Libraries and Sustainability – The Building of a Canadian Federation

Katherine McColgan
Canadian Federation of Library Associations, Gatineau, Canada.
E-mail address: kmccolgan@cfla-fcab.ca

Abstract:

Libraries have been a part of sustainable development long before the term "the circular economy" was coined, but how do libraries tell their story in contributing to sustainability goals?

This paper describes the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB)'s process and experience in developing its first strategic plan using the Canada 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide the work of the organization and frame how libraries support the SDGs.

In 2018, CFLA-FCAB began its first strategic planning exercise and plans to execute the 3-year plan in 2019-2020.

Keywords: sustainability, sustainable development goals, SDG, circular economy

In 2014 the Canadian Library Association closed its doors. At that time, the library community came together to discuss the future of library advocacy in Canada. It was agreed that a national association was needed to advocate for libraries in Canada at a national level and to engage in important discussions nationally and internationally. In May 2016, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) was incorporated as the national voice for Canada's library associations to advance library excellence in Canada, champion library values and the value of libraries and influence national and international public policy impacting libraries and their communities.

The first two years were spent largely on establishing effective operations, governance and policies needed for an organization to operate, but also working heavily on a number of projects and strategies in support of Canadian libraries and the social economy.

Canada's competitiveness depends not only on creating the appropriate environment for businesses to thrive, but also on ensuring everyone can take advantage of new opportunities in the knowledge-based economy. Access to information, tools, and services that unlock creativity and empower progress is vital and Canada's libraries are leading the way toward that goal.

Canada's libraries share the mission of preserving and disseminating Canada's knowledge and heritage—a crucial component of an innovative, productive and forward-looking country. Canada's high rates of educational attainment, literacy and numeracy, and widely available access to the Internet, among other advantages, have supported our competitiveness for decades. However, it is important to note that these benefits are not felt equally in all communities across Canada and we need to prioritize access to information, programs and services at Canada's libraries, which serve communities directly in building human capital, enabling progress, and closing persistent inequality gaps.

In 2018, CFLA-FCAB began its first strategic planning exercise with a goal to execute the 3-year plan beginning in September 2019.

The IFLA guidelines for libraries, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Canada 2030 Sustainable Development Goals helped shape CFLA-FCAB's Strategic Plan and align our work to support sustainable development in Canada.

The landscape

In 2013, IFLA developed the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Development that describes how libraries support sustainable development.

The principles of the document state:

- Libraries provide opportunity for all
- Libraries empower people for their own self-development
- Libraries offer access to the world's knowledge
- Librarians provide expert guidance
- Libraries are part of a multi-stakeholder society
- Libraries must be recognised in development policy frameworks

In 2015, following this initial work of IFLA, library associations from around the world signed on in support of "The Lyon Declaration", a declaration that reinforces the idea that sustainable development "seeks to ensure the long-term socio-economic prosperity and well-being of people everywhere".

In Canada, the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et techniques de la documentation (ASTED), Canadian Association of Music Libraries Archives and Documentation Centres/L'Association canadienne des bibliothèques archives et centres de documentation musicaux, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, Canadian Library Association, Manitoba School Library Association, Simon Fraser University Library, University of British Columbia Library, Association des Bibliothécaires du Québec Library Association (ABQLA), British Columbia Library Association, Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL), Canadian Association of Research Libraries / Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada, Canadian Health Libraries Association (CHLA/ABSC), Canadian

Urban Libraries Council (CULC/CBUC), Manitoba Library Association, Ontario Library Association, and the Saskatchewan Library Association signed on to the declaration. The last nine associations are now members of CFLA-FCAB.

IFLA's document "Access and Opportunity for All: How libraries contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda" continued in this important work and helped to further define and demonstrate how libraries support the sustainable development goals world wide.

In Canada

In September 2015, Canada, along with 192 other UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda provides a 15-year global framework that defines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and over 230 indicators.

In Canada, the focus has been placed on groups who are marginalized and vulnerable, which include Indigenous peoples, women and girls, immigrant and refugee populations, people with disabilities and individuals identifying with the LGBTQ2 community. In conjunction with its partners, Canada is working to end poverty and inequality and develop a prosperous society.

The Government of Canada has identified the following priorities and programs that it currently has in place that support the 2030 Agenda:

- Through its focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, including women and girls, Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy supports the main principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to ensure that no one is left behind in the achievement of the SDGs. New resources and tools for international assistance announced in Budget 2018 will help partner countries working toward achieving all of the SDGs.

- By prioritizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, Canada supports SDG 5 (gender equality), as well as the achievement of all other SDGs.

- Consistent with the Government of Canada's commitment to advance the work of reconciliation, renewing Canada's relationship with, and outcomes for, Indigenous peoples supports multiple SDGs, including SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDG16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

- By strengthening and growing the middle class, Canada supports SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).

- Canada's 2016 to 2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, which sets out Canada's sustainable development priorities, is linked to many SDGs, including SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (life on land).

- Canada's support for the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, investments in clean economic growth and investments in international climate finance all contribute to SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action).

As part of the 2018 Federal Budget 2018, the Government of Canada announced funding of $49.4 million over 13 years to establish an SDG unit and fund monitoring and reporting activities by Statistics Canada. This reporting mechanism will ensure that Canada is working toward achieving the 2030 Goals. In addition to this oversight, the Government of Canada announced an additional $59.8 million over 13 years for programming to support the implementation of the SDGs. Civil societies can apply to this program for funding to aid them in their work to support the SDGs.

On July 17th, 2018, Canada presented its first Voluntary National Review report[1] at the United Nations High Level Political Forum in New York.

Moving forward

With this groundwork laid, it only seemed natural for the newly formed Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) to use these tools as guidance in the development of a national advocacy organization for libraries.

The CFLA-FCAB Board of Directors agreed that CFLA-FCAB would use the SDGs as the underpinnings for the work of the Federation moving forward and should be kept in mind whilst the Federation's committees and Board of Directors develop work plans and identify initiatives in which to engage.

First, the CFLA-FCAB developed its first Strategic Plan spanning from September 2019 to August 2022 with the theme "Stronger together: advancing the impact of libraries".

CFLA-FCAB influences public policy, advances library excellence, and raises the visibility of libraries in Canada to advance our national intellectual, social, economic, and cultural success.

The Strategic Plan is divided into four objectives:

Objective 1: Amplify the influence and impact of libraries in national and international public policy
- Build relationships and increase engagement with federal government representatives and other influencers regarding policy decisions and related impacts
- Collaborate with our members to strengthen the capacity of our sector throughout Canada
- Amplify the voice of the library sector with strong, clear and consistent messages about the issues that matter to our members

Objective 2: Anticipate and respond to the changing information environment by defining national policy positions to advance library excellence
- Develop and monitor national policies and guidelines
- Support adoption of national policies and guidelines by the Canadian library community.

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[1] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20312Canada_ENGLISH_18122_Canadas_Voluntary_National_ReviewENv7.pdf

Objective 3: Raise the visibility of libraries as contributors to Canadian intellectual, social, and cultural life
- Advocate for federal funding opportunities for libraries.
- Foster relationships with allied agencies, organizations and initiatives that share common missions, mandates, and goals
- Benchmark the impact and role of Canadian libraries according to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals
- Support member associations by developing key messages to communicate effectively with their target audiences

Objective 4: Develop a sustainable organization to effectively support our Vision and Mission
- Continue to build a solid governance structure
- Continue to build stable revenue sources to support our activities
- Develop strategies to further engage and collaborate with members and the broader library community

The objectives in the Strategic Plan as well as the work by committees and the Board of Directors support the following Sustainable Development Goals:
- #3 – Good health and well-being
- #4 – Quality education
- #9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- #10 – Reduced inequalities
- #11 – Sustainable cities and communities

CFLA-FCAB currently has four strategic committees; Cataloguing and Metadata Standards, Copyright, Indigenous Matters, and Intellectual Freedom.

The Cataloguing and Metadata Standards committee advises the Board when CFLA-FCAB needs to develop and promote its library communities' positions on cataloguing and metadata standards and issues, and it oversees the development of appropriate position statements and supporting documentation and strategies. At a national and international level, the committee ensures that Canada is well represented on the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing (CCC), Canadian Committee on Metadata Exchange (CCM), the RDA Board. The committee engages with existing communities and working groups within CFLA-FCAB members to foster collaboration and maximize the impact of advocacy on cataloguing and metadata issues / standards and promotes cataloguing and metadata training and professional development.

The Copyright committee advises the Board on matters of national and international copyright policy and advocacy. It develops and carries out copyright-related policy, education, and advocacy activities and actively seeks out allies on copyright and related matters in the wider community. The committee also fosters and actively promotes collaboration and alignment on copyright advocacy across CFLA-FCAB's member associations, the Canadian library communities, and other allied organizations.

The Indigenous Matters committee exists to work with Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) people to address issues related to libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions; to promote initiatives in all types of libraries by advancing and implementing meaningful reconciliation as addressed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and in the

Calls to Action[2] to implement the recommendations of the CFLA-FCAB Truth and Reconciliation Committee report[3]; to monitor ongoing progress in those areas; and to promote collaboration in these issues across Canadian libraries, archives, and cultural memory institutions.

The Intellectual Freedom committee is responsible for advocating for the value of intellectual freedom (as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) in Canada and developing policies, guidelines, position statements and written reports to inform society on the importance of intellectual freedom. The committee engages in discussions within CFLA-FCAB, as well as with government and other agencies regarding pending legislation and public policy affecting intellectual freedom in Canadian libraries. The committee works to maintain effective liaison with and provide support where appropriate to other organizations and groups in Canada and around the world that are also concerned with intellectual freedom, and maintains a working relationship with the media and make statements to the press, television, and radio on issues affecting intellectual freedom, especially as they affect libraries and the information professions.

Election platforms Campaign

2019 marks national elections in Canada and Canadians will be heading to the polls in October 2019 to place their votes on who will lead the country for the next four years.

Although there are several parties that run in federal elections, there are three major political parties; the Liberal Party of Canada, the Conservative Party of Canada, and the New Democratic Party. In building on the Strategic Plan, CFLA-FCAB developed an election platforms campaign that will be used to enter into discussions with these parties, regarding the role of libraries and how supporting libraries will support Canada's Sustainable Development Goals.

In continuing our support of the SDGs as outlined in our Strategic Plan, our messaging is divided into four pillars:

Advancing Social Infrastructure
CFLA-FCAB is calling upon the next government to invest $800 million over the next 4 years to support a targeted library upgrade investment fund, advocating for the following points:

- Canadians, especially those who face socio-economic barriers, need and expect libraries to provide equitable access to spaces that facilitate digital literacy, collaboration, innovation, and community gathering as well as access to technology.
- In many communities, especially those that are smaller, remote, or Indigenous, access to adequate library space is often compromised by inadequate infrastructure, both digital and physical.
- Investing in library infrastructure will bring real social and economic benefits to the people who need it most.

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[2] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf (last accessed June 10, 2019)
[3] CFLA-FCAB Truth and Reconcilation Committee Report http://cfla-fcab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Truth-and-Reconciliation-Committee-Report-and-Recommendations-ISBN1.pdf (last accessed June 10, 2019)

- Rural Broadband Internet access is critical to supporting social infrastructure.
- Supporting Canada's libraries supports Canada's Sustainable Development Goals.

Indigenous Ways Of Knowing And Language Preservation
CFLA-FCAB recommends that the next government commit to supporting Indigenous ways of knowing and language preservation, advocating for the following points:

- Indigenous knowledge should be available through all types of media ensuring it is preserved, protected and accessed in a culturally respectful and sensitive manner for use by current and future generations.
- Enable public policy that activates the revitalization, use and preservation of Indigenous knowledges and languages.
- Ensure Indigenous peoples are trained in library services and archival methods to equip them with the skills to retrieve and store information and materials for the community's use and enjoyment.

Copyright
CFLA-FCAB recommends that the next government commit to balanced Copyright legislation, advocating for the following points:

- Develop public policy that offsets the harm caused by the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement's (CUSMA) extension of copyright term through flexible fair use and ensuring technological protection measures can be bypassed for legal uses, such as copying within fair dealing and for preservation.
- Put in place public policy, grant programs, or tax incentives that encourage publishers to make all ebooks available to consumers also available to libraries, meet fair pricing and licensing terms, and permit digitization and digital lending of out-of-market content.
- Respect, affirm and recognize Indigenous people's ownership of their knowledge and protect it from unauthorized use.

Support For Accessible Formats.
CFLA-FCAB recommends that the next government commit to continued sustainable funding for the production and delivery of accessible formats, advocating for the following points:

- Libraries must be able to provide access to information to Canadians with perceptual disabilities that is equivalent to access for Canadians without perceptual disabilities.
- Fewer than 10% of Canadian works and 5% of Indigenous works are available in alternate formats, creating an inherent barrier in education and workforce readiness for people with perceptual disabilities.
- Creating and converting works into accessible formats requires significant financial and human resources to ensure quality, discovery and usability.

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