IFLA Toolkit

for developing national literacy and reading strategies

Introduction

"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right.... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential." – Kofi Annan, UN Literacy Day 1997[1]

This IFLA Toolkit has been developed by members of the IFLA Working Group on Literacy, chaired by Ingrid Bon. Its objective is to assist countries in developing and improving national literacy and reading strategies from a library perspective.

It provides guidance, and flexible materials for library associations, their members and the wider Library and Information Science (LIS) community when engaging with relevant public authorities in order to ensure both that literacy receives the attention it needs, and libraries the recognition and support necessary to deliver it.

Clearly there can be strategies at different levels, which can complement each other – national reading strategies, strategies for the library sector, and individual library strategic plans – delivering stronger, more cost-effective outcomes. All of these strategies have an important role to play in setting objectives, allocating resources in order to achieve them and establishing means of measuring success. This document focuses on library engagement in national literacy and reading strategies. Nonetheless, many of the lessons are applicable in the context of national library sectors and individual libraries.

Moreover, this toolkit provided here is precisely that – a toolkit. Depending on the situation in your country – who is responsible for literacy, who pays, whether you have a strategy already – you will need different tools. You can therefore adapt this document, and make your own additions or variations, in order to ensure that your engagement is adapted to your national, local and individual circumstances.

The first chapter offers a practical framework for planning your engagement, including defining goals and mapping relevant actors. The second and third chapters give you arguments for both the importance of literacy, and the role of libraries in delivering this.

We hope it proves useful.

We gratefully thank Margaret Allen, Imke Behr, Sue Considine, Lisa Krolak, Adriaan Langendonk, Kristine Paberza, Stephen Wyber and Jan Richards for their contributions.

Ingrid Bon

[1] http://www.un.org/press/en/1997/19970904.SGSM6316.html

Literacy is here considered as the capacity to read and understand the context of both fiction and non-fiction.

First you learn to read than you read to learn.

This summary highlights the pertinent points of the toolkit. Please note that you should read the attached toolkit for greater details.

1. **A good national strategy should include the following elements:**
    a. Take an overview of current situation – is there a strategy?
    b. Evaluate what needs to change
    c. Define your goals
    d. Map out the targets of your advocacy, important influencers, and potential partners
    e. Evaluate these targets, influencers and partners, and think about how to use your time best to achieve the result you want

2. **Arguments for focusing on literacy:**
    a. Higher literacy levels are linked to successful knowledge societies.
    b. Illiteracy or low-literacy is associated with important costs, such as unemployment, poor health, or unsustainable inequality.
    c. Universal literacy can be a driver of greater fairness, especially for marginalised groups.
    d. Literacy is key to social integration and civic participation.
    e. Literacy, and in particular more advanced forms of literacy, are increasingly essential in order to survive, and thrive, in a digital world.
    f. Literacy enables people to make more effective use of other government services.
    g. Universal literacy features in the UN 2030 Agenda and is a core component of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

3. **Arguments for including libraries in literacy strategies**
    a. Libraries are well-trusted, safe and friendly spaces, supporting lifelong learning and community development.
    b. Libraries already exist and are ready to contribute. They can represent a low-cost means of delivering literacy strategies.
    c. Libraries are well embedded in their communities, and understand well the needs of their users, as well as having relationships with other actors and agencies.
    d. Many librarians are specifically trained in providing support to younger readers for example, and can complement the work of schools.
    e. Libraries are open to people throughout their lives, not just during childhood, making them a vital first stop for people looking to improve their literacy later.
    f. Libraries promote not just literacy, but also a love of reading. Building a reading habit has been shown to improve results at school and elsewhere. They also support demand for books later in life.
    g. A number of countries already recognise the role of libraries in delivering literacy.

4. **Building the case with evidence and data**
    a. Data and evidence are essential in order to justify change, such as the creation or updating of a literacy strategy. Your arguments are stronger if you can provide this.
    b. There is a lot of data at the international level on literacy, including on the impacts of high – or low – literacy on other policy areas such as health or employment.
    c. There are many good examples of libraries collecting data about the impact of their work on literacy. This provides vital evidence in campaigning to get libraries involved in national literacy strategies.
    d. Stories also have a powerful impact. IFLA's SDG Stories initiative provides a portal to find – and post – these examples of what libraries are achieving on the ground.

5. **Delivering your arguments**
    a. The way you deliver your arguments is key to their effectiveness.
    b. Take ideas and advice from other resources on advocacy, and apply them in your own work.
    c. Everyone, through their experience and ideas, can be a strong advocate for modern literacy and reading strategies that give a sufficient role to libraries.

Contents

Introduction 1

1. Pick up your pens… planning your engagement concerning national literacy strategies 6

2. Making the Case for Literacy: Why Literacy Matters More than Ever in the 21st Century 9

3. The potential of libraries in supporting literacy efforts 11

4. Building the Case with Evidence and Data 13

5. Delivering your Arguments 16

Annex 1: Policy recommendations 17

Annex 2: Resources 18

Annex 3: Impact Assessment 22

1. Pick up your pens… planning your engagement concerning national literacy strategies

Those who read this toolkit will not need any convincing of the importance of literacy at all stages in life. And those working in libraries will also have a good idea of what works, in your community, in building literacy skills. But how do you take this to the next level? How do you not only receive recognition for the work of libraries in building literacy, but also support, and a place at the table from the drafting to the delivery of national and regional literacy and reading strategies for all people, of all ages?

There are a number of benefits associated with engaging in national strategy-setting. For libraries, they may make it easier to benefit from available funding (government and other), create new opportunities for visibility, act as a basis for forming new partnerships at all levels, and, most importantly, help realise the shared goal of a universally literate, informed, and participatory society.

For governments, strategy-setting offers an opportunity to think clearly about how to best use the available resources to promote literacy, to mobilise all actors in the literacy field around common goals, to allow for reflection on whether key populations or types of literacy are left out, and to increase credibility when working with donors and funding.

Of course, each country – and in many cases, each state within a country – works in diverse ways. As such, library associations and libraries do too. You should therefore start by assessing the current situation. You will need to answer the following questions:

Does your country already have a national literacy strategy in place?
Identify the existing documents which define how your country looks to build literacy skills. This may be a stand-alone strategy, or part of a broader plan, for example for the education sector or focusing on skills. It may also be spread across different documents – one for children, one for people who have a different mother tongue, for example.

If such a strategy exists, in whatever form, you should read this first, perhaps in a group. You should evaluate whether it reflects the role of libraries and the contribution libraries can offer or not. Were libraries involved in creating it? Does it provide financial or legal support to libraries?

Even if there is no mention of libraries, does it contain reference to activities where libraries have a particularly strong contribution to make, for example community or informal learning, encouraging a love of reading, support to pre-school learning?

On this basis, you can evaluate what is good and what is bad about the current situation. Possibilities include:

- There is no literacy and reading strategy.
- The current strategy does not take account of the contribution that libraries can make.
- The current strategy does not provide funding or legal support to libraries to offer literacy support services.
- The current strategy is old and does not take account of digital tools.
- The current strategy is only focused on primary school children, rather than people throughout life.
- The current strategy is only focused on basic literacy, rather than more advanced forms.
- The current strategy does not take account of the importance of developing a love of reading.

Defining what needs to change
Using your understanding of what needs to be improved, you can define what it is that you want. It is important to be clear about your aims so that you can stay focused and convince others. Can you summarise your objective in one sentence? Can you explain it in a short letter to a senior politician or newspaper? In a tweet? Practice this. There is further advice on how to do this in this toolkit.

Potentially relevant objectives which would open the way to a greater role for libraries include:

- Ensuring that literacy and reading strategies are focused on people throughout their lives by including commitments, and targets, for lifelong literacy.
- Delivering higher levels of school-readiness by helping younger students to feel comfortable with reading.
- Update the strategy to take account of digital tools, for example by including a focus on the merits of digital technologies, or on digital reading.
- Ensure that the strategy includes a focus on developing a love of reading as a factor in building literacy skills.
- Include more advanced forms of literacy in the strategy as commitments or targets.
- Overcoming the transmission of low literacy across generations.

Of course for libraries themselves, the more direct goals could include:

- Raising the profile of libraries in literacy and reading strategies by recognising them explicitly as a partner.
- Ensuring that, where resources are available, libraries receive a share, or at least are eligible to apply for this.
- Promoting the inclusion of libraries in literacy networks at local, regional and national levels.
- If a literacy network does not exist, consider starting one.

Write-up a list of what you think is missing, and then try to think about what you would change. You don't need to have perfect legal language for this – focus on your ideas, and about how to present them in an attractive and easy-to-understand way.

Mapping the Field
Where there are plans and strategies in place, and you will need to argue for amendments or reforms to these to take better account of (or offer support to) libraries, and of the types of activity and support they can provide. But who should you target with your advocacy?

Firstly, you should identify who you need to influence directly. Who actually takes decisions about literacy strategies? Which government ministry (or ministries) or agencies are responsible? Options could include:

- Ministry of education (or education agency)
- Ministry of culture (or culture agency)
- Ministry of skills (or skills agency)

Who is responsible within these ministries? Is there a department or directorate working on literacy? Try to find an organigram of that organization or ministry and work out who it might be.

Second, you should look at who else might be important. Who will shape the approach the government takes? Options could include:

- Parliamentary committees responsible for literacy

- Prominent journalists and commentators working on literacy (including on radio, TV and the Internet)
- Think-tanks and academics
- Foundations and charities.
- Local affiliates of organizations such as the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY)
- UNESCO National Commissions/Offices
- Organizations of mayors or local authorities

Finally, you should look at potential partners – organizations which are also likely to be involved in delivering – and designing – a strategy. While some may risk being potential competitors for funding, many may help to advocate on behalf of libraries to ensure the inclusion of libraries in national strategies. Sometimes the partners have good connections with funders, decision makers and other stakeholders and they may be willing to use their own channels to lobby directly on behalf of this important topic. Such players include:

- NGOs, such as Save the Children
- Reading (and writing) foundations
- Agencies working with specific disengaged target audiences e.g. unemployed/low income groups, indigenous communities, immigrants and refugees.
- Schools, pre-schools, daycare centres,youth healthcare centres and adult education centres
- NGO's like Save the Children, or Lions/Rotary Clubs
- Book centres
- Literacy centres
- Publishers

You can then display all these actors on a map. You can then ask yourself further questions:

- Who is most important for achieving what you want to achieve?
- With whom do you have the best contacts? Where do you need to invest effort to win support? Is it worth it?
- What do they think about libraries – are they positive or negative? Active or passive?
- What are their goals, in general and for a literacy strategy? Are they close to yours?

Use this map can help you work out how to divide your time. Make sure you focus on the people and organisations which are most important and useful for you, and that you haven't missed anyone important. Remember too that you do not need to advocate to someone directly – you can work through partners who believe in your cause, and may have a more powerful voice.

Wrapping up: designing National Strategy – what are the elements of a good strategy: first steps.

- Take an overview of the current situation – is there a strategy?
- Evaluate what needs to change
- Define your goals
- Develop proposals for changes to improve the current literacy and reading strategy
- Map out the targets of your advocacy, important influencers, and potential partners
- Evaluate these targets, influencers and partners, and think about how to use your time best to achieve the result you want

2. Making the Case for Literacy: Why Literacy Matters More than Ever in the 21st Century

Few people will claim that literacy is not important – it is a clear goal in the UN's 2030 Agenda. However, there are many other priorities competing for attention and resources, even within broader education policy. It is vital to be able to articulate why literacy in particular deserves attention.

"Literacy stands at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. It is a foundation for human rights, gender equality, and sustainable societies. It is essential to all our efforts to end extreme poverty and promote well-being for all people. That is why the Sustainable Development Goals aim for universal access to quality education and learning opportunities throughout people's lives. One of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 is to ensure that all young people achieve literacy and numeracy and that a substantial proportion of adults who lack these skills are given the opportunity to acquire them.

Fifty years ago, International Literacy Day was proclaimed to promote literacy as a tool to empower individuals, communities and societies. We have made significant progress over the past five decades, but the world is still very far from universal literacy. And today, with the world becoming increasingly digitized and information rich, new opportunities and challenges are emerging" – Ban Ki-Moon, UN Literacy Day September 2016[2]

In today's fast changing society, everyone needs to have a wide set of knowledge, skills and competences. This is essential for participation in social, economic, cultural and civic life. Literacy is just such a key competence. When we talk about literacy we refer to the OECD definition: ''The ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written text to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential". This is essential for developing further skills, to enable workers to function effectively and safely in their workplace and to stay connected as a human being to the (digital and complex) world we live in.

Although literacy has been high on the development agenda over the past decades, there are still 750 million adults (two-thirds of whom are women), 115 million young people and some 250 million children of primary school age who lack basic reading, numeracy and writing skills. Furthermore, 124 million children and adolescents receive no schooling at all (UIS, 2017 and Footnote) and grow up without sufficient literacy skills.

People with low literacy levels can be found in any nation. For example, in the European Union one in five adults aged 15-65 has significant difficulties in reading, numeracy and writing even after attending compulsory schooling.

The OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) indicates that adults with low levels of proficiencies in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments face a higher risk of unemployment, a higher incidence of poverty and social exclusion, higher health risks and lower life expectancy, while their children face higher risks of educational underachievement (OECD, 2016).

Without sufficient literacy skills, people most likely will be condemned to live poorer, less fulfilled lives in a less cohesive and productive society. They are "more vulnerable to ill health, exploitation and human rights abuse. They are more likely to be unemployed and paid less. Unable to read or

[2] https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sgsm18044.doc.htm

write, they are held back from their full potential, and whole communities are locked into vicious cycles of poverty that lay the conditions for violence and strife" (Irina Bokova)[3].

But with good literacy skills, every other skill is attainable. As the world grows ever more digitized and networked, it will become even more important that every citizen is given the skills that literacy affords so that they can find gainful employment, increase personal skills, take part in social activities and participate politically.

Literacy learning is not something that stops when an individual leaves school or achieves a certain educational level. The acquisition and development of literacy skills takes place before, during and after formal education, in and out of school, and through non-formal and informal learning, throughout a person´s life. It is never too early or too late to improve literacy skills. (UIL, 2017).

Moreover, with the proliferation of the internet and technology, the conventional concept of literacy being a set of reading, writing and counting skills, has evolved. It is now understood to include means of identifying, understanding, interpreting, creating, and communicating in increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and hyper-connected societies and economies. This also implies new and more advanced forms of literacy.

Therefore, in order to reach the literacy targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goal SDG 4 countries need to adopt a life-long, and life-wide approach to literacy learning.

Arguments for focusing on literacy:

1. Higher literacy levels are linked to successful knowledge societies.
2. Low-literacy is associated with high societal costs, such as unemployment, poor health, or unsustainable inequality.
3. Literacy can be a driver of greater fairness, especially for marginalized groups.
4. Literacy is key to social integration and civic participation.
5. Literacy, and in particular more advanced forms of literacy, are increasingly essential in order to survive, and thrive, in a digital world.
6. Literacy enables people to make more effective use of government services.
7. Universal literacy features in the UN 2030 Agenda, and is a core component of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), as well as the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Survey (PIRLS).

[3] https://www.compassion.com/world-days/international-literacy-day.htm

3. The potential of libraries in supporting literacy efforts

When people think about literacy, they tend to think about formal education – where many people do indeed learn to read and write. Strategies risk doing this also. It is therefore important to take a lifelong learning approach and to make the case for libraries, both in complementing the work of schools, pre-schools and families in helping young children, but also in supporting literacy, and a love of reading, among people of all ages.

Literacy is at the core of the mission of most of the public libraries and activities. They fully embrace the need for developing, supporting and sustaining the literacy skills of all its community members at all stages of life, from basic to advanced literacy levels. They are perfectly positioned to provide intergenerational and family literacy activities and traditionally have a special focus on reaching out to marginalized groups.

As such, they play an important role in supporting a culture of reading and creating and enriching a literate environment, which makes them vital partners for governments in delivering on their literacy commitments: Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.6 centres on literacy: 'By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy'.

Literacy development starts at birth. Therefore, (public) libraries often devote special attention to supporting early literacy skills and family reading, especially for families with low literacy skills. Reading to and with children in the first five years of life helps to foster a love of books and reading.

This develops vocabulary, stimulates brain development and builds emotional bonds with parents, guardians and professionals in day-care centres. Being read to for at least 15 minutes a day during (early) childhood promotes a growing engagement with language and reading, supports personal and social skills — and puts children as much as one year ahead of those who are not being read to. (Krashen, 2004)

As a child grows, schools clearly have a crucial role in literacy learning. However, they cannot do everything alone: it takes a village to raise a child and a reader. Access to a library (both at home and in the community) is a strong predictor of success.

For young people and adults, libraries are an excellent resource for people at all levels of literacy proficiency. They enable users to locate relevant information by sharing newspapers, magazines and other reading materials, and by providing access to public computers and the internet.

Academic libraries support young people and adults in developing the advanced literacy skills they need for their studies and research. Libraries in work settings, meanwhile, can provide the background knowledge for informed programme development and decision-making. Having access to a public library is also crucial for youth, adults and families with low literacy skills as it is an accessible, trusted and safe place to improve the literacy skills they did not attain during their formal education (UIL, 2016).

Beyond pure literacy skills, building a strong reading culture and fostering a joy of reading helps to create independent readers and learners of all ages, better able to take on the world and seize the opportunities it presents. This in turn promotes creativity, innovation, and employability, thus strengthening society.

Such a reading culture also benefits authors and publishers by developing future demand. Evidence shows that libraries also foster a love of books (and so book-buying) by supporting discovery and

broadening horizons. In close cooperation with publishers, education agents, civil society and other literacy stakeholders they form a solid foundation to build a nation of readers.

Libraries focus on their communities

The engagement of the community is key to developing a national literacy strategy. Libraries are ideally placed to be leaders in the field. They are more than simply service providers offering and supporting literacy programs. They are active and trusted connectors, with a deep knowledge of their community's needs, and often seen as more welcoming than commercial venues.

In 2012 library commentator Dr. R. David Lankes, tweeted the much-quoted observation 'Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services ...Great libraries build communities.'[4] Lankes has subsequently argued that the people within a community are the library's most essential and valuable collection. A public library is one of the most essential keys to an involved, literate community.

Libraries themselves do not need to limit themselves to their buildings. Indeed, not everyone may be comfortable entering a room full of books. But there are many examples of successful delivery of library services in other places, such as community centres, local parks, health clinics, workplaces, and simply outdoors. Such measures can also make it easier to reach marginalised populations.

Libraries can also offer a means of getting communities involved in the definition of literacy and reading strategies. Through consultations, experience and simply getting people talking about literacy and the need to break down the stigma of low reading and writing skills, they contribute to a more inclusive, more effective strategy.

Precedents from Around the World

A number of countries have already recognised the role of libraries in delivering literacy through national strategies, and indeed have engaged libraries and library associations in the policy-making process.

Libraries are clearly recognised as key complements to schools in developing literacy and reading skills among children, for example in Angola and Malta. They are given a part to play in supporting adult and lifelong education in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Malta (again), and Indonesia. Libraries' contribution to promoting reading in general is acknowledged clearly in Italy, Spain, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique, while Malta and Finland both recognise how libraries can promote higher forms of literacy.

A number of these strategies have been developed by or in collaboration with librarians and library associations, with the strategies in Malta, Papua New Guinea, Australia and the Netherlands offering good examples. Sometimes, national or state libraries have their own strategies, such as the Literacy Strategy of the State Library of Western Australia: Literacy Matters[5]. More information on these strategies is posted on our resources page[6].

[6]https://twitter.com/rdlankes/status/166525664319639552?lang=en

[5] State Library of Western Australia (2017), *Literacy Strategy of the State Library of Western Australia: Literacy Matters*, https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/our-services/learning-literacy-and-languages/literacy, accessed on 7 May 2019

[6] Start.me website

Arguments for including libraries in literacy strategies

- Libraries are well-trusted, safe and friendly spaces, supporting lifelong learning and community development.
- Libraries already exist and are ready to contribute. They can represent a low-cost means of delivering literacy strategies.
- Libraries are well embedded in their communities, and understand well the needs of their users, as well as having relationships with other actors and agencies.
- Many librarians are specifically trained in providing support, for example to younger readers, and can complement the work of schools.
- Libraries are open to people throughout their lives, not just during childhood, making them a vital first stop for lifelong literacy and learning.
- Libraries promote not just literacy, but also a love of reading. Building a reading habit has been shown to improve results at school and elsewhere and to support a demand for books later in life.
- It's been done before! Libraries are already cited in a number of literacy and reading strategies

4. Building the Case with Evidence and Data

In arguing for the need for a (renewed) literacy strategy, you need to be able to provide evidence. Sometimes, stories and anecdotes will prove most powerful. In other situations, it is hard data that is necessary to convince.

It is widely recognised that governments should base their policies and strategies on evidence and data. Even though this is not always the case, there are few who openly reject their importance. Everyone wants to show – and believe – that what they are saying, and doing, is backed up by facts.

In promoting literacy and reading strategies and efforts involving libraries, it is therefore vital to be able to provide facts, figures, and stories. These can help you – and your allies – in convincing decision-makers to act.

Data in the Library Environment

As a first step, it is important for libraries themselves to collect and make use of data. It can facilitate the identification of issues, support the optimisation of resources, drive innovation, and allow for benchmarking and assessment.

Data and evidence-gathering should not only focus on things like numbers of users, numbers of computers, or numbers of books. It should also look at the results of libraries' work – the impact it has on users and communities.

In the case of literacy, this can involve direct testing, measurement of confidence, or assessment of improvements in ability in everyday, functional situations. Do people taking part in reading programmes report greater ease in dealing with information? Do their exam results improve? This is harder, but also more powerful as an indicator of success.

IFLA is working to build the capacity of libraries to collect and use data, including through the Library Map of the World, and the work of the Statistics and Evaluation Section. See the annex for a longer discussion of impact assessment.

Data and Evidence for Literacy Strategies

At a wider level, you could also look to use data on literacy at a higher level (national, regional, or local area) to make your case. Traditionally, literacy is assessed by judging whether an individual can read and write, with understanding, a short simple statement about their everyday lives, and is collected for adults (people aged 15 and above, by gender), and youth (people aged 15-24, by gender).

International organisations working in the field, such as UNESCO and OECD[7], also do work on more sophisticated measures, or more detailed break-downs. For example, the OECD's PISA study focuses on different levels and types of literacy, as well as allowing for comparison with figures about socioeconomic characteristics (income, migrant background, reading habits at home). Meanwhile, UNESCO has, working with IFLA, defined ways of measuring more advanced forms of literacy, such as media and information literacy.

By defining statistical methodologies, these organisations make it possible for governments (and libraries) not only to measure progress over time, but also to compare performance between countries. They also publish this material, making it possible for libraries to draw on this in their own advocacy around the need for literacy strategies.

Please see the annex for more ideas of places to look for data and evidence on the importance of literacy.

Using data and evidence of library impacts

Data and evidence can also help you argue for the role of libraries in general and your library (association) in particular in delivering literacy and reading strategies and efforts. Clearly, the sort of data that libraries gather about their own work, as mentioned above, is critical here. IFLA strongly encourages libraries and library associations to invest in this, in order to provide the most relevant possible information. This is the most powerful evidence of why supporting libraries is worthwhile.

National or regional data can be useful when it helps to identify areas where change is necessary, for example to develop literacy among adults, or to provide more reading support. For example, this sort of data can demonstrate the costs of low childhood literacy later in life[8], the link between low literacy and bad health[9], or the risk of certain parts of the population being left behind[10]. All make for powerful arguments for strong literacy strategies, with libraries at their heart.

find more ideas of places to look for data and evidence on the importance of libraries in literacy and reading strategies and efforts.

You can also use the SDG Stories featured on the IFLA Library Map of the World. This is a single portal which includes examples of libraries contributing to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. All stories featured include indications and evidence of impact, and you can filter them to show only those relevant to SDG4 (education). The more stories are submitted, the more useful the

[7] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

[8] OECD, 2010, T*he High Cost of Low Educational Performance*

[9] OECD, 2018, *Association betweebn Literacy and Self-Rated Poor Health in 33 High- and Upper-Middle-Income Countries*, OECD Education Working Paper No. 165, http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP(2018)1&docLanguage=En

[10] For example, older people: Barrett, G. and W. Riddell (2016), "Ageing and Literacy Skills: Evidence from IALS, ALL And PIAAC", OECD Education Working Papers, No. 145, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlphd2twps1-en

portal becomes for everyone – we encourage you to share yours. The Storytelling Manual created by IFLA offers guidance on how to do so.

Summary

- Data and evidence are essential in order to justify change, such as the creation or updating of a literacy strategy. Your arguments are stronger if you can provide this.
- There is a lot of data at the international level on literacy, including on the impacts of high – or low – literacy on other policy areas such as health or employment.
- There are many good examples of libraries collecting data about the impact of their work on literacy. This provides vital evidence in campaigning to get libraries involved in national literacy strategies.
- Stories also have a powerful impact. IFLA's SDG Stories initiative provides a portal to find – and post – these examples of what libraries are achieving on the ground.

5. Delivering your arguments

Knowing how to communicate your arguments is vital. You will need to promote your position to your target group, as well as other influencers. With practice, everyone can learn how to make a strong argument.

Once you have defined your goals, created your arguments, and found the data and evidence to support them, you need to learn how to deliver them effectively.

There are many ways of doing this, for example through meetings with individual decision-makers or influencers, appearances in conferences and public meetings, editorials in newspapers, appearances on radio or television shows, articles online, or social media campaigns. These are all opportunities to make your arguments. The indicators mentioned in this Toolkit are not in a hierarchy as not all countries and libraries can work with the same indicators. Use what is available!

Each has its own features, and there are many resources available to help you to be effective in each environment. But in each case, you should look to explain why literacy and reading are important, why libraries play such a vital role in providing it, explain the problem you are seeking to address, and propose a solution.

It is important, as set out in the first section of this toolkit, to be clear and concise. If you can make your argument in ten pages, can you make it in five? In one? In half a page? Can you make sure that you are only giving the most important information, and the crucial argument? The more important the person you are talking to is, the less time they are likely to have.

You should be consistent in your arguments, so that people come to remember your points, and of course use simple language. It is also important to think hard about the person you are talking to. What are their priorities? What are their interests? What do they want to hear? What else might they be thinking about?

If you are talking in public, think about someone you know who is a powerful and convincing speaker. How do they do it? What tricks do they use?

Do not forget, also, that you may also be able to call on support from other influencers. Sympathetic journalists, celebrities, politicians, or non-governmental organisations can be very effective in making the case for investment in literacy and libraries. Coordinate with them, and help them to make your points.

There is a lot of valuable advice in the training materials for IFLA's International Advocacy Programme IAP, as well as in IFLA's 10-Minute Library Advocate series.

Summary

- The way you deliver your arguments is key to their effectiveness.
- Take ideas and advice from other resources on advocacy, and apply them in your own work.
- Everyone, through their experience and ideas, can be a strong advocate for modern literacy and reading strategies and efforts that give a sufficient role to libraries.

Annex 1: Policy recommendations

1. **Involve libraries in the policy dialogue surrounding literacy and ensure that libraries are an integral part of local and national literacy strategies and efforts.**
   Given libraries' unique mission, governments should ensure that representatives of the library community are included, along with other public and private literacy stakeholders, in the policy dialogue for the development and implementation of local and national literacy strategies and efforts.

2. **Enable libraries to provide a literate environment for everyone to develop, enhance and sustain literacy skills within a lifelong learning perspective.**
   Governments should ensure that libraries are able to provide free access to reading materials, literacy activities and (online) information in a safe and friendly environment, where families and individuals can read and learn together. Libraries support literacy and learning needs from birth through senior years and are an ideal community space to facilitate intergenerational and family learning.

3. **Ensure libraries are inclusive and have the knowledge and resources to provide relevant literacy materials in a welcoming space for marginalized, vulnerable and minority language groups.**
   Libraries should serve as a convenient hub where diverse groups can find relevant literacy materials and support. This includes materials, services and activities for people with different literacy levels and abilities. Where availability of materials in minority languages is limited, libraries should support the creation of local content relevant to the community.

4. **Institutionalize professionalization and invest in ongoing training for all library staff.**
   Training should help library staff to be professionals with a service and needs-based approach to modern libraries, including an understanding of literacy challenges and solutions, the process of learning to read and write, and the extent of local and national policies on literacy. Training should also involve using ICTs to develop and sustain literacy skills and teaching digital skills.

5. **Collect and analyse the data provided by libraries for better informed policy-making and coordination of the various literacy efforts of different stakeholders.**
   Libraries should measure and evaluate their literacy activities and services and share their findings with governments and the general public. Libraries need to understand and be able to communicate the impact of their literacy work, including how their literacy efforts can best support the achievement of local and national literacy goals.

(UIL Policy Brief #6, *Using Libraries to Support National Literacy Efforts*, 2016)

Annex 2: Resources

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How libraries provide safe spaces for ALL YOUTH https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/66072

LITERACY DATA

UNESCO
Education & Literacy
http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/
Explore by themes, view the various indicators or browse by country.
The **UNESCO Institute for Statistics' fact sheet** is published regularly, documenting data and trends on youth and adult literacy

Data by Theme - Education - Literacy
http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=166&lang=en
Country by country comparison of literacy rate, illiterate population and data source and literacy definitions in each country.

UIS. 2017. *Literacy rates continue to rise from one generation to the next.* Montréal, UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (UIS fact sheet, 45)
http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs45-literacy-rates-continue-rise-generation-to-next-en-2017.pdf

The **UNESCO eAtlas of Literacy** presents more than 50 interactive maps and charts on a range of issues, ranging from youth and adult literacy rates and numbers to gender disparities at the global, regional and country level. It is published in English, French and Spanish:

UIS. 2014. *UNESCO eAtlas of literacy*. Montréal, UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
http://www.uis.unesco.org/data/atlas-literacy/en

The **Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report** assesses the state of education systems in UNESCO Member States. Current literacy data is available in the annexed statistical tables. The report is published in seven languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese):

UNESCO. 2017. Accountability and education: meeting our commitments; Global education monitoring report, 2017/8. Paris, UNESCO.
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002593/259338e.pdf

OECD

OECD Education GPS
http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile
Allows you to explore all of the OECD's data about education by country, in order to understand where there are strengths and weaknesses.

OECD Skills Outlook
http://skills.oecd.org/skillsoutlook.html
Measures skills in student and adult populations that are needed to participate fully and benefit in today's hyper-connected societies and increasingly knowledge-based economies. OECD also works with countries to develop their skills strategies.

Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)
http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/
Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is an international survey conducted in 40 countries that measures adults' proficiency in key information-processing

skills - literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments. The survey gathers information and data on how adults use their skills at home, at work and in the wider community.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
http://www.oecd.org/pisa/
Tests competencies of 15 years old students on using knowledge and skills in new situation in math, literacy and science.

The World Bank
The World Bank Data
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS
Sources of information is from UNESCO, the data bank provides online tool for visualization and analysis and allow download in CSV, XML and EXCEL formats.

Our World in Data
Literacy: Our World in Data
https://ourworldindata.org/literacy
Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina provides a useful empirical view of the literacy rates in the world.

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)
TIMSS & PIRLS
https://timssandpirls.bc.edu
https://nces.ed.gov/timss/countries.asp
https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/countries.asp
TIMSS (Trends in Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in Reading Literacy Study) are conducted by IEA regularly in more than 60 countries as a comparative studies of student achievement.

ICILS
ICILS 2018
ICILS (International Computer and Information Literacy Study 2018 – examine the computer and information literacy.

LaNA
http://www.iea.nl/sites/default/files/LaNA Flyer.pdf
LaNA (Literacy and Numeracy Assessment) is a short and basic assessment at the end of primary school intended for countries where TIMSS and PIRLS are found to be too difficult to implement.

Good practices in data collecting on reading:
Netherlands:

1. Bibliotheek inzicht (Library research platform): this provides Annual data on library members, activities, stakeholders. See also more in-depth academic research into Boekstart from the University of Leiden.
2. The Art of Reading (BoekStart and de Bibliotheek op school/The Library at School): English information about the program, especially about monitoring
3. Reading Monitor (LeesMonitor) is the website bringing together all relevant research around literacy and reading promotion. To note in particular pages on library influence,
4. https://www.leesmonitor.nu/en/library-influence
5. Monitoring BoekStart: this is an annual national data publication. It gives information on the number of babies (0-2 years old) involved, plus broad information about the families

involved, such as the education level of parents the parents, status as immigrants, or use of Dutch as a second language..

6 Monitoring of de Bibliotheek op School(The Library at School): this is a collection of annual national data, providing information abut the conditions of school libraries, their collections and their use. This includes broad data about the achievements of the children, how they are using collections, and further contextual background information. There are also statistics about the activities teachers are carrying out on reading promotion, showing the connections between library and classroom activities. See also published academic research into this programme.

START.ME
This website is filled with links to relevant documents, websites etc.
In an ongoing process relevant new information will be added.
https://start.me/p/Z9eygL/startpagina

The IFLA Library contains a rich collection of papers submitted and presented at World Library and Information Congresses. Searching for 'literacy' provides many valuable examples of projects and research into libraries' contribution to building literacy.

Annex 3: Impact Assessment

Impact is the effect of the service (event, activity) on an individual or a group – what change does it lead to? Impact assessment is the gathering of meaningful data that will confirm or otherwise whether a service or activity has achieved its goals. As highlighted in the rest of this toolkit, evidence from properly conducted impact assessments can provide very strong arguments.

A first step is to define your overall goals clearly and effectively. What is the overall change you want to see. For example, in the case of a literacy strategy, it could be to help older workers adjust to digital ways of working, to improve literacy levels among marginalised groups, or to ensure higher levels of school-readiness among children.

You should then define a clear impact objective. What exactly do you want to see change during the lifetime of your intervention? You can check your idea against the SMART framework:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound

For example, linked to the above ideas, you could look at defining a programme which enables older workers to understand how information is set out on a website or e-mail, how to use links or spell-check, through a mixture of workplace interventions and evening classes at the library.

Third, you need to define impact indicators. These indicators are tied to the overall objectives, and should give as good an idea as possible about the direct impact that your programme is having. Importantly, the methods you choose should be realistic – are you using questionnaires, interviews, stories, images, tests, surveys, or large-scale data gathering? Do not forget that you will need to measure at least twice (see below).

The indicators and collection methodologies you choose are unlikely to be perfect – other factors may affect the people taking part in your experiment (other training or support, personal circumstances) – but can give a good idea of success.

To take the example of the scheme with older workers, for example, these could be either a practical test of ability to find and read information online, a more subjective question about how confident they feel, or an assessment by their employers of improvements.

Finally, you need to define the baseline. This is crucial in order to understand where you are coming from. Again, in the case give, this could be an initial test, survey of confidence, or conversations with employers. The baseline provides something with which to compare the results of your assessment.

Clearly public libraries undertake a lot of activities and programmes and each of them has a specific goal to be reached. The objectives and indicators chosen will vary, as will the data sources. While a national level strategy may use international data such as PISA, PIRLS or PIAAC, individual libraries will rely on very different tools. These reflect the sorts of changes that an intervention at a given level can expect to influence. The below figure sets out the types of impact that are possible.

In general, the public library and its reading programmes will focus on the first level: Changes in knowledge and skills. But the effect of improving the literacy rate in a community are affecting all other levels as well.

Figure reproduced from the Global Libraries Impact Planning and Assessment Roadmap (2008) in: Streatfield, D.R. and Markless, S. (2009), What is impact assessment and why is it important? Performance Measurement and Metrics, Vol. 10 Issue 2, pp.134-141, https://doi.org/10.1108/14678040911005473

On the evaluation of reading programmes usually the data collecting is limited to the number of participants but more important is to be able to compare groups that participated and those who did not participate.

For example, children who participated in summer reading programmes may show a smaller decline in reading skills if compared with children who did not participate. For the data collecting on this level the library needs to work closely with schools.