



International Development Committee: Inquiry on Sustainable Development Goals

Written evidence submitted by CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals)

1. CILIP is the leading body representing the library, knowledge and information professions in the UK. We believe in a literate, knowledgeable and connected society. Our members work in a range of sectors including higher education, schools, public libraries, health, and commercial organisations and across government. We also play our part in the global information society mainly through an active membership of IFLAⁱ (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions).
2. We are making this submission because we share with professional colleagues across the world the belief that libraries and information services, and the skilled professionals that manage them, make a vital contribution to sustainable economic development and are key building blocks of prosperous, inclusive and open societies that enjoy good governance.
3. Our submission does not comment on which goals should be prioritised but makes the point that whatever goals the UK might choose to prioritise, literacy, access to information and the skills to use that information effectively are core targets of achieving sustainable development and essential components to the successful delivery of all the goals. Short illustrative examples are given throughout the text.

Executive Summary

4. CILIP urges the UK government to support and promote the importance of access to information and the skills to use that information as a core target within Agenda 2030, previously referred to as the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, as an important human right and an essential component to successfully deliver all Goals currently proposed. This, alongside universal literacy, constitute essential building blocks to the achievement of all the SDGs. They are enablers of the transformational change necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda and they are the currency of library, knowledge and information services.

5. Library, knowledge and information services operate across all parts of society. The UK is a developed nation but the role and impact of its libraries are indicative of the powerful part they can play in developing nations including, with the appropriate investment, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)
6. The 2030 Agenda is also an inclusive global agenda for the whole world including the UK. The UK should look at how it as a nation can achieve these goals as well as contributing to the developing world. If the UK develops an action plan CILIP would welcome the opportunity to contribute to its development.
7. We recommend that:
 - a. The development of local information infrastructures forms part of the Overseas Aid programme as a support for universal literacy, the provision of access to information and the development of the skills to use that information effectively – key enablers in achieving each and every SDG
 - b. An Advisory Group to include, amongst others, the British Library, The National Archives and CILIP is formed to advise on such a programme
 - c. The Government is asked to clarify how it will implement the SDGs in the UK and report on progress, and how others can engage in that process

Submission of evidence

8. Our submission predominantly focuses on the first question (Which SDGs should DFID prioritise and how?). We also comment on the role of other government departments and make some observations relating to the measurement of impact.
9. We believe that whatever sustainable development goals are chosen or prioritised by the UK government access to information and the skills to use that information effectively must be recognised as vital to the achievement of any of the goals. Alongside universal literacy they are the enablers of the 2030 agenda.

Universal Literacy

“By 2030 ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy” (Goal 4:6)

10. UNESCO statisticsⁱⁱ indicate that 757 million adults, two thirds of whom are women, still lack basic reading and writing skills. Sub-Saharan Africa and India and Pakistan are amongst regions with especially poor literacy rates. Western

Europe undertakes more detailed assessments of literacy skills that are not directly comparable to the basic literacy statistics collected by UNESCO. The National Literacy Trustⁱⁱⁱ suggest that less than 1% of adults in England are completely illiterate but around 16% - 5.2 million adults – are functionally illiterate with literacy levels at or below those expected of an 11 year old.

11. Literacy is the learned ability to communicate and acquire knowledge through the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking/understanding. People with good literacy skills are more likely to have higher self-esteem, better health, better jobs and higher wages than those with poor literacy skills. They are more able to take advantage of the opportunities that life may offer them. It enables citizens to be informed, productive and part of community life, which in turn leads to lifelong learning and sustainable futures.

Trust Programs in Palestine

The Trust works with marginalised groups in Palestinian society, especially in villages located in the northwest of Jerusalem. Their programs use the libraries as community places to combat illiteracy, provide educational opportunities and community spaces to learn and acquire knowledge through dialogue. These libraries have been particularly important for women who are now change agents in their communities.

Mohammed, Yusra and Awad, Manal (2014) Community libraries & combating illiteracy as a lever to community development. Paper presented at *IFLA WLIC 2014, Libraries, Citizens, Societies: Confluence for Knowledge* Lyon, France. Retrieved January 11, 2014 from <http://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/955>

12. Libraries play an important part in promoting and sustaining literacy, especially school and public libraries. As well as skilled staff they provide a wide range of reading material with items to suit the capabilities and interests of all users. The service is provided in a safe and non-judgmental environment. For the child the aim is to make reading fun and enjoyable, whereas for the adult it is to open up new opportunities, increase self-esteem and enable greater participation in local events.
13. The ability to read and write is also essential to the acquisition of so-called “higher literacies” which include information literacy, digital literacy, health literacy and financial literacy. In essence these are all important living skills enabling full participation in society. They are important in unlocking the potential of the sustainable development goals by helping people better understand them and enabling them to better contribute to their achievement.

Turku City Library, Finland

The library works with the Turku City Women's Centre to develop Finnish language and reading skills using creativity, particularly amongst immigrants. (Hernalahti & Kolehmainen, 2014)

Hernalahti, S. & Kolehmainen, S. (2014) Creative literacy as a way for multiliteracy. Paper presented at *IFLA WLIC 2014, Libraries, Citizens, Societies: Confluence for Knowledge*, Lyon, France. Available at <http://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/846> [Accessed 10 September 2015]

14. Library, knowledge and information professionals are experts in the identification, collection, management and dissemination of information relevant to the needs of their clients. They are qualified to support users in becoming information literate. CILIP defines information literacy as: "Knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner"^{iv}.
15. Access to information (discussed below) is not sufficient in itself. People must have the skills needed to use it effectively. Information Literacy also forms a key component in other "higher" literacies, notably digital literacy. This is widely recognised as an essential skill in modern society. The digital divide between those confident in their digital skills and those still unconnected deepens more traditional divides. Once more the library, as is the case with public libraries in the UK, are effective bridges across that gap.

Bergen Public Library in Norway

The DEL project seeks to heighten digital literacy in adults who shy away from using online services, by offering one-to-one guidance and courses. As part of the project, the Library has developed a Service Centre for Language and Digital Services, where visitors have daily access to guidance by staff of IT and language proficiency. Assistance is provided for everything from help with job applications to introductions to tablets, mobile phones and social media. Guidance is offered in Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Arabic and Somali, as well as English.

IFLA. (2015) Public Libraries Support Development through Access to Information [Online] Available at <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/public-libraries-brief.pdf> [Accessed 4 September 2015]

Access to Information

“Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”

(Goal 16:10)

Information Management is the “collecting, organising, storing and exploiting information, data, expertise and other knowledge assets which are held within an organisation or network of organisations, ensuring that these assets remain available for future use”.

Information Management Alliance (2015) For further information on the IM Alliance contact CILIP

16. The acquisition, organisation and supply of relevant information is a key component in addressing the challenges of every Strategic Development Goal. The information implications of each goal (including those prioritised by the UK) will need to be considered at a number of levels:
- a. ***Information for the UN and the international community*** to properly assess progress in achieving the new SDGs. The proposed online knowledge platform to provide information about science, technology and innovation is a welcome initiative to share information vital to support the transformational changes encompassed in the 2030 Agenda. The importance of data, and data management skills, is emphasized in a number of UN documents and this is covered later in this written evidence in the section on Open Data.
 - b. ***Information for the decision makers and national politicians*** in planning programmes of action to achieve the SDGs locally. In the UK politicians benefit from the services of the House of Commons and House of Lords libraries that support evidence-based policy as do the Information Services within each Government Department.
 - c. ***Information for organisations and people implementing the change*** at the local level as they plan a project, address problems and find optimal solutions, and
 - d. ***Information for the citizen*** so that they can participate in programmes, hold governments and their agencies to account and assert their information rights (relating to data protection for instance)

All of these levels need to be underpinned by timely and relevant information providing the evidence base for action. Each will require the work of skilled

information professionals to provide the right information to the right people at the right time.

Resilient Infrastructure and Innovation

An Australian report released in 2014 found that hospitals, government departments, associations and other organisations involved in healthcare gain a \$5 AUD return for every dollar they invest in libraries. Australian Library & Information Association, Health Libraries Australia etc.

IFLA & ALP (2012) *How libraries contribute to sustainable development and the SDGs: Building better library communities. 9p (pdf)* Available at <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/alp/103-fbradley-alp.pdf> [Accessed 10 September 2015].

Open Data

17. The UK has led the world in promoting the development of Open Data and harnessing it as a resource for innovation and development as well as an important element of accountability. The idea of a data revolution was first mooted in the report of the [High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons](#) (2013) which included the UK Prime Minister David Cameron. It noted the need for a “...data revolution for sustainable development, with a new international initiative to improve the quality of statistics and information available to citizens” (2013, Executive Summary).
18. High level skills are required in developing and managing such data, much of which would fall into the category of big data. Data analytics is regarded as an area of skills scarcity even within the UK, but other skills (not sufficiently promoted even within the UK) such as Information Management are required too.
19. A data revolution needs to address the skills and knowledge requirement at every level. On a global level this is a massive undertaking as The Data Revolution Group report (2014), “[A World that Counts](#)”^v, makes very clear. Both the High Level Panel and the Data Revolution Group reports speak also of making this information available to citizens. The latter report notes that “there are huge and growing inequalities in access to data and information and the ability to use it” (Data Revolution Group, 2014, p2). An important role for libraries and information services can be seen as infomediaries in providing the public with access to these data sources and the help needed in using them and also informing them of their data protection rights.

Open Government Partnership

Libraries are contributing to action plans in Open Government Partnership member countries, a platform between government, civil society and business to drive commitments to open government and accountability. This includes the role of libraries in providing access to information

IFLA (2015). Toolkit: libraries and the post-2015 development agenda. p27. [pdf]. IFLA. Available at: <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/ifla-post-2015-a2i-libraries-toolkit-v2.pdf> [Accessed 10 September 2015].

20. This will be an important element in making sure that governments, their agencies and companies are accountable for their actions and enable all people “... to have capacity to input into and evaluate the quality of data and use them for their own decisions, as well as to fully participate in initiatives to foster citizenship in the information age” (Data Revolution Group, 2014, p18).

Importance of the local information infrastructure

21. The active support of citizens is crucial to the achievement of all the goals. Therefore the necessary local infrastructure must be present to enable citizens to participate in and make informed choices, and improve their own lives and the societies in which they live. There is a need for something approaching a national public library system in all countries to provide access to this information and the support to people to gain the necessary information skills to use it effectively. Worldwide there are over 320,000 public libraries with over 230,000 in developing countries. However each nation will be different and it will be important to assess the knowledge and information resources available – in schools, in higher education, as a national library or information services in other agencies – and build on that provision.
22. Libraries should play a significant role in promoting and sustaining progress on the SDGs. At their best they are:
- Universally welcoming irrespective of race, creed, status or other socio-demographic characteristic
 - Safe spaces providing an environment in which people feel safe and protected from harm, coercion or threat
 - Neutral spaces offering a broad and balanced view which embraces a spectrum of political and religious views

- Agencies of empowerment promoting literacy and information skills, access to information and the confidence to engage and participate
- Digital spaces, blending the physical and digital into an overall integrated experience
- Educational spaces offering opportunities for structured and unstructured learning
- Creative spaces encouraging the user not only to consume knowledge but create and share new resources
- Commercial spaces enabling the user to incubate business ideas
- Spiritual places in a non-denominational way, encouraging people to reflect on and express their spiritual identity

No other civic institution offers these different identities within a single, coherent and non-judgmental context.

23. It is also important that information is presented in local languages and is locally relevant to the topic under review. That way it is likely to be more acceptable and used by local people. This could start in the learning materials provided for schools and in further and higher education. It means the establishment and promotion of a local publishing industry as part of the necessary infrastructure to drive sustainable development as well as an effective and comprehensive network of libraries.

Namibia

The annual Readathon in Namibia promotes a reading culture by providing children with stories in their home languages (Namibia has 13 written languages) and has been the impetus for publishing children's books in the home languages for schools and libraries (Totemeyer) Marquardt & Oberg. (2011) *Global Perspectives on School Libraries: Projects and Practices*. Available at <http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-publications-series-148> [Accessed 10 September 2015]

24. The importance of universal and affordable access to the internet must also be recognised as a key enabler of growth. Currently there are more than 4 billion people in the world who do not use the internet, (including 11 million in the UK). Libraries worldwide provide that public access to the supporting networks and ICT now so vital as the means of accessing information.

25. Helping develop local knowledge and information infrastructures – publishing capacity, as well as a coherent network of libraries providing access to information and the supporting ICT – are essential building blocks for implementing the SDGs. In developing nations, especially LDCs, supporting the necessary investment in this infrastructure would be a highly constructive use of the UK's overseas aid.

Rijeka City Library, Croatia

The library draws on the creativity of students and young unemployed people in Rijeka to publish an exciting online magazine that tackles serious issues and challenges the shallow and sensationalist local media. Since its launch in June 2013 the magazine has published over 500 articles; built up a team of eight volunteer editors, designers and proofreaders, and has 68 regular contributors – mostly under the age of 30 – who provide a steady stream of short stories, news, essays, features, poetry, reviews, photographs and film. GKR Magazine already has 2000 visitors a day. IFLA. (2015) *Public libraries support development through access to information* [Online] Available at <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/public-libraries-brief.pdf> [Accessed 4 September 2015]

Follow-up and Review: Developing an action plan for the UK

“We encourage all member states to develop as soon as practicable ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of this Agenda. These can support the transition to the SDGs and build on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies, as appropriate” (United Nations, 2012. *Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. Paragraph 78, p28)

26. This is an inclusive global agenda for the whole world including the UK. Therefore the UK will be expected to plan how it will meet the Sustainable Development Goals and will be expected to report on this, in common with other nations, at regular intervals. Although it is at the discretion of sovereign states as to how this will be done, it is an important element of the 2030 Agenda. Scotland has already committed to the sustainable development agenda and will be measuring their progress against the SDGs in their National Performance Framework^{vi} and their National Action Plan on Human Rights^{vii}.
27. We would urge the Select Committee to remind Government that some form of national action plan will be required. Although the UK, (including the devolved nations within it) is a developed nation the themes of universal literacy, access to

information, and the skills needed to use that information effectively are as relevant to the UK as elsewhere. They are the enablers of the changes required to meet the SDG targets. CILIP is keen to be involved in this process of implementing the SDGs within the UK.

Devon Libraries, UK have been instrumental in setting up a Fab Lab, where 3D printers and technology enable people to develop new skills. Fab Lab Exeter is adjacent and complementary to the Library's Business and Information Hub, which provides business information and intellectual property (IP) support for local businesses. It enables users to develop or refine a product or object from first idea to a formed and working prototype. Advice and further business support is also available to help develop the business proposal to ensure a route to market.

IFLA. (2015) *Public libraries support development through access to information* [Online] Available from <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/public-libraries-brief.pdf> [Accessed 4 September 2015]

Role of other government departments and agencies

28. Most UK Government departments and agencies, including those in the devolved nations, can play a role in supporting the SDGs. However we identify a few that have especial relevance to the enabling agenda within the SDGs as set out in this submission.
29. ***Universal Literacy*** – Clearly the Department for Education has the main responsibility for this. However the Government Digital Service (GDS) , with responsibility for the UK Digital Inclusion Charter has expertise in encouraging digital literacy
30. ***Access to information*** – No single department has responsibility for this. The Business Innovation and Skills Department (BIS) shares responsibility with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for the information economy and the associated skills agenda with Ed Vaizey as the Minister of State for Culture and the Digital Economy . The British Library is well-placed to advise on the value of information in supporting many of the SDGs and its recent Strategy, “Living Knowledge”, looks at how it will support research, business, culture, learning and advancing knowledge and mutual understanding across the world.
31. ***Open Data*** – The Cabinet Office has responsibility for the reform and transparency agenda within government, including the use of data. The National

Archives advises Government departments on information management and runs the Information Management Assessment Programme for Government departments

32. **Local Information Infrastructure** – Again no single Government department will have responsibility for this as the infrastructure will include public libraries and and library, knowledge and information services in schools, further and higher education, health and social care and provision in the third sector and private sector. The British Library will have an over-view and Arts Council England (in its role as a public library development agency in England) with DCMS have responsibilities for the public library network in England. Broadband Delivery UK is responsible for delivering the broadband and mobile communications technology that will underpin the information infrastructure.
33. **Follow-up and Review** – We assume the implementation of the SDGs in the UK will be coordinated by the Cabinet Office advised by other departments including the Department for International Development. It should be noted that the national governments in the devolved nations will also have expertise in these areas and need to be fully involved in a UK response.
34. There are a number of other agencies outside Government, including CILIP that would wish to be involved. A first step in addressing this area would be to convene an advisory group that would include, as organisations with UK interests, the British Library, The National Archives and CILIP.

Indicators for measuring impact

35. Some suggested international Indicators for an Access to Information Target are given as an appendix at the end of this document. They have been compiled by the International Federation of Library Associations and institutions (IFLA).
36. Whilst these indicators can be used to measure levels of access they do not necessarily measure the impact of such access. That said, how progress will be measured and the indicators within the targets chosen should be internationally agreed ones.

Conclusion and Recommendations

37. The development of sustainable development goals within the 2030 Agenda is both exciting and challenging. The High Level Panel report recognised that this is a universal agenda and not just for the LDCs or developing nations.
38. CILIP urges the UK Government to support and promote the importance of universal literacy, access to information and the skills to use that information effectively as core targets within the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals. They are important human rights and essential enablers to successfully deliver all the Goals.
39. High quality library, knowledge and information services, and the professional staff who manage them, help guarantee that access. They not only provide impartial access to the information but help people to develop the skills to use it effectively. Thus in turn aiding the development of national, local priorities which will help hasten and further embed sustainable development.
40. We recommend that:
 - a. The development of local information infrastructures forms part of the Overseas Aid programme as a support for universal literacy, the provision of access to information and the development of the skills to use that information effectively – key enablers in achieving each and every SDG
 - b. An Advisory Group to include, amongst others, the British Library, The National Archives and CILIP is formed to advise on such a programme
 - c. The Government is asked to clarify how it will implement the SDGs in the UK and report on progress, and how others can engage in that process
41. We trust that the Select Committee will find merit in these ideas and recommendations and feel able to include them in its report.

CILIP

CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals is the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. CILIP's vision is a fair and economically prosperous society underpinned by literacy, access to information and the transfer of knowledge.

As our funding comes from member subscriptions and our own commercial activity we are able to act as an independent voice of the profession reflecting the knowledge and expertise within our membership. CILIP is a registered charity, no. 313014 and more information about us can be found at www.cilip.org.uk.

Contact Point

If you wish to follow up any of the points made in this submission then please contact either:

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Appendix

Indicators for measuring impact

1. Some suggested international indicators for an Access to Information Target:
 - Literacy rate of Youth and Adults, urban and rural literacy rate. Literacy is a basic requirement to access information in all formats. Existing literacy data is collected annually by UNESCO Institute for Statistics^{viii}
 - Ownership of a Smartphone or other internet-enabled devices per 100 people. Data on phone and broadband access is collected by the ITU
 - Media and Information Literacy (MIL) competencies. As by the Global MIL Assessment Framework, UNESCO Communications and Information Sector (2013)^{ix}
2. Suggested international Indicators for increase in universal and affordable access to ICTs through indicators including:
 - Number of broadband subscriptions (per 100 people). Data collected annually by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database^x
 - Cost of fixed broadband subscriptions as a percentage of monthly Gross National Income (GNI). Data collected annually by International

Telecommunications Union (ITU) and UN Broadband Commission in the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database

- Proportion of public libraries with broadband Internet access. Data collected in relation to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Statistical Indicators^{xi} (Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, 2011) for Target 4 ('Connect all public libraries, museums, post offices and national archives with ICTs'), Indicator 4.1
- Proportion of public libraries providing public Internet access. Data collected in relation to WSIS Statistical Indicators for Target 4 ('Connect all public libraries, museums, post offices and national archives with ICTs'), Indicator 4.2

References

ⁱ For further information on IFLA see: www.ifla.org

ⁱⁱ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015. International literacy day 2015. [online] Available at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Pages/literacy-day-2015.aspx> [Accessed 3 September 2015]

ⁱⁱⁱ National Literacy Trust, 2015. Adult Literacy. [Online]. Available at: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/adult_literacy/illiterate_adults_in_england [Accessed 3 September 2015]

^{iv} CILIP, 2004. Information Literacy: definition. [online]. Available at: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/adult_literacy/illiterate_adults_in_england [Accessed 3 September 2015]

^v UN Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development Goals [Data Revolution Group], 2014. World that counts: mobilising the data revolution for sustainable development. [pdf]. United Nations. Available at: <http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/A-World-That-Counts2.pdf> [Accessed 30 April 2015].

^{vi} Scotland's National Performance Framework <http://www.gov.scot/About/scotPerforms/pdfNPF>

^{vii} Scotland's National Action Plan on Human Rights <http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/actionplan>

^{viii} For further information on UNESCO Institute for Statistics see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx> [Accessed 30 April 2015]

^{ix} UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, 2013. Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Assessment Framework. [pdf]. UNESCO. ISBN: 978_92+3_001221_2. Available at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Communication/Documents/media-and-information-literacy-assessment-framework.pdf> [Accessed 30 April 2015]

^x For explanation of ITU statistics see: <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed 30 April 2015]

^{xi} Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, 2011. Measuring the WSIS targets: a statistical framework. [online]. International Telecommunications Union. Available at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Communication/Documents/measuring-wsis-targets-statistical-framework.pdf> (Accessed 30 April 2015)