Chapter 9
Green Libraries:
Current Situation in Mexico

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ABSTRACT

Universities and libraries are applying the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in their academic planning, but this study shows the current situation with the green libraries in the country. The aim of this study is to explore how sustainable 30 academic libraries are. Beyond an analysis of library spaces, this study explains the perspective of their librarians, management of resources, and care of the environment as a part of their day-by-day activities. A survey was submitted, and all the participants described their definitions and approach to the topic. As a result, this study found that the perception of sustainability in academic libraries has a significant connotation towards the issue of budgets and space design, not towards water use, recycling, and electricity use, among other aspects. Finally, this study suggests some good practices of sustainability for the academic library.

SUSTAINABILITY: ORIGIN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A GREEN LIBRARY PERSPECTIVE

Sustainability as a general topic appears as a response to several studies conducted mainly in the United States, which demonstrate the ecological and environmental damage that industrial and agricultural activities caused to ecosystems and their biodiversity, including human beings (Passerini & Brebbia, 2014; Surampalli, 2020).

Literature such as "the silent spring" (Carlson,1962), "The historical roots of our ecological crisis" (White, 1967), "The tragedy of the commons (Hardin, 1968) in the decade of the sixties, and other books, started describing different scenarios that criticize the infinite perception in the use of natural resources. From this type of publications, the theories exposed by Hardin (1968), Commoner (1972) and Bookchin (1980), raised criticisms about the overexploitation of the commons, private property, overpopulation, the limits of capitalist technology and eco-anarchism.

The most important thing to highlight about this type of literature is that it created large movements among expert groups and consequently, the origin of sustainability as a term in almost any type of strategic planning. The ecological-social movement of the 1960s had a significant impact on the first Stockholm Summit in 1972, considered the first international conference created by the United Nations to discuss the importance of environmental sustainability. For the first time, Sustainability was defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Since the Stockholm Summit in 1972, several events have reconsidered the role of sustainability in modern life and the role played by international associations, governmental institutions, and the common people in this process. Although there are multiple meetings, we can cite the World Charter for Nature in 1982, the Brundtland Commission in 1983, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the Rio de Janeiro Summit in 1992, the Earth Charter in 2000, the Rio +20 Summit in 2012, the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2016 (UN, 2022).

One of the initiatives that cannot be left aside is the Talloires declaration in 1990, especially because of the approach from the university perspective and which is aimed at solving problems at a global level in relation to sustainability (Adldong, 2013). Since Doyle's (2014) comments on the environmental movements of the twentieth century, various countries have put forward strategies that seek to create the culture of sustainability. Among the most important agreements is that of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a consensus agreed by 189 countries and in which the 8 purposes of Human Development are mentioned.

Among the proposed goals is number 8, "to ensure environmental sustainability", so that various academic institutions worldwide have oriented their lines of research to environmental sustainability and for this purpose have taken up the MDGs as part of their work plan. By 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established, which have 17 Goals and 169 targets representing the continuity of the MDGs and delimiting a period of (2015-2030).

In this sense, it has been identified that institutions such as IFLA in 2010, ALA and ALAI among others, proposed publications that develop the theme of green libraries, publishers such as IGI GLOBAL promote sustainability with a focus on digital libraries. Under this perspective, the following article identifies the initiatives or proposals that have been raised from libraries to create a sustainable culture and thus contribute to the development of the SDGs.

The history of green libraries emerged with the environmental movement at the end of the 70's. Architects and engineers with an environmentalist vision began to experiment with sustainable design, which is when the first green buildings appeared (Antonelli, 2008). Green libraries are a relatively recent phenomenon, one of the first green libraries was built in 1992, in Seattle, and was designed to use half the energy of a conventional library (McBane Mulford & Himmel, 2010).

The Green Library or Sustainable library is defined as "A library designed to minimize negative impact on the natural environment and maximize indoor environmental quality through careful site selection, use of natural building materials and biodegradable products, conservation of resources (water,

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