



# Towards the Global Library – Applying Agenda 21 to Library Marketing

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## **Towards the Global Library – Applying the Agenda 21 to Library Marketing**

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### **Abstract**

*The Agenda 21 is the United Nations' action plan for the 21st century in favor of sustainable development. Launched at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, its 40 chapters include social, economic and ecological actions to be implemented by local authorities, governments, but also by corporate companies and services. Twenty years after the Earth Summit, our proposal is to apply the Agenda 21 to library marketing and management and to move on to the global or sustainable library. Based on the marketing concepts of global performance and corporate social responsibility, we describe five main dimensions, e.g. social, societal, ecological, commercial and economic performance, and encourage a conceptual framework for the evaluation, management and development of libraries and information services. Beyond marketing, our manifesto is also designed to provide a new outline and clear structure for education, research and publication in library and information sciences.*

### **AGENDA 21 FOR LIBRARIES, A PROPOSAL**

“Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” - does sustainable development matter to library marketing? Libraries are “that societal institution that propagates democracy and growth and development”( Tise 2011). As citizens, librarians may be personally committed to biodiversity, carbon footprint and climate change. Yet, the literature about the future of the library most often deals with new technologies, business models, value chain and society while marketing focus on users' needs, added value and the net generation.

Of course, ecology turned out to be a question of interest, and the green library is on the agenda of library meetings and conferences. Yet, when it is on the agenda, ecology is generally considered a special issue, a hot topic, more or

less isolated from usual topics such as quality, service or job development or societal impact. Our proposal is different.

Our proposal is to put the concept of sustainable development at the heart of library marketing. Our proposal is to adopt the international action plan called Agenda 21 as a framework for library design and development and to explore its potential for library marketing. But what exactly is Agenda 21, and where does it come from?

Twenty years ago, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, produced some important documents on biological diversity, climate change and sustainable development. This conference, also known as the Earth Summit, furthermore agreed on an outline for action on local, national and global level by governments, administrations and individuals.

The challenge was to define a global policy that brings together ecology, economics, culture and society. The governments rose to this challenge with the "United Nations Programme of Action from Rio" called Agenda 21 (United Nations 1987) Adopted by more than 178 governments, the document contains 40 chapters with several paragraphs, divided in four sections on social and economic dimensions, on conservation and management of resources for development, on strengthening the role of major groups and on means of implementation.

The action plan does not prioritize environmental concerns over social or cultural policy. Poverty, human health conditions and settlement development are part of Agenda 21, together with deforestation, biotechnology and freshwater resources. Also, the action plan is not limited to international organizations, national governments and local authorities but involves all social and economic stakeholders - business and industry, trade unions or scientific communities in a double top-down and bottom-up strategy.

Relevant for our purpose are two aspects:

1. As a reference paper, Agenda 21 is the source of further papers, declarations and agreements, such as the Agenda 21 for culture. Its philosophy is not static. It is a global framework for local action. Local authorities especially implement the action plan on the level of townships, boroughs or regions, with specific programs for their fellow citizens and countrymen.
2. Industry and business started to develop their own blueprints for sustainable development in organizations. Corporate social responsibility or CSR, the commitment "to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of

life”<sup>1</sup>, has become a key concept of strategic management and marketing.

So, what about libraries? A recent monograph on the future of libraries describes in detail the “library in 2050” but does not mention environment or sustainability. This seems problematic in the early 21st century with growing concern and awareness surrounding ecological issues. Our proposal is to (re)set the library at the heart of societal debate, and to suggest a global strategy for libraries based on Agenda 21. Librarians are used to seeing the letter “e” in e-journals, e-books, e-ISSN or e-infrastructure – so why not add e-cology, e-economics and e-nvironment?

Several public libraries are funded by local authorities already committed to this kind of political action planning. All libraries are part of the service industry. They are not on the side of the road, even if they may be a little bit late, perhaps too busy with new technology to take in sustainable development. But one day their patrons will ask “how does my library contribute to our quality of life, now and in the future?” And local authorities and other stakeholders will ask the same question.

Academic libraries are in the same situation. More and more universities are committed to sustainable development. How does the library contribute to the action plan? Does it?

Our proposal is to catch up with the mainstream and to develop a library marketing based on Agenda 21<sup>2</sup>, for at least three good reasons: the new marketing approach will (re)connect libraries with global and local policy, it will also (re)connect them with public concern, and it allows for a global evaluation and planning of their performance insofar as it integrates social, societal, ecological, commercial and financial aspects.

Our paper is a draft, a manifesto, more than a scientific analysis. Our intention is to explain the general idea and to outline some perspectives on how the Agenda 21 could change library marketing. There is a growing body of literature on the different levels of global performance related to library management. Yet we preferred to skip most references in order to keep the draft or manifesto-like quality of the text. It is a work in progress, based on years of professional experience, teaching and research in library sciences.

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<sup>1</sup> the definition of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), see <http://mhcinternational.com/articles/definition-of-csr>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/>

## **GLOBAL PERFORMANCE - THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL**

Neither evaluations nor marketing are foreign to the library. Performance, as in the evaluated activity to accomplish tasks and mandates, is part of usual library management, and library managers know, too, that efficient library marketing is vital for the development of usage and funding.

“Global” makes the difference. There are many interpretations of what global means, in particular in the context of the UN’s “think global, act local” motto. For library management and marketing, “global” implies first of all to add other, external criteria when making decisions and setting goals. Agenda 21 helps to define these criteria. Local decisions, local goals, should contribute to sustainable development of local and global environments, i.e. natural but also social and economic environments.

But “global” also entails a holistic approach to the evaluation and marketing that does not prioritize one aspect over others. In fact, the holistic concept of global performance takes up the conviction of Drucker’s landmark book (Drucker 1954) on marketing that “marketing (...) encompasses the entire business. (...) Concern and responsibility for marketing must (...) permeate all areas of the enterprise”. Agenda 21 helps to understand that “all areas of the enterprise” should include commercial, financial, social, societal and ecological concerns. In other words, the global perspective does not exclude the traditional analysis of marketing and financial management but incorporates the investigation of work conditions and human resource management, the relationship with community and society, and the contribution to the protection of the natural environment. Global performance could thus be interpreted as a kind of modern framework for Drucker’s idea of marketing and management.

Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference. Drucker insists that marketing is “the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer’s point of view”. The goal of marketing is to create new customers. Or as Robinson (2012) puts it, “it is the customer who decides what he or she values.” Other goals may be important but remain subdued in relation to the creation of customers. The concept of global performance based on the Agenda 21 action plan defines a different objective. Rephrasing Drucker, we could affirm that with Agenda 21, the goal of marketing and management is to create conditions for sustainable development. This is the most important goal, more important than the number of customers or revenues. Whereas Drucker would have said “without customers, no development”, we reply “without sustainable development, no customers at length”.

Another difference is that this objective is not limited to a company or service. Act local but think global also means that the concept of sustainable development goes beyond organizational boundaries. Just like local authorities, individual citizens or national governments, companies and services have to

contribute to the society's sustainable development. Their action must transcend the traditional limits of business.

In the time of climate change and resource depletion, social responsibility is not a bonus but a necessity. Agenda 21 requests that the strategic planning of institutions should take this into account. With regards to marketing, this means that it is not enough to ask "what is our business?", "who is the customer?", "what is value to the customer?", "what will our business be?" and "what should it be?" (Drucker 1954) but those we should add a sixth question "how does our business contribute to sustainable development?"

Global performance is a multi-level concept. Management and marketing should take into account at least five different levels:

*Social performance:* the organization's activities that impact employees, partners, subcontractors, suppliers, stakeholders and so on. For instance: work conditions, human resource management, training opportunities for employees, business ethics...

*Societal performance:* the organization's activities that impact the communities, local authorities, and all other members of the public sphere. For instance: sponsorships, cultural actions, lobbying, relationship with politicians, cooperation with schools and higher education...

*Ecological performance:* the organization's activities that impacts the natural environment. For instance: green marketing, eco labels, waste reduction, recycling, eco-friendly products and services, energy-efficient production...

*Commercial performance:* the organization's activities that impact business, market and customers. For instance: quality management, customer satisfaction survey, benchmarking...

*Financial performance:* the organization's activities that impact economic indicators. For instance: pricing, rationalization, investment, purchasing management...

Often, social, societal and ecological performance levels are put together under the term of corporate social responsibility (CSR). For analytical and practical reasons, we prefer to distinguish these aspects and keep them apart. This distinction simplifies the presentation of the five performance levels and of related standards, checklists, best practices and so on. Some examples may be sufficient to point out their connection and interrelation.

The concept of corporate social responsibility is well established in industry and business. The International Organization for Standardization launched guidelines (in 2010) for socially responsible behavior (ISO 26000). Even if this international standard cannot be used for audits or certification, it draws our attention to the importance of social accounting, i.e. reporting on strategies and

actions with impacts on business ethics, society and environment. Accountability, transparency, communication, conforming to standards, certification, labeling, best practices – they are part of marketing insofar that they help to improve the relationship with customers and to develop new markets.

For libraries, the challenge is double: they need to adapt their existing toolkit of evaluation and reporting methodology to the concept of Agenda 21, and they need to adopt the established and confirmed methods and tools of other business and service sectors, wherever necessary and possible. For libraries, the concept of global performance is not only helpful to mark out their specific contribution to sustainable development but it is also a powerful argument for customers (patrons), local authorities, government, sponsors, university management and so on.

Below, we will describe the five aspects of global performance. Some are not really new for the library, but others are. Yet, what is new is the interconnection between the different levels of global performance, and the acceptance of sustainable development as an external criteria for management and marketing decisions.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

This paper is not about management. Our intention is not to provide new ideas on how to improve library management. Instead, we try to put forward arguments that may enhance library marketing. In the context of Agenda 21, social responsibility is one of those arguments.

One of the best known definitions of social responsibility is given by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (Holme andWatts 2000): “Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large.”

This new concept of management has been applied to service industry, and it also provides a new framework for library management. We can identify four aspects:

### **Ethical behavior**

Libraries should be committed to behave ethically, e.g. to edit and apply deontological rules. After long debates on ethical librarianship and in the light of Agenda 21, these rules may include ethical neutrality, refusal of censorship, and respect of the reader’s convictions, beliefs and interests. Staying neutral is not easy, especially when “political, religious, or financial interference in (...) decision-making and (...) service provision is becoming increasingly common” (McMenemy 2007). Another ethical challenge is the rising attraction of new

technologies. Respect of individuality, human dignity, intellectual property and privacy become crucial concepts in modern librarianship. Librarians are involved in creating guidelines, policies and “netiquettes” at local, national and international levels (Sturges 2002). Ethics are important to create a trustful and confident relationship with users, and are therefore a central argument for marketing. Winston (Winston 2005) highlights the role of education for future ethical leadership in library and information science. Let us also add the growing importance of committing to sustainable development as part of an overall ethical behavior.

### **Contribution to economic development**

We suggest a generic interpretation in the way that libraries should value creation in their specific sector, may it be culture, education, R&D or sciences. Librarians are generally conscious of their contribution and potential for their community and society. What is needed is an awareness of the ecological aspect of libraries, as well as aspects of accountability and transparency. Of course, commitment to value creation also implies that the return on investment and financial worth must be evaluated. But value goes beyond that, also including human capital, relational capital and so on (see below). Simply stated, libraries should not act in a vacuum but accept their role and responsibility in culture and society. The library’s contributions in transmitting information, disseminating research results, raising awareness and providing education in media literacy all seem to play a role in culture and society.

### **The workforce and their families**

The library committed to social responsibility should care for its employees. This part of global performance is often called social performance, a concept that covers initiatives in favor of working conditions, training, human resource management, wages and so on. The underlying idea is that any managerial effort to improve the quality of life of the workforce and their families not only contributes to the (local) development of the (global) community but also enhances the quality of service, through higher professional and social competencies, reduced absences and turnover, enhanced empathy and greater loyalty to the employer.

### **The local community and society at large**

The last facet of social responsibility is societal performance, i.e. the level of commitment to improve the quality of life of the local community and society at large : the role of libraries in their communities, as part of local and cultural policy. Several books and articles have been written on the library’s political dimension, and librarians are educated to be aware of their social and political responsibility. Agenda 21 marketing adds three aspects: it draws attention to the development of adequate services for the disadvantaged sections of society (poverty, exclusion, digital divide, ageing, immigrants). It includes the



relationship with suppliers, contractors, and other business partners. And again, it does not endorse the social performance as an important yet somehow stand-alone initiative, but puts it in the context of commercial performance, ecology, financial management and so on.

Social responsibility is meant to improve the global service offer. On the whole and from a marketing viewpoint, these types of initiatives are not a parts of the usual library's core service offer. Still, these initiatives contribute to the development of new and innovative peripheral and complementary services, such as learning centres, idea stores or community offices.

By the way, this last example – the community office - is of particular interest, since it seems to be the first project that clearly adopted the Agenda 21 action plan as a framework for library development (Price 1997).. The objective: “(...) provide people with access to knowledge, education and training in one building, (and act) as a single access point to all public services, to encourage social cohesion, the acceptance and diffusion of innovation and the development of local communities, with the objective of empowering individuals (...)”(McMenemy 2007).

Yet, there cannot be one single model for the socially responsible library, nor only one way to improve social and societal performance. It all depends on commitment, knowledge and competency, and on the specific environment. A successful model may fail under different circumstances. Here more than elsewhere, sustainability is a challenge for public libraries, especially to maintain projects and outreach activities once external funding runs out Baker and Evans 2011).

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## **THE GREEN LIBRARY**

Library services are relatively clean, compared to power plants, chemical industry or road transport. Their carbon footprint is smaller than a coal plant or a blast furnace. Yet, libraries consume energy and water, buy chemicals and produce waste. As any other service, they are affected by questions of environment and pollution, and should be concerned about these topics. With regards to Agenda 21, the question is not whether they are involved in the environmental cycle but how they perform.

There is a growing body of articles, reports, websites and books about the green library, and the ecological performance of libraries has been the object of several meetings and conferences. More specifically, we can distinguish at least four different action levels:

*Awareness:* The first action line is to raise awareness, and alert the staff and stakeholders about issues related to ecology and the environment. But if the

local authority has already voted an Agenda 21 action plan, the library does not need to raise awareness, but should implement the action plan.

*Evaluation:* A second level consists in checking the library carbon footprint and its ecological impact. The evaluation of ecological performance can make use of an increasing number of checklists, standards, guidelines or recommendations for best practices which are published on the web or elsewhere (McBane Mulford and Himmel 2010), and provide a more or less detailed and reliable ecological profile with “hot spots” (priority problems) and a baseline when measuring improvements.

*Action:* There is (almost) no limit for action in favor of waste reduction, recycling, saving energy and so on. Some of these actions may require a high level of effort, others less; then there will be differences in the magnitude of impact and return on investment. Some actions are linked to new buildings or important renovations (green roof); others can be implemented at any time (use of energy-efficient light bulbs, recycling of paper). Our objective is not to offer another list of tasks but to insist that, in the context of Agenda 21, this kind of environmental action should not be undertaken as a series of isolated acts but in connection with the other performance levels.

*Education:* Education in ecological literacy is another option, no doubt more in line with the library’s traditional role and mandate. The idea is to provide information on ecology-related issues to the library’s public. This may consist of several different actions: re-defining acquisition policy, building the collection, indexing and classifying, creating a specific website, hosting events, exhibitions, workshops... this would probably also imply networking with the community, with non-profits, NGOs and so on. At the same time, these actions would also increase the library’s societal performance.

More and more libraries all over the world are committed to ecological performance and can serve as models or benchmarks, such as the Fayetteville Public Library (AR), the National Library in Singapore, the Crowfoot Library in Calgary (Canada) or the Cooroy Library in Sunshine Coast, Australia.

Agenda 21 library marketing can build on these examples in order to promote ecological action and create a positive image. But more importantly, marketing will link ecological action with other performance levels, especially with respect to service quality and the user’s needs.

Ecological performance will often operate in synergy with social, financial or commercial performance, better working conditions, reduced expenditures and indoor pollution, creating a positive image and strengthening the community’s commitment to the library. Also, new (ecological) procedures and constraints (zero paper) may foster innovation and new services.

## **SERVICE QUALITY AND USER SATISFACTION**

Commercial (or business) performance characterizes the efficiency of a service provider in terms of previously set goals. A marketing strategy based on the Agenda 21 action plan appraises commercial performance – e.g. increasing number of customers, evolution of sales, market share, customer satisfaction... - as important and necessary for the development of a service. Agenda 21 does not oppose financial and commercial performance but rejects the idea that those are the only strategic goals and the only evaluation and auditing criteria. Sustainable development needs financial governance and business development, but that also includes environmental action and social responsibility.

Now, does it make sense to speak about commercial performance for a library? Most libraries are not meant to make business or increase sales. Still, a library is a service like any other, with users and usage, projects and objectives, and its performance can be evaluated in terms of quality, efficiency and satisfaction – the same criteria that define commercial performance. So let us take a step back and consider how the concept of commercial performance can contribute to the understanding and marketing of library services, as part of global performance and linked to sustainable development.

1. “If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it.” Lord Kelvin’s famous quote about measurement illustrates our first point. The concept of commercial performance introduces the issues of previously set goals, effectiveness and efficiency. Does a service set clear goals? Does it attain these goals (effectiveness)? And if so, does it save or waste its resources (efficiency)? These issues can be measured. They can be presented using performance indicators, and they can be the very heart of service marketing.
2. Even with clearly set goals, measuring effectiveness is not simple. A library usually surveys its users’ satisfaction through interviews, questionnaires or direct observation, and satisfaction is taken as an indicator for effective service delivery. Yet, service marketing is aware that satisfaction depends on several factors. The quality of the service is one of them – not as an objective factual statement, but as a subjective experience, a unique encounter between the customer and the service provider. Other variables influence the experience of quality and satisfaction, such as expectations, attitudes, learned habits, values, brand (service) image, information literacy and so on. Satisfaction involves personal, social and cultural aspects. Of course, a satisfied user will (probably) come back. Yet, marketing wants to know why he was satisfied, and how to repeat and improve his experience. Some methods attempt to create more objective, valid and comparable satisfaction evaluations. LibQual is one of them – established and recognized but not

sufficient for an in-depth understanding of the user's reaction. Measuring satisfaction as a multivariate experience remains a challenge.

3. Another way of evaluating effectiveness and efficiency is through quality management. As a kind of in-house counterpart to user satisfaction, quality management strives towards consistent objectives and procedures, assured quality with defined and accepted quality levels for service transactions and products, and continuous concern and improvement. Public and academic libraries are more or less familiar with quality management. Crucial to our argument is not the standardized and resource-intensive ISO9000 management but its underlying philosophy – the focus on measurable goals and features, on monitoring, corrective action and improvement of service quality and process.
4. Yet, these marketing concepts should not mask the real challenge for the library, which is to be a user and community-centered service. This may appear trivial but it isn't. Saying that the library must have excellent knowledge of its users is trivial, and a lot has been written about this. But – who are the library's users? An abstract citizen in need of information literacy and culture? Individuals registered as patrons? The local community or the campus? Different communities? The Google generation looking for information, not books? To decide who the users are is already making a strategic decision. And what about the non-users? Marketing is also about exploring new markets with different needs and other profiles.  
Sometimes, stakeholders (the local authority, the library board...) are seen as a kind of barrier, a difficulty or constraint for serving the community. Yet, why not consider them as just another kind of customer, with special needs and demands, for instance with an Agenda 21 policy? For marketing purpose, this mental game may be helpful to avoid unproductive opposition between the user's needs and the library's set missions and goals.
5. Good marketing demands communication, feedback and reporting. More and more, customers want to be taken seriously, treated as partners, and so do library users. Are they objects or subjects of the library? Since an increasing part of communication, interaction and service transaction is online, how does the library organize and manage its web community? In the corporate sector, social networks have started to modify innovation, information, communication and even human resource management in depth. Library 2.0 is definitively on the agenda. Yet, so far, the library struggles to adapt the 2.0 tools to a traditional library framework, instead of changing its framework. Applying Agenda 21 may facilitate the acceptance of new technologies which can improve the contact with the community and society.
6. The people make the place. Relationships and interactions are important for the quality of service and the experience of satisfaction. Again, this

may seem trivial. Empathy, friendliness, reactivity, competence, respect and understanding should characterize the relationship between librarian and patron. Although, beyond the usual librarian-patron tandem, there are now interactions with other users, with groups, friends, classes and so on. The library is moving from the individual reading sphere to an open space of learning, information, working, communication. Academic libraries become “learning centers”, and this is not only a linguistic change, but impacts the library’s standards and norms. Interaction with others, formerly often prohibited or limited, is now encouraged. The library becomes a living space, open to the academic or community environment.

Let us summarize. The library is (most often) not a commercial service. Yet, the concept of commercial performance is helpful to highlight some specific aspects related to service quality and user satisfaction in the library environment. A service cannot and will not develop if it does not improve quality and meet its users’ expectations. The contribution of Agenda 21 is to highlight the library’s responsibility for community and society and to add that quality and satisfaction are not the only criteria for marketing and evaluation.

#### **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

Library managers are generally used to some form of financial governance and to reporting their financial performance. In other words, they report their activities and projects in monetary terms. This may take the form of a table with revenues and expenditures, a balance sheet or a dashboard with some significant indicators. Good financial performance is one condition for service efficiency, and the evaluation of financial performance is necessary to decide on acquisition policies and the development of the library’s collection, on investments in hardware and software, in furniture or buildings, in recruitment, training and so on. Also, the financial results are most often reported to the funding body (local government, university, research organization...) and/or to the library board.

What does the Agenda 21 framework add to this usual library practice? Agenda 21 does not reinvent the wheel. Its strength is not to tell people what they already know but to place the financial performance in the context of global performance and sustainability, together with social responsibility, ecology and marketing. What does this mean?

1. First of all, this does not necessarily mean another way of accounting but another use and interpretation of the results. Applying the principles of Agenda 21 to the library leads to developing a philosophy of accounting, accountability and transparency on the long term. Libraries are generally able to establish whether their current performance is better or worse than before. But are they also able to assess whether they are performing

better or worse than others, or to compare their performance against a standard or benchmark?

2. Communication is essential. Accountability and transparency are important for the image and the credibility of the library, which in turn impact its funding, sponsoring and support. For this reason, the library should not limit the appraisal of financial performance to the funding body and/or the board, but include other groups, such as patrons, community, media, corporate partners, lobbies and so on. All of these stakeholders are interested in the library's performance albeit not for the same reasons, and they don't need the same information. Hence, the library management should track some key accounting ratios, i.e. indicators of financial performance shaped for different target groups and organized into a financial dashboard. If these ratios are valid, reliable and understandable, they will improve and support the library's communication policy.
3. Third, applying the philosophy of Agenda 21 to marketing will help the library's management avoid two risks. Financial results will not be over-emphasized, and they will be presented in the context of social responsibility, environment and service quality. Of course, funding bodies and local authorities are genuinely interested in getting feedback on governance and efficient use of allocated resources. But this feedback will be weighed in with other results ; it will be seen as one but not as the only contributor to the sustainable development of the library and community.
4. Four, Agenda 21 marketing may prompt the library to evaluate the financial impact of its action in favor of sustainable development. In other words, the accountability could include more than traditional library statistics. So far, financial ratios focus on acquisition and collection development, inscriptions and usage. With regards to Agenda 21, other financial ratios could be added, derived from recycling, energy consumption and efficiency, lifelong learning and training, work conditions, cultural action and so on. Also, library management could develop a robust risk management that would include these aspects.
5. Finally, developing a strategy in favor of sustainable development will facilitate the adoption of new modes of financial accounting, in particular for the evaluation of added value and return on investment. Because of the non-market nature of library services and resources, it is difficult to estimate their value and to provide data on return on investment and funding. It has been a couple of years since some libraries have started to apply the contingent valuation method (CVM) and other stated preference techniques, which are based on surveys and were initially developed for environmental resources (air, water...). It may be too early to determine the benefits of these techniques for library management. Nevertheless, they provide some interesting perspectives for the

assessment of library performance and to measure the economic value of library services. Also, CVM appears useful for marketing and communication, as a kind of intuitive indicator and argument.

### **TOWARDS THE GLOBAL LIBRARY**

Sustainable development, as we wrote above, is on mankind's agenda. The United Nations action plan Agenda 21 is clear on one point. The solution can not be found on the local level ; though without local action, there will be no global solution.

Local level, this is our conviction, includes the library. The library is a service like any other. At the same time, it is part of a local community, or a local academic campus, and is as such a stakeholder in their local policy in favor of sustainable development.

Twenty years after the Rio Earth summit, the library's mandate should no longer be confined to traditional concerns about collection preservation or helpdesk assistance, but should also include a contribution to sustainable development. Thus, our proposal is to apply the Agenda 21 to library marketing and management, as a conceptual framework to evaluate, set goals and make decisions in libraries and information services. Not so much to reinvent the library, but to rethink its way of working, its projects and objectives, in terms of sustainable development – this is the next challenge for marketing and management.

Of course, the five performance levels described above - social, societal, ecological, commercial and economic – can be in conflict or even incompatible. A zero paper project may not necessarily enhance the work conditions or satisfy the patrons, and financial performance may limit the development of service quality. But management is the art of getting things done through people, and this requires realism, arguments, priorities and compromises. Marketing will help to set goals and decide on strategies, while keeping the global and overall goal in mind - sustainable development.

The library is a cultural institution, supporting education and research, but it is more than that – it is also part of the local community and, like any other service, is a potential contributor to the sustainable development of society and mankind, and should be evaluated within this framework. Beyond marketing, our manifesto is also meant to offer a new outline and structure for education and research in library and information sciences.

The Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012, twenty years after the first Earth Summit, reminds us that “sustainable development emphasizes a holistic, equitable and far-sighted approach to decision-making at all levels. (...) It rests on integration and a balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental goals and objectives in

both public and private decision-making.”<sup>3</sup> Libraries are but a small piece on the global game field. Yet they are part of the game, and society needs their specific contribution for sustainable development. Applying the Agenda 21 to library marketing is one way to get there.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?menu=62>