

Nepal on the IFLA Library Map of the World

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Abstract :

IFLA's Library Map of the World, launched in response to the need to accurately collect and share basic data and information about the library landscape in each country, has grown into a powerful advocacy tool providing access to country-level library statistics from more than 130 countries in the world, full country profiles describing the library field in each country, and SDG stories about impactful library programmes contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Nepal has engaged in the LMW project with library data covering all library types and a full country profile containing information about the library environment in Nepal, including organisations and institutions in the library field, policy and legislation documents, and information about education and events for library professionals. Nepal's presence can be strengthened by adding SDG stories highlighting the contribution that libraries around the country are making to the country's development.

During the last five years since Nepal joined the LMW project, the country has demonstrated an increase in its data availability that is higher as the regional average in Asia-Oceania region. The article outlines the benefits to the library field in Nepal from its involvement and visibility in this project and offers suggestions for using high-quality library data to demonstrate the value libraries bring to their communities and achievement of the country's development goals.

Keywords: *Library Map of the World; Library data; Library statistics; Library advocacy.*

IFLA Library Map of the World – a powerful advocacy tool :

The Library Map of the World (LMW), a project carried out by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), is a response to the critical need of IFLA and the library field to accurately collect and share basic data and information about

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the library landscape in each country. With the LMW project IFLA aims to create awareness of the state of the libraries in the world, communicate basic metrics that describe library service levels per country, demonstrate the impact of libraries on the lives of people in their communities and the contribution of libraries to sustainable development, and to provide countries with data and evidence for library advocacy (IFLA Headquarters, 2018).

The LMW began in 2017 by collecting country-level data on a small set of basic library performance metrics from as many countries as possible. To gather existing library statistics IFLA has been liaising with data contributors – national library associations, national libraries, and other institutions across the world. The LMW website – librarymap.ifla.org – was launched in August 2017 with library data from 75 countries across all regions of the world. In addition to data, a small number of stories illustrating how libraries contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were made available. The goal was to inspire more libraries and countries to contribute their stories of libraries impacting lives to the site (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2017).

Over the years, the LMW has grown beyond simply providing data and being a resource for accessing library-related SDG stories. In 2018, full country profiles were introduced to provide the LMW users with the opportunity to easily learn all about the library landscape in a selected country (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2018).

Today the LMW website offers three types of content:

- Data – a source of country-level library statistics covering all library types.
- Country Profiles – a source of information about the library environment, organisations and institutions, policy and legislation, education for the profession, and national events in each country.
- SDG stories – a collection of inspiring stories about impactful library programmes contributing to achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

By the end of 2021, over 190 established main contributors³ from around 170 engaged countries and territories worldwide have engaged in the LMW project. In addition, there are around 50 SDG story contributors⁴ from over 30 countries with their SDG stories published on the LMW website.

Together with the LMW contributors, IFLA continues to gather and make available more data, more stories, and more information on the library environment in each country every year. The LMW website has become a powerful advocacy tool for library advocates around the world providing access to content⁵ and helping to visualise the power of libraries:

3 Main contributor – an organisation (national library association, national library, or other institution) which committed to contributing data and/or content for full country profile.

4 SDG story contributor – each individual library or an organisation which submitted information for an SDG story and worked with the LMW team during its curation.

5 Numbers of available content types as of March 2022.

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- Library data from 134 countries that can be used in briefs, presentations, and advocacy messages (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2022).
- 55 SDG stories, that can be used with stakeholders to motivate, persuade, and inspire to act (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2022).
- 26 country profiles that highlight priorities, issues, and achievements in the library field in each country (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2022).

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In Nepal, the LMW team works with the Nepal Library Association as the main contributor which joined the LMW project since its beginning in 2017. The Association provided available library statistics, including annual data updates, as well as the content for full country profile. (*Image 1: Nepal Country Profile*)

Nepal's library system is in its development stage with different types of libraries present, including the National library and other government libraries, academic and special libraries, community, and public libraries, including libraries for children. Setting up and funding libraries on a regular basis, employing a professional staff and providing regular professional development opportunities, working on rules and regulations as well as finding means for sustainability and modernisation of libraries are the policy priorities in the library field in Nepal. The library community is hoping the Government of Nepal will soon enact the necessary policies and laws needed to develop a modern library system (Nepal Library Association & International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2021).

Nepal's country profile provides comprehensive insight into the library environment in Nepal, including information about many support organisations helping with books to rural communities, building libraries in community schools, advancing professional knowledge, building research and vocational skills among children and young adults, implementing literacy and education programmes for girls, and much more. The presence of Nepal on the LMW can be enhanced by adding some visual and impactful SDG stories highlighting the contribution that libraries are making to the country's development.

Statistics and data :

Library statistics is one of the means of understanding the library system and trends during its evolution. They are also critical in making an effective case for providing necessary support to libraries and communities they serve. Nepal has library data available on the LMW website for all library types; some library types have more data available than others with public libraries being front-runners when it comes to data collection.

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LIBRARY MAP OF THE WORLD

HOME SDG STORIES COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTORS ABOUT

NEPAL

OVERVIEW


MERICS

ORGANISATIONS

POLICY & LEGISLATION

EDUCATION & EVENTS

ABOUT NEPAL

 **Region:** Southern Asia
Population: 28,992,771
Area: 147,180
GDP per capita, PPP: 2,478 (current International \$)
Major Languages: Nepali (official) 44.6%, Maithali 11.7%, Bhojpuri 6%, Tharu 5.8%, Tamang 5.1%, Newari 3.2%, Magar 3%, Bajjika 3%, Urdu 2.6%, Avasthi 1.9%, Limbu 1.3%, Gurung 1.2%, other 10.4%, unspecified 0.2%

Library Location Resources
 No information available

LIBRARIES IN NEPAL

Nepal's library system is in its development stage, with the following library types present in Nepal:

- National library and other government libraries.
- Academic libraries - university and college libraries under the corresponding universities, and school libraries which have been established over the past few years.
- Special libraries (medical, law, engineering, and language libraries).
- Community and Public libraries.
- Children libraries.

With the exception of university, college and special libraries, libraries are run by staff without library training or certification. A handful of libraries have computer-based catalogues or databases, and no libraries are automated (Circulation service, etc.).

There are approximately 1000 community and public libraries scattered across the country, which are run by the communities in which they are located. Community and public libraries that are more than 3 decades old can be said to be on the verge of complete shutdown for lack of government support and funding. Only a few are supported by the Government.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) has a library co-ordination unit, and it is solely responsible for the development of policy and legislation concerning libraries in Nepal. Setting up libraries, funding them on regular basis, employing/deploying professional workforce, running refresher trainings every year, making level-wise library development board, and making/modifying rules and regulations as per the need, finding means for self-sustainability and automation of the libraries are the policy priorities in the library field in Nepal.

MoEST is currently evaluating the draft reports on National book policy, the Library Master Plan, and Library Automation that were submitted by ministry-formed committees in 2017. There was an urgent need for such reports because there is a good deal of development work to be done. The library community is hoping the Government of Nepal will soon enact the necessary policies and laws needed to develop a modern library system infrastructure as envisaged in these reports.

University and college libraries are financed by the parent body i.e. the University itself. Private college libraries are financed by the college authority and school libraries have recently begun to be financed by the MoEST.

Due to the scarcity of community libraries, [READ Nepal](#), [Room to Read Nepal](#), [Fajar Trust Fokhara](#), [Manaram Foundation](#) have established libraries focusing specifically on remote communities and their schools. The Government too has started funding schools, to set up libraries and purchase books. However, there are no provisions for trained library managers.

Due to the 2015 earthquake, Nepal has faced acute problems with library buildings, collection development and modernization. The Nepal National Library (NNL) collapsed in the earthquake, as did most of the Nepalese libraries. A new building construction for the NNL is underway. The largest library in Nepal, the Tribhuvan University Central Library Kirtipur Kathmandu, was also affected by the Earthquake, but was recovered and has been rendering satisfactory service to a large number of people in addition to the university's students, faculties and research scholars.

There are several national library associations in the country. The most active are the Nepal Library Association, the Nepalese Association of School Librarians (NASL) in Kathmandu, the Chitwan Library Association (CLA), the Bhaktapur Library Association (BLA), and the Nepal Community Library Association (NCLA).

These associations are concerned primarily with advocating for the establishment of new libraries, cultivating the habit of lifelong learning, and providing advice/service to the concerned. These associations also work to help preserve and conserve the rare and fragile intellectual and cultural heritage of Nepal, and work to build the capacity of library personnel.

The LMW performance metrics have not changed since the beginning of project. The LMW aggregates country-level library statistics across all library types (national, academic, public, community, school, and other libraries) for eight basic performance metrics:

- Number of libraries (library service points)
- Number of libraries with Internet access
- Number of staff
- Number of volunteers
- Number of registered users
- Number of physical visits
- Number of physical loans
- Number of electronic loans

Over the years, IFLA has been monitoring data availability in each participating country, including Nepal, by measuring the data availability percentage index (DAPI).

$$\text{Data availability} = \frac{\text{Number of metrics for which data is available}}{\text{Number of all metrics on the Library Map of the World}}$$

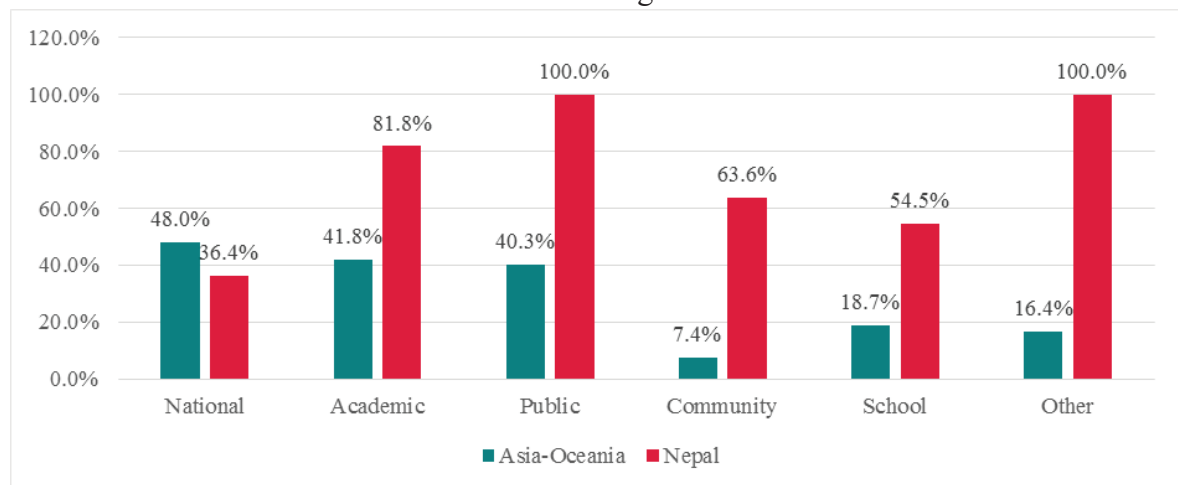
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Country DAPI is calculated as the percentage of available data from the country on the LMW website across all library types. Non-applicable metrics are excluded from the calculation.

Nepal's DAPI at the end of 2021 is 72.7%. With this Nepal ranks⁶ number 13 among all countries with published data on the LMW website. Since Nepal joined the LMW project in 2017 its data availability improved by 9.1%; the availability of library statistics in the country has increased slightly over the last five years.

Overall, Nepal's DAPI (72.7%) is high compared to the average DAPI in the Asia-Oceania region⁷ (29.2%). Looking at data availability in each of the six library types, DAPI in Nepal is lower than the regional average only for the library type of national libraries.

Chart 1: Data availability for library types in Nepal comparing to the average in Asia-Oceania region



Publicly accessible, up-to-date, and high-quality data – a boost for advocacy :

Library data and evidence play a crucial role in library advocacy in backing up arguments and lending them credibility. Up-to-date, high-quality, and open library statistics is a foundation for ensuring more effective planning for the future at all levels, including a stronger focus on the distribution of limited resources where they are the most needed (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) et al., 2022).

With the LMW project, IFLA as an organisation is endeavouring to strengthen the availability of data about libraries and their work in serving library users and communities.

6 Rank is the country's standing in data availability among all countries with published data on the LMW website.

7 There are 27 countries in Asia-Oceania region with published data on the LMW website, including Nepal. Average regional DAPI for Asia-Oceania region is calculated based on data availability from these 27 countries.

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Submitting data to the LMW not only increases the profile of libraries in every participating country but allows for cross-country and international analysis. From a stakeholder perspective, whether governmental or prospective funder, Nepal's presence with substantial data and a country profile on the platform of an international body such as IFLA, points to a well organised profession and a potential trusted partner.

The data on the LMW website is made openly accessible by offering its users an opportunity to download the full LMW data set in a format that allows further data analysis. It is possible to compare how the library field is structured and carry out regional and global analyses such as IFLA's own Library Stat of the Week series (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2020).

It is vital that statistical authorities not only ensure the collection of data about libraries and their use, but that they make it publicly available. Without evidence, it is harder to identify successes and needs, to develop strategies for library development, or to identify the contribution that libraries can make to the achievement of other national policy goals.

In addition, availability of library data makes it easier for library advocates to engage with governments in highlighting the role of libraries in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals, through reports submitted to the United Nations as part of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). 2021 was a record year for references to libraries in VNRs with almost 44% of reports published referring to libraries, compared to 26% in 2018 (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2021).

IFLA's Statement on Open Library Data calls on all governments to collect or support collection of library data, and to make this data open and re-usable (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2022). LMW plays a key role in supporting the Statement.

Reliable library statistics help to provide a factual basis for the vibrant library environment within in Nepal and demonstrate our shared vision for evidence based and data driven development.

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