Reading development: an essential axis of sustainable development

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Abstract :

While sustainable development in the North mainly focuses on the environment in terms of reducing consumption (particularly of energy) and emissions of pollutants, other objectives of this approach must not neglect the following points:
- *Access to knowledge for all*
- *Preservation of cultural pluralism*
- *Guarantee of fundamental freedoms to all*

The system currently developed in the North shows its limits, particularly when it comes to freedom of access to knowledge and respect for diversity, while developing countries face crucial choices and the sustainable development framework might be helpful to make those decisions. Rural exodus and rapid growth of urbanization create major challenges about new social aspirations like generalized formal education and more open cultural facilities.

In this perspective, as reading is an essential source of knowledge and dissemination of culture, which strategy would be appropriate for the development of reading?

One of the today's key debates is about electronic resources. Should the information society necessarily be only an electronic information society? If the marginal cost seems very interesting for mass distribution of knowledge, is electronic documentation really the best tool for developing sustainable access to knowledge and culture for all?

When reviewing issues related to the dissemination of digital information in a technical, economic, cultural and political perspective, we will try to determine the advantages and disadvantages of information technologies, and to search for ways to reach a truly sustainable development that benefits all. We will especially try to highlight the important role that libraries may play in the invention of this new model and the need of collective advocacy for a fair and sustainable approach of access to culture and knowledge.

Introduction :

How the reading joins in the sustainable development?
On August 24th, 2002 in Glasgow, the IFLA launches the Statement on Libraries and sustainable Development indicating in particular that " [...]*the international library and information community forms a network that connects developing and developed countries, supports the development of library and information services worldwide, and ensures these services respect equity, the general quality of life for all people and the natural environment[1]».".*

Besides the three pillars of the sustainable development (ecology, economy and social), the IFLA insists on the issue of the North-south solidarities. Indeed, the notion of long-lasting leans on the idea that social justice and political freedom are two core elements of stability and moderation, and are thus essential bases to the implementation of a more responsible relationship between human beings and the whole biosphere.

Long-lasting development couldn't really be without knowledge access for all (social and required economic need) conservation of cultural diversity (human biodiversity) and guarantee of fundamental freedom for all (wealth of the human ecosystem). These three necessary conditions must allow the advent of free and committed citizens, and their realization requires a wide sharing of reading capacities.

Illiteracy is a main factor of social and political exclusion in the countries of the North. While in the South it is an obstacle to people's emancipation, that maintains classes distinctions. Mastering the reading is thus a core element of integration into the society as a control lever of development and emancipation.

Conceiving a fair, democratic and sustainable society which is not a society of readers seems quite difficult today[2].

At first we shall see which criteria would be necessary to allow a sustainable reading development. Then, we shall try to define whether the digital technology

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[1] http://archive.ifla.org/III/eb/sust-dev02.html

[2] However, we are aware of the importance of the oral tradition. Even if strictly speaking, the oral tradition isn't about reading, libraries have a role to play in the conservation and the communication of the oral tradition. The importance of the tales in libraries is not to be demonstrated any more. But we do not treat this issue in this presentation.

offers a sustainable model for reading development, including from an environmental perspective. And at last, we shall end with the role and the place libraries could play in this context.

I - What criteria for a sustainable reading development ?

1. A long-term vision for a long-lasting development

Achieve universal primary education is the second goal of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Thanks to a rate of schooling higher than 90 % in 2006[3], this objective seems attainable[4]. Quoting the UNO itself, even if primary education is essential, it really bears fruit only if it goes on throughout the life. It is not only necessary to learn reading, but especially, to practise daily reading to get benefit from it. It is by daily contact with the writing included in a readers sociability network and by having the opportunity of reading that people remains readers. It is thus essential to take into account the whole context if we wish to advocate a really sustainable approach of reading development.

Even in France, where children attend schooling and learn to read, the part of the pupils under age 15 experiencing significant reading difficulties climbed from 15,7 % in 2000 to 21,7 % in 2006[5]. We have no skills to explain exactly the reasons of this evolution. But these figures show how much the reading competence is evanescent, and how much it is important never to let up the effort for its development. And it is surely obvious for everybody in this room that libraries are a central element of this permanent effort for reading development.

However the United Nations Environment Programme shows that the Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals will remain difficult to realize as long as the natural environment will not be taken into account. Indeed dealing with wood gathering and water carrying, children of poor countries don't have no time to go to school or learn to read. Now, in a natural deteriorated environment (water pollution and deforestation), the duration of these domestic tasks is getting longer depriving even more the children of the access to education, and thus to reading.

So that the reading could become more democratic, it is necessary to make it accessible to all.

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[3] source : http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml , read on 30 july 2010

[4] Even if in the book *Huit*, Taslima Nasreen and seven authors denounce the promises not held by United Nations for the development. http://www.rue89.com/cabinet-de-lecture/2008/11/26/objectifs-du-millenaire-huit-ecrivains-epinglent-l-onu

[5] source : http://www.stats.environnement.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/fileadmin/indicateurs/IDD_nationaux/821_fiche_difficult_351s_lecture.pdf

2. A bearable development accessible to most of the people

Knowledge access for all and the guarantee of fundamental freedom are necessary elements for the establishment of a democratic society. As the IFLA/Unesco Manifesto indicates [...] *Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society*[6] .

The obstacles to free access to reading and information ensue above all from political and social problems. And the recurring attacks on liberties are present in the North as in the South in very different contexts.

In the North: censorship, self-censorship, merging of the media, end of the separation between justice / power, the gap between the haves and the have-not...
In the South: censorship, liberties restrictions (Internet cut in China), confinement of opponents (human rights restrictions)...

In these conditions, reading cannot be accessible to all.

Now, if the digital networks could be an extraordinary means of free information broadcasting, we also know the political risks bound to them, whether it is in watch over private life, censorship[7] or manipulation.

Printed matter obviously also knew and still know censorship and surveillance. It is however hard to imagine in the world of the printed matter the equivalent of the Li Zhi (2003) affair, this Chinese cyber-dissident whose identity had been revealed to the authorities[8] by Yahoo!. As far as we know this type of punctual denunciation seems to last.

Also the French law forcing libraries to keep a specific name track of the use of Internet on public computers does not have any equivalent for the paper.

In a censorship and control on access to information context, making reading accessible to all requires a major work to blow up bolts.

So, reading development requires to take into account the human environment, as we have just saw it, but also the natural one, as we will see.

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[6] IFLA/Unesco Manifesto, http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm

[7] http://www.amnesty.org/fr/news-and-updates/news/chinas-censorship-internet-must-stop-20100113

[8] http://www.pcinpact.com/actu/news/26549-Yahoo-Chine-encore-accuse-de-denonciation.htm

3. An adaptable development also takes into account the environment, natural or not

As Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals indicates, hard living conditions in a deteriorated environment are an obstacle to the learning to read. From North to South, destruction of natural surroundings entails living conditions impoverishment. As if the destruction of biodiversity has as a consequence the destruction of cultural diversity.

After a so-called natural disaster such as the Haiti's earthquake of January, 2010, what can reading bring ? It allows " [...] to kiss it goodbye and to exceed traumatism [...][9]" and also to support a culture in a state of weakness, to set up actions towards children and to liven up the everyday life of refugee camps.

Reading could also be a mean to tackle before such problems. As the Interreg III European program NOE[10] project -introduced by the Librarians and cultural action participants collective (COBIAC)- shows, the goal is "[...] *to heighten young people awareness[...] of natural risks and their consequences on the cultural heritage [by the creation] of an entitled comic strip "The NOE's flight", written in Italian and translated into French, English, Portuguese and Arabic*. It was spread in schools and libraries of the three partner regions as well as in high-risk areas of Algeria (Algiers, Oran and Boumerdès[11]) ". In which the reader learns that reading has a role to play in problems linked to environment (natural seismic risks) and culture (ensuing heritage destructions).

In a different style, deliveries of declassified books of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region (France) libraries are impatiently expected in Palestine. Their arrival announcing new readings for the inhabitants, as well as contacts with the outside. In a strongly deteriorated environment, socially under pressure, and economically suffocated, reading gives people in a state of permanent stress a shot in the arm. But there are many obstacles, precarious routings conditions, and fragile deliveries couldn't always be maintained.

Now, development of mobile, effective and light digital tools would allow to compensate for some of these shortages. But besides the modification of reading report they generate, these tools also require needs in training, money for the equipment, and also cause nuisance.

II - The digital technology, a sustainable model for access to reading?

4. The digital divide from North to South

Digital divide is a inescapable fact within society. It exists between the youngest and the oldest, the most and the least culturally endowed, between the richest and the least rich. But it is even more visible between rich and poor countries.

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[9] http://www.bibliosansfrontieres.org/

[10] http://www.cobiac.org/-noe-

[11] http://www.cobiac.org/-noe-

A 2003 study of the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) already noticed the uneven distribution of Internet access with a *"[…] rate of penetration of Internet [reaching a ceiling] at 0,4 % in sub-Saharan Africa [when it is] higher than 50 % in the USA, in Scandinavia and in Hong-Kong […]*[12]*"*. Today digital divide is still a fact, even if it is slightly reduced. Indeed, Africa reaches henceforth a rate of penetration of…5 %[13] ! Disparities are always important.

To reduce the digital divide, besides the Volunteers of the United Nations program UNV[14], had been developed the International Technologies Union. It is " […]*the leading United Nations agency for information and communication technology issues* [15] ". Its main mission is " […] *"bringing the benefits of ICT to all the world's inhabitants"*. A key priority […] *"lies in bridging the so called Digital Divide by building information and communication infrastructure, promoting adequate capacity building and developing confidence in the use of cyberspace through enhanced online security […]* "

In brief, if *"[…]the goal of putting every human being within easy and affordable reach of information and communication and to contribute significantly towards economic and social development of all people […]"* is a praiseworthy intention, the equipment level in means of telecommunication remains even today deeply unequal, as we saw it.

Not to mention the cut in cultural diversity. We evaluate approximately at 72%[16] the web contents written in English while it is the mother tongue of hardly 5 % of the world population[17] (representing 35 % of the users[18])! In a prospect of sustainable development, this drying out of cultural diversity is a real danger. And it is essential that libraries would be aware of it and advocate a place for all languages in their collections. We shall see some existing way in the last part of the speech.

As the Unesco notes, […] increasingly, information and knowledge are key determinants of wealth creation, social transformation and human development. Language is the primary vector for communicating knowledge and traditions,

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[12] extrait de http://www2.cnrs.fr/presse/journal/1093.htm

[13] http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2009/07-fr.html

[14] http://www.unv.org/en/news-resources/archive/past-annual-reports/annual-report-200304-opening-doors/doc/working-together.html

[15] http://www.itu.int/net/about/index-fr.aspx

[16] http://portal.unesco.org/ci/fr/ev.php-URL_ID=20979&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[17] in *La bataille des langues,* Manière de voir, Le Monde diplomatique,n°97, février-mars 2008, p15.

[18] in *La bataille des langues,* Manière de voir, Le Monde diplomatique,n°97, février-mars 2008, p65.

thus the opportunity to use one's language on global information networks such as the Internet will determine the extent to which one can participate in emerging knowledge societies[19].

5. The digital technology, a low cost broadcasting?

Although "dematerialized" and "virtual", digital information requires the use of expensive technical tools with a short life expectancy[20]. That means investment, training and staff able to maintain the equipment in good condition.

In this context, there are attempts of digital tool provision and skill transfer, as shows the "digital school Library" program of the Foundation for a Global Library[21]. Leaning on the problems of supply in electricity and of connection to the telecommunications network, this program also considers the problem of the equipment costs by supplying XO computers.
However, the problem of such a program is its durability compared with the quick obsolescence of the equipments.

How could digital information being part of reading process ? Could we seriously imagine a massive and in relatively short term distribution of digital reading tools such as reading tablets, Kindle, Ipad or others? While their individual cost and functioning means remain inaccessible to wide sections of population, increasing even more the digital divide.

If the exponential smartphones expansion offers many resources, its economic model leaves little space to libraries at the moment. Nevertheless, compared with their distribution included in emerging countries, they could be a means to strengthen reading development. On the express condition, however, to offer a wider linguistic variety, a real interoperability, and costs of communication sharply reduced. What we don't seem to do.

But digital information access could also be cut by natural disasters, as in Haiti. As the ITU remains [...]while both developing and developed countries are equally vulnerable to natural disasters, poorer nations are hardest hit because of their already fragile economies and lack of resources[22].". Not to mention the

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[19] http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=16539&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[20] Between the changes of standard, the unavailability of spare parts and the irreparable degradation of components, libraries often have little grip on these aspects that could affected services to users.

[21] This program aims " [...] *at facilitating free access to the educational and cultural quality contents, and at allowing communities to create and to share their own contents. The digital school Library joins villages without electricity and internet access thanks to the use of a computer with reasonable price conceived specially for the children such as XO computers of the One Laptop Per Child organization. The collection of the digital school Library consists in tales, comic strips, dictionaries, encyclopediae, educational games and educational forms*

http://bibliothequeglobale.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=41&Itemid=45

[22] http://www.itu.int/net/about/mission.aspx

opportunism of ICT traders taking advantage of the post-disaster rebuilding to sell (very expensively) their products and to impose technological dependence[23].

Now, without electricity, without telephone, without Internet, and without means, to what written information could a reader hope to have access? What about a good old book in the daylight?

Add to the digital information fragility which first undergo poor countries is another factor for the whole world population : pollution.

6. The digital technology pollutions

Even if we currently speak about dematerialized documentation, digital resources are nevertheless well anchored in material reality and energy consumption. "*in 2005, the electric consumption of all the servers in the world had been estimated at 123 terawatthours which amounts to the production of about fifteen nuclear power plants*[24].". Only for France, the annual consumption of the ICT in 2008 amounts to the production of 8 power plants (50 to 60 terawatthours [25]), and represent at the moment 13,5 % of the total annual consumption of electricity.

Could the development of "virtualization" techniques of the servers and the improvement of the machines performances allow to hope for a consumption slowing down in the next years[26]? Nothing is more uncertain. The current forecasts for France are more pessimistic and indicate a 20 % consumption from 2012[27]! There is thus incompatibility with the objective of reducing by 20% the energy consumption before 2020[28].

More usually electricity is far from being easily and continuously available all around the world. Certainly, things evolve and access to electricity improves from day to day. But in a medium-term prospect, we are wondering about the possibility of having such quantity of electricity for every inhabitants of the planet equivalent to that at present only consumed in the North.

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[23] Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, New York : Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt , 2007.

[24] http://www.econologie.com/mobile/ar-3454.html, article tiré des Dossiers du Monde de juin 2007

[25] http://www.clubic.com/actualite-264210-tic-consomment-megalopoles.html, consulté le 21 juin 2010

[26] It is necessary to be attentive to the « rebound effect ». If the number of servers increases faster than the improvement of their energy performance averages, the global consumption of the network will continue to grow!

[27] http://www.telecom.gouv.fr/fonds_documentaire/rapports/09/090311rapport-ticdd.pdf

[28] http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/france/other.pdf

Won't the depletion of natural resources and the increasing cost of the energy quickly going to become a brake in this development? It seems insane today to build a reading policy only on consuming electricity devices. And therefore to consider that books will inexorably be replaced by a digital reader requiring a whole lot of energy resources.

Because beyond electricity, the presence of poisonous compounds and rare metals in electronic devices must be taken into account. The European Commission report published on June 17th, 2010[29], underlines the highly strategic nature of the access to these rare metals for the new technologies development. Now, these resources are in the heart of important geopolitical movements, in particular in Africa, as also in the heart of wild economic battles.

This resources exploitation is extremely problematic from an environmental and human point of view: deforestation, contamination of grounds and waters, put in danger of miners… When it is not to keep nameless wars! And it is, again, mainly the countries of the South that undergo all these damages.

But the European Commission cynicism only speaking about economic agreement and supply also proved itself as Mr. Antonio Tajani (European Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship) asserts that *the Commission also wants to facilitate the exploitation of the European mineral resources […], by avoiding a too strict application of the Natura 2000 directive on the protected zones*[30]. This clearly indicates that in the heart of Europe, the economic concern dominates widely on the ecological one.

Already widely exploited for their resources in rare metals, South countries are once again affected as they are used as trash cans for the electronic scrap of the North. In France, we consider that every person generates an average of 25 kg of WEEE[31] (waste electrical and electronic equipment) a year. Less than 10 % is correctly recycled, the rest is disappearing, following more or less official and legal sectors, most of the time in South countries.

In other words, from the beginning to the end of their life cycle, the digital documentation tools have a particularly negative impact on the environment and even more on the least rich countries environment. With their low means libraries could obviously not by their own will change this order of things. But as everyone, libraries must be aware of these stakes and choose not to worsen the problems as taking place in a global prospect of sustainable development.

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[29] http://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2010/06/16/l-europe-veut-garantir-son-acces-aux-metaux-rares_1373665_3244.html

[30] ibidem

[31] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/waste_management/l21210_fr.htm et http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9chets_d%27%C3%A9quipements_%C3%A9lectriques_et_%C3%A9lectroniques

III - The libraries role and place as agents of a sustainable development of the reading

As main tool of fight for literacy and of written information distribution, libraries should thus stand a key place in sustainable development projects. They are on the one hand "object" of the sustainable development by the searches about energy consumption cut and pollution linked to their functioning, and on the other hand also "subject" of the sustainable development, in the way they could contribute to create conditions for social equity and political freedom as respecting the environment at best.

7. Offering areas of equality and free access to information

The phenomenon of globalization is not that an economic reality. On the human plane, tens of million migrants[32] cross borders to obtain a better life by avoiding poverty, wars and persecutions. Now, despite put up walls and entire zones trying to stay safe of this movements of population, we have to admit that the *watertightness* is only virtual. In the prospect of facilitating the integration of all the populations, reading and libraries obviously have a role to play.

In the North, the fight for literacy and elimination of illiteracy programs exist. And it is important that libraries develop them by becoming places of resources for migrants and both political and climatic refugees, and also for minorities.

If libraries of large metropolitan areas generally offer access to multilingual collections and subscriptions to newspapers representing the cultural diversity, some programs deserve however to be mentioned. In particular two examples coming from Netherlands.

The first one is the one of Doorn Kulturhus who shelters an association of migrants and political refugees.

The second one is the one of the Dordrecht public library that facilitate the integration of the women of extra-European communities through their children registration. A child card gives the right to his mom to loan a grown-up book in the specific collection for foreign origin women. These books are treating of private and individual issues (sexuality, contraception, public freedom). These works are at the disposal of the women in the children area.

But they are many other examples throughout the world.

We shall not speak here of the South countries as we don't have no skills for this. But let us indicate however the example of the Centres of reading and cultural activities[33] (CLAC) in Africa. Introduced by the Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie[34] (Intergouvernmental agency of the

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[32] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_migration

[33] http://www.eticao.tg/etiD01-02.html

[34] http://www.wwo.fr/ong-948-Agence-intergouvernementale-de-la-Francophonie.php

French-speaking countries and communities of the world collectively), these are places for public reading development in rural areas. Their objectives are to facilitate the opening up of rural communities (by the access to books and to modern communication ways), to develop centres for exchange and training in various domains (education, elimination of illiteracy, health), to allow the blooming of local cultures and popular traditions.

Reading and exchange as ways to live together ... But with what durability[35]?

8. Developing the cooperation and sharing the resources

North/South solidarities are visible through international cooperations, such as B@bel, the COBIAC and MEDiakitab.

The Unesco B@bel[36] initiative wants *giving access to information by promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in Cyberspace*. We already talk about cultural diversity impoverishment on the Internet[37] in point 4 on the digital divide . *By reducing linguistic barriers to information, Initiative B@bel is contributing to bridging the digital divide as well as advancing UNESCO's efforts to foster knowledge societies, promote universal information access, and achieve education for al[38]l*. It comes in 15 programs and opens numerous cooperation ways.

The librarians and cultural action participants Collective (COBIAC[39]) [see point 3] develop partnerships with the Maghreb, the Middle East, Africa, the South-East Asia and also multilateral projects. Originally based on the sending of outdated library books of the Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (France), these projects widely evolved towards partnerships allowing trainees welcome and professional

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[35] « But until this day, and since its creation in 2007, our library mainly lives only thanks to payment out of my own pocket . […] our biggest regret : the defect of support of the State of Cameroon through the Ministry of Culture and the youth or city halls ", extracts from the Web site of the CLAC of Yaoundé, Cameroon,
http://www.leclac.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=49

[36] http://portal.unesco.org/ci/fr/ev.php-URL_ID=16540&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[37] Today, more than 90% of content on the Internet exists in only 12 languages, so many users of the 6 000 languages in the world are overlooked by this important communication medium. The "Initiative" puts emphasis on the need of completing all the steps to ensure the presence of a language in the digital world. Synergy and cooperation with other institutions and initiatives is capital to achieve longer term results regarding multilingualism in the cyberspace.

Since access to information and knowledge is key to human development and quality of life, Initiative B@bel places special emphasis on the needs of developing and transition countries. By supporting their information needs and encouraging their participation in the digital environment we can contribute to societal progress.
From http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=16540&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[38] http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=16540&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[39] http://www.cobiac.org/

exchanges and indeed the support to local publishing and libraries building. All the elements allowing to support reading and to root it locally.

MEDiakitab is "[…] a Euro-Mediterranean platform around book and around multimedia for the youth, and practices of cultural action which are bound to it. […] MEDiakitab is based on the pooling of approaches, experiences and questionings on these practices, a "Mare Nostrum" of the access to knowledge and to imagination through book, tales and multimedia[40][…]". When the consideration of the traditional forms of reading (tale) meet the current tools (digital technology), it allows to bring down borders and to work at a distance around common problems. A beautiful example of sustainable development.

The place and role of reading is fundamental in all these projects, and the one of libraries undeniable. Now, in these long-term cooperation, the environmental side isn't very much put forward. There is thus a place to be taken for libraries.

9. Becoming a model of sustainable development

As Alain Caraco notices […] libraries can't stay indefinitely out of environmental issue. Their ecological impact is typical of service sector activities: libraries occupy buildings, generate transport, make purchases and produce waste […][41].

Reading development in exemplary places as rehabilitated libraries allows to send a strong signal to the civil society. But how envisaging such places when everywhere, budget cuts strongly breaks down the sustainability of library programs ?

Indeed, the recurring economic crises due to globalization are not without impact on libraries and reading world. Let us take for example the United States of America. Budget cuts in big public libraries became common practice. After Seattle in 2009, the New York public library put up with a budget loss of 37 million dollars at the beginning of 2010. The library is thus under constraint to close a certain number of its branches, depriving then hundreds of readers already affected by the economic crisis to free access to numerous documents.

Nevertheless, in March, 2010, the New York public library inaugurated its 88th branch[42], with its "environmental-friendly" design ! What a paradox. A new building conceived according to less consumer modes of resources whose perpetuity already is subjected to budget ups and downs of the current year. Some weeks later, the public library of Los Angeles had to pay for budget cuts. How promoting long-term reading if we're not able to offer it any more necessary areas nor time for its blooming ?

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[40] information recueillie sur le site http://www.medcoop.com/actualite-detail.php?idactu=203, consulté le 1 juin 2010.

[41] Alain Caraco, Les bibliothèques à l'heure du développement durable, in *Bulletin des bibliothèques de France*, Paris, 2008, tome 53, n°3.

[42] http://manhattan.ny1.com/content/top_stories/115399/new-york-public-library-opens-green-library-in-battery-park-city

Fortunately, some prestigious institutions are committed in conversion to sustainable development programs, such as the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. By choosing to make sustainable development a priority action, the BnF with *a participative approach become involved in managing the establishment in an eco-responsible way, in putting the job in the service of sustainable development and in promoting social development*[43]. It could be about an important and federative example for many structures.

It is thus necessary to modify our behavior. And as Michèle Battisti notices "the librarian has to be a catalyst, a leader in the change not a follower. It is necessary to get a clear vision of what is a library within society, to extract the essence of its mission and translate it into a local context[44]".

Conclusion :

If reading is a core element of sustainable development, libraries are the drive belt allowing it. Learning to read cannot be made in the urgency and indeed requires a long-term vision, accessible to all and taking into account local needs.

Whether today printed matter is not any more the only reading transmission mode, the development of digital tools, besides digital divide persistence, are still far from being accessible to all, do not offer a total interoperability, and ask many questions concerning pollution.

Beyond that, reading development could only exist if there are physical and material relays, among which libraries are the best example. Encouraging cooperation between librarians seems a good way for reading promotion. So, in spite of still very marked disparities between North and South, common ways exist that are necessary to be pursued.

The impact of libraries committed in a sustainable development approach is also a precious asset to facilitate the crossbreeding of reading and sustainable development.

Facing all that you've seen in this speech, there is a real eloquent website. It is the one of the world real time statistics. Where the juxtaposition between the two parts in the heart of our problem: Society and Media *and* Environment are astounding and say many thing on the world which surrounds us.

A general survey will say more that a long speech:
http://www.worldometers.info/

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[43] http://www.bnf.fr/fr/la_bnf/dev_durable.html

[44] Article de Michèle Battisti consulté le 13 décembre 2009 http://www.adbs.fr/faire-du-lobbying-en-faveur-des-bibliotheques-40833.htm?RH=DOSTHE_DROINFO