REINVENTING LIBRARY SERVICES IN NIGERIA: A PANACEA TO YOUTH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The paper presents reasons libraries need to reinvent their services to cater for contemporary issues significantly affecting youth's development in Nigeria. The paper further discusses libraries as the centerpiece for the provision of information services based on users' needs. It explains that libraries can serve as a panacea for youth's empowerment in Nigeria in order to overcome the existing challenges of unemployment, lacking access to information, illiteracy and poverty because these are the factors retarding the government effort to have sustainable administration in Nigeria. The method that guides this study is the social-cognitive approach. The paper therefore, concludes by proposing a framework for which library services can be reinvented in line with global best practices to cater for the needs of the teeming youth in Nigeria. Finally, the paper recommends further that libraries regardless of their functions and types should have to reinvent their services towards youth's development and empowerment for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Libraries, Library services, Needs, Nigerian Youth, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Libraries and the services they offer, irrespective of their types are sensible, veritable, and thoughtful human inventions build to sway and meet up the never ending human needs and demands. Therefore, the provision of libraryand information services should be one of the fundamental human rights of every citizen (Aina 2004).But unfortunately the consistent failures by these human's useful endeavors, its obsolescence, dearth in innovation, lacuna or ineffectiveness amongst others, to meet the basic needs of youth are indirectly the reasons for the multiplicity of problems in our societytoday. Hence, failure to meet the 'information needs', 'governance needs' and basic 'human needs' in Nigeria for instance have tweaked and aggravated absolute decay in the general governance performance to further meet the socio – economic, educational and political needs of life in the country.

As stated by Rafiu(2015) for the needs to meet up with good governance in Nigeria still remains an elusive reality in most African countries. This ugly situation mentioned above, is manifested in abject poverty and widespread malnourishment of vast majority of Nigerians with about 70% living below the poverty line, high level of illiteracy (64 million adult illiterates), alarming level of unemployment among the youth (54%), dismal performance of numerous government initiatives and empowerment programmes, appalling level of corruption and impunity in the country, high incidence of communicable diseases among the populace due to unhygienic living conditions prevalent in their communities as well as deplorable state of socio-economic infrastructure and amenities due to negligence and embezzlement of funds(Rafiu, 2015).

Premium Times publication of 22nd December 2017gives a glaring and highly disturbing statistics of youth's unemployment in Nigeria. National Bureau of Statistics explained that the Nigeria's unemployment rate worsened from 16.2 percent in the second quarter of 2017 to 18.8 percent in the third quarter of the year.The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) unveil the number of people within the labour force who were unemployed increased from 13.6 million in the second quarter of the year to 15.9 million in the third quarter of same year, with more than two million people unemployed within the period.

Similarly, the number of underemployed increased people from 17.7 million in the second quarter to 18.0 million in the third quarter (Q3)of 2017.Data released by the NBS further showed that the rise in the rate was occasioned by the economic recession that saw the nation's growth decelerate until

September 2017 when Nigeria finally exited recession.The report declared economically active or working age population (15 – 64 years of age) that increased from 110.3 million in Q2 to 111.1 million in Q3 2017, while the labor force population increased from 83.9 million in second quarter to 85.1 million in Q3 2017.

The total number of people in full-time employment (at least 40 hours a week) declined from 52.7 million in Q2 2017 to 51.1 million in Q3 2017, it shows, adding that total unemployment and underemployment combined, increased from 37.2 percent in the previous quarter to 40.0 percent in Q3 2017.During the quarter Q3 2017, 21.2 percent of women within the labour force (aged 15-64 and willing, able, and actively seeking for job) were unemployed, compared to 16.5 percent of men within the same period.The report also noted that underemployment was predominant in the rural areas as 26.9 percent of rural residents within the labour force were underemployed compared to 9 percent of urban residents within the same period.

Certainly, the inability to meet the needs of the youth could have a resultant consequences on the general failure of youth structure leading to; poverty, youth restiveness, fidgety, insecurity, thuggery, bribery and corruption, human-trafficking and slavery, body parts sales, prostitution, armed robbery, illegal mining, vandalization, clashes, bigotry statements,fraud, scammers, shenanigan states of mindset, high poverty, malnutrition, abrupt hopelessness and sudden death as a result of different mischievous and unbecoming attitudes in the country.

With this state of conditionon the effectiveness of present state of library service provisions put in place here in Nigeria, and in meeting youth's needs and demands, one gets to wonder that, if library and its services are understood to be a key to sustaining human information needs which is directly related to societal, material and environmental developments from generation to another by guiding, protecting, processing, organizing, transmitting, disseminating, promoting, distributing relevant information through effective and efficient service provision, why then its present state is mirage?

Library services provision have a very crucial role to play in any society for different level of development.As Mohammed (2017) pointed out regardless of which type of library and the environment it is designed to serve, the basic mission and objectives of library and information service provision should be to support and promote cultural and social justice, equity, fair play and democratization of information access, availability and utilization that can lead to sustainable development in Nigeria and beyond.

This paper therefore intends to present reasons why libraries, irrespective of their types and parent organization they are serving, must reinvent its services to cater for contemporary issues significantly affecting the Nigerian youth.In effect, it equally discusses and reviews the states of library services, library as a concept and sustainable development, in Nigeria for youth's development. The paper also recommends some practices to be incorporated in serving the sprawling needs and demands of Nigerian youth.

The method that instigates this paper, therefore,is the social-cognitive approach. Social – Cognitive Approach in Library and Information Science, according to Hjorland (2002) is an approach wherebyan individual's thinking, social and documentary domain in which he/she operates are seen to influence the use of information in a study.

Library Services
Library services are intangible, meaningful, useful, intrinsic values, commodities, products etc. The services libraries renders to clienteles in order to actualize its purposes in any context must have the above mentioned qualities. Libraries are therefore centerpiece for the provision of services. Every service arises from users' needs, needs in communities of like-minds, group of people, organization, and or individual personal needs. On this, Tunde (2012) equally states that the basic rational behind the establishment of any library, is due to the needs and demands from the community members or organizations.

Accordingly, Aina (2004) states that the services provided to users of individual libraries depends on the objectives of the present organization andthe services provided in a library will therefore differ

from one library to another. Though, there are certain services that are common to all libraries. Library services are equally discussed in terms of two broad categories: public services and technical services. Any operation that involves direct contact with the library patron is considered a public service while technical services are classified as those activities that are done before users can take full advantage of the use of the library (Yusufu, 2014).

By and large, library services can equally be categorised as primary or secondary services. The primary services are in-house general services that are considered basic for the library's internally operationability. While the secondary services are specialized, collaborated, networked, extension, necessary and externally needs targeting services libraries render beyond its shores to fit and remain relevant in the society.Basically, the major types of primary services are reference services, library guides, reservation service, current awareness services, exhibition and displays, user education, information literacy programmes, lending services, inter-library loans service and document delivery, technical services and different digital services. The secondary services on the other hand could be un-exhaustive in lists. But among the regular once are literature searches, information brokering, referral services, translation services, extension and outreach services, rental of premises etc.

Certainly, the provision of any service is usually not an easy task, because well-meaning considerations and necessary steps would be taken inorderto provide effective services to satisfy user's needs. According to Ross (1998), the establishment of any library is "the process of creating service to satisfy the growing demands and needs of the user population". In establishing a service, the following procedure would be taken into consideration namely: the need to prepare a plan of action, draw out a list of objectives, taking decisions about the nature of service, raising necessary capital; the physical and natural resources, and the benefits that the service will offer to the members of the library and the entire community or institution.

Library and Sustainable Development
Libraries in 21st century are no longer places that just collect and lend books; those days are gone. They are now multitasking systems and institutions that provide access to information in all its qualities, therefore enables people to make informed decisions that can improve their lives. Through libraries, people of the communities can have access to a timely and relevant information and they are then better positioned to eradicate poverty and inequality, improve agriculture, provide quality education, and support people's health, culture, research and innovative developments that ensure sustainability in the country.

In recent times, one of the most topical issues globally attracting both national and international debate is sustainable development. Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently used definition is the one submitted by Brundtland Report as quoted in the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD, 2017) official website, stating that "it is a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (www.iisd.org/topic/sustainable-developmet). Thus, more importantly is the willingness and fain attention the library professionals globally have shown to the causes of sustainable development.

Since the endorsement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations (UN) member states have come to agree that the universal access to information and other library services are not only an important goal in itself but they are also driver of success in other areas. This led the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the UN to include access to information and libraries into their developmental plans of transforming world: as pinpoint in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development goals (www.ifla.org).

The UN 2030 agenda is an inclusive, integrated framework of 17 SDGs spanning economic, environmental and social development including youth. By achieving this agenda, no one will be left behind. Hence, access to information and the library resources are keys to help achieve the goals behind the formulation of the agenda.

Libraries, especially public ones, through their services, are the only place in any community where people have equal access to information that will help improve their lives. Libraries are relevant in attaining sustainable development because:

- Development projects that are working to achieve the Sustainable Development are most effective when they leverage existing resources and local institutions that people already know and trust, such as academic, special and public libraries, rather than funding new, unproven infrastructure or investing in narrow, technology based approach.
- Libraries have staying power because of ongoing public support and dedicated funding and therefore governments, and development agencies seeks to strengthen and expand the services libraries offer.
- Libraries through its relevant and effective services equally support initiatives in a variety of fields including health, agriculture, civic engagement, education, information literacy and many others and have a powerful impact in the community because they are connected to people's needs at local level.

Libraries in all respect therefore must now show that they can drive progress across the entire UN 2030 Agenda. Another great concern to library professionals in Nigeria in this respect is that while the SDGs are universal goals, each country will be responsible for developing and implementing national strategies to achieve them, and will be expected to track and report its own progress towards each target. As these plans are developed, the library community in Nigeria will have a clear opportunity to communicate to government officials on how libraries serve as cost-effective partners for advancing development priorities. Advocacy is essential now to secure recognition for the role of libraries as engines of local development, and to ensure that libraries receive the resources needed to continue this work (IFLA, 2015).

The Nigerian Youth
Youth is usually perceived as the time of life when someone is young. The young person, either he or she is mostly at this period characterized with capabilities, abilities, agilities, resound cognition, visible affective and psychomotor development. But in effect, age range that constitutes youth tends to vary from countries due to so many inherent factors, hence individuals maturity may not correspond directly to his chronological age. But with the United Nation definition that youth are persons between the ages of 15 and 24 is generally accepted. It also recognizes that these young people are heterogeneous groups in constant evolution and that the experience of being young varies across region and within countries.

According to the National Youth Development Policy (2009), youth in Nigeria includes citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria aged 18 – 35 years. In a similar note, Mohammed (2017) states that Nigeria is a country with adverse cultures, traditions and languages spoken by its over 180 million peoples with over 70% of them as youth of 35 years and below. Certainly, the Nigeria Youth percentage should spur a lot of concern to all and sundry.

The Nigerian youth are considered vulnerable in society because of the rapid pace of change they experience at this time of their lives and the expedient attention ought to be given to meet their basic needs. It is in this light that, a National Youth Development Policy was created and designed to advocate for youth and youth development. The policy viewsyouth's welfare as vitalto Nigeria and its socio-economic development. This policy is seen as a youth participation project, versus a project identifying problems and needs (NYDP, 2009).
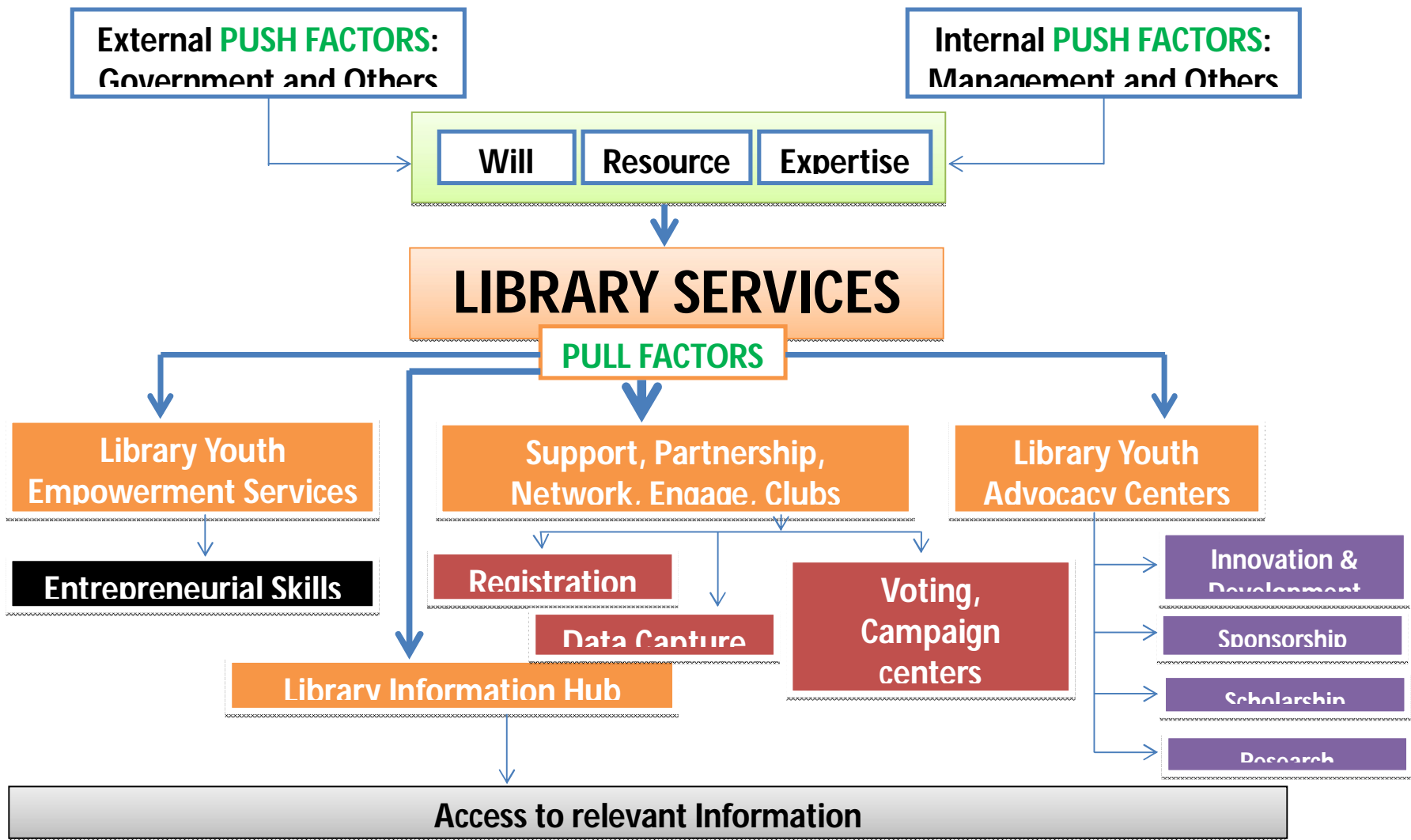
In its furtherance, the 2009 National Youth Policy recognizes 5 priority areas that need to be addressed to enhance youth lives. These include the impact of globalization, access and use of communication technology, the impact of STDs and HIV/AIDS, international issues in an aging society, and youth perpetrators and victims of arm conflicts (NYDP, 2009). Yet still, the nature of the sociopolitical and economic environment which have had prevailed in the country imposed serious constraints in terms of meeting the needs and aspirations of the youth and the possible actualization of the NYDP plans and priorities in Nigeria.

From all indication therefore, the Nigerian Youth needs and demands can be summed to include amongst others; education needs, healthcare service needs, information access needs, employment needs, demand for governance inclusion, identity needs, social needs, security needs, food security needs, sustainable development needs, housing needs, sports, recreation and entertainment needs, need for rule of law, sustainable energy needs, social amenities needs and many other demands. As aptly pointed out by the former president Chief OlusegunObasanjo (2009), that "youth constitute Nigeria's only hope for a real future", therefore necessitate the need to identify and address issues that would enhance the lives of the youth and inversely would improve on the overall national development for a sustainable atmosphere.

Reinventing Library Services as a Panacea to Challenges of Youth Sustainable Development in Nigeria

In line with the discus, the needs therefore to reinvent and excogitate specialized/secondary library services to meet youth needshave become eminent. Therefore, it is in the context of inclusiveness by all to the course of youth sustainable development in Nigeria that this paper contrived and recommends services on the framework below that ought to be included to meet the needs and demands of youth in all respects. Two main categories are employed to explain this framework. Firstly, the push factors which comprises of the external and internal push factors and secondly, the pull factors which comprises of the suggested secondary services. Under each of these categories of services recommended, examples are further shown even though they are not enough to give the whole picture. The government and other stakeholders are vital external push factors while the library management, administrators, staffs are essential internal push factors that in all could be determine in good will to raise resources and deploy the rightful expertise to design, create, plan, manage, organize, monitor, facilitate, disseminate, advocate, and implement the services and/or programmes.

FIGURE 1: THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK AND THE RECOMMENDED SERVICES

External PUSH FACTORS: Government and Others		Internal PUSH FACTORS: Management and Others

Will	Resource	Expertise

LIBRARY SERVICES

PULL FACTORS

Library Youth Empowerment Services	Support, Partnership, Network. Engage. Clubs	Library Youth Advocacy Centers

Entrepreneurial Skills

Registration

Data Capture

Voting, Campaign centers

Innovation & Development

Sponsorship

Scholarship

Research

Library Information Hub

Access to relevant Information

These services/programmes are:
- ⇨ Youth Information Hub
- ⇨ Library Youth Advocacy Center
- ⇨ Library Youth Club
- ⇨ Library Youth Empowerment Service

The nomenclature of the service names used above are tentative, likewise each library (public, school, national, special and academic) must choose the programs and services that will be of most beneficent to the youththey serve. And each library's service response will be different, since it will be based on the unique needs and characteristics of the youth in the community, as well as on library and community resources.

Youth Information Hub
A hub specifically refers to Youth Information Hub service should be designed and implemented to particularly meet youth's information needs. Policy issues, administration and management, resources needed should be spelt out. Primarily, the youth information hub should integrate state – of – art – technology, access to ICT like high-speed internet that may be available anywhere else; digital and hybrid systems in a well furnish environment and atmosphere. The personnel managing these services should be youth and the services render should be for youth without prejudice, partisanship and biasness. All genders should have equal access to the services. Access to information, information products, packages and information utilization should be at the fore-burner of this service. For sustenance, the information hub should design workshop that will further teach youth data capturing skills, online search and retrieval skills, information packaging and management skills, system design skills both manually and electronically where necessary with a meager fee attached. The youth information hub should equally collaborate with other government agencies responsible for capturing electronic data, census, examination bodies like Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO), Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, Health, Sport and Youth, Ministries of Finance, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Military, Paramilitaries etc. where the information hub will serve as an examination registration center, voters registrations centers, polling units and campaign organization centers to the various agencies to lieu and attract youth.

Inter-alia, the information hub should serve and provide access to: information and resources that can give people opportunities to improve their lives; public access for farmers to online resources like local market prices, weather reports, and new equipment; public access to health and wellness information that will helps individuals and families stay healthy; access to information and research for students of the community; inclusive spaces where cost is not a barrier to new knowledge; access to quality information and good practices that support local water management and sanitation projects; free and reliable access to electricity and light to read, study, and work; safe and welcoming meeting spaces; programmes and services designed to meet the needs of women and girls, like health; access to information and ICT that helps women build business skills; sustainable system of sharing and circulating materials that reduces waste; historical records about coastal change and land use; research and data needed to inform climate change policy; widespread access to information needed to guide decision-making by local and national governments on topics like hunting, fishing, land use, and water management; neutral and welcoming spaces that make learning accessible to all, including marginalized groups like migrants, refugees, minorities, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities; equitable access to information that supports social, political, and economic inclusion; public access to information about government, civil society, and other institutions; serve as trusted institutions devoted to promoting cultural inclusion and understanding and also aid the documentation and preservation of cultural heritage for future generations.

Library Youth Advocacy Center
Youth engagement in advocacy in lieu to recurring issues especially at this time of life is vital. Advocacy is actions individuals or organizations undertake to influence decision making at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels that help create a desired policy or funding change

in support of libraries. Thoughtful and effective advocacy can build the local, national, and international support needed to ensure that libraries services are deemed important and can improve lives by providing useful and sustainable public access to information technology in the communities, public schools, hospitals, and libraries. Advocacy can help raise the profiles of libraries, secure "a place at the table" for library staff where important funding and policy decisions are made, and achieve library's overall sustainability goals. Thus, in the context of youth, advocacy should be used by the youth to: encourage a positive public policy environment for dialogue and actions that are tilted towards in their community; raise the visibility of issues and identify both the challenges and the opportunities for actions; and ensure sustainability of the support investments in all contexts.

Library Youth Club
Clubs that tend to attract youth of different like-minds should be setup for diverse social activities and discus. The various departments for examples in the tertiary institutions could have its peculiar club with clear stated vision, mission and purposes. The club could equally include both teachers, lecturers, students and all other interested members. Topical issues bothering health, education, social injustices, human settlement and development, environmental management, sustainable energy, agriculture, poverty and hunger shouldall be discussed, deliberated upon, resolutions suggested, and a communiqué to be compiled.

Library Youth Empowerment Service
Libraries should have services targeting on youth empowerment, training in new skills needed for education and employment,information to support decision-making by governments on youth's empowerment. In tandem with the vision of collaboration, partnership and networking, the youth empowerment service should engage with all the stakeholders, relevant agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, Small Scale Enterprises, specialized libraries to train youth in the skills needed to understand and use this information, and to train youth on a continuous basis and on different skills, practices, and craftsmanship etc.

Conclusion
Contemporary library service trends in Nigeria are not youth-centered,thus contributing amongst others the enormous youth' needs and demands not being met to secure their life and life demands on a sustainable venture. Reinventing and contriving new services to cater for youth needs and proving the library worth in bridging the gaps for sustainable development that will help Nigeria reduce its onerous problems and challenges become highly imperative.

Therefore, in an all-inclusive stance, all relevant stakeholders most come up, through collaboration and partnership to advocate, establish, build, design and implement services that are youth – centered in approach and that will equally aid the facilitation of information access; creation of library youth clubs to discus, deliberate and suggest useful resolutions; youth advocacy that would help to identify the needs for recognition between library professionals, and other societal actors and one's self to further push for youth needs and demands through policies used by the library; youth empowerment services that will equally help to advance, lift, develop and sustain the youth life and meet up with their demands and needs which would invariably contribute to the capacity building, self-development and dependence, environmental, sociopolitical and economic national development in a sustainable context of Nigeria in particular and other countries the world generally.

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