

## Chapter 12

# Sustainable Development Goals and Academic Libraries in Nigeria: An Approach to Realizing Environmental Sustainability

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### ABSTRACT

*Besides the objectives of academic institutions involving research, learning, and teaching, the role of academic libraries taking the centre stage in Nigeria's development is of paramount importance. The existence of academic libraries in developing nations like Nigeria is important to ensure the well-being of the people. It is established that there is a link between academic libraries and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. A survey around the Sustainable Development Goals set up by the United Nations was taken, and it was established how academic libraries can meet them through environmental sustainability approaches. It is imperative to note here that the concept of environmental sustainability is linked to the concept of green libraries and their practices in academic libraries. This work relies heavily on previous works of literature, policies and proposals that have earlier existed, and a critical analysis of the practices observed in academic libraries.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5964-5.ch012

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is an exciting ongoing discourse about environmental sustainability in consonance with the role academic libraries have to play. This topic has become a global concern because of the state the world's ecosystem has been left in. It is suggested that SDGs have been able to unify different nations by the common vision it holds to create a safe and sustainable space for individuals regardless of their status. Individual actors in society have taken up the initiative to make it their social responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the goals and the academic libraries are not left out.

Nigerian academic libraries have little to zero knowledge about this concept and its application. They strive to contribute to sustainable development as stipulated by The United Nations but due to the position they occupy, it may seem that contributing to environmental sustainability is far-fetched. Placing the SDGs within the context of green libraries provides a safe space to discuss their contributions to sustainability in the environment.

Academic libraries are libraries attached to universities, poly-techniques and colleges of education. They could be attached to special institutions like research centres and institutes, colleges of medicine or Law schools. Connaway et al. (2017) believe that academic libraries are institutes of value attached to a tertiary institution that serves mainly the staff and students of the institution. Gabbay and Shonam (2017) seem to have a different opinion. They posit that the position and status of academic libraries within academic institutions are quite unclear and could differ from one academic institution to another.

Whatever the case may be, it cannot be disproved that the academic library holds so much value when it comes to the education system concerning teaching, learning and research. Existing works of literature have revealed the nature of value academic libraries provide to include teaching, learning and research (Abubakar, 2011); provision of quality information services (Momodu, 2015); and a positive impact on students' academic performance (Carvalho e Rodriguez & Mandrekar, 2020).

The values achieved by academic libraries should, however, extend to include the achievement of the environmental dimensions of the sustainable development goals. The 2030 United Nations sustainable development goals made provisions for the planet. It seeks to do this by protecting the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

The objective of this chapter is to discuss in detail the sustainable development goals related to the environment and the various approaches academic libraries can achieve to environmental sustainability, and in turn, contribute to sustainable development goals.

### **Environmental Dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals: Academic Libraries Contributions**

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are focused on the people, the planet, peace, and prosperity. The design is such that every participant of society can work together in partnership to see that these goals are fulfilled. Since the inception of the United Nations SDGs, a blueprint for shared productive life exists on the planet. It is abundantly clear that when it comes to goals involving the environment, vulnerabilities exist as well as ways to drive progress (Ramutsindela, & Mickler, 2020). The goals that reflect environmental sustainability are Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation for All); and Goal 15 (Pro-

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