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# Green Initiatives Towards a Sustainable Future: Insights from Libraries in Kenya

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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Session 152: Climate Action in Libraries: Creating a More Sustainable Future by Engaging and Inspiring Youth  
Thursday, July 28, 14:30 – 16:00, Room: Liffey A

# Green Initiatives Towards a Sustainable Future: Insights from Libraries in Kenya



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# Introduction

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Environmental protection is an increasingly pressing issue all over the world.

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Little is known about the green library concept in the African context and among Kenyan libraries.

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This study proposed to explore the adoption of green library concepts in Kenya for environmental sustainability with a view to proposing strategies that can be used to guide libraries in the going green transformation.

# Background

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The Emissions Gap Report (EGR) (2019) projected that by 2030 emissions will get to 56 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e, which is double what they should be.

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The update was reviewed at the climate change conference known as COP 26 in Glasgow, the UK, in November 2021, resulting in the Glasgow climate pact:

-Mitigation- **reducing emissions;**

# How have Kenyan Libraries responded to the call for sustainability?

Green buildings?

Green services?

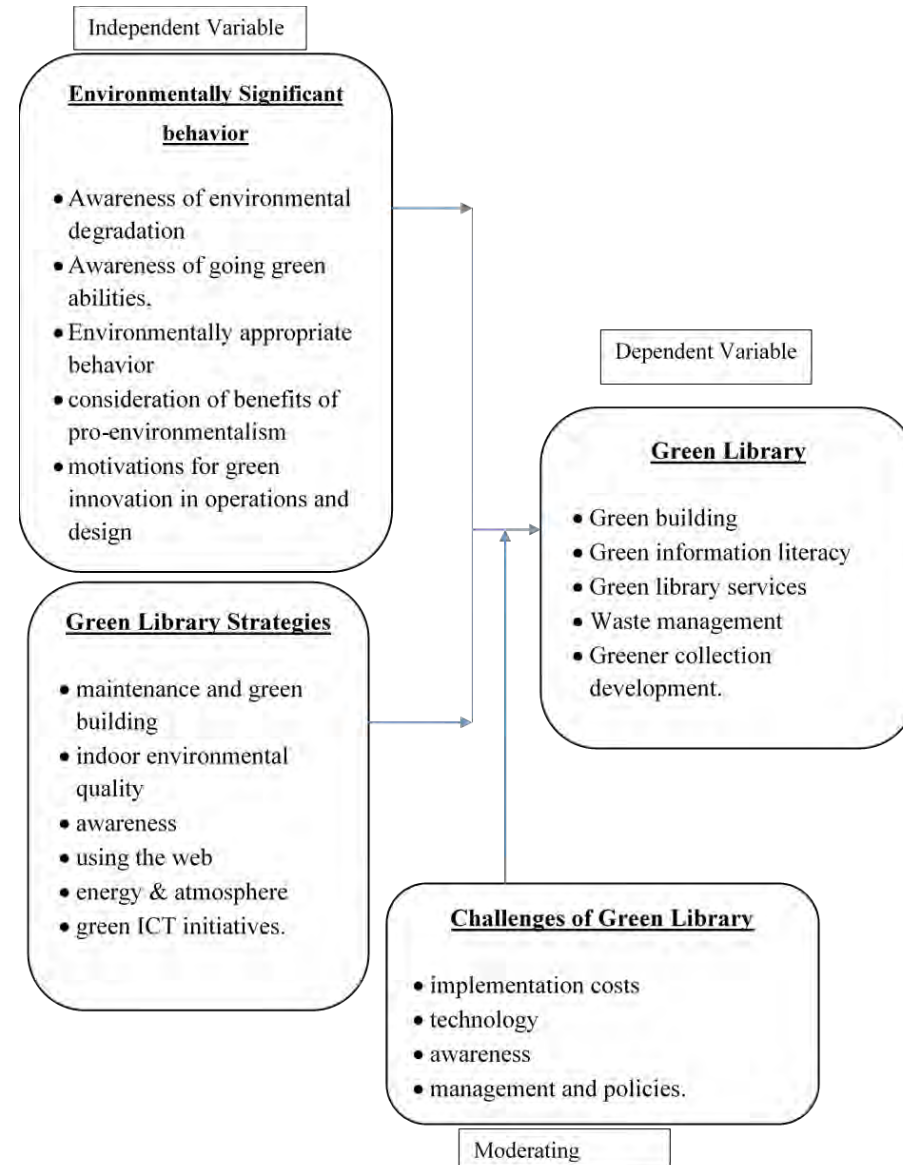
Green practices?

Awareness by librarians?

User involvement?

Strategic plan & policies on sustainability?

# Conceptual framework



# Approach

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- Purposive non-probability sampling technique was employed based on their appropriate infrastructure, green architectural design and procedural practice related to environmental sustainability concepts.
- Data was collected through face-to-face interviews, observation and document review.
- This study was founded on the norm-activation model theory and the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory of Pro-Environmental Behaviour. The standard rating system is referred to as LEED Standards.

# Sample

- Five public University libraries, i.e., University of Nairobi Graduate Research Library, Kenyatta University postmodern library, Moi University Margaret thatcher library, Masinde Muliro University and Embu University
- Three private chartered University libraries i.e.
- The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, United States International University – Africa and Adventist University Library
- Two Public libraries, i.e., Kenya National Library Service- Upper Hill and Kenya National Library Service- Nakuru
- Two School and Special libraries, including the Mpesa Foundation Academy library and the International School of Kenya library.





# Librarians' comprehension and perception of the concept of green libraries

The green library movement in the local libraries is still taking shape

*"I can say that our library is green because the library building is made with enough lighting to minimise electricity use. We also encourage our users and even the staff during the day to put off lights and only switch on when it is dark."*

Most librarians considered their library green to some extent.

*"Our library is green as we make use of the available resources, for example, the saving of energy by using the sun, harvesting rainwater, and taking care of ventilation because we don't have air conditioning in this building."*

# Use of Natural Lighting in Libraries



# Tree Planting Inside the Library







# Natural light

- Energy saving bulbs
- Solar energy
- Reduced electricity consumption



# Green library design – MPESA Foundation Academy



# Water Harvesting

*“We have water harvesting whereby we have huge water tanks surrounding the library to tap rainwater and irrigate plants. We have put gutters that collect water into our underground tanks.”*



# Community awareness on Environmental sustainability

- KNLS Nakuru participating in annual greening events such as tree planting, cleaning nearest towns and marketplaces aimed at environmental sustainability contributed to their going green initiatives.





# Findings

Most participants described their libraries as partially green following the practices they were involved in and revealed that the libraries have a lot of good plans for the future in going fully green while also impacting the mindset of library users and the communities around them.

Libraries in Kenya are offering green services such as user training on environmental sustainability by designated librarians, green collection lending services, digital library services, awareness campaigns spearheaded by energy management committees etc.

Greening initiatives such as architectural building designs with atriums and green roofing, maintenance-friendly and eco-friendly construction, zoning of lighting, redesigning as per LEED standards, and coming up with bicycle parking spaces, recycling, and reuse of resources

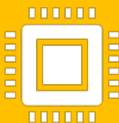
# Going green



The libraries were more intentional in finding ways to cut electronic waste.



Using technology to reduce electronic waste, which has become the hardest to dispose of. This was characterized by more internet usage for communication purposes and the use of refurbished computers.



Partnering with companies that refurbish disposed or outdated computers and machines.

# Challenges



Inadequate financial facilitation,



Lack of awareness and understanding of the green concept,



Lack of clear policies and strategic plans to guide implementation,

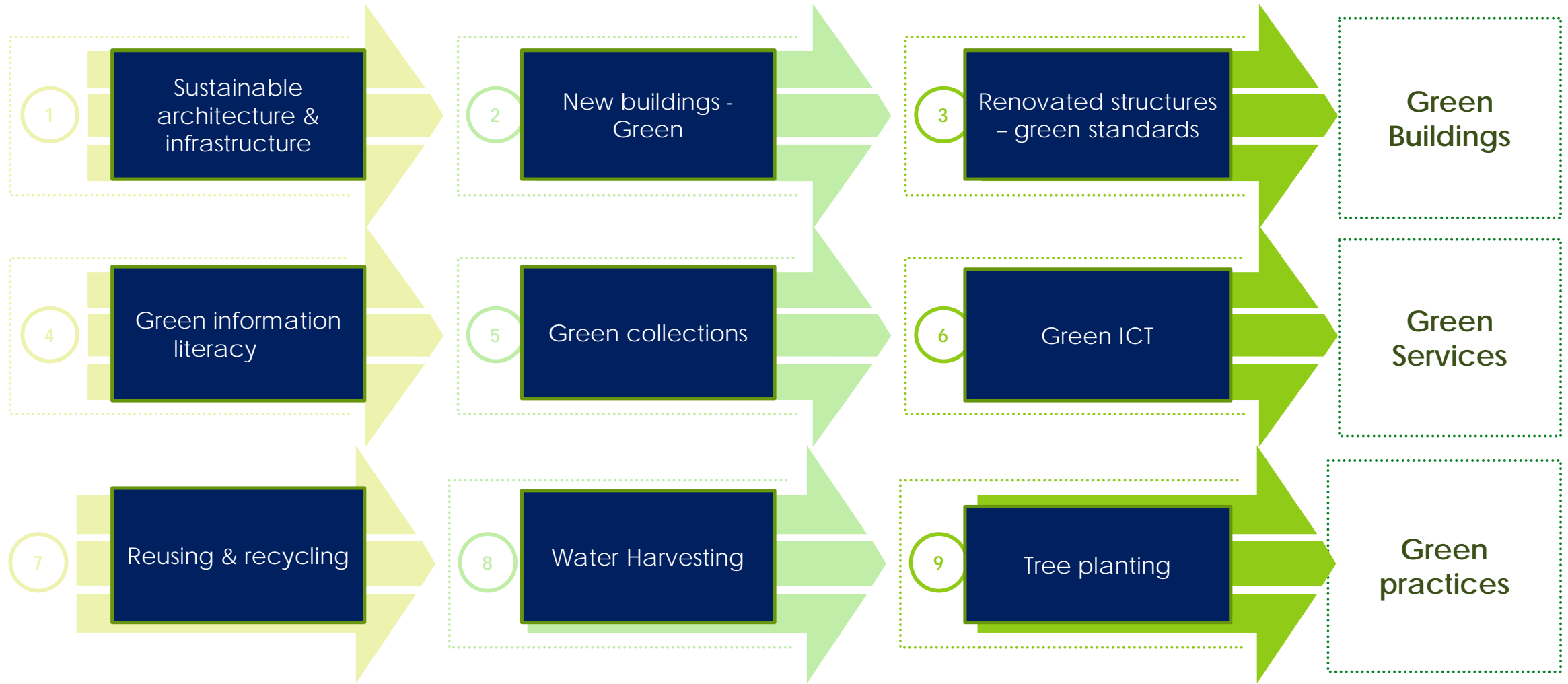


Organizational culture



Lack of interest from the library users and the management.

# Summary of Milestones



# Conclusion

The study proposed three strategies for fully going green:

- active user involvement in green initiatives (children and youth)
- Improving performance and growth measuring metrics
- Maintaining green library standards as guided by the IFLA ENSULIB green library checklist.



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