



Theme: Realising the Opportunity: Libraries in Sustainable Urban Development (METLIB Satellite Meeting)

Date: Friday 18 August 2023

Location: [Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies](#) (IHS) Library, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Delegate Numbers: 75 participants from various countries and backgrounds to discover a range of experience and perspectives (**No registration fee required**).

Note: **Urban professionals are especially encouraged to attend**

Background



Around 75 librarians, urban planners, academic researchers, and economists will come together to explore how **libraries** contribute to **sustainable urban development**. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 directly addresses Sustainable Cities and Communities, while some of the other SDGs relating to Good Health and Well Being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4) (SDG 13), both touch on key determinants of sustainable urbanisation and represent areas where libraries play a supportive role.

Libraries serve as a destination and a gathering place, bringing people together in the urban center and in local neighborhoods, often serving as a **third space** that is both welcoming and a refuge. The library provides flexible programming that identifies and addresses local needs in areas such as literacy, digital skills, employment support and cultural affirmation, all issues contributing towards **community engagement and the fulfilment of individual potential and rights**. The library may serve as a partner agency for other urban actors, providing history, documentation, digital support, etc.

Looking across these questions, the meeting wishes to identify factors contributing to the library's value as a partner in sustainable urban development as well as barriers to such a

role. Are there ways that libraries could enhance their ability to contribute to urban development and policymaking? How can urban policy-makers and development specialists better realise the potential of libraries?

This meeting will kick-off with an urban development-based keynote speaker (to be confirmed), followed in the morning by two sessions presenting **case studies** of libraries impacting on urban development (the ambition being to have a **librarian** and an **urban professional** each give their perspective views on the expected outcomes/challenges and lessons learned from the cases in question). During these sessions interaction with the meeting participants will be encouraged and reinforced during the afternoon sessions. In the afternoon sessions, featuring 2 sets of 3 parallel workshops, (participants can choose a maximum two themes) there will be the opportunity to deepen the discussion further in small groups to explore ideas, before we consolidate our ideas and define future follow-up.

A draft schedule for the day is currently being worked out by a special **METLIB** working group and it will be shared here as soon as the speakers/discussion leaders have been confirmed. The full program and registration details are to follow here shortly...

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