



9. BIBLIOTHEKSKONGRESS 2025
#BibliothekenEntschlossenDemokratisch
24. – 27. Juni 2025, Bremen

Open Session:
*Global perspectives on modern
challenges in libraries*
June 24, 2025

**“School Libraries at the Crossroads:
Global Challenges, New Literacies, and the Right to Literacy”**

Luisa Marquardt
(Roma Tre University, IFLA School Libraries, IASL, AIB)

Öffentliche Arbeitssitzung - Salon Oslo - Dienstag, 24. Juni, 16:00 – 17:30
Sitzungsleiter:in: Jacqueline Banford (BID)

Bio

Luisa Marquardt teaches LIS – Library and Information Science at the Dept. of Education, Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy (since 2002)

Previous work experience: Chartered Librarian for over 20 years (Rome County); Library Educator, Trainer, and Consultant.

Translator : Manifesto IFLA-UNESCO per le biblioteche scolastiche (1999, rev. 2003; 2025) and several IFLA publications

Author & Editor: *Global Perspectives on School Libraries* [...], with Dianne Oberg (IFLA 2011) and, with A. Cantatore, *Una, cento, mille biblioteche nelle scuole* [...] (AIB, 2015); *Viel Licht und Schatten: Italienische Bibliotheken* (2019). In N. Werr & R. Musser, *Das Bibliothekswesen in der Romania*. Berlin: DeGruyter-Saur; Il confine permeabile dell'alfabetismo. *Il Manifesto* (2019, agosto); Venuda, F, Roncaglia, G, Marquardt L (2019). Piccole e povere ma innovative, i lavori in corso delle biblioteche scolastiche. In Associazione italiana biblioteche, *Rapporto sulle biblioteche italiane 2015-2017* (p. 146-148). Roma: AIB: Marquardt, L., Moretti, G., & Morini, A.L. (Cur.). (2021). *La biblioteca scolastica e le sue figure professionali: concetti in trasformazione* [...]. Milano: Ledizioni; Marquardt, L., & Anagnostopoulos, E. (Cur.). (2021). *Competenze, orientamento, empowerment per l'inclusione: trasversalità e trasferibilità di skills, strumenti e pratiche* [...]. Milano: Ledizioni; *Biblioteche scolastiche e didattica* (2025), Liceo D'azeglio; Marquardt, L. & Oberg, D. (2025). *School Librarians and Principals Leading Together*. Bloomsbury.

Active member in library and cultural associations (AIB, IFLA, IASL, CNBA, etc.) / (OPAM, Forum del Libro, etc.), covering positions as: **Director Europe for IASL** – International Association of School Librarianship (2009-2016) e **IFLA School Libraries Section Standing Committee Elected Member** (2017-2021; Secretary 2021-2023; Chair 2023-2025); **IFLA CPDWL** (2025-2029)

Head of a community library in Rome - “**Biblioteca Statuario**”.

Awarded with the “International School Librarianship Award” (2008).



Abstract

The talk aims at presenting the IFLA School Libraries Section and its activities, including the promotion of the IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto 2025.

The contribution underlines the role of school libraries and school librarians (equitable access to information and reading, IL/MIL/AI literacy education, collaboration with public libraries, etc.).

As an example, a brief focus on Italy and its main actions in the school library field is provided.

Outline

- Introduction of IFLA School Libraries Section
- Global Scenario
- The Role of School Libraries and School Librarians
- AI & School Libraries
- Brief focus on Italy
- Final remarks
- References
- Contact



The IFLA Section of School Libraries –
established in 1977 – is a Unit within **Professional Division E.**

It is dedicated to the improvement and development of school libraries and resource centres worldwide, with a particular focus on advocating for qualified and adequate staffing.

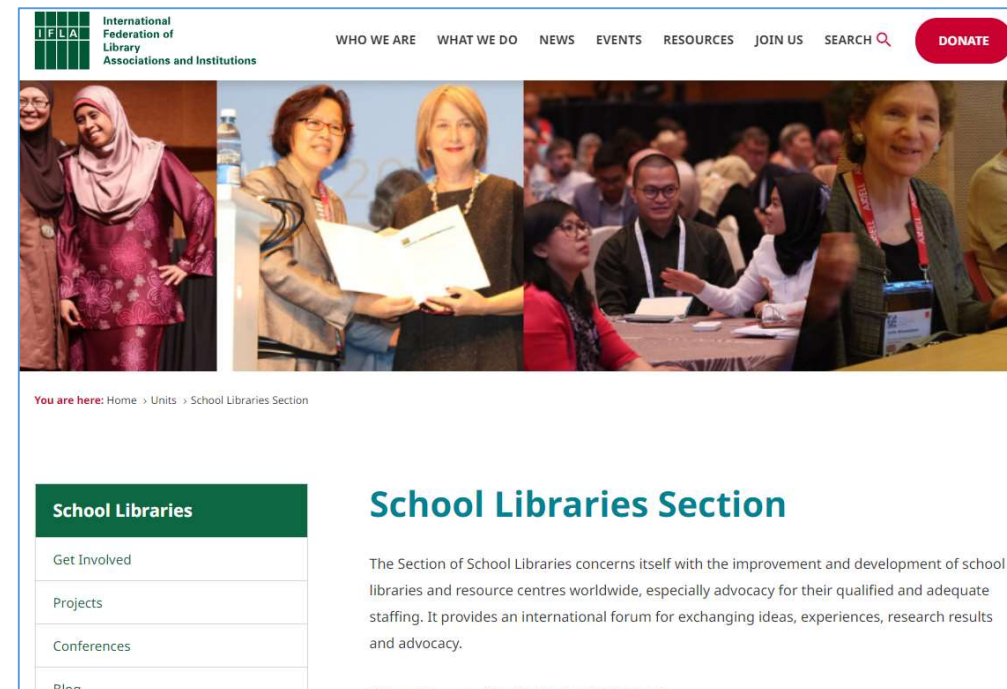
It serves as an international forum for exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, presenting research findings, and promoting advocacy.

It has a MoU in place with the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) for joint initiatives (research, publishing, advocacy).

<https://www.ifla.org/units/school-libraries/>

24/06/2025

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IFLA Section School Libraries

The Section is currently engaged in several initiatives through its working groups, including:

- **AI literacy education** in and through school libraries
- Implementation of the **2030 Agenda** - Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) and education for sustainability in and through school libraries
- An Open Session at the upcoming IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Astana, August 18, 2025
- Translation of the new **IFLA–UNESCO School Library Manifesto 2025** and its related poster in languages other than English
- Discussion on the **revision** of the School Library **Guidelines**
- Ongoing collaboration with IASL, including a joint workshop titled *“Librarians and Principals Leading Together”*, to be held in Rome during **ESHA 2025** (<https://www.esha2025rome.eu/>), the international conference of the European School Heads Association. The workshop is based on the IASL book (Marquardt & Oberg, Eds., 2025), which updates the former IFLA research (Henri, Hay & Oberg, 2002), and on the new IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto 2025.

Info: <https://www.ifla.org/units/school-libraries/>

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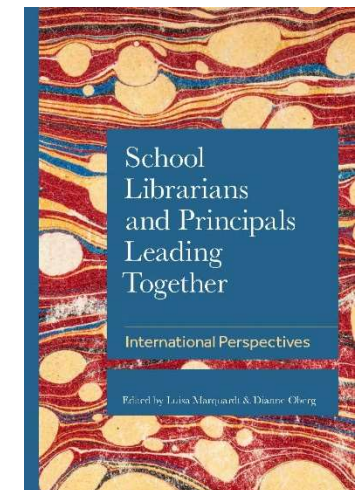
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August 18-22, 2025



October 29-31, 2025



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Global Scenario

Global Educational Challenges (and Concerns):

- ✓ Declining reading performance (PISA, PIRLS)
“Global Literacy and Numeracy Skills in Decline - OECD Report Highlights Widening Inequalities” (2024)
- ✓ Digital distraction and fragmented attention: a cognitive crisis? (Dontre, 2020; Bouten, 2017; Couffe & Michael, 2017; Wride, 2024)
- ✓ Emergence of AI in education
- ✓ Growing demand for advanced literacies
- ✓ Persistent educational inequalities (Corral-Granados, Smeplass & Ho, 2024)

Evolving Concept and Definition of Literacy:

Digital Literacy - Media & Information Literacy (MIL) - AI Literacy - Ethical Literacy (privacy, bias, responsibility)

Literacy means navigating information complexity with wisdom.



The Role of School Libraries and School Librarians

School Libraries provide:

- ✓ Access to diverse, high-quality resources
- ✓ Literacy-rich environment
- ✓ Curriculum and teacher support
- ✓ Safe, inclusive, culturally responsive spaces
- ✓ Critical and ethical information practices
- ✓ Link to public libraries and other type of libraries

Every child deserves a school library.

The School Librarian plays a key role in:

- ✓ Reading promotion
- ✓ MIL and AI Literacy instruction
- ✓ Collaboration with teachers
- ✓ Cross-curricular integration
- ✓ Ethical information guidance

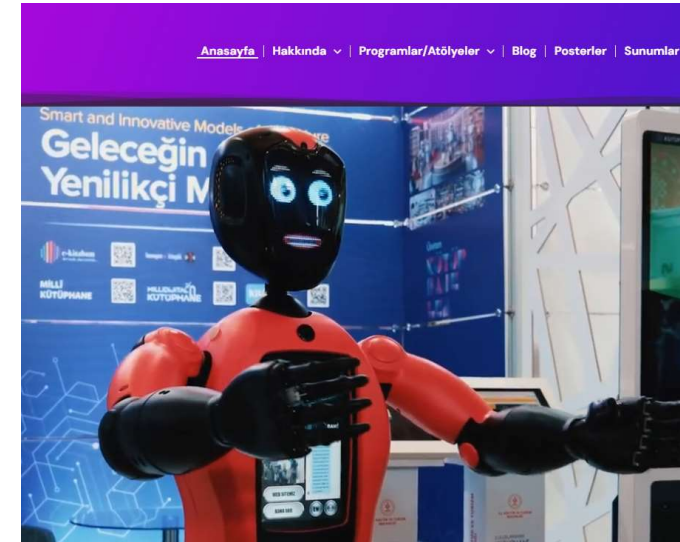
In the AI age, human guidance matters more than ever.



AI & School Libraries

As discussed at the Joint IFLA Midyear Meeting (Istanbul, April 2025), generative school libraries wisely employ AI to implement their services and activities, for instance, in the following areas:

1. Language and Literacy Support
2. Cultural Bridging and Awareness
3. Personalised Learning
4. Community Engagement and Inclusion
5. Access to Resources
6. Social and Emotional Support



(<https://www.kutuphaneveteknoloji.com/>)

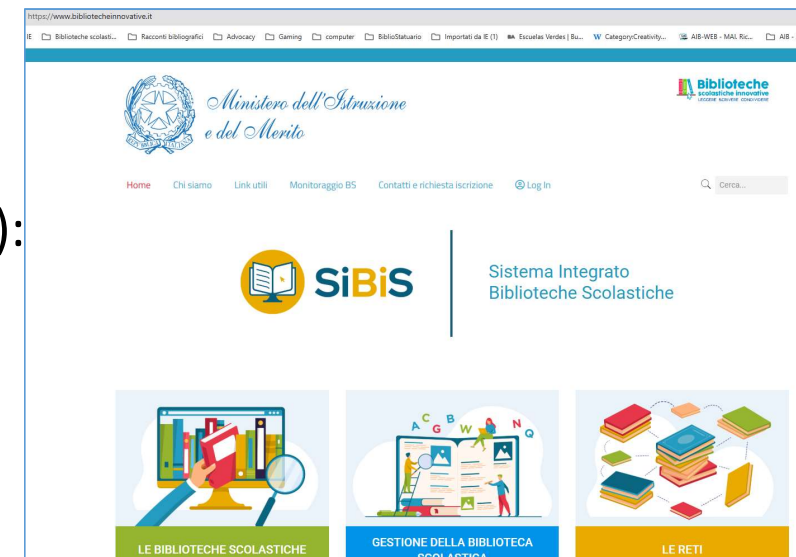
Brief focus on Italy

Some key actions:

- Action #24: Innovative School Libraries (within the Digital School Programme – Law 107/2017)
- The National Reading Plan (Law 15/2020)
<https://www.istruzione.it/biblioteche-scolastiche-innovative/piano-lettura.html>
- SiBiS Portal (Integrated School Library Network)
<https://www.bibliotecheinnovative.it/>
- Education and Training Programme at National and Regional level (2022-2023), plus National and local events (2023, 2024, and current)
- A Library in Every School / «Una biblioteca in ogni scuola»
- Events and Publications

Reading Promotion Campaigns (and School Library Advocacy):

- Ioleggoperché (I read because) – Italian Publishers Association
- Libriamoci a scuola (Let's take off with books at schools) – Cepell/ National Book and Reading Centre
- International School Library Month (October)



Transforming a «space» into a «place»





IFLA Section School Libraries

Promoting and Implementing the SL Manifesto 2025

The IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto 2025 can be a powerful tool to stimulate the development of school libraries, their growth both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Key-points: School libraries

- ✓ Are fundamental educational infrastructure.
- ✓ Are essential educators.
- ✓ Promote equity, inclusion, and lifelong learning.

The 2025 IFLA-UNESCO Manifesto reaffirms the right of every learner to a school library.

It is both a professional and ethical commitment.

Many translations are already available, including German and Italian.

About Italy, both the Manifesto and its related poster have been already published in a book (sent to schools in May 2025) and individually (as posters) for distribution.



(Photo credit: L. Marquardt, May 2025)



Final Remarks

- ✓ There is no educational equity without school libraries.
- ✓ Literacy is evolving — school libraries are where learners evolve with it, they bridge the gap between access to information and the ability to use it wisely.
- ✓ In the age of AI, the human guidance of the school librarian is more essential than ever.
- ✓ A well-resourced school library is not an option — it is educational infrastructure.
- ✓ Close collaboration both within the school (school principal first) and outside (public library, associations, etc.).
- ✓ The development and the spread of a well functioning library in every school are a matter of democracy, are expression of how much a community (school, local etc.) take care of their youth and its own future.

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Luisa Marquardt

Mail to:

luisa.marquardt@uniroma3.it

