

The Impact of Library Publishing Through the Lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

As library publishing programmes expand around the world, reports and research pertaining to standards and workflows have proliferated. This paper calls for library publishing programmes to explore the impact of their programmes at local, national and international level in relation to their contribution to open access publishing, EDI agendas and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The presentation highlights the UN's SDG Publishers Compact and argues that the SDGs are an ideal lens through which library publishers could examine their impact as library publishers have a strong publishing record in areas such as gender, education and climate as examples.

Key Initiative 1 of [IFLA's Strategy 2019-2024](#) aims to "Show the power of libraries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals" (IFLA, 2019, no pagination), stating "we will produce high quality, high impact tools that demonstrate to external audiences the contribution of libraries to development in all of its dimensions." (IFLA, 2019, no pagination).

As library publishing programmes have expanded, concomitant practice, professional development and research have focused on publishing platforms, standards, workflows, business models and case studies. Analysing the impact of library publishing programmes will gain increasing importance as this form of scholarly communication matures. Impact indicators will likely include library publishing's contribution to open access scholarship and bibliodiversity. To aid with the assessment of library publishing's contribution to open access publishing at a national and international level, library publishers must ensure that metadata submitted to the Directory of Open Access Journals as an example, clearly indicates that content is library published. Library publishing programmes continue to increase their focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion (Library Publishing Coalition, 2022). This presentation contends that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide an additional meaningful and impactful framework for assessing the impact of library publishing.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals comprise seventeen goals encompassing climate action, the eradication of hunger, gender equality, quality education and more.

Fig. 1. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



In 2020, the United Nations launched the [Publishers SDG Compact](#). A range of propriety and university presses from around the world including Africa and the Middle East have joined. Members include Emerald, Sage, Bristol University Press, Qatar University Press, Leiden University and others. A full membership list is available [here](#). Signatories to the Compact commit to publishing SDG related content and to engaging in sustainable publishing practices. A full list of signatory requirements is available [here](#). More recently a number of tentative librarian and publisher led methodologies have emerged which measure how publishing contributes to the SDGs ([Armitage, Lorenz & Mikki, 2020](#)). Qualitative case studies demonstrating the impact of library publishing in the context of the SDGs would also be beneficial.

This presentation also describes how library publishers can assist editors wishing to demonstrate alignment to the SDGs. Library Publishers are also ideally placed to become signatories of the United Nations Publishers SDG Compact.

Additional training and workshops on the UN's SDGs should be provided to library publishers so that they can maximise the impact and reach of their publications.

References

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