

Corporate social responsibilities by academic libraries: A global review

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become an integral practice for organizations initiated to demonstrate accountability and contribute to societal well-being. This paper explores CSR efforts in academic libraries through documentary reports from cases of academic libraries in Nigeria, Tanzania, Lesotho, Kenya, India, and the Philippines. The study involved a systematic investigation, examination and analysis of existing records on CSR from various settings. The reported cases highlight outreach initiatives to serve the information needs of rural communities, including agricultural extension services, literacy programs, mobile libraries, book donations, and skills training. Disadvantaged groups are also beneficiaries in some of the examples. Key CSR activities aim to promote development, address inequality, and build relationships. However, libraries face challenges like limited funding, low literacy of users, lack of ICT infrastructure, developing local language materials, vehicle maintenance issues, and impact monitoring. Proposed solutions emphasize partnerships to pool resources, customization of training for users, utilization of local languages, leveraging of low-tech options (mobile phones), enhancing evaluation, and securing external funding. The reports demonstrate libraries' potential as change agents in fostering inclusion and bridging information gaps by embracing CSR principles. Also, libraries achieve much through collaborations with corporate organizations. The study provides exemplars for modelling CSR practices that enable libraries to positively serve disadvantaged communities and live up to their role as equitable social institutions.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibilities; academic libraries; library outreach programmes; CSR practices; social responsibility

Introduction

In contemporary society, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a significant departure from traditional business values primarily centered around maximizing economic gains. This shift towards increased social engagement is a natural consequence of social development (Dima, Vasilache, Ghinea & Agoston, 2013). Corporate social responsibility is now one of the most widely adopted practices among organizations, extending beyond profit-centric entities to encompass non-profit organizations. Presently, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the practice through which businesses acknowledge their societal responsibilities by assuming accountability for the consequences of their operations on various stakeholders (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Tamvada, 2020). These stakeholders may include customers, suppliers,

employees, shareholders, communities, and the environment

According to Sitaram (2015), CSR involves an organization's actions and stance concerning its perceived communal or stakeholder responsibilities. Furthermore, Sitaram (2015) underscores that CSR represents a set of moral obligations towards various social actors and society as a whole, driven by an organization's economic, social, political, and ethical reflections on its role in society and its relationships with these actors. The triple bottom model recognizes that social responsibility must be holistic, embracing environmental, social, and economic impacts (Casey, Cawthorne, DeLong, Herold & Lim, 2014)

The driving forces behind CSR include progressive self-interest, social investment, transparency, trust, and heightened public expectations. Organisations are faced with the important

task of supporting global sustainability goals. Commenting on the literature on the social responsibility of libraries, Leko Šimić, Mihaljević and Tolušić (2018) noted that while many publications focus primarily on green and ecological initiatives within libraries, they constitute only a limited portion of socially responsible practices. In spite of the research efforts in the area, of environmental sustainability, there remains scanty published research in this domain. There is a great need to cover broader aspects of social responsibility and sustainability within academic libraries. Also, in this evolving landscape, libraries, regardless of their mission, size or type, must embrace the concept of CSR to maintain relevance in contemporary society.

Literature review

According to Akpom, Onyam, and Benson (2020), libraries should engage in CSR for several compelling reasons. Firstly, it serves as a strategic means to assist the government and portray a positive image of libraries within society, especially given the existing negative perceptions. Secondly, CSR allows libraries to make a significant contribution to societal growth, development, and well-being. CSR initiatives enable libraries to establish mutual relationships with stakeholders and effectively address social, economic, and environmental challenges faced by society, while also enhancing their overall image within the community.

Similarly, Enem, Benson and Igbokwe (2020) suggest several reasons why university libraries must embrace the CSR practice. Firstly, it can lead to a change in how the public perceives libraries. Additionally, it contributes to the welfare of librarians themselves and enhances the corporate image of the library. CSR also fosters mutual understanding between the library and the community, ultimately

increasing customer patronage and satisfaction. Furthermore, it elevates the library's visibility in the university and society, improves its image, and provides a competitive advantage within the information industry. From another perspective, librarians can strengthen their value chain through CSR, attract high-quality staff to libraries, and increase enrollment in library schools.

Leko Šimić, Mihaljević and Tolušić (2018) explain that academic libraries continually face growing demands from their users while also grappling with sustainability, environmental concerns, and social responsibility issues. Marraud and Ferrer (2013) in the Rebuin Report reflect that "The survival of the university and its libraries both in the medium and long term depends on its economic feasibility, commitment with environmental sustainability and socially responsible performance." The value placed on an institution, the needs of the (host) community, and the company's focus or goal, play a major factor in decisions to support public causes.

According to Yap, Perez, and Dar Juan (2020), libraries are often overlooked as recipients of CSR programs. However, in the Philippines, the corporate sector has shown a strong inclination towards supporting the education and training sector, presenting libraries with a significant opportunity to receive valuable contributions from them. Akpom, Onyam, and Benson (2020) believe that the adoption of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) in libraries has not been widespread, but suggest that libraries may have unknowingly engaged in CSR activities to some extent. They posit that although the concept of CSR has been prevalent in the business world for some time, libraries have not fully embraced these practices. This might be partly attributed to poor funding and the limited financial

support libraries receive from their institutions, being non-profit-making units. In any case, libraries have a high potential to serve as both beneficiaries and providers of CSR, particularly when there exists collaboration or partnerships with other organisations. The advantage an organization like the library has in engaging with communities is that service is already embedded in their mode of operations/objectives (Suharso, Yanto, Rohman, Wiratningsih & Saefullah, 2018; Yap, Perez & DarJuan, 2020).

Akpom, Onyam and Benson (2020) define corporate social responsibility (CSR) in libraries as obligations of libraries to their host community, stakeholders within the community and society in general. The concept of a socially responsible library, as further discussed by Leko Šimić, Mihaljević and Tolušić, (2018), is integral to librarianship, and can be traced back to the American Library Association (ALA). The ALA's Social Responsibility Round Table (SRRT), founded in 1969, actively promoted social responsibility as a core value in librarianship. They emphasized that libraries and librarians have a role in addressing societal issues and inequalities to fulfil their mission of enhancing societal well-being and democracy. The ALA offered an early definition of a socially responsible library, characterizing it as an institution and profession that acknowledges its duty to engage with non-library issues linked to social welfare (American Library Association, 1973).

Leko Šimić, Mihaljević and Tolušić (2018) focused on identifying and assessing key components of social responsibility in academic libraries to enhance their ability to address contemporary challenges. In line with this, the researchers developed a tailored social responsibility model based on the Croatian Business Council and Croatian Chamber of Commerce CSR Index. The

model was validated through librarian surveys. The findings indicate that librarians prioritize staff training and development most, followed by building community relations with a strong emphasis on privacy protection. Green initiatives, especially digitization efforts, ranked third, while strategic planning for social responsibility received the lowest attention. Also, the incorporation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles into official documents or reporting was not prioritized, indicating a gap between principles and practical implementation and requiring improved coordination of CSR activities within libraries.

Libraries reflect social responsibility within their parent institutions in various ways. Reporting on the sustainability and social responsibility of academic libraries in the Rebuin reports, Marraud and Ferrer (2013) highlight the critical role of academic libraries in university social responsibility. Libraries contribute by participating in institutional social responsibility initiatives and integrating sustainability into their services and activities. To enhance their contribution, libraries should align with their institution's social responsibility strategies, champion sustainability initiatives, and incorporate sustainability principles into core services. This includes managing resources efficiently and promoting responsible behaviours such as reducing paper and ink consumption, supporting open access, and using environmentally friendly practices. By doing so, libraries can foster a more socially and environmentally responsible academic environment, while ensuring their long-term success.

Aside from environmental sustainability goals, libraries have a diverse range of possibilities for engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. These possibilities encompass empowerment programs, rural and

community development initiatives, disseminating information about employment opportunities for unemployed graduates, promoting educational development, and ensuring timely, regular, and relevant information services to the local community. They may also contribute to sustainability goals by promoting environmental consciousness and awareness campaigns, advocating against discrimination and delivering healthcare services through health-related information services and health education. Additionally, libraries can support educational initiatives like scholarships and intern opportunities, organize seminars on entrepreneurial opportunities, and actively participate in community development and the promotion of citizens' welfare through collaboration with stakeholders (Enem, Benson and Igbokwe, 2020).

Libraries can also ride on the back of enhanced accessibility to prove outreach services as part of their social responsibility programme. Outreach allows extending services to users locally by harnessing technology. This can be done by making services accessible everywhere, available 24/7, and reaching users through multiple channels (Ashiq, Rehman & Mujtaba, 2021) such as mobile services and tech solutions.

Emezie and Igwe (2017) highlight that rural communities in Nigeria lack access to vital community information services (CIS) to meet their needs and support development. With poor literacy, infrastructure, and the absence of community information centres in rural areas, inhabitants are information-deprived. This gap presents an opportunity for academic libraries located within communities to provide outreach services as part of their corporate social responsibility. By leveraging their resources and capabilities, academic librarians can articulate targeted CIS programs on health,

agriculture, business, finance, and more to rural citizens as CSR. Delivering specific information aligned to SDGs (Chukwu, Emezie, Njoku & Abanum, 2022) through flexible channels can empower rural communities educationally, economically and socially.

Academic libraries possess a high capacity and potential to embrace change and incorporate new processes and practices. One of the suggestions by Ashiq, Rehman and Mujtaba (2021) to manage challenges associated with lack of funding includes partnerships with the business community. This is exemplified by the commitment of MTN to Nigerian academic libraries (John-Okeke, Omekwu & Chigbu, 2016), Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE)'s donation of 50 books to the University Library of the Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTOLIBRARY, 2016) and companies support to libraries in Indonesia (Khoir, 2011).

Corporate organisations are also supportive of libraries as is the case of the Allcargo Group, a global logistics conglomerate in India which offered CSR by organizing a school library programme in Maharashtra, India in collaboration with the Zilla Parishad of Raigad. The goal of the project was to foster reading habits among students, encourage them to gain knowledge through books and reduce the increased screen time among children during the pandemic, through the introduction of well-curated books in Marathi, Hindi, and English (CSRJournal, 2023)

Priyanto, Uswah, Wahyuni, Khoir and Paijo (n.d.) report on collaborations between companies and Indonesian libraries through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The companies support libraries through their foundations by providing funding, resources, facilities, and activities. Some open "corners" or spaces dedicated to the company within the

academic libraries such as the American Corner, Sampoerna Corner, Nation Building Corner, World Bank Corner and other corners. These spaces located within the libraries provide books, computers, WiFi access, and database subscriptions for library users. The companies also fund library training, workshops, internships, and annual meetings among other activities. CSR support was also extended to community libraries in rural areas including funding, resources, and librarian training by the companies. In return, the companies get visibility and promotion to their users.

In their descriptive study focused on librarians working in selected federal and state university libraries in southern Nigeria, Akpom, Onyam, & Benson (2020) shed light on various corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that public university libraries can implement to contribute to societal transformation. The respondents, with a grand mean score of 3.2, agreed with all 13 proposed CSR activities. These activities included raising awareness about environmental sustainability (mean score of 3.5), engaging in activities that promote vocational skill acquisition in host communities (mean score of 3.5), organizing adult education and continuing education programs (mean score of 3.4), incorporating community interests into library services (mean score of 3.3), donating books to rural areas (mean score of 3.3), disseminating information on eradicating hunger and poverty, and actively participating in healthcare and educational initiatives in the host community (mean score of 3.2). The study submits a moderate positive perception of librarians towards libraries engaging in CSR. These findings underscore the potential for university libraries to play a significant role in fostering positive social change through CSR initiatives.

In the collaborative programmes between libraries and corporate

organizations Yap, Perez and Darjuan (2020) report the survey of 14 Philippine companies' corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives supporting libraries. Most companies (86%) had CSR programs, with 79% supporting various types of libraries, such as academic, school, public, and special libraries. They collaborated by establishing "knowledge corners" in academic libraries and donating resources, space, and facilities, resulting in mutual benefits. School libraries received support from 67% of companies through book donations and library kits. Partnerships included funding, infrastructure development, and programs. Notably, 30% of companies had long-term partnerships with libraries. CSR activities aimed to enhance library facilities, collections, services, and reading promotion. Examples included the Ayala Foundation's "OurLibrary" program and the Aboitiz Foundation's library kit donations. Banking and financial institutions were actively involved in the library CSR (Yap, Perex and DaJuan, 2020).

Enem, Benson, and Igbokwe (2020) identified the major challenges that may arise when implementing CSR initiatives in libraries as lack of funding, transparency issues, and divergent stakeholder opinions among others. These challenges manifested as a lack of commitment toward CSR activities, limited knowledge about CSR within local communities, narrow perceptions of CSR initiatives, inadequate training in library schools for CSR, a lack of clear CSR guidelines, the library's status as a social institution, insufficiently trained staff, and poor staff supervision. These challenges underscore the complexity of implementing CSRs in library settings and the need for proactive solutions (Enem, Benson, & Igbokwe, 2020).

However, Akpom, Onyam and Benson (2020) opined that librarians can

institutionalize CSR practices within university libraries in Nigeria through initiatives encompassing the establishment of public relations or corporate social responsibility units. Forming partnerships with non-governmental organizations, developing a formal CSR policy, fostering a culture of CSR among library leadership, assessing and evaluating existing CSR-related activities and collaborating with medical institutions or the Ministry of Health to deliver medical education to the public (Akpom, Onyam, & Benson, 2020) were other ways to improve CSR practice in academic libraries.

Corporate social responsibility initiative - Exemplars

Based on reports of various CSR initiatives of academic libraries in different parts of the world including the cases of the University Library of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), Nigeria (Mushi & Egbukole, 2021; Chukwu, Emezie, Njoku & Abanum, 2022), Sokoine National Agricultural Library, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania (Mushi & Egbukole, 2021), the National University of Lesotho (NUL) (Moshoeshoe-Chadzwina, 2020), the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences Library in India (Vijesh & Mohanan, 2015); the Rajagiri Business School Library (Vijesh & Sreejith, 2020) and the University of Nairobi Library and Information Services (University of Nairobi, 2021). A study of the initiative or intervention and the challenges encountered for the CSR project (s) by the academic libraries is explored to provide successful exemplars for possible modelling and adoption.

1. University Library of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), Nigeria

A. Background

In the case of FUTO (Owerri), the acquisition of land from eleven host communities sparked boundary disputes and controversies. A robust "Town and Gown" relationship was crucial for amicable boundary negotiations and understanding and respecting clear boundaries. Thus, the purpose of the CSR to the community was mainly to enhance the "Town and Gown" relationship of its host communities. In summary, the outreach programs aimed to foster good rapport, provide access to the library's resources and services, and contribute to the development of the agrarian host communities.

B. CSR initiatives

The Library affected the host community positively in the following ways:

- Organizing sensitization campaign on the different SDGs to rural communities.
- Partnering with health-related NGOs for health activities and repackaging information for users.
- Establishment of the host communities relations committee with a librarian as head
- Empowerment programmes.
- Book donations to secondary schools in the area
- Conflict resolution
- Providing information and resources related to various aspects of the university and its interactions with host communities; offering documents, records, maps, and other materials issues such as land acquisition, compensation, and

university policies and serving as a repository for such materials.

- Training workshops on agricultural practices conducted in the Igbo language and
- Agricultural extension services.

C. Challenges Experienced

- Administrative bottlenecks from university management,
- Finance for logistics and implementation
- Poor relationship between university and rural communities.
- Social and environmental threats.
- Credibility questions, the efforts were viewed with suspicion.

2. The Sokoine National Agricultural Library (SNAL) – Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania

A. CSR efforts and initiatives

The Sokoine National Agricultural Library (SNAL) engages in several outreach programs to serve the public, especially local farming communities:

- The "Mkulima Library" collection solves the challenge of the language barrier for information literacy and access to the non-academic community.
- Mkulima Library serves the local farming community by providing access to information resources relevant to farming activities.
- Researchers at the university are encouraged to translate their findings into Swahili for dissemination to farmers.
- Farmers who visit the library are exposed to modern information and communication technologies and receive information literacy training.

- SNAL regularly visits different regions to conduct workshops and seminars based on the needs of farmers in their respective areas (outreach services). All outreach services to the public are provided free of charge by the university library.
- SNAL participates in the "Saffepa Book Reading Competition" to build a reading culture among primary and secondary school students in Morogoro municipality.
- Provision of Reading Materials: SNAL provides both printed and electronic reading materials to all participating schools and awards free reading materials to the best schools on the closing day event. The competition involves the community as a whole (parents, teachers, and the general community), especially during the closing day ceremony.
- The library actively participates in university and national exhibitions to market its resources and services.
- Outreach services include information literacy training, workshops, consultancy services, and promoting access to electronic resources. All services are provided free of charge to give the public access to information for development.

B. Issues and Challenges

- Resource constraints (time, staff, and funding). Limited financial support from the university constrains the outreach activities.
- Outreach is not extended to all who need it. Many individuals in the country cannot read even in Swahili due to the high level of illiteracy.

- Lack of ICT skills among rural farmers makes information access difficult.
- Reaching farmers in remote rural areas with poor infrastructure is challenging.
- Developing content in local languages requires extensive translation efforts.

3. The National University of Lesotho (NUL)

A. CSR efforts and initiatives

The National University of Lesotho (NUL) Library initiated the Distance and Rural Learner-Teacher Support through a Mobile Digital Library (DRULETSMODIL) project funded by UNESCO.

- It involved a mobile library vehicle providing digital and print resources, internet access, information services and training to rural communities and schools.
- Operated in 3 phases over 4 years covering all 10 districts of Lesotho and reaching over 130,000 users.
- Offered free access and services to disadvantaged groups including rural farmers, youth, women, and remote schools.
- Collaborated with other organizations like GIZ, UNICEF, community radios etc. to provide specialized services.
- Embodied principles of diversity, inclusivity and social responsibility in serving the information needs of marginalized groups.

B. Issues and challenges

- Lack of funding continuity and reliance on external donors.
- Reaching remote rural areas with poor infrastructure.

- Low literacy levels and ICT skills of users.
- Developing content in local languages.
- Limited time at each location per phase.
- Hard to sustain services after vehicle moves.
- Technical issues of vehicle maintenance.

4. University of Nairobi Library and Information Services

A. CSR efforts and initiatives

The University of Nairobi Library embarked on a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative that involved various activities to support local communities in 2021 including:

- visit to a Children's Home for the needy and orphaned children aged 1 to 19 to contribute to the children's well-being and education through donations of various items
- visit to Joy Town School for the Mobility Disabled in Thika County to donate essential items such as masks, milk, bread, toilet paper, sanitisers, dispensers, and signage to help manage the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance hygiene measures.
- support of disabled individuals through the registration of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (K), free medical screenings, Braille presentations, and games for PWDs during the International Day for the Disabled.

B. Issues and Challenges

- Adhering to pandemic regulations
- Monitoring, evaluation and documentation

5. The Rajagiri College of Social Sciences Library in India

A. CSR efforts and initiatives

The library collaborated with the college's outreach department Rajagiri out REACH to provide training and assistance in setting up libraries in rural communities as part of CSR projects.

- Provided resources and helped design health and socioeconomic surveys conducted by students during rural camp trips.
- Offered need-based documentation services on social issues for the college.
- Participated in IT literacy and e-governance programs for underprivileged groups in partnership with local self-help groups.
- Conducted community aid programs to provide library access and services to rural villages and disadvantaged schools.
- Provided an earn-while-you-learn program for students to gain work experience in the library.

B. Issues and challenges

- Mobilizing resources and materials for extensive community programs with a limited library budget.
- High time commitment required from library staff for community initiatives along with regular services.
- Limited technology access and infrastructure in rural areas hinder modern library services.
- Information literacy levels of rural users necessitate focused training programs.

- Language barriers in serving marginalized groups.
- Travel constraints in reaching remote villages.

6. Rajagiri Centre for Business Studies, Kerala, India Business School Libraries

Some of the Rajagiri Centre for Business Studies (RCBS) libraries' efforts are as follows.

A. CSR efforts and initiatives

- Collaboration with the college's outreach department Rajagiri outREACH to set up libraries and conduct surveys in rural communities.
- Provision of health and socioeconomic surveys, and aided in questionnaire design for rural camps.
- Offering documentation services on social issues and participation in e-governance programs.
- Conduct of community aid programs providing library access and services to rural villages and disadvantaged schools.
- Support of student groups like Rajagiri Transcend that work with the homeless and needy through donations.
- Volunteer at relief camps and drove book donation initiatives during the Kerala floods in 2018.
- Organizing book exhibitions and fairs to promote reading and access to information.
- Provision of free community information services to the public and local organizations.
- Donation over 3000 textbooks and books to management institutes and underprivileged students.

B. Issues and Challenges

- Mobilizing resources for community initiatives with limited library budgets.
- High time commitments for library staff to conduct CSR activities on top of regular services.
- Reaching rural communities with poor literacy levels and limited technology access.
- Developing content in local languages and travelling to remote villages.
- Lack of infrastructure in rural areas to provide modern library services.
- Assessing the impact of programs and ensuring participation from all stakeholders.

7. De La Salle University Libraries in the Philippines (The Human Library)

CSR efforts and initiatives

A. Background

The De La Salle University Libraries in the Philippines introduced the concept of the human library, which is a program that allows readers to interact with human books that represent different stereotypes and prejudices. The aim of the program is to promote understanding, tolerance, and social responsibility among the participants.

B. Issues and challenges

- Finding and selecting suitable human books that can represent diverse groups and share their stories in a respectful and honest manner.
- Raising awareness and interest among potential readers who may not be familiar with the concept or its benefits.
- Balancing the duration and appropriateness of the reading sessions to ensure meaningful

dialogues and avoid fatigue or boredom.

- Comparing and benchmarking the results with other local or international libraries that have similar programs, which are scarce or nonexistent in the country.

Recommended solutions based on the literature

The study confirms that academic libraries are not solely beneficiaries, but initiators of CSR in their universities, host communities and society. Libraries, as pillars of knowledge and community development, have a unique role to play in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Funding, Illiteracy and poor management of CSR initiatives are the major challenges experienced by the academic libraries involved in outreach/CSR. Despite the challenges of limited funding and high illiteracy rates in many communities, libraries can make a significant impact through strategic initiatives by collaboration and partnership. Libraries can work with other stakeholders to provide, promote, or sustain outreach services and programs. Since low literacy levels are often a major challenge, leveraging on local language and culture can help libraries develop content that respects local cultural norms and enhances outreach effectiveness.

Given the digital age, improving ICT and information literacy skills is vital. Libraries can equip the community with the necessary skills to access and use information resources in multi-modal formats. In areas with infrastructural challenges, mobile and low-tech Solutions can be a game-changer. Libraries can reach remote or rural communities using mobile or low-tech solutions. However, to ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives, monitoring, evaluation and documentation are essential. Libraries

should measure the impact of their outreach services and programs and make necessary adjustments.

Finally, effective communication and promotion can raise awareness about the library's services and programs. Encouraging participation and engagement in outreach activities by staff, friends of the library, volunteers, or the target population can foster a sense of ownership and community.

Discussion

The documentary reports showcase a range of CSR efforts by academic libraries to serve their local and rural communities. Common initiatives included outreach programs to provide agricultural training and extension services, literacy and skills training, promoting reading culture and access to library resources, mobile library services, setting up rural libraries and donating books and supplies to schools and disadvantaged groups. The libraries aimed to foster town-gown relationships, contribute to development and serve marginalized communities through customized information services provided free of charge. Though the primary brief of academic libraries is to support teaching, learning and research, they should be able to engage in community service to support their parent institution. These efforts would invariably increase the value and visibility of academic libraries in the community and the society at large.

Key challenges faced by the libraries in their CSR endeavors included limited funding, high illiteracy levels and lack of ICT skills among rural users, local language barriers, infrastructure limitations in reaching remote areas, issues of vehicle maintenance for mobile services, and the capacity to manage the programmes. Safety considerations and participation also posed challenges during the pandemic. Since academic libraries are supported by their

parent institutions and they are not-for-profit institutions, it is not easy for these libraries to carry out outreach. However, collaborating with stakeholders and businesses will enable them to deliver support services to their host communities, even beyond the prescribed formal activities. Proposed solutions emphasize leveraging strategic partnerships with government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups to enhance reach and impact, while aggregating resources. Customizing literacy and skills training programs for different user groups' needs, use of local languages, and low-tech solutions suited for rural contexts could improve usage. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems can demonstrate impact and boost staff participation. Seeking external funding and exploring revenue opportunities could provide sustainability.

The reports demonstrate academic libraries' potential to positively impact disadvantaged communities when they embrace CSR principles. The libraries are well positioned to serve as change agents that can foster social inclusion, contribute to sustainable development goals, and help bridge information inequality through purposeful outreach. CSR provides an avenue for libraries to live up to their roles as equitable community institutions while benefiting from enhanced community relations. Adopting effective solutions such as collaboration can help libraries surmount challenges and amplify their CSR impact.

Conclusion

Organizations are shifting towards greater social engagement and less profit-centric approaches, reflecting changing perspectives. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) embodies an organization's moral duties to society, that cover economic, social, political, and ethical considerations. To remain relevant in today's

evolving landscape, libraries, irrespective of their size or type, must adopt the concept of CSR. Corporate Social Responsibility is grounded in libraries' inherent commitment to service, enabling them to engage in empowerment initiatives, and rural and community development programs, as well as contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The findings of the study highlight the major areas of CSR engagement by libraries in six countries through the documentary method of research. The areas highlighted in the studies are through (i) Education and Literacy Promotion of schools, communities and disadvantaged groups (ii) Community development with respect to healthcare and skill acquisition promotion (iii) Environmental sustainability through green initiatives, resource management, reducing environmental footprint through digitization (iv) Social welfare and promotion of inclusivity (v) Collaborations and partnerships with NGOs, businesses and stakeholders (vi) Donations and philanthropy (vii) Enhancing access to information and (viii) Community engagement. Libraries should try to be more innovative in dispensing CSR. They should explore the needs of their community and focus on the SDGs in designing the CSR projects. Such interventions should follow sound models such as the triple bottom principles which recommend attention to environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Documentation, monitoring and evaluation are aspects of CSR management that libraries have not fully embraced. Academic libraries should incorporate strategic planning in actualising CSR. This implies that they should include it in their policy and planning. In effect, academic libraries should establish committees to oversee CSR planning and management.

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