The role of Libraries in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

ALA United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals
At the
ALA Connect Live: Sustainability
February 25, 2021
ALA Task Force on United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

The American Library Association (ALA) has created a Task Force on the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to develop a multi-year strategic plan in the coming year to increase participation by libraries in efforts to achieve the Goals.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN members, including the United States.

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) has asked library associations around the world to join in a global effort to highlight how libraries contribute to the SDGs.

ALA’s Task Force will be chaired by ALA Immediate Past President Loida Garcia-Febo and was initiated by ALA President-elect Julius C. Jefferson Jr. for his upcoming presidential year.
Working Toward a Sustainable World

United Nations book club inspires students to make a difference

In 2019, Batesville (Ind.) Intermediate School began a book club using selections inspired by the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the organization’s blueprint for addressing global challenges like poverty and climate change by 2030. Batesville’s students use lessons they glean from the club to engage with their community and the world, earning the school the American Library Association’s 2020 Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award for Excellence in Humanities Programming.

No poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, and quality education: These are some of the 17 SDGs the UN established in 2015. In May 2019, the UN launched the SDG Book Club; each month, it posts on the club website a selection of books for children ages 6–12 that illustrate a particular SDG to help young people interact with these principles.

Our school launched the Junior Ambassadors program in August 2019, using the SDG Book Club as a springboard to introduce students to a more global perspective on world issues. Twenty-four 4th- and 5th-graders met for 30 minutes four days a week to read, discuss, research, learn, plan, and execute the sharing of knowledge and solutions to these issues. Fellow teacher Angie Moster and I used the book club to initiate discussion, then offered additional opportunities for junior ambassadors to build knowledge of SDG topics such as poverty and hunger through research activities, special projects, and guest speakers. What began as a desire to help small-town children expand their views of the world grew into a broader program that affected our school, community, and beyond.

The UN’s recommendation of Serafini’s Promise by Ann E. Burg was perfect for our junior ambassadors to begin their study of the first SDG: no poverty. Its story demonstrates how poverty, hunger, health, and education are intertwined. The book is set in Haiti, so Angie and I invited members of local Haitian ministry groups to speak to the program participants. The speakers gave students new perspectives on activism and commitment. They shared how their groups try to meet immediate needs while creating long-term sustainable solutions to global problems.

Welcome to the SDG Book Club Blog where we feature stories from book clubs from around the world!

Reading is a great way to better understand what people from across the globe struggle with in their everyday lives, and it helps us reflect on our own situation. But reading is just the first step: now it’s time to share your book club experiences and how you plan to take action. Each month, we will feature a couple of book clubs on our blog, so get ready to share your story through social media, by using #SDGBookClub and tagging @UNPublications.

We appreciate your participation, and admire you for taking the initiative to educate your communities about the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important that we all participate to help make this world a better place for everyone.

SDG Book Club Serbia at Pozega

As an initiative of Pozega Public Library, librarian Daniela Skokovic and Marija Jevericic, professor of Serbian language at Gymnasium “Sveti Sava”, started activities dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their newly established “SDG Book Club Serbia” for first year high school students. The goals of the Book Club are to promote the SDGs among teenagers, educate them, and improve their reading competencies. Together, they created a reading list of books dealing with topics of hunger and poverty. Students work in groups of four to five, give their recommendations, read books and write brief summaries which they then translate [...]

This library supports
the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals

Add your library logo here
Add your library's information here.
Downloadable bookmarks

4 Quality Education
- the place for lifelong learning
- Add your library logo here
- Add contact information, social media handles, or information about your library.

5 Gender Equality
- making space for girls in STEM
- Add your library logo here
- Add contact information, social media handles, or information about your library.

10 Reduced Inequalities
- helping to reduce inequalities
- Add your library logo here
- Add contact information, social media handles, or information about your library.

16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- providing access to information
- Los Angeles Public Library

Example
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<th>No Poverty</th>
<th>Zero Hunger</th>
<th>Affordable and Clean Energy</th>
<th>Responsible Consumption and Production</th>
<th>Partnerships for the Goals</th>
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<td>Libraries helping communities meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the times of COVID-19</td>
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<td>Developing guides to understand COVID-19, how to stay safe &amp; healthy.</td>
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<td>Referring people to food pantries and organizations with free food; hosting city-wide free meal programs.</td>
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<td>Providing access to eLearning to help students with homework.</td>
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<td>Livestreaming events to empower women and teach them how to achieve goals.</td>
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<td>Clean Water and Sanitation</td>
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<td>Providing services usually provided at the library building, remotely.</td>
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<td>Advocating for Open Access to resources to help researchers and students studying from home.</td>
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<td>Making available resources to learn languages and new skills from home.</td>
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<td>Sustainable Cities and Communities</td>
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<td>Safeguarding and preserving cultural heritage records &amp; research from the pandemic.</td>
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<td>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</td>
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<td>Offering free access to information to dispel misinformation about the virus.</td>
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<td>Partnering with public &amp; private agencies to provide services.</td>
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Create your own SDGs library chart!

http://www.ala.org/aboutala/ala-task-force-united-nations-2030-sustainable-development-goals