



www.eahil.eu

Journal of EAHIL

European Association for
Health Information and Libraries

Vol. 16 no.4

December 2020

ISSN L-1841-0715

The production of this journal
was made possible by the generous support of:

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Journal of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries

Vol. 16 No. 4 December 2020

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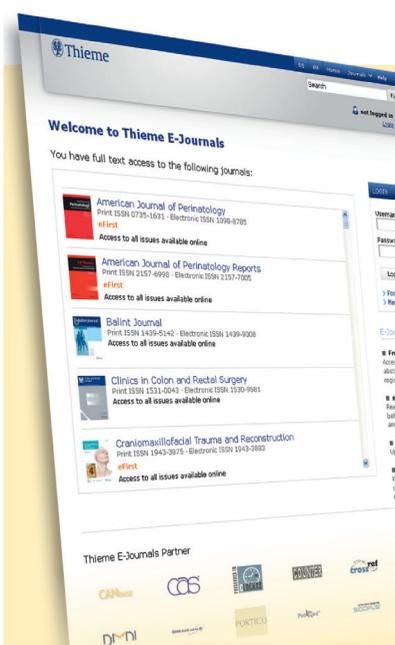
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Sustainability: time to act for a better world

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Dear EAHIL friends,

I've always cherished December deeply; it is a time of reflection and celebration, in which we look upon the past with a critical eye, remember what we achieved, figure out what we could have done better, re-live whatever joys we were gifted and reconcile with whatever sorrows we were forced to endure.

However, in writing this Editorial, rather than looking back upon this disastrous and unprecedented year, I wish to rather reflect upon the future.

In the upcoming months, the global distribution of a vaccine will hopefully guide us out of this pandemic, however, once the virus is defeated, we can only hope that its devastating passage has served as a warning, to act swiftly on many fronts in order to help create better environmental, social, and health conditions for us all.

As is well known, in 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). It was an urgent call addressed to all countries - developed and developing - and stakeholders, to act in collaborative partnership in order to transform our world within the following fifteen years. "The Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development (...). We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path". At the heart of this Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and amongst them Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

How do medical libraries fit in this scenario? Is a "green librarianship" possible? This December-themed issue of *JEAHIL* will help us answer these questions. It is guest-edited by Irma Klerings and Gerhard Bissels, and is dedicated to "Medical and health libraries and sustainability". I am sure it will inspire us all to take concrete and impactful actions in our countries and different working environments. I'm also sure you will join me in thanking both the editors and the authors for their contributions: Gerhard Bissels, Franziska Corradini, Petra Hauke, Irma Klerings, Tuulevi Ovaska.

Following the monographic section, you will find Maurella Della Seta's Letter from our President, containing important information on the results of the EAHIL elections, the News from ICML+AHILA by Emma Farrow (Secretary, IFLA Health and Biosciences Libraries section), and the update from the National Library of Medicine by Dianne Babski (Associate Director, Library Operations, NLM).

Last but not least, I am truly glad to inform you that a new column titled "Looking at the past" has just been inaugurated with a detailed and passionate report by Suzanne Bakker (EAHIL Executive Board Member, President and Past-President 1999-2012 and the EAHIL Secretariat Supervisor since 1998). While reading this report, new EAHIL members will have the precious opportunity to learn about "The years before 1987: the primordial state of EAHIL" (this is the title of the paper) and existing members to recall events and be reminded of long standing colleagues and friends.

In reading Suzanne's report, you might get enticed to browse the old EAHIL Newsletter and read some of its first issues. Be aware that the online collection (1987-2004) has now been checked and completed with the help of Petra Björk, Katri Larmo and Michelle Wake, members of the Editorial Board. This was one of the goals that the Editorial Board had envisaged for 2020.

Going back to the theme of this issue, I invite you all, during the next days, to watch the video "Nations United: Urgent Solutions for Urgent Times | Presented by Thandie Newton" which I personally found deeply engaging and inspiring. <https://youtu.be/xVWHuJOmaEk>

I wish you and your families the most serene and joyful of holidays
Federica

MONOGRAPHIC SECTION

Medical and health libraries and sustainability

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Medical and health libraries and sustainability

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Why a themed issue on sustainability in medical and health libraries? Is "sustainability" not something we are doing anyway - and have been doing for quite a while?

At the end of an EAHIL gathering a small group of colleagues were not so sure. There were mountains of empty plastic bottles piling up. Every evening each of us had to put another bag full of unwanted glossy brochures in the wastebasket at our hotel rooms. Most attendees had flown to the venue - some even over distances where the train would hardly have taken longer. It was quite obvious that the biggest immediate impact on the environment that a professional body like EAHIL has, manifests itself in the way it organises its conferences. And we felt EAHIL could do better.

But the term sustainability today means a lot more than just the carbon footprint. Gerhard realised that when a student of his, Franziska Corradini, wanted to write her BSc thesis about the United Nations' 'Sustainable Development Goals' (UN SDGs). The SDGs encompass goals such as "no poverty" and "good health and wellbeing" along with "clean energy" and "responsible consumption".

With this in mind, we accepted the invitation to edit a themed issue of *JEAHIL* on sustainability projects in medical and health libraries. But the official channels, such as the IFLA world map of SDG related activities in libraries, had nothing to report about medical and health libraries. It seemed that our profession either had not made the link yet with this UN/IFLA scheme - even though in our daily work, we do contribute towards achieving one or several of the SDGs -, or that our focus was too narrow: by merely looking at libraries as individual entities, we were missing larger, e.g., university-wide projects. So we decided to change the focus of the themed issue, from reporting actual projects towards a wider perspective on the SDG concept.

Petra Hauke, chair of the IFLA SIG "Environment and Sustainability in Libraries" (ENSULIB), kindly agreed to an interview in which she outlines the aim and concept of the SDGs, and encourages medical libraries to become aware of them and commit to their support.

Franziska Corradini shows in an article derived from her BSc thesis how libraries mainly in the German-speaking countries have approached the SDGs so far, and what potential there may be especially for medical and health libraries.

Irma Klerings gives an overview of practical toolkits for making events such as conferences more sustainable.

And, finally, Tuulevi Ovaska presents an example of university library involvement in a university-wide sustainability strategy based on the UN SDGs.

Medical libraries already contribute to a more sustainable society, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals show us how we could do even more. Should they not become part of our everyday thinking and planning just as Evidence Based Medicine did thirty years ago?

Interview with Petra Hauke: Sustainable Development Goals in medical libraries

Franziska Corradini (a), Irma Klerings (b) and Gerhard Bissels (c)

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Abstract

The role of libraries in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become an increasingly important topic in the last years. The authors of this paper talked to Petra Hauke, convenor of the "Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Special Interest Group" (ENSULIB) at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) about her work and the ways medical libraries might contribute to implementing the SDGs.

Key words: Sustainable Development Goals; environment.



Fig. 1. Petra Hauke

Introduction

Petra Hauke is LIS lecturer at the Institute for Library and Information Science at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and also co-founder of the German Green

Library Network (Netzwerk Grüne Bibliothek) (1) (<https://www.ibi.hu-berlin.de/de/ueber-uns/personen/hauke>; email: petra.hauke@hu-berlin.de). She was interviewed by Franziska Corradini, Library Assistant, Bern University of Teacher Education, Bern; Irma Klerings, Cochrane Information Specialist, Donau University, Krems; and Gerhard Bissels, Lecturer in Library Innovation, University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Chur on the Sustainable Development Goals in medical libraries (2). The interview took place on Nov. 9, 2020, via video link.

What is ENSULIB?

Q: You are convenor of ENSULIB, the IFLA's Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Special Interest Group which will be established as a "section" in January 2021. Could you briefly acquaint JEAHIL readers with the role and goals of ENSULIB?

A: ENSULIB started in 2009 as a "Special Interest Group (SIG)". Within IFLA, Special Interest Groups bring together libraries and librarians with common and continuing interests which they wish to discuss or explore with other IFLA members, but which are not included in the goals of an existing Section. Finally ENSULIB was able to convince the Governing Board that our focus is clearly a topic of great interest and a

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benefit for many IFLA members and to the field at large. ENSULIB's role within the IFLA community is to encourage and support libraries' environmental and social responsibility and the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals.

Q: How does ENSULIB function, and what are the plans of the section for the next years?

A: ENSULIB's aim is to make libraries active supporters and actors of the United Nations Agenda 2030 in terms of all aspects of ecological, social, and economic sustainability. The section is concerned with all types of libraries that are engaged in environmental and social responsibility and supporting the 2030 Agenda. "Green Librarianship" is a global approach of all aspects of librarianship, from the conception of the library's building, of the day-to-day management, of all its resources, up to the information work about environmental issues and the support to local initiatives.

Specific aims set out in the section's action plan include:

- to identify the best sustainable practices in libraries and share them;
- to develop and promote tools and standards to support libraries in their conversion to sustainability;
- to increase the effectiveness of all types of libraries that focus on sustainability in all its aspects;
- to provide a forum for addressing sustainability issues related to libraries' services;
- to advocate for "green libraries" as a fundamental component in the development throughout the world;
- to share experience, knowledge and problem-solving strategies, and promote networking amongst green libraries and green research services.

ENSULIB's new standing committee (SC) will be established during the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in August 2021 – which will become a virtual conference. The SC will define working groups for e.g. the IFLA Green Library Award (which has been running already since 2016), green library standards, prepare sessions and satellite meetings for the annual WLIC, cooperate with national green libraries initiatives like the German "Netzwerk Grüne Bibliothek", the Finnish green

library network, and the Swiss campaign "biblio2030", create a green libraries projects bank, plan webinars etc. – depending on the capacities and abilities of the upcoming section's standing committee members.

Q: ENSULIB is planning to set up a toolkit on the Web to help libraries become more sustainable. There are quite a few websites with this aim already, especially in the German-speaking countries, with the bulk of the information rather similar, but some unique bits on each platform. Does creating even another platform make sense?

A: Our aim is to bring all the information from the various websites together on the ENSULIB website.

Q: Shouldn't there be some standard for sustainability in medical, or research libraries in general?

A: Libraries should aim to have a sustainable building, and to run services sustainably. Beyond that, IFLA says sustainability is libraries' business. It's every library's business, so all libraries are asked to become advocates for sustainability!

Q: How will the knowledge gathered through ENSULIB's work be transferred to librarians?

A: The section works to meet its objectives through the following activities:

- sharing experiences, best practices and new developments through its sessions at the WLIC and satellite meetings. Information is shared with the wider membership through the section's web pages, email list and social media;
- publishing guidance on establishing and providing library services for green libraries, based on the experience of section members and elaborated with other relevant bodies, such as national green libraries initiatives.

Q: What methods is ENSULIB going to use to motivate librarians/libraries to change toward a more ecological "everyday life" (attitude, mindset, processes etc.)?

A: IFLA, as the world association, has declared all libraries to be advocates of the Agenda 2030 as early as 2015 through the International Advocacy Programme (IAP). The Programme aims to help libraries worldwide achieve these goals through their work. IFLA explicitly says: "Take action!" Every person in the library system and beyond can help promote the role of libraries as supporters of sustainable development. IFLA expressly says: "Sustainability is libraries' business!" As institutions with a societal

mission, it is natural for libraries to seek to address the major societal challenges of today – and there are fewer greater than sustainability. Libraries should act as exemplars, educators, and enablers (3).

Medical libraries and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

Q: On the IFLA's map of libraries reporting activities related to the UN's SDGs, there are almost exclusively public libraries represented. We have not found a single example of a medical library participating. Why do you think this is?

A: IFLA is looking for any kind of libraries which follow the UN Agenda 2030 to demonstrate how libraries contribute to improved outcomes across all SDGs. It seems that medical libraries have not yet appeared in this context. Or they have not taken the appropriate public position. Few publications are available on sustainability projects in medical libraries (4-6). There are numerous examples of academic libraries that position themselves publicly in the sense of SDGs like the University Library of Valencia, Spain (7), or winners of the IFLA Green Library Award like the Thailand, Rangsit University Library (8), to name but a few.

Q: Which of the SDGs should, in your view, medical libraries give particular attention?

A: First of all SDG 3: Health and well-being. Health has a central position in the agenda through SDG 3, but also is closely linked to over a dozen targets in other goals related to urban health, equal access to treatments, and non-communicable diseases, among others. In fact, the SDGs represent a unique opportunity to promote public health through an integrated approach to public policies across different sectors. For example, better education for girls (SDG 4.1) would improve maternal health (SDG 3.1). Tackling child malnourishment (SDG 2.2) would have a great impact on child health (SDG 3.2). And ensuring access to safe water (SDG 6.1) or tackling ambient air pollution (SDG 11.6) will evidently have a direct impact on several SDG 3 targets. On the other hand, using coal to improve energy access (SDG 7) would have a negative impact on health. The few examples given should make clear, that in the end all SDGs refer in any way to SDG 3 "Good Health".

Q: Medical and other specialist libraries tend to focus on a specialist audience, such as hospital staff, or

researchers and students of a medical faculty. If we are talking about promoting health literacy, or Public Health in general, wouldn't medical libraries have to broaden their audience, to include non-specialists?

A: Both are possible. Medical libraries can either focus on their specialist communities, or go beyond that, and – if you have the capacity, and the expertise – reach out to external audiences, at least if the institution permits. But medical libraries that support research or clinical practice, already contribute to achieving SDG 3, Health and Well-Being. When Donna Scheeder, the former IFLA president, was involved in the United Nations' development of the Sustainable Development Goals, she made sure basic information provision was included – because without access to information, none of the other goals could be achieved. This was the beginning of the current development, but we now realise we have the chance to achieve more!

Q: I see a problem with the lack of capacity in libraries. Libraries are currently not in a position to seriously embrace and push for the SDGs; they just do not have the extra staff time. Is just lending books enough?

A: IFLA wants to demonstrate the importance of libraries in achieving the SDGs. We librarians ought to make the decision makers aware that libraries are crucial for achieving the SDGs. By just delivering what they do anyway, libraries contribute already towards achieving the SDGs. This is the first step – but if at all possible, we should go further.

Q: Libraries could go further, and argue for additional funding to support the SDGs.

A: Exactly! Library associations initially felt that it was enough to claim sustainability for themselves. Mission accomplished. But they ought to go beyond that, and should not miss this opportunity. IFLA says: "Sustainability is libraries' business". This sentence can be read either as a statement, or as a task for libraries to achieve.

Q: As someone who has been involved in sustainability in libraries for a quite a while, have you seen enough change happening? 2030 is approaching fast... Are you confident that we will meet the 2030 goals?

A: It will be a challenge. We should try to do everything we can – but it is a vision. We will still have hunger, inequality and so on in 2030. We don't have much time left. We should try our best! It depends on us all if the change is a vision, or an illusion.

Q: Do you have plans to work with specialist librarians'

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organisations, such as EAHIL or the MLA in the medical field?

A: Yes, of course. This is essential to achieve the goals and also follows SDG 17: Partnership for the goals. They are all invited not only to sign an institutional membership but also to apply for a standing committee membership.

Q: Special libraries might have a profound knowledge concerning specific goals. How could an exchange, a transfer of this knowledge to other libraries, or back up to decision-makers e.g. in government, look like?

A: IFLA says: "Libraries are key institutions for achieving the goals" (1, 7). Libraries enable access to information – and access to information is crucial for achieving the goals. Reliable information on health issues (SDG 3), climate change (SDG 13), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), to name but a few, provided and actively distributed by special libraries to governments, decision makers and the libraries' professional community, is essential to achieve the goals. But libraries can do more than provide access to information. Libraries can – and already do! – act as exemplars, educators, and enablers. Programmes like "Love our Library", provided by the University Library of Cork, Ireland, could easily be adopted by special libraries (9). Their engagement should not only extend within the internal community, but also reach out to the outside community. "The Sustainable Library's Cookbook" by Raymond Pun and Gary L. Shaffe, published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) offers a wide range of examples, e.g.: "Cultivating community through a fruit and veggie exchange", "Adding more green for a healthier library: modeling sustainability practice", "Rooftop garden ratatouille: developing plaza/deck library greenspace", "Teaching undergraduates how to critically evaluate information resources and scholarship related to sustainable agriculture" (10).

SDGs in the wider and the narrower sense. Green libraries

Q: We perceive two different approaches to the UN's SDGs that libraries could pursue: they could either focus on the sustainability of the library's operation; or they could get involved in implementing SDGs themselves. Where do you see the role of libraries?

A: Both. Green library buildings follow e.g. LEED or

ISO criteria as far as possible. But so-called green libraries are also committed to sustainable routines like recycling and decreasing consumption, modification of the conditions of storage and preservation, applications of environment-friendly practices like recovery of rainwater, use of renewable energy sources, printing control, paper recycling, etc. Special libraries with their special knowledge also have a major role in universities and research centres. Going beyond provision of books and journals, they also offer valuable training and support on how to get the best out of the information. The University library in Gothenburg, Sweden, has developed tools on information literacy for sustainability, adaptable for other libraries (11). In their function as "exemplars, educators, and enablers" also special libraries can go "out of the box" to draw public and decision makers' attention to the need of achieving the SDGs.

Q: Does/Should the role of libraries differ depending on the socioeconomic setting (e.g. global North vs South)?

A: The SDGs address global challenges like poverty, inequality, climate change, peace and justice etc. Nevertheless, the problems faced by countries of the North or South are different. Although all SDGs are interdependent and cannot be addressed separately, countries that are characterised by poverty and hunger will have different priorities from countries that are more likely to be characterised by economic abundance. Accordingly, libraries will also have different priorities in the implementation of the SDGs. In this context, for example the National Library of Uganda provides ICT training to female farmers to access weather forecasts, crop prices, and to set up online markets in their local languages (12) while others discuss the "Trust in International Digital Content: Open Access and Access to Information at the World Bank" and how this trust can be used in pursuit of achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and opportunity for all (13). Achieving the SDGs is a global challenge, but the resulting requirements and possibilities differ.

Q: Are there blueprints that we could – or should – provide to libraries in poorer countries in the South, to further their transition to sustainability?

A: Of course, our duty is to cooperate. We have more opportunities with our richer resources. But we need to take into account what possibilities libraries in

poorer countries have. For many years I taught book publishing. And when I asked my students if they'd prefer to produce an electronic book, or a printed one, they usually went for the print publication! I make my IFLA publications available on-line, if at all possible, Open Access. But some libraries in the global South do have so limited or even no access to electronic resources that I always try to also have a print version produced that can be sent to those libraries. Our current IFLA book project (on new libraries in old buildings) will be a pilot - Open Access electronically, with a parallel print edition.

Q: Thank you very much, Petra, for this interview!

More information on ENSULIB activities can be found at the IFLA website: <https://www.ifla.org/environment-sustainability-and-libraries>

Submitted on invitation.

Accepted on 23 November 2020.

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Sustainable Development Goals in libraries of the German-speaking countries

Franziska Corradini

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Abstract

“How did the release of the Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) affect libraries in German-speaking regions?” was the leading research question in my bachelor thesis. To analyse the situation, I did a case study, based on a literature review.

Findings are that the SDG publication influenced particularly the library associations in Germany and Switzerland. Most actual libraries, though, are probably not familiar yet with the SDGs. Nevertheless, there exists in Austria an outstanding model in (library-)cooperation and SDG platform Bildung 2030. As there are hardly any articles about medical libraries contributing to the SDG discussion, there is unused potential for medical and health libraries to contribute. High potential lies within cooperation between public libraries and medical and health libraries, to spread health literacy to the public.

Key words: sustainable development; libraries; libraries, medical.

Introduction

In 2015 the United Nations released the Agenda 2030, containing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). How did these affect libraries in German-speaking regions? This was the leading research question in my bachelor thesis.

Methodology

To analyse the situation, I did a case study, based on a literature review. To limit any bias as far as possible, I used Triangulation, i.e. I chose three different kinds of sources for the literature review. I relied on standard bibliographical databases (Proquest's Library and Information Science Abstracts; EBSCO's Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts), selected social media (Facebook, Twitter), and the relevant library associations (IFLA, Bibliosuisse, dbv). To guarantee a certain degree of transparency, all literature retrieved is documented in an open Zotero library (1).

Findings

Library associations influencing the SDG spread in libraries

The first literature analysis showed that IFLA impacted

greatly on how German-speaking libraries reacted to the release of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is due to the fact that IFLA published a toolkit alongside the SDGs themselves. The toolkit contains suggestions on how libraries should act concerning the implementation of SDGs in libraries. Librarians were mentioned only on the very last page of this document (2). According to the toolkit the main responsibility to spread the SDGs lies with the library associations and with the libraries with a national role (i.e. national libraries or other influential libraries).

German and Swiss library associations followed the IFLA recommendation. Today, the Deutsche Bibliotheksverband (dbv, German library association) refers to the SDGs as one of their most important topics. In their critique of Germany's national SDG action plan, dbv complained that libraries had been overlooked. Bibliosuisse, the Swiss library association, set up a working group named Biblio2030, which met with politicians to get involved to the national plan for implementing the SDGs. Unfortunately, neither in Germany nor in Switzerland did the library associations achieve that.

Nevertheless, both organisations collected material and examples through both individual and joint efforts.

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They published those on their websites. dbv launched the internet platform biblio2030.de (3), where they publish materials and information related to the SDGs, but which is primarily a collection of best practice examples of library activities connected to the SDGs. All libraries in the German-speaking countries are invited to contribute to this idea pool. In doing so they communicated clearly that the platform served primarily as a marketing tool. Until now there are very few contributions in relation to the number of existing libraries. In summer 2020 only 34 of 12,239 libraries in the German speaking countries submitted an SDG activity example to either the IFLA's library map of the world or biblio2030.

This leads to the assumption that the majority of libraries in the German speaking countries have not yet realised how important the SDGs are, or that they have not yet recognised the need for action, or simply do not know the SDGs. Both press and literature review confirmed that assumption, as there are few articles about SDGs from German speaking authors found and those few repeatedly from the same few authors.

One possible reason why libraries obviously still seem to be unfamiliar with the SDGs could lie in the fact that IFLA and the other library associations have kept most of the responsibility and the lead for the next steps at the association level. Actually, libraries might be holding back, expecting some kind of directives from their respective national organisations.

During the past few years, library associations have, indeed, called on libraries to set their daily work into the SDG context, acknowledging that libraries contributed already to achieving the SDGs through the delivery of their core library services. By encouraging libraries to use the SDG context to market their existing services library associations, on the one hand, triggered a number of examples that would help them lobby for the inclusion of libraries in national SDG strategies. The downside of this strategy has been that by allowing libraries to pass existing activities off as part of national SDG strategies, they discouraged libraries from developing new activities in the realms of sustainability.

Trailblazer Austria

Interestingly the situation in Austria is different from that in Germany and Switzerland. The ministry of

Education named libraries as partners in conveying the sustainability message, so the IFLA goal to get into the political focus seems to have been met by Austrian libraries.

Five organisations (BAOBAB, FORUM Umweltbildung, KommEnt, Südwind and Welthaus Graz) are leading the project Bildung 2030 (education 2030) and its collaborative web platform (4), which is funded by the federal government (Figure 1). The platform is aimed at anybody with an interest in SDGs but primarily at education professionals. One can find information about the SDGs, didactic materials, classroom materials, activity ideas and further training courses or resources for teachers. Libraries are present in different sections of the platform. Their services such as access to resources via a catalogue and reference services in libraries across the country are integrated as tools. This is an amazing and convincing method to show that libraries can have a supporting, maybe even a key role in education for sustainable development.

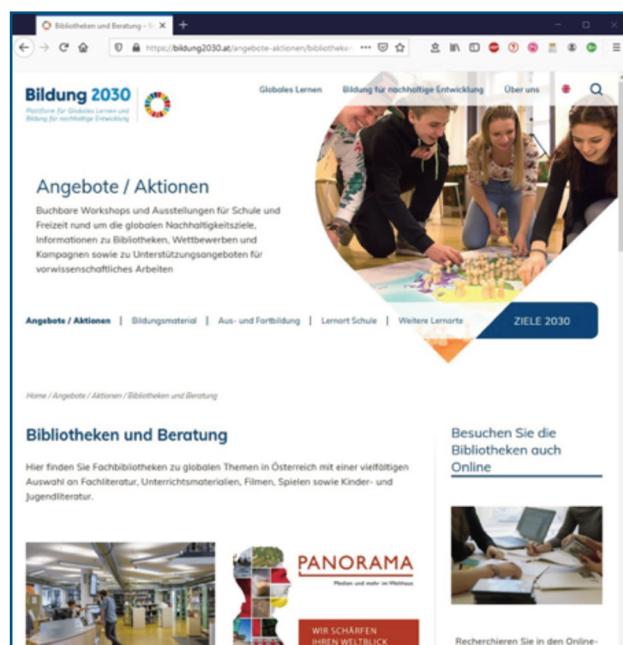


Fig. 1. Bildung2030 website.

Most impressive is the fact that this success of Austrian libraries is built on libraries' core values services, and not on any of the buzzwords often used to make libraries appear more "modern". There is not a word about digitisation, 3rd place, or any other trendy

service. They had also no need to show how they contribute to achieving the SDGs. All they did is that they were present in the right place at the right time, and they connected with other like-minded organisations. And for sure, they had to take the initiative to get there, they had to take action.

Nevertheless, one has to say that the general situation in Austria was hard to assess, because there were hardly any publications about the SDGs on the website of the Austrian library associations. Regarding libraries in Austria overall, one must conclude that the SDGs subject has not yet reached the majority of them. Apart from the special libraries (Südwind and C3) which contributed to Bildung 2030 there are, in essence, not more individual libraries active than in Switzerland or Germany. But on a national account they did a remarkably great job in conveying the SDGs to the public, especially to schools. The platform is worthy of praise for being an excellent example of cooperation in the sense of the SDGs themselves and especially SDG 17 partnership for the goals.

Conclusions

The SDG publication influenced particularly the library associations in Germany and Switzerland. On that level subjects such as networking, marketing and lobbying received a high significance.

Most libraries are, however, probably not familiar yet with the SDGs. Only a few participated in the platforms and only a fistful of them did grapple with the SDGs in a remarkable way. It may be the same for most Austrian libraries. But in Austria there exists an outstanding model in cooperation and platform Bildung 2030. The platform consolidated libraries' sustainability activities and the SDGs themselves for the educational community.

Even if I do not know how Austria arrived at this cooperation, it does confirm my own experiences in librarianship. If we dare to ask potential partners to work together with us, they usually agree immediately and take the lead, if asked, voluntarily. At the same time, I have often witnessed that libraries do underestimate their own popularity and are scared to take the first step towards a cooperation. Library associations are working hard to raise governments' faith in libraries, but maybe they ought to start to raise libraries' faith in themselves.

The hidden potential in medical and health libraries

When I subsequently focused the literature review on medical and health libraries, I hardly found any article about how medical libraries contribute to the SDG discussion. Considering the findings of the aforementioned study, this is not astonishing at all. There is ample potential for medical and health libraries to contribute.

Medical and health libraries have a huge trove of special knowledge. SDG 3 "Health and Wellbeing" belongs to the most important of the SDGs and is crosslinked with many other SDGs, such as access to sanitation (SDG 6) or ending hunger (SDG 2). On the IFLA library map of the world (5), there are 9 stories concerning SDG 3 (Figure 2). They are all about public libraries giving access to health information. As public libraries are closer to the public, it makes sense that they are the primary institutions to spread quality knowledge. But medical and health libraries could provide public libraries with quality information. This may be a very high aim. But a closer look at the current corona crisis shows, how much health and medical libraries can contribute, or already do. For example, the World Health Organization Library and Digital Information Networks (6) publishes several documents concerning the COVID-19 Pandemic, some of them especially designed for the general public. Librarians, also the ones working in special libraries, are usually aware of public libraries around. As, in my experience, researchers tend to forget their own faculty library, they probably are even less likely to consider public libraries



Fig.2. IFLA library map of the world with nine examples about SDG 3 "Health and Wellbeing" (04.11.2020).

potential partners. But just as IFLA tries to raise politicians' awareness of libraries and their potential, the librarians in medical and health libraries may be the link between special knowledge and the users of public libraries. Where material already exists, it is sufficient to inform public libraries about the material through well-established communication tools, e.g., a mailing list. Or, where such materials do not exist yet, they could pull the strings and bring together the right people and the right ideas. Through cooperation costs and effort are kept to a minimum, and there may be follow-up projects, initiated from various institutions: the beginning of a partnership between specialist and public libraries.

In a wider, long-term perspective, medical libraries could open up to the public. Biliamin Popoola showed that health information services from medical libraries improves patient information services (7).

In a service like this lies the potential to unite information and health literacy, the capacity to understand technical terms and to describe them in an easier and more accessible way. Especially in poor countries an additional, free hub of health information could contribute to achieving SDG 3.

Information and health literacy are becoming even more important in times of fake news and restricted access to information.

Acknowledgments

This paper is partially based on the Author Bachelor thesis "Sustainable Development Goals in Libraries" presented at University of Applied Science Graubünden.

*Submitted on invitation.
Accepted on 24 November 2011.*

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Green it! Planning more sustainable conferences

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Abstract

Climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic challenge us to re-evaluate the way we live and work. In the academic sector, this includes organising and attending conferences and other scientific meetings. The pandemic has led EAHIL 2020 to be moved online, which is "greener" than physical meetings, but has interactional drawbacks. On the other hand, planning of physical conferences can make use of existing guidance to improve the environmental impact in areas such as venue and travel arrangements, catering, waste reduction as well as communication. In the future, conference organisers can draw upon insights into remote and virtual collaboration gained during the pandemic. Hybrid conferences that allow physical and remote attendance might become an option for increased sustainability of scientific meetings.

Key words: congresses as topic; conservation of natural resources; climate change; videoconferencing.

Introduction

Climate change has led to an increased awareness of the environmental impact of our lifestyle, not only in our private lives but also in our work context. Part of our work as health librarians, biomedical information professionals, and researchers consists in attending national and international conferences and workshops to exchange ideas and knowledge, build networks and collaborate with colleagues. But organising and attending such events has a considerable environmental impact (1), leading many of us to ask if there is a way to make them "greener". The following essay offers potential considerations about guidance for planning more sustainable conferences and the impact the COVID-19 pandemic might have on future conference planning going forward. It invites us to rethink our current practice and consider new possible avenues of communicating, meeting and networking.

Step 0: is a physical event necessary?

The European Commission's seven step guideline on organising sustainable meetings and events has a preliminary "step 0" (2). It challenges guideline users to consider whether a physical meeting is even

necessary. In a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, organisers of many academic conferences answered this question with "yes" and decided to cancel or postpone conferences planned for 2020. The organisers of EAHIL 2020 took the opposite approach and moved the conference into the online space. We can consider this a success. Not only in terms of maintaining the possibility of academic exchange during the pandemic, but also in terms of achieving environmental sustainability goals. A virtual event removes the majority of ecological concerns associated with academic conferences, in particular travel-related greenhouse gas emissions due to aviation.

But what about the benefits of physical meetings? Janisch *et al.* (3) note: "Technology cannot fully replace the power of direct interaction". While virtual events can serve as an enhancement to academic exchange, they have a hard time replacing real life personal interaction and networking, in particular for those conference attendees who are not yet well connected in their field. According to Janisch *et al.* (3) online interaction and collaboration works best between people who already know each other personally. This indicates that attendees of online conferences who do

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not have an already well established professional network, might profit less from the important social aspects of the event.

Guidance for sustainable conference organisation

If we do not want to completely abandon physical conferences in the future, and at the same time intend to face the challenges posed by the climate crisis, we need to consider ways to lessen the negative environmental impact of such events. But where to start? Planning and organising events like the EAHIL workshops and conferences is already a complex undertaking. Trying to figure out how to improve environmental sustainability at the same time seems quite daunting. Fortunately, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. A number of international (2, 4) and national organisations (5) as well as universities (6,

7) provide guidelines and checklists for “green” events. There is even an international standard for sustainable events: ISO 20121 (8).

Areas for improvement

While the focus of various guidance documents can differ, the general gist of the recommendations tends to go in the same direction. Main areas for consideration are: venue and travel arrangements, catering, waste reduction, recycling, and communication. The following considerations are summarised from a selection of available guidance (2, 4-7) to show the scope of areas with potential for adaptation in form of sustainable event management. Table 1 gives an overview of the guidance used in this summary. Note that this is not an exhaustive list of guides, checklists, and recommendations on the topic.

Title	Year	Issuing organisation
Guidelines on organising sustainable meetings and events at the Commission (2)	2018	European Commission
Planning healthy and sustainable meetings (4)	2018	World Health Organization
Guidelines for the sustainable organisation of events (5)	2015	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), Germany
Sustainable event certification (6)	2017	North Carolina State University, USA
Sustainable event guide (7)	2018	University of Exeter, UK

Table 1. *Examples of guidance for sustainable event and conference organisation.*

Since air travel is the main factor for the environmental impact of conferences (9), it is important to choose a venue that can also be reached by other means of transport and to communicate and promote these alternative travel options. Additionally, carbon offsetting of inevitable travel-related greenhouse gas emissions could be recommended to attendees or even budgeted into conference fees by the organisers. The energy efficiency of the chosen venue as well as the waste collection and recycling system in place should also be taken into consideration.

In addition, catering is an area where sustainability measures can be taken to reduce environmental impact. Recommendations call for seasonal and locally produced food and beverages, ideally choosing organic and fair trade products whenever possible. If the water quality allows it, tap water should replace bottled water. Food should be predominantly plant-based, as meat, dairy, and fish contribute more heavily to greenhouse gas emissions (9, 10).

Catering also relates to another area, waste management. Reusable crockery, glassware and cutlery

reduce the amount of waste produced, as does reducing paper use, for example by providing handouts and brochures digitally. Correct waste sorting can be improved by providing clearly labelled recycling and non-recycling bins.

However, the success of any sustainability measure depends on proper administration and communication. For this reason, is it important to nominate a sustainability coordinator, and to communicate the conference's sustainability measures not just to the attendees, but to everyone working on and sponsoring the event.

Finally, it is worth remembering that today's understanding of sustainability exceeds environmental goals. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (11), which form the foundation of the International Advocacy Programme launched by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (12), also incorporate social, health and economic topics. These broader goals can also be part of sustainable conference organisation, in particular since they are often linked closely to environmental concerns. Interestingly, this is the area where different guidance documents diverge most. Depending on the focus of the organisation issuing the guidance, they might call for providing healthy food options and encouraging physical activity (4), taking into account the needs of disabled people and the principles of gender mainstreaming (5), or making sure to contract socially responsible companies (6). Whereas the recommendations centred more directly on environmental concerns are independent of the conference's goals, the broader social, health and economic considerations should be shaped by who is organising the event.

Planning for the post-pandemic period

All of the guidance discussed above has been published before the COVID-19 pandemic, which raises the question: is there anything we can learn from the current situation that will have an impact on future conference organisation?

The Cercedilla Manifesto, published in April 2020 (10, 13) calls for more sustainable research meetings. Although it is based on years of previous research and discussion, its initial considerations seem prescient. The first guiding question is one we are already familiar with: "Is a physical meeting necessary?" However, instead of implying a binary choice, this is followed up

with "Are logistics for remote participation available?". The authors argue that hybrid formats that allow for physical and online participation, not only reduce travel-related emissions but also are more inclusive for participants with limited financial or time resources (and make it possible to reduce travel-related health risks).

The technological and administrative requirements to achieve such a hybrid format might have seemed daunting a year ago. Yet, during the pandemic, universities and other institutions had to adapt not only to distance teaching and remote work, but also to hybrid formats of collaboration. Many invested not only in videoconferencing software, but also improved technical equipment for meeting rooms and lecture halls. At the same time, the proliferation of online conferences like EAHIL 2020 provides us with first-hand experience of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of virtual and real life events.

When organising scientific conferences in the future, we should draw upon this improved technological expertise and understanding of what we expect from physical compared to remote meetings. In this context, hybrid formats seem particularly promising, both as a sustainability measure that decreases travel-related greenhouse gas emissions, and as a way to deliberately combine the advantages of virtual conferences with those of physical meetings.

Submitted on invitation.

Accepted on 24 November 2020.

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Carbon neutral University of Eastern Finland (UEF) by 2025

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Abstract

Reducing environmental harm aims to build a responsible and sustainable future. The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) promotes the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all its operations. UEF's goal is to become carbon neutral by 2025. The Library has staff members in two of the university's six working groups that chart the carbon emissions of the university and a steering group member.

Key words: (MeSH): carbon footprint; Finland; libraries; universities.

Introduction

The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) has taken determined steps to reduce environmental harm over the past few years, for example switched to 100% renewable energy, begun carbon offsetting and recycling of consumer plastic waste at the university's campuses. The UEF strategy is rooted in global challenges and aims to build a responsible and sustainable future. The UEF has agreed to promote the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) in all its operations. Sustainability and responsibility are also the key development principles for university campuses. The university has signed the Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development as part of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 in Finland and adheres to SDGs through our Green Office and Fairtrade agreements.

Becoming carbon neutral by 2025

In accordance with its Climate Action Plan, the university is committed to taking action to mitigate the effects of climate change with the goal of the university becoming carbon neutral by 2025. The university has calculated its carbon footprint this year, and concrete measures to reduce it are being planned accordingly. Through its strategy for 2021-2033, the UEF builds a responsible and sustainable future. UEF ranked 67th in the UI Green Metric World University

Ranking comparing a total of 780 universities (1). UI Green Metric Ranking compares universities based on how well they take environmental responsibility and sustainable development into consideration in their activities.

A kick-off event of the Carbon Neutral UEF 2025 project was held on the 4th of June 2020. The UEF appointed working groups to chart the carbon emissions of its facilities, procurements, travel, restaurant services and laboratories — and to brainstorm ideas on how to reduce them — and scholarly communication that promotes carbon neutrality. Besides the university's own experts, the working groups have stakeholder representatives. The library has a staff member, an information specialist from the collection services, in the procurement working group. The procurement working group has made numerous calculations of the carbon footprint and produced suggestions on how to reduce it. This includes the library's acquisitions, e.g., the carbon footprint of printed books and journals has been studied. As a coordinator of the library's communications, I am a member of the communication group. The tasks of this working group include increasing the visibility of sustainable development both on the website and the intranet of the UEF, increasing the transparency of the actions, inspiring the staff and the students to eco-acting, creating campaigns, making the aims more concrete,

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building a website for sustainable development at the UEF, visualising the aims and achievements, and reporting the outcomes of the project. In addition, the project has a coordination group and a steering group in which the library has a member from the Internal Services.

Conclusions

In Finland, the Unifi, a co-operational organisation for Finnish universities that promotes higher education, research and arts by addressing far-reaching, university related issues and aims to influence the Finnish higher education and research policy, has just published 12 theses on sustainable development and responsibility. (2).

*Submitted on invitation.
Accepted on 25 November 2020.*

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Letter from the President



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Dear EAHIL colleagues,

This is my last letter for 2020 and my last letter as President. As you know, my mandate will finish at the end of this year. Lotta Haglund from Sweden will be the new President, and I will uptake the role of Past President for 2021-2022.

These four years as a President passed very quickly, and I am very pleased with the results that we achieved in this period. During my mandate, EAHIL was able to provide four excellent events, i.e., two interactive Workshops (Dublin, 2017, and Basel, 2019), a Conference (Cardiff, 2018) and an online Conference, hosted by the Information and Library Centre of the Medical University of Lodz. This last event was especially challenging since it was the first online conference in the history of our Association. As the Lodz LOC summarised, there was a great participation, a sound scientific program, and the most important, countless smiles (see *Figure 1* for a graphic summary of the Conference). The March 2021 issue of the *JEAHIL* will be dedicated to the Lodz event, and I am looking forward to reading it.

All the above-mentioned events were well attended, and enthusiastically approved by most of the participants in their feedbacks. A warm thank to all the organisers, to the Local Organising Committees and to the IPCs members, who worked so hard to ensure successful and enjoying meetings.

During the last four years I have excellently been supported by the Executive Board and the Council members, and I wish to thank all of them for their help and their work in favour of our association. A special and warm thank goes to the colleagues who are now ending their mandate in the Board: Marshall Dozier (Past President) Karen Buset (Honorary Secretary), Ghislaine Declève (Treasurer) and Tuulevi Ovaska (Communication Coordinator). I will miss you!

Results of the Elections for Council members

As you know, last November we had the elections of the new Councillors, for the following countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom. We had several meetings with EAHIL Board colleagues, to organise the election process.

I wish to thank all candidates for their involvement in EAHIL activities. I am glad to send my warmest congratulations to the new and re-elected Council members for the 2021-2024 term:

Irma Klerings (Austria); Luc Hourlay (Belgium); Josip Simic (Bosnia & Herzegovina); Dana Zdenkova (Czech Republic); Louise Stenolt (Denmark); Ivika Rande (Estonia); Louise Farragher and Donna O'Doiblin (Ireland); Cinzia Bussolati and Cristina Mancini (Italy); Elina Vela (Latvia); Irina Gangan (Moldova); Eugénie Delvaux and Hans Ket (Netherlands); Maria da Luz Antunes (Portugal); Elisabeth Nylander (Sweden); Alison Bethel (UK).

Governance Committees

I sincerely want to thank, as well, the members of the Financial audit committee 2017: Helena Bouzkova (Czech Republic) and Susanna Henriques (Portugal); the members of the Nomination committee 2020: Gerhard Bissels, (Switzerland), Regina Kűfner Lein, (Norway) and Ivana Truccolo (Italy); and the members of the Election audit committee 2019-2020: Angels Carles (Spain), Katri Larmo (Finland) and Linda Lisgarten (United Kingdom).



Fig. 1. EAHIL 2020 in numbers, as summarised by the organisers of the Conference.

EAHIL Award 2020

As EAHIL President, I presented the EAHIL Award of 2020 in the closing ceremony of the EAHIL 2020 Online conference. The award was posthumously given to Shane Godbolt (1943-2019) in recognition for her immense contribution to international health librarianship (Figure 2). Shane passed away in November 2019, but with awareness of the gravity of her illness, the Board made the exceptional decision to give Shane the award early so that she could know of our deep appreciation while she was still alive. These are the main motivations of the Award, that formally acknowledges Shane's outstanding contribution to Health Librarianship:

Shane was a founding member of EAHIL and had always continued to be active in EAHIL. It is due to Shane that we have stronger collaborative links with our sister association, AHILA. She was founder and editor of the Health Information and Libraries Journal. She was a founder and director of Partnerships in Health Information, a charitable organisation with the aim of addressing information needs of the public and healthcare providers, especially in African countries.

As a conclusion, I would like to wish you a cloudless holiday season and the very best beginning of the year 2021, hoping that it would be better than this tragic 2020.

Maurella



Fig. 2. Shane Godbolt, EAHIL Award 2020.



MARMARA
UNIVERSITY



EAHIL
HYBRID WORKSHOP

20
5

21
8

July

Sultanahmet, İstanbul

Crossing the Bridge
New Challenges, New Opportunities





Dear EAHIL Colleagues and Community,

On behalf of the Marmara University Rectorate and International Program Committee & the Local Organizing Committee it is a great pleasure for us to invite you to the EAHIL2021 Workshop in İstanbul. EAHIL2021 Workshop will be hosted by Marmara University on 5-8 July 2021. The main theme of the workshop is “***Crossing the Bridge: New Challenges, New Opportunities***” The Bridge is connecting Europe and Asia and it's a symbol of İstanbul. The idea of a bridge crossing the Bosphorus dates back to antiquity and its a link between the continents. COVID-19 has turned the world upside down and many things have been impacted in the world this is another link for us. The International Program Committee of the EAHIL2021 specified six thematic areas within this scope. The subthemes include but are not limited to the ***Physical and virtual, Education and literacy, Communication and publication, Data and research, Evidence and resources, Innovation and services.***

Due to the pandemic, the EAHIL2021 Workshop will be held as a hybrid event and combine both in person and virtual experiences. The sessions will be held face-to-face with a certain number of participants, and online participants will also be provided. This hybrid workshop experience will give you so many new insights, ideas, and best experiences in the real and the virtual world with presentations, interactive workshops, plenary sessions, continuing education courses, poster exhibitions, social and cultural activities.

We will deliver a dynamic, enriching and memorable experiences in İstanbul. Marmara University is one of the oldest educational institutions in Turkey. Rectorate of Marmara University at Sultanahmet Square (Hippodrome of Constantinople) in the Fatih district of İstanbul. Marmara University is located in the heart of the city, an area very close to the historical places and very well served by road links and public transport. The venue of EAHIL2021 will be Ord. Prof. Dr. Nihad Sayar Meeting Hall which is in the Rectorate of Marmara University Building at Sultanahmet Square. You have a chance to visit Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, German Fountain, Hagia Sophia, Grand Bazaar, Hagia Irene Church, Topkapı Palace, Petit Hagia Sophia from the venue by walk very easily. We are very excited to be able



EAHIL2021

to come together face to face at this meeting. Taking into account the importance of the COVID-19 outbreak, the necessary preparations have been identified. EAHIL2021 Workshop will be held by paying attention to the necessary hygiene and social distance rules.

We carried out our promotional activities at the EAHIL 2020 Online Conference. We would like to thank everyone who showed interest in the EAHIL2021 Workshop organization and İstanbul! At the same time, we announced the First Call for Papers and Posters for the EAHIL2021 Workshop.

The detailed schedule is available for you at our website: <https://etkinlik.marmara.edu.tr/eahil2021>

Scholarship studies continue in order to invite colleagues who are attending in this field to the event. The EAHIL Executive Board announced the availability of EAHIL-EBSCO Scholarships to EAHIL members. Also Association of University and Research Librarians operating in Turkey Medicine and Health Sciences Platform will provide scholarships to Turkish colleagues.

We would like to invite you to our beautiful İstanbul which is the meeting point of continents, cultures, arts, history and science for 2021.

Asst.Prof. Güssün GÜNEŞ

EAHIL2021 Chair of the IPC & LOC Committee

Stay updated at:



<https://etkinlik.marmara.edu.tr/eahil2021>



eahil2021@marmara.edu.tr



@eahil2021



@eahil2021



CALL FOR PAPERS AND POSTERS

On behalf of the Marmara University Rectorate and International Program Committee & the Local Organizing Committee it is a great pleasure for us to invite you to the EAHIL2021 Hybrid Workshop in İstanbul.

This hybrid workshop experience will give you so many new insights, ideas, and best experiences in the real and the virtual world with presentations, interactive workshops, plenary sessions, continuing education courses, poster exhibition and social activities.

The main theme of the workshop is “**Crossing the Bridge: New Challenges, New Opportunities**”. IPC invite proposals of four kinds of abstracts for sessions at the EAHIL2021.

- Oral Presentation
- Poster Presentation
- Interactive Workshop
- Continuing Education Courses (CEC)

The Committee encourages innovative proposals for activities in interactive formats on the following themes: **Physical and virtual, Education and literacy, Communication and publication, Data and research, Evidence and resources, Innovation and services.**

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION will be online only at: <https://etkinlik.marmara.edu.tr/eahil2021>

IMPORTANT DATES

- Opening Call for Abstracts: November 15th 2020
- Deadline for Abstract Submissions: January 15th 2021
- Notification of Abstract Acceptance: February 15th 2021
- Deadline for Abstract Final Versions of Accepted Submissions: March 8th 2021
- Deadline for Registration of Presenters: April 1st 2021

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Güssün GÜNEŞ, Chair of the International Programme Committee,
gussun.gunes@marmara.edu.tr or ipc2021@marmara.edu.tr





The years before 1987: the primordial state of EAHIL

Suzanne Bakker

EAHIL Executive Board Member, President and Past-President 1999-2012 and the EAHIL Secretariat Supervisor since 1998
suzanneb@planet.nl

THE ARCHIVES

On 27 February 2001 Tony McSeán, President of EAHIL, wrote a letter to Ursula Hausen mentioning: "(...) to hear that you had a file of important historical documents relating to the early days of EAHIL. The Association's own archives are fine as far as they go, but it is clear that they tell far from a complete story of the first couple of years and particularly in relation to the events leading up to our formation. I understand that you would be willing to add your papers to the official archive of the Association. If that is the case, then the Board has asked me to write to you accepting the offer in the most enthusiastic terms and to thank you warmly for a proposal that will allow us to maintain a much more complete picture of our history than has previously been available".

The return letter by Ursula includes: "They will indeed be of interest where they concern the early years. Those were fascinating years which are dear to my memory. Feel free, however, to discard any documents which would be a mere duplication of existing materials".

At some day later that year Ursula and I met in the Netherlands and she brought the boxes with the historical documents. At that time the EAHIL Secretariat was run by the Dutch Library Association and in the attic of the office at the Nieuwegracht in Utrecht there was enough space to store the material.

Later on, EAHIL archives moved to Maarsse, where Gerben van den Bosch and Nicole Regoort took care of the association's administration. In 2018 it was decided that this service would be discontinued; leaving the archives to be moved to ... indeed, my home address, where EAHIL still is registered according to the Chambre of Commerce. Marion Heymans, coopted to the Executive Board, will become the new liaison between EAHIL and the Dutch authorities and service providers.

In my correspondence to Nicole Regoort, by email, I mention: [transl.] "I do not know where the archive could be stored. Scanning seems to be an awful project and hardly useful. But because of being an international organization, probably nevertheless necessary".

In the first week of January 2020 the boxes arrived in Abcoude and have been staring at me ever since (Figure 1).

Steps taken: (i) at first checking the contents of these boxes; (ii) sorting by kind of material; (iii) deduplicating the newsletter and journal issues; (iv) sorting and deduplication of minutes of Board, Council and GA-meetings; (v) sorting and weeding the correspondence by the secretariat and the presidency over the years.



Fig. 1. EAHIL archives waiting to be sorted out and scanned in Abcoude.

The documentation of the Brussels' period (1987-1998), managed and cared for by EAHIL's secretary Roselyne Hoet (*Figure 2*), included literally everything, copies of all paper mailings that went out to members, including elections materials. The hardest decision to take was to disrupt this perfect archive, to throw away election papers, the personal records and membership lists, all further personal data we are no longer entitled to keep (!) according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It was the EAHIL Executive Board's wish to have the archival documents digitized; a scanned copy of all minutes of meetings, the *Newsletter*, the *Journal*, official documents, and whatever seems to be relevant to the history of EAHIL. Even without the *Newsletter*, the *Journal* and the Conference Proceedings the files mount to more than 1 GB on hard disk.

The archives of Ursula Hausen enabled me tracing back some of the historical connections and contacts relevant to EAHIL's founding and development in the seventies and eighties of the 20th century.

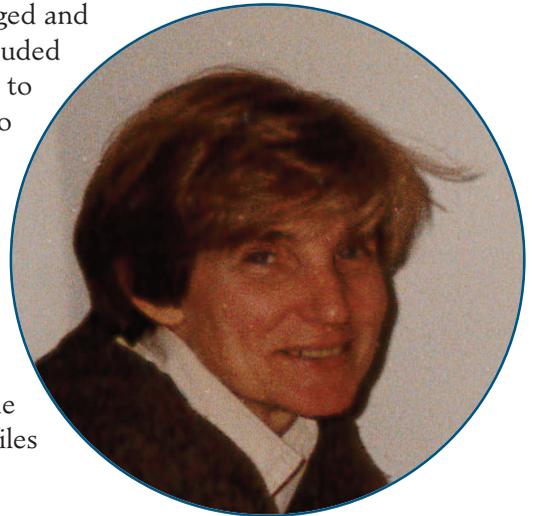


Fig. 2. Roselyne Hoet, EAHIL's secretary (1987-1998) in Brussels.

THE CONGRESSES

International Congresses on Medical Librarianship (ICML) are organized by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the World Health Organization (WHO), and medical library associations worldwide since 1953¹.

In 1969 the 3rd International Congress on Medical Librarianship (ICML3, May 5-9) (*Figure 3*) was held in Amsterdam; Ursula Hausen was one of the attendees. During this Congress a meeting of the participants from Germany (or German-speaking countries?) took place. The founding of the AgmB (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Medizinisches Bibliothekswesen) in 1970 is causally related to the Amsterdam-meeting, which is acknowledged on the AgmB-website².



Fig. 3. Front cover of the program book of 3ICML in Amsterdam.

Among the members of the organizing committees we notice – not surprisingly – both librarians and publishers, but rather remarkable also biomedical researchers and clinicians from the Netherlands. President of ICML3, Dr Pieter J. Gaillard, was a leading cell biologist and the secretary-general of the organization; Dr Pierre J. Vinken, chief-executive of Excerpta Medica, later of Elsevier. Frank B. Rogers of the National Library of Medicine (USA) and Madeleine Wolff-Terroine, librarian/information scientist at the Institut Gustave Roussy in Paris (France), are members of the scientific committee. The Dutch medical librarian in the Organization Committee, Frederik P. Koumans, a biologist, affiliated with the Medical and Pharmaceutical Library, The Hague (Netherlands), born in 1905, would certainly have been involved in future international activities, if much younger³.

On the list of attendees of ICML3 there are the names of several colleagues who will get involved somehow in EAHIL, e.g.: Štefan Adamič, Yugoslavia⁴; Ritva Sievänen-Allen, Helsinki, Finland; Deborah Avriel, Jerusalem, Israël; Susan Crawford, Chicago, USA; Guus Mathijssen, Utrecht, Netherlands; Marc A. Walckiers, Brussels, Belgium; Paul Weiß, Geigy, Basel, Switzerland⁴.

Štefan Adamič, would lead from 1975 the Institute of Biomedical Informatics (IBMI) of the University of Ljubljana and will be awarded the title of Professor Emeritus in 1995 for his contribution to biomedical informatics. Deborah Avriel will later become the librarian of the WHO library in Geneva, Switzerland. Guus Mathijssen, librarian of the Veterinary Library of the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands, is co-founder of EAHIL's European Veterinary Libraries Group (EVLG).⁵ Ritva Sievänen-Allen, is chief librarian of the Finnish National Library of Health Sciences (TERKKO) in Helsinki, succeeded by Miriam Ginman and later by Pirjo Rajakiili.⁶ Mr. Paul Weiß, medical doctor and documentalist, working at the pharmaceutical firm Geigy (later known as Ciba-Geigy) was cofounder of AMDP, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Methodik und Dokumentation in der Psychiatrie. This taskforce with members from Germany, Schweiz and Vienna, developed the system for documentation and evaluation of psychiatric symptoms and diseases (AMP). Since 1981 Dr Weiß was Director of the Institut für Wissenschafts information in der Medizin, Berlin, till its closure in 1990. Susan Crawford has been active in the MLA as an author and editor⁷. Marc Walckiers was the chief librarian of the medical faculty at the University of Louvain, Belgium. His name is strongly related to the history of EAHIL, being the organizer of the first European conference for European medical librarians in Brussel in 1986 and the founder and first President of EAHIL in 1987.

A short report by Ursula about the 4th International Congress (ICML4) in September 1980 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia published in the newsletter *Bibliotheksdiens*t, included the resolution adopted during this meeting "to promote partnerships between libraries in developed and developing countries". See also the article in the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* by Irwin H. Pizer c.s., including Štefan Adamič⁸. Among the people attending this congress in Belgrade we notice: Deborah Avriel (Israël), A. (Guus) Mathijssen (Utrecht, Netherlands), Anna Nannestad Nickolaysen (Oslo, Norway), Fiona MacKay Picken (London, United Kingdom), Ritva Sievänen-Allen (Helsinki, Finland), Marc Walckiers (Brussels, Belgium), Paul Weiß (Geigy, Basel, Switzerland) and Valentina Comba (Torino, Italy).

THE CORRESPONDENCE

In October 1984 Ursula Hausen writes a letter to several medical librarians in different parts of Europe about planning and organizing a European Conference and Workshop on Health Sciences Librarianship in 1986. Among the recipients of this letter: Brigitta Pawlik (Offenbach, Germany), Beryl Ruff and Deborah S. Avriel (WHO, Geneva, Switzerland), Brigitte Blum (Bern, Switzerland), Valentina Comba (Torino, Italy), Gabriella Poppi (Rome, Italy), Øystein Wendelbo (Bergen, Norway), Sigrid Reinitzer (Graz, Austria), Hannelore Schmidt (München, Germany), Fiona MacKay Picken (London, United Kingdom), Kyziaki Apaki (Athens, Greece), Monika Segbert (British Council, Cologne, Germany), Greta Renborg (Uppsala, Sweden), Marc Walckiers (Brussels, Belgium) and Helga Faluwoye (Ibadan, Nigeria).

In that same period there were already contacts with potentially interested institutions who would be able to support, such as: The WHO Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen, the Ministry of Health of the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Foundation for Economic Development; but also LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche) was expected to support the initiative of organizing a conference or workshop for medical librarians in Europe.

The questions posed to the European colleagues were:

1. Which country would you consider best to serve as a host [for the conference or workshop]?
2. What percentage of the conference time should be devoted to continuing education courses, papers, poster sessions, round table discussions?
3. What subjects should be chosen for continuing education sessions?

4. What would be a practical length of the conference, and of the CE [Continuing Education] courses? (practical in the sense, that librarians would have the time and the money to participate).

Before going to Japan, Ursula had already received replies about interest in organizing and attending such a conference from 6 countries, from France, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Italy and the UK, among these Christine Deschamps (Paris), Brigitte Blum (Bern), Øystein Wendelbo (Bergen, Norway).

It was important to get an overview of the degree of organization and cooperation among medical librarians in the countries of Europe as well as the existence of biomedical library associations (or subgroups of national library associations) and what the particular needs would be for workshops and continuing education courses. The information gathered by Ursula Hausen would become the layout of the program of the ECML in 1986.

DECISION TAKEN

Being in Tokyo for the ICML in 1985 the European medical librarians gathered in a room made available by the Japan Medical Library Association (JMLA), with the help of Mrs Takada, in the building where the ICML was being held (Figure 4). They discussed the options for closer cooperation among the European Medical Librarians by either/or founding of an association and/or publishing a European Journal of Medical Librarianship. It was decided that the best way to start the closer cooperation would be a three-day meeting in the fall in 1986 or spring 1987 with the support of and, if possible, funding by the WHO and European institutions.

In the report of this meeting:

- “ - Mr Walckiers, the only librarian from Belgium [in Tokyo], accepted to organize in Brussels the first European meeting of medical librarians with the help of Mrs Hausen and the support of the WHO and of the Commission of the European Communities, if possible,
- everyone accepted that librarians from each country would send suggestions about this meeting to Mrs Hausen and Mr Walckiers
- Mr Wright accepted to prepare and to send to the 26 present European librarians a short report of their meeting of 2nd October in Tokyo”⁹.

Attendees of this meeting:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Valentina Comba, Torino | 10. Agnes Nagy, WHO | 18. Linda J. Parr, London |
| 2. Fiona MacKay Picken, London | 11. Eeva Kihlberg, Helsinki | 19. Stefan Adamic, Yugoslavia |
| 3. Brigitta Pawlik, W.Germany | 12. Terttu Soini, Finland | 20. Paul Weiss, German Dem. Rep. |
| 4. Ursula Hausen, WHO | 13. Anna Nannestad Nicolaysen, Norway | 21. Øystein Wendelbo, Norway |
| 5. Eustace Cornelius, London | 14. Liliane Frenkiel, Israel | 22. Kari Halldal, Oslo, Norway |
| 6. Gillian M. Pentelow, London | 15. Christine Deschamps, Paris | 23. Elisabeth Kjellander, Sweden |
| 7. C. (Tina) Craig, London | 16. Ritva Sievenen-Allen, Helsinki | 24. Ragnhild Lande, Norway |
| 8. Phyllis Gale, London | 17. Monique Cleland, Switzerland | 25. Marc Walckiers, Belgium |
| 9. Derek Wright, London | | 26. Rüdiger Schneemann, Berlin |

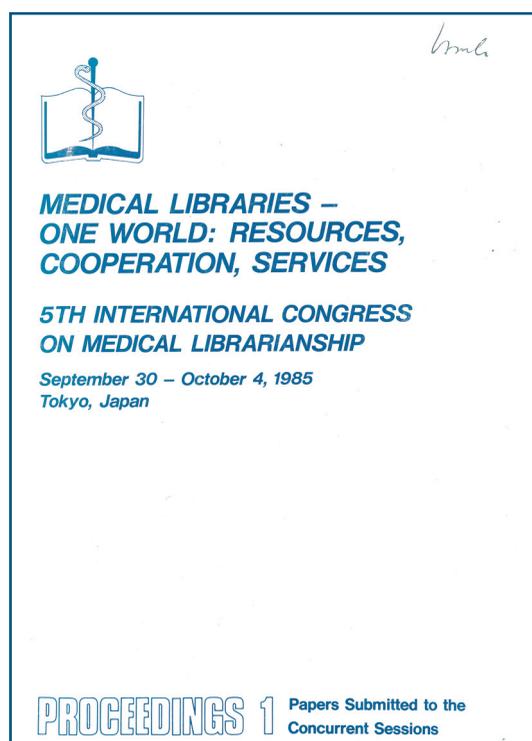


Fig. 4. Front cover of the Proceedings of 5ICML in Tokyo.



Fig. 5. Marc Walckiers, first President of EAHIL.

In November 1985 Marc Walckiers confirms in writing to Ursula Hausen that 10 Belgian colleagues promised to support and cooperate with him in order to organize the 1st ECML in Brussels in October.

Marc Walckiers became chair of the Local Organizing Committee, Ursula Hausen chair of the European Organizing Committee and Christine Deschamps chair of the Programme Committee and together they prepared for and took the responsibility to organize the first European Conference in October 1986 in Brussels (Figures 5-7). Interestingly enough most of the correspondence about the conference continues to be written in three languages: French, English and German.

In order to get sponsoring and support many letters were sent out, e.g. to the European Office of the World Health Organization in Copenhagen, the European Commission, library organizations and research institutes. Stationary with letterhead and footer was designed for the use of all these paper (!) mailings (Figures 8, 9).

Before the decision was taken to organize the 1st ECML the subject of the letters was a short questionnaire about the state of medical librarianship in the different countries regarding organization of the library, associations for librarians and/or medical librarians, union lists of (medical) periodicals, interlibrary loans etc. In the archives I found some clippings of library literature on this subject e.g. the chapter on Europe in the book of Fiona MacKay Picken about Medical Librarianship¹⁰.

The colleagues gathered in Tokyo promised to support and spread the idea of a European meeting.

With the dates set for the 1st ECML most letters are about preferences and interests regarding the subjects and themes to include in the conference program and on the issues to be discussed in workshops or the subjects of training sessions and continuing education courses. Looking at the invitation to contribute and attend the conference¹¹, as well as the published proceedings¹², the scheme looks very familiar. It has been and still is the blueprint of most of the EAHIL conferences ever since!



Fig. 6. Ursula Hausen, first vice-President of EAHIL.



Fig. 7. Christine Deschamps, first Treasurer of EAHIL.



FIRST EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MEDICAL LIBRARIES
Brussels, 22-25 October 1986
PREMIERE CONFERENCE EUROPEENNE DES BIBLIOTHEQUES MEDICALES
Bruxelles, 22-25 octobre 1986
ERSTE EUROPÄISCHE KONFERENZ FÜR MEDIZINISCHE BIBLIOTHEKEN
Brüssel, 22-25 Oktober 1986

Fig. 8. Letterhead of the stationary designed for the mailings and correspondence related to the first conference.

European Organizing Comité
Comité Européen d'Organisation
Europäisches Organisationskomitee
Chairman – Président – Vorsitzende
Ursula HAUSEN
WHO Library - Bibliothèque OMS
Av. Appia - CH 1211 GENEVE 27

Local Organizing Comité
Comité local d'Organisation
Lokales Organisationskomitee
Chairman – Président – Vorsitzender
Marc WALCKIERS
Bibliothèque Méd. Univ. Louvain
Av. Hippocrate 50 - B1200 BRUXELLES

Programme Comité
Comité de Programme
Programmkomitee
Chairman – Président – Vorsitzende
Christine DESCHAMPS
Bibliothèque Univ. Paris 7
Pl. Jussieu 2 - F75005 PARIS

Administrative Secretariat
Secrétariat administratif
Verwaltungssekretariat
Dalia SHANNI
E.C.C.O. sprl
Rue Vilain XIII, 17A - B1050 BRUXELLES
Tél. (32.2) 6478780 - Tx 61434 SDR BRU

Fig. 9. Footer of the stationary for the first conference and the contact details of the chairs of the organizing committees.

SPIRIT AND MOTIVATION

By reading the many letters and notes from Ursula Hausen one can feel the strong motivation she had to setting up a network of medical librarians in Germany and in Europe. Furthermore, it is clear that Ursula maintained close friendly contacts with several colleagues she had met in Zagreb and Tokyo, e.g. the Italian colleagues Valentina Comba and Gabriella Poppi. By organizing the 1st ECML and the founding of EAHIL she was in very close cooperation with Marc Walckiers, who spent 5 months working in the WHO library (Jan-May 1987)¹³ (Figures 10, 11).

Ursula Hausen¹⁴ (Oct 1985):

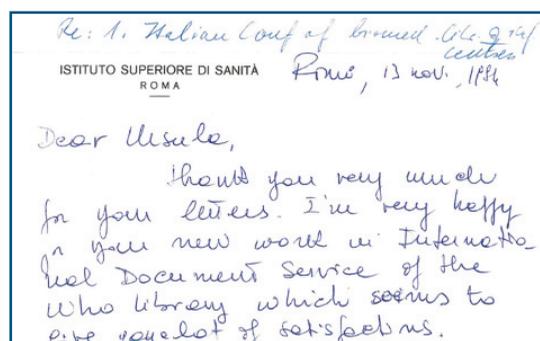


Fig. 10. Letter of 13 November 1984 by Gabriella Poppi to Ursula Hausen.

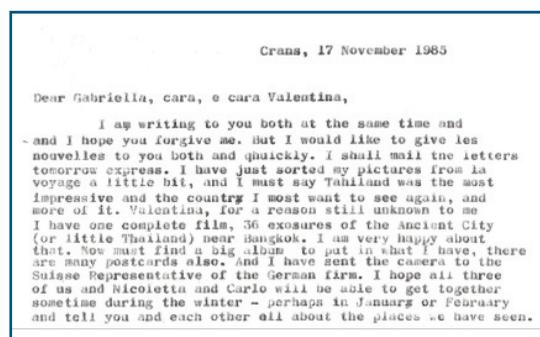


Fig. 11. Letter of 17 November 1985 from Ursula Hausen to Gabriella Poppi and Valentina Comba.

Am wertvollsten waren wieder die persönlichen Kontakte, die während der Kongresswoche angeknüpft oder erneuert werden konnten” [transl.: The personal contacts that were made or renewed during the congress week were again the most valuable]. “After the Belgrade congress, it was already possible to say that these gatherings of librarians from all over the world provided a strong impetus for the medical library system in the individual countries, often a first association of librarians in this sector of special libraries, so this will be increasingly expected to be the case in the future.

For the first time, 25 medical librarians from Eastern and Western European countries came together with the wish to keep closer contact among their European colleagues in the future. It was decided with great enthusiasm to hold a joint conference in Brussels in October 1986. It should be under the aegis of the WHO regional office for Europe and, if possible, the European Community. Librarians from twelve European countries, who were represented in Tokyo, have taken on the task of getting in touch with colleagues in their countries, receiving professional, moral and financial support and making suggestions for lecture and discussion topics and training events” [translated].

SUPPORT AND ORGANIZATION

Financial support to organize the first conference was received from the European regional office of WHO in Copenhagen, and from French and Belgian Ministries. The

European Commission provided the Conference venue and translation services. Sponsorships were received from Svenska Lakaresallkapej, Pharmacia AB, Astra AB, Janssen Pharmaceutica, Smith-Kline Rit, Sigma, Fidia SpA, UCB and Merck, Sharp & Dohme. The conference attracted almost 300 participants; the programme included library visits to Maastricht and Antwerp as well as continuing education courses. With a positive outcome, the conference was a great success.

One of the first preparatory meetings by the organizers for the first conference was held in Lausanne on 28 November 1985 as a side event for a meeting regarding the founding of the European Council of Library Resources (ECLR) with M. Clavel and the Secretary of LIBER, Dr Koch, present. The aims and scope of the ECLR consisted of further cooperation among libraries all over Europe as well as representation towards the European Commission, comparable with the US Council of Library Resources. Among the attendees of this meeting are Christine Deschamps, (Directeur, Bibliothèque, Université Paris VII), Brigitte Blum (Universitätsspital Bern, Bibliothek) and Monique Cleland (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine, CHUV



Fig. 12. *Brigitte Blum, EAHIL Board member and secretary 1989-1990, who became close friends with Ursula Hausen; a friendship that lasted into retirement.*



Fig. 13. *Monique Cleland, EAHIL Board member (1988-1990) and President (1991-1992).*

Lausanne); they would later on take up roles and responsibilities in the Executive Board of EAHIL and in the organizing committees of future meetings (Figures 12, 13).

Already in 1978 LIBER organized in Cologne a seminar for medical librarians in cooperation with the AgmB and it was agreed that a LIBER Group of Medical Librarians should be established but this initiative did not arouse much interest¹⁵. “Although LIBER sponsored the first ECML in Brussels 1986, further cooperation with EAHIL or subjects of mutual interest and shared aims and goals did not develop between the two organizations. LIBER was founded under Council of Europe auspices and has grown to consist [in 1986] of about 180 research libraries. Though these are at present drawn mainly from the national and university sectors, membership is equally open to research libraries with other affiliations such as medicine”¹⁶.

The local organizers of the Brussels event had their meeting on 27 February 1986 in Brussels at the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology. The European Organizing Committee met again on 3 March 1986 in Geneva. This meeting was hosted by the World Health Organization Library. All committees gathered in Brussels on 12 and 13 September 1986. Meetings of the Programme Committee were also held in Paris in Christine Deschamps' Office in Paris, talking in French, English and German (translated by Gabriella Poppi in English).

From November 1985 till October 1986 seems a very short period for organizing a conference. Remember, in times before email and Internet, communication was by paper mail, expensive phone lines or faxes of poor quality. The workload was most probably mainly on the shoulders of Marc Walckiers, Ursula Hausen and Christine Deschamps.

The archives don't tell much about the procedures of inviting speakers, the call for papers and the selection of oral and poster presentations. The names of committee members for this first conference include many of the people who were approached personally and invited to the conference by the organizers. Having known each other already for several years and dividing the workload among the three of them seems to be the secret behind the very successful 1986 conference in Brussels.

THE FIRST CONFERENCE

The title of the first ECML is “Medical Libraries – cooperation and new technologies”. Themes proposed in the call for papers:

1. Cooperation/networks (acquisitions, interlibrary loans, etc.)
2. Computerization and standardization (interfaces, formats, etc.)
3. Information on scientific reference works
4. Development of scientific databases
5. Continuous education of information specialists
6. The role of libraries and documentation centres in health services administration.

In addition to the official sessions, round tables will be held on subjects of common interest. For the first time in many years, this conference will also present to medical librarians in Europe an exhibition on new information technologies, particularly in the fields of publishing, computerized libraries, and databases. Finally, a selection of courses on medical librarianship and consultation of databases, as well as visits to

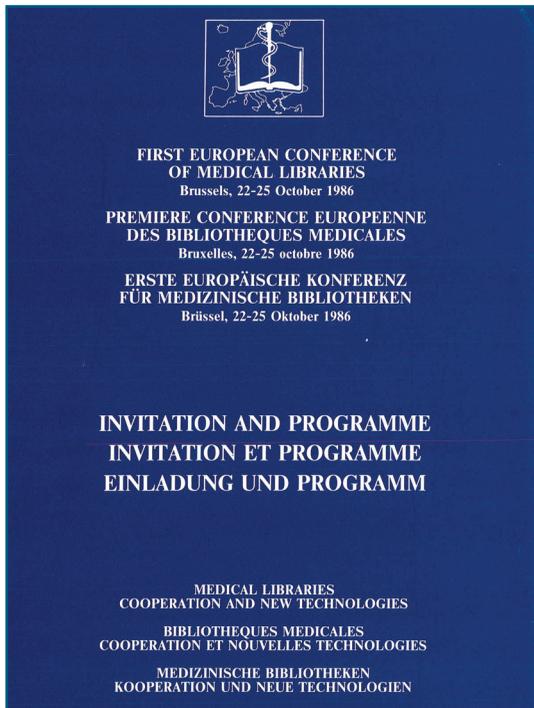


Fig. 14. Front cover of the announcement and invitation to the first ECML.

libraries in Belgium and neighbouring countries, are proposed for the days preceding the conference (Figure 14).

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

The press release issued on October 27th was published in 4 languages (EN, FR, GE, NL):

“From 22 to 25 October 1986, 300 medical librarians from 26 European countries attended the First European Conference of Medical Libraries. This Conference, held in Brussels, was sponsored by the Commission of the European Communities and the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organisation and received support from various institutions in different European countries. Over 80 contributions covered topics like library management, user education and efficient cooperation through the coordinated use of new technologies in libraries (information technology, telecommunications, compact disks, databases, etc.) in accordance with the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the European Communities dated September 27th, 1985. Medical librarians play an important role in the active information support of medical research and health care services working for “Health for all”, an aim jointly accepted by the countries of the European Region of the WHO. During the closing session, the plenary assembly decided, following a proposal of the chairmen of the organizing Committees (Mrs U. Hausen, WHO Geneva; Mrs C. Deschamps, University Paris 7 and Mr M. Walckiers, University of Louvain) to create a European Association of Health Librarians. Its aims will be to represent European health librarians, offer them continuing education, and improve their cooperation for better information to medical research and health services”.

The archives hold many thank-you messages to several persons, organizations and institutions for supporting the conference. For those who have organized an EAHIL meeting (conference or workshop) ever since, you can imagine the relief felt after the closing session, receiving congratulations and compliments; this certainly has been something very special for Ursula, Marc and Christine after years of networking and planning. In the financial report a small surplus is stated, that allows for the founding of the association the year after in Brighton.

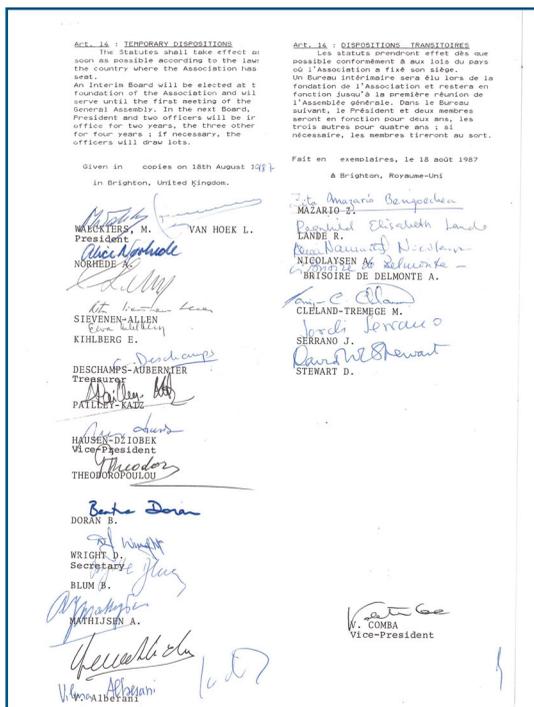


Fig. 15. Signatures of the colleagues accepting EAHIL statutes during the meeting founding the association in Brighton, October 1987.

THE YEARS AFTER

In 1987 at the IFLA meeting in Brighton 72 European Medical Librarians came together on Tuesday 18 August in the Metropole Hotel for the founding of EAHIL (Figure 15).

It would be interesting to investigate the career path of these and all forementioned colleagues and how EAHIL played a role in their professional life. It is stimulating and heartwarming to feel the enthusiasm among these *founding fathers and mothers*, that contributed to and, to my opinion, laid the basis for the outcome of the European cooperation and collegial friendship where EAHIL stands for until today. Even in the virtual world EAHIL's warmth and inclusiveness still exists, as was proven by the very successful online gathering in Łódź last week (16-18 November 2020).

THE AUTHOR'S POSTSCRIPTUM

All issues of the Newsletter to *European Health Librarians* (1987-2004) and all issues of the *Journal of EAHIL* (2005-present) are full-text available online at: <http://ojs.eahil.eu>. Minutes of meetings (Executive Board, Council and General Assembly) are scanned and stored in the digital archive, managed by the Executive Board. Programme and Abstract Books of the conferences and workshops await digitizing. Most of the published proceedings are or will become available full-text online (see the links on EAHIL's website under "Past events"). Copies of most of the conference and workshop websites are on EAHIL's webserver, hosted by Novoserve in the Netherlands. Easily accessible and a great help in "rebuilding" a complete archive of the minutes, are the archives of EAHIL discussion lists going back to 1997, hosted by SPRI (Institute of the Health Services) in Stockholm till the end of 2000, nowadays by E-compass in the Netherlands. The remains of the archive, i.e. the original paper copies of legally important documents, will be transferred to IFLA's headquarters in The Hague (Netherlands). There are only a few photographs in the archive. The 20-year-old compact disc is unreadable on all of my (6!) computers and devices. I have to apologize for the very low quality of some of the illustrations used in this paper.

About my time and energy dedicated to EAHIL I can but quote again Ursula Hausen: "*Am wertvollsten waren die persönlichen Kontakten*". [transl.: By far the most valuable were the personal contacts]. For more than 30 years EAHIL had a prominent role in my life, be it by obviously guiding me as to when and where to travel for the annual vacation.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for belonging to the EAHIL family and to thank my European colleagues for their cooperation and friendship and the uncountable many good memories that I bear with me. That's why I stayed in medical librarianship!¹⁷

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Update from the National Library of Medicine



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Greetings from Lake Gaston in North Carolina! I'm writing this update while sitting on a dock, enjoying the last show of Fall colors while taking a break from my home and home office in Maryland. Like many of you, it's been an interesting year and I find it hard to believe it has been eight months since we started working fully remote during a global pandemic.

I want to acknowledge that the National Library of Medicine (NLM) is as much about people as it is a place where we do business. While the way we do business has changed because of the pandemic, we've done our best to be flexible and responsive. We have adapted our work to be done offsite so we can keep our staff safe while keeping critical operations going. I, along with other NLM leadership, am very proud of how our people have risen to this challenge!

For the [NLM update at the Annual Medical Library Association's Virtual Meeting](#) in August, we described the current state of NLM according to three themes: Resilience, Relevance and Reinvention. These themes have now become our guiding principles as we continue to work and lead in these extraordinary times.

RESILIENCE

Let's first look at resilience in action over the last eight months. Since we went to maximum telework the way we work has had to change. Many of our staff who typically work with our collections have embraced new work, like transcribing manuscripts or working on data projects. All communications, meetings, and even conferences have gone virtual – and everyone had to quickly adapt to a variety of new online technology and platforms. I myself even created a series of “virtual walk-about” to simulate my usual walking around the office to check in with staff.

As you know, data standards are essential to the exchange of health information for research and clinical care. We swiftly updated our coding and terminology products, like [MeSH](#), with new COVID-related entries. We've updated our standards products like the Common Data Elements Repository (CDE) with [protocol questionnaires](#). This standardized, quick response enables easy and open access to research that matters for increasing discovery and solving the pandemic.



Understanding insights from our historical collections better positions us to solve the current challenges we face. Our History of Medicine Division staff quickly adapted to the COVID response challenge by showcasing relevant information on past pandemics including the 1918 Spanish Flu Work, Circulating Now blog articles, lecture series, and history talks. Through our [global health event web archiving](#) activities, we are capturing and preserving selected web content covering this coronavirus pandemic.

We opened PubMed Central (PMC), our digital archive of peer-reviewed biomedical and life sciences journal literature, to expand access to full-text articles related to coronavirus. Recognizing the growing demand from the research and library communities in preprints, we launched the [NIH Preprint Pilot](#) to make preprints searchable in PMC and discoverable in PubMed, starting with COVID-19 preprints reporting NIH-supported research. Preprints are complete, public drafts of scientific documents that are not yet peer reviewed. They play a key role in accelerating the dissemination of research on the SARS-CoV-2 virus and COVID-19. To make access to articles faster, we adapted our procedures for depositing articles and continue to engage with publishers whose journals are within the scope of the Library's collection.

RELEVANCE

Let's explore our second guiding principle: relevance. [Our Strategic Plan](#) lays the foundation for NLM's future; Goal three is to inspire and empower the data-driven workforce needed to meet the demands of tomorrow. This year, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to recruit and hire 20 recent graduates in a government-wide Pathways program that encourages students to enter federal public service. All staff were recruited, selected and onboarded virtually during the pandemic. For the first time at NLM, or at least during my 15 years at NLM, we were able to successfully – and safely – onboard all individuals while in a remote work mode without having to set foot in the building.

Last year, NLM began a Data Science @ NLM Training Program which has been instrumental in building a data savvy workforce. We were able to assess the developmental needs of over 1,200 employees and lay the foundation for learning and skill building through a variety of training events and activities, including an [Open House](#) where staff shared data science projects and contributed ideas for enhancing our products. It was a highlight of my career at NLM to see staff across all job series and divisions come together to learn, share and inspire.

Because we are committed to workforce development, this was not a “one and done” effort. This year, we initiated more training and skill development opportunities that enable staff to apply new skills to their work. We also designed a Mentorship program for non-technical staff to collaborate with data science experts on projects that will enhance products or increase efficiencies in our processes. Our premise is that everyone should use data to make informed decisions regardless of your background or role in our organization.



REINVENTION

Data driven decisions have helped us with a bit of reinvention. Just as our workforce is evolving in diversity and 21st century skill building, our [60-year-old building](#) is finally getting a much-needed upgrade. The goal of the renovation is to maximize efficiency of the space, improve environmental conditions, and create collaborative community spaces, like a 'state of the art' training center, for our staff and the public to enjoy in the future. Construction will start in early 2021 and continue in phases over a three-year period. Rethinking how we work

now during the pandemic is helping us plan as we head into work-flow disruptions and office moves required during the renovations. Many of you have experience with overcoming obstacles trying to serve the needs of your staff and users during renovations, so you understand the complexity at hand.

Over the past year, you may have noticed that we have changed some of our product offerings. For the past couple of years, we have conducted in-depth program and product audits. Using data from this process to inform our decisions, we have consolidated our platforms to focus on products that are unique, high-quality and trusted resources. These changes not only make better use of our internal resources and staff expertise, but more importantly, improves the user experience for better discoverability of biomedical information aligned with our core mission and strategic vision. As information professionals – one of our primary user groups – we hope that you appreciate this agile philosophy and goal of making the information we present more findable for all our users.

How is your organization rising to the challenge of being more resilient, relevant, and reinventive? I look forward to future exchange on this topic as we work together to advance the discipline of biomedical research and information. Until then, be safe, and happy holidays!

ICML+AHILA 2021, 21-25 June in Pretoria, South Africa (blended/virtual conference)



Emma Farrow

Secretary, IFLA Health and Biosciences Libraries section; COVID-19 Literature Digest team, Public Health England on behalf of the International Congress Planning Committee
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CALL FOR PAPERS: DEADLINE 11TH JANUARY 2021

The International Congress of Medical Librarians (ICML) will be coming to the African continent for the first time in 2021. The Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa (AHILA) are the perfect partners - their biannual Congress is an important regional event, with 22 African countries represented in 2019 alongside international delegates. Combining these international and regional conferences provides an important platform to hear about the latest research, share learning and discuss best practice.

With less than ten years to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, our joint theme "A call for action: Engaging to save lives" reflects the contributions that medical librarians and other information professionals are making by connecting, engaging, and ultimately improving health and saving lives. The call for papers, posters and lightning talks closes on 11th January 2021.

The organiser team, led by ITOCA, have selected an excellent venue and are working closely with the South African National Convention Bureau to deliver a complete package for participants both in person and online.

With the remaining uncertainties around the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the conference will either be blended (that is a mixture of "in-person" and online events) or fully virtual. You will need to register for the conference to present but you will not be required to travel to South Africa.

Welcome to ICML+AHILA 2021, we hope you can join us.

ICML+AHILA CONGRESS,
21-25 June 2021
Pretoria, South Africa

Call for Papers, Posters and Lightning talks

Theme: A call for action: Engaging to save lives

Submission Deadline: 11 January 2021

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