The Think The Unthinkable experience in Italy

Background to the Workshop 3
Sustainable development and fundraising

30th EBLIDA Conference - Athens (GR), June 15th 2022

SDG projects in European libraries not only as stories to be told to administrators and policy-makers for advocacy purposes, but also as a fully-fledged concept apt to frame library work into the broader and far-reaching scope of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
The Italian context

**Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development**

*Report 2021*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Improved SDGs</th>
<th>Not changed SDGs</th>
<th>Got worse SDGs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>7, 13, 16</td>
<td>2, 6, 9</td>
<td>1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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**INVOLUNTARY PART TIME**
7.3% (2010) → 11.9% (2020)

**DROP IN GDP PER CAPITA**
- 8.4% approx.

**NEET**
22.2% (2019) → 23.3% (2020)  
9% in 2030

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**Culture DRIVES and ENABLES the CHANGE advocated by the 2030 Agenda**

What about libraries?

Non-homogeneous picture: few libraries having reoriented operations to accommodate SDGs

**Suggestions to Italian libraries**
- debates on SDGs with citizens
- projects in co-creation with partners/citizens
- green library objectives to be pursued within the library

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Our partnership

Tailoring the Italian libraries’ strategic role within the European policy framework

Advocates the importance of a culture for sustainability by developing appropriate tools for libraries [...] and by linking SDG-oriented projects in European libraries to European funding opportunities (EBLIDA Strategic Plan 2019-2022, strand 4)

* Italian Library Association (founded in 1930)
* committed to IFLA global strategy as well as to the EBLIDA European one
* supports the projects carried out by the Italian libraries on sustainable development → SURVEY 2022

* association of public library networks located throughout Italy
* committed to
  - developing new solutions for libraries to improve services
  - filling the lack of national guidelines
  - providing libraries with the right tools to face up to the future
EBLIDA Think The Unthinkable (TTU)

The Italian TTU strategy

Part of a post Covid-19 European library agenda aimed at achieving the SDGs ...

Main goals

- Training, knowledge and dissemination
- Design culture and prototyping
- Raising awareness and political legitimation
- Disruptive effect
- Promoting change

... and financed by the European funds

INDIRECT FUNDING (especially ESI Funds)
- European Cohesion Fund
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- European Social Fund (ESF)

DIRECT FUNDING
- Creative Europe (CREA)
- Horizon Europe (HORIZON)
- Interreg Europe
- Erasmus+ (ERASMUS)
- Digital Europe (DIGITAL)

RECOVERY PLAN
- NextGenerationEU
- European Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE)
- National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)
Italian libraries for UN 2030 Agenda
The three steps planned by the partners

The starting point: two translations into Italian


EBLIDA, *Think The Unthinkable [TTU]. A post Covid-19 European Library Agenda meeting Sustainable Development Goals and funded through the European Structural and Investment Funds (2021-2027), short version, September 2020*

The format

1 - **Training** of librarians aimed at a better understanding of the ESIF 2021-2027 → TTU presentation webinar *Chiedete e vi sarà dato [Ask and you shall receive] (April 28th 2021)*

2 - **Cultural design, project management** and **prototyping** → 10 Virtual Labs (2021-2022)

3 - **Political-advocacy approach** to promote greater awareness among Italian **decision-makers** [in progress]
The 10 Virtual Labs
**Why - What - Who - How**

**Why**
To provide tools (project ideas, guidelines, checklists, etc.) for library project design based on EU funding opportunities.

**What**
- Green Libraries
- Digital Preservation and Digitalisation
- Digital Services and Skills
- Wikibased Repositories
- Social Inclusion and Territorial Cohesion
- Economic Growth and Employment

**Who**
- 1-2 leader(s) + 1-2 facilitator(s)
- 8-10 participants (different skills and experiences)
- ... and coordinators over all

**How**
- 4-6 online meetings from November 2021 to May 2022
- no prescriptions on working methods
Looking into the themes

One theme - more issues / 1

1. **Green Libraries**
   1.1 Restructuring libraries and urban gardens, sustainable territorial and urban regeneration
   1.2 Green literacy

2. **Digital Preservation and Digitalisation**
   2.1 Cooperative webarchiving of cultural heritage digital resources
   2.2 New information ecosystem to deal with heterogeneity problems of management and access to silos containing digital images, improving response times and operations for users

3. **Digital Services and Skills**
   3.1 Digital literacy, inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning
   3.2 Citizen Science (coding, digital fabbing, makers spaces)
Looking into the themes

*One theme - more issues / 2*

4. **Wikibased Repositories**

Access to scientific databases and scientific information helping libraries to find appropriate policy-making related to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and legislative / policy measures designed to advance the cause of libraries.

5. **Social Inclusion and Territorial Cohesion**

Promoting reading and social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most deprived and children, of marginalised communities.

6. **Economic Growth and Employment**

6.1 Improving access to employment of all jobseekers and of inactive people, promoting self-employment and the social economy.

6.2 Developing the local economy and converting libraries in business incubators.
The Virtual Labs «WE ARE»

Lab 1.1: Spaces, environments, areas, places - Green library

Lab 1.2: Green literacy - Green library

Lab 2.1: Webarchiving of local history - Digital preservation

Lab 2.2: Sustainable digitisation - Digitisation of collections

Lab 3.1: Digital communities - Digital citizenship

Lab 3.2: Smart cities and citizen science - Digital citizenship

Lab 4: Smart metadata - Access [and crossing the whole 2030 Agenda]

Lab 5: Social and territorial cohesion - Inclusivity

Lab 6.1: Job and occupational retraining - Work and economic growth

Lab 6.2: Productive activities and entrepreneurship - Work and economic growth
How are the Labs doing?
Facts, figures and more

EXPECTED OUTPUT: ready-to-use tools to help project management in libraries

People
11 leaders
11 facilitators
~ 100 participants

Lab development methodologies
Seminars held by leaders or facilitators
Seminars held by external experts
Contributions by participants
Brainstormings
Individual study
Retrieval of documents
Identification of case studies
Discussions
Writing of notes and reports
Development of concept maps

Work tools
Online meetings (sometimes recorded)
Shared web drives
Online classrooms
Online tools for project design
Online tools for group work

Altogether ~ 50 online meetings

Types of output (mostly in progress)
Reports of the labs
Guidelines to project management
Concept maps, Outlines, Infographics, Videos

Positive attitudes
Enthusiasm in sharing skills and experiences
Desire to discuss with colleagues
Openness to learning

Critical issues
Initial defections of the participants
Poor attendance
Lack of time to work on outputs

Altogether ~ 130 hours of idea sharing
‘A taste of’ the Labs
The Lab 1.2 - Green Literacy

Leader: Academic librarian; member of the AIB study group on IL
Facilitator: Expert in the topic
Participants: 6 librarians [public (3), academic (2), school (1)] + 2 cultural managers

Meetings: 5 (November 2021 - February 2022)

Tools: GoogleMeet; WhatsApp Groups; Google Classroom; Padlet; Mindomo.

Goal: raising awareness on the strategic role of libraries as essential partners to accompany the ecological transition and environmental education, by promoting the change advocated by the SDGs in the relationship people-environment.

Targets: raising awareness among librarians on Green Literacy issues; increasing design skills and new perspectives.

Lab development
- Analysis of strategic documents and tools (2030 Agenda, IFLA, EBLIDA)
- Analysis of financing opportunities (recovery plan etc.)
- Analysis of strategic plans (cities, libraries)
- Project design on the subject
- Analysis of case-studies

Outputs
- Report of the Lab
- Concept map
- Infographic
Lab 1.2 - Green Literacy

The concept map: detail

Educational resources

European policies

Methodologies and communication

Assessment

Funding opportunities

Dissemination of results

Case studies and strategic plans
Alignment with the UN SDGs ... and many libraries EU

Investments in the period 2021-2027 will be guided by five main objectives.

These are the strategic objectives of the European Parliament and the Commission.

They are illustrated by the 5 points on the next slide and they permeate all European funds.
Alignment with the UN SDGs ... and many libraries EU

A smarter Europe, through innovation, digitization, economic transformation and support for small and medium-sized enterprises

A greener, zero-carbon Europe, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewable energy and the fight against climate change

A more connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital communication networks

A more social Europe, which will give concrete expression to the European set of social rights and support quality jobs, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare

A Europe closer to its citizens, supporting locally driven development strategies and sustainable urban development across the European Union

Icons from https://icons8.com/
The workshop
Thinking and sharing ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which are my Library’s <strong>features</strong> matching with one or more SDGs within my local context?</td>
<td>Which are my Library’s <strong>features that put at risk</strong> its commitment with one or more SDGs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does my Library’s output on SDGs <strong>differ</strong>icate from other institutions’ one within my local context?</td>
<td>How much do I <strong>know</strong> about <strong>how to apply</strong> for European funds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which are my Library’s <strong>features</strong> matching with one or more of the European main objectives?</td>
<td>What <strong>resources</strong> are <strong>lacking</strong> in my Library to apply for European funds?</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>ASPIRATIONS</th>
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<td>In which <strong>aspects</strong> of <strong>European policies</strong> for sustainable development is the <strong>mission</strong> of my Library most <strong>identified</strong>?</td>
<td>What <strong>organizational changes</strong>, including human resources, within my Library would be useful to apply for European funds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does my Library have <strong>partners</strong> with whom it can further develop projects eligible for European funds?</td>
<td>Which <strong>strategic shift</strong> is my Library supposed to undergo by cooperating in the EBLIDA’s European TTU strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the <strong>interaction</strong> between EBLIDA and my Library may positively influence my Library’s planning to apply for European funds?</td>
<td>What <strong>differences</strong> do I hope to be able to offer to the <strong>users</strong> of my Library? To its <strong>partners</strong>? To its <strong>employees</strong>?</td>
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Many thanks for your attention!

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