THE GREEN LIBRARY

The challenge of environmental sustainability

DIE GRÜNE BIBLIOTHEK

Ökologische Nachhaltigkeit in der Praxis

Edited on behalf of IFLA by
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Rebekkah S. Aldrich, Susan Benton, Louise Schaper
and Jeffrey A. Scherer
Sustainable thinking
Passageway to better buildings, budgets and beyond

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Passageway to better buildings, budgets and beyond[1]

Abstract: Whether you have a building project or not, sustainable thinking fosters partnerships, improves social equity and economic vitality, enhances environmental quality, increases revenue and conveys value. This paper will present a compelling argument on how to design with nature and to stay green after the building is finished and the move-in is complete. The article will elaborate on a platform for embedding an eco-ethic deep into day-to-day operations. In addition the article will explain the tools that libraries need to pursue a sustainable future in uncertain times. Besides these practical aspects of staying sustainable after the building is complete, the authors will discuss the macro-level thinking that is needed in the library organization and the crucial role architecture plays in creating positive chain reactions in the sustainable continuum. This macro thinking requires an understanding of the consequences of sustainable actions and non-actions with regard to social responsibility of integrity and ethical actions. These responsibilities can be viewed as a "social compact" – defined as an implicit agreement amongst members of society to act in ways that protect the personal well-being of all persons. As such, the authors will explore the relationship between behaviour, equity and money in the decision-making process used to become and stay sustainable in the library. Finally, all of these aspects will be related to the body, mind and spirit of the library patron.

Zusammenfassung: Ganz gleich, ob Sie ein Bauprojekt planen oder nicht – nachhaltiges Denken fördert Partnerschaften, verbessert soziale Gleichheit und ökonomische Dynamik, erhöht die Umweltqualität, steigert den Umsatz und vermittelt Werte. Dieser Beitrag zeigt, was ökologisches Design ist und wie man nach Fertigstellung eines Gebäudes und dem Einzug nachhaltig „grün" bleibt. Der Artikel behandelt das Einbetten einer Umweltethik in die alltäglichen Abläufe sowie Methoden zur Wahrung der Nachhaltigkeit für die Zukunft. Abgesehen von diesen praktischen Aspekten ökologischer Nachhaltigkeit nach einer Gebäudefertigstel-

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[1] This paper is an updated and extended version of Genovese, P. & P. Albanese. (2011). "Sustainable libraries, sustainable services: a global view." Paper presented at the 77th IFLA Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 13–18 Aug 2011. http://conference.ifla.org/past/ifla77/196-genovese-en.pdf. Accessed on 27 February 2013.

lung diskutieren die Autoren die entscheidende Rolle, die die Architektur für das Herstellen positiver Kettenreaktionen spielt. Dieses „Makro-Denken" erfordert ein Verständnis für die Konsequenzen nachhaltigen Handelns und Nicht-Handelns unter Berücksichtigung der gesellschaftlichen Übereinkunft von sozialem Verantwortungsbewusstsein und ethisch-moralischem Handeln. Die Autoren untersuchen die Beziehung zwischen Verhalten, Werten und Geldmitteln im Entscheidungsprozess, was für das Erreichen und Erhalten von Nachhaltigkeit erforderlich ist. Letztendlich betreffen alle diese Aspekte Körper, Geist und Seele des Bibliotheksnutzers.

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1 Sustainable thinking: Evolution and revolution (Rebekkah S. Aldrich)

To ensure the viability of our libraries we must be strategic and detail-oriented. How we talk about what we do, the partnerships we seek out, the technology we provide access to and the choices we make about operations can be just as important as traditional library services such as collection development, reference and customer service. How well we tell the story of our organizations will have a significant impact on the likelihood of our communities' willingness to invest in us.

Our premise is that the infusion of the core value of sustainability into our organizations – in every area of operations, not just facilities – will help lead to choices, partnerships and messages that will have a positive impact on the future of our libraries. There are advantages to be gained on many fronts by adopting and developing a sustainable thought pattern, including funding, public perception, and library worker satisfaction.

The concept of sustainability, the capacity to endure, is one most commonly discussed as it relates to nature. Our natural world requires stewardship to be viable for future generations, as do libraries. At the core of each movement – the conservation of our natural world and the achievement of sustainable libraries – are significant similarities: people and wisdom.

In the book *The Philosophy of sustainable design* by Jason F. McLennan the author identifies five "principles of sustainable design", one of which is the respect for people or "the human vitality principle" (McLennan 2004, ch. 4). People of the world, citizens of our communities, library patrons, library workers – all play a part in contributing to the viability of our natural world as well as our library world. The wisdom of nature, the biomimicry principle, and respect for place can generate a better, more sustainable society. Libraries traditionally serve much the same function: by empowering people, providing access to knowledge, to wisdom, we can help create a better, more sustainably healthy society. By taking a lead from the environmental sustainability movement's principles we may be better able to build a solid future for libraries in an uncertain technological age.

Environmental sustainability is often described as the "three-legged stool" – a balance of the environment, economics and social equity that must be achieved to be truly sustainable. Sustainable thinking for libraries can follow the same premise: that only by balancing our environment (facility, maintenance), economics (funding, budget, workforce development, local economic impacts) and social equity (access to knowledge and technology; providing a living wage to our workers and a healthy space to work and learn in) will we develop the paths in our organizations to achieve sustainable funding, sustainable support in our communities and a relevant future. These paths can be in the areas of leadership and management, marketing, facility choices, programming choices and beyond.

To be around for the long haul we must think sustainably

Sustainable facilities include buildings that are constructed and renovated with an eye towards energy efficiency, good indoor air quality, and the use of sustainable materials. It means maintenance procedures that care not only for the environment but also for the people who work in our spaces and make use of our services.

"Sustainable thinking" takes the tenets of sustainable facilities and weaves that care and focus throughout our organizations, all the while sending a message to our constituents – library workers, patrons, and funders – that we care about them as individuals and that we care about our community, both local and global.

A facility that has been intelligently designed can be part of a library's marketing strategy to demonstrate to its community that it cares how the funds allocated to it are spent with an eye towards reducing future costs. Have libraries

always been cost conscious? In most cases, absolutely. Does your community-at-large realize how well you have done this over the years? Probably not.

Maximizing the good from good choices

Leadership is required to facilitate an organizational culture shift. "Going green" can be the impetus for change. An internal campaign to green your library can be translated into a stronger team, better messaging, cost savings and new and beneficial partnerships in your community.

An article in the *MIT Sloan management review* in 2010, "The change leadership sustainability demands" by Christoph Lueneburger and Daniel Goleman, identifies three phases of sustainability leadership: making the case for change, translating vision into action and expanding boundaries.

Making the case for change

At the Mid-Hudson Library System in Poughkeepsie, New York,[2] we used the concept of a "Green Team" to pull staff together towards a common goal during a difficult financial time for our institution. Facing drastic cuts to our operations budget (which would ultimately result in layoffs) made for understandably poor morale. Staff felt powerless to effect change. A core group of staff, some in official leadership positions within the organization (executive director, business office manager and the head of building operations) – with others who hold informal leadership roles (those who may not have authority but are well respected) – were included. Tasks of the group included brainstorming ways the organization could "go green" with an eye towards creating a healthier workspace and reduction of operational costs. One of the ideas which came out of this group was the "Go Green Challenge" which pitted staff from different floors against each other to come up with the most ideas for going green.

The good-natured competition made the challenge a big topic of conversation. A staff of 20 generated almost 200 ideas, many of which were able to be implemented. Recycling in the building greatly increased, energy consumption was reduced by 13%, and staff reported feeling empowered and positive during a time in our history that had previously been dominated by worry and fear.

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2 http://midhudson.org. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

Translating vision into action

Translating vision into action can take many forms. A commitment to sustainability can be threaded throughout strategic plans, job descriptions and public relations materials developed internally. However, libraries do not always need to take the lead in a sustainability initiative to be effective. Libraries can align themselves with community-based sustainability goals.

The governing board of the Kingston Library in Kingston, New York[3] identified an opportunity to make a difference by adopting a "Climate Smart Community Pledge"[4] to dovetail with a similar pledge adopted by their municipality.[5]

Previous conversations at the library board level had been inwardly focused with an eye towards optimizing energy conservation at their location. The board had achieved recent success in completing facility projects to tighten the building envelope and reduce energy costs. They felt empowered in this area, as they were moving the organization forward in a fiscally sound way. When the City of Kingston made the move to adopt the "Climate Smart Communities Pledge", promulgated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the board saw an opportunity to broaden their view of stewardship, while simultaneously aligning the library's goals with broader community goals.

By taking the pledge the library sent a message to municipal leaders that they were part of the solution, to residents that they cared and were doing something about it and to taxpayers, who want to see their dollars used wisely. The library altered a number of aspects of the city's pledge to fit their needs and one in particular stands out:

> "WHEREAS, we understand that public libraries are good stewards of public dollars and therefore should investigate and invest in energy efficient cost saving option."[6]

As a result of the pledge the library aligned their next facility goal with a goal of the municipality to reduce storm water run-off and when it was time to replace the library's parking lot the library took the opportunity to re-envision their parking lot and work with community partners to identify how this project could be leveraged to meet the need to reduce storm water run-off. A grant was written,

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3 www.kingstonlibrary.org/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

4 www.kingstonlibrary.org/pdf/trustee/kl_climate_smart_pledge.pdf. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

5 www.kingston-ny.gov/filestorage/76/78/1896/FinalClimateSmartandGreenJobsPledge91509.pdf. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

6 www.kingstonlibrary.org/pdf/trustee/kl_climate_smart_pledge.pdf, p. 1. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

funds received and work recently completed. The parking-lot project incorporated greenery, rain gardens and an eye towards containing storm-water runoff on site. The ribbon cutting for the project was proof that the library was part of the larger solution in the community, as municipal and environmental leaders in the community joined the library board, staff and patrons in celebrating the library's thoughtful accomplishment.

Expanding boundaries

Lueneburger and Goleman's description of this phase of sustainability leadership includes statements such as "adeptly anticipating", "evaluate trends", "spot new opportunities", and becoming "unconsciously proactive". As libraries move forward we have a responsibility to remain and to be seen as relevant. How we accomplish this can take many forms. This phase, possibly even more than the other two, most closely aligns with our premise of "sustainable thinking": that in order to thrive, not just survive, we must tune in to how our communities are evolving, how technology is changing the landscape and how our users want to access our services.

There are a number of emerging trends in public libraries that exemplify this phase:

1. The Little Free Library Movement:[7] Outposts of interesting structures containing books for citizens to exchange freely have taken many forms: repurposed phone booths (Clinton Community Library, Clinton, New York),[8] custom mini-structures that look like birdhouses, dog-houses and trees. People want to read. People want to be local. Limiting the availability of the printed word to the library facility is not necessary to fulfil our mission. Just as e-books will increase our market share of readers accessing the library, so can decentralized physical access.

2. To market, to market: An increasing number of libraries on the east coast of the US are leveraging the rise in popularity of access to local, fresh food by taking the opportunity to have a presence at local farmers' markets. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania[9] and the Darien Library of Darien, Connecticut[10] have stalls at their respective farmers' markets. The Friends of

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7 www.littlefreelibrary.org/. Accessed on 18 February 2013.
8 http://clinton.lib.ny.us/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.
9 www.clpgh.org/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.
10 www.darienlibrary.org/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

the Hudson Area Association Library in Hudson, New York[11] held a cookbook book sale at their farmers' market. While the library as place is an important selling point, it can exist alongside a travelling presence in the community.

3. Enhanced tradition: Multiple libraries in the USA have begun lending items the community needs beyond the traditional books, movies and music. Gardening and carpenters' tools, seed libraries, and cake pans are circulating in libraries around the USA. Makerspaces[12] have appeared at the public libraries of Fayetteville, New York[13] and Westport, Connecticut with 3D printers and robotics programmes. The facilitation of content creation has become a service point for some libraries like the Idea Lab in Palm City, Florida[14] and the Idea Box in Oak Park, Illinois.[15] These collections and programmes extend the library's mission of knowledge creation to the kinesthetic, hands-on learning at the library.

Sustainable thinking is not facility-specific, it is evolution, it is revolution. It can be an answer to some of the largest obstacles facing libraries today.

2 The "daily green" (Louise Schaper)

"Daily green" is what libraries do every day to become more sustainable – an enduring and respected service doing its part to respect the planet's health.

While most libraries have a "daily green" routine, e.g. recycling, double-sided copies, most don't venture beyond these basics. But if they did, more of every library's budget could go to direct service rather than keeping the lights on. "Daily green" speaks to fiscal conservatives and environmentalists alike.

By fostering a "daily green culture" a library will gain a competitive advantage that yields significant benefits. Those benefits include healthier air, lower energy and water bills, healthier food for public and staff, zero or reduced waste, reduced paper consumption and decreased energy and greenhouse gas emis-

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11 http://hudsonarealibrary.org/support/friends-of-the-hudson-area-library-news/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.
12 Makerspaces, or hackerspaces, are idea labs for community members to bring their ideas to life with space and tools provided by the library. Makerspaces provide hands-on learning opportunities and can take many forms – from knitting to 3D printing and beyond.
13 http://fflib.org/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.
14 http://ap3server.martin.fl.us:7778/portal/page?_pageid=353,4440320&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL. Accessed on 5 January 2013.
15 http://oppl.org/events/idea-box. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

sions. A library's daily green culture is likely to spread to those beyond the library and can result in positive press about the library, increased respect for the library by government, residents, or campus leadership, expanded partnerships and increased investment in the library.

In a nutshell, a daily green culture reduces the climate impact of the library, educates constituencies and can yield a higher percentage of the budget for direct customer service or other priority.

A major part of library budgets goes to keeping the doors open. This includes the cost of heating, water, cooling, lighting and powering computers plus the cost of cleaning supplies, paper and packaging. Multiply these expenses by the number of buildings and square feet to get a picture of how libraries are major carbon consumers. In the USA there are about 17,000 public library buildings. On average it costs $1.75 per square foot per year for energy costs. With 187 million square feet of public library space in the USA, an estimated $327,5 million are spent on energy annually. If energy goals were set for US libraries, say a 10% reduction, $32 million could be saved annually and redeployed to direct service. Through a broad commitment to sustainability action by the global library community, even more could be achieved.

Building a new green library is about people

Building a new green library is not the whole answer. A case in point is the award-winning Fayetteville (Arkansas) Public Library,[16] which opened a 90,000 sq.ft. U.S. Green Building Council LEED silver building in 2004. It was the greenest building of its size in the region, but sustainability was not thoroughly reflected in daily activities. Lights were left on for late-night cleaning, disposable dishes and cups were used at events and by the café, noxious cleaning products polluted the air, and the 200 or so computers created considerable heat. The public noticed and commented. The library director took action but it took several years of trial and error to create a culture of sustainability that yielded significant savings, public praise and coherence of values.

To create a culture infused with daily green takes people, purpose and process. Firstly, the right people unleash the energy and make it happen. Secondly, embedding sustainability into the library's purpose and plans provides the pathway. Thirdly, adding the daily green into the dialogue about process improvement ensures successful action.

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16 www.faylib.org/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

First step: People

The first step is people. People create a culture of sustainability – or not. Library administration must be committed, as should the IT and facilities managers. Enlist sustainability leadership from those who already have an interest and are respected and trusted by all levels of staff. Choose staff members who are "can-do", hardworking and fun people. Green teams can work, but be sure that authority and responsibility is clearly delineated. Change job descriptions to reflect everyone's green responsibilities. Provide them with resources including time to do the work and encourage them to take external roles that will increase their sustainability knowledge and foster awareness of the library's efforts. It's not an "only if you have time" job or task. Don't forget to engage the broader staff in planning and executing.

Unleash innovation. Expand beyond the library field and tailor sustainability ideas for the library environment. Most of the ideas working elsewhere will work for a library.

Once the daily green is rolling, share successes with the broader community. That way the library can positively influence others to adopt green practices at home and work. Use signage, newsletters, annual reports, TV, and community talks. Develop library programmes that inspire and instruct.

A daily green culture attracts new partners. A solar-panel company may partner to provide panels or at least a large discount on panels. A government agency and utility company may provide heavily discounted LED lights. A group of non-profits can partner to create a local non-profit green council. Partnering is a competitive advantage for all.

Second step: Purpose

Purpose is the second, yet often neglected, step to fully embracing a culture of sustainability. Here the library articulates its commitment to sustainability through its planning documents – mission, vision, goals, objectives, slogan, policies and values. This codifies and deepens the library's commitment to sustainability.

In 2010, a Canadian study of North American libraries indicated that while "there is an exciting emergent library discourse on 'green' policy and actions" and while public libraries are implementing green practices, they are not yet "encoding a green ethic in official institutional language" and that library asso-

ciations have not addressed environmental responsibility in their policies. (Al & House 2010, 1)

Embed the library's commitment to sustainability everywhere it articulates direction, values, expectations, goals and objectives, policies and procedures. Don't forget to embed commitment in library job descriptions.

Third step: Process

Finally, the third step is process. Process is what libraries do every day in order to provide services. Most libraries are thoughtful about their processes and continually improve them to be more efficient or to match their end or internal customers' needs better. By including sustainability in process thinking, the culture of green is deepened.

Take parking as an example. Drivers usually want to park close to the library. When close parking spots are reserved for hybrid or electric vehicles the library is rewarding a green behaviour – driving a more energy-efficient vehicle.

It's not always easy or possible to know what processes are greenest. Is it greener to make paper posters to advertise library events or is it greener to eliminate paper and use LCD monitors to advertise events? While the answer may not be known, the right answer is to move in the right direction.

Where should libraries start to make their daily actions greener?

Start with energy

The answer is to start with energy. Here's where the greatest gain lies. By reducing energy use, monies saved can be redeployed to more mission-focused activities and a great story can be told. Start by base-lining or measuring the current energy use. Consider an energy audit. Develop an improvement plan. Fine tune or update the HVAC[17] systems to use the least energy for comfort, retrofit lighting with energy efficient lights, replace switches with motion sensors, and upgrade computers with thin clients, energy-rated CPUs[18] and efficient servers. It's the right time to consider solar photovoltaic systems. With government rebates/lo-

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17 Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning.
18 Central Processing Unit.

cal leases and/or partners these projects can be affordable and scalable. Look at edgier opportunities – like how to harness server room heat.

Saving energy is do-able, measurable and a winner. Adopt a goal of net zero energy use for any new buildings constructed by 2015. If a small rural community in Chrisney, Indiana can build a net zero building in 2009,[19] it can be done all over the world.

Building maintenance

Next, take on building maintenance. The cost, complexity and odour emissions of cleaning supplies can be reduced without sacrificing cleanliness. Adopt green cleaning processes, including the use of hydrogen peroxide in various dilutions, and microfibre cloths, to simplify and improve air quality. Replace night cleaning with pre-opening and daytime cleaning to reduce electricity use.

Food

Then, think deeply about food. Libraries often serve food at events in the belief that it attracts attendees. But often it's junk food served on plastic and washed down with liquid in a plastic bottle that gets thrown into giant waste bins whose contents fill up landfills and incinerators. Instead serve healthy food, using real, recycled or recyclable crockery, compost waste and strive to achieve zero-waste events. Partner with local food growers, bakers or chefs to provide snacks. When contracting for on-site cafés, add green requirements into the contract.

Transit

Make transit by and to the library greener. Buy hybrid or electric vehicles for the library. Provide ample bicycle parking space and consider covering it, especially for employees. Get a bus route stop at the library. Consider becoming a refuelling stop for electric vehicles.

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19 www.lincolnheritage.lib.in.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=81&Itemid=88. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

Be creative!

Think green when procuring and using consumables. Build green into purchasing policies. Specify that paper, cleaning and other maintenance products must be third party certified to be green, e.g. *Greenseal*.[20] Reconsider library cards. Are they really needed? If so, buy recyclable or compostable cards! Look at interlibrary loans (ILL). A study done in 2010, "Greening Interlibrary Loan Practices", an OCLC study by Denise Massie,[21] revealed that ILL greenhouse gas emissions can be cut in half simply by re-using packaging materials.

Look at print publications. Switch to an e-newsletter and use a delivery service such as *Constant Contact*.[22] If paper is still needed, create a half-page double-sided sheet to list upcoming events. Or consider a quarterly print newsletter instead of monthly. Use in-library monitors for advertising events.

Finally, re-use furniture or, when buying new, buy green. It's easy to find furniture made from recycled materials. *Loll*, a Minnesota company, uses plastic milk jugs to make stunning pieces.[23] Be creative. Delft University of Technology[24] features a service desk made from discarded books.[25] Use paints made with low volatile organic compounds (VOCs). When replacing flooring, choose a material that is recyclable and doesn't emit noxious odours.

With engaged people, articulated purpose and thoughtful processes every library can create a culture of sustainability that yields endless value for staff members, the library, the broader world and beyond.

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20 www.greenseal.org/. Accessed on 18 February 2013.
21 www.oclc.org/resources/research/publications/library/2010/2010-07.pdf. Accessed on 5 January 2013.
22 www.constantcontact.com/. Accessed on 18 February 2013.
23 www.lolldesigns.com/. Accessed on 17 February 2013.
24 www.library.tudelft.nl/en/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.
25 www.recyclart.org/2010/09/library-information-desk/. Accessed on 18 February 2013.

3 Public libraries: Stepping up to the sustainability challenge (Susan Benton)

"Brainpower is the new currency of success in the 21st century. And libraries are often cities' best assets in building up the brainpower of the community ..." (*Julian Castro, Mayor of San Antonio, Texas*)[26]

Government, community and business leaders the world over are grappling with the urgent imperative of rebuilding local economies, getting people back to work and ensuring that we pursue the economic, educational and environmental strategies that will advance a sustainable future in which people and communities prosper. Public libraries are emerging as powerful strategic partners in this effort.

As today's libraries showcase innovative practices that address sustainability needs – such as energy efficiency, workforce development and civic engagement – community decision-makers gain an ever stronger understanding of the library's value, including the need to leverage its assets, engage its leaders and provide the resources to ensure its long-term sustainability.

This essay examines key elements of community sustainability in the 21st century; the myriad ways that public libraries already lead sustainability efforts in local communities, and the urgent need for library leaders to continue telling the story of their contributions so that decision-makers value and provide necessary resources to the library.

Sustainability in the 21st Century

The concept of promoting local sustainability has deep roots that gained traction as the environmental movement grew in strength during the 1960s and 1970s. In those days, sustainability referred primarily to repairing the natural world and adopting new policies and practices that would improve our built environment – both in terms of building construction and community development.

Today, our understanding of sustainability has broadened in critical ways that are both more powerful and more challenging in their complexity. In a recent issue of *Public Management*, a journal of the International City/County Managers Association, Michael Willis wrote, "At its essence, sustainability is all about facing the future – of devising ways and means to meet the environmental, social and economic challenges the future presents" (Willis 2012).

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26 www.libraryworks.com/INFOcus/1210/ULC_Sustainable_Communities_Full_Report.pdf, p. 11. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

Leading thinkers and practitioners understand that effective local approaches must embrace a "triple bottom line" framework that includes economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity. Achieving success across these domains involves strategies that are interconnected and, by necessity, require the active engagement of leaders working together across sectors in local communities.

Economic vitality involves a continuum of lifelong-learning activities as well as business and workforce development strategies. Environmental quality requires new business practices, civic engagement and awareness and a shared commitment to behaviours that contribute to sustainability. Social equity, (in modern understanding) the essence of democracy, requires that all citizens have access to learning opportunities and the ability to participate fully in their communities. Clearly, no one agency or community group can take on or achieve success across these complex domains.

Libraries and local sustainability

One community agency, the public library, is uniquely positioned both to lead sustainability efforts and to be a catalytic partner with local government and other groups. To start with, libraries model sustainability by being strong stewards of public resources and adding value to the community. They demonstrate environmental responsibility through their embrace of green practices and advance social equity by promoting civic engagement and individual growth. By leveraging its many assets including public trust, multi-disciplinary collections, technology, high-quality programmes and informed staff, the library is well-positioned to exert leadership and work in partnership with other community organizations.

However, despite libraries' long-standing contributions, they are not always "top of mind" when local leaders develop sustainability strategies and initiatives. Moreover, the vexing fiscal challenges that local officials face today are such that, in too many instances, libraries are seen as "nice but not necessary". This under-recognition has potentially serious consequences that limit the full deployment of a community's resources, including political, social, human and fiscal capital, and diminish the impact of collective efforts. For library leaders, the bottom-line consequence is this: if the library is not understood and included as a critical partner, it will not receive the resources needed to fulfil its mission.

How can library leaders raise their visibility as key sustainability partners? Three strategies have proven effective in many communities: create, collaborate and communicate.

Create

Library leaders must have a keen understanding of their communities' strategic priorities with respect to sustainability. Armed with this knowledge, they can inventory current policies and programmes to promote those that are already contributing to sustainability efforts. These might include integrating green practices into branch construction and facilities renovation; demonstrating new green technologies, providing business and workforce development programmes; access to digital technologies; lifelong-learning initiatives and health/wellness services. Where programmes do not already exist, libraries should create and promote them.

Fig. 1.1: Arlington Reads – Arlington Grows: An innovative programme on food sustainability. © Arlington Central Library.

In Arlington, Virginia – a mid-sized city adjacent to the USA capital – the Arlington Public Library[27] has created a comprehensive approach to sustainability called "Bikes, Buildings and Broccoli". The library promotes and supports Arlington's status as a bike-friendly community by encouraging staff to bike to work; leading an annual bike tour of seven library branches; and hosting sessions on bike safety, equipment, and routes. To support its county government's commitment to energy conservation, the library cut electricity use by 43% and total energy use by 27% in the Central Library over ten years; circulates electricity monitors to help residents cut energy use; installed solar panels on the Central Library's roof;

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27 http://library.arlingtonva.us/. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

recycles paper, bottles, cans, spectacles, cellphones, and CFL[28] light bulbs; and holds an annual recycled art show. "Broccoli" represents the library's reputation as a gardening leader including the Central Library's organic vegetable garden. The library provides classes in the garden, donates harvests to the Arlington Food Assistance Center,[29] offers master-gardener demonstrations and tree-steward clinics, and won an award for its innovative "Arlington Reads" programme[30] on food sustainability. Through these efforts, the library has leveraged its deep community connections and its role as an education hub to demystify sustainability mandates, raise civic awareness and celebrate the ways in which people can take individual and collective action.

Collaborate

Collaboration is at the heart of successful community approaches to sustainability. Today's high-performing public libraries understand that both within their libraries and in the larger community the ability to form strategic partnerships is an essential capacity. In many respects, libraries have a natural ability to collaborate in that their programmes intersect with the missions and strategic priorities of so many other organizations (civic, education, business, cultural, etc.).

Collaboration takes many forms. At the community level, libraries must be "at the table" when leaders gather to design sustainability strategies and initiatives. At the programmatic level, library leaders must work effectively with other sector leaders to determine how multiple agencies can share resources in order to achieve mutual goals and measure success. Libraries must invite other agencies into their facilities to provide programmes and services and also go into the community to expand both reach and impact.

In New York City, the Brooklyn, Queens and New York Public Libraries – three systems that collectively serve eight million citizens – formed a partnership with the city's Department of Small Business Services to launch *Workforce 1 Expansion Centers* in their branch libraries. The library-based Workforce Centers make it possible for job seekers to go to one familiar place – the library – both to become workforce-ready and get referrals to companies that are hiring. For the city and the libraries, this partnership is mutually advantageous. By leveraging the city's employment resources, the libraries have expanded their traditional job support

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28 Compact Fluorescent Lamp.

29 www.afac.org. Accessed on 18 February 2013.

30 www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Communications/PressReleases/page75484.aspx. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

services and are able to offer job seekers what they want most: the opportunity actually to apply for a job. The city capitalizes on both the "foot traffic"[31] that the libraries generate and their reputation as reliable sources of information. In announcing the partnership, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the libraries' track record as "gateways to opportunity" made them "great locations" for the city's career counselling and job placement services. Since late 2011, two Brooklyn Public Library branches alone have referred close to 4,500 job seekers to interviews that have resulted in 917 job placements!

Communicate

While the public library's identity as a strategic partner continues to grow, library leaders cannot assume that their relevance and value is understood. They must proactively be at the table with decision-makers, concretely articulate the alignment between the community's needs and what they provide and – most of all – tell their stories in compelling narratives that combine facts with vivid illustration of how people benefit and positive change occurs. Library leaders must build storytelling cultures within their institutions so that stories of outcome and impact are constantly gathered and used to communicate the value of the library. Citizen engagement is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy, yet in Calgary (Alberta, Canada) the city faced historically low voter turnout for elections. Calgary Public Library[32] launched an aggressive communications and voter engagement campaign during a critical 2010 election to bring out the vote.[33] A series of highly publicized, library-hosted events was designed to inform residents about the importance of municipal elections and connect them to candidates and their positions on key issues. Using forums, a series of blogs, a training session for candidates and campaign managers, and meet-the-candidate sessions which built interaction with the public, the Calgary Public Library became recognized as election central for both candidates and voters.

The impact of the library's effort was remarkable with a 53% voter turnout for the 2010 municipal election compared to an average of 28% during the previous three elections. Calgary Public Library secured broader recognition for its value to the community through this effort, and the voter turnout validated their

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31 www.nyc.gov > News and Press Releases > 2012 Events > February 2012 > February 21. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

32 www.calgarypubliclibrary.com. Accessed on 18 February 2013.

33 www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/story/2010/08/25/calgary-library-election-voter-turnout-idiot.html. Accessed on 5 January 2013.

effort. The library now has a powerful story to tell that demonstrates how its pro-grammes provide value through positive change.

Government, business and civic leaders consider sustainability the "issue of our age". The deep roots and vast connections that libraries possess, combined with their stature as highly trusted public institutions, their capacity to deliver programmes, distribute information to large, diverse audiences and ensure universal accessibility make them not only logical, but necessary partners. Standing up and staking claim to a community's strategic priorities is fundamental to the library's core business – and essential to its long-term sustainability.

Building sustainable communities is a perpetual endeavour. Libraries have existed for centuries and proven themselves faithful to their core values while being continuously responsive to the changing needs of communities. Libraries and local governments can "join at the hip" to leverage their shared commitment to building strong, healthy, resilient and engaged communities.

4 Sustainability: The social compact
(Jeffrey A. Scherer)

Beginning in the early 17th century, philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that scarce resources and overpopulation forced people to form small groups that were governed by consensual agreements. These "compacts", they argued, would lead naturally to democratic behaviours if it meant that there was a mutual benefit to all of protection and abundance of necessities. In this article, this instinct can be viewed as a "sustainable social compact" – defined as an implicit agreement amongst members of society to act in ways that protect the personal health and well-being of all persons and result in fair distribution, wise use and protection of natural resources.

This article has brought forth the notion that "greenness" is more than a colour or one-time event. It is an ethic that should be embedded deep within the actions and consciousness of any person who truly wishes to lighten the burden on nature, our built world and future generations. Architects and owners of libraries are faced with increasing pressures, at least in the USA, to reduce first cost of construction even though cost-control choices can have a negative impact on the future. This article has chosen to posit that change will not come from without – only from within. And since the issues of sustainability can, at times, seem overwhelming, we argue for thinking about "nano-decisions". We also argue that the sustainable library building is an essential social compact with society.

The components of this society include not only the staff and patrons, but the politicians and outsiders who often control the economic framework of the project. But beyond these constituencies, the truly sustainable library will acknowledge that children, teenagers, and adults will be impacted by the choices made in building, maintaining and operating the building.

How can this happen?

Conversation is the natural way we humans think together. If our words mean something different to each other, we are not conversing but simply passing in the dark along separate roads and destined to arrive at different places. It is an axiom of our society that certainty is considered a virtue. We believe that doubt can be a virtue. Doubting enables us to question the power of the *status quo*, the inertia set in place by politics as usual, and the believability of nay-sayers who complain that change is too expensive. Sustainability consultants will forcefully argue that their advice is the only way forward. Many times they are correct and nearly always their heart is in the right place. However, trends emerge and become commonplace – often without much scrutiny. Our society is so "trained" to think short term that we often grab for the biggest and most visible idea without doubting its efficacy or long-term viability.

Given the intertwining of the political and economic, the noise generated in arguing about what is certain can drown out the subtle and often more sustainable and deeply embedded actions. For example, a tax incentive may encourage the installation of photovoltaic panels – while the first cost reductions might eliminate choices in the building design that would obviate the need for the power harnessed from the photovoltaic panels in the first place. Besides these issues, we are also suffering from poll-driven decision-making that squeezes out realistic and long-term thinking about sustainability. Given the nasty fights over any money-based decision, it seems inevitable that the politicians who hold the purse strings want to a) hold on to their status and b) make choices that will retain their status. Libraries are facing ever increasing competition for money. Sustainable behaviours, as discussed above, can enable them both to be competitive for the funds and, more importantly, exhibit leadership that is not driven by polling or popular demands.

The fine art photographer Zoe Strauss has an image that states: "EVERYTHING IS NOT $1.00". Our ability as a society to take the long-term view has been severely tested by this "low cost" bias. To counter the pervasive economic bias that can control the sustainable choices, we feel that the cost-benefit argument is best framed as a performance issue.

A. Economic performance: Where cost can be found to provide measurable functional and use or utility benefits;
B. Social performance: Where community and shared or political process benefits can be measured;
C. Environmental performance: Where minimal environmental impact (ideally measurable environmental benefits) can be found;
D. Cultural performance: Where aesthetic, ethical and other cultural meanings can accrue.

To keep a realistic balance between behaviour, equity and money, the whole sustainable community will have to rethink the way the benefits are articulated. Most sustainable arguments, at least in the USA, are framed around economic interests. While we respect that this "objective" measure can be effective, we posit that it is best to frame the sustainable discussion around the impact on the body, spirit and mind.

For the body, test sustainable actions for their benefits to the health of the person – both short and long term. This can include a) mechanical systems biased to fresh air, b) natural materials that eliminate toxicity build-up and c) quietude resulting from simple systems that do not rely on mechanical transport of air. For the spirit, make sure the benefit to the well being of the person is central. This can include, for example, a) quietude resulting from low-volume air distribution, b) happiness resulting from view and ample daylight, and c) connectedness to nature through sustainable landscaping. For the mind, make sure the sustainable strategies do not create headaches through noise.

Finally, sustainability is more than just reducing the energy demand. In this article we have tried to emphasise that sustainability is a comprehensive attitude and ethical imperative that should be deeply embedded in everyday actions and decisions. A sustainable building does not stand in isolation. It forms a central part of a healthy community that creates a world trustworthiness – not suspicion.

Lewis Hyde, the philosopher and author, has argued persuasively in defence of the value of creativity and its importance over the market economy (Hyde 2007). He argues that our world cannot and should not be reduced to simplistic truisms or ideas. The value of individual actions, guided by ethics and the free exchange of ideas that support the society – not a vested group – will create a stronger community that will be founded in trust. Trust, we believe, is the core element of a sustainable community. Trust that decisions are being made beyond self-interest; trust that the long-view will benefit everyone; and trust that permanence beats obsolescence every day. The following quote from Joseph Conrad speaks directly to the value of trust and giving freely: "The artist appeals to that part of our being [...] which is a gift and not an acquisition – and, therefore, more permanently

Fig. 1.2

Fig. 1.3

Fig. 1.4

Fig. 1.5
The photographs 1.2–1.5 show an example of a sustainable library project that adheres to the principles of the library as a social compact: Hennepin County Library, Maple Grove, 2010. Architects: Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. © J. Scherer. More photographs at www.archdaily. com/109062/hennepin-county-library-maple-grove-meyer-scherer-rockcastle/. Accessed on 14 January 2013.

enduring" (Conrad 1914). As professionals, we have to choose carefully and wise-ly which lines we will cross. If we choose unwisely, our planet will not endure; our children will suffer; and our nest will be fouled. Our understanding of the importance of sustainability is important; doing something about it is a gift.

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