

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA: CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Salisu Dakat Yusuf

College Library, Federal College of Education Pankshin

Dr. Danjuma Gokum Kachukah

Curriculum Studies Department

And

Zango Wonder' Kachidi Nickaf Bartholomew

College Library, Federal College of Education Pankshin

Abstract

The sustainable development goals are 17 goals set up by United Nations through declaration of Agenda 2030, which took place in September, 2015 to guide development efforts worldwide. These goals are expected to be achieved by the year 2030. Sustainable development is a global concern that involves even academic libraries. This paper emphasized on the contributions of academic libraries in transforming communities towards achieving sustainable development goals. Academic libraries as important resources for achieving these goals should provide relevant and adequate information to the communities in an accessible manner. It provided a brief introduction on how academic libraries can drive progress across the 17 sustainable development goals thereby transforming communities. The paper also highlights the problems militating against academic libraries towards community transformation via sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Academic libraries, Sustainable development, Nigeria, Community transformation

In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) launched the new global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to create a common set of development goals worldwide. The plan was meant to be comprehensive, people – centred set of universal and transformative goals and targets for full implementation by the year 2030. This agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

Prior to this launch, the international Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2015) participated in the United Nations (UN) open working group

meetings held to discuss a new development plan once the Millennium Development Goals ended in December 2015. IFLA advocated for culture, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and access to information and knowledge across societies, assisted by emerging technology supports sustainable development and improves people's lives. Libraries in the digital age play a key role in connecting people via information and communication Technology. Thus, the inclusion of libraries is essential in meeting the global United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

However, libraries are institutions that serve as channels to knowledge, information literacy skills, life – long learning, research and learning development of individuals in communities. Libraries are tools for the development of society (Okoro, Akidi&Arua 2014). Therefore, for people to live informed lives and transform their communities towards sustainable development goals, libraries should be able to meet their needs at the appropriate time. Lozano (2002) agreed that the general library's roles are to provide acquisition of knowledge and dispels ignorance, as such, the general objectives of the library is to serve as a centre for information where people acquire the needed knowledge to reduce their ignorance and level of uncertainty about their environment.

The 2015 declaration of the SDGs provided Nigerian nation another opportunity to improve the lives of her citizens to take bold and transformative steps to achieve sustainable development. In order to achieve this, Nigerian citizens should be aware and informed about the action plan of SDGs. Academic libraries and information centres have vital roles to play in information provision for the attainment of sustainable development. Unfortunately, academic libraries in Nigeria do not have full capacity to disseminate enough information to bring about development. The intent for this article is to sensitize policy makers on the contributions academic libraries should make towards awareness creation, capacity building and dissemination of all round information to the public for transforming their communities towards 2030 sustainable development agenda.

The Role of Information to National Development

Information is a key factor in transformation and national development. The realization of the enormous power of information has made libraries and information resource centres inevitably present in many sectors of the nation's development. A nation needs to provide sustainable development goals for its citizens to make them achieved desirable transformation in their communities. Yusuf, et al (2021) posit that to accomplish this, an academic library has to make an important contribution to create, acquire, organize, process, store, disseminate and provide access to information via various documents and media. The information provided will reduce the level of ignorance, make way for poverty eradication, improving lives of people and transforming their communities. Ezekwe&Muokebe (2012) stated that libraries with

Transforming Communities towards Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: Contributions of Academic Libraries

various resources are best heritages that humanity can claim to have. This goes to signify the importance of libraries and their collections in nation's building.

Abata – Ebire, Adebawale and Ojokuku (2018) observed that the library and information centre is the bedrock for the development of any nation and serve as an institution that stores, preserves and disseminates information needed at the appropriate time. In view of this, this paper highlights the major contributions of academic libraries in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Nigeria thereby transforming communities through improving people's lives and environments.

Sustainable Development: An Overview

Many researchers have focused on sustainable development as the process of all round transformation of a country. Sustainable development is the principle of meeting human development goals to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services on which the economy and society depend. According to Nicholas and Perpetual (2015), sustainable development is the overall change and improvement in any given society as related to individual progress. Shah (2012) stated that sustainable development is the development that provides a better quality of life for both the present and future generations. However, sustainable development can be viewed as achieving the needs of the present without the ability of the future generations. It has three main pillars: economic, environmental and social. These pillars are also known as 3 Ps, people, planet and profit. Abata- Ebire, Adebawale and Ojokuku (2018) observe that sustainable development covers a wide range of interrelated issues in the areas of environmental, economic, social and political all within the limits of the world's natural resources to ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by the year 2030.

Building a new community in a previously underdeveloped areas without destroying lives or environment and using renewable resources during development are all examples of sustainable development. Sustainable development as a transformative agenda has these underlying principles:

- Conservation of ecosystem
- Development of sustainable society
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Control of population growth
- Development of human resources
- Promotion of public participation

Sustainable development goals and global goals are collection of 17 interlinked goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" (Jimmy, 2020). The blueprint has 17 goals and 169 targets, then addresses the global challenges facing the whole world and they are as follows: No poverty, zero hunger, good health and well – being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry,

innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on the land, peace, justice and strong institutions, partnerships for the goals (in inabledevelopment.un.org) transforming our world. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Academic Libraries and Sustainable Development

Academic libraries are very vital in information dissemination in academic communities thereby making vital contributions towards advancing the sustainable development goals. Alenzua (2017) noted that academic libraries provide resources, translate complex data into publicly accessible information closing gaps in access to information through open access in scholarly communication and through collaborations, libraries are advancing digital inclusion, thereby becoming hearts in academic communities.

IFLA (2016) stated that IFLA's initiatives for academic libraries towards sustainable development are within these four main activities

- Raise awareness of the United Nations (UN) transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.
- Change the mind set to achieve the vision of libraries as critical community assets.
- Campaign for libraries in the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.
- Develop evidence to demonstrate how access to information and libraries contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) outlined in the United Nations (UN) 2030 Development Agenda. Academic Libraries are seen as the custodian of knowledge and most reliable information centre that deals with acquisition, processing, dissemination and preservation of information all for actualizing sustainable development.

Contributions of Academic Libraries to Community Transformation towards 2030 Agenda

(a) Academic libraries should provide free access to need based information in a packaged format. They should also ensure access to information resources and basic services that will make people better informed to contribute their quota in transforming their communities.

(b) Academic libraries should concentrate on maximizing research impact and promoting research impact and promoting collaborations with other libraries to develop research projects that are mainly oriented to cutting – edge technology. They should also develop services for independent researchers in order to advance ideas on development and transformation of communities outside academia.

Transforming Communities towards Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: Contributions of Academic Libraries

(c) With the recognition of the importance and necessity of research performance analysis, academic libraries should launch a project to build an integrated research performance, management platform which should be connected to various resources and repositories. This should provide better understanding of research competency and enable the academic community to make better informed decision and promote outcomes and collaborations with broader communities.

(d) Academic libraries help researchers throughout the cycle of research. They provide access to a multiple of resources, teach how to use them, manage data and promote research output and preservation. By this, the value of research is amplified to provide the information people need to access economic opportunity, gender equality, quality education, improve their health or develop their communities.

(e) Provides a platform for standards in information dissemination so that there could be an established standard and setting of norms for the provision of technical and need based information in the country which could be part of National Information Policy, (2016 (NIP). Since academic libraries provide information that have direct impact on human, social, economic and environment, they should be seen to contribute to ethical, best practices and guidelines in information repackaging to ensure adequate community transformation.

(f) Inculcating functional literacy in people through capacity building which will eventually lead to a lifelong ability in productiveness, self – reliance, quality assurance, situational analysis and improvement in any given field and society. Amosun, Oyetola and Ogunmodede (2012) pointed out that these factors could aid access to new trends on educational matters and would reshape the contributions of the patron to society thereby enhancing community transformation.

(g) Promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by training library users through learning and research at the national, regional and international level thus boasting access to information by the rural populace on the 17 – point Agenda of the United Nations which is to be achieved by 2030. Academic libraries could as well manage networks of knowledge resources and act as hubs to support access to global information which would lead to success in advancing sustainable development goals (SDGs) towards community transformation.

(h) Ugwuona, Otubelu and Afigwe (2017) stated that library is regarded as a centre for exchange of knowledge and a hub for academic activities because all educational processes resolve round it and their outputs are thereunto, preserved. Academic libraries in Nigeria should be seen to act in this regard by developing a functional database that could serve for the National Information Management System (NIMS) and as well enhance the set goals of sustainable development as in reduction of mother and child mortality, improvement of maternal health and fight against diseases. In addition to this, academic libraries could support research by providing, documentations in priority areas as climate change, biodiversity, energy and industrialization.

(i) Technology has brought about interconnection in the world, access to technology and knowledge is important for sharing ideas and fostering innovation. A successful agenda to advance the United Nation (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or (2030 Agenda) requires partnership among government, private sector, educational institutions and civil society. Some areas for academic libraries to partner in order to achieve the United Nation (UN) 2030 agenda include:

- Training librarians to create e –content and deliver information at the right time to the right user.
- Training researchers to generate quality research and showcase their work to society via libraries
- Identify and support innovation in small and rural areas. Local literate people can assist the elderly to document local knowledge and practices, with the help of nearby research/academic libraries to ensure their preservation.
- Collaborate with public libraries to develop services for independent researchers in order to advance idea development outside of academia.
- Promote sustainable development goals (SDGS) by training patrons on how they can engage in advancing them (Garcia -Febo, Kim, Zual, Jain &Tugwell, 2017).

(j) In Nigeria, Vision 2030 is the national strategic roadmap to guide the Federal government in their attainment of the United Nation (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Vision 2030 is the impetus for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the alignment with the four national goals:

- ✓ improving governance
- ✓ furthering economic development
- ✓ enhancing stability
- ✓ expanding opportunity

Librarians advocated that libraries need to be included and recognized in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for their very important contributions to development. Since libraries provide information for people to be able to develop their communities, academic libraries playing a part in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) along Nigerian National goals is essential as an educated populace is crucial for development.

Challenges of Academic Libraries in Community Transformation

In Nigeria, certain issues affect the extent in which academic libraries should achieve their potentials. Some of the challenges could be so deep rooted that if not taken care of by authorities would jeopardize the activities of libraries. Challenges include the following:

(i) **Inadequate Fund:**Academic libraries in Nigeria are not fully funded to effectively discharge their duties. Most information resources and facilities are very expensive and cannot be accommodated within the library budget. This situation in

Transforming Communities towards Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: Contributions of Academic Libraries

worsened as most academic libraries do not have viable income – generating strategies to supplement their meagre budget.

(ii) Career Advancement: Equipping libraries with the skills they need is imperative. Job training and career advancement opportunities are vital in helping libraries overcome the challenges of their work. New and emerging competencies such as data visualization and communication skills are now required for libraries to become more effective in information provision in communities transformation.

(iii) Inadequate Literacy for the Digital Age: There is lack of functional literacy ability to decipher meaning and express ideas in a range of media requiring the use of images, graphics, video, charts and graphs or visual images (Ugwuona, Otubelu&Afigwe, 2017). The technological literacy competencies in the use of information and communication technologies are lacking. The rapid digitization of information has impacted operations and systems in libraries resulting in gaps in the skills needed to operate a digital library. This affects knowledge impact, dissemination and management of technical information.

(iv) Instability of Electrical Power Source: The poor state of power supply in the country is a great challenge to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) for library services as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities use electrical power for operation. This situation jeopardizes the essence of library services in education (teaching, learning and research).

(v) Inconsistent Government Policies: The complicated nature of policy making means that librarians have to be constantly kept abreast of new development and policies in the scholarly publishing in order to cope with the inconsistent government policies (Abata – Ebire, Adebawale, &Ojokuku, 2018). It is not easy to decipher the regulations and understanding of how the changes effect library operations.

(vi) Understanding Research Trends: Changes in the scholarly publishing have redefined the roles of librarians, extending far beyond content duration. New skill sets such as data management are necessary for librarians to stay ahead of research trends and provide users with the most relevant content in this era of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This poses a challenge to librarians in communicating the value of their work to the constituencies.

(vii) Lack of Technical Support Specialists: Some facilities and equipment especially ICT tools are difficult to remedy when there is breakdown, due to lack of technical support specialists. Technical support specialists are essential to the continued viability of ICT use in library services. The general competencies needed would be in installation operation and maintenance of equipment network administration and security, but most often they are not available.

(viii) High Illiteracy Rate: In a large community with diverse population, high illiteracy level and lack of reading culture by information users, librarians are faced with problems of interpretation of the contents of information sources in different languages.

(ix) Impact of Information and Communication Technologies ICTs: Librarians are aware that an appropriate balance needs to be maintained between traditional library

services to online library services. There are lots of problems faced in transforming the physical space in the library to foster better collaboration and accommodate other activities such as transition from print to digital based collection. These changes are inevitable in this digital age and getting the necessary support for effective communication and challenging.

(x) Inadequate Collaboration with other Libraries and Information Centres: In Nigeria, there is no effective collaboration between academic libraries and other libraries for improved services. Academic libraries should partner with public libraries and other libraries to develop services for independent researchers in other to advance development of ideas in communities outside the academic community

Conclusion

Academic libraries are essential components of the academic community and they play important role in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs). The sustainable development goals (SDGs) were also presented and the contributions of academic libraries in community transformation via SDGs were explicitly discussed. If sustainable development goals in Nigeria is to be sustained, citizens need to be well informed and this can be done through provision and dissemination of resources taking into account the community development indicators such as community health, education, environmental issues, economic and social factors.

The paper provides enough sensitization to all who would be involved in implementation process including the policy makers and the way forward for academic libraries to act as community transformation tools in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Academic libraries should be properly positioned in terms of facilities, manpower resources in order to provide adequate information and services for proper community transformation. Thus, this paper recommends that academic libraries should:

- Seek for income development generating strategies to supplement their meagre budget in order to boost their services.
- Federal government should ensure that academic libraries are fully integrated into the scheme of activities at both local and national levels.
- Academic libraries should regularly organize seminars, workshops; symposiums that will serve as an educational forum where citizens can listen to information to enable them develop themselves and their communities.
- Adequate staff with professional qualification needs to be provided for academic libraries so that they will give quality contributions to national development in spheres of life.

Reference

- Abata – Ebire, B. D, Adebowale, J. D, &Ojokuku, B. Y (2018). Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria: *International Journal of Applied Technologies in Library and Information Management* 4(2).
- Alenzuela, R. (2017). Libraries for sustainable development: *Vision and action* nurinuieduikz.
- Amusan, D. A., Oyetola, S. O. Ogunmodede, (2012). Influence of library and information services for Attainment of Millennium Development Goals on Education: *A case study of Oyo state, Nigeria. A American International journal of Contemporary Reraerch* 2(8).
- Ezekwe, F. A. &Muokebe, B. O. (2012). *Introductory studies in the use of Library and Information Technology. Enugu: RhyceKerex.*
- Garcia – Febo, L. Kim, J. H., Zual, L., Jain, V. &Tugwell, Y. (2017). Advancing the United National Sustainable Goals: Experiences of International Academic and research libraries. *College and Research Library News.*
- IFLA (2016). *Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: a Storytelling Manual. The Hague: IFLA.*
- IFLA, (2015). *Information for all: the key role of libraries in the information society. Report prepared for; libraries @ the heart of the information society.* Retrieved on February 25th, 2018 from <http://www.unige.ch/blbio/sesIFLA/rollib030566.pdf>. *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2016). Libraries and the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda. https://www.ifla.org*
- Jimmy, D. W. and Larry, S. (2020). *Sustainable development goals and global goals are collection of 17 interlinked goals designed to be a ‘blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all: global goals are collection of 17 interlinked goals.* @ <https://www.wikipedia.org/>
- Lozano, P. (2002). *La Informcion Local a les bibliotequespubliques: Unaeina per al desenvolupament de la Communitat. Metodos de information, a (5).*National Information Policy, Uganda (2016). *Review Report on Uganda’s Readiness for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.* Kmpala: National Information Policy.

Nicholas, M. T. & Perpetual, A. E. (2015). Library and Education: Panaceas for Development in Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Information Science and Technology*, 5(2).

Okoro, C. A., Akidi, J. O. & Arua, U. (2014). Information Library and Development of Democracy in Nigeria: The Role of Libraries. *Proceedings of the 3rd National Conference/Annual General Meeting of Nigeria Library association, Abia State Chapter, 13th15th November, 2014.*

Otubelu, N. J. (2020). Transforming Communities towards Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: Contributions of Academic Libraries. In: *COCLIN Journal of Library and Information Science*, 13(1 & 2) Dec., 2020. *** Shah, A. (2012). Sustainable development: Introduction.

<http://www.globlissues.org/article/408/sustainable-developmentintroduction>

Retrieve On 21st August, 2014.

Ugwona, C. S., Otubelu, N. J. & Afigwe, I. G. (2017). Achieving some of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria: Factors inhibiting the Contributions of Special Libraries: *Librarianship in Africa* 9(1 & 2).

United Nations (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: United Nations.

Yusuf, S. D., Katkuka, D. G. & Ajiji, I. A. (2021). *Managing Library Services in Nigeria amidst Covid -19 Pandemic: Issues and Challenges*. Being a paper presented at the 5th annual chapter conference of Nigerian association for educational administration and planning (NAEAP) Kano chapter, from 8th – 11th march, 2021. At convocation arena, Bayero University, Kano.