



ENSULIB
Environmental Sustainability and
Libraries Special Interest Group
<http://www.ifla.org/environmental-sustainability-and-libraries>



ENSULIB announces the winner of the 2nd IFLA Green Library Award 2017

Environment, Sustainability and Libraries ([ENSULIB](#)) is a special interest group under IFLA. With generous sponsorship from [De Gruyter Publishing](#) (Boston/Berlin), the group circulated a Call for Submissions for the *IFLA Green Library Award* for the second year in a row. To ENSULIB's great delight, 35 submissions were received from around the world, including India, Ukraine, Serbia, China, USA, Columbia, Italy, Portugal, Kenya, Nigeria, and Iran. When the call for reviewers went out, 15 people stepped up to help with the process. The reviewers were as diverse as those who submitted. Coming from Australia, France, Finland, Kenya, Germany, Portugal, Saudi-Arabia, Spain, Sweden, U.S. and other countries, they were a blend of LIS students, library professionals (from public and academic libraries) and an architect as well.

After much deliberation, the winner was selected: the public library [Stadtbibliothek Bad Oldesloe, Germany](#). Their project, "Ernte deine Stadt – Harvest Your City: Three Years of Green and Sustainable Library Commitment in the Stadtbibliothek Bad Oldesloe" combines urban gardening with makerspaces and community building efforts, demonstrating that libraries are more than just book-lending-stations. Another byproduct has been the launching of Germany's first Community Supported Agriculture.

One award reviewer compared the Bad Oldesloe library's ambitious and rigorous project to a "lighthouse in its region, creating a proactive and interactive space where citizens are the protagonists of a wide variety of activities to promote sustainability." With three years of activity and great potential for growth, the Bad Oldesloe project celebrates their public library as a meeting place for collective thinking about ecology, space and creativity -- civic engagement that is inviting and accessible.

The Bad Oldesloe project fulfills the goals of the Green Library award, which include, communicating the library's commitment to environmental sustainability and creating awareness of libraries' social responsibility and leadership in environmental education. More generally, the Award aims to support and promote the worldwide [Green Library movement](#) and encourage Green Libraries to present their activities to an international audience. Following the [IFLA Statement on Libraries and Sustainable Development](#), the award advances the profession through illuminating the role of libraries and librarians in the advancement of sustainability standards and the promotion of specialized knowledge within professional practice.

The award will be presented at the ENSULIB Satellite Meeting in Berlin, Germany, 16 Aug 2017, and at the World Library and Information Congress in Wroclaw, Poland, Session 154, Special Presentation of Awards Session, held on Tuesday, 22 Aug 2017, 12:45–13:45, Expo Pavillon.

Five Runners Up

The five runners up for the award came from *Kenya, Serbia, Ukraine, China and Hong Kong*. The various polarities of the submissions created a mighty challenge for the reviewers. For instance, cool weather countries grapple with how to warm a building, while those in hot climates aim to cool their buildings. Three of the submissions (from *Kenya, Serbia and Ukraine*) focused on children, with libraries promoting literacy and environmental awareness to the next generation. These three projects are very low-cost, illuminating how a library can successfully create environmental awareness in children without big money. The *Chinese* submission focused on green library building which offers a haven in the bustling, polluted city of Guangzhou, however with governmental support. The *Hong Kong* submission hinged on the fact that Hong Kong is not yet committed to environmental issues and sustainability, as seen in the lack of green values in its business center. In this case, a university library takes a leading role by creating a clear environmental policy and strategy which manifest in everyday routines.

The economic disparities between the submissions raised other questions in terms of judging projects with variable consumption levels. Some of the countries do not have national waste policy or recycling programs while others maintain rigorous laws to protect the environment. It was also noted that some of the libraries are still in the process of developing a project, while some have well-defined sustainability structures in place. This made the comparison hard. Reviewers wrestled with the definition of a “green library” (e.g. tree planting, recycling, re-using) and how to also reward creativity, novelty, or the best solution to a real problem in hand. Should the project be rewarded based on the aim to stop climate change, or is it sufficient to raise awareness in citizens? There are no definite answers to these questions since there are no widely accepted criteria for “green libraries.” In the end, reviewers made their own decisions and pooled their responses. The final winner was based on: strong social aspects with the whole community invited to participate; prioritization of children as the next generation to implement environmental work; celebrating the library as an active environmental agent, opinion leader, and a place where actions are implemented.

China (Guangzhou)

Sun Yat-sen Library is located in downtown Guangzhou and is more than 100 years old. The building has been transformed into a green library with concepts of ecological and environmental protection. As the city became more crowded, the library has also increased in value as a public green park. The building is constructed with brick walls and big windows, so that air conditioners are needed less frequently, thus conserving electricity and reducing air pollution. Photovoltaic panels have been installed and there is a roof garden as well.

A team of librarians educate citizens through films, exhibitions, monthly lectures, poetry readings, and more. A website, Ecological & Environmental Protection, was created in 2007 with more than 2 million visits to date.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong, a highly urbanized, high consumption, business-oriented city vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, struggles to find solutions to environmental issues. The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Library argues for a holistic approach, embedding sustainability in the Library strategy, and formulating wider green strategies beyond the green building. “Go Green” impacts library staff attitudes towards the environment, and changes the way academic libraries serve their users and community. The Library partnered with campus architects to design green library buildings as well as emphasizing cultural

sustainability, such as supporting Cantonese language learning. Library staff co-organized an international conference on sustainable academic libraries in 2016, collaborated with a green charity, and created an organic rooftop vegetable garden. More than 40 library staff volunteers became organic gardeners, many of whom have never gardened before.

Kenya

Library Reading Tree is a project started in Nakuru region of Kenya in 2015 as part of introducing children's book clubs into six public primary schools. The Reading Tree is a painting that invites children to attach a sticker bearing their names, age, school and class after they read a storybook in the library. The children's inquisitiveness started a real "green revolution" through tree planting in their schools, beginning with 50 fruit trees and other indigenous medicinal trees being planted at Kenyatta Primary school in Nakuru county, Kenya. The trees are water and attended by members of the children's book and environmental clubs. The Kenya Forest service provides the library with trees at no cost. Now children are excited to come to the library to enjoy the carpet of green grass and trees within the compound. Through this project, local children are learning the importance of conserving the environment the role of planting trees to help combat climate change. The majority of public school children suffer from malnutrition and low self-esteem so the fruit from the trees are a valuable food source as well. The project goal is to bring the Reading Tree to all public primary schools in Nakuru.

Serbia (Uzice)

Uzice's public library is located in the center of a small town. Despite the poor conditions, enthusiasm and creativity rule the day. They are building an awareness of sustainable development and environmental protection among local youth of all ages. Creative educational workshops feature handicrafts, creating decorative art from natural materials, and finding new uses for discarded objects and materials. Examples are: corn dolls, painted dried pumpkins, plaster masks, sawdust dolls, flower pots from old shoes, cartoon heroes and decorative boxes of wavy cardboard, flowers of crepe papers, puppet dolls, and a traditional costume balls. The library organizes sales of these items, using the income to renew their book fund and buy materials for workshops. They also participate in humanitarian activities and cooperate with local schools, including working with children with special needs and the elderly.

Ukraine (Lviv)

The ECOeducation project serves children 4–10 years old, as well as their parents and teachers. In the duration of the project, they held 38 events with 971 participants (children and adults). The aim and objectives of the project including teaching children about eco-thinking, caring for natural resources, reducing waste, and sharing their knowledge with relatives and friends. Through educational and entertaining presentations and workshops, children and adults learn about sorting garbage, reusing waste materials, and collecting used batteries, plastic bottle corks, and waste paper. The ECO corner at the Library offers interactive events such as planting greenery and a winter garden around the building, a drawing contest, cleaning up a nearby park and the use of eco packaging for books. The computer game "Garbage Hero" teaches about garbage sorting and was provided by partners of the project.

Madeleine Charney, July 13, 2017