

The Role of Libraries in Achieving the United Nations Goals of Sustainable Development 2030

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Abstract— This study highlights the most important contents of the United Nations goals for sustainable development and the role of libraries in achieving them. The study initiated from the fact that libraries are professional institutions participate in scientific and intellectual aspects of societies, and play a role beyond to the operations of collecting and presenting information materials to support strategies and visions of their communities. Taking into consideration that libraries are social organizations play important roles in the innovation and development, the international organizations have involved them in their activities. Thus, when the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 were announced, professional associations of libraries have developed various plans to achieve them. One of the first organizations was the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), which was involved from the beginning in creating the United Nations 2030 Agenda. This supported the inclusion of access to information, protection of cultural heritage, global literacy, and access to information and communication technology (ICT) in the framework for sustainable development. The most significant achievement in this regard was the recognition of access to information as a target under Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide an access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels." Moreover, the sub target 16.10 stated, "Ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements". Culture is also included in sub target 11.4 and information and communication technology in 5b, 9c, 17.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals. To contribute in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the IFLA developed a program to enhance the role of libraries in implementing the goals, and raise the awareness of them among information specialists. The Program started in 2016 under the title 'The IFLA International Advocacy Program' (IAP), and passed through major stages including regional workshops covered various areas of the world. At the local level, the Oman Libraries and Information Association contributed to IFLA's efforts by participating in its workshops that were dedicated to this purpose, and holding a number of supportive workshops in the Sultanate. Some reports were sent to IFLA as contributions from library and information workers in the Sultanate to support its efforts to raise awareness and implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

Keywords— IFLA; Oman Libraries and Information Association; Libraries; UNSD Goals

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 are a set of global goals aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring that all people can live peaceful, healthy, and prosperous lives (Stig, 2018). Achieving these goals will require the collective efforts of governments, civil society, and individuals around the world. One group that can play a critical role in this effort is libraries. Libraries are more than just repositories of books and information; they are also community centers that can help to promote education, sustainability, and social inclusion (Bradley, 2016). In this context, libraries can be powerful partners in achieving the SDGs. They can provide access to information, support education and literacy, advocate for human rights, foster social inclusion and promote sustainable development. This study will identify the 17 SDGs of the UN, explore the various ways in which libraries can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. By highlighting the critical role that libraries can play in achieving these goals, the will demonstrate the importance of libraries as key partners in the global effort to create a sustainable future for all. The study gives special focus to Oman Libraries and Information Association's contribution in achieving SDGs 2030.

II. RATIONALE

Libraries paly a fundamental role in societies as they are the gateway to information and knowledge. The notion of the role of libraries in achieving the UN's SDGs 2030 is grounded in the fact that libraries are more than sources of information. They are not just repositories of books any more rather they serve as dynamic community centers which can help enhancing various sectors including education, health, economy etc. The primary role of library is still providing different resources to access information (e.g. books, journals, online databases and multimedia materials). They provide resources help individuals fully participate in developing the society using the provided tools from the library. By answering the first question of this paper, the wide range of the USGs will be much more clear to determine the roles of libraries in achieving the SDGs 2030.

III. RESEACH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS

The main aim of this study is to explore the role of libraries to achieve the sustainable development goals 2030 of the United Nations. This main aim is expected to be fulfilled throw answering the following questions:

- 1- What are the UN Sustainable development goals 2030?

- 2- What are the roles of libraries in achieving the UN Sustainable development goals 2030?
- 3- How are Omani Libraries and Information Association involved in the implementation of UN Sustainable development goals 2030?

This study will seek answers to the above questions, with special concern to the participation of Oman Libraries and Information Association in activities of the IFLA that was aimed to support achieving the UN SDGs 2030.

IV. METHOD

This study utilizes the content analysis approach to review and analyze reports of the UN SDGs 2030 and IFLA. Information from the official websites of the UN and IFLA analyzed and grouped according themes that are related to the libraries roles in achieving UN SDGs 2030. Moreover, the Oman Libraries and Information Association's official website and twitter account content analyzed to explore the extent of its participation in achieving SDGs. Related published articles have also been selected to review the previous work on the topic. Google Scholar and Ebscohost have been used to access information about the role of libraries and related it to SDGs. Regarding the criteria of selecting eligible resources to be used and analyzed. All the used resources are peer reviewed article and the all websites with the twitter around have been checked to be official as a source of trusted information. The data gathered from various above sources were grouped according to the study aim and questions, and used for formulating findings and discussion of the research.

V. UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2030

The first research question of this study is related to identification of the UN Sustainable development goals 2030 in order to understand them and be able to relate them later to the roles of libraries to answer the other questions. To answer the first question, researchers visited the reports of the UN published at their Website, in addition to some resources that have discussed them. The United Nation General Assembly adapted the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 which has been signed by 193 countries (Stig, 2018). It includes 17 goals known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 sub-targets which are representing a worldwide framework to achieve sustainability. The goals aimed to transfer the world to more peaceful and fair place in the future by addressing various issues, like, health, gender equality, hunger, education, poverty, environment etc (Weiland et al., 2021). The seventeenth SDGs are G.1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere, G.2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, G.3. Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages, G.4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all, G.5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, G.6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, G.7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, G.8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, G.9. Build resilient

infrastructure inclusive and sustainable industrialization and forester innovation, G10. Reduce inequality whining and among countries, G.11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, G.12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, G.13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact, G14. Conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, G.15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystem, sustainably manage forest, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss, G.16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, G.17. strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015). Figure 1 summarizes the SDGs.



Fig. 1: The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals 2030

The SDGs are an integrated system, which recognize that an event in one area of the world will affect outcomes in another area and that sustainable development should balance environment, social and economic aspects. The agendas are 'indivisible whole.' As the goals are interconnected, achieving progress in one area affects other areas. The SDGs are designed in interlinkage network where positive interactions between goals should be sought and negative interaction should be avoided (Weiland et al., 2021). For example, G.3 in SDGs on good health and well-beings is connected to some other goals, like G.1 (no poverty), G.2 (zero hungry), G.6 (clean water and sanitation) and G.10 (reduce inequality).

However SDGs 2030 agenda allow for coordination between different sectors and integrated implantation, SDGs also present challenges for government, civil society representative, donors and other actors in society, political and social (Weiland et al., 2021). Thus, to achieve SDGs, partnership between different society actors is required. SDGs emphasizes the importance of effective partnership in fostering the implementation of comprehensive SDGs. Building partnership is not just important for achieving SDGs, but also it helps understanding the way that different policy issues are made and how sectors interact with each other.

VI. LIBRARIES CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

To identify the role of libraries professional organizations to achieve the UN Sustainable development goals 2030, as it was sought by the second research question, researchers analyzed

relevant published literature, in addition to the websites of the UN and IFLA. The results indicate that three years before establishing the SDGs, there were intense involvement from many stakeholders including IFLA (Bradley, 2016). As libraries are sources of information, they play an important role in preparing people to meet the challenges of UN SDGs 2030 agendas. It is one of the libraries roles to provide people the access to information, which can support some of the SDGs principles. SDGs sub-targets included some direct roles for libraries to work on, in order to achieve SDGs. The researchers have summarized them as followed:

1. It was stated in G.4.7, which is related to education, that "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (United Nations, 2015).
2. G.12.8, which is related to consumption information and patterns, stated that "By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature"
3. It was mentioned in sub-target 13.3, related to warning from climate change that "improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning"
4. According to SDGs 2030 Agenda, access to information is recognized as a goal under Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals: G.16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
5. It was stated in sub-target 16.10 in regards to provision of justice that " Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements"

Moreover, Keiser (2022) published an article recently titled 'Libraries and the U.N sustainable Development Goals' in which the author recommended some implementations that libraries should put into actions for better sustainment applications. First, SDGs should be the centre of the library strategic plan. Second, the library must publish its commitments to public. Third, libraries should educate the surrounding environment about sustainment development (SD). Fourth, libraries have to encourage the creation of updated knowledge about SD. Finally, libraries should keep measuring their progress and keep the tracks about the results of implementing SDGs.

Overall, libraries play an essential role in achieving SDGs as they provide access to information and knowledge, promote literacy and education, support research and development and advocate for policy change and social justice. For example, G.1 in SDGs is titled No Poverty. Libraries can support this goal by providing access to information and resources to help people be aware about how to improve their lives. In addition, libraries can help in training people for new skills that are needed for education and employment. Another Example is G.2, which is No

hunger. Libraries can support G.2 by providing access to agriculture research, which can end in research recommending more productive and sustainable crops. Moreover, providing physical and online resources for farmers, including local market prices, weather reports and farming equipment, can help reaching sustainable agriculture which can lead to achieving G2 (Choh et al., 2017).

VII. IFLA AND SDGs

The International Federation of Library Associations and Associations (IFLA) has taken it upon itself to help libraries to achieve the goals set by the UN for SDGs 2030. IFLA has been involved over the years in the creation of the UN 2030 Agenda, and advocated for the inclusion of access to information, protection of cultural heritage, global literacy, and access to information and communication technology (ICT) in the framework for sustainable development. Working align with the SDGs, IFLA launched its program to enhance the role of libraries in implementing the goals under the title: The IFLA International Advocacy Program (IAP) in 2016. IAP is a training program aims to raise awareness of SDGs, thus, several workshops conducted in different regions around the world. IAP also aims to up skill the librarians' to be more qualified to achieve the SDGs (Choh et al., 2017). IFLA issued a report summarizing its global vision in ten main parts corresponding to ten opportunities to be achieved. The report started presenting two main key findings. First, libraries share a unity in their goals and values regardless of the library location, type and the librarians' years of experience. Second, it is important to effectively connect local and global actions because different regions have various characteristics and requirements. It is essential to consider the differences in order to unite the library field taking in account common challenges (IFLA, 2019). Table 2 summarizes the reported highlights in response to the ten opportunities.

	Highlights	Opportunities
1	Ensure equal access to information and resources	IFLA must be champions in intellectual freedom
2	Keeping highly committed to support literacy, reading and learning.	IFLA must update its traditional roles to meet digital requirement
3	Focusing in serving communities	IFLA needs to study and understand community needs first. Then, designs services that impact people's lives.
4	Embracing digital innovation	IFLA must keep updated with the technological changes
5	Having leaders who believe in the need of strong advocacy	Spreading better awareness of the need for advocacy at all levels. 'Every librarians is an advocate.'
6	Funding is a primary challenge	Ensure stakeholders who share the same values
7	The need to build collaboration and partnership.	IFLA has to enhance a spirit of collaboration.

8	Willingness to be less bureaucratic, inflexible and resistant to change	Challenging present structure and behaviours
9	IFLA is responsible for saving the world memory	IFLA needs to reach the maximum accessing the world's documentary heritage.
10	Young professional are highly commented and show desire to lead	IFLA should create effective opportunities for young professionals to learn, develop and lead.

Table 2: IFLA global vision

In short, libraries and library professional organizations play an important role in achieving UN SDGs 2030 via different means; by aligning their services and programs with SDGs, sharing knowledge and best practices, forming partnership and collecting and monitoring data. They can effectively contribute in creating a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous world.

VIII. OMAN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION AND SDGs

The third research question is about how Oman Libraries and Information Association has participated in achieving the UN Sustainable development goals 2030. The first author of this paper and other colleagues from the executive board of the Oman libraries and Information Association attended workshops of the IFLA regarding this issue. So the answer of this question is extracted from minutes of these activities and our reports to IFLA. In addition, information from Oman Libraries and Information Association's website and twitter account has been carefully analyzed and connected.

Oman Libraries and Information Association is a professional organization aims to promote and develop the library and information sector in the sultanate of Oman. The association has been actively involved in contributing to achieve SDGs 2030. One of the ways of the association's contribution was via representing the Sultanate of Oman in three workshops held by IFLA. The first one held in Doha, in March 13-15, 2017 and the president of the association at that time, Mr. Walid Al-Badi, joined it. The second workshop was held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on Sunday and Monday, May 21-22, 2017 and the vice president of the association at that time, Dr. Jamal bin Matar Al-Salmi, participated in it. The third workshop was held in Tunisia, 8-11 May 2018, in which its president, Dr. Khalfan bin Zahran Alhijji, represented the association. Before attending any workshop, the participants were asked to sign an agreement with IFLA to carry out awareness-raising activities, and to meet policy makers in their countries, to ensure that libraries are recognized among the main partners in supporting the UN SDGs 2030. The IFLA follows up the progress and supports participants to achieve their commitments, and to publish their activities widely. The workshops included an explanation of the SDGs of the UN and the role of libraries in achieving them. Participants in the IFLA's activities succeeded in achieving the required integration of local efforts in the Sultanate of Oman with global efforts, and there the Sultanate was included in the map of global libraries.

The second way of the association's contribution in achieving SDGs is by conduction various activities. To keep pace with the role of professional associations, especially IFLA, Oman Libraries and Information Association has implemented a large number of workshops, training courses and brainstorming sessions. There were three workshops designed according to the requirements of IFLA and under its supervision. The following table presents the details of the three workshops. (table 1).

Workshop	Topics	Time	Place
1	-The International Advocacy Program (IAP)- Introduce the United Nations Plan 2030, and the role of libraries in its implementation	March 29, 2017	Main library, SQU
2	- Omani librarians: Towards a unified library community	September 19, 2017	Faculty Club, SQU
3	IFLA's Global Vision: How the united library community can face future challenges: ideas for implementation	June 26, 2018	main library SQU

Number of members of the library profession in the Sultanate, from various academic, technical and administrative categories, were invited to attend the workshops. The workshops came out with several ideas and recommendations. Contributions from library and information workers in Oman were sent to IFLA to share ideas and recommendations around the world about enhancing the contribution of libraries in achieving SDGs. Among the most important points that were addressed and included in the report are:

- 1- Opportunities that are available in the country and region for enhancing library services.
- 2- Country priorities and the region's priorities in relation to libraries.
- 3- Ideas to achieve available opportunities, including:
 - a. Ideas to achieve Opportunity 2: Evolving our traditional roles to meet the digital age.
 - b. Ideas to achieve Opportunity 3: Understanding the needs of the community better, realizing and designing services that make an impact in the community.
 - c. Ideas for achieve Opportunity 5: Advocacy and look for support.
 - d. Ideas to achieve Opportunity 7: Collaboration and partnership with other organizations.
 - e. Ideas to achieve Opportunity 9: libraries are responsible for preserving the memory of the world.

In general, Oman Libraries and Information Association has contributed to the UN SDGs through different means, such as, attending workshops abroad and conducting workshops in the country to support libraries and information centers across Oman and raise the awareness of the role of libraries in achieving SDGs.

IX. IFLA AND SDGs

This paper has reviewed the most key notes of the UN SDGs with the role of libraries and library professional organizations to achieve them. It could be concluded that the role of libraries is not limited to the traditional vision anymore where libraries were represented in collecting scientific resources and making them available for the beneficiaries, but rather libraries have become intellectual cultural institutions and even political in many cases. Libraries adapt the plans of the society and seek development. Library professional associations and unions of libraries have understood this role and have sought to strengthen the links between libraries of all kinds and other institutions of society. Therefore, when the UN established SDGs 2030 in 2015, professional associations for libraries, including IFLA, rushed to review the goals and develop plans to support them. IFLA participated from the beginning and called for the inclusion of access to information, protection of cultural heritage, global literacy and access to information technology communication technology (ICT) in the framework for sustainable development. As a practical example of the contribution of libraries to achieve SDGs, the Oman Libraries and Information Association has been actively involved in contributing to the UN sustainable Development Goals 2030.

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