

Environmental Sustainability Of The Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs): The Library Task

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals are seventeenth goals set by world leaders to be achieved by 2030 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The goals include those dedicated to eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. This study examined the influence of library and information services on attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) on Environment. Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are those that are directly concerned with the environment hence they are referred to as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Environmental sustainability. Providing access to data, information, research and knowledge. Information repackaging, public enlightenment/awareness campaign, human resources development, mobile library and outreach services and capacity building are the identified strategies that libraries can adopt to ensure attainment of SDGs by 2030. It was recommended that the state government should establish more branches of the state public library at the nooks and crannies of the country most especially, in the rural areas. Standard academic libraries should be established at the universities and polytechnics, school libraries should be established in each primary and secondary schools in the state with adequate budgetary allocation provided. Qualified librarians should also be employed to manage the public, academic and school libraries in the country.

Keywords: Library, sustainable development goals (SDGs), environmental sustainability

Introduction

The problem of development has occupied the attention of scholars, activists, politicians and environmental workers, local and international organizations for many years with an increased tempo in the last decade. Though there are different perspectives to development, there is a general consensus that development will lead to good change manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology, and obtain physical necessities of life (food, clothing and shelter), employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, sustainable development and peace. This is why some people have argued that the purpose of development is to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom and dignity.

Sustainability generally was accepted as a developmental paradigm of humanity at the turn of the 20th Century, as developmental paradigm, the most landmark definition which appeared first in 1987 in that "sustainable development is the development that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within the two key concepts of needs in particular, the essential needs of the world poor to which overriding priority should be given, and the idea limitation imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environments ability to meet present and future needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development: "Our Common Future", 1987 as cited by Barth-Nengia, 2016), Sustainable Development recognizes that growth must be both inclusive and environmentally sound to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity for today's population and to contribute to meet the needs of future generations. It must be effective with resources and carefully planned to deliver. It is concerned about meeting the needs of the future, meeting the needs of the future depends on how well we balance the social, economic and environmental needs or objectives of the present. Sustainability is based on these three core pillars social or society, environment and economy. Whether one considers sustainability to exist as a three-legged table consisting of the environment, the economy, and society, or as a dualistic relationship between human beings and the ecosystem they inhabit, there is an agreement that to ensure the provision of clean air, clean water, and clean productive land is foundational for a responsible socioeconomic system. Examining, for a moment, the three-legged model, the question might be raised, do these legs provide equal support or is there some associated hierarchy of values among them? It is apparent that, without a sustainably productive environment to provide a resource foundation, it would be difficult or impossible to imagine having a sustainable society. Similarly, a sustainable economy depends upon a sustainable flow of material, energy, and environmental resources. Without it, economic systems will fail.

Social sustainable development must meet basic needs of food, shelter, cloth, education, work, income and safe living, peace, social harmony, culture and development of human potential for all. Economic sustainability helps to create jobs and reduce poverty and it is the ability to maintain the physical environment, human life, capabilities required to maintain the natural environment, accepts of the environment that produce renewable resources. A general definition of "environmental sustainability" can be crafted in recognition of these linkages between human well-being and ecosystems and, in particular, ecosystem services. The basic understanding of the term "environmental sustainability" set forth in this paper essentially expands our common perception of human activity as to more clearly connect it with the ecological concept of interdependence, thus delineating the boundaries of this use of "sustainability" to correspond to the overlay of human activity upon the functioning of the supporting ecosystem. Environmental sustainability, then, is limited to and, in fact, becomes a subset of ecological sustainability.

Broadly speaking, this concept of “environmental sustainability” might be seen as adding depth to a portion of the meaning of the most common definition of sustainable development, “meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs,” by taking on the general definition “meeting the resource and services needs of current and future generations without compromising the health of the ecosystems that provide them,” (Our Common Future, 1987). More specifically, environmental sustainability could be defined as a condition of balance, resilience, and interconnectedness that allows human society to satisfy its needs while neither exceeding the capacity of its supporting ecosystems to continue to regenerate the services necessary to meet those needs nor by our actions diminishing biological diversity.

Sustainable Development Goals was put forth toward achieving environmental sustainability; these goals was built on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) , these eight goals set by the UN back in 2000 to eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy and diseases expired at the end of 2015, as a post 2015 agenda the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was adopted on 25th September, 2015, by the 193 Countries of the United Nations General Assembly as the 2030 Development Agenda officially known as “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” a set of seventeen aspirational Global Goals with 169 targets was put in place, in responding to the accusation that the MDGs were too narrow focus, the SDGs set out to tackle a whole range of issues to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. All the goals and their various target are interconnected, meaning success in one affects others. According to Barth-Nengia (2016), SDG 1 is a fundamental goal; the meeting of its target depends on the meeting of most of the other SDGs. This goal is directly and indirectly related to all other SDGs, especially on immediate and substantial progress towards SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 13, SDG 16 and SDG 17.

Therefore, the unifying thread throughout the 17 goals and their 169 targets is the commitment to ending poverty by eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimension including extreme poverty which is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2020). The SDGs are designed to bring about a positive change in the lives of billions of people in the world. Countries of both the developing and developed world have committed themselves to provide the resources and policies to attain these goals. These are designed to set in motion a development that takes into account the links between different sectors and needs. Each country is responsible for working out details of comprehensive development framework and funding strategies. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have elicited great interest and attracted broad support from the international community. World leaders have reaffirmed their clear and unequivocal support for the goals.

Attainment of SDGs on environmental sustainability: The role of the library

The sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for several bold breakthroughs by the year 2030 including the end of extreme poverty (SDG 1) and Hunger (SDG 2), Health coverage (SDG 3), Universal secondary education (SDG 4), Universal access to modern energy services (SDG 7), Sustainable Cities (SDG 11), Combating Climate Change (SDG 13), and Protecting marine (SDG 14) and terrestrial (SDG 15) ecosystems. The trends of occurrence have shown that achieving these goals will be difficult but not impossible; to many, these goals seem impossible to achieve but with the rapid development of libraries there are elements of possibility because there are due awareness for the deep transformation of the world. Libraries play a special role in today low-income countries, as it provides adequate information to the people; hereby transform their mind set and orientation.

Libraries have achieved high value-added at the level of the institution, but of what value are they in the community for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals? The answer to these questions depends on what we think on libraries and the sustainable development goals attainment is. In classical terms, the purpose of national development is to attain increased productivity for economic growth. Economic growth has not however, provided solution to rural exodus, marginalization of the weak, galloping urbanization, proliferation of shanty-towns, mass unemployment, increased poverty and spread of deadly diseases. The truth is that development means developing the people; roads, buildings, the increases in crop production, or other things of that nature are not development itself, they are only tools of development (Nyerere, 1974). Nyerere's view and similar thread of thinking lead to the notion of human development: the increasing of people's chances to acquire knowledge and have access to resources that would enable them to live healthy, gainful and dignified life (UNESCO, 2000; Lundu, 1995). To be realistic, development efforts should be aligned with the current regional and global development strategies such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are multidimensional and lay emphasis on human development and sustainability (United Nations, 2002). The roles of the library in the attainment of the SDGs are clearly stated in the SDGs and its target, the SDGs Goal 16.10 clearly state thus "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements".

Libraries have long been crowned knowledge institutions as they provide the public with spaces for information and learning. And this space is accessible to all groups of society, regardless of gender, age and ethnic affiliation (IFLA, 2003). This role of the library must be seen against the backdrop of the fact that the development of the society and individuals can only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society (Drotner, 2005). Libraries have rightfully stated their claim as gateways to participation in society through lifelong learning and information. Information is seen by libraries as the pivot around which development revolves and the library as its vehicle. Participants of IFLA Africa Section Seminar 2007 identified that library:

- have an existing legal mandate and role to provide information to all
- provide egalitarian service at charge to end user;
- have existing collaborative networks that enable them to share skills, resources and achieve economies of scale;
- are involved in creation of repositories for local content;
- knowledge library and information services have to generate financial resources; and

There is clear need for knowledge, library and information services that have potential viable product that can help practitioners to provide information and services that are relevant to the government and other service users towards the realization of the SDGs. The seminars further identify poor funding of all categories of libraries as the threats for the attainment of SDGs on environment (IFLA, 2007). Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are those that are directly concerned with the environment hence they are referred to as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Environmental sustainability.

SDGs	Target	Library Role
Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all. 6.2. By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations. 6.3 By 2030, improve water quality reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, cycling and safe reuse by X% globally.	Provide access to quality information and good practices that support water management and sanitation projects. Providing public enlightenment and awareness campaign on waste management.
Goal 7 Affordable and Clean Energy- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.	7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	Provide data and information to aid free and reliable access to electricity.
Goal 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.	9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.	Provide widespread existing infrastructure of public and research libraries and skilled and library professionals. Welcoming and inclusive public spaces. Access to ICT like high-speed internet that may not be available anywhere else.
Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities- Make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.	Trusted institutions devoted to promoting cultural inclusion and understanding. Documentation and preservation of cultural heritage for future generations.
Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.	12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle 12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.	Sustainable system of sharing and circulating materials that reduces waste. Provide historical records about coastal change and land use. Provide widespread access to information needed to guide decision-making by local and national governments on topics like hunting, fishing, land use, and water management.
Goal 13 Climate Action- Take	13.3 Improve education,	All libraries play a significant role

urgent action to combat climate and its impacts.	awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.	in providing access to data, research and knowledge that supports informed research and public access to information about climate change.
Goal 14 Life below Water- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.	14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.	All libraries play a significant role in providing access to data, research and knowledge that supports informed research and public access to information about coastal conservation.
Goal 15 Life on Land- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystem, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.	Libraries have a key role in preservation of indigenous knowledge – which includes local decision-making about fundamental aspects of life including hunting, fishing, land use, water management.

Strategies libraries can adopt to ensure the attainment of SDGs on environmental sustainability

The library can adopt the following strategies to ensure attainment of SDGs on environment:

✿ Information repacking

This refers to the ways of adopting information to suit the desired information need of any user (Uhegbu, 2007). Information users in any community differ in their academic backgrounds and qualifications, cultural and religious beliefs, occupational and professional inclinations as well as their psychological and socio-economic backgrounds. These differences affect their perception and understanding of information at their different background. In information repacking, the librarian rearranges or repackages the contents of information in such a way that it would satisfy the information need of the user, given his or her background. Packaging and repackaging of information can be done in the following ways:

Contents repacking

In content repackaging, information is reassembled to suit the taste of the user or user group. In the rural and illiterate communities, information containing only statistics can be repackaged to include grammatical expressions to explain what they are. Medium Repackaging: Environmental information can be properly used by the recipients if the medium or source in which such information is presented is in harmony with the characteristics of the users. If information users are illiterate and cannot read the instructions on, for example, how to bag household waste, for continues effectiveness and use; since such group can appreciate oral and visual aids, film shows and discussion sessions on the issues can be organized for them to transmit the information. Diagrams can also be used during the session. Village meetings, age grades groups, library extension workers, churches, mosques, etc. can be used as base for medium repackaging. Language Repackaging: In language repackaging, information that is communicated in a language that the receiver cannot understand is translated to that which he or she can understand. Environmental information that is communicated in English language and meant for a rural and largely illiterate community can be translated to the communities' vernacular.

✿ Public enlightenment/awareness campaign

The library can collaborate with the government and mount an awareness/enlightenment campaign in the community to eradicate and enlighten the people on prevailing environmental

health issues, especially those that are common in the community. Audio visuals like films, video, posters, etc. concerning the environmental health problem can be shown to the audience to make them have a vicarious experience of the subject matter. A medical doctor or a competent environmental health worker can be brought in to deliver talks and give some explanations during the campaign. Well designed and colorful posters with catchy messages written in both English and local languages are very good vehicle for public enlightenment and awareness campaign.

Use of oral media: This is the use of traditional associations and institutions like the town criers, age grades, cultural groups, market associations, traditional rulers and religious organizations to disseminate information to the people in the community. Public owned associations or groups as mentioned above command the attention and loyalty of their members and therefore are good media for information dissemination especially in rural communities.

✿ **Human recourses development through lectures, seminars and workshops**

Lectures, seminars and workshops are means of sharing ideas and passing information to people. The library can in collaboration with the appropriate agencies, institutions and professionals organized public lectures, workshop or seminar in the community to address the environmental issues. Also to develop human capacity, displays and exhibitions can be used; to display is to put something in a place where people can see it easily. To exhibit means to show something in a public place for people to enjoy and giving them information. Library displays are usually done within the library premises especially around the readers' department. An organized display of information materials such as films, videos, books, magazines, tapes etc. on health issues will attract the attention of library users to their existence, and some may even be borrowed by clientele for home reading. The library can as well organize exhibition of environmental information materials in the community. Public places like town halls, village squares health center, etc. can be used as venues. This type of exhibition is usually done in collaboration with authors, environmental workers and book vendors. Leaflets and handbills can be freely distributed and thus, great awareness is generated.

✿ **Capacity building**

The library can organizes capacity building which is to strengthening the capacity of the neighborhood, residents associations and organization to identify priorities and opportunities for change and to work individually and collectively to foster and sustain community improvement. All this involves a number of components including leadership development, community organizing, organizational development and fostering collaboration among organization. Capacity building, is also an externally and internally initiates process designed to help individuals and groups to appreciate and manage their challenges circumstances with the objective of improving the stock of human, social, financial, physical and natural capital in an ethically defensible way (Ifidon & Ifidon, 2007).

✿ **Mobile library and outreach services**

The information needs for poor and neglected persons and rural communities in Nigeria are provided in forms of library extension services. The libraries offer support services needed by different organizations, agencies and groups such as schools, churches, organizations, age grades, social mobilizations center, etc. they provide space for organizing educational and enlightenment campaigns and programmes needed by the rural communities to stimulate and promote activities. Adimorah (2009) asserts that library extension services may take the form of space provision as avenues for organizing talks, seminars, workshops, lectures and recreational activities; and that users take the opportunity to acquire greater knowledge, skills and experiences. The libraries provide the information needs of the rural communities in the form of its mobile library service.

Uwa (2014) posits that mobile library service provides information to the doorsteps of the prospective users remotely located, making dramatic impacts on the rural communities. Nwalo (2003) and Ranganathan (1992) describe mobile libraries as “library in miniature”, “knowledge on the wheel”, and “librachine”, mobile library provide information at service stations, such as village squares, town halls, courts, health center etc. for the benefit of the rural communities.

Conclusion and recommendations

In order to achieve a total sustainable development in all aspects, the people must have access to adequate and up-to-date information on food, shelter, security, agriculture, health, education, democracy, family planning, youth empowerment, gender equality, environment etc. In this regard, it is imperative that all hands must be on deck towards establishment of effective library at each of the local government areas and each political wards in Nigeria should have at least one information center for proper management, provision and dissemination of information that will boost the participation of every one as a major player to the achievement of sustainable development goals. “Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”. This statement comes from sustainable development Goal 16. 10; demonstrate the importance of library in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Library is clearly crucial in achieving all of the SDGs, since library integrate and accelerate all three pillars of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability as well as providing an innovative and effective means of implementation in today’s inter-connected world. In terms of specifically strengthening the means of implementation. It is essential that libraries are key tools for the unprecedented advances in healthcare, education, energy, water and sanitation, agriculture and environmental monitoring and protection. Therefore, achieving the SDGs will require rapid roll out of libraries throughout the public and private sectors including health, education, agriculture and infrastructure. Government at all levels should increase funding of libraries and training of librarians for effective services and establish timelines for provisions and upgrade of public and academic libraries in the country not later than 2025 to achieve the SDGs by the target date of 2030; the university and polytechnic in partnership with government and the private sector should undertake massive funding of research, training of librarians and library staff including introducing “use of library” into primary and post primary curriculum.

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