

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES THROUGH ICTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16 IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA

¹Samuel, Oluwafemi Owwoeye, ²Emmanuel Tunde Makinde and ³Daniel Chaba

^{1,2 & 3}Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja

¹daprophet19@gmail.com ²Emmanuel.tunde@nileuniversity.edu.ng

Abstract

The research investigated the role of public libraries in North-Central Nigeria in disseminating information to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16), focusing on peace and justice objectives. The study, guided by two objectives and research questions, employed a survey research design with a total population of 194 librarians in the selected public libraries. Utilizing a total enumeration approach due to the manageable population size, questionnaires served as the sole data collection instrument, with 173 completed responses analyzed. Descriptive statistical tools, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were employed for data analysis. Findings highlighted a strong agreement among respondents on the importance of peace and justice for humanity's SDG attainment, emphasizing the significance of developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. The study concluded that sustaining SDG 16 requires well-informed citizens achieved through information selection, processing, organizing, and dissemination using ICT facilities. The need for local fora to discuss conflicts, violence, human rights violations, and persecution is emphasized. Some of the recommendations are that public libraries in North-Central Nigeria should think of organizing public enlightenment campaigns during library weeks, conducting seminars, workshops, and symposia to educate citizens on ending violence, abuse, trafficking, torture, illicit financial and arms flows, reducing corruption and bribery, and fostering a commitment to peace and justice. Furthermore, the study underscores the pivotal role of public libraries in fostering awareness and understanding to support the implementation of SDG 16 in the region.

Keywords: *Information dissemination, public libraries, Sustainable Development Goal 16, North Central, Peace and Justice.*

Introduction

To solve critical societal problems, Heads of State under the umbrella of the United Nations came together in September 2015 and unanimously adopted a framework for development known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs, or Global Goals, are an agenda to transform the world; a transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nwankwo *et al.* (2020) posited that the United Nations launched the seventeen sustainable development goals in 2015 to create a standard set of development goals for all communities in every country with a deadline for attaining the 2030 vision. The SDGs are expected to run for the next 15 years, and could also be called the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development. The development framework consists of 17 goals and 169 targets across all aspects of human endeavors, which are interrelated, according to Irex (2016). Adeniran (2018) described sustainable development as transforming a country's economic, social, political, educational, religious, and cultural values towards improvement in human dignity and the general well-being of its citizens.

Sustainable Development Goals have been defined in many ways. The most frequently used description was given by the Brundtland Commission (1987), cited by Nwankwo *et al.* (2020), as a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words, it means a better quality of life for everyone, now and in future generations. Sustainable development is a programme developed to meet the needs of the present and future generations.

Ukubeyinje and Ejitagha (2019) listed out the 17 SDG goals to include: Goal 1: No poverty, Goal 2: Zero hunger; Goal 3: Good health and well-being; 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: Reduce inequality; Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities; Goal 12: Responsible consumption; Goal 13: Protect the Planet; Goal 14: Life below water; Goal 15: Life on land; Goal 16: Peace and justice and Goal 17: Partnership for the goal.

Humanity's peace and justice goal is promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. According to Justice for All (2019), people everywhere should be free of fear from all forms of violence and feel safe as they go about their lives, regardless of their ethnicity, faith, or sexual orientation. High levels of armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country's development. As of May 2022, the number of people forced to flee conflict, violence, human rights violations, and persecution had surpassed 100 million (Mariru, 2023).

According to the United States Department of State (2018), sexual violence, crime, exploitation, and torture are prevalent where there is conflict or no rule of law. Governments, civil society, and communities must work together to resolve conflict and insecurity. Strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights is critical to this process, as is reducing the flow of illicit arms, combating corruption, and ensuring inclusive participation at all times. The library is a non-profit making organisation. Its structures and constitutions are based on set goals, objectives, plans, and policies. The varying objectives and policies led to the establishment of different types of libraries, of which public libraries are no exception. Public libraries are libraries accessible by the general public and are usually funded from public sources. According to Anil and Rani (2017), a public library aims to provide information to the general public to satisfy their educational, research, information, cultural and recreational needs.

Library information dissemination is sharing new or existing information with library users. It can be done verbally, through writing, or via technology. Dissemination is crucial to effective communication, ensuring that information reaches its intended audience. Information dissemination is the process of making facts available to the general

public. The dissemination of information by public libraries to library users has grown tremendously in recent years (Litzenberger, 2016). Technology has played a significant role in changing how information is disseminated. It is no longer limited to face-to-face conversation or the exchange of written correspondence.

It is a known fact that information is power. Therefore, implementing and realizing any developmental programme, including the SDGs, is vital. IFLA (2017) posited that libraries and librarians' support in the sustainable development agenda is expected to be in the area of providing the people with relevant and up-to-date information they require to be aware of and have access to economic opportunities, gender equality, quality education, improve their health or develop their communities. Public libraries' implementation of peace and justice should be consolidated and new roles adopted to ensure high-level contribution to the SDGs agenda.

Statement of the Problem

The actualisation of peace and justice for humanity of the SDGs in Nigeria is very slow concerning the efforts made by international organisations to meet the 2030 deadline. According to Mariru (2023), in 2021 alone, 320 fatal attacks against human rights defenders, journalists, and trade unionists were recorded in 35 countries, and the number of people forced to flee conflict, violence, human rights violations, and persecution had surpassed 100 million. More than eight years into the adoption of SDGs, there seems to be poor sensitization or awareness of the public library's need for peace and justice for humanity by the public library to the general public, yet awareness is instrumental to the realization of peace and justice. Peace and justice can be sustained by disseminating current and up-to-date literature by public libraries, primarily through ICT facilities, to the general public on their rights as individuals and how they can seek justice when any person or entity violates those rights.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the influence of information dissemination of public libraries towards the implementation of peace and justice goals in North-Central Nigeria.
2. To determine the influence of information dissemination of public libraries towards the implementation of peace and justice goals in North-central Nigeria.
3. To determine the importance of peace and justice goal of sustainable development goals for humanity in North-Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of information dissemination of public libraries towards the implementation of peace and justice goals in North-Central Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of information dissemination of public libraries towards the implementation of peace and justice goals in North-central Nigeria?
3. What is the importance of peace and justice goal of sustainable development goals for humanity in North-Central Nigeria?

Literature Review

The concept of peace and justice and its importance for humanity

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that sustainable development goes hand in hand with peace and security and is undermined by conflict. Likewise, the absence of sustainable development is a crucial driver of inequality, fragility, and conflict. UN General Assembly (2015) posited that the nexus between security and development has been made explicit by including the peace and justice goal in the 2030 Agenda. Peace and justice stress the need for strong institutions built on respect for human rights, effective rule of law, and good governance at all levels. It is arguably one of the most ambitious goals in the 2030 Agenda because it is not simply a goal alone but also an enabler for achieving other goals.

According to the United Nations (2017), many peace and justice targets are somewhat vague, and limited guidance exists on measuring and achieving them, especially in fragile contexts. Good Security Sector Reform (SSR) can be instrumental in achieving peace and justice goals and targets (United Nations and World Bank, 2018). This is because the SSR will define how the principles of good governance apply to public security provision, management, and oversight. United Nations (2017) posited further that good Security Sector Governance (SSG) principles are accountability, transparency, the rule of law, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Information Dissemination Roles of Public Libraries

The birth of technology and continuous ICT developments are changing libraries regarding information acquisition, storage, organization, maintenance, and rendering methods (Shonhe, 2017). These developments can be used to disseminate information by public libraries to the general public on how peace and justice in a society can be achieved and implemented. According to Shonhe (2017), libraries use the following methods to disseminate information in the 21st-century era.

Online Public Access Catalogues and Networked Databases

Due to the online presence of catalogues, users can retrieve and access information resources timely. Current OPACs can be accessed through mobile technology such as cell phones. Library users no longer need to be within the walls to access OPACS and library databases. Information seekers retrieve various information sources through mobile Online Public Access Catalogues and mobile-based databases such as Pub Med (which contains biomedical literature with more than 26 million citations and includes Full-text content (PubMed, 2017). The New York Public Library, University of Liverpool Library, Jefferson County Public Library, and Nashville Public Library are some of the best practices for mobile OPACs (Nalluri and Gaddam, 2016). Public libraries can use mobile OPACs to disseminate information on peace and justice.

Personal space/My Library

This is a self-service platform where public libraries manage the personalized accounts of their users with custom-made collections. Verma and Verma (2014) posited that librarians could help users set up and manage their profiles and preferences for catalogue searches, receive alerts on reserved items, check their records, track interlibrary loan requests,

renew borrowed items, and document delivery requests. This platform presents a new opportunity for electronic data interchange and selective information dissemination (Liu and Briggs, 2015). Public libraries can harness the advantages of mobile technology to implement structures necessary for achieving peace and justice for all by making information ubiquitous.

Short Message Service (SMS) notification

This entails using mobile telephony systems to disseminate information through text messages and multimedia content such as videos, images, and audio files. Libraries use this service to alert patrons regarding outstanding fees, renewals, provision of call numbers, interlibrary loans, issue return notifications, items on hold, and new arrivals (Kumar, 2014). Public libraries can also use this service by alerting their users in text messages or through videos, images, and audio files on the need to embrace peace and justice for the common good of society.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design of correlation was adopted for this study. This is because the survey research design method has the advantage of broader application, allowing data to be collected on a large population. The population of this study was 194 which consisted of librarians in the public libraries in North-central Nigeria, namely: Benue State Library Board, Kogi State Library Board, Kwara State Library Board, Nasarawa State Library Board, Niger State Library Board, and Plateau State Library Board respectively. Questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. Descriptive statistics involving frequency tables, percentages, and mean were used to analyse the data for the study.

Table 1: Importance of Peace and Justice Goals

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Decision
		4	3	2	1	173				
1	Reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	85	61	21	6	173	571	3.30	0.80	Agreed
2	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children	75	53	32	13	173	536	3.09	0.59	Agreed
3	Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	92	53	20	8	173	575	3.32	0.82	Agreed
4	Reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat organised crime	72	64	24	13	173	541	3.12	0.63	Agreed
5	Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all forms	83	66	8	16	173	562	3.25	0.75	Agreed

6	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	116	47	7	3	173	622	3.59	1.09	Agreed
7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	83	54	30	6	173	560	3.24	0.74	Agreed
8	Broaden and strengthen developing countries' participation in global governance institutions	59	81	30	3	173	542	3.13	0.63	Agreed
9	Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	84	57	24	8	173	563	3.25	0.75	Agreed
10	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms following national legislation and international agreements	74	54	13	32	173	516	2.98	0.48	Agreed

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD)

Table 1 shows that five items were listed for the respondents to respond on importance of peace and justice goals for sustainable development goals for humanity in the public libraries studied. All ten items produced high mean scores above the benchmark of 2.5. These included item 6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (\bar{x} =3.59; SD=1.09), item 3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all (\bar{x} =3.32; SD=0.82), item 1: Reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere (\bar{x} =3.30; SD=0.80), item 5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all forms (\bar{x} =3.25; SD=0.75), item 9: Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration (\bar{x} =3.25; SD=0.75), item 7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (\bar{x} =3.24; SD=0.74), item 8: Broaden and strengthen developing countries' participation in global governance institutions (\bar{x} =3.13; SD=0.63), item 4: Reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat organised crime (\bar{x} =3.12; SD=0.63), item 2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children (\bar{x} =3.09; SD=0.59) and item 10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms following national legislation and international agreements (\bar{x} =2.98; SD=0.48). Above all, the highest mean score was discovered from item 6 on developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

Table 2: Information Dissemination Roles of Public Libraries

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Decision
		4	3	2	1	173				
1	Public libraries can disseminate information by harnessing the advantages of mobile technology to	100	62	4	7	173	601	3.47	0.97	Agreed

	implement structures necessary for achieving peace and justice for all and making information ubiquitous using Personal space/My library										
2	Public libraries can disseminate information through the use of Short Message service notification by alerting their users using text messages or through videos, images, and audio files on the need to embrace peace and justice for the common good of society	112	33	20	8	173	595	3.44	0.94	Agreed	
3	Public libraries can disseminate information through the use of various social media networks, web-based SMS notifications and other mobile library services to interact with their clients on SDGs, particularly on the need for peace and justice	59	78	13	23	173	519	3.00	0.50	Agreed	
4	Public libraries can disseminate information through the use of Quick Response Codes to direct users to relevant or important websites containing current literature on peace and justice systems around the globe	101	54	11	7	173	595	3.44	0.94	Agreed	
5	The public library should have a website enabling information dissemination and access by all users as this will enable the librarians to quickly disseminate information to users on the SDGs' peace and justice target	57	67	34	15	173	512	2.96	0.46	Agreed	
6	The library can use mailing list as medium to disseminate information to individual users on sustainable development, its various goals, and how each goal can be achieved and actualized	82	72	8	11	173	571	3.30	0.80	Agreed	

Key: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD)

Table 2 reveals that six items were listed for the respondents to indicate influence of information dissemination roles of public libraries towards implementing peace and justice goals. All six items produced high mean scores which were above the benchmark of 2.5. These included item 1: Public libraries can disseminate information by harnessing the advantages of mobile technology to implement structures necessary for achieving peace and

justice for all and making information ubiquitous using Personal space/My library ($\bar{x}=3.47$; $SD=0.97$), item 2: Public libraries can disseminate information through the use of Short Message service notification by alerting their users using text messages or through videos, images, and audio files on the need to embrace peace and justice for the common good of society ($\bar{x}=3.44$; $SD=0.94$), item 4: Public libraries can disseminate information through the use of Quick Response Codes to direct users to relevant or important websites containing current literature on peace and justice systems around the globe ($\bar{x}=3.44$; $SD=0.94$), item 6: The library can use mailing list as medium to disseminate information to individual users on sustainable development, its various goals, and how each goal can be achieved and actualised ($\bar{x}=3.30$; $SD=0.80$), item 3: Public libraries can disseminate information through the use of various social media networks, web-based SMS notifications and other mobile library services to interact with their clients on SDGs, particularly on the need for peace and justice ($\bar{x}=3.00$; $SD=0.50$) and item 5: The public library should have a website enabling information dissemination and access by all users as this will enable the librarians to quickly disseminate information to users on the SDGs' peace and justice target ($\bar{x}=2.96$; $SD=0.46$).

Discussions

The findings of the study revealed that the importance of peace and justice goals is high thereby reducing all forms of violence, ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children, promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all, reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat organised crime, substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all forms, develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, broaden and strengthen developing countries' participation in global governance institutions, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration and ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms following national legislation and international agreements. This is because peace and justice in any sane society cannot be over-emphasized. High levels of armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on humanity and to a country's development. As such, people should be free from all forms of violence regardless of religious and/or tribal affiliations. This corroborates the findings according to Justice for All (2019), people everywhere should be free of fear from all forms of violence and feel safe as they go about their lives, regardless of their ethnicity, faith, or sexual orientation.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it could be deduced that public libraries are essential tools in society and they play an important role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 using ICT. If Sustainable Development Goal 16 in North-Central and Nigeria as a whole is to be sustained, citizens need to be well informed; and this can be done through information selection, processing, organising, and dissemination of resources using ICT facilities and associated gadgets taking into account the development indicators raised in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, hosting local forums where people can discuss problems such as conflict, violence, human rights violation, and persecution.

Recommendations

1. The management of public libraries in North-Central, Nigeria should ensure public enlightenment campaigns during library weeks by organising seminars, workshops; symposia that would serve as an educational forum where citizens irrespective of gender, age, and profession would be sensitized on the need to end violence, abuse, trafficking, torture, illicit financial and arms flows, reduce corruption and bribery and giving people hope on the need to embrace peace and justice for the common good of humanity.
2. The management of public libraries in North-Central, Nigeria should organise training and re-training for library staff on the use of ICT facilities, mobile technologies, and quick response codes to disseminate timely and current information on sustainable development, its various goals, and how each goal can be achieved or actualized.

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