

Libraries and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Advancing Inclusive Knowledge Societies

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Introduction

Access to knowledge is the engine behind every goal



Every SDG runs on access.

Information access makes the UN 2030 Agenda explicit.



Libraries are the infrastructure.

They deliver knowledge, literacy, heritage, and evidence for decisions.



Africa's gap-closer.

Where researchers and connectivity are scarce, libraries close the gap.

SDGs ADVANCED BY #SDGACTION57288

4



Quality Education

5



Gender Equality

9



Industry & Innovation

17



Partnerships for the Goals

#SDGAction57288

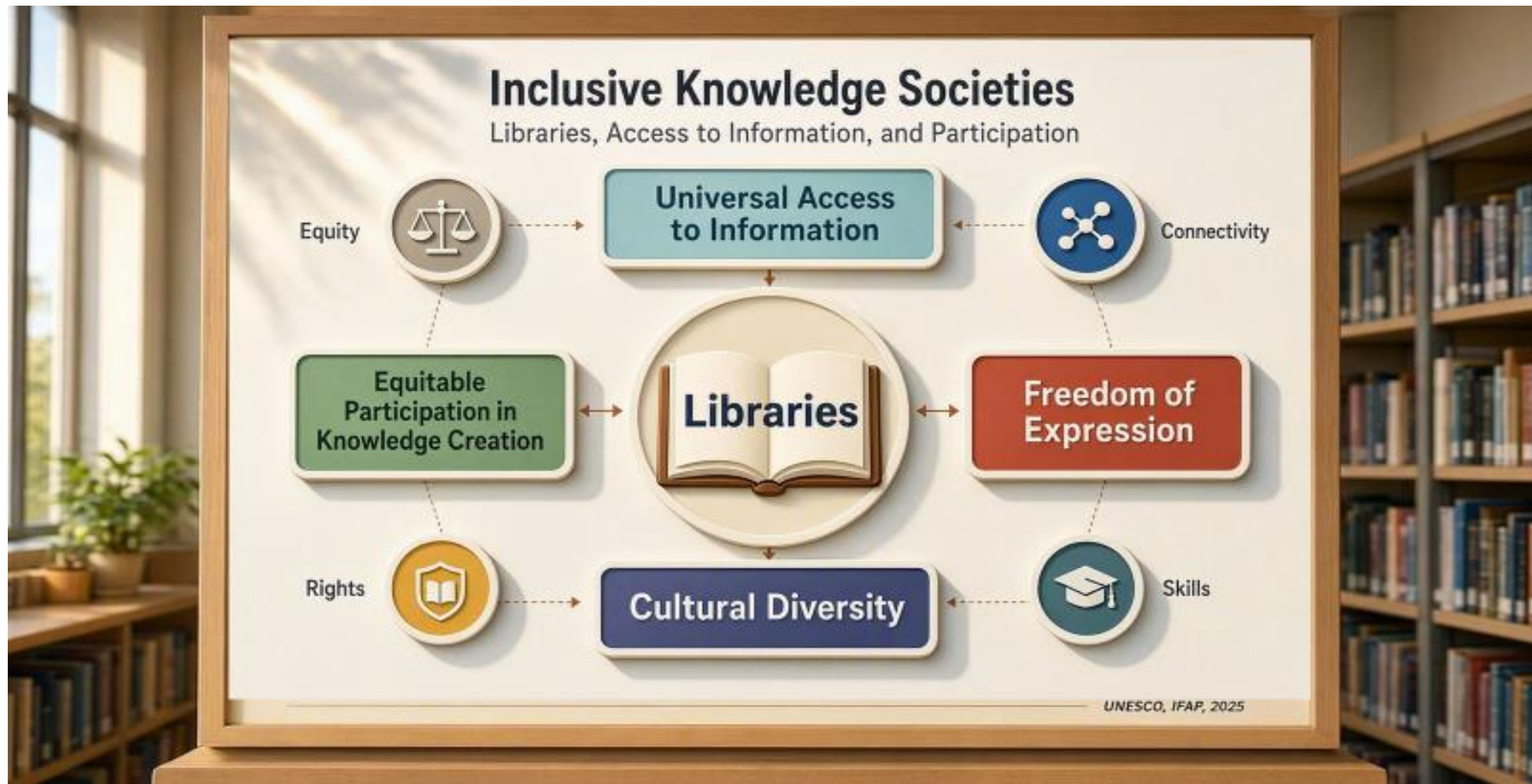
Collaborative Library Innovations for Advancing Ideation, Learning, Research and Innovation Ecosystem in Uganda — proof that CUUL's UN-registered SDG model works.

2025–27

PROJECT WINDOW

200,000+

REACHED



Access to Information: The SDGs Foundation

SDG 16.10 — ACCESS TO INFORMATION



Sources: United Nations (2015); IFLA (2024); UN DESA SDG Partnership Platform, #SDGAction57288 (2025)

Access to Information as SDG Infrastructure

UNESCO · ACCESS AS A GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD



Open, inclusive access to information is a global public good and a direct driver of SDG target 16.10 — the foundation on which inclusive knowledge societies pursue sustainable development.

UNESCO (2025)

UN-KNOWLEDGE FOR PEACE



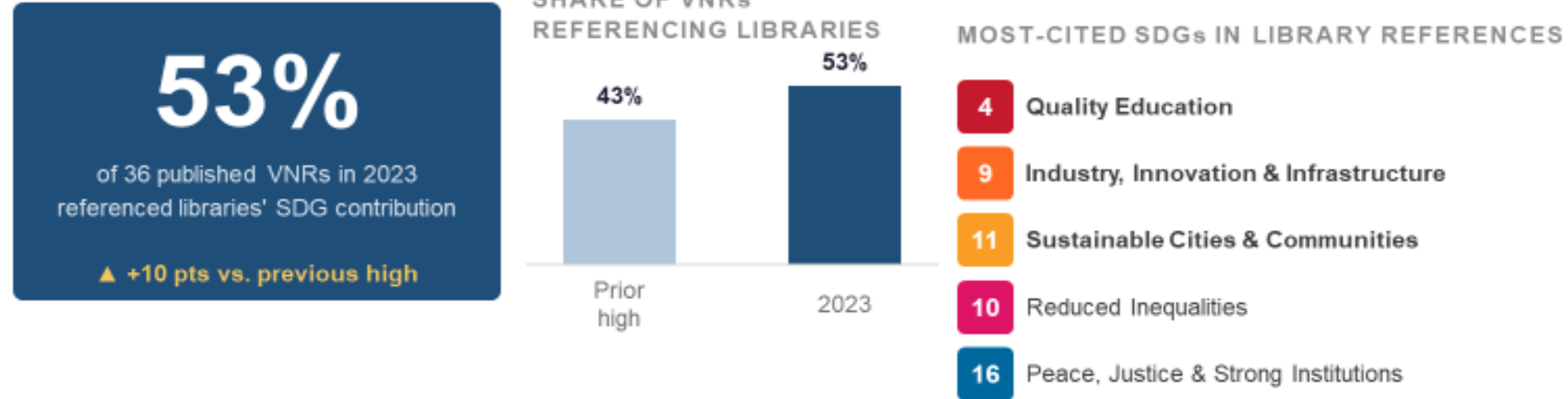
Inclusive knowledge societies draw on the sum of human ingenuity, technical innovation and the power of information — advancing both peace and sustainable development worldwide.

United Nations (2025)

Libraries are structural, not incidental, actors in SDG delivery — the institutions historically responsible for organising and providing access to the world's recorded knowledge.

Global Recognition of Libraries in SDG Reporting

IFLA's analysis of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to the UN High-Level Political Forum



Library references appeared across all but one of the 17 SDGs.

A regional recognition gap: Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America & the Caribbean recorded a lower share of VNRs referencing libraries than Europe and Asia-Oceania — a gap this paper's Uganda case study helps to contextualise.

Source: IFLA, Library Stakeholder Report — Voluntary National Reviews Analysis (2023)

Open Access, Open Science & Research Visibility

How access-to-knowledge intermediaries operationalise the SDG information agenda

+75%

increase in scientific output in low- and middle-income countries linked to Research4Life access

Research4Life / WIPO-affiliated study (2024)

+20%

rise in participation in international clinical trials among the same countries

EIFL NATIONAL CONSORTIUM
PARTNERS · since 2011

CUUL

Uganda

KLISC

Kenya

COTUL

Tanzania

UNESCO's Open Access framing: unrestricted access to research literature improves the transparency and accountability of publicly funded research, and strengthens the diffusion of knowledge across society.

Advancing Inclusive Knowledge Societies: The CUUL Case

From resource-sharing body to formally recognised UN development partner

80 → 120

member institutions — CUUL's growth
to Dec 2025

50%+

Established institutional repositories
with EIFL grant support

2025

CUUL National Repository operational;
peer-reviewed CUUL Journal launched

Registered against SDG 4, 5, 9 & 17 — CUUL is a formally recognised development partner, consistent with UNESCO's view of information access as a public good spanning multiple goals.

A REPLICABLE PRACTICE

Formal SDG-partnership registration gives Uganda's libraries a documented, citable record — closing a visibility gap IFLA finds common across Sub-Saharan Africa. Other national library consortia can follow the same path.

Sources: CUUL, UN SDG Partnership Platform #SDGAction57288 (2026); UNESCO (2025a); EIFL (2023); IFLA (2023)



CUUL: Driving Access to Global Scholarly Knowledge

Consortium of Uganda University Libraries

CUUL facilitates access to a comprehensive portfolio of multidisciplinary databases, including:

International Monetary Fund	American Chemical Society	AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY [®] of PHYSICS	
American Chemical Society [®]	CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS	OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS	OXFORD PRESS [®]
SPRINGER NATURE	Taylor & Francis	WILEY	JSTOR
Project MUSE	EBSCO	SAGE Publications	Nature Publishing Group

In partnership with

Research4Life[®] EIFL AAU Association of African Universities RENU KLISC

From Access to Impact: Advancing Digital Transformation and Knowledge Equity in African Academic Institutions

collaboration collaborative efforts and the financial support of the consortium of academic delivery models. CUUL website: CUUL website/ Uganda University Libraries

2nd HMU International Week for Academic Libraries, 21st-25th of September



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