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Issues and Challenges Relating to the Library and Information Services Contribution of Sustainable Development

القضايا والتحديات المتعلقة بمساهمة خدمات المكتبات والمعلومات في التنمية المستدامة

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Abstract:

Libraries are the center of development and are essential to accomplishing sustainable development goals because they serve as the main source of information processing needed to produce meaningful progress. In essence, knowledge is the engine of growth and the factor that sets developed economies apart from developing ones globally. Information has been identified as the fifth component of production because it has a substantial impact on how individuals decide to allocate and use the four conventional factors of production. The availability and application of information for forecast purposes is a major factor in the economic gap between the developed and developing countries. A lot of unsuccessful global development predictions can be ascribed to the volume of data needed to meet the desired outcomes. As a result, the challenges faced by libraries and librarians were examined, along with the library's role as a crucial information hub capable of achieving sustainable development objectives. As a result, the challenges faced by libraries and librarians were examined in this article, along with the library's role as a crucial information hub capable of achieving sustainable development objectives.

Key words: Information; knowledge; librarians; libraries; sustainable development

الملخص:

تعتبر المكتبات محورًا أساسيًا للتنمية وضرورية لتحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة، فهي تمثل المصدر الرئيسي لمعالجة المعلومات اللازمة لإحداث تقدم ملموس. ولأن المعرفة تُعد القوة الدافعة للنمو والعنصر الفاصل بين الاقتصاديات المتقدمة والنامية على المستوى العالمي، فإن دور المكتبات في توفير هذه المعرفة يصبح أكثر أهمية لتحقيق التنمية الشاملة. ولقد تم الاعتراف بالمعلومات كعنصر خامس من عناصر الإنتاج نظرًا لتأثيرها الكبير على كيفية تخصيص الأفراد واستخدامهم للعوامل الأربعة التقليدية للإنتاج. كما أن توفر المعلومات واستخدامها في التنبؤات الاقتصادية يُعد من العوامل الرئيسية وراء الفجوة بين الدول المتقدمة والدول النامية. وقد تم ربط العديد من التوقعات التنموية العالمية الفاشلة بنقص البيانات اللازمة لتحقيق النتائج المرجوة. من هذا

المنطلق، تم استعراض التحديات التي تواجه المكتبات وأمناء المكتبات بالإضافة إلى دور المكتبات كمراكز معلوماتية حيوية تساهم بشكل فعال في تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أمناء المكتبات؛ التنمية المستدامة؛ المكتبات؛ المعلومات؛ المعرفة.

Introduction:

Libraries have been acknowledged as important development catalysts over time. The reasoning behind this is that significant advancements cannot be made if they are not anchored in or related to libraries. Libraries are vital for achieving sustainable development goals because they serve as the cornerstone of development. The library uses information as a crucial resource to provide the goods and services that its customers require in order to support these development goals because it is a government-designated non-profit organization.

It has been acknowledged that information is both an essential part of decision-making and a catalyst for growth and development in general. The world's economies are divided into rich and poor, developed and developing, and highly developed and less developed countries due to a single factor. It is significant to remember that, more often than not, the factors that differentiate the economies of the first and third worlds are not the years of production, but rather the availability and patterns of information consumption for projection.

The library's primary mission is to collect, organize, and disseminate knowledge that can drive economic growth across all sectors. The failure of various global economic projections at different times can often be traced back to a lack of the necessary knowledge to actualize such developmental initiatives. Ezema and Chizoba[1] emphasize that libraries are uniquely responsible for providing the diverse formats of information, both print and electronic, essential for scholarship and research, underscoring their vital role across nearly every academic discipline. Pareek and Gangrade[2] further highlight that the exponential growth in global publications has amplified the library's function in managing, organizing, and supporting research through the availability of these resources.

In order to tackle long-term issues related to human development, the leaders of 169 countries unveiled the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, following the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) deadline. The Sustainable SDGs are intended to direct development initiatives between 2015 and 2030, and libraries are seen as essential to accomplishing these goals.

Methodology:

This study uses a descriptive-analytical method to investigate the importance of information services and libraries in accomplishing the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This methodology focuses on:

- Examining librarians as well as libraries as portals to the SDGs.
- Examining the role of information services in sustainable development.
- Understanding the Contribution of Algerian Libraries to Achieving Sustainable Development Goals.
- Investigating the challenges libraries face in aligning with SDGs and proposing solutions to overcome these barriers.

Research Questions

- How do libraries and librarians facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?
- What role do libraries play for promoting and improving the SDGs?
- What are the major challenges libraries faced in achieving the SDGs?

1. Libraries, Librarians as "Gateway" to Sustainable Development Goals:

Libraries and librarians have generated, gathered, arranged, conserved, and distributed knowledge all across the world. In actuality, no organization has ever been acknowledged by humanity with as many obligations to ensure human wellbeing as the Library. Libraries serve as vital gatekeepers of information due to the vast resources they manage. In the context of open-access publishing, librarians are better described as "gate-openers" as their role is to facilitate access to knowledge. They undergo specialized training to gather, organize, and disseminate information and expertise effectively. While alternative knowledge sources like the internet present challenges, librarians have adapted by focusing on curating collections of resources that are not readily available online, reinforcing their unique value in the information ecosystem[3].

It is crucial to remember that the Sustainable Development Goals whether they are aimed at wealthy or poor countries are meant to promote equitable global development. In keeping with Henri Frederic's dictum that "everything you need for a better future and success has already been written," librarians play a crucial part in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal Project. Academics, users, and the general public only need to have access to the library's priceless materials.

Consequently, any efforts to achieve development goals would be a significant waste of time and resources if they are undertaken without consulting a library. This idea is rooted in Luis Herrera's statement that "Libraries are more relevant than ever." Libraries act as safe havens for cultural preservation, hubs for civic and cultural engagement, spaces for personal growth and reinvention, and guides in navigating the complexities of the information age.

Libraries have earned a reputation as reliable sources of knowledge, a quality that is highly valued by societies. Librarians work diligently to ensure that patrons have

access to the necessary information to address their inquiries and make informed decisions, further solidifying the library's critical role in modern development.

Both developed and developing countries need to work swiftly in order to achieve the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. These objectives include the complete eradication of poverty worldwide, as well as the advancement of sustainable agriculture, food security, better nutrition, and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages; gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; equitable access to high-quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning; sustainable management of water and sanitation for everyone; and accessible, high-quality healthcare.[4]

It is alarming that the UN is formulating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without consulting libraries. As Henri Frederic Amiel aptly stated, everything necessary for success and building a better future, including the attainment of the SDGs, has already been written. The solution lies in accessing the wealth of knowledge housed in libraries all you need to do is visit one.

2. Information Services and Sustainable Development Goals:

Knowledge and information are essential anywhere opportunity arises because they enable people to make well-informed decisions that can enhance their quality of life. The SDGs include eliminating poverty and inequality, advancing agriculture, offering top-notch education, and fostering innovation, research, human health, and culture. It is claimed that communities with universal access to up-to-date and pertinent information are more suited to achieving the SDGs. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) claims that. IFLA also provides a list of library and information products and services that can be offered in order to further promote universal literacy, close gaps in information access, create a network of information delivery sites for public services, promote digital inclusion through access to ICTs, and protect and make the Internet of Things (IoT) accessible to everyone[5].

Access to information is crucial for empowering individuals, enabling decision-making, and fostering development, particularly in rural areas. For rural communities to progress, they must have access to the information needed for everyday life and active social participation. Harande emphasizes[6] that the lack of library and information services in rural regions is a significant reason for the slow or stagnant development in many African nations. Involving a government that is engaged, thoughtful, and responsive could help deliver information to off-grid areas, promoting growth.

Bradley supports this view, arguing that an informed populace is key to national development and poverty eradication. He further suggests that access to information

resources and services is essential for achieving universal justice, building inclusive, effective, and accountable institutions, and fostering peaceful and inclusive societies, all of which contribute to sustainable development. Therefore, ensuring access to information in rural areas is not just about development it's about laying the foundation for justice and societal growth at every level[7].

3. Information Services and the Library's Role

The importance of libraries in achieving the Sustainable Development cannot be verstated. The following are areas where the library can provide input:

3.1. Repackaging information for rural residents:

According to Omona[8], women make up more than 70% of Uganda's agricultural work force and are crucial to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for nutrition and agriculture. These women need to be adept at using libraries and information sciences so they can acquire, evaluate, and use pertinent data to enhance their production processes, which will enable them to have the most effect possible. But in developing nations, where English is the primary language used to convey agricultural information, a major obstacle appears. The fact that a large number of rural farmers do not know this language makes it difficult for them to use the information effectively, which further limits their capacity to support sustainable development.

Academic, public, and special libraries should collaborate with agricultural extension agents to translate and repurpose most of the information into regional languages. This approach will enhance accessibility and utilization, making it easier to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for agriculture.

Furthermore, libraries can play a crucial role by providing information services tailored to the needs of farmers and extension agents. By interpreting, translating, packaging, and customizing knowledge, libraries can offer essential information on various agricultural and nutritional topics. With these enhanced resources, meeting the SDGs for agriculture will become more achievable.

3.2. Breeding a community of readers:

The library and information services are essential to this process. They contribute in the following ways, for example:

3.2.1. Providing Access to Reading Materials:

You can find books, magazines, newspapers, and other reading materials at the library. They offer access to a multitude of resources, including those that are difficult to get in stores or online. Others in the community are inspired to read as a result. Libraries play a major role in making reading materials more accessible to the population. This is important because access to printed materials is necessary to

promote literacy and reading. Public access to a vast array of books, magazines, newspapers, and other resources is regularly provided by libraries[9].

Additionally, libraries give users access to resources like rare books, out-of-print publications, and specialty collections that might not be readily found elsewhere. In addition, libraries usually include audiobooks, e-books, and other digital resources that may be accessed remotely, including online databases. By providing access to a vast array of reading materials, libraries can aid in the growth of a community's reading culture. They might also help to promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning. Libraries can also be quite helpful for people who do not have easy access to books or who do not have the money to purchase books. The primary function that libraries often provide in order to support the development of a community of readers is the provision of reading materials.

3.2.2. Promoting Reading Programs:

To promote reading, libraries sponsor various initiatives such as book clubs, reading challenges, and other activities aimed at cultivating a passion for reading. One notable example is the summer reading program, which many libraries offer for children and teenagers. These programs encourage young readers to continue their reading habits during the summer months when school is not in session. Participants can track their reading progress and earn rewards for reaching specific goals. According to a study by the Dominican University Graduate School of Library and Information Science, summer reading programs are effective in preventing a decline in children's reading skills[10].

3.2.3. Offering Guidance and Support:

In addition to assisting readers in selecting books that align with their interests and reading levels, librarians are trained professionals who offer valuable guidance and support. They leverage their expertise to help individuals find the right materials that match their preferences, whether they are looking for a new genre, author, or subject. Librarians are skilled in recommending books that not only cater to current interests but also introduce readers to new authors and genres they may not have considered before. This personalized approach can enhance the reading experience, foster a deeper love for literature, and encourage exploration of diverse reading materials. By providing tailored recommendations and fostering a supportive reading environment, librarians play a crucial role in promoting lifelong reading habits and intellectual growth.

3.2.4. Creating a Reading Culture:

Libraries can promote reading in their communities by hosting author talks, book signings, and literary festivals. These gatherings can encourage reader interaction and

foster a sense of community among readers. Libraries may support lifelong learning by giving users access to information and resources on a variety of topics. This category includes books, articles, and other items that assist readers learn about new topics. Libraries and information services, to use the phrases separately, play an important role in fostering a reader community by making reading materials more accessible, encouraging reading initiatives, providing guidance and support, establishing a reading culture, and fostering lifelong learning[11].

3.3. Digital Divide Gap Bridging Through Information Access:

Libraries allow people from all social, economic, and cultural backgrounds to freely and equally access knowledge and ideas, therefore library users stand to benefit the most from having access to reading materials, literacy programs, and non-formal educational activities. In addition to offering informal learning opportunities, literacy campaigns, and reading resources. Internet connectivity has an impact on everything in today's linked society, including job searching, healthcare, and high-quality education. In addition to overseeing the print resources in their collections, public libraries, according to Petuchovaite, are critical in bridging the digital divide and assisting individuals in society who are adopting digital technologies.

3.4. Guaranteeing Visibility of Research:

Gani, Kassa, and Khali argue that librarians are skilled information specialists capable of recommending reliable alternatives to dubious sources and highlighting often overlooked options. Their expertise extends beyond simply suggesting books; they actively support research efforts and help bridge communication gaps between researchers and valuable information. While showcasing the prominent content of various works is important, librarians also emphasize the importance of close coordination and collaboration. Their role is not just to display information but to facilitate comprehensive access to diverse and credible resources, ensuring that users can make well-informed decisions and advance their research effectively[12].

3.5. Preservation of cultural heritage:

Indigenous wisdom has gained widespread recognition in the contemporary, global society as a result of their attempts to disseminate knowledge. This has significantly increased worries about the necessity to protect it for the benefit of future generations. The necessity of creating, conserving, and disseminating indigenous knowledge across human society was emphasized by IFLA in 2004. The committee suggested that libraries and archives take up projects to gather, preserve, and disseminate indigenous knowledge; improve access to information sources; promote research and study of indigenous and traditional knowledge; and raise awareness of the

value, relevance, and applicability of indigenous knowledge and locally produced knowledge to both non-indigenous and indigenous peoples[13].

The quest of sustainable development can benefit greatly from knowledge. The reason for this is that it forms the basis for local decision-making in a number of domains, including as agriculture, natural resource management, food preparation, healthcare, and education. Thus, in order to achieve the SDGs, libraries and librarians must put in twice as much effort to guarantee that this cultural heritage, rights, and privileges do not vanish.

According to Dada[14], libraries offer services that can significantly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in several ways. First, they promote media and information literacy, along with general literacy, which empowers individuals to access, understand, and use information effectively. Libraries also play a key role in bridging information access gaps, particularly in underserved communities, ensuring equitable access to knowledge. Moreover, they support businesses, civil society, and government agencies by helping them better understand regional information needs, fostering informed decision-making.

Additionally, libraries serve as hubs for government services and activities, providing physical locations where these services can be delivered more efficiently. They also encourage the digitization of resources, ensuring that information is preserved and made accessible to a wider audience in the digital age. Through these efforts, libraries contribute directly to enhancing the outcomes of the SDGs.

4. The Role of Algerian Libraries in Achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals:

Algerian libraries play an important role in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 (SDGs) by facilitating access to knowledge, promoting education, and encouraging innovation. These libraries play an important role in improving society by providing access to information, fostering inclusive education, and meeting the different needs of their communities. Below, we discuss the function of Algerian libraries in accomplishing the various SDGs[15].

4.1. Quality of Education

Libraries in Algeria play a crucial role in improving education by providing materials and services that benefit all students. Public and university libraries play critical roles in assuring fair distribution of knowledge, encouraging lifelong learning, and promoting individuals' educational growth across the country.

4.2. Educational Resources for Early Learning

Algerian libraries offer specific services for children and youth, promoting early education and fostering a reading culture. These services are intended to meet the various requirements of young people, giving them with the resources they require to

flourish academically and personally. Libraries contribute to the establishment of a solid foundation for lifetime learning and intellectual development by emphasizing early education.

4.3. School Partnerships and Outreach Programs

Libraries actively interact with schools to broaden students' educational options. These connections include sponsoring school visits, donating educational supplies to classes, and arranging reading contests. Libraries emphasize the importance of reading for its lifelong ability by bridging the gap between official education and casual learning. A good one is the Algiers Public Library, that collaborates with local schools to host yearly book fairs and workshops to promote reading as a crucial tool for academic achievement[16].

4.4. Dynamic and Experiential Learning

To make learning more enjoyable and interactive, many Algerian libraries host seminars, storytelling sessions, and cultural events. These exercises help children and young people develop their creativity and critical thinking skills. The Béjaïa City Library provides hands-on seminars on robots and technology, simplifying complicated scientific concepts for young learners. Such programs help to close the gap among theoretical understanding and actual implementation.

4.5. Literacy and support for disadvantaged groups

Algerian libraries prioritize the educational requirements of underprivileged areas. Development of literacy and reading support efforts are among the programs aimed at kids from rural or underprivileged communities. Libraries like the Tizi Ouzou Public Library offer specialized reading sessions and educational games to youngsters who struggle with basic literacy skills. These efforts seek to decrease educational inequities and guarantee that each kid has the opportunity to achieve.

4.6. Digital Literacy and Advanced Skill Development

In response to the growing relevance of technological advances in learning, Algerian libraries have established programs for digital literacy to help youngsters manage the digital world. These courses cover basic computer skills, online research, and even beginner coding. The Oran Municipal Library, for example, hosts seminars that introduce young students to digital tools, allowing students to access educational materials online and build critical 21st-century skills.

4.7. Multilingual and Multicultural Education

Due to Algeria's wide linguistic terrain, bilingual and multicultural learning is a vital part of library services. Libraries provide literature in Arabic, French, and other regional languages, like Berber, to help overcome linguistic divides and build a sense

of inclusion. The Blida Provincial Library is a notable example, offering bilingual storybooks and instructional materials that cater to the language diversity of its clients.

5. Challenges facing Libraries towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goals:

Libraries across the world face a number of problems in successfully implementing sustainable development goals. One of the most significant challenges is a lack of funds, which limits their capacity to get new resources, modernize infrastructure, and conduct SDG-aligned initiatives. This financial constraint frequently impacts the quality and accessibility of services, especially in underserved and rural communities, where libraries have the greatest opportunity to overcome education and informational gaps[17]. Another major concern is the technology divide. Many libraries, particularly in poor countries, lack access to cutting-edge digital technologies, dependable internet connectivity, and sophisticated information systems. This limits their ability to deliver technological literacy training, online materials, and innovative services that are critical of Added to resource constraints, a shortage of competent library personnel is another impediment[18]. Many library workers lack training in developing areas like digital resource management, data analysis, and community involvement, all of which are crucial to achieving sustainable development goals. This competence gap restricts libraries' capacity to respond to changing patron requirements and implement effective programs' sustainable development in a based-on knowledge society[19].

When considering the specific instance of Algeria, these broad problems become very clear. Algerian libraries face significant financial constraints, limiting their ability to extend services, update premises, and acquire digital resources. This problem is exacerbated by a disparity of resources between cities and rural areas, allowing many towns without basic library services. The technological divide is also evident in Algeria, because many libraries struggle to give entry to current digital resources and internet services. This inhibits their capacity to provide digital literacy programs, electronic databases, and e-learning tools, all of which are critical to the advancement of education and innovation. The lack of particular training for Algerian library personnel exacerbates these issues. Many employees lack the necessary abilities to handle digital resources or establish SDG-aligned projects. Furthermore, there is little cooperation with libraries and national policymakers, leading to underutilization of libraries in attaining developmental goals.

Conclusion:

Rather than waiting until 2030, world leaders should begin evaluating the progress or shortcomings of Vision 2030 now. A thorough analysis of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) revealed that one of the major barriers to their success

was the lack of access to accurate and timely information. This issue not only slowed down progress but also hampered effective decision-making in key areas of development. To avoid repeating the same mistakes, this study advocates for a stronger emphasis on the provision of comprehensive information and library services.

Libraries and information centers play a critical role in the dissemination of knowledge, enabling informed decision-making, innovation, and the implementation of sustainable practices. Ensuring that these services are widely available and accessible will empower communities, improve education, and support a range of development initiatives. In the context of Vision 2030, investing in information infrastructure and library services is not just an option—it is a necessity for realizing the global development goals. World leaders should recognize the urgent need to prioritize information access and begin taking concrete steps to integrate these resources into their developmental frameworks today.

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