

Advancing Climate Action and Sustainable Development Goals: The
Transformative
Role of African Libraries and Information Centres

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INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Climate Action
- ❑ Libraries as knowledge hubs in Africa
- ❑ Importance of climate action for sustainable development
- ❑ Alignment with SDGs, Agenda 2063 & WSIS Action



CLIMATE ACTION & SDGS OVERVIEW FOR LIBRARIES

- ❑ Climate Action SDG 13
- ❑ Cross-cutting relevance of libraries to other SDGs (4, 11, 17)
- ❑ Libraries as enablers of community resilience and knowledge equity

13 CLIMATE ACTION



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



THE TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF LIBRARIES

- ❖ Access to Information: Climate data, research, indigenous knowledge
- ❖ Capacity Building: Training communities on sustainability practices
- ❖ Advocacy & Awareness: Campaigns exhibitions, dialogues
- ❖ Innovation Spaces: Makerspaces, digital labs for green solutions



AFRICAN CONTEXT

- ✓ Libraries as community anchors in rural and urban Africa
- ✓ Integration of traditional knowledge with modern science
- ✓ Partnerships with governments, NGOs, and universities

Case studies/Examples:

- Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) hosting climate literacy forums/corners, e-motorcycle battery swapping stations
- South Africa's community libraries- repair cafe, Public Earth Observatories
- Sierra Leone Climate Assurance library program



GREEN LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE

- I. Energy-efficient buildings, solar panels, rainwater harvesting.
- II. Libraries model sustainability for communities.

Examples:

- ✓ University of Dar es Salaam Library (Tanzania) uses solar energy.
- ✓ Stellenbosch University Library (South Africa) recycling initiatives- three-bin sorting system, installation of water-saving devices, grey water systems, water-wise
- ✓ landscaping- (in line with university's Environmental Sustainability Plan guides) + Stellenbosch community Recycling project
- ✓ Aga- Khan University library (Kenya) - energy-efficient design, eco-friendly policies, and awareness programs



**Green
Libraries
Partnership**

**Green Library
Services**

For sustainable development



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- a) Digitization reduces paper use.
- b) E-resources minimize environmental impact.

Examples:

- ✓ African Digital Library Project (Pan-African, 1999) that support ongoing activities in integrating online full e-textbooks through The Coalition on Media and Education for DevelopmentAfrica Forum (CAFOR) - University of Nairobi Library (Kenya),University of Ghana Library System, National Library of South Africa, Makerere University Library, University of Dar es Salaam Library.
- ✓ Makerere University Library (Uganda) digitizing theses.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY... PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- ✓ Knowledge Management: Climate repositories, open access platforms
- ✓ Digital Transformation: E-libraries, mobile apps for climate literacy
- ✓ Community Engagement: Storytelling, cultural preservation linked to environment
- ✓ Policy Support: Evidence-based resources for decision-makers



GLOBAL ALIGNMENT

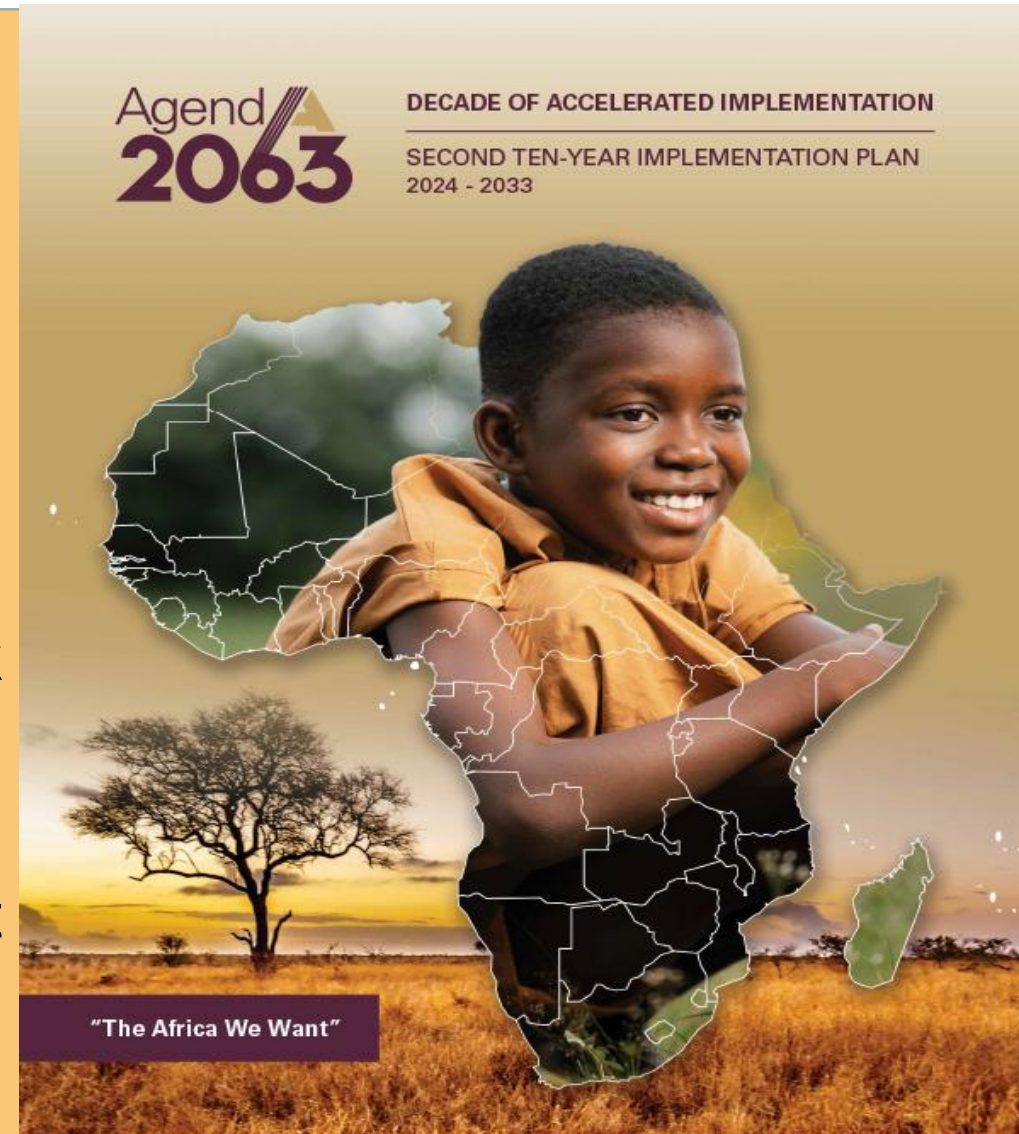
- ✓ Libraries advancing SDGs 2, 4, 9, 11, 13, 17
- ✓ Contribution to AU Agenda 2063 aspirations
- ✓ Role in WSIS Action Lines: ICT for sustainable development

Global Climate Change



II. CONTRIBUTION TO AU AGENDA 2063 ASPIRATIONS

- ❖ The African Union's Agenda 2063 aims to achieve inclusive and sustainable development across Africa.
- ❖ Role of Libraries - provide access to information and resources that support the realization of these aspirations
- ❖ They contribute to climate action by promoting sustainable practices, such as climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy transition, and by integrating climate risk management into national policies.
- ❖ Libraries - facilitate the dissemination of information on climate change and the implementation of climate-resilient strategies



II. CONTRIBUTION TO AU AGENDA 2063 ASPIRATIONS...

Contributions

AU Agenda 2063's aspirations on prosperity, education, cultural identity, and people-driven development provide a strong framework for libraries to advance climate action.

African libraries are already implementing solar energy, climate literacy, indigenous knowledge preservation, and youth-led environmental programs showing how knowledge institutions can be catalysts for sustainable futures.

Examples

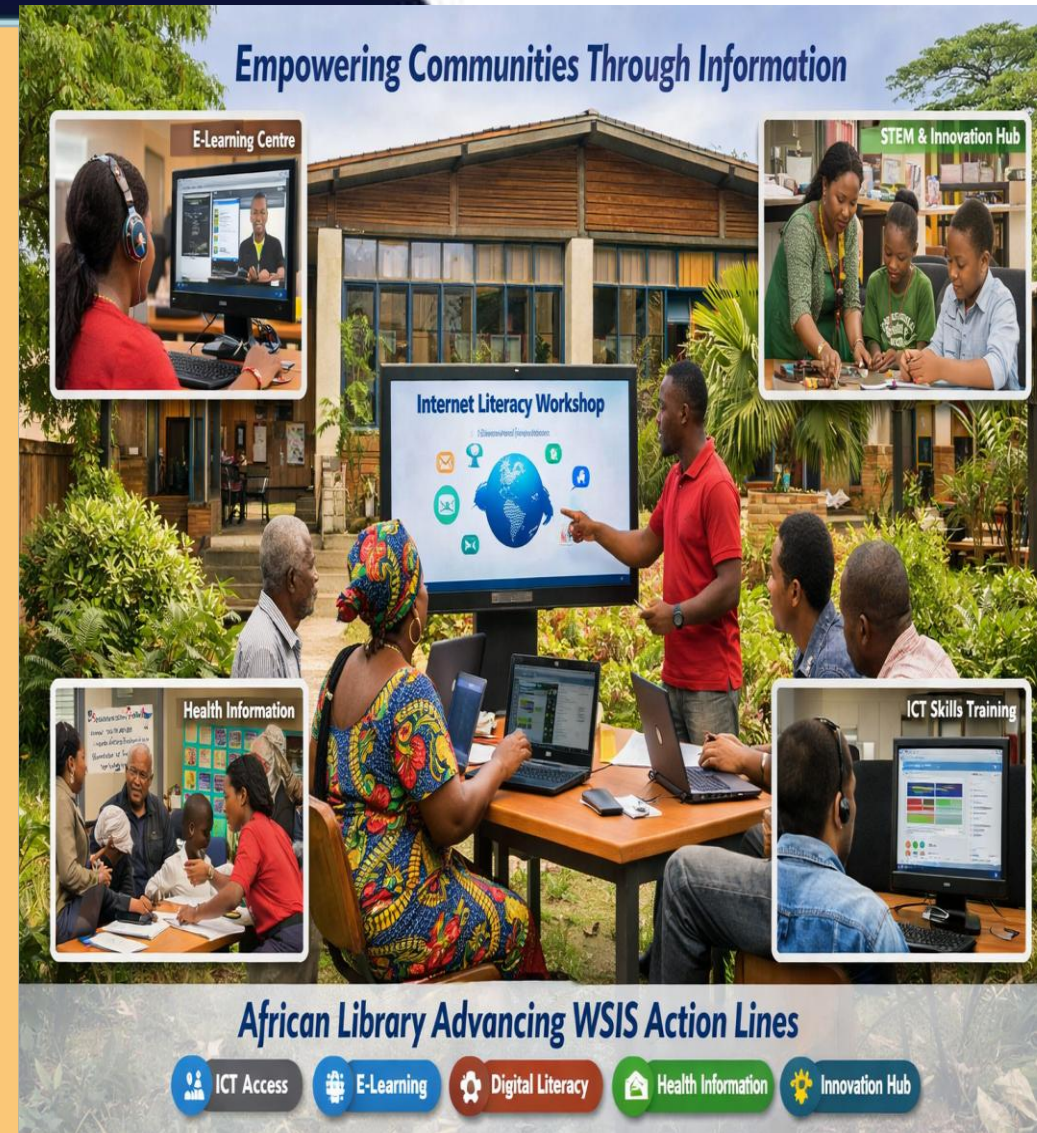
- I. A1- Promotes libraries as hubs for education, innovation, and access to information- e.g. Kenya National Library Service integrates solar energy and ICT hubs to reduce carbon footprint
- II. A2- Libraries provide lifelong learning, digital literacy, and STEM resources - e.g. Ghana's public libraries run climate literacy programs for youth, linking SDGs with local action.



III. ROLE IN WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) ACTION LINES: ICT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

WSIS Action lines for libraries :

- I. Access to Information and Knowledge - inclusive hubs that bridge the digital divide, equitable access to ICT tools, digital resources, and knowledge.
- II. Capacity Building and Digital Literacy- empower citizens with digital skill; drive innovation and inclusive participation in the knowledge economy; advance the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063.
- III. Community Development and Sustainability -integrate ICT into local development initiatives supporting education, agriculture, health, and entrepreneurship= contribution to sustainable socio-economic growth.



III. ROLE IN WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) ACTION LINES: ICT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT....

iv. Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge - safeguard indigenous knowledge systems through digitization and dissemination of cultural heritage; global access = strengthening Africa's voice in international knowledge networks.

v. Partnerships and Policy Influence - collaborate with governments, NGOs, and international bodies to shape ICT policies, advocate for open access, and align national strategies with WSIS Action Lines.

vi. Innovation and Research Support- provide ICT-enabled platforms for research, data management, and innovation, reinforcing Africa's role in global knowledge production and sustainable development.



Impact Measurement Indicators:

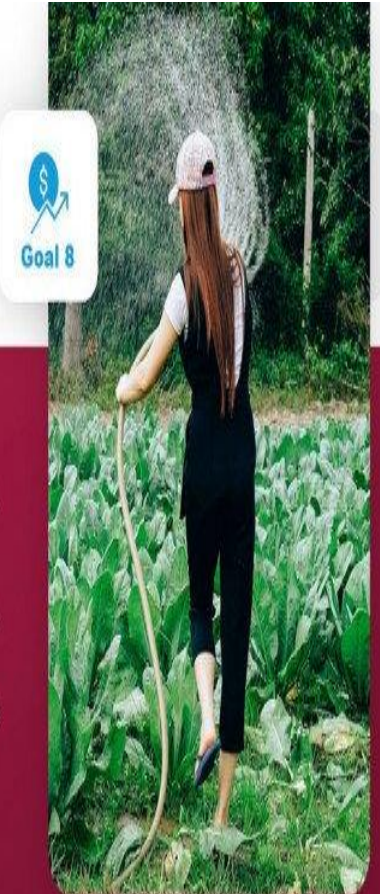
- ❖ To capture the breadth and depth of climate-related initiatives, by highlights both quantitative and qualitative indicators of success.
- ❖ Number of climate-related programs hosted - Demonstrates institutional commitment and scope of climate action.
- ❖ Community participation levels - Reflects inclusivity, engagement, and ownership of initiatives.
- ❖ Partnerships formed - Highlights collaboration, resource mobilization, and strengthened networks.
- ❖ Digital resource usage statistics -Shows integration of technology, accessibility, and reach of climate knowledge (awareness and action).
- ❖ Qualitative impact (empowerment, awareness, resilience): - Captures transformative outcomes beyond numbers, emphasizing strengthened capacity and adaptive communities.



Opportunities

1. Expanding digital access- increase e-learning modules, open data repositories, and interactive tools on climate knowledge resources - challenges , innovations and solutions . It bridges the urban–rural divide
2. Strengthening partnerships- for collaborations enable resource sharing, joint programming, and policy advocacy (governments, academia, NGOs, private sector etc). Create networks of practice that scale local initiatives into regional and continental movements, aligning with both the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063.
3. Develop an easily applicable Climate Action Framework for Libraries in Africa (AFLIA, SCESCAL, Africa library consortiums, Information Africa Organization...)
4. Leveraging indigenous knowledge-documentation, preservation, and dissemination of IKS that embody sustainable practices. i.e.
 - I. Integrate traditional ecological wisdom with modern science for culturally grounded climate solutions.
 - II. Strengthen community resilience
 - III. validate the role of indigenous voices in shaping Africa's climate

Decent Work and Economic Growth



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Opportunities...

- Leveraging on existing infrastructure at international, regional, national, and institutional levels
 - IFLA: i)The IFLA Environment, Sustainability and Libraries (ENSULIB) Section proudly announces the publication of the IFLA Guidelines for Green Libraries ii) IFLA's Climate Action Commitment ahead of COP26 climate summit, 17 September, 2021
 - IFLA - SAA RDC with a strong action plan on Climate Led Library Projects (2025-2027)
 1. SSA RDC 2023 strategy focuses on integrating climate action into library and information services
 2. Conferences/seminars
 - a. Africa Climate Summit, Addis Ababa , September 2025 with Climate Heritage Network
 3. Webinars
 - a. Libraries at the Frontlines of Climate Action By Dr. Buhle. Nov. 2025
 - b. Building Sustainable Library Systems through Partnerships, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment by Damilare January 2026,
 - c. Transforming Libraries from Quiet Repositories of Books into Active Climate Futures Labs by Climate Heritage Network, 30th April 2026.

Challenges

Funding gaps

Limited budgets: constrained financial allocations results to prioritized basic services rather than climate-focused initiatives

Dependence on external donors: Reliance on international grants can create instability, as funding cycles are short-term and not always aligned with local priorities

Missed opportunities: Without adequate funding, libraries struggle to invest in climate literacy programs, digital platforms, and community outreach that could empower citizens to act on SDGs

Equity concerns: Rural and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected, as their libraries often receive the least support, widening the knowledge divide on climate resilience.



Challenges...

- **Digital divide:** lack of reliable internet & modern ICT tool; lack of renewable energy sources; limiting their ability to provide climate data, e-learning, and global knowledge exchange.
- **Physical facilities:** Ageing buildings, poor maintenance, and inadequate space hinder the hosting of workshops, exhibitions, or innovation hubs focused on sustainability.
- **Resource scarcity:** Limited access to climate-related publications, databases, and multimedia tools restricts libraries from becoming true knowledge centres for climate action.
- **Resilience gaps:** Libraries vulnerability to climate impacts (floods, droughts, heatwaves), with no disaster-preparedness infrastructure or green building designs.



Need for Policy Recognition

- ❖ Librarians are under represented in national climate strategies and SDG frameworks, despite their potential as community anchors for education and advocacy.
- ❖ lack of policy documentations on integration of libraries as partners in climate action thus missing out on funds, strategic partnerships etc
- ❖ Advocacy challenge: need for Library leaders to continuously demonstrate their relevance to policymakers and their role as dynamic knowledge hubs.
- ❖ Global alignment: though libraries struggle to connect local initiatives to continental frameworks (AU Agenda 2063) and global ones (WSIS, SDGs), they are rarely recognised, limiting their transformative impact.



Conclusion

Libraries are more than repositories of knowledge they are active agents of change in Africa's climate action journey.

- ❖ By aligning their strategies with the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063, libraries can play a transformative role in advancing sustainable development, safeguarding indigenous knowledge, and empowering communities..
- ❖ Solar-powered technologies, climate literacy programs, youth-led initiatives, and the preservation of cultural archives demonstrate that libraries are already playing a significant role in shaping a greener and more sustainable future
- ❖ A replicable framework enables scalability, allowing every library to contribute effectively to Agenda 2063 and SDG 13.

Thus, libraries can decisively position themselves as knowledge hubs, cultural custodians, and frontline leaders in climate action, powerfully advancing Africa's vision of prosperity, resilience, and global influence.



Call to Action

- ❖ Invest in libraries as climate knowledge hubs
- ❖ Strengthen partnerships with global and local actors
- ❖ Empower communities through inclusive access to information
- ❖ Position African libraries as drivers of sustainable futures- through strategic policies
- ❖ Need to prioritizing energy efficiency, renewable energy, green cleaning, recycling, indoor air quality, and green spaces in libraries
- ❖ Replicate best practices and success stories



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- ❖ IFLA Guidelines for Green Libraries by IFLA Environment, Sustainability and Libraries (ENSULIB) Section, 2026. Available <https://repository.ifla.org/rest/api/core/bitstreams/9b71fdb8-0d95-492a-8236-dab027791382/content>
- ❖ Partnership Launches Ambitious Rooftop Solar Power Project at UDSM, by Renancy Remmy, CMU, 2025. Available <https://www.udsm.ac.tz/news/partnership-launches-ambitious-rooftop-solar-power-project-udsm>



**KONGOI MISSING!
ASANTE SANA!
THANK YOU!!**