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Achieving Sustainable development through Libraries: Some Preliminary Observations from Botswana Public Libraries

Priti Jain

Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

E-mail: jainp@mopipi.ub.bw

Lynn Jibril

Department of Library Services, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

E-mail: Lynn.jibril@mopipi.ub.bw



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Abstract:

Sustainable development in the 21st century is based on access to information and knowledge. Like their counterparts, African libraries have recognized the key role of libraries in achieving sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The National Library of Uganda provides ICT training to female farmers to access weather forecasts, crop prices, and to set up online markets in their local languages. Nigerian Librarians developed a SDGs Action Group on Facebook to achieve SDGs. Similarly, public libraries in Botswana are actively engaged in achieving sustainable development goals. For example, supporting Goal 8, some public libraries provide basic ICT training to empower community so as to increase access to information for career and job opportunities leading to social and economic development. To support Goal 4: Quality education, some Public Libraries provide homework assistance to children to build strong educational foundation. To address Goal 5, Gender Equality, some public libraries in Botswana organize gender related activities to support girls and women. The aim of this paper is to share Botswana public libraries' initiatives toward sustainable development. The data for this paper was collected through interviews with the librarians, who are actively involved in SDGs and observations.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Public Libraries; Public librarians; Botswana.

1. Introduction

Sustainable development in the 21st century is based on access to information and knowledge that provides access to opportunities and leads to social and economic developments. On September, 25 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the post 2015 development agenda termed Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN specifically referred to the agenda as a Plan of Action for the people, the planet and prosperity, which aimed at strengthening universal peace in larger freedom. Agenda 2030 comprises of 17 SDGs and 169 targets. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and complete what MDGs did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet 5 Ps: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership (UN, 2015).

As information professionals librarians have recognized the importance of SDGs. At an event organized by the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL), the former IFLA President Donna Scheeder appropriately stated that, “there is no truly sustainable development without access to information, and no meaningful, inclusive access to information without libraries”. She further presaged that without strong government support for libraries, the digital divide could turn into an information and knowledge divide (Library News, 2017). In recognition of libraries’ key role in achieving sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all types of libraries world over are working towards realizing sustainable development.

The 1994 IFLA/UNESCO public library manifesto (IFLA/UNESCO, 2016) proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for fostering peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women. UNESCO therefore sees the public library as a tool that can be used to achieve any form of social and economic transformation. That is why all public libraries the world-wide are working towards fulfillment of SDGs and contribute to make the world a different planet.

2. Global Initiatives by Libraries Towards the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals

Libraries across the world continue to contribute towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals. Below are a few examples showing how libraries across the globe are contributing towards SDGs.

To achieve SDG 1: No Poverty, Sri Lanka government runs e-Library Nenasala Programme to increase digital literacy and access to technology among the nation’s poorest residents living in remote rural areas. The purpose of the programme is to eradicate poverty in the country. The Nenasalas offer instruction in basic computer skills, guidance on accessing information through the Internet, and a wide variety of locally relevant knowledge (Bradley, 2016). Towards achieving SDG 4: Quality Education, the National Library of Indonesia is playing an important role in increasing the level of education and literacy for the population spread amongst thousands of islands, where education is harder to access and many library services are provided by boat (Bradley, 2016). In support of SDG 8: Good Jobs and Economic Growth, public libraries in European Union are helping the public in using computers to apply for jobs. According to the statistics, 250,000 people find jobs through their public libraries in European Union each year. Public libraries provide public access to ICT and ICT training, which enables

people to apply online for jobs (Scheeder, 2015). Europe's 65,000 public libraries empower individuals and build stronger communities, where twenty four million adults participate in non-formal learning (Public Libraries, 2020).

In support of SDG 15: Life on Land and halt biodiversity loss, the Biodiversity Heritage Library in United States is an ongoing open access digital library for biodiversity literature, which includes more than 46 million pages from over 170,000 volumes of biodiversity literature published from the 15th to the 21st centuries in over 40 languages. Scientists are using the above data to identify new species, map population and ecosystem developments, and inform future climate change models (Scheeder, 2015).

Being a signatory to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Australian Government is providing awareness, encouragement and resources to enable Australian libraries to incorporate the SDGs in their own strategic plans and policy statements (ALIA, 2017). In collaboration with IFLA, Australian libraries' initiatives are based on three roles for libraries: i. supporting freedom of access to information outcomes, ii. Providing examples of success, which can be used as part of Australia's reporting, and, iii. Helping to communicate the 2030 Agenda to the general population. ALIA focus for 2017-2018 are:

1. Organizing and delivering a successful Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Summit for Library and Information Professionals in July 2018.
2. Creating a report for the federal government on how libraries in Australian libraries are supporting SDG's goals and targets.
3. Embedding the SDGs in Australian constitution, strategic plan, policies and guidelines.
4. Providing the awareness, encouragement and resources to enable Australian libraries to incorporate the SDGs in their own strategic plans and policy statements (ALIA, 2017).

3. Initiatives in African Libraries Towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals

Following their partners, African libraries have initiated numerous projects. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been identified by African countries as tools within their wider development planning framework that will put an end to the tragic conditions experienced by many Africans (Bawack, 2018:64). The sections below expounds some of the efforts that are being made by selected libraries in Africa towards realizing Sustainable Development Goals.

Fostering SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, the Uganda Health Information Digest published by the Makerere University Library repackages scholarly information in print format for health workers who cannot access the information. The Digest includes abstracts on topical disease and health issues. It is distributed to over 1500 health units including hospitals, health centers, dispensaries, health related NGOs, district medical offices, all district health and social services committees and Members of Parliament (Scheeder, 2015).

Addressing SDG 5: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, the National Library of Uganda has an ICT training program, which is specifically designed for female farmers. The program ensured that these women have access to weather forecasts, crop prices, and support to set up online markets in their local languages. This promotes economic empowerment to women. Uganda was one of the first countries to develop its 2015/16–2019/20 national development plan in line with the SDGs (Bradley, 2016).

Supporting SDG 9: Innovation and Infrastructure, Western Kenya and Uganda are engaged in lively debates, quizzes and spelling competitions through Kisumu Public Library's smartphone, laptop and video conferencing project. This is to help schools that are hundreds of kilometers apart in remote areas of western Kenya and Uganda. Also, few rural schools have internet connections and libraries research ways of connecting to the internet through the mobile phone network (Bradley, 2016).

Supporting SDG 16, Target 16.10: Access to Information, Moldova libraries are contributing to Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plans. This is a platform between government, civil society and business to drive commitments to open government and accountability. In Moldova, librarians attend civil society meetings to help develop the country's national action plan, and to include the role of libraries as supporters of access to information (Bradley, 2016).

Academic Libraries in Cameroon have classified all hard copies of dissertations according to related SDGs and the library staff have been schooled on the 17 SDGs. Each librarian is assigned to two SDGs. He/she collects a pack of research dissertations, reads each of them, and makes a synthesis of its contents, catalogues, and presents its metadata vis-a-vis the SDG. (Bawack, 2018:65). In Zambia, Lusaka conducted a one-day training on advocacy for the Sustainable Development Goals for 100 library managers drawn from government, learning institutions and parastatal bodies across all 10 provinces of Zambia to facilitate sustainable development through libraries (Nonde, 2017). To meet Agenda 2063 and 2030 Ghana library board is helping students acquire basic ICT skills that are motivating them to use computers to access information (Dzandza, 2017).

Libraries in Nigeria are creating awareness about the SDGs among all stakeholders. Nigerian librarians have formed a SDGs Action Group on Facebook as a platform to seek submissions on how libraries can contribute to the achievement of SDGs including other platforms, such as radio broadcasts, tweets and posters. Libraries are also collaborating with governmental and non-governmental institutions to ensure collaboration. Libraries in Nigeria have the mandate to fill the information gap by providing access to basic information on education, health, agriculture, other social and civic issues and capacity building that will be required for national development (Igbinovia, 2016, Dzandza, 2017).

Thus, libraries can contribute to sustainable development in numerous ways: provide skills and resources to help achieve universal literacy, support research and quality education, promote good health, increase in production, and boost the economy of the country. Public access to ICT supports digital inclusion for all levels in the country and could and promote gender equality in policy making and decision (John, 2016).

This paper presents the Preliminary Observations from Botswana Public libraries towards achieving sustainable development goals.

4. Public libraries in Botswana

Public libraries in Botswana are run by the Botswana National Library Service (BNLS), Headquarters situated in the capital city, Gaborone. The BNLS was established in September, 1967 by an Act of Parliament: National Library Service Act, No. 29 of the 1967. It was officially opened on 8th April, 1968. The BNLS is one of the departments of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development (MYSC). The National Library

Services Board provides advice to the minister on matters related to the provision of library services in the country. The Director of BNLS is the Secretary to the Board (Botswana 1987: Chapter 58.02).

The BNLS started with one public library, the Gaborone Public Library on 1st April, 1968. In the past 50 years, BNLS has grown rapidly and extended its services to most parts of the country including all remote areas. Currently, BNLS runs 42 public libraries and 61 village reading rooms. BNLS also manages the National Reference Library where the country's memory is housed and managed as well as the library service for people with disabilities (LSPD). Of the 42 public libraries, 34 are already working towards attainment of SDGs. This study focused only on 20 public libraries that are actively involved in SDGs (Interview with Respondent A, 2018).

5. Statement of the problem

Botswana subscribes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Botswana was part of the 2017 Voluntary National Review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Botswana's SDGs implementation process can be captured in four distinct phases: First, the process began with a strong campaign to ensure ownership of SDGs at all levels. Second, the goals were integrated into national development frameworks, programs and sector plans. Third, institutional mechanisms were established for their effective coordination. Fourth, a plan of action (Roadmap) to rollout SDGs was approved. The SDGs have also been translated into the local language by civil society (Botswana Voluntary National Review, 2017). Botswana has put together a National SDGs Roadmap to provide a coherent and well-coordinated approach to the implementation of the SDGs. The Roadmap sets out three areas of focus: (i) Coordination, Ownership and Leadership; (ii) Implementation, building on existing structures; and (iii) Data and progress tracking and reporting. It also includes a plan of action for the next five years (Botswana SDGs Roadmap, 2017). Botswana SDGs Roadmap was officially launched on 22 February, 2018 at the University of Botswana. Despite all these efforts by the Government of Botswana, at the moment no study has been undertaken in the country specifically in libraries and information center sector, yet information and knowledge are key to sustainable development. Hence, this study sought to determine how Botswana public libraries are contributing towards the attainment of SDGs in Botswana. To accomplish the purpose, the study pursued the following two questions:

Q. 1. What initiatives Public Libraries in Botswana have undertaken towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

Q. 2. Do public libraries face any challenges in carrying out their initiatives?

6. Research Methodology

This paper used interviews and observation methods to collect data. Face-to-face Interviews were conducted with the librarians, who work in the public libraries that are in the vicinity of Gaborone. Telephone interviews were carried out with the librarians who work in distant public libraries. A total of 20 interviews were conducted with the librarians working in public libraries in Botswana, who are actively engaged in attaining SDGs. All interviewees were asked two main questions: what are Public Libraries' initiatives towards SDGs and do they encounter any challenges in carrying out their initiatives.

Physical observation was conducted in 6 (six) public libraries including Kanye, Gaborone, Mochudi, Ramotswa, Mmakgodi and Thamaga. Observation check-list included: availability of computers to carry out ICT training, class room spaces for training, spaces for home work assistance, play grounds for sports, arts and craft materials, the library collection, Internet and Wi-fi for searching information for student research and homework.

6.1. Population of the Study: Population is defined as a group of individuals who have the same characteristics (Creswell, 2014: 160). The population of the study consisted of one librarian at BNLS, who was overseeing SDGs in all public libraries and 24 librarians, who work in 20 public libraries and are actively involved in achieving SDGs 2030.

6.2 Data Analysis: As mentioned earlier data was collected using interviews. Thematic analysis approach was used for the analysis of interviews and responses were grouped into themes based on two research questions.

6.3 Ethical Consideration: Prior to carry-out interviews, the permission to conduct interviews and present the findings at IFLA International conference was sought from the Botswana National Library Service (BNLS) headquarters and all the participating librarians. Anonymity was guaranteed to all the participating librarians; hence no librarian’s name is disclosed in the paper.

6.4 Profile of participating libraries: Table (1) presents the names of the libraries, who participated in the study across Botswana:

Table 1: Participating Public Libraries

S/N	Name of the library	No. of participant
1	BNLS Headquarter	1
2	Francistown	1
3	Gaborone	1
4	Gweta	2
5	Jwaneng	1
6	Kang	1
7	Kanye	1
8	Kasane	2
9	Kopong	1
10	Lobatse	2
11	Mahalapye	1
12	Mankgodi	1
13	Matlhako	1
14	Maunatlala	1
15	Mochudi	1
16	Molalatau	1
17	Moshupa	1
18	Nata	1
19	Ramotswa	2
20	Selibe Phikwe	1
21	Thamaga	1

Total	21 Libraries	25 Participants
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7. Findings of the Study

The following section presents the findings based on two research questions.

7.1 Major Initiatives in Public Libraries: Question (1) sought to determine the major initiatives, which are instigated in public libraries in Botswana to achieve SDGs 2030. The findings revealed initiatives towards SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 3: Good Health, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. Table (2) displays various initiatives under each SDG:

Table 2: Major SDG Initiatives in Botswana Public libraries

SDG	Initiatives
SDG 1: No Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic ICT training programmes • The business Café Service
SDG 3: Good Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health talks • Partnership with health-related NGOs for health activities
SDG 4: Quality Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-Work Assistance • Culinary arts club • Early childhood development clubs • Indigenous language improvement program • Story-telling and chess clubs • A life-skills club three month-Braille training programme for blind • Mobile library service for the local prisoners • Games and reading clubs • Read with me Club
SDG 5: Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket weaving, sewing and needle work to empower women • Capacity building workshops
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capturing of indigenous knowledge and its preservation • Promoting traditional outdoor games like koi and morabaraba • Repackaging information for user
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with various organizations in the implementation of many SDG related programmes • Career-coach clinics • Kanye Burial Society and Community Service Committee

Source: Interviews, 2018

7.2 Challenges faced by public libraries: Question 2 sought to establish the challenges faced by public libraries in achieving the sustainable development goals. The study identified seven challenges comprising: lack of mobility, lack of equipment such as, computers and printers, inadequate funding, space limitation, lack of local content for local needs and old library collection. Table 3 below displays the findings

Table 3: Challenges faced by public libraries

S/N	Challenge	Frequency
1	Lack of mobility	19
2	Lack of equipment such as, computers and printers	18
3	Inadequate funding	17
4	Space limitation	10
5	Lack of local content for local needs	12
7	Old library collection	15

Source: Interviews, 2018.

Observation: According to the observation check-list, physical visits to public libraries observed the following: the availability of computers and class room spaces to carry out ICT training, spaces for home work assistance, play grounds for sports, arts and craft materials, access to Internet and Wi-fi for searching information for student research and homework, and library collection. Some of the challenges identified in Table (3) (lack of equipment and computers, space limitation and old library collection inhibiting to provide adequate homework assistance) were further validated with the observation.

7. Discussion of findings

This section discusses the various initiatives for achieving SDGs in Botswana public libraries and the associated challenges encountered in carrying them out.

7.1 SDGs Initiatives: Libraries across the globe are playing a key role in the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Similar to their associates, Botswana public libraries are actively involved in achieving SDGs across the country. Findings from interviews and observations from the libraries in this study revealed some good initiatives towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals. All the twenty libraries that participated in this study are engaged in one way or the other in bringing developments to the communities they serve. They thus ensure access to information by repackaging information to suit the needs of communities, universal literacy for all through partnering with schools and the Ministry of Basic Education to equip learners with life skills, and the preservation of the cultural heritage of societies by nurturing and ensuring sustainable transfer of skills from one generation to another. The following section discusses in detail the various initiatives under the different sustainable development goals that are being achieved by public libraries in Botswana.

No Poverty (SDG 1): Botswana Public libraries are actively involved in pushing the 2030 agenda for the achievement of SDG 1 eradication of poverty in all its forms. All participating public libraries offer basic ICT training to provide new skills needed for employment and to combat poverty. The findings are supported by Bradley (2016) observation in Sri Lanka, where government runs e-Library Nenasala Programme to increase digital literacy and access to nation's poorest residents living in remote rural areas. Botswana public libraries offer lessons on basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ranging from how to operate a

computer, Microsoft word, spreadsheet, PowerPoint to search for information using a computer.

ICT training is a very popular training in all the public libraries in Botswana with an average monthly enrolment of about 60 people. Many community members, who have gone through this training have achieved employment promotion; they are able to look for job vacancies and apply online for the job. Some who were not employed have now improved employment potential for the job market. This finding of the study is similar to European Human public Library, where 250,000 people find jobs every year due to ICT training (Scheeder, 2015). Most youths have taken advantage of this training to start up some business ventures as it is the case with Kasane public library (Interview with Respondent H, 2018). It should also be noted that income generating activities referred under other SDGs below will also contribute to SDG1.

Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3): To maintain good health and well-being of the community, majority of the participating libraries in this study contribute to healthy lives and promote the well-being for all. For example, Thamaga public library commemorates the United Nations commemorative days like the World AIDS Day, where they display library materials on HIV/AIDS. They also hold health talks on the general well-being, such as, nutrition and healthy lifestyles. They partner with health workers to address library users on health related matters (Interview with Respondent T, 2018). In addition, Kanye library collaborates with a health related Non-Governmental Organization for health activities such as, conducting First Aid training for the community (Interviews with Respondent G, 2018). Gaborone, Gweta and Maunatla public libraries organize scheduled health talks for the users conducted by the health workers both on Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

Thus, Botswana public libraries support healthy lifestyles by ensuring access to health and wellness information and these initiatives have yielded positive results. This is evident by the statement, “In Botswana 87% of library visitors say their health improved as a result of the health information they found using public library services” (ifla2pagernext4billion, 2018).

Quality Education (SDG 4): Quality education is the foundation to improving peoples’ lives and sustainable development. All participating libraries play a key role in contributing towards the improvement and provision of equitable quality education through a number of varied activities initiated by the different libraries. Common to all libraries in this research is the ‘Homework Assistance’ initiative, where the libraries have formed clubs with the main objective to assist school going children between the age groups of seven and twelve develop their thinking skills as well as ensure that they have the right skill to search for information and use information to complete given tasks. Developing children from a tender age is critical in the overall education of any citizenry - this activity supports lifelong learning skills that are critical to participation in the knowledge based economy.

Kanye library has initiated a culinary club where members of the club use library materials, such as, cooking books to pick a menu and the club members contribute some money to buy the ingredients, cook and share amongst members. Most members in the group have hearing impairment and as they interact with this group, they get to exchange not only cooking skills but also the communication skills through sign language. This is in line with this particular SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, as it calls for inclusiveness and Kanye library has embraced and demonstrated this by involving people living with disability. Kanye also has early childhood development initiative just like all the other libraries in this study. The aim of this

program is to offer safe spaces to children from disadvantaged families whose parents cannot afford fees for pre-schooling. This program contributes to a good educational foundation for the children. The library provides all the materials in terms of writing paper, pen or pencils, chairs and tables as well as the space itself and a partner NGO pays the salary of the volunteer who spends time teaching and playing with the kids. Another significant initiative by the Kanye Library is an indigenous language improvement programme which they implement in collaboration with a local primary school. Since its inception there has been a marked improvement in the results of Setswana language examinations (Interview with Respondent D, 2018).

Ramotswa, Thamaga, Kanye, Mankodi and Molalatau libraries have formed storytelling and chess clubs. Storytelling is an important activity in grooming an information society since it introduces children to new vocabulary and offers them the opportunity to use their imagination and creativity at an early age. Storytelling also offers insights into universal life experiences. It motivates the children and develops their listening and reading skills which are all critical in the learning process. Similarly, chess helps unleash one's originality by affording an opportunity to explore and exploit a child's cognitive and creative potential to the maximum. It increases problem-solving skills and hence, it is also a very essential skill in the development of the child's mind for relaxation, leisure and education. The library provides the facilities for playing chess. There is also a life-skills club, where members of the community are taught life skills including writing proposals for projects and curriculum vitae for job seeking (Interviews with Respondents M, O, D, G & J, 2018).

Mochudi is a community that has the most number of physically disabled people and as such has the highest number (4) of schools for special education (1 Primary School, 1 Junior Secondary, 1 Senior Secondary school and 1 Vocational school). The public library in Mochudi has joined hands with members of the community to accord these members of the society access to information resources through offering a three months training on Braille for the blind (Interview with Respondent, I, 2018).

Gender Equality (SDG 5): In an effort to accelerate the United Nation 2030 agenda, the International Women's Day is celebrated every year on 8th March, and themes and sub-themes such "Step it Up" which commits to the empowerment of women and women rights are featured globally. Similarly in Botswana, public libraries have come up with initiatives towards empowering women, such as, the basket weaving projects in Gweta and Nata, where the libraries have provided working spaces for the women to weave their baskets and also assist in marketing these products to tourists passing through their villages. The proceeds from these are used to pay school fees for the families and to provide for the families' daily upkeep. Furthermore, some libraries for example, Nata, and Maunatlala libraries do have needle work programs where the ladies share their skills with those who do not have them through a capacity building workshop conducted in the library. In other instances ladies are taught how to bake and make jam so that they can become self-reliant through income generation (Interviews with Respondents Q & U, 2018). One of the libraries (Maunatlala) provides sewing machines for the village women. Women are able sew track suits and other attires which are purchased by local authority through the social welfare department for orphans in the village (Interviews with Respondent U, 2018).

The Women's Shelter operated by an NGO in Gaborone is a facility established to respond to the needs of the victims of gender based violence. The Gaborone public library has partnered with this NGO to provide library materials to women at the shelter for empowerment and

mitigation of violence and reduction of gender inequalities (Interviews with Respondent C, 2018).

Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11): Few of the public libraries have initiatives that are devoted to the promotion of cultural inclusion such as, Thamaga, Gaborone, Gweta and Jwaneng while others are actively involved in the preservation of the cultural heritage for future generation like Kasane, Kanye, Molalatau. Public libraries just like all other library types are no longer just custodian of books, they offer safe spaces for leisure, education and relaxation. This was evident in the services the public libraries offer to reach out to communities like the indoor and outdoor games they play within the library premises. Traditional games like koi and morabaraba are part of the indigenous knowledge the societies hold and by promoting these games public libraries in Thamaga, Gaborone and Gweta are playing an active part in preserving the country's cultural heritage (Interviews with Respondents O, C & Q, 2018). Further three other public libraries Kanye, Kasane and Molalatau are actively involved in documenting and preserving their communities' indigenous knowledge through carrying out projects that seek to capture stories entailing the history of the communities they serve and share them with the library users as well as document them for future use (Interview with Respondents D, J & P, 2018). These are commendable efforts since indigenous knowledge is in danger of being threatened.

Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17): The SDGs call upon collaborative partnership, sustainability and inclusiveness. To achieve this goal various public libraries, who participated in the study have realized the important role stakeholders play in the achievement of these goals. As a result public libraries have partnered with the private sectors, government, as well as the non-governmental organizations in order to expand their services in the communities they serve. Kanye, Gaborone, Thamaga, Ramotswa libraries engage health workers to hold health talks for the community about their health and well-being to help them live better and more fulfilling lives. Libraries, as industries that are transforming due to the digital age, have taken advantage of this transformation and are using their spaces to partner with experts in other critical areas to conduct coaching clinics on general life skills, such as how to write a curriculum vitae or write a winning proposal (Interviews with Respondents D, C, O, & M, 2018). In Ramotswa for example, the public library in collaboration with the District AIDS coordinators office has formed a 'Life Line Club' that seeks to assist the youth in matters related to HIV/AIDS as well as drug abuse (Interview with Respondent M, 2018). Kanye and Thamaga public libraries partner with the community's burial societies to support the disadvantaged members of the society with school uniform, toiletry and clothes to offer these descent and dignified lives (Interviews with Respondents D & O, 2018).

7.2 Challenges: As presented in Table (3), some formidable challenges experienced in the implementation of project activities had limited the scope and range of achievement. Transport is a strong enabler for most of the activities by the libraries but there is always a challenge securing a vehicle to provide mobility to reach communities in the remote areas of the country. This has negatively affected expansion and extension of library services to the people living in remote areas and the ability by libraries to initiate SGD related activities. It is worrisome to note that this is a common challenge in almost all libraries in this study. Another major challenge was lack of equipment/infrastructure, such as, computers and printers that are essential for the ICT training and other trainings. This has resulted in a significant waiting list for prospective trainees in virtually all participating libraries. Lack of adequate funding to implement initiatives towards achieving the SDGs is yet another common challenge to the all the libraries. Funding is the most crucial resource for any initiative.

8. Conclusion & Recommendations

It is apparent from the preceding that Public Libraries in Botswana have initiated a good number of projects towards accomplishing SDGs. The collaboration engendered with communities is admirable, as the SDGs can only be achieved working with communities who are the primary beneficiaries of the initiatives. However, while noting that the libraries have made commendable efforts in pursuing the implementation of various projects across the SDGs, the identified challenges such as, lack of mobility, lack of ICT infrastructure, inadequate funding, old library collection have limited their scope of achieving the SDGs. As a result, most projects are restricted to those goals that are easily implementable in the existing facilities and infrastructure. It is hoped that the Government working with relevant organizations, such as Botswana Library Association will explore increasing resources to the libraries to address some of the challenges faced and increase their ability to broaden the scope of activities towards achieving the SDGs. It is also hoped that this discourse will provide guidance to other African countries in supporting their public libraries to contribute to the country-level efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Governments therefore, should recognize the important role that libraries are playing in achieving SDGs. Cornish (2018) has appropriately articulated that, “the good thing about the library is we cut across various government jurisdictions; we’re a bit about education, we’re a bit about breaking the poverty and its cycle through literacy. We’re about health and well-being to help people live better and more fulfilling lives and we are about culture and preservation. so it's important for us to talk to government”.

To overcome some of the identified challenges and successful execution of Sustainable Development Goals in public libraries, the researchers put forward the following recommendations:

Partnerships: The sustainable development goals require an integrated approach towards achieving these goals and therefore, partnering with critical stakeholders such as, governmental and non-governmental institutions is paramount in overcoming identified challenges.

Documentation: There is a need for proper and clear documentation of all the initiatives towards the achievement of the SDG for purposes of not only reporting to higher authorities statutory but to the national association as well as the national bodies, regionally and internationally. A National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework can be further expanded to accommodate this requirement and to measure impact of SDGs initiatives. Also, best practice documentation is also highly recommended so that other public libraries can benchmark and emulate them for effective implementation to maximize outcomes and overall impact.

Advocacy: Advocacy for libraries across all levels of Government requires evidence and this can come out of the current projects and programs being implemented and properly packaged to meet advocacy needs.

Creation of local content: Public librarians are also encouraged to repackage and create content for their users in the local language to facilitate implementation of their SDG activities in their catchment communities.

Formation of a forum: Like Nigerian libraries, Public libraries in Botswana should form a forum to share experiences, challenges and discuss areas of improvement to achieve sustainable developmental goals.

Statistical evidence: It is also important that compelling library stories backed up by statistical evidence be told to policy makers through advocacy efforts, these will also assist in transforming the image of libraries.

Inclusion of libraries in a country's national development plans: Government should include libraries as part of the national development agenda.

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