The Use of Public Libraries as Tools for Achieving Sustainanable Development Goals in Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: This is a study on how the Niger State public libraries can be used as a tool to implement the sustainable development goals in Niger State in collaboratiom with Niger Sate Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) office and Nigerian Library Association (NLA) Niger State Chapter .

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study adopted a descriptive research method while total enumeration method was used to gather information from 44 participants of SDGS awareness

workshop. Two questionnaire were used for data collection. One before the the commencement of thr worshop and the other, after the workshop.

Findings: The findings revealed that developmental programmes that would improve the lives of people are welcome ideas. Findings from the gathered data revealed that the public library can work together with SDG Offices and other bodies to implement the SDGS. The study recommended that the Nigerian government should pay attention to public libraries in Nigeria and put them in a good and workable state to enable them carry out their duties efficiently. Another finding was that the activities of the Sustainable Development Goals could help to breathe life activities in the Nigerian public libraries.

Originality/Value: Based on the literature reviewed, the way forward is rehabilitation and equipping of the Nigerian Public libraries with information communication technology components that can help fast track dissemination of information to the people.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Public libraries, Information and communication Technology, Programmes, Nigeria.

Introduction

Sustainable development goals (SDGS) is an action plan that is set out to improve the standard of life of people all over the world. Promotion of sustainable development in the 21st century demands access to information and that is where the public library comes in as the peoples' university in the community which makes information available to people across different demographies. Sustainable development is finding the right balance between the well-being and needs of people now and in the future to organize society for long-term survival. According to the United Nations (2015), development is important and essential for the survival and growth of any country. A country is classified as a developed country if it can provide a quality life for its people. Most of the world's population lives in developing countries.

According to International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and institutions (2016), Sustainable Development is an international agreement aimed at making the world a better place for all citizens by setting goals related to 17 goals. On September 25, 2015, in New York, 193 member states of the United Nations formally agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The new agenda provides a roadmap for global development efforts beyond 2030. The 2030 Agenda continues the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but is a broader, more progressive, and more innovative agenda that addresses many of the challenges facing the world today and in the future. It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 sub-

goals. In addition to building on the MDGs, the SDGs include important new goals in the areas of economic growth, infrastructure, peace and effective governance, and the ocean.

Sustainable development is important to the growth and development of a country in order to successfully improve the meaningful standard of living among the populace. Ejechi (2018) posited that Sustainable development not only meets the need of present generation but also those of the future generation. In other words, it is the development that guarantees a better quality of life for everyone, now and for the generation to come. The aim of this study was to ascertain how public libraries can be used as tools to implement sustainable development goals.

Statement of the Problem

Promotion of sustainable development goals in the 21st century demands access to information and that's where the public library comes in as the peoples' university in the community which makes information available to people across different demographies. Unfortunately, the Nigerian public libraries are not only lacking in basic information and communication technologies (ICTs) and materials infrastructure but are also not up to date in their awareness level on SDGs and how to work hand in hand with other developmental agencies in order to achieve personal and all round societal development. This study therefore, seeks to demonstrate how the public libraries can be actively involved in developmental activities that will improve the standard of people in their communities.

Objective

The aim of this study is to determine how the sustainable development implementers can use public library resources to enhance sustainable development goals.

Literature Review

Public libraries are undergoing rapid change, primarily due to the speed and scale of technological change. As a result, the relevance and role of libraries has been discussed across sectors and in many different forums. Lawson (2016) stated that public libraries have always been in a state of self-assessment, restructuring, and transformation since the proliferation of digital environments, the Internet, computers, and rapidly changing technologies that appear to be evolving day by day. Research was done, dialogue was held, meetings were held, and articles were written. All of this focused on the role and future of public libraries. These energetic and meditative activities of the future of public libraries are underpinned by the ever-changing economic, intellectual, and demographic environment in which libraries find themselves today.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (2016) stated that increasing the efficiency of library operations and services is another benefit of using ICT in libraries of increasing importance. Libraries are presently using ICTs to automate every area of their services ranging from technical services to providing efficient reference and information services, including network operations such as cataloguing, authority control, and inter library loan and compilation of bibliographies.These environments are no longer static; changes are occurring at accelerated rates. The continual shift to globalization, a knowledge economy, and emphasis on speed, creativity, and innovation place various new demands on the public library. The confluence of all of this change has been disruptive to traditional library operations, staff, and users. It is therefore pertinent for the public libraries to not only adjust their structures and staff to meet the needs of the 21st century, but to also become more agile organisations in order to deal with continuous change. According to Gruber, Hatonen and Koutroumpis (2015), it is practically impossible to function effectively in any area of human life without the involvement of ICT and the education sector cannot be put aside out of this revolution. This is because ICT improves whatever it is introduced to: making any form of service faster, more efficient, and better. ICT has undoubtedly impacted on the quality of teaching, learning and research in traditional and distance education institution. Crist (2015) observed that we now live in a changing society where information technology has taken the center stage and is accompanied by massive increase in knowledge.

Libraries have existed for centuries without the use of ICT. However, as technology emerged around the world, public libraries adopted these tools to avoid some of the daunting tasks associated with managing large collections. Therefore, the use of ICT in public libraries to reach

a larger audience cannot be overemphasized. The combination of ICT and public libraries is a powerful tool for promoting and implementing Sustainable Development Goals.

Benefits of using ICT in libraries also include providing unlimited access to up-to-date information from a variety of sources, as well as providing the flexibility of information that individuals can use according to their needs. Unwin (2017) states that ICTs offer new ways of offering services in library operations and that it facilitates dissemination of information to library users with much ease compared to the manual or traditional method, which is cumbersome. Furthermore, resources on the Internet permit librarians to provide value added information services to their clientele.

 Information is very important for the development of individuals and society, and information technology gives considerable power to those who can access and use it. Despite rapid growth, Siddiquah and Salim (2017) found out that many people around the world are unable to obtain information, and in some regions the gap between rich and poor information continues to widen. Extensive sources of public information such as television broadcasts, telephones and other mobile web-based services, educational institutions and public libraries are taken for granted in developed countries. International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) (2017) found that such infrastructure in developing countries is seriously lacking, which impedes the individual's ability to collect information and solve problems. According to Meidan (2018), access to information empowers people to exercise their political and socioeconomic rights, to be economically active, to learn new skills and to hold their governments to account, enabling informed decision making, supports creativity and innovation, strengthens identity and provides transparency. Boogaarts (2016) confirmed that through multilateral, bilateral and international commitments, governments have increasingly recognized the importance of accelerating access to information and the internet, particularly through public access, to promote social and economic development.

 The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development includes a commitment to universal literacy, recognizes that access to information is crucial and identifies ICTs and the internet as horizontal enablers for development. It specifically aims at increasing access to information and communications technology significantly and providing universal and affordable access to the internet in the under developed countries by 2020. The World Economic Forum (2016) noted in

its recent Internet for All report that the barriers to greater internet use fall into four categories: infrastructure; affordability; skills, awareness and cultural acceptance; and local adoption and use, which is often an issue of the lack of local content. World Bank (2016) posited that two important things are needed for the public access of ICT to be achieved: connectivity for everyone and also the ability of people to engage in a new digital world and that public libraries are ideal for providing public access as outlined above. It is important to recognise two main ways through which ICTs can contribute to the SDGs: directly through the impact that they have on the lives of individual poor and marginalised people; and structurally through the ways that they can enable the delivery of all of the SDGs themselves.

Methodology

The research design used for the study was the descriptive research design involving a quantitative research instrument which is a semi structured questionnaire named sustainable development goals A and B. A Sustainable Development Goals Sensitization Workshop which took place at Niger State Public library Complex. The library has been inactive for a long time. So, this exercise intended to demonstrate that the process of achieving the SDGS can bring about activities in the public library and help the library fulfil its mandate which is to educate, provide recreation, inform, and help in research activities. On commencement of the workshop training, Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire A **(SDGQA)** was distributed to all attendees present. The aim was to collect basic information that will aid the collation of demographic statistics and contact details of the attendees (SECTION A), as well as to obtain primitive knowledge of the attendees on the workshop before commencement (SECTION B). Total enumeration technique was used to cover all the participants that attended sensitization workshop and the data was analyzed in frequencies and percentages.

Results

Demographic Information

Table 1: Table of gender distribution of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	25	57

Female	19	43
Total	44	100

Table 1 reveals the total population of the respondents. It was observed that twenty-five (57%) were male while the remaining nineteen (43%) were female.

Table 2: Table of Age distribution of participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15 – 25	19	43
26 – 35	16	36
36 – 45	5	12
45 and above	4	9
Total	44	100

Table 2 reveals that, among the respondents between the ages of 15-25 had the highest representation with nineteen out of the forty-four participants, followed by the age grade of 26-35 with sixteen participants, followed by the age grade 36-45. Age grade 45 and above had the lowest number of attendees.

Table 3: Table of distribution of level of education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SSCE	2	5
Undergraduate	10	23
First Degree	19	43
Masters	12	27
PhD	1	2
Total	44	100

Table 3 reveals that, among the respondents, first degree holders and masters students took the highest percentage with 43% and 28% respectively. While, PhD holders had the lowest with 2%.

Table 4: Table showing distribution of occupation of participants

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	23	54
Civil Servant	12	28
Applicant	4	9
Business Owner	4	9
Total	44	100

Table 4 reveals that 54% of the attendees are students and 28% are civil servants, while the rest are applicants and Business owner

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS QUESTIONNAIRE A (SDGQA)

Question 1: Have you heard about the Sustainable Development Goals before now?

Table 5: Response on hearing about the Sustainable Development Goals

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	66
No	15	34
Total	44	100

Table 5 shows that twenty-nine (66%) of the respondents have heard about the Sustainable Development Goals before the workshop training, while, fifteen (34%) replied they have not heard of sustainable development goals before the workshop training.

Question 2: Have you been involved in any activity to promote Sustainable Development Goals?

Table 6: Response on involvement in any activity to promote Sustainable Development Goals?

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Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	30
No	31	70
Total	44	100

Table 6 reveals that thirty-one (70%) of the respondents have never been involved in any activity to promote Sustainable Development Goals until they attend the workshop, while thirteen (30%) replied they have been involved in some activities regarding SDGs before.

Question 3: Have you visited the Niger State Public library before now?

Table 7: Response on visitation of the Public Library

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	30
No	31	70
Total	44	100

Table 7 reveals that, thirty-one (70%) of the attendees are visiting the Niger State Public Library for the first time that day while the remaining thirteen (30%) claimed they have visited the library before then.

Question 4: What is the level of your involvement in the following social media handles?

Table 8: Level of involvement in social media handles

Social media	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	No involvement at all
WhatsApp	28 (65%)	11 (25%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Instagram	11 (25%)	5 (12%)	13 (30%)	5 (12%)	9 (21%)
Telegram	6 (14%)	8 (20%)	17 (41%)	4 (11%)	6 (14%)
LinkedIn	2 (5%)	10 (24%)	13 (32%)	5 (12%)	11 (27%)
Twitter	9 (22%)	9 (22%)	13 (32%)	3 (7%)	7 (17%)

Electronic Mail	**16** (38%)	**15** (35%)	**4** (10%)	0	**7** (17%)
Facebook	**16** (39%)	**13** (32%)	**8** (19%)	**2** (5%)	**2** (5%)

Table 8 reveals that the respondents' involvement with social media handles like whatsapp, Electronic mail and Facebook are of higher percentage than other social media handles.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS QUESTIONNAIRE B (SDGQB)

After the completion of the workshop, Sustainable Development Goals Questionnaire B (SDGQA) was distributed to get the feedback of the attendees on the workshop. The analysis of the responses collated includes the following;

Question 5: How useful have you found this workshop?

Table 9: Responses on the usefulness of the workshop

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Extremely Useful	33	82
Moderately Useful	5	13
Somewhat Useful	2	5
Not useful	-	-
Total	40	100

Table 9 reveals that thirty-three (82%) of the respondents found the workshop extremely useful while, five (13%) of the attendees responded they found it moderately useful. The workshop was therefore found to be extremely useful

Question 6: How willing are you to attend another workshop on one of the Sustainable Development Goals?

Table 10: Willingness to attend another workshop

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Extremely willing	29	73
Moderately willing	11	27
Somewhat willing	-	-
Not willing	-	-
Total	40	100

Table 10 reveals that twenty-nine (73%) of the respondents are extremely willing to attend another workshop while 27% of the attendees responded they are moderately willing to attend another one.

Question 9: Would you be willing to pay a token between #2000 - #5000 for a training session to learn entrepreneurial skills?

Table 11: Willingness to pay a token fee for training

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	32	82
No	7	18
Total	39	100

Table 11 reveals that thirty-two (82%) of the respondents that completed the workshop training are willing to pay the token for a training session to learn entrepreneurial skills while only 18% replied otherwise.

Question 10: What entrepreneurial skills would you like to learn more about?

Table 12: Entrepreneurial skills to be learnt

Skills	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Online trading	22	55

Graphic design	12	30
Tailoring	9	23
Web design	9	23
Baking	9	23
Photography	7	18

Table 12 reveals that majority of the respondents (55%), are more interested in learning more about online trading and Graphic design than other entrepreneurial skills.

Findings

The sensitization workshop demonstrated how the public library can influence the implementation of sustainable development goals in Nigeria. The Niger State Public Library board headquaters was used for the experiment. The results showed that the public library can work together with SDG Offices and other bodies to implement the SDGS. The workshop helped to draw peoples' attention to the Niger State Public Library which has been left unattended and redundant with no visible activities taking place there. This is in line with United Nations (2015) who stated that in order to achieve the SDG's goal of universal access, the government needs to provide a wide range of low-cost or free public access facilities, especially for women, rural residents, and residents.

The activities of the Sustainable Development Goals could help to breathe life activities in the Nigerian public libraries. The findings also revealed that developmental programmes that would improve the lives of people are welcome ideas. Therefore, it is beneficial for the public library, SDG implementers and the general public.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The achievement of sustainable development is hinged on the spread of information. The public library is a viable tool in the dissemination of information to a wide range of people. Thus, involving the public library in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals is one of the best decisions the government can make and adequately equipping the public library with up to date ICT components will make achievement process quick, easy and feasible.

Based on this, the study recommends the following:

➢ The Nigerian government should pay attention to public libraries in Nigeria and put them in a good and workable state to enable them carry out their duties efficiently.

➢ There should be re orientation and training of public library staff to better prepare them for the job of dissemination of information on SDGS.

➢ Modern ICT Tools should be made available by the government to the public libraries to make their work easier and effective.

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Presenting the Goals to the People and Coming up with Activities that directly affect their Lives