THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN UGANDA IN ACHIEVING THE UN 2030 AGENDA.

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1. **Introduction**

The full title of 'The UN 2030 Agenda' is, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (United Nations, 2015). The Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and complete what MDGs did not achieve. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. A summarized list is given below. It is very important for us all to familiarize ourselves for quick reference and answer to our users

Goal 1: No poverty

Goal 2: Zero hunger

Goal 3: Good Health and wellbeing

Goal 4: Quality education

Goal 5: Gender equality

Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy

Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Goal 10: Reduced inequality

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production

Goal 13: Climate action

Goal 14: Life below water

Goal 15: Life on Land

Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions

Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals

(IFLA, 2016)

2. Purpose and summary of relevant goals

The role of libraries in achieving the SDGs has been approached from various dimensions; some from specific geographical areas, others from library types, service provision, or category of people served. This presentation limits itself to Goals 4, targets 6 and 7; and Goal16, target 10. Emphasis was however, put on Goal 16:10. The purpose of this paper was to show the need and readiness of Uganda to implement the 2030 Agenda and demonstrate how university libraries can contribute to national development and the achievement of the SDGs. The mmethodology used for data collection included literature review, interviews and personal knowledge from the author's professional experience of 23 years as a university librarian.

A summary of the two goals - 4 and 16 chosen, the relevant targets and expected indicators are given below:

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. (Quality education)

Target 4:6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy. **Indicator** – proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional a. literacy, b. numeracy skills, by sex

Target 4:7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles. **Indicator** – Extent to which i. global citizenship education and ii. Education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels.

Goal 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. (Peace, justice and strong institutions)

Target 16:10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. **Indicator**: 16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and /or policy guarantees for public access to information (SDG Indicators, 2017)

3. Uganda and the SDGs

You may be interested to know that the UN Summit that adopted the 2030 Agenda in September 2015 was under the Presidency of Uganda's Minister of Foreign Affairs (United Nations, 2015). It is therefore not surprising that Uganda was among the first countries to integrate the Agenda in its national planning frameworks, particularly in its Second National Development Plan (NDPII) 2015/16-2019/2020 (National Planning authority, 2016). The SDGs programme found Uganda with its own strategies based on the Uganda Vision 2040 Development Framework. In line with this National Vision Framework, six (6) five-year NDPs were to be implemented, with two so far having been produced – the first NDPI in 2011-2015, and the second (NDPII), in 2016-2020. The Thrust of the NDPII is to propel the country to middle income status in the current running five years through prioritizing investment in five key growth drivers with greatest multiplier effect as identified in the Uganda Vision 2040 (National Planning Authority, 2018).

The SDGs have been incorporated into the NDPII with the aim to ensure that the Government policy framework, budget priorities and programmes are aligned with the SDGs in the overall framework of the NDPII. The Government highlights six areas for implementation including: multi-sector implementation planning; Coordination; data and reporting; population mobilization; Partnerships; and Human and Financial resources (Development Initiatives, 2015).

This is also supported by the legal and constitutional provisions which provide for freedom of access to information (Uganda Access to Information Act 2005). In relation to target 16:10, one can say that Uganda has moved a step by enacting Act 5 and Act 6: Uganda Access to Information Act 2005 (Uganda Gazette, 2005). This is, "An Act of the Republic of Uganda to provide for the right of access to information, pursuant to article 41 of the Constitution, to prescribe the classes of information referred to in that article; the procedure for obtaining access to that information; and for related matters"

The Act applies to all information and records of Government Ministries, departments, local governments, statutory corporations and bodies, commissions and other Government organs and agencies, unless specifically exempted by this Act. Its purpose is, among other things, "to empower the public to effectively scrutinise and participate in Government decisions that affect them".

The Government has also taken other steps to promote the right of access to information by establishing Access to Information Regulations passed in 2011; laws to facilitate the use of Internet – the Uganda Communications Act, 2013 (CIPESA, 2016), and the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance (MoICT&NG); plus developing a Government Communications Strategy; providing Public Education

Airtime on radios; and establishing the Government Citizens Interaction Centre (GCIC) to enhance the monitoring of service delivery (CIPESA, 2017).

The Government has also undertaken other sustainable development programmes such as Education for sustainable development: Uganda implementation strategy (Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, 2010).

4. Libraries and access to information

The core functions of libraries in general were originally to acquire, organize and provide information resources to users. These have now been extended to include to identifying, selecting, organizing, providing information in the right formats (Obasola, 2012), marketing library services, teaching patrons in ICT use, and referencing management software. Sometimes they are called Academic libraries. These include, college libraries, polytechnic libraries and university libraries. Their roles include acquiring and making available books, other material and services to aid their universities' academic and research programmes; and where students, lectures/faculty and researchers seek information for their academic pursuit (Agbo & Onyekweodiri, 2014)

It has been observed that access to an opportunity begins with access to information (Dada, 2017; IFLA, 2017). Libraries in their various types – public, academic, school, research, and others, ensure that access to information and the skills to use it, are available to everyone. They also provide information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, which helps people to develop the capacity to use information effectively (Lak, 2017). Access to information allows people to learn, engage in social discussions, make better choices, improve their lives, find jobs, build networks, stay healthy, and come up with ways to improve their situations (IFLA, 2017). Libraries also preserve information to ensure ongoing access for future generations. They provide access to the world's culture and heritage. Libraries and access to information contribute to improved outcomes across the sustainable development goals (IFLA, Booklet, 2016).

Many countries have designated libraries for vital information and knowledge and have become important centres of access to information for personal and national development libraries promote lifelong learning and quality and equitable education. Libraries introduce people to ICT skills which develops them in many ways from readily available information. They support students to do well, while teachers and lecturers prepare useful notes for passing on to the students (Bandoma, 2016).

Achitabwino (2007) observes that, "for a nation to develop, it needs to have and provide relevant and updated information on food security, health, democracy, population, education, family planning, youth empowerment, gender equality, environment, etc. Libraries are there for proper management, provision and dissemination of such information". Agbo and Onyekwiodiri (2014) affirm that libraries have been the greatest force that has contributed to human civilization.

Recognizing this critical role played by access to information and libraries in supporting development, IFLA successfully, advocated for the inclusion of access to information, ICTs, culture and universal

literacy as part of the UN 2030 Agenda. Consequently, library communities in every country are urged to communicate to their government leaders how libraries can advance their development priorities. It is interesting to know that, some achievements have already been recorded in favour of Uganda as examples of implementing Goal 3 and 5 of the SDGs.

Goal 3: Good health and wellbeing: Health and Medical practitioners in rural Uganda still face challenges of accessing basic information for ensuring quality health care. Makerere University Library repackages scholarly information in print format (The Uganda Information Digest) and distributes it to over 1500 health units and workers who cannot access the information online.

Goal 5: The National Library of Uganda has an ICT training programme designed for female farmers, providing access in local languages on weather forecasts, crop prices, and support to set up online markets. This programme increases the economic well-being of women through technology skills. (IFLA, 2016; Beyond Access: libraries powering development, 2012)

5. Universities and University Libraries in Uganda

University education in Uganda started in 1949 with the establishment of Makerere as a University College of East Africa offering degrees awarded by the University of London (Ssekamwa & Lugumba, 2000 p.14). Up until 1988, Makerere University was the only university in Uganda (Baryamureeba, 2018). To date there are 9 Public Universities and 40 Private universities. Other universities were established from 1988 as chronologically indicated in Appendix 1. The Ugandan university libraries formed the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) in 2001. Membership to CUUL also includes other degree awarding institutions. The current membership of CUUL stands at 46 universities and other institutions.

The main aim was to form a forum for holding conferences, seminars, workshops and courses on networking, resource sharing, modern trends, as they pursue their responsibility of providing quality information resources for supporting learning, teaching, research and innovation in their universities.

5.1 Achievements

CUUL is housed at Makerere University Business School (MUBS) Library, with a well-furnished office. The Consortium has a constitution and a website. It has organized workshops on: Institutional Digital Repositories and policy formulation, Information Literacy, marketing of library and information services, Reference Information Management software, monitoring and evaluation of e-resource usage, academic writing, leading in the library forum, etc. CUUL has also participated in the Africa Regional Meeting in Ethiopia, AFLIA Conference and Training in Ghana, Africa Forum on Disabilities (Mirembe, 2015; Nannozi, 2018). It has also published a book entitled, 'INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES AMONG THE CONSORTIUM OF UGANDA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES'.

CUUL and the Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA) have written to the National Planning Authority (NPA), requesting for participation in the consultative forum on the implementation of the SDGs in Uganda. They also requested the Authority to request government Ministries and United Nations Agencies to give their publications on the SDGs implementation programme in Uganda to the University Libraries and National Library of Uganda for dissemination to universities for integration into their curricula.

5.2 Collaborations

CUUL has developed collaborations with: INASP, ITOCA, SIDA, PERI, National Information Technology Authority of Uganda (NITA-U), Consortium of Academic Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH), Eifel, and UNESCO

6. The need for involving university libraries in the SDGs implementation programme

6.1 Access to information and knowledge across society, assisted by the availability of ICT, supports sustainable development and improves people's lives (LYON Declaration, 2015). It has been reported in the latest MDGs report that Uganda achieved only 33% of the MDG targets, hence the 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity for its unfinished business (Review Report on Uganda's Readiness for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, 2016). Worse still, the NPA report of March 2018 to the Minister of Finance expressed that "the low economic growth performance for the last three years of NDPII implementation implies that the country may not be able to achieve the lower middle income status by 2020", given the projected economic growth of 5.5% in the current financial year contrary to the 15% envisaged in the NDP (Mugerwa, 2018 Daily Monitor, 9 April). This is evidence to show that the Government needs to coopt more stakeholders in the planning process and consultations. It is observed that "Communities that have access to timely and relevant information for all are better positioned to eradicate poverty and inequality, improve agriculture, provide quality education, and support peoples' health, culture, research and innovation" (Garcia-Febo et al, 2017; IFLA, 2016).

6.2 While the SDGs are universal, each country is responsible for developing and implementing its national strategies to achieve them. As plans are being developed, the library community in each country should communicate to their government on how libraries serve as a cost effective partners for advancing their development priorities (IFLA, 2017; Bandowa, 2016). Access to information is cross-cutting, and promotes progress across the board. University libraries are information access centres in their universities and communities. Some of them are the only places with generators and/or solar where people can get reliable light and ICT to read and study (Bradley, 2012). They are therefore, called upon to come out and assume their role by asking the Government to be included in the implementation of the SDGs programme. The IFLA (2017) and others suggest the following strategies for librarians:

i. Understand the UN 2030 Agenda process

ii. Understand how the Agenda is being implemented at the national level; identify implementation process and government priorities

iii. Organize meetings with policy makers to demonstrate the contribution of libraries and access to information to national development and across the SDGs; request to be involved in national consultations; identify representatives from the library sector; develop library strategies and messages,

iv. Participate in national consultations

v. Monitor the UN 2030 Agenda implementation

vi. Tell library users about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

vii. Utilize the Media, partners and champions

6.3 An interview was held with the Executive Director of the NPA and Senior Planner Education Sector.

The visit was welcomed as a good initiative. Information received was that:

i. NPA was synchronizing the targets of the SGDs and the NDPII to find where is agreement on the indicators. At the intervention level, they found a lot matching up to about 75%.

ii. The Government is planning to start working on NDPIII, where it is hoped to integrate the NDP with the SDGs. The process will involve holding consolations from the grassroots – LC1, 2, 3, 4, 5; public and private sectors; institutions from primary and secondary schools, tertiary up to universities; Ministries, UN agencies and NGOs.

iii. Libraries were advised to link with related sectors and the Ministries of Education, and ICT on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

6.4 Role of University libraries

Most of what has been outlined above and the contact with UPA is however, ULIA and CUUL's leadership business. What about the university libraries? A number of activities can be listed:

i. Talk to your university about the need to be involved in the SGDs implementation process

ii. Plan for their involvement in the SGDs implementation process and disseminating information on SGDs to users

iii. Budget for the SDGs implementation programme since this is going to involve an extra cost for the university and community engagement

iv. Collect as much as possible the SDGs information, from Government, UN agencies, NGOs, and other sectors. This will help meet Goal 4:7, "ensure that that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development".

v. Re-Train staff for carrying out the new tasks

vi. Give current awareness service to the university and outside community

vii. Market the new library resources and services to the university and community

viii. Make outreach programmes for district leaders, community leaders, schools, tertiary institutions

ix. Train users

x. Use media

xi. Work with stakeholders – university, institutions and users

xii. Recommend more staff recruitment to cop up with additional work

xiii. Upgrade your ICT for e-resources

xiv. Collaborate with other libraries and partners

xv. Lobby for funding

xvi. Formulate output targets and indicators

xvii. Develop appropriate policies for use of the library resources and publicize them

xviii. Support the work of national library and information association and university library consortium to lobby government and collaborate with other LIS partners

xix. Align LIS activities with Government priorities in the NDP and SDGs

xx. Promote the culture of reading by organizing reading competitions for schools and communities. This will contribute to Goal 4:6, "Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional a. literacy and b. numeracy skills by sex". The latest statistics by Index Omundi (2018) is for 2015 and puts Uganda's female literacy rate 71.5% while the men were at 85.3%.

xxi. Hold library marketing and other promotional activities, eg library weeks

xxii. Make library development profiles for medium and long term, projecting the library future needs for the Government to consider while budgeting for the National Development Plan.

The profiles should indicate all the items needed – books, e-resources, ICTs, furniture, space, equipment, and staff

xxiii. Explore partnership with LIS related and other organizations for raising support to supplement Government allocations. (Ralebipi-Simela, 2017; Bandoma, 2016; Hunt & Grossman, 2013)

6.5 CUUL

i. CUUL needs to continue organizing workshops for retraining librarians' involvement in development strategies.

ii. Collaborate with partners for expertise and improvement of library services

iii. Lobby for funding to subsidize subscriptions

iv. Develop relationships and partnerships with organizations that support LIS activities.

v. Participate in monitoring and evaluation of the progress of achieving the SDGs

vi. Lobby government to provide the necessary resources and budgetary support and infrastructure for the development of university libraries in order to respond to the needs of ICT for contributing effectively to information access for achieving the SDGs.

vii. Appeal to the Governments to recognize and support access to information and libraries as they implement the 2030 SDGs.

6.6 Explore new Trends.

There are a number of trends impacting libraries (Pinfield, Cox & Rutter, 2017) that the librarians need to take note of and adapt to them as they arise in their situations. These include:

i. Technology trends – need for regular updates of ICT,

ii. Networking and how it reshapes library organization, collaboration and scope

iii. Open access, learning and teaching practices

iv. Changing student/user behavior

v. Changing order of names, last name beginning and first name coming first in relation to referencing methods, especially in cases where only one is given in full and others initialed.

vi. Research output created by universities being available for outside access through institutional digital repositories (inside-out) over-riding the importance of outside-in (procured) collections, and becoming the basis of assessing and rating universities

vii. The changing balance between print and electronic collections which calls for a corresponding change and adaption by procuring the necessary ICT by libraries. The NCHE now needs to change, in its student: books ratio from considering only printed books, as is the case today in its Quality Assurance Checklist, resulting into poor ratios, to include e-books and e-journals which are now counted among the library collections.

viii. Growing need for librarians to adapt to new skills, and collaborate, instead of competing with other professionals in delivering library services

As Pinfield, Cox & Rutter (2017) observed, "some of these (the trends) have been with us for a number of years, yet the end-point for their evolution is remains unclear".

6.7 Challenges

i. Unreliable power supplies which make reading and Internet access limited (Anasi, Ukangwa, & Fagbe, 2017).

ii. Inadequate funding: This has caused many university libraries not to perform their roles as expected. Many are below the NCHE checklist. Public universities have been experiencing budget challenges for the last two years. i. the 2016/17 institutional budgets were cut by nearly 50% after approval. ii. The 2017/18 budget was made worse by both cutting and disbursing funds quarterly, so that if a book contract was more than what is received in the first quarter, he would have to wait for the second or even third quarter to be paid fully. Some of the subscriptions to CUUL have been paid in installations. Librarians are able to attend the retraining by CUUL due to inadequate funding for transport. In the 2017 NCHE Report for 2014/15, the Executive Director attributed the challenge of struggling in some areas to underfunding. It was surprising to learn from the NPA too that their programmes were also being affected by budget cuts.

iii. Poor band width, inadequately trained staff (Agbo & Onyekweodiri, 2014), changing world order eg writing of names beginning with surname instead of the first names   (Dada, 2017),

iv. Transfer of library from academic (Teaching and Learning) budget which is stable to administration budget which fluctuates. This reduced the budget for the information resources, including books, e-

7. Conclusion

University libraries should take up the challenge and lead all the LIS professionals in promoting access to information, particularly SDGs related information for the development of Uganda. CUUL should, alongside the NCHE Checklist, develop indicators of an ideal library contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda in Uganda. The new indicators may include the:

i. Participation of LIS in the SGDs implementation programme in Uganda

ii.   Availability of information resources on SDGs in University libraries

iii. Evidence of improved skills to find, evaluate, apply and create information on SDGs

iv.   Internet access skills attained by users

v.   Increased literacy of the communities surrounding universities

vi.   Increased funding of university libraries

vii.   A framework for measuring access to information

viii. Improved national development

Like Achitabwino (2007) of Malawi asked, the librarians in Uganda and SCANUL-ECS as a whole, should also join him by asking,

"If we have to sit down and keep on watching our country underdeveloping, then who do we expect to take a leading role in saving our beautiful country? Let university libraries wake and play our role.

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Appendix 1: Public and Private Universities in Uganda

SN	Name of University	Public/Private	District	Year of Publication	Library Contact
1	Makerere University	Public		1949	Prof. Hellen
2	Islamic University in Uganda	Private		1988	
3	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	Public		1989	
4	Ndejje University	Private		1992	
5	Uganda Martys University	Private		1993	
6	Bugema University	Private		1994	
7	Uganda Christian University	Private		1997	
8	Nkumba University	Private		1999	
9	Busoga University	Private		1999	
10	Kampala University	Private		2000	
11	Kampala International University	Private		2001	
12	Aga khan University	Private		2001	
13	Gulu University	Public		2002	
14	Kyambogo University	Public		2002	
15	Kumi University	Private		2004	
16	Kabale University	Public		2005	
17	Mountains of the Moon University	Public		2005	
18	Uganda Pentecostal University	Private		2005	
19	African Bible University	Private		2005	
20	Bishop Stuart University	Private		2006	

21	Busitema University	Public		2007	
22	Muteesa I Royal University	Private		2007	
23	St Lawrence University	Private		2007	
24	All Saints University	Private		2008	
25	Cavendish University	Private		2008	
26	International Health Science University	Private		2008	
27	Victoria University	Private		2010	
28	International University of east Africa	Private		2010	
29	Virtual University of Uganda	Private		2011	
30	Livingstone International University	Private		2011	
31	Islamic Call University College	Private		2011	
32	International Business, Science and Technology (ISBAT) University	Private		2011	
33	African Rural University	Private		2011	
34	St. Augustine International University	Private		2011	
35	Muni University	Public		2013	
36	Africa Renewal University	Private		2013	
37	Nsaka University	Private		2013	
38	Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU)	Private		2013	
39	Ibanda University	Private		2014	
40	Soroti University	Public		2015	

41	Kayiwa International University	Private		2015	
42	Lira University	Private		2015	
43	Stafford University	Private		2015	
44	TEAM University	Private		2015	
45	Valley University of Science and Technology	Private		2015	
46	Ankole Western University	Private		2016	
47	University of the Sacred Heart Gulu	Private		2016	
48	Avance International University	Private		2016	
49	Metropolitan International University	Private		2017	

Source: National Council for Higher Education, 2017

Appendix 2: Other Degree Awarding Institutions

SN	Institution	Public/Private	District	Year	Contact
1	Uganda Management Institute	Public			
2	Africa Reformed Theological Seminary (ARTS)	Private			
3	Ernest Cook Ultrasound Research and Education Institute (ECUREI)	Private		2016	
3	ESLSCA International Business School Uganda	Private		2013	
4	Indian Institute of Hardware Technology	Private		2013	
5	Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in Africa(IHPCA)	Private		2014	
6	Multitech Business School	Private		2011	
7	Sal Pali Institute of Technology and management	Private		2014	
8	Uganda Baptist Institute, Jinja	Private		2016	
9	Westminster Christian Institute Uganda	Private			
10	YMCA Comprehensive Institute	Private			

Source: National Council for Higher Education, 2017

Thank you