

# York University Libraries

Special Issue: UNSDG Progress Report  
2020-2023

libraries | YORK U



DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT & STRATEGY

ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

RESEARCH & OPEN SCHOLARSHIP

TEACHING & LEARNING

## CONTENTS

- 2** Advancing the UN Sustainable Development Global Goals
- 4** Leading the Way to Quality Education
- 10** Enhancing Strategies for Research and Teaching to Promote Healthy Lives and Well-being
- 12** Reducing Inequalities and Improving Accessibility
- 16** Expanding the Historical Record of Marginalized Communities
- 18** Knowledge Creation in a Safe Space
- 22** York University Libraries Collaborate with The Hemispheric University Consortium (HUC) on UNSDGs
- 24** Casita Azul: Advancing Socio-environmental Research, Reciprocal Education and Community Outreach Within Costa Rica
- 26** York University Libraries World Café on UNSDGs



Joy Kirchner, Dean of York University Libraries

## HOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**WE WELCOME YOU** to take a look at how York University Libraries has enthusiastically committed to York's mission to elevate contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As noted in our York University Libraries' strategic plan, this is a year we are laying the foundation for action by integrating UNSDGs in everything we do while putting in place some immediate prioritized actions that will positively impact the future. I'm enormously grateful and proud of all of our staff who have embraced the UNSDGs with such energy and commitment. There is so much we already do that has an enormous impact on our community.

Our alignment with the UNSDGs tells this story magnificently while also stretching us to elevate our thinking to address global challenges in the ways we can uniquely contribute. Our beginning is wonderful. Our future planning, documented in this report, is exhilarating to behold and holds great promise for our future achievements in this space.

Joy Kirchner,  
Dean of York University Libraries

YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

# ADVANCING THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GLOBAL GOALS

**York University Libraries Enthusiastically Embraces York's Mission to Elevate Contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)**

IN JUNE 2020, YORK UNIVERSITY launched its new [University Academic Plan 2020-2025 \(UAP\)](#), which included a university-wide challenge to elevate York's contributions to the [United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

The new UAP serves as a blueprint for action, positioning York University as an agent of positive change in a world facing a convergence of unprecedented trials from climate change, a global pandemic, racism and xenophobia, poverty and inequality. York University's new UAP is a rallying call for students, faculty and staff to bring their expertise from across disciplines to work together to build new tools and develop strategies and solutions to global challenges.



**York University Libraries Strategic Plan 2021-2026 Goal:**

- Identify, prioritize, and collaborate with key partners to develop and engage with York's evolving SDG activities.
- Develop a framework for creating sustainable interdisciplinary partnerships that support SDG goals and initiatives.
- Collaborate with faculty to enhance the visibility and impact of research emerging from SDG initiatives.
- Drawing upon library expertise, identify and develop library-led curriculum integration opportunities that align with SDGs.

## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.**

#### SDG 4: Quality Education

Education liberates the intellect, unlocks the imagination and is fundamental for self-respect. It is the key to prosperity and opens a world of opportunities, making it possible for each of us to contribute to a progressive, healthy society. Goal 4 is about ensuring access for all along all educational levels, and ensuring relevant skills for sustainable development and financial success.

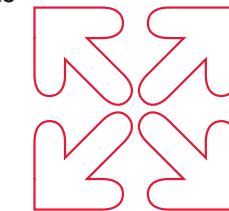
**York University Libraries develops survey that finds 50 percent of York instructor respondents are creating their own open educational resources**

**THE OPEN EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE** initiated by York University Libraries, is a university-wide committee created to encourage broad stakeholder discussions on open education, open educational resources (OER), open educational practices, and open pedagogy.

In 2022, the working groups of the Open Education Steering Committee (OESC), launched a [survey](#) to inform the OESC's development of programs and resources to support faculty with OER implementation.

The broad adoption of OER would support reducing financial barriers for students, while improving the overall academic experience. The survey sought to inform pathways to advance innovative open education supports and teaching

practices, including an inventory of campus activities in this space as well as professional development opportunities. Results from the survey showed that 68 per cent of respondents (from a total of 121 respondents) reported using OER in their classes. A majority also agreed that OER are more accessible and affordable than commercial textbooks. Despite the high adoption numbers among respondents, there was a lack of awareness around best practices for searching for and finding OER. Nearly all respondents indicated they would find OER through Google and YouTube searches, despite the existence of curated OER repositories like eCampus Ontario's Open Library, and OER Commons.



**30 percent of respondents were creating OER aligned with SDGs.**

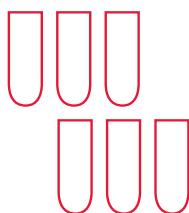
- *OER Survey Report*

# Leading the Way to Quality Education

York University Libraries uniquely partners with faculty in teaching wide-ranging critical information literacy and digital fluency skills to ensure students are successful in their academics and are career ready in an ever changing world. Embedded in curricula, our librarians teach students to critically discover and evaluate information sources, develop research skills and data fluencies with opportunities to think through a range of ways to mobilize, enhance or engage in visual knowledge creation in the digital age. This work extends to the many ways we disseminate curricular materials to the greater global community through our leadership in [Open Education Resource development](#).



Student studying in Frost Library, at Glendon Campus, York University.



## Perceptions of Accessibility and Reliability

Faculty were asked to react to the following two statements on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The results show a gap between perceptions of accessibility vs reliability when it comes to OER.

**OER are a more accessible/flexible alternative to commercial textbooks.**

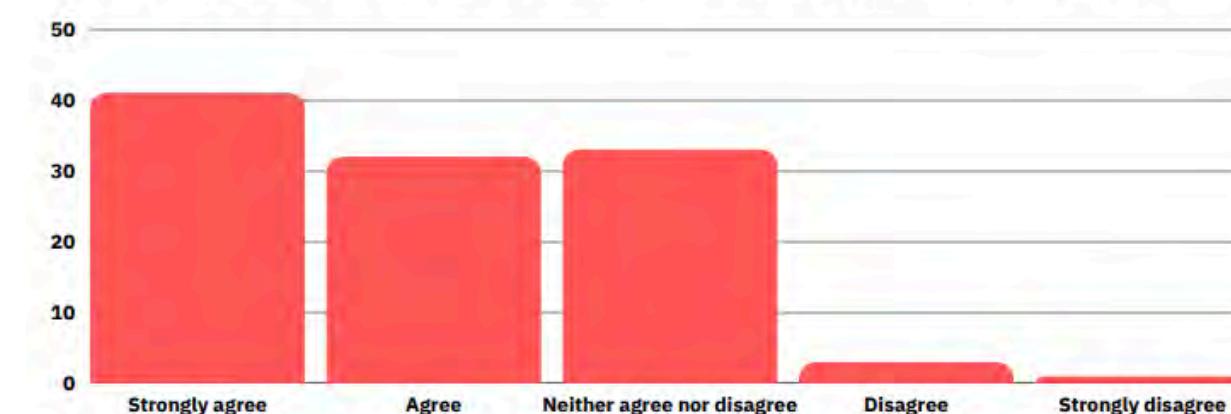


Photo credit: York University Libraries 2022 OER survey.



## Leading Expertise on Open Education and Open Access

IN NOVEMBER 2022, YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES co-led The National Open Educational Resources (OER) Summit on Infrastructure and Policy 2022. The Summit was organized by the [Canadian Association of Research Libraries](#) and through York University's **Dean of Libraries Joy Kirchner's** leadership on the Association's [Open Education Working Group \(CARL OEWG\)](#). The two-day working session launched a multi-phased summit focused on developing advocacy strategies for OER at the federal level. Participants included representatives from key stakeholder groups across the country such as [Universities Canada](#), [Colleges and Institutes Canada](#), [CARL](#), Campus Books Canada, [Canadian Federation of Students](#), [Student Union Etudiante](#), [eCampusOntario](#) and [BCCampus](#). Currently, the [CARL OEWG](#) is facilitating follow-up conversations with summit attendees to support ongoing advocacy actions.



Students working in Steacie Library, York University.

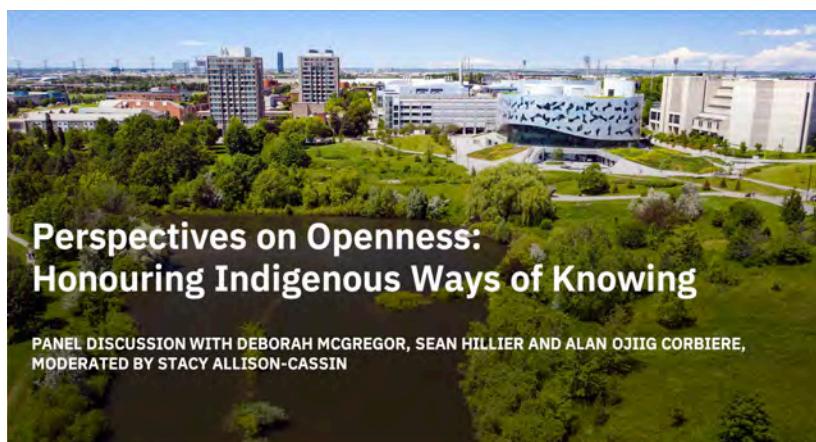
## Advancing Access to Indigenous Data and Research

FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES, the path to reconciliation with Indigenous communities is interconnected with Indigenous research and scholarship and the programs and services offered by the libraries. In 2021, several York University librarians, archivists and library staff explored how libraries should consider the ownership, control, access and possession of Indigenous information and data during a professional development series. York University Librarians and project leads **Norda Bell**, an associate librarian, and **Rosa Orlandini**, a data services librarian, challenged participants to reflect on their responsibilities in creating respectful relationships with Indigenous communities individually and collectively.



York University Libraries created and launched an **Indigenous Action Plan** and formed a working group with representation across all library departments to address gaps that exist in reaching and supporting Indigenous students and scholars.

The plan identifies and seeks to address systemic issues within the library structures that marginalize Indigenous ways of knowing. The plan aligns with the University's Indigenous Framework, supports the York University Libraries Strategic Plan and guides York University Libraries in addressing the needs of the Indigenous community while putting in place reciprocal supports to build our awareness of Indigenous Ways of Knowing.



# York University Libraries Librarians Help Design Curriculum

## LIBRARIANS HELP DESIGN CURRICULUM FOR UNIQUE VIRTUAL FIELD COURSE IN BIOLOGY

**IN AN INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION** in June 2020 when many field courses were cancelled, York University librarians **Rosa Orlandini** and **Ilo Maimets** collaborated with **Professor Dawn Bazely** in the Department of Biology, to deliver a virtual online field course (Biology 3001B) to provide innovative structure and content to third year biology students.

In the six-week course, 26 students developed their own group research projects from one of several lab modules running through the course, including areas such as Watershed Ecology & Urban Ecosystems, Soil Ecology, Seed Ecology, Pollen Ecology & Flowering Phenology, Indoor Biome & Urban Biodiversity, Virtual & Augmented Reality: nature in the Anthropocene, Animal Behaviour & Behavioural Ecology and Team Science, Citizen Science & Science Communication.

The group projects were done virtually, and students received a “science from home” lab kit in the mail. The kit included an origami microscope and hand lenses along with a universal smart phone macro lens. Using these tools, the students conducted lab modules at home, learned how to find and create maps for their project, learned how to find and evaluate research studies and related information using databases and search techniques, and participated in a collaborative project in Urban Ecology citizen science using platforms such as Wikipedia and YorkSpace.



Rosa Orlandini, Data Services Librarian,  
Open Scholarship Department, York  
University Libraries.



Ilo-Katrynn Maimets, Teaching and Learning  
Librarian, Student Learning & Academic  
Success Department, York University  
Libraries.



**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



## Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

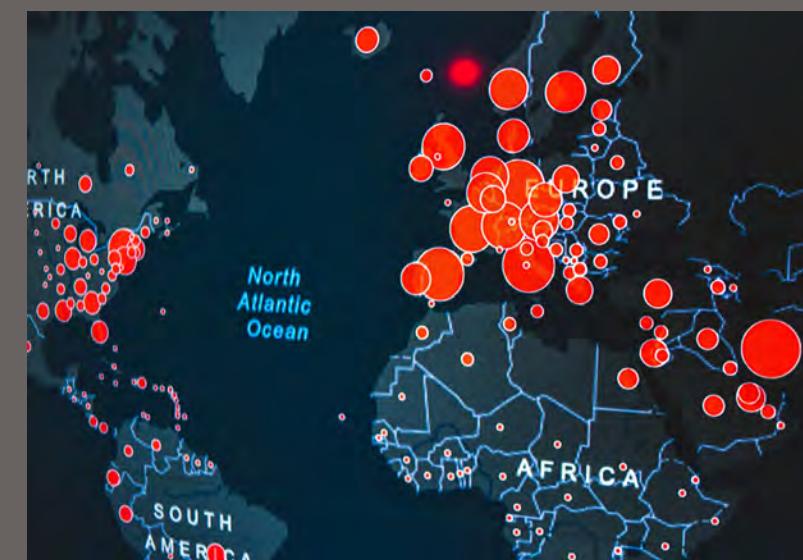
### SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

Over the last 15 years, the number of childhood deaths has been cut in half. This proves that it is possible to win the fight against almost every disease. Still, we are spending an astonishing amount of money and resources on treating illnesses that are surprisingly easy to prevent. Goal 3 promotes healthy lifestyles, preventive measures and modern, efficient healthcare for everyone.

# Enhancing Strategies for Research and Teaching to Promote Healthy Lives and Well-being

### YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES PROVIDE RESEARCH EXPERTISE FOR UN RESEARCH ROADMAP FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

A TEAM OF YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS **Angie An, Adam Taves, Minglu Wang**, provided research consultations and research strategies for **Dr. Steven Hoffman's**, director of Global Strategy Lab, WHO Collaborating Centre on Global Governance of Antimicrobial Resistance, Dahdaleh Distinguished Chair in Global Governance & Legal Epidemiology, and professor of Global Health, Law, and Political Science at York University, international research team in the support of his work on UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery. This [Roadmap](#) identified the top research priorities needed to support an equitable global socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.



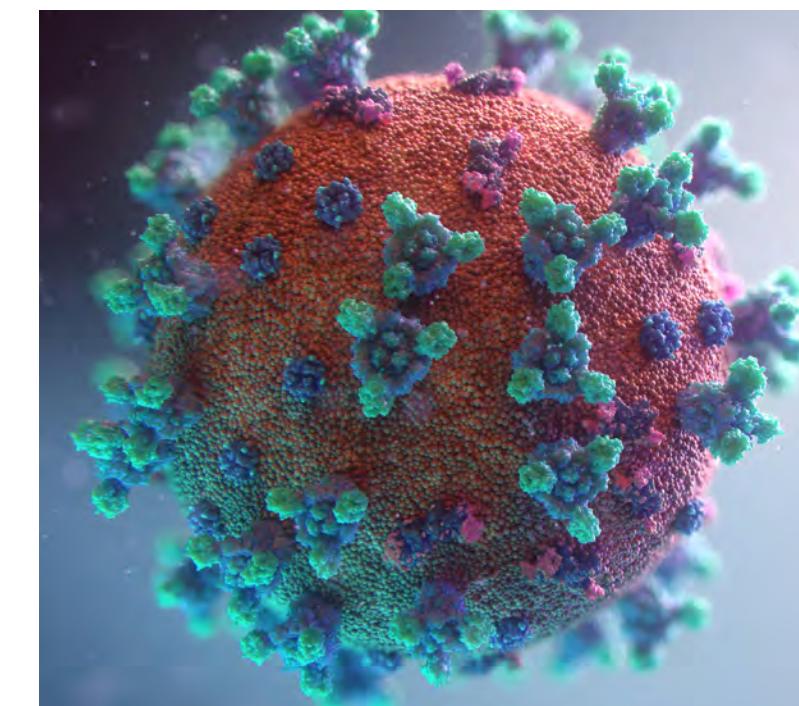
## York University Libraries Creates a New, Globally Accessible COVID-19 Research Guide

EARLY ON DURING THE COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, York University's Dean of Libraries, **Joy Kirchner**, spearheaded the production of an [innovative research guide](#) to support the global community of COVID-19 researchers to expediently locate needed resources to support their work in the midst of the pandemic crisis. Given the lack of published resources for an emergent disease, the Dean saw the imperative of mobilizing librarians to provide an authoritative online guide to relevant research. Co-authored by York University Libraries' librarians, the resource consolidated and drew upon international resources compiled by many other librarians, archivists, scholars and others as well as resources available to York researchers. The resource also highlights research available to York community members that is purchased by York University Libraries and available through databases and e-book platforms.



“ York is committed to disseminating the research performed at the University in ways that make it widely accessible, while protecting the intellectual property rights of its authors. Opening boundaries to access research could not be more relevant today. The urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic demanded that we get this new resource up and running swiftly. ”

- Joy Kirchner, Dean of York University Libraries



**10** REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



## Reduce inequality within and among countries.

### SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Too much of the world's wealth is held by a very small group of people. This often leads to financial and social discrimination. In order for nations to flourish, equality and prosperity must be available to everyone – regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs or economic status. Goal 10 is all about addressing income inequality, social, economic and political inclusion and creating policies that promote equality.



From Left to Right: Alanna Brown, Leena Hussein (fourth-year history students) and Alexandra Wong, Data Visualization and Analytics Librarian, York University Libraries.

# Enhancing the Publishing Experience for Students with the Aim of Reducing Inequalities and Improving Accessibility

**YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS AND ARCHIVISTS** partnered with faculty to provide experiential education opportunities for fourth-year History students on new ways of learning and engaging with sources for inclusion in Wikipedia.

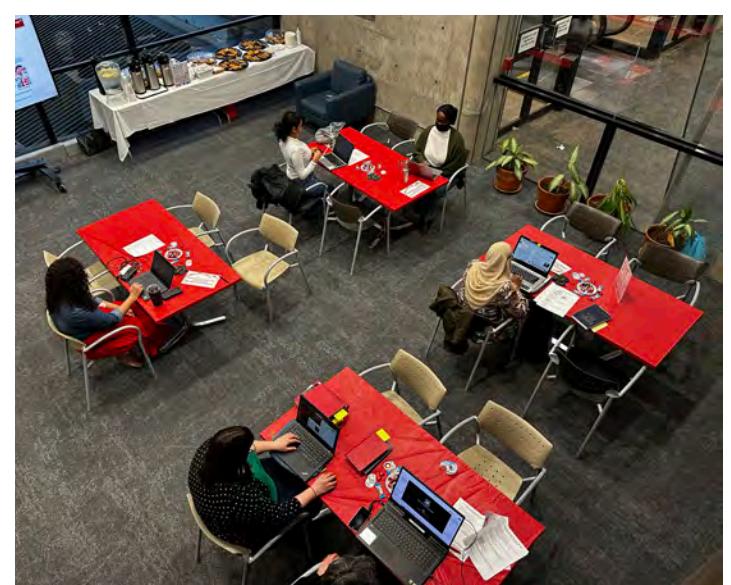
In 2023, a new collaboration between York University Libraries and a fourth-year public history course in the [Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies \(LA&PS\)](#), provided students with a hands-on opportunity to conduct well-sourced research to produce web profiles via Wikimedia platforms in an effort to expand the representation of Black histories available on Wikipedia.

The new placement of two students from [HIST4840](#), taught by Jennifer Bonnell, associate professor in the Department of History at York University, allowed the students to work as research assistants at the libraries as well as during the Black Histories Wikipedia and

Wikidata Edit-a-thon, a collaboration between York University, University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University and the Toronto Public Library.

*This year's addition of the Black Histories Edit-a-thon project has provided a great opportunity for my students to be involved in a real-time, crowd-sourced method of making historical sources from marginalized groups more accessible to researchers and the interested public. The project offered an opportunity for hands-on work to bring Black history to wider audiences and my students have gained transferable skills in working with digital scholarship applications, event planning and facilitation.*

- Jennifer Bonnell, Associate Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS), York University



Atrium of Scott Library, York University.

*Growing up in Canada our education system for Black history stops at the Underground Railroad and there's so much more to Black history than that. It includes stories of Black excellence, Black agency, and Black joy, so I find that joining this placement is very important in the sense that I'm helping to bring more information to Black history that's outside of Black struggle and enslavement.*

- Alanna Brown, fourth-year History student, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS), York University



Scott Library, York University.

*For us at York University Libraries, our librarians and archivists are able to share our deep knowledge of our collections and resources with our students and communities. We also bring our vast experience with working with primary, secondary, and tertiary sources and how to use those sources for citations in Wikipedia and Wikidata to create a better system where the sum of all knowledge is well sourced.*

- Alexandra Wong, Data Visualization and Analytics Librarian, Open Scholarship Department, York University



Student in the Adaptive Lab at York University's Scott Library.

## Making Learning Universally Accessible

FOR DECADES NOW, Library Accessibility Services (LAS) and the Adaptive Lab at York University's Scott Library has continually enhanced its service for students with print disabilities. In 2020-23, Library Accessibility Services and the Adaptive Lab continued to see increasing demand for its services while introducing innovative service excellence solutions to meet the demand. In 2011, the LAS team spearheaded the creation of Papyrus, a database software created in-house by the Library Digital Systems and Initiatives Department at York University Libraries to more efficiently manage and track legally obtained and produced adapted content to support students. This database is used to seamlessly deliver electronic files to students once they are processed or secured from publishers. LAS archives the in-house scans and can make these available to multiple students when necessary. Papyrus allows for efficient file delivery as well as archiving of all secured and in-house processed material.

LAS is set up as a dedicated unit to offer accessible document support and acts as the production house for processing accessible

scans of sources that cannot be obtained via publishers or other electronic text repositories.

The LAS team can procure new hard copies via the Acquisitions department if required and scan items within a short turnaround time which is critical for students enrolled in their multiple courses for their degree programs. Registered users are assigned to transcription assistants who typically work with the student throughout their entire academic experience.



Student in the Adaptive Lab at York University's Scott Library.

The Adaptive Lab also features computer programs such as Kurzweil, Dragon Naturally Speaking and ZoomText. These technologies can read text out loud, create written documents using dictation and zoom or enlarge everything on a computer screen. The various software makes text accessible for people who have print disabilities and otherwise would not be able to access print scholarship.

### York University Libraries globally recognized for its accessibility services for students and faculty with disabilities

The Dean of Libraries, Joy Kirchner was invited to participate in the Joint ARL (Association of Research Libraries) CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) Task Force on Marrakesh Treaty Implementation. York University Libraries quickly became a recognized as a leading partner on the international task group to advance the implementation of the Treaty between the United States and Canada in the first pilot. It became clear through this work that York's Libraries' Accessibility Services are regarded as an international leader in library services for those needing alternate formats of texts and those who require access to the Libraries' adaptive lab to utilize assistive spaces and technologies to conduct research, course work or to study. The task force, representing all major University libraries in Canada and the United States, is working through several pilot collaborations to inform the implementation of global sharing of content to support students

and faculty who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or have a print disability. In 2023, York University Libraries led focus groups with York students who make use of the Libraries' Accessibility Services, leading the Task Group to consider an advocacy plan to advance global sharing of content to support those with print disabilities.

**By the Numbers:** As of 2023, there are 698 active users at York (receiving alternate formats of texts and/or requiring access to the adaptive lab in Scott). In 2023, 400 users requested alternate formats for their course readings and research. Since the launch of Papyrus over a decade ago, close to 3000 students or faculty have been referred to the service and to date, the database contains 20,769 items.



**689**  
active users



**400**  
users  
requesting alternate formats



**20,769**  
items  
in database

**"**This one-on-one model offers referred students more personalized assistance if required, as well as continuity with the support. The unit liaises closely with counsellors from Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and staff from the Assistive Technology Lab, in the Dahdaleh building and offering specific training on assistive software and hardware.

- Claudio Iacoe, Transcription Coordinator, Library Accessibility Services (LAS), York University

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.**

### SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

The world's population is constantly increasing. To accommodate everyone, we need to build modern, sustainable cities. Goal 11 is about using new, intelligent urban planning to create safe, affordable and resilient cities with green and culturally inspiring living conditions.

## Expanding the Historical Record of Marginalized Communities

**YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES' CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS (ASC)** is well known for its community engaged archives. The importance of preserving community heritage and providing avenues for the community to tell its story is the cornerstone of York University Libraries endeavours. Much of this activity is centered on empowering the community with new skills to build accessible repositories of knowledge with our help. Our work through the archives at York University Libraries aligns directly with [UNSDG Target 11.4](#) which aims to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, and lies at the heart of our community collaborations.

To improve the discoverability and expand the historical record of marginalized communities, dedicated attention was placed on processing archival donated collections involving Black and Greek Canadians over the last few years. Completed projects include the fonds of Inez Elliston, a Jamaican-born educator, a leader in community volunteerism, and first coordinator of the Multiculturalism and Race Relations Committee for the Scarborough Board of Education with 9.2 metres of textual records, and George Papadatos, a political activist, community organizer and music promoter who lived in Toronto before returning to Greece in 1974 with 5.4 metres of textual records, photographs, and video and audio tapes.

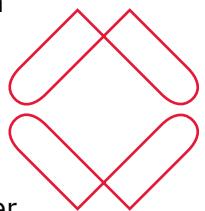


Photo credit: Woman and children dressed in traditional clothing walking in the annual Greek Independence Day parade on Danforth Avenue, ca. 1995-2005. ASC, Greek Community of Toronto fonds, 2005-009/001.

Archives and Special Collections also announced the completion of the finding aid for the fonds of Kenneth Shah, a founding member of Caribana and the Caribbean Cultural Committee who was involved for more than thirty years with the festival celebrating Black emancipation from slavery.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Shah moved to Canada in 1965 to pursue a career in petroleum engineering. He eventually left this profession to focus on carnival arts, costume design and production, taking a leadership role in programming from the first festival held in 1967 until his death. The work to rehouse and describe almost four metres of textual records, 4,000 photographs, and 51 sound and moving image recordings was completed in 2023 by archivist Emma Thomas.



Photo credit: Kenneth Shah in costume for the Caribana parade, 1970. ASC, Kenneth Shah fonds, 2020-002/021 (15).

Partnerships played a key role in ASC's collection development and outreach activities to bridge divides of language and culture so that there was greater diversity of perspectives preserved in Canadian public memory. The Archives continued its collaboration with the Regent Park Film Festival on the Home Made Visible project, enhancing the documentation for over 300 video clips uploaded to the York University Digital Library. The partnership was shortlisted for the Governor General's History Award in November 2022.

Collaboration between the Libraries and the Greek Canadian History Project began in 2012 to support the research of graduate students in York University's Department of History. The Project identified unique documents and significant book collections held by members of Toronto's Greek community and coordinated the donation of this material to York so that it could be preserved, described, and shared with scholars and the public. The Project ensures that the Greek community plays an active role in shaping its cultural heritage. Thanks to a major donation to York in 2021, the project has been renamed the Hellenic Heritage Foundation Greek Canadian Archives with funding to hire a director and archivist to continue building the collection, select material for digitization, and encourage an awareness of the community's cultural heritage.



Photo credit: A large mas costume, 1972. ASC, Kenneth Shah fonds, 2020-002/021 (14).

5 GENDER EQUALITY



## Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

### SDG 5: Gender Equality

Gender bias is undermining our social fabric and devalues all of us. It is not just a human rights issue; it is a tremendous waste of the world's human potential. By denying women equal rights, we deny half the population a chance to live life at its fullest. Goal 5 is about ensuring political, economic and social equality for women, and eradicating prejudice in all forms.

# Knowledge Creation in a Safe Space

IN 2022, YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES launched the new **Media Creation Lab in the Digital Scholarship Centre (DSC)**. The 1,700-square-foot lab provides students, faculty and researchers access to high-end audio and video recording equipment, an audio-visual media creation space, dedicated virtual reality (VR) spaces, a sound-isolated podcasting booth, portable virtual reality headsets and workstations for hands-on digital media production work. It allows users to produce podcasts, virtual reality projects, music recordings and other creative multimedia outputs.

In an effort to promote the Digital Scholarship Centre as a safe, inclusive

and approachable space, York University Libraries' librarians offered the following jointly led sessions by DSC's Media Creation Lab and the Centre for Feminist Studies: (1) "Everything You Wanted to Know About Anti-Racist Feminist Podcasting (But Were Afraid to Ask) and (2) Listening, Resonating, Attuning: Exploring Sound as Method.

Working in consultation with York University Communications & Culture faculty members Rianka Singh and Kelly Bergstrom on best practices for a welcoming environment for all, the Media Creation Lab drafted a [Safer Space policy](#) and prepared targeted communications to reach our diverse student body.

**“The library is often seen as a place of consumption where you take out books, but students have always been creating in libraries. Here at the York University’s Media Creation Lab, we facilitate the discovery and the creation of knowledge using digital media. This is a place where knowledge is moved, consumed, repurposed and created.”**

- Kris Joseph, Librarian, Digital Scholarship Infrastructure Department, York University Libraries



Student in Scott Media Creation Lab's virtual reality room.



Photos: Media Creation Lab, Scott Library.



**“**We wanted the Media Creation Lab to be a place where those who don't normally feel welcome or included in media or technology spaces to feel safe and that they belonged. For this reason our programming is particularly focus on communities that are often excluded as well as first-time users and beginners. The main impetus behind the lab was to break down barriers for students, faculty and staff so that they could create, experiment and explore new technology and media in a safe, judgement free, and accessible space.

- Sarah Coysh, Associate Dean, Digital Engagement and Strategy, York University Libraries

## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



**The Global Goals can only be met if we work together.**

### SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development. Goal 17 is about fostering global partnerships, international investments, and support to ensure innovative technological development, fair trade and market access, especially for developing countries. To build a better world, we need to be supportive, empathetic, inventive, passionate and, above all, cooperative.

## York University Libraries Collaborate With The Hemispheric University Consortium (HUC) on UNSDGs

To advance international conversations and collaboration pertaining to the UNSDGs, the **Dean of Libraries Joy Kirchner** initiated and led an SDG Summit focused on a sprint format for all [The Hemispheric University Consortium \(HUC\)](#) library members to engage in synergistic discussion and future goal setting related to collaborative activities focused on SDGs (September 22, 2022). A kick-off presentation was delivered at the 2022 HUC Directors' Summit (April 22, 2022) to introduce UNSDG collaboration idea by showing how York University Libraries is aligning with SDGs.

As part of the process the Dean introduced a new style of agile project management to complete the tasks (sprints) culminating in the creation of an inventory of SDG activity which HUC libraries will highlight in the next year. In May 2023, the Dean was asked to lead the Director's summit where she successfully facilitated SDG goal prioritization commitment and activity for all member HUC member libraries for the next year.



Scott Library, York University.



Scott Library, York University.

15

LIFE  
ON LAND

## A flourishing life on land is the foundation for our life on this planet.

### SDG 15: Life on Land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. We are all part of the planet's ecosystem and we have caused severe damage to it through deforestation, loss of natural habitats and land degradation. Goal 15 is about promoting a sustainable use of our ecosystems and preserving biodiversity, which is the key to our own survival.

# Casita Azul: Advancing Socio-environmental Research, Reciprocal Education and Community Outreach Within Costa Rica

## CASITA AZUL'S MISSION

- Cultivate a collaborative environment and engaged partnership that meets the needs and desires of the local communities of the Alexander Skutch Biological Corridor (ASBC), Costa Rica and advances York's curricular and research objectives within [Las Nubes Project](#) and [Semester Abroad](#) frameworks*

Situated amid small South-West communities in Costa Rica, Casita Azul opened in 2015 to the local community and in 2016 for York students. As part of the Las Nubes EcoCampus, our library space, Casita Azul, supports and contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Focusing on life on land, SDG 15.1 aims to conserve, restore, and ensure sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems. To do our part, Casita Azul partners with local organizations such as bird sanctuary, Los Cusingos, and water management organization, ASADA, to advance conservation, restoration, recycling, and sustainability education projects within



York University Libraries Team from Left to Right: Dana Craig, Director, Student Learning and Academic Success, Diandra Arias, Library Assistant and Tom Scott, Teaching & Learning Librarian at Casita Azul, York University.

local communities. York University Libraries have organized over 10 campaigns within our ongoing recycling project, in partnership with @refugioeavesloscusingos, where we have thus far recycled approximately 2,000 kg of metal, cardboard, plastic bottles and paper and 6,000 kg of glass!

Our recycling campaigns involved people from the Municipality of Pérez, team supported by Los Cusingos and Asada Santa Elena De Pérez Zeledón.

## By the numbers 2021:



1,515 kg

of metal cans, cardboard, plastic bottles, and paper



7,730 kg

of plastic cups



1,944 kg

of glass



IN 2022, York University Libraries had our second recycling campaign involving participants of the various communities of the Alexander Skutch Biological Corridor. Our recycling campaigns involved people from the Municipality of Pérez, a team supported by [Los Cusingos](#) and [Asada Santa Elena](#).



180.9 kg

of metal cans, cardboard, plastic bottles, and paper



533.7 kg

of glass

Librarian Dana Craig delivering an orientation to a class in hut at the Wright Centre.





## York University Libraries World Café on UNSDGs Empowers Staff to Integrate SDG-Mapping into Workplans

**EMPOWERING OUR EMPLOYEES** in both education, knowledge sharing and integration of the UNSDGs into daily work is part of the ongoing mission at York University Libraries and part of the Strategic Plan. The mappings between Libraries and SDGs may not always be intuitively clear. Thus, on April 6, 2023, York University Libraries launched its first UNSDG World Café to help expose all staff to examples of how other Libraries have mapped to SDGs, with the goal of inspiring departments and their staff to think more creatively about SDGs.

The key goals of this all-staff event was to inspire SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) SDG-related goals in every departmental workplan and to create a York University Libraries Mapping Document. Following the World Café style for brainstorming, small group-rounds were created with staff and each group conducted speed-brainstorming in 15-20 minute sessions with library leaders helping to facilitate and record ideas and dialogue. Each round was prefaced with a question specially

crafted for the specific UNSDG context and desired purpose of the World Café. Questions were used to build upon each other to focus the conversation or guide its direction on the following:

- Understand why SDGs are important (why SDGs?)
- Building understanding of SDGs for all staff, by exposing them to exciting SDG examples
- Inspiring staff to contribute generatively to SDG planning so that they co-create a vision with their directors/managers
- Understanding what they are already doing in their work to expand SDGs
- Tapping into the wisdom and creativity of the collective

Finally, a York University Libraries staff webpage was created to gather information shared and will form the basis of next steps as teams begin to integrate their feedback into their workplans.



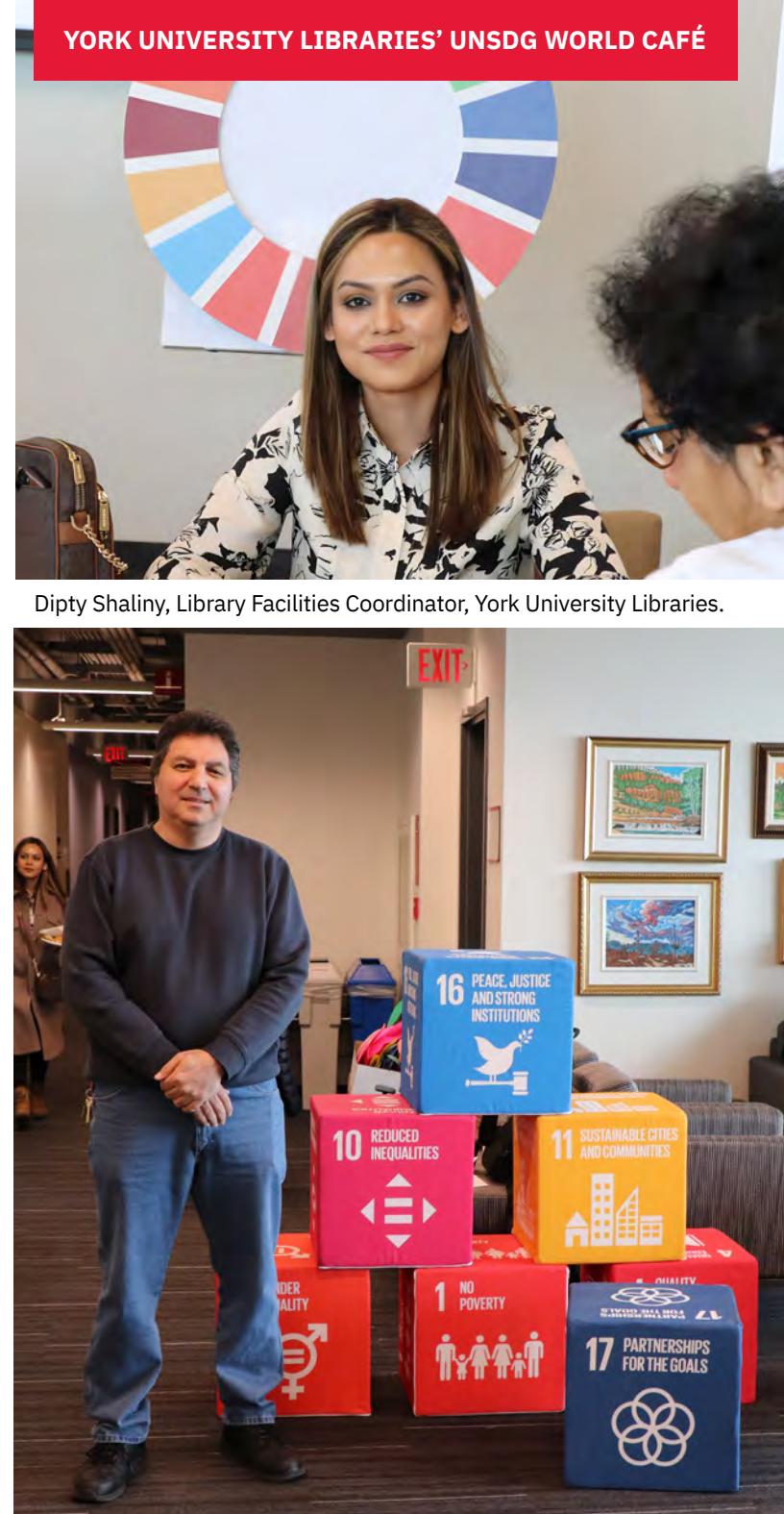
Joy Kirchner, Dean of York University Libraries.



Andrea Kosavic, Associate Dean, Research and Open Scholarship, York University Libraries.

“ We leveraged the World Café model to bring individuals with specialized knowledges from different areas of the Libraries to the table to focus on selected SDGs. This resulted in a generative cross-pollination that transcended departmental boundaries and surfaced innovative ideas to operationalize in the coming academic year. ”

- Andrea Kosavic, Associate Dean, Research and Open Scholarship, York University Libraries



Dipty Shaliny, Library Facilities Coordinator, York University Libraries.



Homayon Allamshahi, Shipping Lead Hand, Library Facilities, York University Libraries.

“ As a longtime proponent of appreciative inquiry models, and tools like the World Café, I was delighted all staff embraced the model to such great effectiveness in order to delve more deeply into the SDGs and advance specific actions to meet our strategic plan SDG goals. ”

- Joy Kirchner, Dean of York University Libraries



The Future  
is  
OPEN

Office of the Dean of Libraries  
**YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**  
Keele Campus, York University  
516 Scott Library  
4700 Keele Street  
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3  
Tel: 416 736 5600  
Email: [libraries@yorku.ca](mailto:libraries@yorku.ca)  
Web: [library.yorku.ca](http://library.yorku.ca)  
Social Media: @yorkulibraries