Public Libraries in Africa

A Report and Annotated Bibliography

compiled by Aissa Issak

International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP)
Preface and acknowledgements

Over the past ten years much has been written in the professional press about the state of and role for public libraries in Africa. As a basis for discussion on a programme of revitalization of public libraries in Africa, the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) was invited to commission a researcher, supported by a small team of country-based resource persons, to undertake a literature search, prepare a bibliography and provide a short synthesis report outlining major findings.

In order to involve as many African colleagues as possible in the process, the opportunity of the London International Book Fair (March 1999) and the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (August 1999) were taken to bring together a number of public and community librarians, and those interested in libraries, to present views and discuss the present context and potential for revitalization. The Synthesis Report is, however, to a large extent based on the literature search and knowledge as presented by the country researchers. It is therefore possible that there may be gaps in country descriptions and there may be more activities taking place within some countries than has hitherto been written about. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of data included, but the publishers cannot accept responsibility for accidental omissions or errors. The publishers would be pleased if any errors in this edition could be brought to their attention.

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About the compiler

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Map of Africa showing the countries included in the report and bibliography
Section I

Public Libraries in Africa:
A Synthesis Report on the Literature Cited in the Bibliography and the Country Reports

by Aissa Issak
Public Libraries in Africa: Synthesis Report

Abstract

The synthesis of literature quoted in the bibliography and the country reports portrays the public library movement in Africa as being very weak, with numerous problems regarding financial constraints, lack of human resources, outdated materials and poor use. The only sector of the African population that uses public libraries is school children. However, each country report illustrated that children do not use the materials held in the library but use libraries primarily as places for study, because they are quieter and more spacious than their homes.

The consensus of opinion seems to be that African librarians need to rethink what a public library is all about, in terms of what is needed, what will be used, and what is sustainable in Africa. Perhaps some new and more viable visions will result. In particular, public libraries in Africa need to start to be more aggressive and introduce services that are attractive to the users. Librarians must begin to know their potential users, and not only assume that they are school children. More dynamism and more involvement of the user community, extended to all users – school children, adults, literates, non-literate and neo-literates – are required for the improvement of public library services.

The introduction of alternative services, like community information centres, is welcomed, but there is a need to balance the services offered in urban and rural areas. The promotion of the services through the media, for example, is required. The public library systems must be known by everybody in society.

Long-term realistic strategic plans are required for public library development. These should be prepared on a country basis and should be founded on professionally carried-out user-needs and user-satisfaction surveys, together with stakeholder research – for example, what the government wants and expects from a public library system (if indeed it wants one at all), and how much it will pay for such system; or what the private sector thinks is the value of the public library service.
1 Introduction

In today’s society, marked by an acceleration in the use of information technology and the proliferation of information, libraries have to reassess their role and redefine tasks in order to ensure that all citizens have access to information. Information organization, its availability and, most importantly, its accessibility seem to be powerful concerns that any library needs to take into account. In developed countries it is becoming clear that a considerable part of a library’s collection is becoming obsolete, owing to the developments that are occurring with networked information resources. In the less developed and developing countries, the same situation of outdated materials is also evident, although for different reasons. Because of the existence of basic problems related to high levels of poverty, the situation of public libraries in Africa is among the lowest priorities in those countries. The publishing industry in Africa is growing, after a profound stagnation, although it is not yet fulfilling needs.

In this report, which is based on a review of literature published between 1994 and 1999 and on the information provided through reports from the countries involved in the project, the situation of public libraries in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe is highlighted (full country reports appear in Appendix 1). A brief analysis of the literature on each country is presented, followed by general information on the provision of services by public libraries and the ways in which public libraries in Africa might be developed. Unfortunately, the country report from Malawi was received after finalization of the synthesis and it was impossible to incorporate information within the text.
2 Brief analysis of country reports

2.1 Botswana

The Botswana National Library Service (BNLS), a government department, was established in 1967, and has two major broad objectives: firstly, to provide library services to all members of the society for education, research, recreation and information; and, secondly, to provide professional advice to different sectors and institutions interested in the development of library services in the country.

There is a high demand for library services, and the government is committed to support library services but finds that it is unable to meet all the demands placed on it. Nevertheless, the reading culture is increasing in line with the improvement in literacy levels. Although library services are also growing, there are some constraints on the improvement of these services. The most significant problems relate to the shortage of qualified staff, insufficient physical space – for example, for the village reading room scheme – inappropriate opening hours and limited facilities using modern technology. A survey on user information needs at community level showed that, overall, there is a relative expansion of library facilities, and that both users and non-users are aware of the facilities that exist to meet their needs in terms of libraries in their towns and villages.

Particular mention is made of the introduction of a specific unit within the library services for people with disabilities, and the necessity of having qualified and skilled staff to work with this clientele. It is argued that the communities have shown their interest in having library services by their initiatives in providing physical facilities, especially within the village reading rooms programme, and that there is a major role for the BNLS to assist these initiatives with its professional and technical expertise. Indeed, the BNLS has to increase its role in providing the materials, furniture, equipment and trained staff to develop the services.

Taking into account the financial limitations, the authorities feel that the way forward for the development of library services in Botswana centres on the building of co-ordination and co-operation with other stakeholders in the country. The demand from the rural communities for more community centres and village reading rooms is an area where increased funding could be utilized.

2.2 Ghana

The public library movement in Ghana began in 1928, as a personal effort of the then Anglican Lord Bishop of Accra. However, it was not until 1970 that the Ghana library Board (GLB) was established by an Act of Parliament, with the functions to establish, equip, manage and maintain public libraries in the country.

The broad objectives of the GLB are to:

- provide materials for educational support, in the areas of both formal or informal education, in order to have a mass of informed citizens in the country;
- to act as centre for the dissemination of information of any kind and by any means, such as books, newspapers, magazines;
- to provide facilities for study and research.

Additional objectives include active participation in community activities, with the provision of information to fill specific needs, and to promote and encourage a reading culture in the country.
The situation of public library services in Ghana is, at present, very poor, owing to the lack of financial and human resources, and the absence of library materials. The low salaries offered in the public sector contribute to the poor quality and quantity of the services offered by public libraries. As in other countries, the majority of public libraries, especially in rural areas, have become places for study used by school pupils. The book-box service and the mobile libraries are the most widespread services for the public in Ghana. These are administrated and co-ordinated at the regional level under the umbrella of the GLB.

There have been several initiatives to try to ameliorate the situation. In 1986, the Ministry of Education set up a community libraries project, but as with the public library sector, the community libraries are deteriorating as a result of financial constraints, lack of qualified human resources and lack of materials. The Ghana Book Trust was established by the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE), and helped to establish libraries, provided books and also trained library assistants, all over the country. A new Act of Parliament, for the establishment of the Ghana National Library Service, which is based on local government system, is due to empower local authorities and create a new environment for the improvement of library services and accelerate their development. Again, without a commitment to financial resources, it is difficult to know how this service could be sustained.

2.3 Kenya

Public and community libraries in Kenya are experiencing serious problems, particularly in terms of their infrastructural capacities and financing. One of the main tasks to be carried out in the near future will be the physical renovation of public library buildings. Because of financial constraints, purchase of stock for the public library sector in Kenya has declined, and current acquisitions do not reflect even the breadth of local published materials, which are available. However, despite the existence of these constraints, the number of library users has increased in the last few years, and the pressure for study facilities will lead to continued growth in demand.

All public libraries in Kenya report financial difficulties, and no solutions as to how these might be overcome were offered. Suggestions advanced for the improvement of services to the public include collaboration with local publishers, based on the fact that if readers can access locally produced information they will use the libraries. Also, the creation of legal mechanisms to operate within the library sector, such as a national book policy and legal deposit, would help to ensure the availability of local information in libraries. It was felt that the management of the public library sector needs to be reviewed, and that greater focus on users, through user-needs and user-education surveys, should be developed.

Two programmes are cited as examples of services being provided by the public library sector that bear some possibilities for replication - the camel mobile library and the book-box scheme. The indications are that both services are being heavily used and have contributed to increasing the success of students in their examinations. Additionally, the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) has introduced two new activities, the AIDS-awareness and the Braille unit. A programme targeting rural women and a service which delivers books to readers on a fee basis are reported; these seem to show some success. Nevertheless, none of the programmes has, as yet, been evaluated.

2.4 Nigeria

Public library services in Nigeria have declined dramatically over the past ten years, reflecting both the political and economic situation of the country. The financial crisis has had a
particularly strong impact and has affected the structure and maintenance of buildings, the size and content of the collections and the overall provision of services. The main library activity now is to serve as reading and study rooms for students who, in the majority of cases, use their own materials and do not consult the library collection.

The financial difficulties are not the only problem. The country report highlights the need for a radical change in the concept of public libraries, with adaptation to the real needs and circumstances within the country. They must serve all sectors of the population – urban and rural dwellers, literate and non-literate, children, adults – and services have to be rooted in the Nigerian oral culture, playing the role of disseminating and preserving this culture.

The merger of public and school libraries in Nigeria is suggested. Appropriate staff, and training facilities for the staff, are also recommended. It is felt that the starting point for revitalization would be a comprehensive mapping of public libraries in Nigeria, which would incorporate a clear definition of strategies and options, particularly in terms of funding and sustainable acquisitions. Additionally, at present there is no appropriate structure for the implementation of community libraries and this needs to be rectified. More emphasis on the training of a new style of community information workers and librarians is seen as a priority for Nigerian public library services and its complementary alternatives.

2.5 South Africa

The public library system in South Africa can be considered to be the most sophisticated on the continent. It is important to note that the system has developed since the early 1820s when the first tax-supported public library was established in Cape Town. Certain other public and national libraries developed in the 1850s in the major cities but most public library development took place during the period from the 1930s to the early 1990s.

Public libraries in various parts of South Africa are now facing an alarming deterioration. It is reported that presently 8 million out of 12 million learners do not have access to library facilities, and because of the reorganization of the provinces, school libraries are closing down and public library services have been badly affected. The main factors affecting the system are the new political situation, the reduced availability of funding, and the use of new technology. Aware of the alarming situation in the public library sector, an investigation through a survey was undertaken in 1998, covering the nine provincial library services and the ten independent public libraries of the country. This revealed that most significant problems the sector is facing concern the lack of funds, the low level of awareness of the importance of the sector, particularly by the politicians, low staff morale and motivation, lack of co-operation with other sectors and the waste of the scarce resources available.

In spite of the problems mentioned above, the public library sector in South Africa is growing. For further improvements, lobbying, research and publicity of the services offered on an ongoing basis at national and local levels are recommended. The suggestions put forward to increase the effectiveness of the sector highlight the need to raise awareness among decision-makers of the crucial role that public libraries can play in the promotion and dissemination of information in areas such as culture, science and technology, indigenous languages and knowledge. Firstly, it is imperative to alert decision-makers to the nature of the current deterioration of the public library system. Consultation and co-operation between national and provincial authorities and among the various ministries that have a stake in the library sector are essential. Existing and planned infrastructure must be better utilized. The establishment of a national council for libraries, and information services and the building/establishment of multi-purpose community centres, are among the suggestions for the development of the public library sector in the country. Additionally, measures such as the allocation of funds – for example, from the lottery – the reduction of telecommunication
rates, the reduction of postal tariffs for document delivery and the zero-rating of educational and academic books for purpose of VAT, should also be considered.

2.6 Tanzania

The public library system in Tanzania is managed by the Tanzania Library Service Board (TLSB), which is a government agency established in 1975 by an Act of Parliament. The Board operates under the Ministry of Education and Culture, and has as its main objectives to establish, equip and manage public libraries throughout the country. The form of development chosen by the TLSB was the establishment of regional libraries, then district libraries and, finally, village libraries. As with any other public library system, the provision of information resources to support education, culture and entertainment are among the activities developed by the public library system in Tanzania. The services offered include lending facilities, reference services, children’s libraries, and textbook collections. This range is present only in Dar es Salaam and in a few larger centres around the country. The mobile library services, which started in 1970, came to an end as a result of financial problems.

The main financial support for the public library system in Tanzania came from the government, and until the 1980s the system witnessed a development comparable to that in other sectors. However, in the last ten years this support has only been enough to pay staff salaries, and there has been hardly any financial support directed to the acquisition of materials. It was hoped that with the creation in 1997 of local library boards, which consist of members of the local communities, this situation would change. Local boards are willing to respond to the needs in terms of library development in their respective areas. Membership enrolment fees were introduced to raise funds to improve the services and to fill the gap created by the reduction of support from the government. However, the immediate effect was that the number of users declined rapidly. Recently there have been signs of change; users are beginning to understand the necessity of charging fees.

The major problems that public libraries in Tanzania are facing are similar to those found in other parts of Africa – the lack of up-to-date and relevant materials, financial constraints, absence of adequate buildings and the lack of motivation among library professionals, who abandon libraries in search of better job opportunities. This era is dominated by information processing through computerized services; however, at present this is beyond the reach of Tanzanian library services.

Although the problems affecting the development of library services in Tanzania dominate the country report, mention is also made of efforts to increase accessibility to library and information services. The introduction of membership fees is now seen to give users a greater sense of responsibility for the library materials and services, which in turn can give some guarantee to their improvement and better preservation of the materials. However, this is also dividing the user base, as fees remain beyond the reach of the majority.

2.7 Uganda

The public library sector in Uganda began in 1940, with the major aim of providing information to an elite minority. The role of fighting illiteracy was introduced at a later stage. The Public Library Board (PLB), which came into existence in 1964, currently holds the responsibility for establishing, managing and equipping the public libraries in the country.

Three main factors are reported to be thwarting the development of good public library services in Uganda – the absence of financial and moral support from the government, the lack of human resources capable of dealing with the library issues, and the political climate
in the country. The improvements in public library facilities in Uganda include the introduction of services in rural areas, the Multi-purpose Community Telecentres project supported by UNESCO, ITU and IDRC, and the Acacia Initiative. However, although all these programmes have some level of success, their impact has not yet reached the expected level. The management of public libraries has changed since the introduction of the 1995 Constitution in the country, which decentralized the control of libraries to urban and district authorities, where the PLB has now only a supervisory role.

The recommendations for the development of the public library sector in Uganda include the recognition by the government of information as a key player in socio-economic development, the extension of decentralization to all districts, and the introduction of legal procedures, such as the Legal Deposit Centre, to guarantee the availability of the information. Recommendations also include information resource-sharing networks, through the establishment of a central reference library functioning at the headquarters of the PLB, the compilation of the national bibliography, the identification of funds to revitalize services such as mobile libraries, book-box libraries, and the diversification of services, such as the inclusion of the new forms of technology in the libraries. It is suggested that the PLB should encourage professional co-operation among librarians and should extend library services to institutions like prisons, hospitals, refugee campus and military camps. An independent proposal to create a professional association for librarians in Uganda has been received.

2.8 Zambia

The library movement in Zambia started in colonial days with a grant in 1962 from the Ford Foundation that was intended to establish rural library services under the Zambia Library Service. Today, the services provided remain underutilized. The country report highlights that the concept of community information is poorly applied, and that the situation of public libraries in Zambia has been deteriorating in line with the decline of the economy of the country. The Zambia Library Service is in the process of trying to introduce some community information services. However, progress is reported to be very slow, owing to lack of staff, resources and adequate training for the community information workers.

In fact, even among information professionals, there appears to be very little knowledge of what information initiatives do exist. The general public is even less aware. A few information service initiatives are being established by NGOs, but again there is little knowledge of these.

In terms of improvements in the information-provision sector in Zambia, training, or re-training, of librarians was identified as being one of the top priorities, the fields of management, new information techniques and promotional activities were singled out. The rehabilitation of the library buildings, the introduction of computerized services and also the allocation of library transport were also seen to been necessary for the re-establishment of library services. Library stock has to be renewed, with priority being given to the acquisition of material of local importance, such as tropical agriculture and African history and culture.

2.9 Zimbabwe

Public libraries in Zimbabwe have been in existence since the time when the first European settlers arrived in the country in the 1890s. The Bulawayo Public Library, for example, was set up in 1896, and it is considered to be the oldest public library in the country. Throughout their history there have been changes relating to locations and space, staffing, book acquisition and funding. Some initiatives to build public libraries in farming communities were developed, and some of them are still in existence. Until Independence, the library movement was growing at the same level as the development of residential communities as
a result of the established policy of building a public service wherever a neighbourhood was set up. Profits from beer sales were used for the construction of these public services. This policy, however, changed after the country’s independence. The taxation of beer companies by the government has increased but the financial support from the government to urban councils has decreased. On the whole, the macroeconomic situation of the country has affected the development of library services for the public and strategies adopted by the government, like the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, have resulted in a reduction in the support to libraries.

Presently, library services in Zimbabwe are run and managed by the National Library and Documentation Service (NLDS), which was established in 1985 by an Act of Parliament. The principal objectives of the NLDS are to promote and disseminate publications of educational, scientific, and recreational value; to establish and maintain a high standard of library services; to train librarians and maintain a high standard of professional practice in the various libraries; and to operate services such as inter-library loans and document delivery for all needs.

Although facing many different sorts of problems, libraries for the public are still in existence. The National Free Library of Zimbabwe, which operates a national lending library and a national centre for inter-library loan; the Bulawayo Public Library, the oldest public library in the country, the Highfield Central Library in Harare and the Mzilikazi Library in Bulawayo, are the most prominent libraries in the country. They are also the ones that are making the greatest effort to overcome the difficulties that they are facing. Reduced financial support, staff shortages due to cost-saving measures adopted by the government, high levels of inflation in the country’s economy, and various problems in the book sector are cited as being the main causes for concern. As is reported, the Bulawayo Public Library can be classified as a good model for other public libraries in Zimbabwe, considering its fight to survive under very difficult circumstances.

Bearing in mind that the majority of the people in Africa live in rural areas, and have specific information needs, some alternative initiatives for public library services in Zimbabwe have been established. With particular importance and with some positive impact in rural communities, the Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme (RLRDP) is worth a special mention. The programme started in 1990, and has defined as its main objective to help in the establishment of information resource centres in rural communities and to provide relevant reading/information materials identified by communities themselves.

The libraries which belong to the Programme are based in primary schools, with a few also in some secondary schools, but they are open for use by different members of the community, not only school children. The methods used within the RLRDP to disseminate information include drama, poetry, singing and dancing. Gender and development are two of priority areas. To date, 200 member libraries and over 200 associate member libraries throughout Zimbabwe receive support from the RLRDP. Some evidence of organization within the communities has to be present before help is sought from the RLRDP. The ownership of the library by the community is reported as one of the strongest factors that guarantee the sustainability of rural libraries in Zimbabwe. The establishment of the RLRDP can be seen as an initiative that has revolutionized the rural library movement in Zimbabwe, although it has to be noted that, at this time, the RLRDP is heavily dependent on external donor funding.

Other initiatives are beginning to start concerning the provision of information to rural communities, inspired by the work carried out by the RLRDP. With support from the Netherlands government, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education is trying to set up information resource centres at different points of the country, both for urban and rural areas, at the local, district and provincial levels. The Zimbabwe Book Development Council (ZBDC) has also attracted external funding to support the development of urban and rural library services.
In general, the provision of library services in Zimbabwe is hampered by the lack of human, material and financial resources. Based on the RLRDP experience, and on the number of applications for support from the RLRDP, it is suggested that there is the need to define strategies within grassroots organizations in order to work better with the communities in the area of information dissemination. Careful studies on financing and priorities for the introduction of new services are recommended.
3 Analysis of public libraries in Africa from the literature review

3.1 General considerations

3.1.1 Taking into account all the available literature collected for the purpose of this report, the main findings point to the fact that public library models were imported into Africa, without any consideration of the real situation of the continent and the information needs of the African people. Public libraries in Africa have therefore failed to fulfil their role within society because they were built for a small percentage of users, the ones with access to formal education systems. Additionally, the provision of library services now are not taking the political, social and economic realities of the African countries into consideration. The inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the provision of services to the public, and a more realistic approach towards the kind of users existing in Africa, is required before a public library sector can be effective in many African countries.

3.1.2 The situation of public libraries in Africa is deteriorating, because of factors such as the economic crisis, the lack of a definition of the role of the libraries, an excess of centralization in the management of libraries, and a lack of human resources able to run the libraries professionally. Additionally, co-ordination and co-operation within the library services are absent in many countries.

3.1.3 Considering that the government should be the principal supporter of the public library sector in Africa, there is declining support or even its total absence, which makes development of the sector difficult or impossible. In the majority of the cases, the government guarantees only the payment of salaries and does not finance any activity within the sector. Lack of recognition of the role and importance of libraries by government authorities is also affecting the development of the services.

3.1.4 A weak publishing industry, the inadequacy of bibliographic systems and the irrelevance of the materials presently held in public libraries in Africa are also factors that influence their poor performance. A reading culture is not yet established in Africa, because of the high prices of the materials, the poor existence of libraries outside the major urban centres and the irrelevance of the materials available in the libraries, acquired mainly through donations from abroad.

3.1.5 Public libraries in Africa have not yet radically changed the practices implemented by the colonial dwellers. In order to meet the real needs, it is important to find new approaches to librarianship in Africa. A combination of school and public libraries in Africa seems to be an appropriate way for better use of the scarce resources available. This is based on the fact that the majority of public library users in Africa are students. However, a clear definition of the services for each target group is also necessary, in order not to restrict the use of the libraries.

3.1.6 The picture to date points to fragmentary and unco-ordinated development of public libraries in Africa as a result of the absence of defined policies, specifically for the public library sector. The definition of specific policies for public libraries is crucial if any development is to be achieved. It is necessary to clearly define the various services in public libraries in Africa, targeting specific groups of users, such as children, young people, adults, literates, semi-literate, non-literate and others. The existence of public libraries in Africa today is more in favour of urban people, and there is a need to find a balance between urban and rural areas. A redesign of public library services in Africa is urgent, if these institutions are willing to contribute to the development of society.
3.1.7  Raising the professional commitment of librarians is also an important factor for success. Few African countries have professional associations. There is little consistency in professional standards and processes. For example, accessing the information available via the catalogues of public libraries, there are inconsistencies, and consequently it is not easy to prepare union lists of holdings. More active participation of the librarians in the process of disseminating information and showing the importance of libraries is required across Africa. Definition of missions and objectives, and strategic planning are not current practices in the public library sector.

3.1.8  In the era of information dissemination and with the developments in information technology, there is a necessity to examine the potential that the new technology might play in the improvement of services provided by libraries.

3.1.9  Although they face numerous problems, it is important to recognize the role that public libraries in various parts of Africa play in the provision of information to support the formal and non-formal process of education. The village reading rooms in Botswana, the camel mobile libraries in Kenya, and the RLRDP in Zimbabwe are the services that exist in actuality, and are reported as successful practices aiming to fulfil the information gap, especially in rural areas. Evaluation of these initiatives is required to see if there is scope for expansion or replication.

3.1.10 The question of sustainability was raised. At present, almost all ‘successful’ initiatives rely upon external donor support. Measures must be taken to examine how these services could be run on a cost-sharing basis and eventually become self-supporting in the community.

3.2  Public libraries in developing countries in general

The literature indicates that the situation of poor public library services is not exclusive to African countries. Other parts of the world are facing similar problems, but efforts are being made to improve the services offered to the public and the extent to which the services reach areas outside the major urban centres.

3.2.1  On learning from other examples, Ortiz,\(^1\) on the one hand, and Evans,\(^2\) on the other, present a survival example of a network of rural libraries in Cajamarca, Peru, a place marked with hunger, poverty, premature deaths and high levels of illiteracy. The network of rural libraries of Cajamarca is a unique example where there are no library buildings, classification systems or defined opening hours, but where books are used to acquire and transmit knowledge. The librarians are chosen from the community, on the basis of confidence and esteem, they work on a voluntary basis, and the ‘library’ is the house of the person chosen.

As Evans recalls, the network of rural libraries in Cajamarca changed slightly in terms of their philosophy considering that the services are carried out on a voluntary basis and that the librarians are practising farmers. Additionally, there is a policy whereby library provision has to recapture past traditions and indigenous knowledge in order to build the future. The capacity to read and write should be in equal proportion to the capacity to speak. Finally, much importance is given to the fact that literacy acquisition and the use of library services should be an enjoyable and shared activity.

Evans goes on to describe the experience and enormous success of the network of rural libraries in Cajamarca and argues that it can be used as model for the development of rural libraries in Africa.

3.2.2 Arguing that to obtain adequate library services in the developing world it is necessary to overcome many obstacles, Riggs considers the situation of insufficient book collections, the absence of a qualified staff, and the inadequate funding capacity. He states that the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' in access to information is widening all over the world and considers that the efforts to reduce that gap have not yet seriously begun to eliminate the problem of information poverty. There is still a lot of work to be done in order to make libraries in developing countries as an integral part of the information revolution. Some of that work, as presented by Riggs, can be summarized as the introduction of local support, finding the resources for the necessary information technology infrastructure, and the formulation of information policies that are accepted, recognized and adhered by all participants.

3.2.3 Considering the right to information, Yilmaz argues that public libraries, as information and cultural centres, have important responsibilities in safeguarding an important human right to information. However, the author considers that the right to information can be fully achieved only if the country has a true democratic system of government. Commenting on the economic, social, health and other conditions in developing and least developed countries, Yilmaz notes that, so far, the most important right in those countries seems to be the right to live, and that this relegates the right to information to second place.

3.2.4 Considering that library development has been slow in developing countries, Knuth defends the view that a shift in the perception of library services, whereby they become important to national development and significant contributors to the educational process, can give libraries in developing countries a new role. This would require the transformation of library missions and delivery methods. For the author, who argues that public and school libraries can be combined, this will result in necessary integration in a climate of scarcity, as well serve a broader population, supporting formal education and development programmes. The advantages of having these combined libraries, as Knuth views them, are that they will offer a dynamic solution, with multiple functions to meet the needs of every member of the community, from children to adults, including the poor and the non-literate.

Commenting on the scarcity of funds in developing countries, Knuth considers that only those institutions that contribute to national development programmes will have access to funds. Therefore, libraries must evolve into activities that contribute to development, such as by meeting local information needs, and especially the need for a literate environment. For Knuth, libraries are necessary in developing countries to create and support literate societies. The combination of different types of libraries into one is not something new, as Knuth says. In fact, the model was introduced in countries like Australia and Sweden.

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3.3 **Measuring the impact of public library services**

3.3.1 Usherwood and Linley, arguing that the full impact of public library services cannot be measured only by statistics related to aspects such as books issues, present a methodology for evaluating the outcomes of public library services in the UK but which can be valid for other countries. These authors present the results of two case studies carried out in the UK, which aimed to evaluate the social impact of public libraries, using the ‘social process audit’ as the research technique.

For the authors, the case studies, and the research techniques used, allowed them to present what they consider some progress towards the construction of a framework that can be used by practising librarians to understand the relationships between the objectives of public library authorities and the actual outcomes of the services provided by those libraries.

In presenting the results of the research carried out, Usherwood and Linley stress the point that it is possible to evaluate the services of public libraries, or other public and voluntary organizations, by applying the ‘social audit’ approach. As the authors argue, this is a practical tool that can enable libraries to assess their impact and the reasons for their success or failure. This technique can provide a useful guide to improve, redesign and develop the services and to improve the library’s performance.

3.3.2 As Kebede argues, the simple understanding that libraries are vital for any society is no longer valid. Reasons such as economic constraints have forced library services to justify their existence, to justify the relevance and the meaningfulness of the activities developed, the cost-effectiveness of those activities and their efficiency in executing the different tasks and to identify what is needed to realize the goals defined. As the author continues, performance evaluation in library and information services is a necessity and can act as a stimulus to collecting data to measure the services and to allow management to focus on the important areas. Considering the low esteem of library and information services in developing countries, their bottom position in any list of priorities, Kebede considers that engaging in an evaluation process of the library and information services in developing countries is crucial if services are to continue in existence, let alone develop. Arguing that libraries in developing countries have failed to show what good they can do for society and have also failed to meet the expectations of their patrons, Kebede argues that the introduction of performance measurements can contribute positively to changing this marginalized image. The two main purposes when carrying out performance evaluation processes are diagnosis and justification for the existence of the services. The reasons for the absence of performance evaluation practices in developing countries may be related to the low awareness of the importance of such practices by library and information service managers and practitioners, the lack of financial capacity to finance these activities, the shortage of the requisite staff to undertake the evaluation process, and, most importantly, the lack of evaluation tools and methodologies to apply to the specific situation of developing countries. Kebede emphasizes that the library and information sector in developing countries has to develop its own methodologies to conduct performance evaluation practices that are appropriate to the context of those countries, and introduce the process in a continuous and consistent manner.

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The question of having performance indicators in accordance with the reality of each country is very well illustrated by Karlsen when explaining the difficulties that public libraries in Norway had in the introduction of performance measurement indicators that were written with a different reality in mind. As Karlsen stresses, in the process of applying performance indicators it is crucial to give attention to factors such as language, and the culture and tradition of each country. However, this does not invalidate the fact that it is necessary to have some form of measurement of the performance of African public libraries in general. Karlsen comments, rightly, that performance measurements are not an end on themselves, but they have the potential to direct the planning activities of a library and the definition of more clear lines for the improvement of such activities. For the author, the definition of goals for the library system is a crucial step before the application of the performance indicators. This definition of goals is very useful for the measurement of the results achieved within a particular library. It is also interesting to note that performance and impact of rural information provision in developing countries has been the subject of interest by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and UNESCO. Qualitative and quantitative standards have been developed together with technical guidelines and performance measures for all types of rural library and information services.

3.4 The role of public libraries

In terms of the impact that public libraries are able to have in the community, Usherwood and Linley conclude that libraries can develop social cohesion and help to build individual confidence in playing a social role. Additionally, they refer to the central educational role that public libraries have to play in terms of literacy and reading skills, and the fact that libraries can also have an economic impact. As the authors comment, public libraries are seen as an important source of information for training awareness and career progression.

For Pienaar, public libraries and librarians, in redefining their role and creating new services, can have a dynamic future in serving disadvantaged communities, especially in developing countries, where these communities do not have access to ready sources of information because of their high levels of illiteracy. The author sees public libraries playing an important part in helping all disadvantaged communities to raise the quality of their lives. He argues that public libraries need to move from the traditional library-oriented approach, which at present serves only a formally educated community of users, to a user-oriented approach. The libraries’ priorities need to be based on the identification of the information needs of the users, especially those coming from disadvantaged communities. This will require a revision of priorities and a new vision.

Basing their arguments on British society, Kinnell and Sturges refer to the fact that the traditional places where people used to meet, talk and exchange ideas, like the corner shop, the pub or the community hall, are becoming scarce. The public library is one of the few places in Britain to have so far resisted the changes and is still the meeting place for a large number of citizens. As they argue, in British society the public library remains a neutral and

10 B. Usherwood and R. Linley, ‘New libraries – new measures: A social audit of public libraries.’
independent place, owned by the community, where people from any background can use the available materials and services, and access information. Very importantly, they also note the access to the collective memory of the community where people can learn about its roots and life. The role of the public library as information provider and local archive, meeting point for leisure, learning and entertainment, where people can socialize in a safe environment, gives the public library uniqueness among various institutions. As the authors say, no other institution or organization gives to the people this opportunity within towns, villages and neighbourhoods across the country. According to Kinnell and Sturges, public libraries have a tremendous capability to adapt to the changes in society, and this can be considered one of the greatest strengths of these institutions. However, as public libraries are places that can be used by everybody, from school children to the elderly, and for various purposes, there is still an imprecise definition of their role. As the authors question, whether public libraries should be a medium for education and instruction, an information source, in addition to being a place for leisure, remains under discussion.

The creation of community information centres as an alternative mode of provision of information services to the public is one of the main concerns in several African countries, especially in rural areas. However, it is worth noting that this is not a concern exclusive to Africa. In fact, Usherwood considers that there is a growing interest in community information because society is becoming more complex. Although this statement was made within the British society, the same basic reason - that people are having to cope with the everyday business of living and the extent of changing processes at national levels – can be found in other societies. Usherwood warns that access to information in itself is often not enough to solve the problems facing the individual or the community. As the author continues, this access needs to be linked with action and may require the involvement of various groups within the community and different types of organization. In order to achieve the best results and have any kind of impact in society, community information services need to be promoted so that the members of the society, including politicians, users and the potential users, can develop a positive attitude towards the concept and the existence of these services. Usherwood emphasizes that staff attitudes have to change in view of the services provided.

With regard to the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, Hassner considers it a document of ideas, which can be used in various ways. Its non-prescriptive nature means that the ideas can be turned into practical action by adaptation to the circumstances in hand. The author presents some examples, with special emphasis on the Ljusdal Municipal Library in Sweden, which was chosen to become a model library not only for Sweden, but also for the rest of the world, following the Manifesto’s guidelines. Hassner goes on to present some comments about model libraries in different countries, including Estonia, Portugal, Chile, Spain and Zimbabwe, which are integrated into the UNESCO Model Library Network (UNET). For Hassner, UNET is proof that it is possible to convert the spirit of the Manifesto into practical action, suggesting that what is important now is to increase the number of countries that are connected through the network. The author considers that one of the conditions for success is to make sure that more and more people – including librarians, decision-makers, politicians and others – understand the context of the Manifesto and realize that it can have an important impact on the provision of services of quality in libraries. Some of the results of the creation of UNET have been the increased awareness of the importance of public libraries by civil servants, politicians and the general public and the stimulus provided by the establishment of contacts with other countries.


Within the same type of approach, Thomas refers to the fact that the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto has been serving as an ideological document which contributes to the forming of a consensus of opinion in terms of goals and tasks for any public library in any country. The Manifesto could have the potential to serve as a source of inspiration and standard for the process of developing libraries, although each country has first to decide what it wishes to attain from public libraries, and only after this has been decided should external documents be consulted.

3.5 The contribution public libraries can make to the development of society

In an era where vast amounts of information are available and where technological tools are accessible to better disseminate that information, Dybkjaer considers that it is crucial to ask who has access to the information produced, who decides to use it and for what purposes. According to the author, a cadre of well-educated citizens in a country is a prerequisite for all forms of progress, for the society, for the individual and for the preservation of democracy. As Dybkjaer points out, although the technological revolution is leading to the questioning of the existence of libraries, these institutions will still need to be provided as long as they realize and incorporate the revolution. In fact, their role can expand and become greater in visibility and importance.

As Vestheim considers it, public libraries are expected to provide information and services to anybody on any subject, free of charge to the general public and at minimum cost to society. However, in the prevailing environment, public libraries are facing many different changes. They are exposed to severe economic restrictions and, therefore, they are expected to rationalize, but at the same time adapt themselves to the new environment that is surrounding their existence. Although the author’s arguments are based on Western industrialized countries, the same recommendations are applicable to other countries and with even greater emphasis in the case of African countries, if one considers the economic situation of those countries.

3.6 Information-sharing and the promotion of public library services

Considering the experiences of community involvement as reported in the bibliography, it is possible to say that, in some African countries, the community that is supposed to benefit from library services does so. Inspired by Lönnerblad, who considers contracting out as a form of management for some library activities, it is possible to suggest that authorities outside the library could carry out some of the tasks within public libraries in Africa. Activities that do not require specific knowledge and expertise - such as cleaning, book shelving, and even the provision of premises - can be undertaken by members of the community. Considering the interest in good library services manifested by some communities in Africa, one can say that some form of arrangement to provide better services is possible to achieve.

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Action to promote library services is also required urgently, otherwise, the poor use will remain. For example, Buchhave argues, within the context of Danish public library system and with specific reference to youth, that there is a need to create a model public library at all levels: national, regional and local. Considering that young people essentially constitute the African population, and also that public libraries in Africa are mostly used by this section of the population, the same recommendation is probably applicable to Africa. This situation calls for a more concentrated effort on the provision of specific services within libraries; whether it is the conventional public library service or some other form of information provision, these library services should focus on the younger population. Activities for this sector of the African population will constitute a good starting point towards creating more informed citizens in Africa. For Buchhave, one of the major tasks of a public library today in relation to the young population is the production and provision of information elements to fulfil their self-knowledge, culture and identity, which are essential values for any individual.

The media is particularly influential on the creation of identity in youth. The fact that it is largely used by this segment of the population suggests that the availability of library services should be promoted through the media. By using the media to provide information about public libraries, users can be motivated to use their services and facilities. As Buchhave comments, to be more effective, to increase the demand for library services, especially among the young population, and to make the public library more relevant to their needs, several activities need to be carried out. Specific programmes to be developed with children and the youth, and the use of the media to strengthen some values, are also mentioned by Mønson, who considers it important to show children and young people that they can use the library as place to meet and enjoy. As the author suggests, the library should be used as a place to have drawing lessons, to discuss videos, and for other activities, rather than for mere contact with books. For the same author, children today, especially in Western societies, are offered an immense variety of activities on which they could spend their leisure time. Public libraries have to find ways to compete with them. Hansen, who refers specifically to the changes that take place in study programmes at schools, presents other ways of making better use of public libraries. She suggests that public libraries have to be able to offer materials and services that can meet the demands of the programmes offered to students at schools.

Planning, and a definition of the right strategies, are necessary in order to develop a wide range of activities. As Wigg suggests, planning practices are essential for all public libraries. For the author, planning has to take highest priority in order to match the needs of the community with the library’s services. The factors to take into consideration when planning must include economic, geographic and demographic aspects. While planning, as Wigg says, it is also essential to establish standards that can act as measures and benchmarks for evaluating the library’s performance against community needs. Responsible planning, based on a good knowledge of the community that the library is intended to serve, leads to appropriate services and activities.

Another area to consider is the practice of research within the public library context, and, most important of all, the dissemination of the results of the research activities. It is not enough to make assumptions about public library services without properly knowing the library, its users and the needs of the users. As Goulding says, research activities in public libraries have to be developed – and this must be a continuous process. In the case of African countries, small-scale research can be carried out. Goulding presents some ideas for research in public libraries, which include the role of the public library in the present and in the future, the use of public libraries, the expenditures of the libraries, the role of public libraries in terms of supporting the educational system, and performance and evaluation indicators.

As can be concluded from the bibliography, there is little practice in Africa of sharing the materials held in various libraries, and there is not even exact knowledge about the public library system in each country. Co-operation among the various libraries, and also with other institutions such as library schools and other organizations that deal with information, is a practice recommended by Goulding – as is the dissemination of research results, another crucial factor for the success and improvement of public libraries. The dissemination of the results will allow the sharing of new ideas among the practitioners in the public library field.

The development of co-operative relations among libraries to fulfil the needs of users – given that more and more information, either in print or electronic format, is being produced, and that it is impossible for individual libraries to hold all this information – is one of the aspects emphasized by Riggs.

The bibliography shows that various research activities are taking place in library schools in Africa, but knowledge about the results is, in the majority of cases, restricted to the schools themselves. Here again, the media can be used to disseminate the results, which will probably motivate the citizens to use the libraries. Additionally, libraries need to be more aggressive in the promotion of their activities and to stop acting as passive elements.

Concerning the attitudes of donor organizations, the literature available shows that these organizations have, to a large extent, stopped imposing their programmes and started to build partnerships. This is a great opportunity, because the recipients now have the opportunity to specify their needs and ask for specific programmes to respond to them. As an example, quoted by Evans within the context of the CODE programmes in the developing world, these programmes changed in the mid-1980s from being mere donations of second-hand books into local partnerships in those countries. As Evans says, in the implementation of CODE’s programmes – and to some extent, of any aid programme – it is important to balance the stimulation of locally produced materials, in cultural and linguistic terms, with the distribution of materials produced elsewhere. This balance becomes especially worthwhile when, as the author argues, in any development activity, the ones for whom the services are designed have to be involved in the process. Based on the experience of many supporting programmes, it is possible to say that the donors are now giving the opportunity to recipients to define what they want. It is time for public libraries in Africa to take this opportunity.

4 Conclusion and recommendations

Public libraries in Africa are facing problems, mainly related to their role in the community and to their financial debility, which in turn give rise to problems in the provision of their services. However, some positive signs in the development of public library systems are taking place. Alternatives to the public library system are to be found, and they are considered to be an enormous success. However, it is important to balance the services they provide between urban and rural areas. It must also be noted that many of these innovative activities are at this time almost completely reliant upon external donor funding, and it is now necessary to discuss the implications that this has on sustainability.27

More aggressive action and more commitment from library staff are required in the promotion of the services. Since the media has a central place in African societies, it can be suggested that greater use of this medium is necessary to promote libraries and to get the attention of the users and, most importantly, the potential users.

Specific support for the development of library services in Africa is something that gained much attention during the 1960s and 1970s. From the literature, it can be concluded that many of these interventions were based on a Western model.28, 29 There is now some evidence of renewed interest. As Priestley reports, trends have changed over time from large capital investment to ad hoc, one-off project support; but there is now commitment to a more co-ordinated and coherent strategy.30 As Kärre notes, support to libraries in the developing world from donor agencies of Nordic countries, such as NORAD, FINNIDA (now the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Danida, has previously been of a low priority, and usually incorporated into major programmes.31 Usually economic and social development were the priorities because of the basic problems of the Third World countries – food security, water, health and sanitation, and others. As the author says, equal distribution of existing resources, sustainable growth, and the type of growth to introduce have been the greatest concerns within the support offered to Third World countries. It was a long time before culture, which includes libraries, received some attention again – for example, the building of village reading rooms in Botswana for rural populations, and the construction of rural libraries in Tanzania.

It is crucial to remember that, within African countries, the policy-makers and the communities have to be committed to the library movement. Receiving only financial support is not enough. The introduction of services for the various groups of users is an important step towards the improvement of library services and, as the literature shows, the young population in Africa must receive a lot of attention. Governments have to be sensitized about the importance of library and information services for the development of any country. This is a task to be carried out by librarians.

The fact that there might have been poorly qualified staff in Africa is no longer the paramount excuse: there are already many people with good qualifications. What is needed now is to upgrade and refresh their skills, with particular attention being paid to skills that are relevant.

to the needs. It is especially important to motivate the staff and make them feel that they are valuable human resources.

Although donors are involved in financing the development of public library systems in African countries, it is important to think of long-term sustainability. Good relations with the publishing industry, the government and other interested parties are important factors to take into consideration. Real knowledge of the user community is crucial, otherwise the situation of having materials that are not relevant for their needs will remain, as is the involvement of the users, and potential users, in the community to make them feel that the library belongs to them. They have to be encouraged to participate in library management, and perhaps in the use of models from other countries but adapted to local conditions. Performance measurement of the libraries, to make sure that they are matching with the reality where they are established, must be a continuous task for the public libraries in Africa.

**Recommendations**

Some recommendations for specific action have been presented in the country reports and during interviews. However, they are considered to be starting points only and should not be restrictive. Probably the most important task will be to develop long-term, realistic strategic plans for public library development on a national basis. The literature review revealed large gaps in knowledge, and more research is required on several issues. Professionally carried-out user-need and user-satisfaction surveys, together with stakeholder research - for example, what the government wants and expects from a public library system (if they want one at all) and how much it will pay for such a system - are required. It is also clear that African librarians need to rethink what a public library is all about in terms of what is needed, will be used, and what is sustainable in Africa. After national discussions perhaps some new and more viable visions will result.

The bibliography and country reports stress the lack of finance and how it has affected library buildings and library collections. It might be possible to use two or three branch libraries as pilot projects to see if lack of finance is the main problem. This could include the repair of buildings and the purchase of locally published and imported books, and then monitoring changes in usage and satisfaction. Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis should be undertaken during the pilot project. The African public has largely stopped using public libraries, and until libraries are in a position to provide services and have information that people want, and books that are attractive to readers, it would not be wise to market them. Perhaps appropriate use of new technology might attract readers back to libraries, but the literature review did not give any evidence for this. Delivery of materials and information through appropriate and affordable mechanisms were highlighted.
Section II

Public Libraries in Africa:
Annotated Bibliography, 1994–1999

compiled and annotated by Aissa Issak

with Carol Priestley and Roger Stringer

Analyses the implications of socio-economic indicators – such as population, health care, literacy, age of the population – and gross reproduction rate for rural information provision. Considers that sustainable information provision for rural communities in West Africa requires international funding to set up pilot projects and centres of excellence.


Slightly revised version of a paper given at the 1991 IFLA Conference in Moscow. Considers the question of how far public libraries in Africa have provided responsive rural community information services that recognize local culture. Argues that public library services in Africa have operated for a long time without fully taking into consideration the needs and cultures of the people they serve. Discusses the efforts of the Imo State Library Board in Nigeria to provide responsive community information services, which it considers to be exemplary. Also reviews traditional African cultural values and information systems and how they relate to public libraries. Notes also the role of public libraries in cultural development and the documentation of culture (including the documentation of oral history), and their role in the promotion of indigenous knowledge.


Based on a survey of educators from library and information schools in nine countries of anglophone Africa, concludes that continuing education in areas such as information technology, curriculum development, teaching methods, management and rural librarianship is required, especially in a profession that is growing and changing fast.

Although the practice of continuing education for librarians and information professionals is not common, some positive initiatives are mentioned. These include workshops, seminars and training programmes, and the creation of the Consortium of African Information Science Schools (CASIS) by the IDRC from Canada.

Considering the lack of resources to promote continuing education programmes in Africa, it is hoped that international aid organizations can finance and support the programmes.


Considering that library services were imported to African countries, argues that the failure of the services to the majority of African population is partly due to the economic crisis and partly due to the nature of services imported, which did not take into consideration the real situation of the African people.

For the author, library services in Africa need to be transformed and incorporate aspects geared towards the satisfaction of their users. It is necessary to take into consideration that rural communities have information needs that are not being satisfied by existing services; there are differences in terms of information needs depending on socio-economic and political conditions; the information provided must be relevant to the people’s lives; and the process of information transfer needs to incorporate indigenous knowledge.
Commenting on the stages of collection development in African libraries, suggests that they can be divided into three main ages. First are the ‘golden years’, marked by factors such as the question of nationalism, which was the driving force for the establishment of African Studies research institutions aiming to collect and disseminate materials relating to Africa; the availability of financial resources to purchase materials from outside Africa; the influx of researchers into Africa interested in recording the oral literature with roots in Africa; and the training of African researchers.

Second were the ‘lean years’, that occurred in the period that witnessed the decline of collections in African libraries, associated with economic problems, and consequently a collapse in the African publishing industry. This period was also marked by the exodus of African researchers from Africa to universities abroad. The only materials about Africa that could be found in the libraries were mainly products of donation programmes.

Lastly are the ‘hopeful but uncertain years’, the years when some changes occurred, facilitated by economic recovery programmes adopted by many African countries, giving them the financial capacity to acquire materials from overseas and also the renewed interest of international organizations in providing relevant materials for the needs of the users in those countries.

In view of the new reality of African countries, some suggestions regarding collection-development issues in African libraries are presented. These suggestions include the improvement and support of the local publishing industry; the encouragement of local writers; the improvement of relations with foreign libraries; and the identification of organizations interested in supporting African libraries. Other areas that need to be taken into account are the bibliographic centres in African countries, the wide publicity of legal-deposit laws, and a new emphasis in the oral documentation, bearing in mind that the majority of African societies are still oral based.


Examines the different types of library services in Africa, with particular attention to public libraries. Considers that library services based on Western models and implemented in Africa by colonial administrations are not suitable for the majority of the African people. The community services, which are different from conventional public library models, outside the library and inside the community are an imperative in Africa. These new services need to involve the provision of materials in local languages and be suitable for the needs of the people in the community.


Argues in favour of an African approach to librarianship, as opposed to the imported colonial models. The African approach needs to include the documentation of oral materials and the promotion of African languages.

With the main objective of investigating what has been published on library and information science in an African journal, and by choosing as its source the *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science*, summarizes the coverage of African aspects of librarianship under the headings of information technology, rural libraries and image of librarians. The main reason for choosing this journal was the fact that this professional publication had achieved a stable existence within a short period of time.


Claims that current public library services in Africa have not changed very much from the services introduced by the colonial masters, and are mostly élitist institutions serving a minority of people. This attitude towards library services should change if public libraries are to make any impact in Africa. Recommends new and improved services such as community libraries, cultural preservation, and services for the visually handicapped.


Considering that African countries are still mainly oral driven, with the natural consequence of largely undocumented information and the fact that cultural traditions are diversified, owing to the multiplicity of linguistic and social groups, argues in favour of a convergence between the print-oriented public library services and multimedia-oriented community/rural information services. Considers that one of the reasons for the failure of the services provided by public libraries in Africa is in the replication, in cultural and social terms, of the Western library models.

Argues that public libraries in Africa are hardly used, and, when they are used, the majority of users are pupils who use them as reading rooms. One reason pointed out for this misuse is the fact that the majority of the populace in African countries is non-literate, in terms of using written materials.

Presents some illustrative examples of the contribution of rural libraries and community information centres to the promotion of the African cultural heritage. These types of libraries were founded as alternatives to the conventional model of public libraries, and their main focus is on the needs of rural people. Some examples of the implementation of models of rural libraries and community information centres, include the ‘Centre de Lecture et l’Animation Culturelle (Centres for Reading and Cultural Activity) in Côte d’Ivoire, where rural people can have access to educational and recreational materials in different formats and can participate in social and cultural activities.

The second example is the ‘Public Library and Rural Audio Libraries’ in Mali. Banjo reports that, prior to the launch of the ‘Operation Lecture Publique’ (Operation Popular Reading) in Mali in 1977, the situation of popular reading, especially in rural areas was very distressing. Warns of the urgency of having rural libraries and community information centres in Africa as centres of cultural heritage, arguing that conventional public libraries are dying in Africa, as are the guardians of indigenous knowledge, such as priests, traditional historians, elders and traditional doctors. Therefore, it is necessary to save the knowledge of these people.


Reviews the history of libraries and librarianship in Africa, over a period of 20 years, with particular reference to information reported in seminal publications.


Considering that information plays a beneficial role across the whole spectrum of human activities, this article discusses the relevance of public libraries as information providers. The author argues that the identification of qualitative and quantitative users’ needs, the role of
the information infrastructure and of the information technology in the process of facilitating, providing and transmitting information are areas that need to be addressed.


The paper considers that rural dwellers, in comparison to their urban counterparts, are the poorest in terms of access to information. The factors that contribute to this situation can be regarded as material and structural.

In order to improve the use of information services in rural areas, and considering that traditional library services have failed in these areas, it suggests that the introduction of extension services and community information resources centres can be in a better position to serve the needs of the users.


Examines the non-legitimate uses of African librarianship and the effects of library colonialism on African society. Highlights the inability of the traditional public library system to make a meaningful impact on the population of sub-Saharan African countries.


Compares the training for library and information science in Southern Africa, which is largely still based on Western models, with the actual information needs of rural communities in Southern Africa. Presents a summary of recent workshops about the question of training for librarians.

Hassner, Kerstin 'The model library project: A way to implement the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.' *IFLA Journal* 25, no. 3 (1999): 143–147.

Referring to the fact that the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto is a document of ideas, and that it is necessary to convert the ideas into practical action, the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs took the initiative of starting a model library in Sweden, with the aim of it serving as a good example for other countries. To carry out this initiative, the Ljusdal municipal library was chosen to serve as a role model both nationally and internationally.

Some of the results so far are the creation of the UNESCO Model Library Network (UNET), which includes libraries in the following countries – Estonia, Portugal, Spain and Zimbabwe. Within the UNET, the staff of the libraries have the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas, in spite of the fact that they come from different cultures and different material circumstances. Some seminars and workshops have been held in the countries included in the UNET, and there is the hope of incorporating other libraries in the UNET. It is concluded that the work of UNET is a means of realizing and keeping alive the ideas of the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.


The seminar was organized by IFLA in co-operation with Botswana University, Botswana National Library Service, and the Botswana Department of Non-Formal Education.


Having in mind that a public library is a place where people have the opportunity to extend their knowledge and experiences, emphasizes that a more positive approach to the marketing of services is needed. Also, librarians need to have the capacity to identify the expressed and not-clearly-expressed needs, to serve the users better.

Public libraries in most countries in tropical Africa rarely provide relevant materials and hence they are ineffective. They are stocked mainly with foreign literature that is both out of date and irrelevant to the information needs and interests of the people who are expected to read them. Libraries in Africa need to put emphasis on the provision of community information services by building basic collections on such subjects as sanitation, health, agriculture, civil rights and other issues relevant to the needs of the people.


Considering that library development has been slow in developing countries, and the climate of scarcity of resources typical of these countries, defends a combination of school and public libraries as an innovative model to provide a contribution to a literate environment and to literacy efforts. To this combination, a transformation in the library mission and some changes in the delivery methods have to be added.

Arguing that the combined libraries have to be rooted in the formal education system, suggests that this combination has the possibility of offering a dynamic solution to the necessity of co-ordinating community information needs, support to adult education and literacy efforts. The implementation of primary education and the promotion of a reading culture within the community are the visible outcomes of the combination.


Two talks at the IFLA '97 conference dealt with African public libraries' function in cultural life. Libraries largely still reflect colonial values. Both users and librarians are Western educated and culturally isolated from the broad population. Libraries should be based on African traditions of story-telling, dance and drama as practised by the illiterate, rural population, who have no access to traditional public libraries. Calls for a new type of library, such as the Centre de Lecture et l’Animation Culturelle in Côte d’Ivoire and the Public Library and Rural Audio Libraries of Mali. Here the librarian is part of the local society, gathering and transmitting local culture in visual or dramatic form.


Surveys the information provision to rural communities in Anglophone Africa, with particular reference to Kenya, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Botswana and Malawi.


During the 1960s and 1970s, public libraries in Africa witnessed major growth, but the economic problems of the 1980s and 1990s brought to these libraries a stage of deterioration. The conception and development of deliberated and strategic plans, both in the short and long term, can be one way to alleviate the deteriorated situation of public libraries in Africa.

The issues concerning public libraries in Africa presented include their operational capacity in the post-Independence period, the influence of politics in library development, the economic problems, the role of international agencies in the development of public library systems, and the role of the publishing industry.

In order to overcome the problems mentioned and to improve the services offered by public libraries in Africa, the establishment of co-operative relations with other libraries is suggested. However, these relations must also be very carefully planned, considering the potential users of the services. It is mentioned that public libraries in Africa need to radically change the
ways they operate towards a more user-oriented information strategy, reduce unnecessary costs, improve their acquisition policies, and establish good relations with local publishers.

Historically, libraries in Africa were not built with African users in mind and were most influenced by colonial powers. Pre-colonial Africa had generated some forms of knowledge, myths, and the like, which were substituted by the written word, as the primary source of information. As a consequence, use of African libraries is still restricted to a small percentage of the population, which is that minority with access to formal education.
The economic crisis, political instability and the exploitation of African resources as a result of neo-colonial situations have meant that libraries in Africa have failed to adapt to local conditions. Additionally, library services are not seen as a priority by African governments and where these services exist they are concentrated mainly in the urban centres.

Some of the constraints to the development of the library services on the continent include the imposition of programmes by donor agencies, the donation of materials without taking into account the cultural principles of African users, the lack of appropriate training programmes, and the fact that the profession is still in its infancy in Africa. The incorporation of information from the oral tradition, the change in work practices in libraries, the introduction of community information centres, the activity of re-packaging information respecting the copyright laws and other rules, and also the building of classification schemes for the materials held in African libraries, which take into account the cultural diversity of Africa, are presented as ways to improve the services offered by libraries in Africa.

Illustrates the research process used to investigate the provision of information to rural communities, presenting three case studies, Botswana, Malawi and Tanzania.

Considers that to understand the context and status of libraries in African societies it is useful to realize the still-dominant oral system of communication in those societies, which carries with it the indigenous knowledge. As the author argues, with the introduction of library systems and models into Africa, indigenous knowledge and the importance of the oral tradition were not taken into consideration in the planning and design of library services.

Another factor to be taken into account when discussing librarianship in Africa is the level of illiteracy in African countries, which is still very high. Public libraries in Africa have failed to play an active role in supporting adult literacy programmes of education. However, some positive signs of the contribution of public libraries to increase the level of literacy can be identified in countries such as Malawi and Botswana, but these are exceptions and not the major rule. The paper argues that many public libraries in Africa are not adapting their services to the socio-cultural realities of the countries, and therefore are playing a marginal role.

One solution to the problem of public libraries in Africa can be the introduction of information literacy as a subject in the curriculum of schools, following the example of Namibia. The purpose of this subject would be to provide students with skills to acquire knowledge of information sources, to retrieve and use the information available, and to generate new information.

The factors negatively affecting a reading culture in African countries include the scarcity of a rich publishing industry, with the partial exceptions of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa; the expensive prices of the materials published; the non-existence of libraries outside the major urban centres; and the fact that the major quantities of library materials are imported, mainly through donations, and with little relevance for the users' needs.
Some suggestions to improve the situation are advanced and can be summarized as the building of partnerships between libraries and publishing companies, the publication of books, bearing in mind the economic conditions of the potential customers, and the improvement of the distribution facilities through the development of adequate publishers’ networks.

Although African governments, and particularly Ministries of Education, consider education a major priority, the support for libraries is minimal. Also, there is an absence of co-operative relations between different types of libraries, especially academic libraries, which are the most powerful and best organized, and other types of libraries.

In Africa high demands for education and literacy skills are manifested, but there is a tension in public libraries in terms of whether to identify with this tendency and provide educational and curriculum-related materials, or to identify with adult users and providing entertainment and light reading.


Argues that not enough attention has been paid to staff development in the library profession in African countries.


Including the full text of the Manifesto, this paper comments on the guidelines provided by the Manifesto.


The planning of the development of libraries in developing countries made before their Independence was excellent in terms of enthusiasm and recommendations for the type of library services to be introduced. However, the problem with those plans was that they were made within the models of more developed countries, and their implementation in developing countries failed because of the cultural, financial and structural differences. The article also considers that libraries in developing countries have never received adequate recognition and value from governments and local authorities.

Considering Great Britain as a reference for libraries in Commonwealth countries in Africa, argues that the signals and guidance provided by Great Britain were not always clear enough to be used in the development and improvement of library services and especially the library profession in Africa.

However, it must be recognized that developed countries have contributed to the establishment and growth of libraries in developing countries and to the emergence of the library’s roles, image and status.


A comprehensive review of the library situation in Africa, with particular focuses on Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya, although other parts of the continent are touched upon. Discusses the implications of the imposition of Western models and theories in African countries, and covers aspects like library development, foreign aid and its providers, the relevance of the materials held in the libraries for an illiterate majority, and living in a context completely different from the contexts where the content of materials can be applied. Acknowledges that there is a book and information famine in Africa and more realistic information needs to be provided to African people, which will help to solve basic problems like illiteracy, health, nutrition and poverty.

Considers ‘barefoot librarianship’ as a useful technique for the provision of more relevant library services to the largely illiterate African people. The constraints to the successful practice and the full implementation of barefoot librarianship are acknowledged, and encompass poor staffing, obsolete equipment, finance limitations and accommodation. Considers that barefoot librarians need specialized training, to provide multiple skills as advisers, information specialists and others. Concludes that, through the combination of the peculiarities of information needs of the African people and the imperatives of modern techniques, the barefoot practice can be justified.


This article refers to the fact that disadvantaged communities hardly make use of libraries, and libraries, on the other hand, make little effort to reach those communities, although the concept of creating information services for disadvantaged communities is not new.

The author considers that information work for disadvantaged communities demands interactive, dynamic and flexible services, if there is the will to contribute to a greater self-determination and self-reliance. The article notes that public libraries can play an important role in enabling the disadvantaged to raise their quality of life. However, it is argued that public libraries have to move away from the rigid, traditional and library-oriented approach based on serving educated user communities, and reorder their priorities based on the identification of the information needs of the communities.


Illustrates that assistance to book and library development in Africa takes many forms and that although donors place much emphasis on sustainability, many interventions are ad hoc and merely stop-gap measures.


Considers that, from the 1970s, public libraries in Africa started to be led by African individuals, although trained abroad. Argues that, to a great extent, public libraries in Africa have been established using the blueprint provided by traditions in developed countries, and historically public libraries in Africa were perceived as providing materials to access the world civilization and cultures.

The stagnation of African economies and the scarcity of basic necessities such as food and health care have reduced the funds available for public libraries, and the crucial question that public libraries in Africa have started to face is how to justify their existence to their governments.

Although poorly supported, public libraries in Africa have played an important role in supporting formal and non-formal education. Other areas that have been developed by these libraries are the provision of services for literacy programmes, the development of rural communities’ programmes, and the establishment of rural libraries to support the new literates.


The paper discusses the state of public libraries in Africa and whether these libraries are contributing to life-long learning in the African continent.

Considering that public libraries in Africa are rooted in centralized national library service systems which have numerous roles, which in consequence reveals various weaknesses and the lack of professional human resources, the author argues that the services provided by public libraries in Africa are facing a situation of deterioration. This situation is also due to
the gradual deterioration of African economies. Therefore, public library services in Africa are not contributing to any form of life-long learning, given their depressing conditions, and are almost wholly dependent on donor support, with governments playing a minimal part in supporting the development of libraries.

Arguing that life-long learning is a concept dependent on individual needs and commitment to personal development, public libraries in Africa have to develop a ‘systematic iterative process of needs analysis’ and introduce service that match those needs.


A review of the developments of public, academic and school libraries and rural information services in the three regions of Africa, and of training provided for librarians and information professionals. Also presents a review of the professional bodies and associations relating to library activities in Africa.


Illustrates that there are many obstacles to be overcome before adequate library services can be provided in the various developing countries. Argues that the main problems affecting library services now are related to inadequate funding, insufficient collections and shortage of appropriately qualified staff.

In proposing solutions for these problems mention is made of better local support and more use of the information technology, via both national and international networks, in order to improve local and global library services. Another important aspect to consider is the formulation of information policies that are recognized, honoured and adhered to by all.


Discusses the sustainability of libraries in Africa. Notes that African libraries have declined over the past twenty years and analyses failed initiatives in respect of: national policies, cooperation and resource-sharing; book aid; training; new approaches (rural information centres and school resource centres); expatriates; and information technology. Examines the problem of lack of finance and the historical dimension of library development in Africa as reasons why African libraries are not sustainable. Concludes that African libraries must find their own role and destiny within the realities of the African situation.


Using case studies from Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania, examines some of the various ways through which the school population in Africa gains access to supplementary reading materials. The conclusion highlights the factors that contribute to an effective method: adequate teacher involvement and training; ongoing support; accessibility, sufficiency and relevance of books; and moderate costs, with little demand on staff or premises. The school library services operated by the public library systems of Ghana and Tanzania are among the examples discussed.


History is important to our understanding of present-day libraries in Africa. Examines the social, cultural, economic and political factors that have determined library development in Africa. Identifies and describes six historical periods representing the various forces at work: pre-colonial; the arrival of the Europeans; colonialism; nationalism and decolonization; independence and after; and trends in the last 15 years. Concludes that while internal factors
have been important, for Africa forces coming from outside of the continent have also been influential.


Analyses the reasons for what is seen as a failure, in 30 years since political independence, of the public library movement in Africa. Using Kenya as an example, presents the view that the creation of national library systems by colonial governments was based on the desire to hold on to some control over their former colonies and that those systems have not therefore been usefully sustained. Public libraries established and maintained locally have had better success. The future of the African public library seems to lie with the abandonment of national systems and the creation of libraries according to local community needs.


Summarizes the discussions that took place in the Seminar by highlighting areas where consensus had been achieved and issues where further discussion was needed. There is now agreement on the sort of information needs that exist in a rural community and the best ways to transfer this information. There is also general agreement that a rural library or resource centre can usefully fill the gaps in the information transfer and exchange process. But if these libraries are to be effective, there needs to be greater clarification of the information centre concept, more attention paid to funding and sustainability, a deeper examination of training needs, the creation of standards against which rural services can be evaluated, and a mechanism to share information about developments.


Public libraries are no longer seen as crucial to development in Africa. Librarians are therefore re-examining their own relevance to development and are proposing the establishment of rural information centres to serve the needs of the 80 per cent of Africa's population who live in rural areas. Examines the underlying factors that determine the success or failure of such centres. Identifies two types of rural information centres: those set up and managed by the local community and those forming part of a public library system. Reviews the historical development of such centres in Africa and elsewhere and questions whether rural communities need information. Considers information transfer mechanisms in rural communities, the need for trained information manpower and the problems of attaining sustainability of information provision.


The article highlights the results of a survey carried out among professionals who have attended the M.Sc. in Information Science programme at the School of Information Studies for Africa (SISA), based in Addis Ababa, University of Ethiopia. As the author considers, the SISA programme has been recognized as relevant and effective to library and information science employment and market demands in Africa.

Some negative aspects of the SISA programme, which result from the interpretation of the questionnaires' answers, are the fact that the programme is very ambitious, too broad to be covered adequately, and lacks opportunities for specialization. According to the article, the majority of SISA graduates are employed in IT-related jobs, which confirms that the course does not cover the aspects of information in Africa that are not exclusively related to the use of IT.
Although there are career opportunities for SISA graduates in government, private and international organizations, it seems that these graduates are filling only part of the market needs for qualified staff in the area of library and information services in Africa.

Discusses literacy and oral tradition in Africa. While school libraries exist, they have no legal standing. Students are heavy users of public libraries. Combining school libraries with public libraries would include the advantages of a better use of scarce resources, an emphasis upon reading outside the school context, and greater contact between students and adults. Public libraries and schools belong to different administrative structures. There is the risk that the combined library might be considered as a school library to the detriment of other users. Offers the solution of each school library maintaining a collection for basic needs.

Argues that analysis of the questions related to access to information in Africa cannot be made in isolation and needs to be considered in a broader context of information, from a traditional oral-communication process to virtual reality. The book provides a people-centred approach, considering the role that information plays in Africa, provides ways in which community-based services can be developed in Africa, and presents a separate treatment of the strategic role of information in a developing continent.

The collapse of the publishing industry, the highly expensive importation of books and other materials for libraries, the absence of government interest in the development of library systems, the continued dependence on European and American models, are some of the points discussed. Additionally, the inadequacy of bibliographic systems, the irrelevance of materials donated by some donor agencies, and the absence of knowledge about users needs and expectations are also taken into account.

Sturges and Neill draw together a great deal of information, collected either in written format or orally, which present, at the same time, the successes and failures of information provision and literacy programmes in various parts of Africa. The message given by the authors is that not everything constitutes a failure in Africa, considering that there are a great number of initiatives, both local or with the support of the government or other agencies, that are successes. However, the authors recognize that there is a distance between what has been written and the reality of the countries, and that there are differences among various countries.

Based on evidence collected from the published literature and through field observation, the authors argue that there is a need for new approaches to librarianship in Africa, and also for the creation of parallel and different types of information services to complement or even replace the existing library services. For the authors, these new approaches imply the creation of less formal models, less book-oriented and more locally rooted. Above all, information services in Africa need to start to be more realistic and need to be based on ‘financial realism, self-reliance, sustainability, democracy, responsiveness and communication’ (p. 227).


This text provides an overview of libraries and Librarianship in Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. The topics discussed include foreign aid, culture, literacy, publishing and development, libraries and technology, libraries and higher education, professional organizations, training and others.

Discusses the reasons for the absence of public libraries in Africa and presents the idea of
joint services between public and school libraries as a workable solution for the problems that the library sector is facing in African countries.

This combination of services will help to eradicate illiteracy and contribute to education and development. The reasons for this proposal relate to the location of communities, the type of educational programmes, the necessity of having community involvement, poverty, and information needs. The success of these joint services will depend on the success in changing the libraries' mission and the existence of trained personnel.


This paper examines the relationship between education and libraries as seen by their stakeholders – government, parents, teachers, librarians and children. In an imaginary situation, the paper traces the story of a girl, Simangele, who went through the education system from elementary to university levels without using library resources effectively.

The girl’s story reveals that she hadn’t used the library for two main reasons – lack of time and no knowledge on how to use the library. Simangele eventually became a teacher, and in the exercise of her profession she depended on her notes and a few textbooks prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

For the author, although the future of libraries in educational institutions seems bright, it illustrates that there is the need to transform the education systems in Africa in general, and in particular to change the attitudes of the stakeholders in order to accommodate a library culture.


This article analyses the history and problems of mobile library services in Africa, and argues that in the future their role should include collaboration with other institutions and organizations, in order to deliver information to the majority of the population. However, there is also a need to improve the ability of librarians to find and define relevant programmes in order to satisfy the needs of the great majority of the people, who remain highly non-literate or semi-literate.

Early optimism and success, followed by economic challenges, mark the history of mobile libraries in Africa. A reduction in mobile services, some staff dismissed in the services, and even the complete closure of mobile services, have occurred. However, two mobile library programmes have resisted to all those constraints, and can serve as models for other countries: the Bulawayo Public Library in Zimbabwe, and the Bendel State Library in Nigeria.


Despite the technological developments today, libraries must continue their historical function of recording human culture in whatever format. The author comments that public libraries now serve a larger and more diverse population of users than ever before, and this population has increased the demands for services offered. The most exciting aspect in practising librarianship today is caused by the explosion in information technology, but the paper argues that the distinguishing characteristic of libraries in the near future will rely on the provision of services of a high quality and variety.


Describes the history and development of public libraries in anglophone, francophone and lusophone Africa, excluding the Arabic-speaking countries and South Africa. Examines the magnitude of problems facing public libraries, and discusses possible solutions. Argues that the main contribution that a public library in these countries can make is in participating fully in ongoing campaigns to reduce illiteracy and in fostering the reading habit and its enjoyment among persons in all walks of life.

Considering that information is power, it is argued that the right to information is an important human right. However, as with many other human rights, there are essential pre-conditions related to economic, social, cultural and political developments before this right to information can be realized.

The paper concludes that the right to information in developing and less developed countries is still far from being achieved. These countries are characterized by more urgent problems to solve such as hunger, education, economic and political freedom. On the other hand, the governments of these countries give a low priority to information.
Botswana


Summarizes and analyses library literature of the early 1990s about the library situation in Botswana. One question much discussed is that of the appropriate model for library development in a former colony: should it follow the Western (British–American) pattern or an indigenous one? Village reading rooms, book-box services and mobile library services lend themselves more readily to an African model, whereas university and research libraries and computerization programmes lend themselves to a Western prototype. Other writings discuss addressing the information needs of rural people and the need to collect development literature; library and information services for the disabled; and library education, including a discussion of the Certificate in School Librarianship offered by the Department of Library Studies at the University of Botswana.


This issue of the BLA’s newsletter contains some highlights of papers from the 12th Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Librarians (SCCECSAL 12). The conference was held in Maseru, Lesotho, in December 1996. The papers centre on the theme, which was ‘Libraries and Information Services into the 21st Century and Beyond’.


The study aimed to examine the staff structure at Botswana National Library Service (BNLS) Headquarters, Gaborone Public Library, Ramotswa Public Library and Molepolole Public Library. This was done to ascertain if available staff were the right ones for the work to be done, considering their educational level, and relevant training skill and development prospects.


Describes in outline the main libraries in Botswana and their services, including: the University of Botswana Library and its branch libraries; the Documentation Centre of the National Institute of Development Research and Documentation (NIR); the Botswana National library Services (BNLS) and its components, including the national Reference Library (NRL); the Gaborone Public Library branch libraries and outreach services, village reading rooms, book-boxes, postal and mobile library services, and the libraries of schools and teacher-training institutions; special libraries in government ministries, independent departments and parastatal organizations in the social, cultural and economic sector. Concludes with recommendations for future development.


The long life of the resources held in libraries, museums and archives is one of the biggest challenges for the professionals of the different areas. In Botswana, after the Pan-African Conference on Preservation in 1993, a Standing Committee on Preservation and Conservation of Library and Archival materials (SCOPAC) was created, with the objectives of co-ordinating preservation and conservation efforts and discussing, negotiating and establishing guidelines and legal infrastructures related to the matters of conservation and preservation. The establishment of SCOPAC represents an important first step towards developing preservation and conservation programmes in Botswana.

Describes the state of information provision to rural communities in Botswana and highlights specifically the village reading rooms project, and the role of the Botswana National Library Service in the project.


The report reveals the results of the study carried out to find out the potential of computerization of the manual functions and services of BNLS. The study was necessitated by the fact that there are persistent problems (as revealed in the text) posed by the manual information management system at BNLS. Overall, the study recommended that BNLS should computerize its functions and services.


The study investigates the information needs and seeking patterns of rural people in the context of rural development. The research population consisted of respondents from selected villages in Botswana, Malawi and Tanzania. In order to establish rural information needs, the study looked at economic activities, problems faced in income generation, perceived barriers to community development, and direct questioning of rural people and extension workers. Health, income-generating projects, and community leadership are the main areas identified as regards information needs of rural people. Also, there are information needs that can be considered in specific locations, largely determined by climatic and geographical factors, and by present and past government policies for specific purposes. The study also concludes that there is rich network of information sources within the rural community from which information is exchanged - indigenous knowledge.


The Public Libraries Division is operating throughout the BNLS, whose primary objective is to make library services accessible to all members of the community for purposes of education, recreation, research and information. The Division is responsible, in terms of administration, for 21 branch libraries, which are located mainly in the major urban areas. Among the 21 branch libraries, three of them are functioning as community college libraries and serve both the student population and the general public.

The Public Libraries Division is also responsible for the administration of village reading rooms, a service offered to those who live far from the branch libraries. Additionally, a postal service is provided by the Division, which allows the users to borrow books. Two mobile libraries, operating from Gaborone to Francistown, complement the services offered by the Public Libraries Division.


Through this study, information was collected regarding the status of village reading rooms (VRRs) in Botswana. With such information, the Department can make informed decisions in its efforts to expand the use of the VRR programme, which is aimed at providing information services to rural communities. The VRR service was established in 1986 as a pilot project, with twenty VRRs in one District. The same authors, who suggest that the project has had a positive impact, evaluated the project. It was recommended that the service should be spread all over the country. Currently there are a total of 67 VRRs.
The 1994/95 study has revealed that the VRR services are well established in the community and in the minds of people. However, these facilities are utilized mainly by school children because the collections available are geared mainly towards the satisfaction of primary-school education needs.

The study was conducted in ten centres where BNLS has branch (public) libraries. It was aimed at finding out what the information needs of the library users and potential users were. The study looked at areas such as who should be BNLS’s target group, the kind of books to be selected by BNLS, how to improve physical facilities and types of services to offer. The study also discussed how can libraries be made more accessible, and how the services should be promoted. The study gives recommendations, which if adopted, could help in improving the service.

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify perceived barriers to productivity within academic and public libraries in Botswana through examining the perceptions of library personnel. The most pressing barriers were found out to be job dissatisfaction, lack of facilities, lack of training, poor management, budget constraints, lack of commitment, poor relationships among staff, and lack of empowerment.

The findings indicate that librarians could still improve their performance and maximize their output with available resources, if they could change their work attitudes and feel committed to their work. This may be achieved by establishing work teams and being active in productivity movements. Regular training in IT and good work ethics were also recommended by the study.

The Botswana National Library at one time offered an extra library service in addition to the normal library service. It came to be known as the Library Extended Hours Service. The normal service is from 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. during weekdays and 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon on Saturdays. The Library Extended Hours Service therefore started from 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. during weekdays and 12 noon to 2.00 p.m. on Saturdays. This service was meant for library users who are busy most of the daytime and therefore do not find enough time to visit the library during normal service hours. The service was introduced at different public libraries at different times.

The service was evaluated in 1991 (October–December). It was found that most of the library users during this time were school students, who need more and qualified staff so that discipline can be maintained. However, because of the shortage of the required number of staff to man this service, it was discontinued indefinitely.

The report gives background information relating the establishment of the Department. It goes on to highlight the development of the Department by giving the services provided through its various divisions: Departmental Management Division, National Reference and Special Libraries Division, Public Libraries Division, Bibliographic Support Services Division, Research and Publications Division, Educational Services Division, Training Division, Marketing Division, and Computer Services Division.

The report evaluates the Swedish Development Co-operation with Botswana. The co-operation was characterized by developments in the areas of building new public libraries and extending new ones, the establishment of the village reading rooms project, the purchasing of materials for the book-box service, the production of reading materials for neo-literates, and also the establishment of the unit for library services for the disabled.


The book-box service is a BNLS outreach programme designed to meet the reading needs of primary-school pupils. The presence of books in a child’s environment is indeed viewed as a necessary first step in the development of reading skills and habits. The book-box service was introduced in 1976. Teacher-librarians who receive periodic training from the BNLS administer the service at the school level.

The evaluation of the book-box service was commissioned by the BNLS and it represents the first comprehensive evaluation of the service in over fifteen years of operation. The evaluation covers a number of dimensions of the service, including administration, student and teacher usage, and the books themselves. Lack of information dissemination on the system within the school, and lack of interest of the majority of teachers to have their students use the service, are some of the problems identified by the study.


The report discusses the scope for, and feasibility of, introducing automated systems into the Botswana National Library Service. The study was undertaken at the request of the BNLS.

The funding revealed that the BNLS would benefit from the introduction of automation, initially to facilitate the work of the Bibliographic Support Services Division, the production of the National Bibliography, word-processing for administration, and on-line information retrieval for the National Reference and Special Libraries Division. Sufficient additional resources to cover the running expenses of an automated system were also recommended; this included the identification of a suitable professional librarian to be trained as a systems manager.
GHANA

This work is an attempt to assess ways in which the catalogue at the Public Library in Ghana is maintained. This includes the types of catalogue in use, problems encountered in maintenance and how effective the catalogue is in serving user needs. The study revealed, among other things, a number of inconsistencies in the administration of the Cataloguing Department.

This work examines the library’s role in the literacy education campaign in Ghana, during the period 1990–1992. It places emphasis on the types of activities that benefit illiterates and neo-literates, while making suggestions and recommendations as to how best to improve those functions.

This paper makes an assessment of the present state of public library services in Ghana, especially in areas where the services are very ineffective. New areas for improved services, such as cultural preservation and distance learning, are suggested.

Reviews recent developments in different types of libraries in Ghana, including public libraries, and considers that library growth in the country has been fragmentary and unco-ordinated owing to such aspects as the absence of a national library. Suggests the establishment of a national library in Ghana as a centre for library co-operation and an agent for compiling and publishing the national bibliography and union catalogues.

This is a report on the commissioning of a mobile library provided by the Ghanaian–Danish Communities Association (GDCA), a non-governmental organization in Ghana, to serve 17 rural communities in the northern region of Ghana.

An American couple, Mr Kirt Bromley and his wife Hilda, have donated 19,000 books and seven computers to four libraries in the country. The books cover various levels of education.

This study was undertaken to find out which areas of the library’s collection were most patronized. It also aimed to investigate general reading behaviour by educational achievement, sex, age and occupational distribution. Factors that will motivate adult users of the Agona Swedru Branch Library to read more widely are also discussed.

Comments on the role played by the Ghana Library Board in creating a library service capable of being a vehicle for educating, informing and enlightening the rural population. Considers that the traditional activities of libraries, such as lending books and providing reference services, are not adequate for achieving some of the expected results within library services. Suggests new ways for information transfer, such as extension services and stresses the importance of involving rural dwellers in the successful planning and execution of information delivery.
methods at rural level. Highlights some obstacles to this provision, and suggests some ways to overcome them.


This study examines the present state of the rural library services in satisfying the needs of their clientele and analyses the role of the Ghana Library Board in the provision of rural library services, within the current socio-economic and political context.

Asiedu, Joel M. *An Evaluation of the Book Box Services as a Method of Distribution of Literacy Materials to Learners of the Non-Formal Education Division*. Accra: University of Ghana, DLAS (Graduate Diploma Project Work), 1997, ix, 52 pp.

The Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) in Ghana has adopted the book-box service as a way of getting literacy materials to learners who are scattered all over the country. This work evaluates the effectiveness of the book-box system as a distribution tool. It concludes that the system has not been effective in the provision of materials to new literates.

Baidoo, Samud 'Libraries are the engine for development.' *Ghanaian Times*, 7 April 1999: 6.

The importance of libraries and information centres is stressed in this article. Various suggestions are made towards the improvements of library services in Ghana, which include the setting up of a committee to review library services and the renovation and re-stocking of existing libraries.


Reports on a presentation of assorted library books and teaching equipment worth €15.5 million, by Barclays Bank Ghana Limited to the Ghana Library Board.

Boateng, Kwame *The Use of Public Library Services for Children in Ghana: A Case Study of the Children's Section of the Ashanti Regional Library, Kumasi*. Accra: University of Ghana, DLAS (Undergraduate Diploma Project), 1993, ix, 97 pp.

This study aims at finding out if there is really a disparity in the use of the public children's library services by pupils in public and private schools. The study showed that only a small percentage of the population of school age in Kumasi are registered as members of the children's library and the majority of that percentage is from the private schools.

'Baidoo, Samud 'Libraries are the engine for development.' *Ghanaian Times*, 7 April 1999: 6.

'EU to help stock Ghana's libraries.' *Ghanaian Times*, 9 July 1996.

Reports that fifty regional and branch libraries as well as school libraries in a number of senior secondary schools in Ghana are to benefit from a 'book package' under a European Union (EU) assistance programme.

'Facilities in libraries to be improved.' *Ghanaian Times*, 24 April 1999: 3.

A report that the Minister of Education, Mr Ekow Spio-Garbrah, has re-emphasized the government's determination to improve facilities at existing libraries in the country.


A speech by the Acting Ashanti Regional Librarian reporting that more than 14 community libraries have been opened in the Ashanti Region.


Studies the impact of the public library system in the Upper West Region of Ghana. It sets out to determine whether the resources of the library are adequate and suitable to satisfy the needs of the community. Problems such as inadequate accommodation, shortage of staff and lack of publicity are among the main constraints for a wider use of the public library system.

This work is an attempt to describe branch public library services in Ghana, with particular reference to the Damongo Branch Library. The study revealed that problems exist in running branch public library services in Ghana, including outdated stock, inadequate reading rooms and a shortage of qualified staff. Some recommendations are made.


A report on a strike by the unionized staff of the Ghana Library Board demanding increases in salaries as a first step to levels prevailing within the civil service.


A report by the headmaster of a secondary school in Ghana to the Ghana Library Board to consider introducing mobile libraries to help make library books and other reading materials easily accessible to students on school campuses.


A report that the library services in Ghana are making losses running into several billions of cedis yearly, through the non-return of borrowed books and the carelessness of some readers.


This study investigates how a new model of library service will help disseminate information to the population of Kwaprow, in the central region of Ghana, a predominantly non-literate population, which is not fully benefiting from the ‘traditional’ public library services.


This is a report on the presentation of books to the Ghana Library Board by Revi Motors, a private motor distribution company in Accra.


The low salaries and generally poor conditions of service of the public library service in Ghana have led to a number of strikes and protests in recent years. This is a report of one of those protests.


This is a report on the commissioning of a public library for the inhabitants of Dzolo in the Volta Region of Ghana, by the Penistone Venture Scouts of Great Britain. This is aimed at strengthening the bond of friendship between the Penistone and Dzolo communities.


The purpose of the study is to determine whether the present organization and services of the British Council Library in Accra satisfies the needs of the users. Among the findings are that the library satisfactorily serves its priority group, but more still needs to be done in the area of reading space.


A general review of library services in Ghana is made in this article, touching on all types of libraries in the country. The role of the public library in the society is highlighted.
A reader’s comment on the need to revamp the Western Regional Library at Sekondi. He cites the poor services provided in the library especially in the area of book provision, as his major concern, and suggests that NGOs, philanthropists and the government should come to the aid of the library.

A reader’s comment on the deplorable state of the Salaga District Public Library. He reports on the poor state of reading materials and suggests that non-governmental organizations, philanthropists and the general public must help to sustain the library.

This is a rejoinder from the Northern Regional Librarian to an earlier article written about the Salaga library. It claims that the library is still functional in temporary accommodation, waiting to be moved to a permanent building.

This is a reader's comment on the deplorable state of the Berekum Public Library. The shelves are almost empty, and the library is generally ill equipped. An appeal is made to philanthropists, NGOs and the Ghana Library Board for assistance.

Using data obtained through the descriptive and survey methods of research, the study examined the provision of adult education in Ghana, especially with regard to the role of the public library and the co-operation that exists between the public library system and the major agencies providing adult education in Ghana.

Although this article appears to deal generally with all types of libraries, the emphasis is mainly on public and national libraries. The writer echoes the request by many librarians in the country for the establishment of a National Library.

The study reviewed the acquisition process at the KNLS. It found that most books are published overseas. The problems facing acquisition include lack of funds, lack of trained personnel, donation of irrelevant materials, and inflation. The study recommends that local publishers should produce books for the local market and establish better relations with libraries.


Reports on a joint programme carried out between Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) and District Education Officers to train teacher-librarians.

Covering aspects of library management such as selection, acquisition, storage and preservation, the trainees were expected to establish a school library committee to assist in running the school library.


Argues that there is a urgent need in Africa to 'redesign and re-pattern' library services and information flows in order to contribute to economic development and meet the needs of the illiterate population now and in the future.

One of the alternative ways to promote the development and greater use of library services in Kenya is described, which uses camels as the medium of transportation of the materials. The camel library service as an information outlet has proved to be suitable for nomadic pastoralists, who do not form large enough communities to justify the establishment of a permanent service. Considering that traditionally library services in Africa appear to serve the educated people, argues that changes are needed, if one bears in mind that the majority of the population is illiterate.

An evaluation of the impact of the camel library service in Garissa district, in north-east Kenya, is presented, by means of a survey among the users of the service. The survey results show that the service is a feasible one and can provide data for future research in areas with similar climatic conditions which do not have public library facilities. The services offered by a camel library are comparable to those offered by small branch libraries and are recommended to be copied elsewhere.


In Kenya, the camel project started in 1996, as an alternative mobile library service, with the aim of taking information to people difficult to serve through a static library service or a mobile book van.

Arguing that the use of camels in north-eastern Kenya is the most effective method of extending library services to nomadic pastoralists, this article attempts to establish whether the use of camels is a feasible option to take books to people, and to evaluate the impact of the service.

Taking into account aspects such as the occupation of users, book distribution, reasons for visiting the library, users' satisfaction, frequency of visits, and others, concludes that the introduction of camel libraries has proven to be an effective medium of extending library services to nomadic pastoralists. The evaluation also highlights the limitations in terms of resources to provide better services.

Considering the nomadic nature of the lifestyle of the pastoralists, the use of camel services has proved to fit this lifestyle. One of the direct results of the introduction of camel services is the improvement of the educational levels of the population that uses the services. This
project has also demonstrated that the assumption that nomads are hard to reach is false, considering the levels of acceptance of the service.

The improvement of the services offered by the camel libraries programme is recommended, such as building up collections according to the users’ demands, the enlargement of the book-boxes in order to incorporate more variety of information materials, more places for the service stops, and greater promotion of the services.

The first ever library in Wajir District was started. This was a project between KNLS and Nomadic Primary Healthcare Programme, a local NGO. The Ksh.5 million library is set to improve education standards in the arid district. KNLS has equipped the library with 11,000 volumes. Most of the books are primary and secondary education titles, which are intended to boost academic performance. The library is part of a new strategy adopted by KNLS to establish community-based libraries as a result of the dwindling funds allocated to it by the Treasury. The KNLS board chairman, Archbishop Stephen Ondiek, says the new approach has received overwhelming support from communities across the country because people own the libraries and are committed to their success. The Wajir library is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Education who donated the buildings, the Nomadic Primary Healthcare Programme, who furnished it, and KNLS, who provided the books. KNLS bought three camels with accompanying accessories to set up a mobile library. The first camel mobile library was started in Garissa in 1996 and has attracted a lot of public interest both locally and abroad. This camel mobile service is popular with nomadic people.

Braille dictionaries were received at KNLS and will be distributed to all branches. The regional director of the British Council, Mr Bill Harvey, donated them and several copies of the book Race Against Time, a book on Kenyan history written by the first director of the British Council in Kenya, Dr Richard Frost. The KNLS director said that visually impaired people would be allowed to take charge of the Braille section at the KNLS. The service is currently training 15 visually impaired people on the basics of librarianship. KNLS intends to computerize all its branches for better management of its books.


The KNLS has purchased books worth Ksh.1.2 million to be distributed throughout the KNLS network. The Chairman appealed to the Mombasa Municipal Council to allocate land for future library development to cater for the growing population.

Discusses the history and origins of the Kenya National Library Service and describes the following aspects of its role: the International Standard Bibliographic Number (ISBN) Centre; the national collection and depository function; collection development; lending; other services; and the KenIsis computer instruction function.

Highlights the progress and achievements of the Foundation for the Promotion of Children’s Science Publications in Africa (CHISCI), based in Kenya throughout the last ten years. The report presents information on how it is possible to create a reading culture from the earliest ages and proves that children in Africa love books and feel the necessity to read them. Therefore, there is a vast market for children’s publications in Africa.

The activities offered by CHISCI are as varied as problem-solving games, story-telling sessions,
drama, art, and they have proved to be very popular among children, at the same time constituting ways that are available to children to improve their knowledge and different skills.

Considering that the first ten years of the Foundation can be seen as experimental, the challenges for the future relate to the enhancement of the capacity of CHISCI to market its services in Africa, as well as outside Africa, by improving its communication channels. The CHISCI Press needs to initiate the publication of creative interactive books in the areas of Science, Mathematics and Technology. Also, the donor community has to stimulate the children’s book trade in Africa through, for example, a programme in the Annual Pan-African Children’s Book Fair.


Bearing in mind that, because of Africa’s strong oral culture, book fairs serve to sensitize the public to the importance of books, stimulate awareness of their availability, and above all to stimulate a reading and writing culture, the article comments on the organization of a book fair specifically targeting children.

For the author, this Fair is a reminder that Africa has to think strategically about its future in terms of ensuring its scientific and technological development. This Book Fair, organized by CHISCI, together with a series of workshops and other activities, has proved that children in Africa like to read and to exercise their creativity, if they are given the chance.


Reports a joint project between Jacaranda Designs and SBCH, which aims to develop a tour programme to schools in Nairobi, aiming to build an appreciation for books and reading, and also to give students an understanding of the various stages involved in the production and publishing of books.


Noting that the purposes of a school library are to support the teaching and learning processes, to develop a habit of reading for pleasure among the young people, and to develop information and research skills in the pupils, considers that setting up school libraries in Kenya depends on the headteacher’s, school sponsors’ or parents’ initiatives because the libraries are not often included in the school’s master plans.

Although there are no guidelines in Kenya on setting up school libraries, it says that the librarians and teachers in the country have to be aware of the recommendations of organizations like IFLA and UNESCO on setting up libraries in the country’s schools.

The school library also needs to be fully integrated into the educational curriculum, and a close working relationship between the school librarian and the teachers is of paramount importance.

‘Call to convert embassy.’ *East Africa Standard*, 8 January 1999.

The American government donated a computer to KNLS Karatina branch library. The computer will be used to generate income by charging a fee for Internet and e-mail services.

The government has been asked to convert the bombed US Embassy building into a library to serve Nairobi central business district. The KNLS director, Mr Stanley Ng’ang’a, said this would serve as a lasting memory for those who lost their lives and a symbol of friendship between the Kenyan and US governments and at the same time provide library services to the people in the city.


The book is a compilation of speeches and articles written by Henry Chakava, a Kenyan
The book highlights issues of publishing in Africa. It highlights the prospects for indigenous publishing and the mechanics of publishing and indicates the obstacles such as political interference, illiteracy and a poor reading culture. To develop a reading culture Chakava recommends the promotion of readership campaigns organized on a national scale and calls on organizations such as national library services to develop a reading culture.

A branch librarian urges review of the law governing libraries to reflect the current economic climate.

Indicates the benefits of using the Kenya National Library Service, which are located in many parts of the country. Informs readers that the services are extensively used by students, especially during the school holidays. The libraries contain reference documents, which may be used to supplement students’ information. The reference librarian can also be consulted for information.

Informs parents on how they can encourage reading among children by using the Library. Profiles the children’s sections at the KNLS headquarters and Macmillan Memorial Library, which have various materials. The library staff can be consulted for appropriate reading material for each reader. Encourages leisure reading moving away from reading for examinations only.

The Kenya National Library Services plans to put up a Ksh.13 million library in Murang’a through community effort. This will be a joint effort between KNLS and Murang’a Municipal Council. Speaking during the ground-breaking ceremony, the KNLS board chairman urged residents to support the project. A fund-raising held after the ground-breaking realized Ksh.2.4 million.

The KNLS has bought a bindery unit from the Moi University’s Engineering department. The KNLS has been losing more than 7,000 books annually as a result of poor binding. It has also spent huge amounts of money on contracts given to private binders because it does not have its own bindery unit. Librarians are urged to educate users on the proper handling of books.


Issues such as the relevance of the information available, the relation between social poverty and information poverty, users and their information needs, the class struggle and its influence on information provision, and the content and language of information are analysed.

The paper concludes that the question of information relevance is related to the question of equality in the distribution of information among different classes. It also emphasizes that there cannot be information equality unless there is equality in ownership of economic resources and political power.

‘400,000 raised for Makuenu library.’ *Kenya Times*, 27 March 1999.
The Kenya National Library Services in Mutyambua has helped to improve the mean score in national examinations in Mbitini Location. Mutyambua is the first community library to be set up in a typical rural setting characterized by a lack of basic amenities such as electricity, telephone, good roads and tapped water.

The magazine presents feature articles on books and children with a focus on science. The aim of the book fair is to promote a science reading culture among children.


KNLS has plans to develop income-generating projects to maintain and improve its services. The projects will include book-binding, printing and photocopying services.

Gruduah, Othelo ‘Making use of public libraries.’ The Standard Newspaper, 3 April 1994

Encourages students and the public to use the library. Informs readers that all people are eligible to membership. Highlights the KNLS functions, which include, planning and co-ordination of library documents and related services in Kenya. Also, to promote, equip, establish, manage, maintain and develop libraries; to advise the government and other public bodies on all matters relating to library documentation and related services; and to promote a reading culture in Kenya and help in the eradication of illiteracy. The Service has received funding from the government and donor agencies to set up libraries, but the financial resources are inadequate. To continue serving the country KNLS has a new policy where local authorities participate in self-help projects.


This volume contains papers presented at SCECSAL XIII in Nairobi, 1998. Kenya Library Association hosted the conference. Under the theme ‘Information for Sustainable Development’ papers covered topics including copyright and intellectual property, education and training, the information profession, and sector information services.


The campaign was launched during the first Pan-African Children’s Book Fair with the main objective of adopting a nation-wide approach towards a more positive attitude to the reading habit.

The campaign also aimed to overcome the negative attitudes towards books, such as not recognizing the importance of the written word, the absence of the habit of reading for pleasure, and the assumption that the only purpose of reading is to pass examinations.

Some of the activities of the campaign include reading competitions, and the production of books, articles and pamphlets.


The article analyses the trial and investigation into the theft of antiques and valuable material from the Macmillan Memorial Library. The two-headed dragon that was sculptured in a menacing pose pouncing on its prey has not been recovered, nor have copies of some rare out-of-print publications.


Preservation methods include hard-cover binding for periodicals, books are cleaned and rebound with hard covers. Microfiche are stored vertically inside cartons and microfilm is kept in cardboard boxes. Users, light and insects destroy library materials. Preservation and conservation at KNLS is unsatisfactory. Information professionals should be sensitized to the importance
of preserving library materials. A detector machine should be installed at the exit to prevent theft. Preservation methods should be enhanced.

Contains news and feature articles on the library services and administrative issues.

Contains news and feature articles on the library services and administrative issues. This issue focuses on outreach services. These include the camel mobile library, school book-boxes and community based libraries.


The guide provides information on membership and use of the library. This is a generic guide to be used in 11 branches.

This is a list of all serial titles published in Kenya. Foreign serials of interest in Kenya and regional inter-governmental and private organizations based in Kenya are also included in the Directory. These records are intended to further bibliographic needs of Kenya and to a certain extent facilitate inter-library lending and other forms of library co-operation among the local and international information/library communities. This Directory lists serials and periodicals in classified subject sequence. Bibliographic data for the serials listed are based on the serials collection at the Kenya National Library Service.

Kenyans have been urged to develop a reading culture, which will enhance development. A pilot project in Karatina was introduced in which the local community equips book-boxes for use by primary schools. The head teachers have been requested to ease the teaching schedule for teacher librarians so that they can attend to library duties.

Choosing books for children is both a challenging and enjoyable job, which calls for care and consideration from the librarian or teacher doing it. The factors that have to be taken into consideration when choosing books for children include characterization, language style, the setting, illustrations, physical format, and the paper used, among others. Children have to be able to identify with the story, which in turn has to follow a logical structure. It suggests that when selecting books for children, the librarian or teacher should avoid using their own criteria, and always take the child reader into consideration.

This is a complaint from a concerned library user in Kisii, commenting on the failing ceiling board all over the library, particularly the reading area where he narrowly escaped when a falling board fell next to his seat. Readers have complained through the library suggestion box but nothing has been done about it.

KNLS has an AIDS-awareness unit, which provides books, reference services, video shows and lectures on the disease. KNLS is translating some of the books by local and foreign doctors into vernacular languages, including books by the World Health Organization. Donors are urged to assist the library in funding the translation project.

'KNLS has a role in improving workers welfare.' *Sunday Times*, 1 May 1994.

This article was part of a Labour Day supplement providing information for the Kenyan worker. Explains the services KNLS offers to workers. These include relevant books to support vocational trainees in polytechnic colleges and other training institutions, and materials for new literates. Information on local books is also available through the *Kenya National Bibliography*.


The book-box service introduced by the KNLS expects students to read at least 36 different titles in nine months. Rather than wait for readers to come to the library, KNLS has decided to take books to readers.

'KNLS Muranga ground-breaking supplement.' *Daily Nation*, 14 May 1999.

A community library in Murang’a district will be ready at the end of the year; this is a result of a four-year strategic plan by KNLS to establish a facility in the populous district. Speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony for the library in town, the Director, Mr S. K. Ng’ang’a, said the library would enable local people to access information cheaply and easily. He added that once the Murang’a library is complete, it would relieve residents who have had to travel long distances to Thika, Karatina or Nyeri for library services.

The Murang’a library will house all library services; an exhibition and a conference hall will be implemented in three phases. It is expected to cost Ksh.13 million. When completed, it will benefit 40,000 people in the municipality and 2 million people in the Murang’a environs. The library will improve educational standards in the area. It will provide the following services: children library services; adult lending services; mobile lending services; reference service materials; services to institutions; Braille services; AID-awareness services; book-boxes; book donations; national reference and bibliographic services.

Under the new approach to library construction, using cost-sharing measures, communities are required to provide physical facilities while the Board undertakes book-stocking, staffing and provision of recurrent expenditure. To date, six community libraries have been constructed in Kibwezi, Laikipia, Naivasha, Mityambua and Wajir. Plans are under way to establish other libraries in Mwingi, Nyilimi and Uholor.

For sustainability, the project should incorporate income-generating activities. For the purpose of sustainability, a local advisory committee must be formed consisting of chairman (district commissioner), secretary (area librarian), members (district education officer, division education officer, district social development officer, local authority representative), *ex officio* (KNLS Board representative) and five other members.

'KNLS seeks Ksh.10 million to rehabilitate libraries.' *Kenya Times*, 12 November 1998.

The KNLS needs over Ksh.10 million to enable it to rehabilitate its existing buildings that were adversely affected by last year’s El Niño rains. Nine branches are experiencing heavy leakages currently and the books are in danger of being destroyed with the resumption of rains. The badly damaged branches are Embu, Kisii, Wundanyi and Kabarnet.

'KNLS services for the workers.' *Kenya Times*, 1 May 1999.

KNLS provides library and information services to the Kenya worker. The KNLS Board recognizes that the worker needs information to contribute effectively to nation-building. Established 34 years ago, KNLS has remained in the forefront of ensuring that Kenya workers and the entire public have access to libraries. KNLS is regarded the ‘people’s university’. KNLS stocks government publications, research reports in various sectors of the economy, World Bank publications, journals, newspapers and indexes. It has a total collection of approximately
1 million volumes of books with a registered readership of 600,000 readers. The services offered include information services for visually impaired people, children's lending services, reference services, bibliographic services, institutional/bulk lending, AIDS-awareness services, book-boxes to schools, international library services, library advisory services, referral services, issuance of International Standard Book Numbers, Internet and e-mail service.

Mobile book-boxes have been introduced by KNLS in some parts of the country. This service will save poor parents from the need to buy books. To many of them, buying a book is a luxury. The service involves transporting books by bicycle to schools. A box stays in a school for a month. Nine boxes will be circulated. Each pupil is expected to read a total of 36 books.

The KNLS intends to put up two libraries in every district through cost-sharing. The community will put up the infrastructure or identify buildings, which the KNLS would turn into libraries. So far there are established libraries in Karatina and Laikipia areas.

Launching the National Book Week celebrations in Nairobi, the Provincial Commissioner assured his support to the establishment of community libraries in the city. The Nairobi provincial library services will be relocated from the KNLS headquarters to Buru Buru estate to reduce congestion at the headquarters. A plot where the Ksh.30 million modern library will be built has already been set aside and construction has started and will take three years to complete. The modern library will have a meeting hall for hire to enable it to generate income.

Kontoma, Siyad 'It's a camel library. Kenya Times, 26 October 1996.
The mobile library using a camel to transport the books was launched in the arid north-eastern town of Garissa. The library will visit stations every two weeks for readers to borrow and return books.

Provides a historical overview of the Kenya National Library Service and discusses its branches, book stock, readership and services. Describes aspects of the national library services, the camel mobile library, the book-box project being piloted in Karatina Library, the AIDS information service and the service for the visually impaired. Discusses a community-based approach to supplementing the government’s efforts to establish libraries in Kenya.


The library service must be propped up. Daily Nation, 6 April 1996.
The Editorial of the Daily Nation responds to reports that the KNLS might soon grind to a halt. The Service has virtually no money to finance its operations and its staff are working under unfavourable conditions. The library hasn't bought new books in a long time owing to lack of funds, the books available are old, and some are in disrepair. The editors call on the government to increase grants to the organization and to develop a long-term strategy for stocking and ensuring the continuity of this essential service.


A public library at Ukwala in Siaya will be opened by KNLS to cater for the growing population of school children in the area. The facility will help curb idleness among the youth and improve literacy in the area.
A library in Mathira will be expanded at a cost of Kshs. 6 million. This is a community library and leaders have endorsed the move. A US-based library consultant, accompanied by officials from the American Embassy to understand the problems facing community-based libraries, said she would create awareness to raise funds to revitalize library services in the country.


The book is the result of a study conducted in 1994 to establish the problems of book marketing and distribution in Kenya. It covers all aspects of book publishing including the historical background and its present state. The authors note the factors affecting the book publishing industry, which include the lack of a reading culture and a national book policy. They recommend that the Kenya National Library Service should target children in promoting reading, as they form its major membership. The authors conclude that the publishing industry in Kenya needs to be re-evaluated and streamlined. They note that librarians work in isolation and do not have clear plans to enhance information dissemination. There is a call on librarians to be more visible and show their importance to society.


The research assessed the impact of library and mobile services to schools in Kabarnet. The KNLS Kabarnet branch has assisted in setting up school libraries. The research concludes that the services have made a positive impact. However, the mobile service had reached too few people because of poor roads. The research recommends the setting up of divisional libraries operated by staff with skills to work with children.

Masiga, Maurice 'Library gets Sh.4.3 m books donation.' *Kenya Times,* 24 January 1995.

The Standard Bank of Kenya presented books worth Ksh.4.3 million to the Kenya National Library Service. Library services will be extended to location and divisional level. The Service will provide books suitable for the 8-4-4 system of education. Publishers were urged to donate books to libraries and give discounts on their books. The East Africa Educational Publishers (EAEP) are offering KNLS 64 per cent discount on book purchases.

Mbugua, Martin 'K.N.L.S. stocking 8-4-4 textbooks.' *Standard,* 20 May 1995.

The KNLS will stock books for the 8-4-4 education system. These will be used as reference books. Mobile libraries are not able to operate effectively as they are old models and are expensive to maintain because of the poor roads in the rural areas. Local companies are urged to help maintain the old vehicles and buy other mobile units. In addition to grants and donations to support programmes, the KNLS will soon introduce cost-sharing and other income-generating activities.

Mburu, Mary *Library Services to the Poor in Kenya, with Special Reference to Nairobi.* Nairobi: Kenya Polytechnic Library, 1994. 58 pp. (Student research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement the award of Diploma in Library and Information Studies).

The study looked at the services offered to the poor within Nairobi by Kenya National Library Service, Macmillan Memorial Library, Cultural Council, Islamic Republic of Iran Library, World Vision, Kenya Book Foundation and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). It found that the institutions do not have a specific policy to reach the poor. They have also not effectively penetrated slum communities. KNLS provides bulk lending to schools, gives education on library services to the teachers in schools, and services to disadvantaged communities; however, much of their emphasis is on schools outside Nairobi. The Nairobi City Council library service provides books to schools close to its branches that are near slum areas.

Although most people living in the slums have some educational background, many have
never been to a library. There are no creative and innovative programmes to reach the disadvantaged. The disadvantaged poor are not exposed to libraries, there is no relation between the poor and the library staff. The study recommends libraries to have specific programmes for people living in slums and library staff should have social welfare training.


The objective of this research was to create an awareness of the need to have relevant and timely information on development. The library is very far from its the potential users and offers little relevant information on the economy and Kenyan culture. If the KNLS is to meet its objective it will need to store materials that helps meet the economic, social and political information needs.


Comments on issues relating the use of computers to educate children. It concludes that, although the technology cannot replace the human capacity of imagination, it can be used effectively to support the complex activities of the learning process.


Profiles the KNLS headquarters library, its services to children and adults. The children’s section has a stock of over 10,000 volumes on most subjects. Children in primary school join and borrow books. Many people are interested in using the library but the Service cannot keep pace with the demand for books.


Describes the origins, objectives and functions of the Kenya National Library Service and discusses the services it provides. Reports on bibliographic roles and computerization, and provides some basic information. Also refers the idea of adopting a community approach with regards to the development of library services in Kenya, as an alternative strategy to face the financial constraints and at the same time to continue and expand the provision of the services.

The idea of having a community approach is based on the idea of having the community involvement in the creation of facilities. Therefore, the community is expected to provide the physical facilities, such as the buildings and the furniture, and the library board the technical advice, staff and the materials.


This paper, presented at SCECSAL XIII, highlights measures to promote information dissemination in rural areas. The author, who is the director of the Kenya National Library Services, states that libraries can act as catalysts for individual/self-development. The mass media and public gatherings should be used to promote libraries in rural areas. He highlights various initiatives that have been used. These include the camel library in Northern Kenya. This is a mobile library that uses camels to transport books to communities in arid Northern Kenya. Community libraries have been developed jointly by the KNLS and the community. Under this programme rural librarians are trained in the basic skills of information gathering and management. The materials provided are specific to the people in the region. The author notes that the library needs to be marketed among rural communities. The challenges that rural libraries face include inadequate financing, low literacy levels and poor infrastructure. There is a need to provide relevant materials.
These are minutes of a meeting at which departmental heads of the KNLS reported the achievements of 1999 and presented their plans for 1999. Among the highlights of 1998 include technical assistance to develop libraries in other organizations. The organizations include primary schools, a technical training institute, a special school for street children. In 1998 the KNLS participated in various exhibitions reaching various audiences. Other outreach services included lending to schools. Major information services include a constitutional review materials section and an AIDS index.

The service generated income through photocopy services and hire of rooms. Other units that reported progress included the tailoring unit that made uniforms. Acquisitions made in 1998 included books bought by the Board and donations from Book Aid International. The service bought computers for different sections and installed Internet and e-mail services. Plans for 1999 include establishing community libraries, improving physical facilities to attract more users, including the blind. Computer purchases and training form other major plans. Databases are to be developed and it is planned that the mobile library will use different routes. To improve security the acquisitions unit is looking into installing a monitoring camera. Outreach services will include training for teacher-librarians and HIV/AIDS-awareness seminars. The improvement of physical facilities, especially the repair of buildings and furniture, is required in each branch and this will use up much of the finances for 1999.

To encourage reading among adults, the research recommends that good reading habits be introduced at an early age, and that libraries be established closer to where people live, especially in rural and slums areas. Libraries should not charge any fee. The fee charged by the Macmillan Memorial Library of Ksh.20 for every item borrowed is prohibitive. The government should reduce taxes on book production to encourage publishers to produce leisure books. Library closing times should be extended to after 5 p.m. to enable employed people to use them after working hours. Reading and book clubs should be set up which will cater for those people who have completed school.

The community library is a joint effort of the KNLS and the Naivasha Municipal Council. Books in the library address the specific needs of the community, such as floriculture, which is an activity that has been developed in the area. The KNLS Board chairman said that the service was experiencing financial problems. The Director called on provincial administrators to allocate land for library development. He also asked publishers to submit books for legal deposit and enable the production of the Kenya National Bibliography.
user-education, and participation in exhibitions, operating mobile library and postal services. The study found that these services are important, but need to be diversified to include adult education campaigns and also to target disabled persons.


Kenyan libraries should not be a dumping ground for any type of literature. The Minister of Culture and Social Service, Hon. Nyiva Mwendwa, under whose ministry the KNLS falls, advised the management to discuss with donors the kinds of books to be sent to local libraries.


This research was conducted to establish what libraries have done in promoting a reading culture among primary-school children and to find ways in which libraries can improve the reading culture among the primary schools. Reading in Kenya is mainly for examination purposes and few people read for pleasure. Children now have alternative entertainment e.g. video and cinema. Methods that have been used to develop a reading culture are reading competitions, reading tents, book fairs, current-awareness services, story telling times and user education.

There is need to evaluate current materials, encourage the reading of local books, encourage the publishing of locally written books, and encourage local authors to write more books. Most of the materials that exist in libraries do not meet the interest of the majority of the readers. Library facilities are also very far from the readers. The children’s library section should be improved and reading tents and book fairs should be organized on a monthly basis.


This is a textbook for the training of librarians in Africa. It is written by teaching staff of the Department of Library and Information Studies at Moi University, Kenya. The book defines the library, its role, the types and its history. It also discusses information services, resource-sharing, information legislation, automation and professional associations.


Considering the short-comings in terms of staff in the library system of Kenya, argues in favour of the ‘team librarianship’ principle. Suggests that the main advantage of the adoption of the teamwork principle is increasing staff morale and job satisfaction. However, adequate planning and the building of the necessary infrastructure are also very necessary.


Outlines the structure of Kenya’s public libraries system and discusses its main issues. Considers that the adoption of the ‘team librarianship’ principle in the libraries’ staffing is a useful approach, mainly in terms of staff morale and job satisfaction. Updates previous work in 1996.


This chapter traces the history and development of public libraries in Kenya. It focuses on the Macmillan Memorial Library service based in Nairobi that began in 1931. This service is run by the Nairobi City Council and operates three branches. The services include a children’s section and an Africana collection. The authors outline the Nairobi City Council’s fiscal policies and trends and note that over the years the financial support to the library service declined
drastically. This saw the introduction of membership fees. A proposal was made in the mid-1970s to integrate the city’s library services with the Kenya National Library Services to ameliorate the poor financial situation of the service. However, this proposal did not materialize and the authors recommend that a merger of the two services would be of mutual gain. The service also needs to recruit qualified staff with entrepreneurial skills.


KNLS has a user-education programme that uses methods such as lectures, guided tours, printed and audio-visual guides. The research concludes that the programmes are not effective because too few staff – many of whom are untrained, and thus lack the necessary skills – conduct them. The programme is also not publicized. It recommends that staff be trained and varied methods used.


An initiative by the Mathira community library development committee to take books to schools using metal boxes is gaining popularity in the area. The metal book-box service was initiated because parents could not afford textbooks for their children. The initiative by Karatina branch is an innovative form of mobile library service, whose aim is to supply books to schools in rural areas on weekly basis. Each school contributes money and makes choices of the books they would want purchased by the library. Each school uses the box for one month before exchanging it for another. Each box contains 200 titles. Moving into the interior is difficult, as the terrain is rugged. But this does not discourage the schools. Participating schools have shown significant improvement in the national examination. They are giving particular attention to Kiswahili and English textbooks, which are in short supply. The second phase of the project is to provide reading materials to out-of-school children through organizations and churches.


A new concept in Kenyan librarianship. Ebony Place is a paying library. Books are delivered to and collected from readers.

Otieno, Derek ‘Library in dire need of funds.’ *Daily Nation*, 17 February 1996.

KNLS is in deep financial problems, which have forced it to suspend some programmes. Furniture at the library is in a poor state, the roof of the Maktaba building, which houses the headquarters, is leaking, making life difficult for readers. Some vital books and materials are missing from the library. The library has been forced to start commercial activities such as photocopying and hiring out the premises for private functions to raise funds to keep it going. The library receives few funds from the government and cannot buy new books or replace old ones. The rapid expansion, which started in the 1970s and 1980s, has stalled.


KNLS is fully committed to making reading materials available to Kenyans in a bid to eradicate illiteracy in the country. One way of fighting idleness in the slums is by making reading materials available. The public was urged to form groups and KNLS would assist with books.

Oyuga, Chris ‘KNLS to introduce community services.’ *Kenya Times*, 18 December 1996.

KNLS will introduce community-based libraries in 1997. Community services will involve book-boxes that can reach further than libraries.


KNLS launched the *Kenya Books in Print (KBIP)*, a collection of all Kenyan books in print at the 1997 Pan African Children Book Fair. The publication lists all the printed books in the market.
It is expected to boost the sale of the books. The KBIP will enable the Ministry of Education to easily select books for use in schools. The KBIP includes information on the author, title, form of binding, International Standard Book Number, pagination, pricing, publisher and year of publication.

Oyuga, Chris ‘Library service body gears for better services.’ Kenya Times, 21 December 1996.

KNLS has realized the need for community-based services and has embarked on the onerous but novel task. It has introduced the camel mobile service in the arid north-eastern region, a book-box service and a Braille library service. Other new services introduced at KNLS are an inter-library lending system, an AIDS-awareness service, and training for the private and public sector in library management. These services have gained the KNLS international recognition and made it the national agency for the International Standard Book Number. It is also a depository of World Bank publications.


Lack of funds is one of the obstacles facing library growth and has led to dependence on book donation. Another problem is the theft of books. The service will begin various projects to sustain the huge non-profit making organization. These include photocopying services, cost-sharing and printing, hire of its halls for private functions and will put up nurseries and pre-primary schools. Membership fees will also be introduced. The service plans to computerize its operations.


The article decries the poor state of KNLS. Adds that the books on offer are irrelevant to the needs of users. The libraries are also located in inaccessible places. Lack of funds has handicapped library growth. The organization lacks funds to buy books and relies solely on donors.


Comments on the life of Mrs. Elizabeth Gaita, a person who is devoting her professional life to the development of libraries in Kenya, particularly school and mobile libraries.

Training school librarians and teaching library skills to the pupils are among the priorities of Mrs Gaita. The successes and some frustrations of her work are mentioned.


For a long time public libraries in Kenya have been regarded as a place for school children. Public librarians have been challenged to attract adults and professionals as part of their clientele. The government has increased the organization’s recurrent budget to Ksh.1.4 million and the annual development budget to Ksh.300,000 during the current financial year, which is earmarked for the building of two libraries, Buru Buru, in Nairobi and in Nakuru.


Communities have been urged to set up libraries on a self-help basis because of hard economic times facing the country. The KNLS cannot construct libraries everywhere. However, KNLS would help in stocking the libraries with books, employ the staff and take over the recurrent expenditure. It is still committed to the fourth government development plan, which stipulates the establishment of libraries up to the village level throughout the country.


Thirty years after Independence, the national public library services of East, West and Southern African countries are placed low on national lists of priorities, the government funds are scarce, and, in consequence, the library movement in Africa cannot be deemed a success.
This article defends the view that an analysis of the library movement in Africa, citing the example of Kenya as a case study, requires an understanding of its historical dimension. The article gives some details of the Kenyan library movement, considering that the Kenya National Library service was a creation of the departing colonial state and did not have roots in the Kenyan society.

In consequence, taking Kenya as a typical example in Africa, the public library systems in Africa have failed to grow and develop symbiotically with society, and libraries have not played a significant role in social development, in the opinion of African governments. It is believed that, from the historical point of view, it is not possible to expect governments to support the development of national library systems.

In order to have adequate libraries and information services, it is argued that the creation of libraries according to need, and initiatives at local and community levels, have to be encouraged.

The first community library, set up in Karatina in 1991, continues to attract many readers. The community donated the library’s building and furniture while the KNLS provided the books and personnel to run the library. A second community library was opened in Naivasha in April last year. Rural children can develop good reading habits.

Relates the start of Jacaranda Designs in Kenya, a company which publishes for children. Explains the remarkable success of the company, where team work and the attention given to the reality of the country are the major factors. Notes that the books for children published by Jacaranda Designs are also sold outside Kenya. States that Jacaranda Designs offers Africa’s children the chance to explore the familiar with pride, their full-colour and high-standard products presenting at the same time Africa’s best writing and artistic talents for children.

KNLS Board is bracing for tough times following the liberalization of the public sector. It has endorsed the review of the KNLS Act to keep abreast with modern information technology. It is a great challenge to the sector when the public is becoming increasingly aware of the value of information as a necessary ingredient in the country national, social and economic development. The review will ensure that the service meets the needs and aspirations of Kenyans who are now exposed to the Internet.

The Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) will soon establish units to cater for the blind in all its branches country-wide. The board chairman, Archbishop Stephen Ondiek, said that the KNLS was looking for local and international donors to help it establish facilities for visually impaired Kenyans. The British government will sponsor the training of staff in the handling of visually impaired readers. The libraries will liaise with the institutions dealing with the blind to acquire appropriate materials. Talking books and audio services will help the blind. A central distribution system should be created where the blind could access reading materials without problems of delivery.

The article examines the productivity of journals that published articles on library and information science literature in Kenya between 1961 and 1990, aiming to determine the journal’s productivity, authorship productivity patterns, the language and the subject distribution.

For the study, a total of 523 articles were collected and the major findings include the fact that there are no articles written in Kiswahili, the national language of Kenya, and that the
most productive journal is *Maktaba*. It concludes that publication in the area of library and information science in Kenya is very low.

This is a complaint from a member of the public on the diminishing role of the KNLS. He suggests that the Board members should be appointed from every province, and that services should be taken to places where they are seriously needed. The government should ensure that library services are established and accessible to all citizens.

Waihenya, Waithaka ‘Library seminar for teachers.’ *The Standard Newspaper*
KNLS and Plan International held a seminar to train teacher-librarians. The theme of the seminar was the Role of the Library in Socio-economic Development, with special emphasis on schools. The teachers were drawn from schools that benefited from book donations from Plan International.

The research aimed at establishing the methods used in the conservation and restoration of printed information materials at KNLS. There is a conservation and restoration policy for print materials that outlines procedures and measures. However, most of the conservation and restoration methods of the print materials are not adhered to. Atmospheric pollution and misuse of materials by users are the most serious causes of deterioration of print materials. Funds allocated for this work are not adequate. The library needs to allocate more funds for the restoration and conservation of print materials. User-education should be extended to inform users how to handle print materials.

The government has been requested to review the KNLS Act. The writer suggests that KNLS should solicit volunteer services from teachers, lecturers and counsellors to give talks to readers on various subjects. It should also start income-generating projects to supplement the funds it gets from the government and donors.
NIGERIA

   The Director of Abia State Library Board reveals that his library has bought only 68 books
   since the creation of the state in 1991.

Abubakar, M. 'Librarians meet, call for adequate funding of funding of libraries.' The Guardian
   5 December 1996: 35.
   A news report on the speeches made at the opening of the 1996 Library Week of the Lagos
   State Chapter of the Nigerian Library Association.

Adamu, M. Habeebs A Study of the Daura Public Library. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University (BLS
   project), 1993.

Adeosun, B. R. Ogun State Public Library Board: Origins and Development. Ibadan: University
   of Ibadan (MLS project), 1999.
   A study of the origin and development of Ogun State Public Library. The study concludes that
   the Library's enabling law has had no positive impact on its fortunes and that the library lacks
   adequate funds and up-to-date books to fulfil its role as an educational, cultural, informational
   and recreational institution.

Adimorah, E. N. O. The Best Structure of Offering Public Library Services in Nigeria. Paper
   presented at the conference of Chief Executives of Library Boards in Nigeria. Ibadan, 2–6 July
   1995. 20 pp. [Unpublished.]
   Considers that public libraries, as any other institution, are affected by societal demands, the
   environment and the culture of where they operate. Therefore, the present situation, marked
   by the information revolution, calls for library emancipation towards the new reality. In terms
   of practical action, the information revolution calls for the re-examination of public libraries' strategic plans, their mission statements, continuous professional training, the introduction of new services, and the application of new information technologies.
   Taking into account the problematic financial situation of public libraries in Nigeria, it is
   argued that the survival strategy lies in networking, resource-sharing and seeking alternative
   sources of funding.

Adio, K. and Oyekola, T. 'Poor libraries impair educational standard.' Nigerian Tribune 27
   October 1998.

Afiadigwe, J. A. Factors Affecting Workers' Productivity in Public Libraries: A Case Study of Enugu

Afolabi, M. 'Articles on libraries and librarianship in Nigerian newspapers.' Libri, 48, no. 2 (1998):
   96–101.
   This article reports the results of an analysis of news items on librarianship in Nigerian
   newspapers and magazines, during the period from 1987 to 1993, in terms of topics and library
   types. It concludes that the government-owned newspapers publish more items about libraries
   than the private-sector newspapers. The topical distribution includes library services, the role
   of libraries, library establishment and library improvements. Concludes that public libraries
   received the highest attention, followed by school libraries. The author argues that the output
   about libraries in newspapers is generally low and attributes this to the fact that librarians
   have not been aggressive enough in using the press to promote libraries and librarianship
   activities.

Ahmad, B. and Ahmad, I. I. Inter-library Exchange Services in Jigawa State Public Libraries.
   Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University (BLS project), 1994.


The newspaper coverage on libraries in Nigeria, from 1989 to 1993 was the focus of analysis. The aims of the study were to determine the highest number of items published on librarianship, which subject areas were covered, and what type of libraries were the most cited. The highest number of items published were found in the *Daily Times* newspaper, with the subject areas being services and resources offered. Public libraries are among the most cited types of libraries. Additionally, the increasing number of news items on libraries issues shows that there is an increased interest in libraries in Nigeria.


Describes the characteristics of rural Nigerians and discusses the efforts of the government in the sphere of rural development. Emphasizes the issue of free access to information by rural people and sets out the information needs of Nigerian rural people. Explains how libraries can meet the information needs of rural people.


Against the background of the provisions of the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, the paper discusses the implications for staff and resource development in public library services.

Akinboyewa, O. ’Osun State Library is idle’. *Daily Times*, 30 April 1996.

The writer suggests awareness-raising among potential users of library services to encourage the use of the Osun State Library’s services.


The paper traces the history of public libraries in Lagos State, and indeed in Nigeria, from the Lagos Public Library jointly established in 1946 by the British Council and the Lagos Town Council until current times, with the structure of state and local government libraries. Funding is the greatest problem facing public library services in the state. Other problems include an inadequate number of branches and a lack of co-operation between state and local government libraries.


The study was carried out by means of a social survey, using questionnaires, observation and interviews, to generate data from a representative sample of the nation’s broadcast media stations located in the two states. The results showed a general stage of underdevelopment, with inadequate and unspecialized staffing, non-existence of preservation and conservation practices, the absence of collection-development policies and, above all, poor funding.

State radio stations are the ones that give more attention to library issues, in comparison to federal stations. As the survey revealed, there is a need for professional leadership in Nigeria’s
broadcasting libraries, added to good management and adequate collection development. An international perspective has to be introduced by following relevant standards for staffing, equipment, mediagraphic control, preservation and conservation.

Although the government might continue to play a major role in the funding of broadcasting libraries, these libraries need to seek ways of generating revenue. Possible sources of revenue include the commercialization of the dubbing facilities and the film and sound archives.

A critical view of current state of libraries where 'nothing has changed since the early 60s . . . perhaps, not even the calendar on the wall.'


A feature article on the African Heritage Research Library at Adeyipo Village near Ibadan. The library provides services to 'Students, scholars, researchers, peasant farmers, petty traders, craftsmen and local artisans'.


Strategies for national development in Nigeria are discussed and the contribution of public libraries to national development evaluated. It is suggested that public libraries will be more relevant in Nigeria's developmental process if they adopt structures, philosophies and procedures that allow them to reflect the needs of the local communities in the design and orientation of their services.

Keynote address on the role of public libraries delivered on the occasion of the launching of the Public Library Service Fund at the Eti Osa Book Fair, 1993.
The provision of adequate public library services in Nigeria is hampered by the low level of public awareness of the value of libraries and also the inability of librarians to promote the services provided. A coalition of government, the community, the private sector, voluntary organizations, donor agencies and the library association is needed to work together in the activity of defining strategies to develop public library services in the country.

The paper considers the preparedness of public libraries in Nigeria for the information age. It concludes that they are not ready and makes some recommendations for meeting the growing challenges.


The paper traces the history of public libraries in Lagos State from the Tom Jones and Lagos Library established as subscription libraries in 1910 and 1932, respectively. The Lagos Library benefited from a ‘generous donation of $6,000.00 from the Carnegie Corporation of New York’ towards its establishment and had a collection of 5,000 volumes at the end of its first year. Problems facing the provision of public library services are discussed.


News report by the Director of the Kaduna State Library Board at the inauguration of a community library built by the National Youth Service Corps at Makera.


A survey indicating the poor state of library service in Lagos.


The story of the Ebute Metta community’s resistance to the attempt to convert their library into a shopping complex.

‘Community urged to provide public libraries.’ *Daily Times*, 6 January 1997.

An appeal by the Benue State Military Administrator to communities in the State to provide public libraries.

Dankwary, Zakary A. *The Relationship between Reading and Home Background in the Zaria Local Government Area*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University (BLIS project), 1997.


Dipeolu, S. *Public Libraries and Education for All by the Year 2000*. A keynote address delivered at the Second Meeting of the National Consultative Forum of Chairmen of Library Boards, Akure, 29 March 1994. 8p. [Unpublished.]

Considers the role that public libraries could play in the realization of ‘Education for All by the Year 2000’.


In face of the steady decline in government funding for public libraries, alternative sources are explored. These include income-generation activities, such as printing and binding, bookshops, reprographic services and consultancies.
Other forms of alternative funding for public libraries are related to the activities of the patrons, individuals or groups of patrons (friends of the library) and also community and international aid. Although public libraries have to find ways to generate funds in order to maintain their sustainability, it is considered that these fund-generating activities do not exclude the support that the government has to provide.


Issues in public library funding in Nigeria are considered against the background of the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. Data analysed include the budget performance of some state library boards in Nigeria in the period 1992–93.


Discusses the problem of inadequate funding of public libraries in Nigeria in the period 1992–1996, based on the author’s personal observation and interviews. The effects on public libraries, like the cut in some services such as mobile services, are mentioned.

Alternatives to the government subvention for public libraries, such as the use of volunteers, resource-sharing, hiring of conference rooms, setting up of bookshops, staff canteens and the development of printing and reprographic units, among others, are mentioned.

Added to the new ways of raising funds for public libraries in Nigeria, there is the need to create standards and guidelines for library performance. The promotion and marketing of library activities are also recommended.


Library and information science training courses available in Nigeria are listed as a background to the discussion of the Edo State Library’s training programme.


The study, using questionnaire sampling, found that 76 per cent of users of Sokoto State Library were tertiary students using the library for mandatory academic work. Less than 27 per cent of respondents found the books and journals inadequate and 63 per cent rated the overall service satisfactory. Because of some previous preparation of the users, readers found it easy to access the information available in the library. However, it is important to mention that, as user-oriented studies in Nigeria are not very common, this can lead to some false assumptions about the users’ satisfaction or non-satisfaction.

Another problem with the users, considering the fact that the majority of them are school pupils, is that they just use the physical space of the library, and not necessarily the materials held in it.


The only library in Abuja open to the general public is the Readers’ Service section of the National Library of Nigeria and its seating capacity and services are seriously over-stretched. It also lacks books although it subscribes to the Internet. The article appeals to the Federal Capital authority and the Area Council for the provision of better library services.
Enogholase, G. ‘Edo library staff allege mismanagement of funds.’ *This Day*, 26 July 1998. Staff of the Edo State Library Boards accuse state government of mismanaging the sum of ₦100 million meant for setting up post-primary school libraries in the state.


Eyitayo, Samuel A. ‘Information for living: The need for community resource database system in Nigeria.’ *Nigerian Libraries* 32, no. 1 (1998): 1-12. The main question in this article is what information is available for survival within the community and where that information is located. It is argued that, in Nigeria, librarians have not yet committed themselves to the provision of serious community information services.

Considering community information systems as the provision of information about services and resources that can be used to improve the well-being of the members of the community, it defends that in modern times, formal information services are of extreme importance. The building of community resource databases in electronic format are mentioned as a way to guarantee equal access to information by all members of the community. These databases will complement traditional sources of information such as books and newspapers, and also the oral method of giving information.


‘FG enjoined to save library from collapse’. *Daily Times*, 21 July 1997. The Director of the Katsina State Library Board is reported as saying ‘most libraries under the Boards contained outdated books, which ... were of no relevance’.


Gana, F. Z. *Financing Public Libraries for Effective Service.* Keynote address delivered during the Annual Meeting of the Conference of Chief Executives of Library Boards in Nigeria, Ibadan, 2-5 July 1995. 18 pp. [Unpublished.] The role of the public libraries in society is reviewed. It is suggested that managers of public libraries use either the statistics of service patronage or the population of the state as the basis for computing their budgets.


It is considered that the lack of libraries and information centres leads to the loss of some cultural values among societies. Also refers to the fact that the development of library and information services in the past has tended to be restricted to urban areas, with the provision of services targeting some privileged groups.

The paper defends the view that the provision of community libraries and information services is a way out for the development of Nigeria. This suggestion is based on the current situation characterized by the problems associated with the cost of library materials, the illiteracy rate, the lack of infrastructures for libraries, and the lack of a reading culture in Nigeria, among other reasons.

'Government spends N4.2m on library services.' Daily Times, 15 January 1999.
Report of a statement by the Kaduna State Information Commissioner. According to the Commissioner, N4.2 million was spent on the purchase of books, the improvement of library structure, in the local government areas and the rehabilitation of the bindery.

About 3,000 books worth N260,000.00 were donated to the Eket library by the New Business Development Europe and Africa and Mobil Wives in Fairfax.

News report of the pledge by the Soroptimist International Club to rehabilitate the Central Library in Lagos.

In response to the appeal by the Abia State government, a social club, Ilunanya Bu Ndu age group of Amaokwe Item in the Bende Local Government based in Lagos, has pledged to embark on a N2.5million library project.

News report on the opening of the Ondo State Public Library by the Military Administrator.

Iheanacho, O. 'Need for library services.' National Concord, 2 September 1998.
A general advocacy for various types of libraries in Lagos State.

This article describes the state of decay of local council libraries in Lagos State.

Issues in personnel, financial and stock management in libraries are discussed.


Izuora, C. and Okolie, L. 'Lagos FSP commission N8m library.' New Nigerian, 19 August 1997.
News report on the commissioning of a N8 million library to seat 100 readers by the Lagos State Family Support Programme (FSP).


A number of international aid agencies and their role in public library funding in Nigeria are discussed. Agencies identified, and whose programmes are presented with some details, include Carnegie Corporation, Ford Foundation, the British Council and Book Aid International.

It concludes that there is a general feeling among the donors to redefine their role in the light of the new world order, particularly after the Cold War. However, to save the public libraries from total collapse, apart from huge injections of funds, it is necessary to ask two important questions: are the public libraries in Nigeria being sold hard enough to the donors, and is the selling strategy the most adequate?


News report on the appointment of Malam Mannir Isa to succeed Hajiyaa Hadiza Fawibe as Director, Katsina State Library Board.


A feature article on the role of public libraries.


Literacy education for adults in Nigeria have various deficiencies derived from the lack of motivation, poor resources (human and material), bad administrative structures and the lack of proper co-ordination among the various parts involved in literacy programmes.

Nigerian government policy on adult literacy and the role of public libraries in the provision of reading materials for adult literacy are examined. Improvements are suggested.


An investigation of the information needs of a largely non-literate community in Oyo State, the sources of the information and the constraints encountered in obtaining and utilizing it. The study finds that information needs are in areas of occupation, politics and government, social welfare, education, leisure and recreation, religion and health. Sources of information are largely informal and therefore not always reliable in terms of authenticity and timeliness.


Borno State Library Chief Librarian is quoted as decrying the ‘desolate condition of libraries in the state’ and appealing for urgent action to save them from imminent collapse.


Analyses the nature and characteristics of rural Nigeria, considering its demographic profile, community organization and local governance. It suggests ways in which libraries can be tailored to meet the information needs of rural dwellers in Nigeria.


The writer advocates the value of children’s libraries.


News report of a statement by an educationalist.

Obstacles in the provision of information to raise the level of political awareness among rural dwellers are examined. They include physical conditions, administrative procedures and the information system adopted. Public libraries can contribute to raising the level of political awareness among rural dwellers through the provision of extension services, public lectures, exhibitions, translation services and information repackaging.


An announcement of the appointment of Alhaji Yakubu Aliyu as the Acting Director of the Kaduna State Library Board.


The paper considers that information is a vital resource which provides impetus for the advancement of any nation in social, cultural, spiritual, political, economic, scientific and technological terms. It highlights that the information gaps in Nigeria are caused by factors such as the high rates of illiteracy, particularly in English language, ineffective government policies towards the use and management of information resources, inadequate funds for the acquisition and dissemination of information, inadequate information resources, and also a lack of co-ordination among library and information services. Other factors affecting the improvement of library services are found in the inefficient publishing industry and inadequate staff.

As a strategy to bridging the information gap in Nigeria, the establishment of a National Commission on Information, under the presidency and funded by the Office of the President, is suggested. This commission could, among other activities, provide the necessary co-ordination and harmonization of information services by both the governmental and private-owned information agencies in Nigeria. Some other activities of the commission could include the design and evaluation of information systems, the establishment and maintenance of data banks, consultancy services and advice to all relevant institutions.


The Forum of Chairmen of Library Boards in Nigeria considers that, in the information age, public libraries should play the role of information consultants, provide bibliographic services, offer information related to the rural communities, disseminate information for mass literacy, and also introduce and use the new information technology.


Comments on the role of libraries in promoting rural development in Nigeria. Argues that rural libraries should practice the activities of collecting, documenting, preserving and disseminating oral traditions, extend the resources to the area of audio-visual materials, and serve also as cultural centres. The extended activities will permit more involvement of the populace, which is mainly illiterate or semi-illiterate and will facilitate the mass education of rural dwellers allowing them to participate more actively in political activities and providing them with greater ability to make decisions concerning their welfare.


News report of the release of ₦1.5million to purchase books and settle liabilities dating back to 1991.

A news report on the intention of Library Equippers Assisting Reviving Nations (LEARN) to donate library material to Nigerian institutions and organizations.


This study investigates the problems related to the collection, preservation and dissemination of information about the culture of Enugu State, and explores some solutions. It identifies the problems as including the lack of a written collection development policy, insufficient and irregular funds, poor implementation of existing legal deposit law, lack of co-operation with other relevant cultural institutions, inadequate qualified staff and lack of initiative by staff.


The study reveals that the bulk of public library users in Benue State are unmarried school youths within the age range of 15 to 25 years, mostly male and members of the urban élite. The main objective of library use is to study, and users are dissatisfied with public library resources and services. Recommendations include the introduction of programmes for the non-literate masses, improvement of stock, and extension of library hours.


Describes public librarianship in Nigeria during the periods before and after the Independence. It considers that before Independence librarianship in the country was élitist in nature, urban in location, and served the needs of a small percentage of the public, thereby playing a very limited role in urban and rural development. The limited achievements of the public libraries system should also be seen through the socio-economic, political and educational policies over time. Considers that library boards should devise a strategy to serve both urban and rural populations, which would include the acquisition of suitable materials, building of more libraries and providing training facilities for practitioners of librarianship.


Abia State Director of State Library’s plea for ₦4.5 million lifeline to update the library’s collection.


Presents a brief history of public library development in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the start of the library movement in the country in 1910. The author presents some major problems affecting public libraries in Nigeria, which can be summarized as low patronage, which results in poor development of the libraries and also poor use of the materials held in the libraries. The second main problem that constitutes an obstacle for the development of public is financial constraints. Irrelevant and out-of-date collections, an insufficient number of copies, and a lack of qualified personnel are also mentioned.

As recommendations for the development of the public library sector in Nigeria, it is suggested that these libraries should embark on campaigns to educate the public about the role of the library and even on the importance of reading for pleasure. The acquisition of audio-visual materials, as a medium to fulfil the necessities of the non-literate populace, is also suggested.

One way to overcome the financial problems can be the encouragement of more participation by multinational organizations, local corporate bodies, communities and individuals in the
matters concerning public libraries. The possibility of embarking on commercial services, without compromising the free nature of access to information, is also mentioned. Added to the traditional income-generation activities - such as the existence of bookshops, printing, binding and photocopying - public libraries can also offer services as information consultants to the general public.

On the whole, public libraries could have an appreciable impact on the society if only they are adjusted to the prevailing cultural, social and economic conditions of Nigeria. Also the materials acquired by the libraries needs to reflect the users' interests, both in content and format. A change in the view of what constitutes a public library in Nigeria and the formulation of a policy for the libraries' activities, is also touched upon.


Through a questionnaire, the utilization of library resources were evaluated. The results showed that the majority of library users are school children preparing for examinations. Consequently, these users visit the library but bring their own materials. Even in the cases where it is possible to find adult readers, this group is also in a situation where some reading is necessary for examination purposes.

Considering specifically the adult users, it is mentioned that their main reasons for not using the public library are the fact that these libraries are not open every day, the distance between their homes and the library, and also the lack of knowledge of the materials held in the library.

The habit of borrowing books from the library is minimal and the reasons stated are the absence of relevant materials in the library, and the habit of using the physical space of the library but not necessarily being a registered reader.


Provides a brief profile of Nigeria, which constitutes the introduction for a discussion about different types of libraries in Nigeria and draws attention to the overall problem of inadequate funding.


Against the background of the advent of the information age, the author advocates two roles for libraries: as the provider of content and in developing and deepening the market for the products and services of the information society.


A survey of 10 out of 23 local governments in Osun State of Nigeria shows that libraries are perceived as élite institutions. It recommends the provision of libraries stocked with books, posters, pictures and films to educate the rural dwellers on family planning, health care, birth control and political awareness.


Considering the issue of providing library and information services to a non-literate society, the paper refers to the fact that provision at present is not adequate. It goes on to criticize the librarians' attitudes, who upbraid and antagonize the users, and says that this alienates the professional, which has now declined into frivolity. It concludes that if African librarians want to perform their professional functions with some degree of equity, they have to make their peace with tradition, at least with its more known manifestations, otherwise, their work will not be recognized by the majority of the people.

News report on the foundation-stone-laying ceremony of the Tom Jones Memorial Hall and Library in Lagos.


The Lagos Local Government libraries come under focus.


The author writes on the decay of the once famous Lagos City Libraries and concluded that ‘not only are there no relevant books on the shelves, there are not enough chairs to sit’. It advocates that the state government should take over the running of the library from the local government authorities.


A study of the information needs of farmers in Ondo State of Nigeria. It concludes that apart from agricultural extension workers, libraries, journals and government officials should be involved in information dissemination.


News report about community effort to save the 31-year-old Lagos Mainland Local Government Library from being converted to a shopping complex.


Argues that public libraries in Nigeria are used by a very small percentage of the country’s population. The main reasons for the situation are regarded to be the irrelevance of services offered to the illiterate population and the fact that those who are literate restrict their library usage to educational purposes, and therefore stop using the library facilities as soon as they achieve their goals. Some other reasons for the poor use include lack of professional leadership and government support, absence of appropriate legislation and the difficulty of extending the services to outside urban centres.


This article traces the decline of the Edo State Public Library following the decision of the State Military Administrator that all parastatals, including libraries, must be self-sustaining.


A news report on the receipt of ₦3.5 million worth of books for the Ekiti State Library Service from Book Aid International.


A news report on the commencement of mobile library services by the Ekiti State government.


In a regime of collaboration, the British Council and the private sector have worked together to provide library services in Ibadan, Nigeria. The services offered include lending of videotapes, books, periodicals in all disciplines. The readers can also purchase materials in local currency, through the acquisition of coupons.


Opaleke, J. S. ‘Public library service in Nigeria: Clientele evaluation of Offa Township Library.’ Rural Libraries 17, no. 2 (1997): 25–42. After the relocation and enlargement of the public library in Offa, a town in northern Nigeria, a study was conducted to find out who the clientele of the library is, what the state of the services is, what types of collections exist, and some other questions. It was concluded that the clientele of the library is very young, with 50 per cent of them at the age of 19 and under, and 71 per cent of the clientele is male. In terms of overall assessment it was concluded that the users are relatively pleased with the services, but want something to be done about opening hours, the extent of newspaper collections, shelf arrangements and loan periods.

Oyekanmi, R. ‘N10 million library complex lies idle.’ The Guardian, 23 December 1996: 13. A library building costing N10.6 million for the Somolu Local Government in Lagos, Nigeria is being hired out to the public for social functions because the N10 million needed for furnishing cannot be found. This situation, as it is reported, is causing some discomfort among the potential users of the library, which in consequence makes the library virtually empty, unused and look abandoned, apart from during the periods when parties are taking place.


‘Pleasurable world of thrills.’ The Punch, 28 March 1996. A feature article on the Ay-Ess Book Club and Library run by two ladies in Lagos for recreational reading by members of the public.

bearing age in 33 local governments in Oyo State of Nigeria, found that 36.4 per cent, 27.3 per cent, 14.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent sourced such information from the mass media, health workers, personal visits and libraries, respectively.


News report of the struggle to save the Lagos Mainland Local Government Library.


News report of the commissioning of the ₦2.5 million library built for the Eti-Osa Local Government by the members of the Soroptimist International Club of Apapa, Lagos. This is one initiative which involves a considerable number of women, and which shows that this group can make some impact in the economic development of the nation.

Soyoye, O. '₦4m modern library for Ikeja soon.' *Daily Times*, 7 January 1996.

News report on the intention of the Ikeja Local Government to build a modern library.


News report on the call, by the Area Director of the British Council, Enugu, on the Petroleum Trust Fund to rehabilitate all public libraries.

Ude, C. C. *A welcome address delivered at the reception and meeting of ESDC with the visiting Deputy Director of Book Aid International (UK), David Membrey, at Enugu on Monday 13 November 1995*. 3 pp. [Unpublished.]

Gives information about the construction of the regional central library building in Enugu, with funds from the Nigerian government and assistance in terms of equipment and technical advice from UNESCO. It also gives information about the Book Aid International programme in the state, and how effective it is in the provision of information.


A survey of Ozoro and Oleh branch libraries of the Delta State Library Board examined the libraries' facilities, equipment, resources and personnel and found them grossly inadequate. It is suggested that public libraries should look for sources of additional funding and engage in staff recruitment and training.


Study evaluates staff and services at the National Library of Nigeria and Central Library, Lagos. It finds that staff morale and performance are low owing to obsolete stock and untrained manpower particularly at the Central (public) Library, Lagos.

The results of research taken by the combination of questionnaires and oral interviews to assess the impact of grassroots information dissemination on community development programmes in the Imo State of Nigeria. Shows that grassroots information has accelerated self-help development consciousness in the rural dwellers. Projects on social, economic, cultural and health areas were successfully implemented through the dissemination of grassroots information.

Considering that development of any society has a direct link to access to information, argues that rural areas also need information to achieve meaningful stage of development. Although stating that information-seeking in rural areas of Nigeria is still embedded in oral tradition, it is considered that rural dwellers in Nigeria are becoming increasingly information-conscious and that they can be compared with their urban counterparts.

It concludes that rural information dissemination is increasing in Imo State and that this has been made possible by both government support and individual initiatives. Information is beginning to receive high importance in the scheme of rural needs.


A nation-wide survey by the *Daily Champion* reveals ‘dilapidated structures, lack of books, tattered research materials and inhospitable surroundings in the 32 national libraries nation-wide and hundreds of state and local government libraries of which Lagos State alone has 50’.


Efforts by the Lagos Mainland Local Government Council to redevelop a public library into a shopping complex run into a brick wall as the State government orders it to be stopped following protests by residents.

Uwazie, O. F. *Evaluation of Library Services to the Handicapped by the Library for Handicapped of Imo State Library Board.* Nsukka: University of Nigeria (Undergraduate project), 1993.

Uzoh, V. I. *A Study of the Users of Imo State Public Library Headquarters at Owerri.* Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University (BLS project), 1997.

Winfred, O. and Onyeonwu, J. P. *The Purpose of the Public Library.* Keynote address at the Conference of Chief Executives of Library Boards in Nigeria, 13–14 February 1996.

The theme of the workshop was the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994.


A historical survey of public library services in Nigeria.


Bassett, H. 'Bridging the gap ... between children and good books.' *Cape Librarian* 39, no. 6 (1995): 28–29.

The article mentions the low percentage of children exposed to good literature throughout the childhood stage, and discusses the reasons for that. In order to remedy the situation, suggests the introduction of user-education and user-friendly processes, including labels for professional and non-professional staff so that users can identify whom they should consult, the introduction of enquiry desks, regular talks and library newsletters. Services should be more interactive, with meetings with authors, displays and book exchanges.


Newspaper article reporting that funds for libraries and museums in the Northern Province were never received from the Gauteng Provincial government.


Defends the view that public libraries in South Africa can be suitable as centres for the acquisition of literacy skills, and for obtaining crucial information to help economic growth. The areas that should be addressed by public libraries in South Africa are the educational, economic, manpower, business and industrial development. Rural development, urban planning and political awareness are also considered as priority areas for public libraries.


Reports the results of an empirical study conducted among 11 metropolitan libraries and 4 provincial libraries in South Africa with the aim of assessing the policy and practices towards the provision of fiction to adult readers, considering the needs and the preferences of the readers.

Findings showed that library services meet the reading needs and preferences of the adults.
and revealed positive institutional attitudes towards light and medium-level fiction, although only one third of the libraries enquired had formal collection-development policies.

It recommends more analysis on the matters concerning selection criteria, user guidance services, and the training of librarians in popular fiction.


These volumes provide a readily available and valuable overview of issues and developments in the field of public librarianship especially in the Western Cape, but also in the rest of South Africa.


A marketing strategy for the services provided by public libraries could ensure the appreciation, development and use of the information services offered by public libraries. To achieve that stage, a clear definition of the library’s mission and achievable objectives is necessary. An examination of the possibilities of marketing library services in South Africa and an explanation of the marketing concept is presented.


With the objective of finding some insights from the political economy to evaluate the chances of expanding public information services in South Africa, considers that library and information professionals are absent from the construction of the new socio-political order in the country. One of the reasons for this situation is the lack of a connection between library education and scholarship and public-policy concerns.

It argues that understanding public information services in South Africa requires an analysis of the local political aspects as well as its global dimensions.

Two scenarios related to the provision of information services in South Africa are presented. The first one is called ‘public information services for consumerism’, where people are less participative as members of a true democratic society with the right to access information, and more participative as consumers in a market-based society. The second scenario is called ‘public information services for critical citizenship’, where the protection of the public sphere assumes a political dimension and people are empowered to participate in the democratic process, with free and equal access to information services.

It is argued that the future of public information services in South Africa has to be seen through these scenarios.


Argues that libraries in general and public libraries in particular have an important role to play, particularly in an era of profound changes in the country.


Reports the results of a survey about the usefulness of the combination of school libraries
and public or community libraries as a feasible solution to the lack of library services for disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Although recognizing that the simple merger of the services cannot be the solution, argues that the combination of the different institutions can be regarded as a crucial element for the provision of information.

Identifies the role that public librarians are playing in getting children to read and use books.

Considers public libraries to be an essential service and vital to the success of the new curriculum, while raising the alarm about the deterioration of public libraries and the likely effect that this will have on the new education policy.

Based on the UNESCO 1994 Manifesto, which advocates lifelong learning for all and universal access to information resources, argues that public libraries are not fulfilling the role of the school library or education department, partly because of the shortage of staff. Suggests that additional staff from other sectors of the library should be brought to the education department, and these staff have to liaise with teachers, train both teachers and students how to use the library, and identify and address their specific needs. Considers that, only by developing this approach, public libraries will be able to carry out their role in the creation and development of a reading culture.

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Based on the results of an investigation into secondary-school pupils as public library users, the main focus of the article is on the improvement of pupils' access to information through co-operation between schools and public libraries. The results showed that communication processes between public and school libraries were infrequent and that information provision to pupils was hindered.

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Reports on the results of a project carried out among secondary school pupils in South Africa as seekers of information for curricular purposes and the ability of the public library to meet the pupils' needs. The results show that English, Afrikaans and Science subjects are among the majority of information requests. This article recommends that public libraries need to work in collaboration with school staff to ensure effective information provision for pupils.

A study on the public library usage of 500 pupils in Pretoria showed that they use the library with a dual objective, for curricular and also extra-curricular activities, but the majority tend to use the public library for curricular purposes. The survey also showed a significant relationship between the use of the public library and age, gender, school standard and home language.

Considering that a public library plays an important role as provider of materials, facilities and services to complement the educational process, it is argued that public libraries need to take into account the socio-economic and cultural circumstances of school pupils when planning services for the youth population.


Comments on the future requirements for supplying reading and educational materials to fulfil the needs of communities, with particular emphasis on South Africa, and argues that this fulfilment can be achieved through public libraries. As factors affecting access to information, suggests geography and topography, costs, language, technology and bureaucracy.


Provides an account of the book-selection procedures followed by the library services of the Western Cape, Northern and Eastern Cape provinces, and by the Cape Town City Libraries in South Africa.


Considers the hypothesis of developing an information literacy programme and how it can be made effective in terms of literacy skills instruction, by looking at the new curriculum 2005 in South Africa. Suggests some strategies for public libraries to cope with the demands of school children.

Explains the situation of the city of Tygerberg within the structure of the Cape metropolitan area of South Africa, and looks at issues addressing the course of restructuring its library and information services.

This article explores the concept of community libraries in order to understand the ways in which communities have sought to provide a solution to the dearth of adequate library facilities. The community libraries are seen as a model in the provision of library and information services to a democratic and non-racial South Africa.
A brief description of the projects implemented in Alexandra is presented and their major impacts highlighted. These include the Alexsan Resource Centre, opened in 1992, which is responsible, together with the community, for devising programmes and courses for the development of the community. In addition, the READ Alexsan Kopano Library, which serves both the students and the community at large, started in 1991, and is reported to be increasing the study facilities in Alexandra. A specific project, Acorn, was developed with the financial help of the community, with the aim of introducing community library services. Although facing various problems, the success of the project is mentioned and particular reference is made to the importance of community involvement.

Argues that the main reasons why only a few libraries in South Africa conduct needs assessments are the lack of knowledge of the techniques and the inability to find simple and reliable methodologies. Bearing in mind that information centres and libraries are poorly staffed, considers that the ‘critical incident’ approach, combined with self-administered questionnaires and interview protocols, seems an appropriate way to identify users’ needs.
Also discusses the results of an exploratory study conducted in the two rural communities in Natal and Transkei, which attempted to establish their information needs, and analysed the implications of demographic distribution for information provision in the two communities.

Reports the results of a survey conducted in South Africa aiming to identify/review the existing library and information science education and training facilities in South Africa. Presents some specific recommendations for LIS education and training for the provision of information to rural communities in various countries in general, and in South Africa in particular. Concludes that there is a need for specialized training, which can be achieved through workshops, continuing education programmes, and optional courses or parts of the core programme in the topics of information provision targeting communities.

Reviews the topic of the introduction of specialized training towards the provision of information to rural communities, which has to be included in library and information science educational programmes. It considers that presently this area is not adequately fulfilled, and suggests that, in addition to this specialized training, there is a need to establish collaboration with other rural development agencies and to conduct surveys on current research in the field of information provision to rural communities.
This paper discusses the process of development in South Africa, through which librarians operate and face different challenges, providing the direct relationship between information and development. Karelse argues that a more iterative approach is needed in the information and librarianship field in order to be involved in the life of communities to be served. The article provides some examples of the information needs of the people of South Africa.


Presents the general characteristics of rural communities and their living conditions in South Africa and analyses three categories of information systems: the indigenous, the exotic and the synergistic. Taking as an example the case of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, reviews the existing information providers.


In Khunou’s opinion, public libraries can reach the community by introducing such activities as art, drama and music, providing toys for children, and offering career guidance and literacy classes for adults. Co-operation between public librarians and teacher-librarians is also emphasized, within the context of South Africa.


This article explains how it is possible to approach the community to provide the necessary information, identifies some of the sectors that might benefit from library services, and discusses the librarian’s role in marketing those services.


Documents the post-1994 situation in the public library sector, based on a questionnaire survey of the nine provincial library services and the ten independent public libraries. The survey identifies the most important problem facing public librarianship as being funding, arising particularly from a low level of LIS awareness by politicians, (and hence demonstrating the need to lobby effectively). Other factors include the effect of affirmative action on staff morale and motivation, and the problem of competing with other services such as housing, health, roads, etc. It also records the confusion existing in government structures at provincial, metropolitan and local level, resulting in duplication of functions, lack of co-operation, waste of scarce resources, and empire-building.


Considering that little information is available on how information is provided to adults in a developmental context, describes a study carried out by means of interviews with members of NGOs working in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. It was found that information provision was largely a participative and interactive process, with a predominance of the oral method.

The main question this study attempts to answer is how information of any nature is given to rural dwellers. Considering the basic premise that information is vital for development, although it is not easy to identify the direct relationship between access to information and development, the ways in which information is provided, specifically to rural adults, is analysed. Two methods were applied in the study: descriptive surveys and interviews.
The predominance of the oral/verbal method of information provision was identified; however, the printed method is also used. The predominance of the oral approach, although usually justified by the low levels of literacy, is also supported by its main characteristic as a two-way process. Another reason is that the NGOs operating in the KwaZulu-Natal area are open to the idea that the process of transmitting and sharing information has to be participative, dynamic and interactive.

However, rural areas are not as homogeneous as it was thought in the first instance, and some aspects need to be taken into consideration when dealing with the issues of providing information to rural communities. The need for new approaches to librarianship, emphasis on the communication process, the relationship between the information provider and the information seeker, and an understanding of the complex nature of providing information to rural dwellers, are some of the aspects that deserve a more detailed analysis.


In South Africa’s rapidly urbanizing society, many individuals are unable to cope with the demands of city life. Besides information to help them survive, they often need practical assistance to make the provided information useful. The author surveys the literature on community information services in South African public libraries, and on community resource centres, and concludes that they are not geared to providing primary information for survival. The work of the Pretoria Citizens Advice bureau is briefly described to illustrate service provided to newly urbanized people by voluntary workers. The opinion is expressed that public libraries could only provide such a basic service by forming alliances with volunteer organizations.


Explains how the children’s section of the Cape Town City Library was revitalized in the 1960s, within its mission to encourage a love for books, and describes the training of children’s librarians by means of workshops. Also refers to the criteria used for book selection and how the books are made available. Additionally, it comments on the provision of book-lists and holiday reading programmes.


Presents the case of the establishment of a library with the community, focusing on the role, nature and extent of the community participation.

Moerat, N. 'Meeting the demands of scholars.' Cape Librarian 38, no. 7 (1994): 18–19.

Describes the planning of a centralized collection in the Adriaanse Public Library for the Elsies River area of the Western Cape province in South Africa. Discusses problems experienced and a decision to liaise with schools for better provision of materials for students, and examines the benefits of this association for the library.


Reports on a study of norms for community libraries, focusing on Pinetown, South Africa. The five oldest community libraries in the Pinetown public library system were studied by way of questionnaires, interviews and observation. The Pinetown libraries were shown to have made significant progress towards becoming community libraries in the true sense of the word moving towards an active service-oriented system based on the needs of the community.

Defends the view that community libraries are the right model for Africa, and that public libraries, especially in South Africa, need to move away from the passive traditional Western model of public libraries to an active service-oriented system, based on the needs of the community that they serve. Basing its arguments on specific case studies in South Africa, considers that the full transition to community libraries has not yet been achieved, but that there are strong indications in that direction.

Argues that greater involvement by the community, funds to purchase specific materials, and the development of skills among librarians to deal with certain aspects of the community that uses the library are some of the adaptations that are still to be made towards the existence of true community libraries in South Africa.

The author argues that, in South Africa, the public libraries sector has moved from serving an élite to serving the needs of the majority of the people, especially towards the development of communities. It is suggested that public libraries in South Africa can play a vital role in the development of disadvantaged communities by acting as suppliers of materials for educational purposes, supplying facilities to development agencies and serving as a source for community information.

Considering their characteristics, the article suggests that community libraries are more active than traditional public libraries. Also, community libraries must anticipate users’ needs, provide physical spaces for studying, meetings and workshops, and the library staff must be involved in the community’s activities.

As recommendations to achieve the ideal community library, considers that more involvement of the community in the provision of library services, the creation of effective communication channels, the launching of campaigns to promote the services offered, the ownership of funds, and training of the staff are requirements for the success.


Argues that public libraries in South Africa have largely failed to address the information needs of developing communities. Comments on the appearance of resource centres and community libraries since the 1980s as an alternative way of providing information, which an increasing number of public libraries are embracing. Also evaluates the community library system implemented by the Pinetown Public Library in South Africa.


This article explores the relationship between a new language policy in South Africa and the collection development policies of public libraries. The author also refers to the national debate surrounding the language question, discusses publishing patterns and their effects on the future policy of library acquisitions for public libraries in South Africa.

Within the new democratic South Africa, the importance of information and information technology is recognized by the government. This new philosophy can be traced through important public-policy initiatives that have taken into account input from the library and information services sector. One further piece of evidence is a suggestion of ways in which the LIS sector can contribute to the success of the reconstruction and development programme of the government.

The article concludes that the vision of a transformed LIS sector which is efficient, effective and affordable, designed to meet the information needs of all communities, and to promote values of democracy has begun to be seen as crucial by the professionals in the sector.

Considering that the success of the LIS sector in South Africa is hampered by financial constraints, it recommends the building of new partnerships to complement the state’s contribution, and also the introduction of creative fund-raising activities.


A discussion of the major trends associated with the ‘information society’ and their possible impact on developing countries. Opportunities for library and information services in the realization of an information society in South Africa are identified, highlighting in particular the creation of partnerships in the development and spread of multi-purpose community centres (MPCCs).


Discusses the state of South African public libraries and the consequences of their financial difficulties. Provides information on the changing patterns in library usage, especially the increasing numbers of black students using libraries for study purposes.

Ngubane, N. S. Letter to Prof. J. H. Viljoen, President of SAILIS, on the Crisis in Provincial and Public Library and Information Services, 1996. [Unpublished.]


Considers that public libraries can play an important role in resource provision, reader guidance and literacy. The article provides some examples of the building of a co-operative spirit between education and public libraries services in South Africa. Argues that the concept of shared resources between public and school libraries needs to be seriously investigated, but, at the same time, a well-equipped system of school libraries is also a crucial factor.


Argues that librarians should involve themselves more actively in the development of a reading and learning culture, describes adult literacy programmes in South Africa run by the state, industry and non-governmental organizations and discusses the role of public libraries in promoting literacy.


Discusses the nature and sustainability of multimedia as a medium for providing information to satisfy the needs of developing communities by means of an overview of the evolution of the media and methods used for information transfer. Considers that public libraries and librarians in South Africa need to develop a more pro-active approach in the provision of information.


Describes the South Africa books aid project, a three-year project funded by the Department for International Development and managed by Book Aid International. It aims to support local initiatives to improve the quality of basic and adult education in three provinces and to improve access to books in primary schools, educational resource centres and community libraries in the three provinces.

Discusses library and information development in disadvantaged communities and looks at the current requirements of and challenges for an education system in South Africa and at the role of libraries for communities.

Reports on the setting up of a small public library to serve the needs of the community of Soshanguve, South Africa, and the community-development projects based on the library: the ‘Arts for All’ Centre; and the Care of the Aged Project.


Discusses the potential role of the Provincial Library Service to contribute to the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP) in South Africa. As areas that will further the aims of the RDP in the librarianship field, considers the supply of supplementary educational materials, improving the use of printed materials, literacy projects, services to farm communities, and the building of an on-line community information database.

Going back to the 1970s and 1980s in South Africa, traces the emergence of the concept of democracy and focuses on the resistance to NGOs in the country. Also identifies the principles and practices of true resource centres with particular reference to public libraries. Also comments on the conflicting political perspectives affecting public libraries and the practice of public librarianship in South Africa.


Argues that provincial library services in South Africa have an enormous potential as a resource for the sustainable development of the country, although focusing specifically on KwaZulu-Natal. The author presents the challenges in the creation of a healthy and cohesive system of libraries and information provision to the region of KwaZulu-Natal.


Discusses the situation in the Western Cape Province in South Africa, in terms of library facilities, training and guidance of library personnel, and the promotion of library materials.


Vereniging van Staatsamptenare (VSA) and National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) *Griewe rondom die situasie van die Afdeling Gemeenskaps-biblioteekbevorderingsdienis*. [Grievances concerning the situation of the Community Library Promotion Services Division.] Submission to the Gauteng Provincial Library and Information Services, November 1995. [Unpublished.]

Viljoen, J. H. Letter to the M.E.C., Department of Education, Sport and Culture, Bisho, on the Crisis in Provincial and Public Library and Information Services, 5 August 1996. [Unpublished.]


With particular reference to Western Cape, this article provides information about public libraries in South Africa in general.


Assesses the relevance of the theory for the practice in librarianship. Presents the process and the findings of an evaluation of a public library in Durban, in 1996, using a methodology used in project management.


After extensive research in the area of library needs in developing communities, the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa (UNISA) came up with recommendations of what it might offer in specialized education for librarianship practitioners, adjusted to South African conditions and culture, and what can help librarians to gain the trust and support of communities and government authorities.

Libraries, as both independent institutions and organs of other institutions such as schools and universities, are duty-bound to serve visually impaired and blind persons. They are supposed to serve all citizens regardless of their disabilities. There are few public libraries in both the urban and the rural areas of Tanzania, and a good number of regional and district centres have no libraries at all.


This study, through questionnaires, interviews and documentation, aimed to collect information on the problems affecting neo-literates in the rural library environment. It also aimed to identify reasons why people do not use the library after acquiring the desired literacy skills for the betterment of their lives in terms of cultural, political and economic development. Factors considered included the fact that the books available do not provide relevant knowledge, a lack of modern material, and a lack of qualified librarians to deal with the new literates.

'British library phases out school books.' Daily News, 6 January 1996.

The British Council Library in Dar es Salaam has phased out secondary-school textbooks to ease congestion at the library. The books would be moved and stocked by the Tanzania Library Service Board.

'Bureaucracy hampers library services.' The Guardian, 14 April 1998.

Bureaucracy in Tanzania Library Service Board (TLS) has been pin-pointed as the major cause of poor library services in the country. The TLS Director, Mr Ezekiel Mwinyimvu, said that, although it was the responsibility of TLS Board to provide library services to the users, the Board has never incorporated the users into the running the libraries.

'Central Library fees scare users.' The Guardian 14 February 1996.

Paying the Tsh.500 required for temporary membership would be too exorbitant, as it was 'unreasonable to pay that much money just to go in and peruse through a few pages of a book'.

'Central Library users to pay.' Daily News 12 January 1996.

The Tanganyika Library Services (TLS) in Dar es Salaam will next month introduce a new membership registration fee of Tsh.3,000 and Tsh.1,000 monthly for adults and children, respectively. Also the library would also charge temporary readers a daily fee of Tsh.500.


Libraries will still serve individuals, communities and society as a whole. We must continue to seek innovative ways to provide access to information and materials not locally held in our collections. However, physical collections in our libraries will continue to be the primary tools for services, even if we reach beyond the walls of our libraries.


The multimedia resource centre provides various computer games, video, audio materials and other related facilities for children/youth to gain experience and be creative in developing their own applications.
‘Leasing the accommodation did not mean profitising the library’. The result is self-evident.
The accommodation created is to be exclusively used as offices or such educational use as the
TLS Board may permit. The lease prohibits any other use of the space.

Dahlgren, C. ‘The Tanzania Library Service: A review of recent literature.’ Third World Libraries
Presents a bibliographic essay containing a brief overview of the country of Tanzania; a report
on the infrastructure of the Tanzania Library Service (TLS); and a review of recent (1982–93)
literature on the library situation in Tanzania. The TLS has authority over documentation
services, training of librarians, public libraries and literacy campaigns, and it promotes
indigenous literature. Areas of concern covered by recent writers include library education,
security of library materials, the need for libraries based on local needs, and the necessity of
creating a publishing infrastructure.

Dalotta, Elizabeth M. and Nkwakwa, Stella K Promoting the Reading Habit among the Young
Book-industry people should realize that a child cannot cultivate a spirit of enquiry and discovery
without the availability of the right sources of information.

7 pp.
The TLS Board had planned a nation-wide system with creation of a feasible administrative
frame- work which would reflect the growing needs of Tanzanians. In particular, the plan
included the provision of a building in Dar es Salaam to house the administrative headquarters
as well as the national library for Tanzania.

‘Education Ministry pledges to maintain library service’ Guardian, 12 January 1996.
The Ministry of Education and Culture will co-operate with the Tanzania Library Service in
maintaining its services and distribution of books to villages, schools, urban areas and work
places in the country.

Johnson, Duane The Tanzania Library Network: Library Service for the Twenty-first Century
through Decentralisation of the Libraries of the Tanzania Library Service and through
Decentralization of the TLS is possible, and for the enduring strength and vitality of the service,
it is necessary and desirable. Also, it is essential for TLS and the service’s member libraries to
learn, develop according to local needs, and implement the practices of outside fund raising.

Kanshishy, Michael P. Provision of Reference Library Services in Public Libraries: A Case Study
of Tanzania Library Service Board. Bagamoyo: Bagamoyo School of Library, Archives and
Communication is a necessary activity to man, and libraries have a positive part to play in
bringing the community together by providing different sources of information in order to
inform and educate the community in different activities. Public libraries are financed by
government, but the government of Tanzania has now failed to provide enough funds for TLS
and other institutions because of economic hardship. TLS is facing critical problems in
purchasing materials and providing information services to the community.

‘Kapuya inaugurates library board.’ The Express 9 July 1998.
A nation without libraries was a nation without memory. Therefore all libraries which were in
a bad shape should be improved.


The purpose of the study was to establish whether or not adult patrons use the materials effectively. It was planned that the study would contribute to existing knowledge and thereby fill a gap, with the possibility of triggering more studies on the topic.


In brief, evaluation is one of the important steps in the administrative process: it consists of the comparison of performance with the objectives of Library. It allows the library to determine the change in performance for a given time period, and if so, whether the change is in the desired direction, and to what extent there has been change.


The report presents a background to the establishment of the public library systems in Tanzania, to the achievements of the public library system in Tanzania, and the problems.


It is now obvious that change can bring problems. However, the Tanzania Library Service is no longer getting its priorities right. This situation could be equated to the problem facing the whole nation too. Newspapers and magazines are press media as well as essential library material.


A library catalogue can be made available for use, it can be produced in a number of physical forms of presentation such as the printed book catalogue, microform catalogue, etc. Cataloguing is a process of making entries for a catalogue by describing volumes according to fairly well-codified rules.


In order to find out the reasons for the under-use of rural libraries in Tanzania, this study was carried out in the areas of Numerator, Mkuranga and Kisarawe by means of questionnaires and interviews from ward to district level. The findings will contribute to the future development of rural libraries in Tanzania.

It was found that the National Central Library as a public service is not used effectively, owing to internal and external factors. Among them were type of materials provided, information retrieval methods, service offered, distance, and users’ commitments. By means of a literature search, observation, interviews and questionnaires, it was shown that most of the hindrances for effective use of the library are from the external factors. These include the distance from the library, the lack of a reading habit, and limited time.

‘Library services and the impact of charging fees.’ Democrat, 3–9 November 1998.

One thing that was considered was to put a value on the services rendered. When the services were being provided free of charge, there was a feeling that the people did not value a free service. By this move, readers will value and appreciate the services that TLSB offers.


The new system would be applied throughout the country in all TLS’s nine district and fifteen regional libraries.


The automation of the National Central Library (NCL) started in 1987 with you computerization of the National Bibliographic Agency, which is one of its divisions. The main objective was to expand its capacity to collect, store, exchange and use the information needed for development. The main aim of library automation is to minimize the time and costs of running the services and to keep abreast with new information technology. The reasons behind the automation were to decrease workload, to facilitate information retrieval, save time and also to do away with inefficiency and ineffectiveness.


Tanga Regional Library is among the oldest branches of the Tanzania Library Service Board, providing its services in rural and urban areas. In 1996 there was a total of book stock of 36,809 books from 19,889 titles.


In public libraries, measurement motivates people to perform and achieve a higher level of service. The relevant collections that enable the library to satisfy users' needs, and the efforts of libraries to suit users' needs, can be taken as measurements of the adequacy of the services.


The main aim of the establishment of library services was to create a literate and learning environment, so that neo-literates could continue practising their newly acquired skills for their social and economic development. The rural libraries programme, as part of the National Adult Education Campaign, needs emphasis in managerial and supervisory services in order to make its services effective. Thus the purpose of the study in Mbeya rural district was to look into the factors which lead to the effectiveness of rural libraries to neo-literates in four wards of the districts: Ijombe, Uombe, Iwiji and Iwindi.
Malale S. Factors Affecting Inter-library Loans in Public Libraries, with Special Reference to the Tanzania Library Service. Bagamoyo: Bagamoyo School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies (Elective paper), 10 pp.

The paper argues that the inter-library loans system should remain free of charge because fees become barriers in public libraries.


The statistics of attendance and averages of replies obtained from questionnaires and interviews indicate that there is effectiveness in these services. It can be concluded that there is a need to expand the activities in extension services to enliven and perpetuate them. It is true that the services had a positive impact on children, though this is changing as days go by; the children are bored by the monotony of the activities, and therefore lose interest.


Charging for services in public libraries in Tanzania would destroy the reputation of the services that have been established. It would also affect the flow of the information that is required by every sector for national development.


In order to increase membership of library users, service points must consider how to meet the public/community as a whole by using strategies to promote their services, such as vans, mobile film shows, theatrical events and regular book fairs.


Library funds provided by the government are too few to enable the provision of good services to the fourteen regional libraries and the head office. The study shows that in order to enable the existing public libraries to operate in the coming years, these libraries should identify other forms of charges and at the same time enrich those areas of user services. New registration of members, especially of secondary schools students, has given positive indications.


Efficient services arise from satisfaction by both the provider of the services and the user of those services. Satisfaction comes after fulfilment of needs. User needs are all those requirements that attract, support and sustain the interests of the users.


Technical services are very difficult and taxing, and need settled minds. A confused, hungry or frustrated cataloguer will end up assigning wrong numbers or formulating a wrong heading, which may lead to misplacement of documents, and scattering of related material. It is advisable to have a programmed set of incentives. The effectiveness of the administration of a Technical Service Division is dependent upon the application of sound management practices including planning, organization and communication.
Bibliography – Tanzania


The paper discusses the aspect of staffing in a reference department of a public library. The arguments are based on the reference section at the National Central Library, one of the regional libraries of Tanzania Library Service Board, a public library system.


Tanzania Library Service's objectives aim to attain a leading position in establishing and running libraries nation-wide.


The meeting was very important since it enabled members to review the development of services in their centres by comparing the present and the last year's performance. The central board was ready to co-operate with regional boards and advised all regions that have not constituted regional boards that they should do so. So far, great achievements have been noted despite the problems existing in some regions.


Public libraries are supervised, financed and supported by either the central or local government of a country. The wide availability of information can help members of the public know what is being done in other parts of the world. Public libraries differ in their administration from country to country, although there are increasing similarities in the end product, which is the service provided to the users.


The main purpose of the study is to examine factors that affect the provision of a children's library service. Many countries face the problem of providing good services to children in libraries. The usefulness of the collection and the problems of provision of children’s library service at Mbeya Regional Library has been affected by several factors.


In a public library the objective of the system is generally considered to be service. Therefore, library personnel have an obligation to produce constructive research that will give them vital information concerning the needs, desires and individual characteristics of users and non-users, and show that library statistics are important in measuring the effectiveness of a public library.


It was shown that most of the children were not aware of the library services provided for them; this lack of awareness was especially acute for those at lower levels of school. This is because only children who are at Standard Three in primary schools and above are allowed to use the library.

A few local authorities have managed to contribute at least some small amounts of money; however, the majority of them have only made promises, even after the required library budgets were submitted to them well in advance.


Describes the new membership procedure introduced by Tanzania Library Service Board for all public libraries in Tanzania.


The purpose of the study was to find out how non-governmental organizations involved in the implementation of library services, could promote the objectives of the library services. The study also looked into administrative activities, attitudes of the learner, librarians and the environment of the targeted groups/society.


Reading materials should be selected for their interest and information value, and for the enlightenment of all the people of the community in order to fulfil the library’s educational and other roles. The government should be responsible for giving the library services as high a priority as other sectors so that they can serve their users more efficiently, and meet their information needs, especially in the new age of information technology.


Selling library documents will never solve the problems facing information workers. Security and control of materials is a must for every library, and this is one of the most important aspects that has to be carried out seriously and carefully by librarians.


The rural society, being the producers of food, fibres and raw materials, need information as much as the urban society does. This is to enable them to acquire the necessary skills for undertaking their activities.


The use of library services in the provision of education and as a resource for self-study with respect to the disabled is examined. Some of the chapters also deal with the background and statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, literature review and definition of terms, research and methodology.

The most important thing in any information unit is to match the information needs of the users with the services it provides. The library must also improve the ability of those participating in the exercise to meet the needs of their users. Thus, the library can provide current information to the users only when the library collection is up-dated.


The article noted that libraries were study places where quietness should be observed, pointing out that offices in the upper floors and a car park around the library would inevitably disturb library users.


We cannot tolerate this kind of activity whereby a library is situated and surrounded by commercial centres. The place will be noisy, and unsuitable for learning purposes.


Civic Education Centres have a vital role to play during this time, when democracy is gaining momentum in Tanzania. People of the community should understand democratic principles, values and practices.


The paper briefly looks at the education and training of library staff generally in East Africa, and places emphasis on the Tanzanian situation, with examples from the Tanzania Library Service Board. It also tries to distinguish between training, education and development. It shows what skills and knowledge are required in order to provide better services to library users.


Established in the early 1960s, the Tanzania Library Service is still steadily expanding throughout the country. As with any growing organization, the implementation of an effective staff education, training and development programme is essential if quality service to the users is to be assured and the most effective use of resources, materials and new technology is to be facilitated.


It is obvious that story-telling is important everywhere, and it is especially useful in those parts of the world where there is so little or no literature in the vernacular languages and the children have to learn to read in what is to them a foreign language. Story-telling will not only encourage the children to read well, it will also help them to speak the language better. The other advantage of story-telling is to bring children and staff together and share a pleasurable experience.
User statistics and a summary of services from regional libraries.

Tenders, based on bills of quantities, detailed working drawings and specifications, will shortly be invited for the construction of a single-storey regional library.

Contains all new books and other publications produced in Tanzania and deposited at the National Bibliographic Agency of Tanzania Library Service Board in compliance with section 5(2) of Tanzania Library Service Board Act, 1975.

Contains all new books and other publications produced in Tanzania and deposited at the national Bibliographic Agency of Tanzania Library Service Board in compliance with section 5(2) of Tanzania Library Service Board Act, 1975.

Few Tanzanians out of the estimated population of 30 million people cared to improve their knowledge by utilizing the services. The Board was committed to improving services in existing libraries and build new ones in Singida, Lindi and coastal regions.

TLS management continue to review their working arrangements and extend their working hours during weekends. Education is the key to life and books provide that educational to our youths.

Tanzania Library Service Board (TLSB) is charged with promoting, establishing, equipping, managing, maintaining and developing libraries in the country. In order to fulfil this responsibility, the Board provides and disseminates information to all people in Tanzania through its network at village, district, regional and national levels.

Mr Zefania Kalumuna co-ordinator of the Talking and Braille Books on Democracy Project (TBBBD) donated 200 Braille books and talking cassettes worth Tsh.3m during a ceremony held at the National Central Library headquarters in Dar es Salaam.

TLS has embarked on a number of services and improvement activities, including computerization. Children’s activities were introduced in order to attract them to use the library and broaden their minds, and also so that they could relax and enjoy themselves.

Educationalists, librarians and disabled associations should join hands together and press the government to pass an act which would make it necessary for libraries (particularly public and academic libraries) to modify their present buildings so that they became accessible to users with various disabilities. Present buildings of all public regional and district libraries in Tanzania have access barriers that prevent disabled from entering them.
UGANDA


Nakaseke Multipurpose Community & Library Pilot Project. [Promotional leaflet.]


Stresses the need for users to have timely access to relevant, up-to-date, reliable information in Uganda, thus calling for the formulation of national information-system policy guidelines to gear the country to socio-economic goals. Describes the structure, institutional framework, national nodes for sectoral and specialized subsystems, and the target beneficiaries and expected achievements of the system.


Excluding the university sector, this report presents a study of the main factors affecting the provision of books and library services to the formal sector of education in Zambia. It describes the situation of the provision of course books, supplementary books, and library and information services. Comments on the donor agencies’ activities in the book sector in Zambia, including the policies of the agencies and the main issues to be addressed in order to improve the provision of information materials. Some strategies for development, which include policy and institutional changes, infrastructure strengthening and increases in the investments, are also presented.


Argues that the infrastructure of public libraries in Zambia is more in favour of urban population, than the rural population, which in statistical terms represents the majority of the population of the country. Considers that public libraries in Zambia have failed to contribute to the national development, owing to constraints such as financial support and moral encouragement from the government. Other reasons presented are the absence of appropriate legislation and policy regarding the provision of library services. To the proper legislation it is necessary to add dynamic, committed and capable professionals, who are able to modify the current state-of-the-art in order to fulfil users’ needs. The development of community libraries is the most effective method to reform the present public library system in Zambia.


The urgency of the need for a public library legislation stems from the fact that public library services in the country are both inadequate and inappropriate for the information needs of society. This inadequacy has its roots in the failure of the authorities that be, to define the role of public libraries to meet the challenges of the present society. Therefore, only a public library law will create the administrative and financial basis for the development of library services in the country.


Reviews the possible channels for providing library services to schools in urban areas, and recommends that they be supplied through the municipal libraries, with specific reference to Kitwe.


Reports on staffing, membership and loan statistics, book acquisition, and the use of the exhibition hall.


Reports on staffing, funding, the risks of the dilapidated buildings, and issue statistics.
Reports on membership, issue statistics, revenue, and book acquisition.

Hopes for the future – new branch libraries, extension of city library building, re-introduction of mobile library services; statistics. Loans for HQ and three branches total 10,672. A total of K2,883,200 spent on books – about £200 at that time.


The chapter 'Libraries in Education' (pages 86—89) states as a policy that 'the Ministry will seek to make books and other literature more easily available in order to promote open learning and literacy.' It further states: 'Recognising the responsibility of the Zambia Library Service (ZLS) to support a literacy and reading culture throughout the country, the Ministry will improve funding to enable LIS to increase access to reading materials in rural areas, and facilitate it in establishing more libraries.'

Outlines the deficiencies of the National Library Service, and recommends the establishment of a National Library Service Council to co-ordinate and regulate library activities at the national level.

The Zambia Library Service, in its 1997 annual report, presents its mission as 'to inculcate a reading culture'. The achievement of that reading culture is presented through the promotion of school libraries and the provision of public library services to rural areas.

Considering that many problems faced by Zambia Library Service, such as low funding, lack of transport, lack of support and others, result in the low esteem that the service has from members of the society. A conscious effort was made to implement programmes that could give institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, and to some extent, the public in general, an awareness about the role of libraries in the lives of the people. Some activities to promote school libraries included the donation of books to schools and the training of teacher-librarians.

An attempt was made to deal with the question of the decline of some of the Zambian public libraries. This decline can be related to the lack of basic infrastructure, such as water, electricity and telephone lines, and also to the absence of motivation among provincial librarians. The section dedicated to public libraries in the report mentions aspects related to statistics of the public libraries, buildings maintenance, funds decentralization, book supply and services to the visually impaired. In general, public libraries in Zambia are reported to have registered an increasing number of loans to readers from 1996 to 1997, especially in the provincial and branch libraries. The Community Libraries in Zambia project was established to encourage the communities to organize themselves and set up community libraries.

An unpublished article on the first Children’s Reading Tent.

Describes the importance of reading in relation to development, the importance of women reading, and the Zambia Library Service experience of low female readership, and the pilot women’s corners.


Talks about reading culture in general and the situation in Zambia, ending with an account of the efforts of Zambia Library Service to promote reading.


Speech given by Mr Mwanakatwe at a ZLA pre-AGM seminar, 12 March 1991. He is patron of the ZLA, and formerly Minister of Finance, and Secretary to the Cabinet. Examines the alternative methods by which libraries might obtain funds, and concludes that for the last ten years funding for libraries has been appalling. There has been virtually no funding for libraries during this period. Consequently the reading public of Zambia has been starved mercilessly.

‘People should be well informed.’ *Zambia Daily Mail*, 1 October 1996.


The influence of the colonial period forms a background to the primary argument that government is indifferent to the plight of libraries. The library profession has been a major factor retarding library development in Zambia throughout the post-independence era.

Going back to 1929, it shows that the first report on library development in Southern Africa was prepared on behalf of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Commissioners penetrated no further than the then capital at Livingstone. In 1939 the Carnegie Corporation made a small grant under which a limited book-box distribution scheme was attempted. In 1940, and again in 1943, the Carnegie Corporation called for reports on the use of books distributed by means of the scheme to administrative centres, schools and missions in various parts of the country. These reports indicate that the book-box scheme was a failure, because local people did not have ready access to books in administrative centres, the grants for maintaining the book boxes were inadequate, and texts were unsuitable for the reading capacities of the indigenous population.

In 1969 Sleath conducted the only comprehensive survey of municipal libraries. The published results show that within the first decade of independence the municipal public libraries were mainly subscription services and were poorly staffed and funded in comparison with other Zambian libraries. Evidence adduced during the course of this work indicates that these problems have become more acute, exacerbated by the decline in Zambia’s fortunes since 1975.

A new type of library is needed in Zambia if libraries are to play a more vital role in national development. Such an institution must be more attuned to the oral based communications and the communal ethic of traditional Zambian culture. On the basis of the limited research available, it is possible to suggest that such an institution would be based on phono-recordings on subjects of local interest.

Finally, Zambian librarians must take every opportunity to articulate the profession’s potential contribution to national development to the nation’s political leaders. If this is not done, libraries will continue to play a subservient role in the competition for scarce resources in the increasingly gloomy economic atmosphere of the mid-1980s and beyond.


The provision of information in rural Zambia, with particular reference to the role of Zambia Library Service, is discussed. This includes an analysis of the historical functions of rural libraries in Zambia with a view of putting the current rural library scene into perspective. Furthermore, other providers of information in rural Zambia are described. Problems associated with the provision of rural library services in developing countries, with particular reference to Zambia are discussed. Problems include illiteracy, lack of financial support, non-existence of a legal framework, retrogressive social and cultural norms, underdeveloped publishing industry, lack of co-operation between rural information providers, marginalization of library services, and the conflict inherent in Zambian librarianship. The author proposes that the school should provide the location of any rural library, as they often have a room to spare, they have they most enlightened people in the community, and they are widely dispersed. The conclusion stresses the value of community information services that will assist the users in their daily problems and their participation in the democratic process.


In this report of the Zambia Library Service it is recognized that a large part of the book stock in Zambian public libraries is outdated, but that those libraries also receive new books, and, if properly exploited, these should encourage people to use the library services. Despite the efforts made by the ZLS Headquarters, public libraries in Zambia are not functioning as they should be. The new concept of community libraries is touched upon as a way to undertake the provision of information services in the future, especially for those communities concentrated in areas not qualified for having formal branch libraries, but with information needs. The need for adequate legislation regarding library services is also mentioned.


Zambia Library Service *Brochure 11*. Lusaka: Zambia Library Service, 1997. Outlines some of the services provided by the ZLS.

Zambia Library Service *Newsletter* Lusaka: Zambia Library Service. 1993. [occasional; only one issue] News and articles on children's libraries, the reading habit, and the failings of Zambia Library Service; primarily in-house, but also distributed to more than 450 schools.

Zambia Library Service *Report by the Deputy Chief Librarian on a tour of Provincial and Branch Libraries in Southern and Western Provinces* 25th Lusaka: Zambia Library Service, 1999. 3 pp. Brief report on a visit to two provincial libraries, four branch libraries, one municipal library and several library centres.


Zambia National Library and Cultural Centre for the Blind *Services Offered*. Lusaka: ZLS. [Brochure.]
ZIMBABWE


Presents the results of field observation and interviews carried out with librarians and library users in several areas of Zimbabwe, and discusses issues such as library services, training, staffing and funding. The problems found are regarded to be the lack of financial support, scarcity of qualified staff and inappropriate collections. Considers that, in order to contribute to individual and national development, public libraries in Zimbabwe have to improve their relevance and diminish their reliance on Western models of development.


These reports document recent activities of Bulawayo Public Library. This period is important as it begins with the increasing constraints on library service provision in Zimbabwe, such as spiralling inflation and increasing prices of local and imported books, and covers the library’s responses to ensure its survival. By the end of this period, there had been a marked increase in the number of users, despite the financial problems that the library was facing. A new service of talking books recorded on audio-cassettes had been introduced, complementing the video-cassette service, which soon became popular among users, especially those suffering from impaired sight.


Examines the path which was followed during the transition period in the Bulawayo Public Library, where the library had previously been serving an exclusively white and coloured clientele, to the inclusion of the black population. The study also shows the changes which arose in order to meet the increasing demand of library services without compromising the quality of services.


Basing its arguments on the bookmobile services in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, suggests that similar services could be introduced in other developing countries, considering them cost-effective in terms of financial expenditure, book stock and staff, particularly in urban areas. In the case of rural areas the situation will be different, because of the conditions of the roads and other infrastructure. Since school libraries are almost non-existent in Zimbabwe, and also in many other African countries, the argument is focused on the services that the mobile libraries in Bulawayo are offering to school pupils. The major problem of library services in the developing world is related to the need to reduce the costs of the services and make them highly cost-effective. Bulawayo Public Library’s services can serve as a model for other countries.


Although the prices of books are continuing to rise in Zimbabwe, making them very expensive for the vast majority, some positive results of trade liberalization can be seen. In practical terms, liberalization means that there is no longer a limited foreign-currency allocation to libraries, which means that they can buy whatever they want to meet the reader’s demands – provided they have the financial resources to do so. Some suggestions are presented to public libraries to take the opportunities offered by the new trade regime, based on the author’s experience from Bulawayo Public Library. Premium services for more discerning readers – for example, the ‘Red Carpet Room’ and the cassette loan service – are some other ideas advanced in order to promote income-generation.
Doust, Robin W. ‘Standing on our own feet.’ *The Zimbabwe Librarian* 29, no. 1 (1997): 15–16. Starting from the position of under-funded libraries unable to fulfil their mission in Zimbabwe, relates the experience gained from a visit to two libraries in the Netherlands. The provision of first-class services and the desire of the citizens to have good library services are among the reasons for successful library services in the Netherlands.


This Directory counts 81 public libraries in the country, whose collections can be used by subscription or freely. The weakness of the Directory is the fact that the entries do not contain the same type of information, and there is no evaluation of the state of the collections and their use. The publication gives information about different categories of libraries in Zimbabwe with the exception of school libraries, commercial lending, book exchanges and video clubs.


These guidelines are based on four main strategic objectives, which include rural library services being developed in partnership with local authorities and development proposals taking into account available financial resources.


This report provides a summary of library services available in Zimbabwe at that time and of the drawing up of the National Library and Documentation Service Bill.


Gives a statement on the present situation of the library, describing the services and facilities offered. It considers that, in order to attract more members to the library, broadening of the services and making membership more easily accessible are the policies required. More service points, the appointment of qualified personnel, and the promotion of the services are suggested, which will be dependent upon continuing financial support from Gweru City Council.


These reports reflect a continuing decline in the services offered by the Library, which is established by Act of Parliament, and its branches, despite attempts to deal with the difficulties that have occurred.


The article presents an enumeration of the different types of library, and describes rural libraries as the university for the people. Community libraries encourage simple and collective methods for the identification of users’ needs through meetings, study circles and workshops.

Community libraries in Zimbabwe are also helping in the expansion of tertiary education and university distance education. These new methods of education have increased the demand for services from community libraries, since more and more people need materials to help them with their studies.


Challenges the notion that information technology is not useful in rural areas where everything
is scarce. For the author, information technology should be as useful for rural citizens as it is for their urban counterparts. A link between rural development and information technology is presented, considering the accepted principle that information has become an integral part of development. Commenting on the term 'global village', which incorporates economic as well as social and political factors, argues that rural communities need to be part of that village, and, so far, these communities are being excluded. Defending the view that information technology provides alternative sources of information - which does not necessarily mean the replacement of materials in paper format, argues in favour of applying information technology in rural areas, adapted to the political, social, economic and infrastructural context of the areas involved.

Arguing that the library system is run by all the staff, defends the view that the continuing education process must extend to all library workers if the library system is to react positively to social and technological changes.

Considering that, in the past, most attention has been concentrated on the development of library services in urban areas, reports that the RLRDP has developed a new approach to library services, which is community-based. The RLRDP is simple a facilitator of what communities decide in terms of the library services they need.  
The RLRDP envisages affording rural communities access to a variety of information – for daily living, rural development, on gender issues, human rights, environmental issues, education, health, transport, politics, etc. The task is not an easy one, but concerted effort and co-operation among organizations should be seen as a way to achieve these goals.

Reports on the official launch of the ‘Information for Rural Women’ programme by the Danish Ambassador to Zimbabwe, which was held in Nyajezi school and community library in Nyanga district. This programme, by recognizing that girls and women do not usually benefit from access to school and to information, has defined specific action targeting these groups.  
The programme is funded by DANIDA for a period of three years. It covers 36 rural libraries located mainly in Manicaland and Matabeleland provinces. Within this programme, 36 workshops have been carried out, attended mainly by community leaders, and were very well supported by the communities themselves.

Recognizing that information is the vehicle for economic and social transformation, and that access to information has the potential to change people’s lives, considers that libraries have a great role to play in Zimbabwe’s socio-economic development. Argues that municipal and school libraries have to work together to achieve the goal of developing informed and educated citizens. The provision of good library services can be a tool for investment, for community projects and to reduce juvenile delinquency.

This article chronicles the history and development of libraries and librarianship in Zimbabwe.

Argues that no book industry can survive without state support. For the author, this support can take various forms, such as library budgets, cultural promotions or subsidies to stimulate domestic production. The state in Zimbabwe is not in position to devote significant amounts of resources to the publishing industry. In the author’s opinion, the book industry in Zimbabwe is growing and a wide range of organizations have emerged, but this situation has not always been accompanied by a harmony of interests. Planning, co-ordination and the integration of the work of different stakeholders involved in the book sector are some of the aspects recommended for the growth of the book sector in Zimbabwe.


Considers that Harare’s textbook vendors, cashing in on hard times, have forced people to turn to street hawkers for second-hand educational textbooks. A *Herald* survey revealed that the second-hand books sold on streets are 40 per cent cheaper than new ones.

The government’s success in increasing the number of schools and improving access to education for all has not been accompanied by an increase in textbook provision. The high taxes imposed by the government on the book sector make the prices of books very high in Zimbabwe. Within this context, the book vendors found on most pavements in urban centres are selling cheap second-hand textbooks.


Reviews the role and activities of the Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme (RLRDP) in Zimbabwe, which aims to improve the standard of living and the quality of life of rural people. This is done through the provision of libraries and information services in order to enhance the level of literacy and awareness among rural communities. Describes in particular two case studies within the programme.


The first congress of the RLRDP, which took place on 28 and 29 April 1995, was a moment to count the successes, ponder over the mistakes and plan for the future. At this time, the RLRDP had a membership of 46 libraries, and about 500 applications in the queue.


Although the majority of the African population lives in rural areas, these are not seen as a priority for development, compared to their urban counterparts. Examination pass rates in rural schools are below 20 per cent because of the lack of suitable reading and learning materials to support the educational process. The article considers that there are enough books to go to rural areas, but that the attitudes of the intellectuals and librarians in most cases do not encourage information provision for rural people.


Reports on the beginning of a mobile donkey-drawn cart library service in Nkayi, the first one of its kind in Zimbabwe and probably in the whole Africa. The cart library, constructed by a local artisan with advice from the RLRDP, can carry up to 400 books and travels to libraries within a 5-kilometre radius of Nkayi.


Based on the NLDS objective of assisting organizations and communities to establish libraries,
it mentions that the NLDS is currently supporting 33 rural libraries in Zimbabwe through the provision of reading materials.

The paper explains that the NLDS does not impose rural libraries, but provides support when the community is interested, and works directly with the communities on a partnership basis. It also provides guidelines for administration and on the training of staff of rural libraries.

During the Zimbabwe International Book Fair in 1995, the RLRDP’s Manual for Rural Libraries and the RLRDP News Bulletin were officially launched. The manual seeks to assist rural communities in Zimbabwe to operate rural libraries with a minimum support from outside. The news bulletin has the purpose of informing members, donors, the government and society at large about the RLRDP’s activities.

The idea and materialization of the Donkwe Donkwe community library is described, and all the institutions and individuals that helped to transform the idea into practical action are mentioned.
The library is surviving thanks to many income-generation projects that are being developed in the Kezi district, such as, a book-keeping club, a sewing club, and a mattress-repair club, among others. The users are mainly school children, although the library is open to the entire community. Problems within the library relate to the late return of books, a shortage of materials, and a lack of space to accommodate all the users.

In July 1997, the Zimbabwe Minister of Education, Sports and Culture officially launched an improved version of the first donkey-drawn mobile library in Nkayi district, and also opened the Manomano school and community library.

This report is based on a study, conducted by Book Aid International, to determine the situation of book provision in Zimbabwe. The study examines contributions from different stakeholders in the book sector, and gives an indication of what people prefer to read.

Refers to an interview with the Zimbabwe Library Association (ZLA) chairman, who claims that, of the 500 librarians in Zimbabwe, only a quarter are members of the association. The ZLA has as its main concerns improved pay and working conditions, expanded access to information through new libraries, and the promotion of librarianship education.
The need for school libraries is another concern, as is also the fact that public libraries have few materials apart from books. Some of the activities developed by the ZLA to promote libraries include conferences and workshops, participation in book fairs, and the award of librarian of the year.

Presents a short history of public library services in Bulawayo. Since the 1960s, the author notes that a major issue in African librarianship is that African library users are considered to read for study purposes only. Defending view that Africans also read for pleasure, suggests that services to children are of utmost importance. Additionally, adequate and capable staff are vitally important when providing library services for the public.
Section III

Public Libraries in Africa:
A Review of Some Books and Articles
on Public Libraries in Africa

by Cheryll Stringer
Review of Some Books and Articles on Public Libraries in Africa


The state of the existing facilities and collections

It appears from the criticisms that appear in the literature on African public library services that the majority are unable to satisfy the recreational and information needs of the communities they serve; they are often perceived as ‘aloof, inaccessible, expensive, alienating’ (Sturges and Neill, p. 135). There are exceptions – several libraries in South Africa and the Bulawayo Public Library in Zimbabwe are cited – and the reasons suggested for their success are ‘a sophisticated and demanding community’ and ‘an energetic and innovatory’ management style (Sturges and Neill, p. 147); generally, however, the most common role that public libraries perform is to provide a quiet reading/study room for scholars and students.

Many public library buildings are ‘overbuilt’ for the collections they house and the services they offer, and they tend to be situated in urban areas. The collections are often sparse and irrelevant, reflecting inappropriate acquisition policies and a lack of government commitment and financial support. The foreign language of the texts is considered a problem, especially where new literates are part of the community served by the library, and the need for a vibrant, local publishing industry that will provide relevant material is stressed in the literature.

Where there are good collections, problems of information retrieval are noted. National bibliographies are often incomplete and out of date; few databases have been compiled in Africa, providing African information, e.g. PADIS, ESADIS, SADIS; and Sturges and Neill suggest that there is a need for an African system of subject headings (Sturges and Neill, p. 104).

Professional librarians are criticized for failing to respond to the need for change. The rigid stratification of staff into professionals and non-professionals is considered unhelpful, and radical changes in the training of library personnel are advocated to give impetus to a new type of librarianship, less dependent on Northern values and systems and more focused on African community needs for, and uses of, information.

The variety of public library services described in the literature suggests that there is a continuum of library service provision that reflects the broad spectrum of communities that exist in the countries of Africa. At one end of the continuum is the urban Anglo-American model of library service, which is document-based and, if well endowed with the relevant infrastructure, poised to develop the most modern technological facilities for the benefit of its community. At the other end of the continuum is the remote rural community library, which serves an illiterate people who are unable to access written information but whose indigenous information systems are well able to disseminate new knowledge if it is appropriately packaged. It is at this end of the continuum that the library service and librarian become more akin to the resource or community centre and animateur of the francophone African countries.

Sturges and Neill see a pressing need for librarians to be trained to serve in both types of library, focusing more on information than on library science:

The development of programmes which will largely cater for a narrow band of the population who are already information-rich, is not necessarily incompatible with a more egalitarian approach to curriculum design which attempts to develop an information workforce for service to the majority who are information-poor. The two approaches are, however, distinct from each other and it is essential to ensure that the one approach, equipped as it is with the attractions of technology, and a fashionable image, does not overpower the other. Just as with library education, the roots of information science education must be firmly set in Africa (Sturges and Neill, p. 113).
Directions and policies towards which library services to the public in Africa are moving

World Bank activities have indicated that there is a recognition that

Libraries . . . are information providers in a medium (written word) that may not be accessible to many of their constituents . . . This may lead to a redefinition of information solutions away from traditional libraries and document centres into alternative ways of information dissemination’ (Duces, quoted in Sturges and Neill, p. 14).

Olden documents failed efforts at spreading library services into rural areas over the years – postal services in Kenya; mobile libraries in Ghana, Zimbabwe and Kenya; book-boxes in East Africa; reading rooms in Northern Nigeria; teacher-supervised rural library centres in Ghana; and many more. Lack of money and political will were often to blame for the failures.

Mchombu asserts, however, that library services have been rendered ineffective and marginal because they have paid insufficient attention to the information environment in Africa. Illiteracy and poverty are the two major factors that need to be taken into account for any meaningful library service to exist. In addition, he makes the point that ‘the indigenous knowledge systems were [not] regarded as sufficiently important to influence those who designed library services’ (K. Mchombu, p. 150).

This point is taken up by Sturges and Neill:

There is a lack of proper appreciation of the strength of the information system and knowledge base which is an inseparable part of African culture (p. 65).

. . . we find information and other needs satisfied from personal knowledge or experimentation; we find resort to traditional wisdom, through the mediation of chiefs and other local authority figures; we note the significance of markets and other informal meeting places for information transfer (p. 62).

Bases for new directions

Writers on African librarianship have made several recommendations for reforming existing library services in order to make them more relevant and accessible to all communities. Peter Lor, in South Africa, developed ten propositions to form the basis of a new direction. Of these, the following are considered the most pertinent to wider application:

● Libraries try to operate at too high a level, and this level should be lowered, without ceasing to strive after excellence.

● Librarians should commit themselves to the aspirations and values of the communities they serve.

● There should not be discrimination against those users on the basis of literacy.

● Libraries should give a much higher priority to communication than to organization.

● Librarians should accept that community information resources have a higher claim on funding than have sophisticated information services (Sturges and Neill, p. 135).

Sturges and Neill argue in their chapter on ‘The Search for Relevance' that reforming the
present systems is not enough, as they would still not cater for ‘the needs of the poorest, the least privileged and, most crucially, the least print-literate members of society’ (p. 136). They suggest that, in the rural areas especially, there should be ‘a shift from an emphasis on libraries to an emphasis on total information provision’ (p. 136) and that such provision should be based on the following six interrelated principles.

- Financial realism – which takes into account both financial and skills poverty.
- Self-reliance – a service which is not based on imported values and backed with donor money but which emanates from community ideas and physical resources.
- Sustainability – which implies a service that is not imposed but demand-led, emerging from the needs and opinions of the users and perceived as being in their own interests to develop and maintain.
- Democracy – a service that recognizes and respects the different skills within the community. This would mean that urban and rural services would differ radically.
- Responsiveness – a service which offers a full range of opportunities but does this within the framework of preferred communication modalities: the kind of service providing the information that people want, where and when they want it.
- Communication – a service which stresses dialogue and where necessary repackages information in order to ensure that it is understood and correctly interpreted.

Varieties of library service

Sturges and Neill describe the variety of forms of information services which constitute current responses, experiments and ideas. These include:

- Reading facilities, which comprise reading rooms for scholars, students and new literates. These are an essential feature of any library service in Africa. For many urban public libraries this has created problems, librarians often being reluctant to provide for this passive use of their facilities. Analyses of reading room provision in Botswana and Tanzania suggest that the major problems are provision of suitable space and shortage of reading material, especially literature in the mother tongue for new readers. The advantage of such a system is its potential for expansion and evolution into a community resource centre.

- Services still called ‘library and resource centres’ have attracted a good response from funders. While they stay ‘fairly close to the library concept in that they provide for a fixed information point with resource holdings of some kind, the important thing is that they stress the centre as the focus of information-related activities, not merely a repository to which people may come for reading material.’ (Sturges and Neill, p. 186) The Rural Library and Resources Development Project (RLRDP) in Zimbabwe is cited as a successful example of this kind of service.

- Cultural centres, the concept of which originates in the francophone countries, have as their objectives to ‘create better access to modern information media, stimulate activity in education and training in subjects like health, agriculture and literacy and encourage local culture and tradition to flourish’ (Sturges and Neill, p. 189). Staffed by animateurs, they make specialized knowledge accessible to the public in ways they can understand (vulgarisation); and make communities aware of and promote understanding of new knowledge: a kind of consciousness-raising (sensibilisation).
● Technology-based services are dependent on the necessary infrastructure – electricity and telephone lines – being made available. Examples of such services are the Audiothèques Rurales du Mali which uses audio-tapes for new literates, and the proposed Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) in South Africa.

● Itinerant services seek to take information to the people and include mobile libraries of various sorts, or even market stalls staffed by trusted or respected community members.

● Other ideas include co-operating with existing services such as extension work, government institutions, literacy programmes.

**Staffing of new forms of service**

Staff envisaged for the rural information service are people who have their roots in the community – non-professionals, or bare-foot librarians – who are information facilitators in a way that few librarians tend to be. Their need for encouragement and training is considered vital, if they are to staff reading rooms or run study circles effectively, and there are prototypes for such training – curricula for training *animateurs* in francophone countries, and the RLRDP’s system of personnel training workshops.

In this type of service, the role of the professional and para-professional librarian is crucial in providing information backup for the non-professionals. Skills in librarianship techniques would not be as important as skills in the training of non-professionals, information repackaging, community profiling, networking, planning, policy-making and monitoring the published literature.

**Forms and methods used**

Oral methods of communication are basic to the new forms of service. All media used to repackage the information should serve the oral or be served by it. Print, pictures, audio and audio-visual media are discussed and evaluated in terms of appropriateness and difficulties of interpretation, and a variety of methods of communicating the new information are described. The emphasis throughout the literature is that, whatever form or method is used, the service should avoid a top-down approach.

**Options available for strengthening the development of access to information for communities in Africa**

● Librarians should continue to lobby governments to formulate workable public information policies and to fund library services.

● Bülent Yilmaz questions whether developing countries are in a position to consider the citizen’s right to information, beleaguered as they are with ‘problems of hunger, education, economic and political freedom . . . information is a power which plays an important role in solving these problems but governments and individuals generally are not aware of this power’ (Yilmaz, p. 107).

● In the absence of government support, librarians should seek donor funding for the maintenance of library initiatives.
Diana Rosenberg (referred to by Olden) expresses the view that ‘only a stable and continuing administrative structure can provide them [rural libraries] with long-term sustenance. She believes that history and financial problems prevent the public library service from providing this, but that local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as churches offer possibilities’ (Olden, Libraries in Africa, p. 133).

- Sturges and Neill urge a study of the community development literature to see what is being done to identify and meet community needs in other areas, e.g. health, agriculture. Tools for analysing community needs are being developed as user-related research gains in popularity. A 'social audit' study undertaken by Bob Usherwood and Rebecca Linley, albeit in Britain, had the following objectives and yielded interesting results:
  
  - to develop a tool for measuring the social impact of library activities in relation to stated objectives;
  
  - to investigate the social and economic impact of public libraries; and
  
  - to investigate how far a library’s activities, in practice, contribute towards the achievement of its social objectives (Usherwood and Linley, p. 91).

- New curricula should be developed for library schools that will produce librarians who are equipped to cope with the variety of information needs and contexts described above. The courses offered need to be less dependent on traditional Anglo-American models; content and methods used for the training of animateurs in francophone countries could be incorporated. The production of bibliographic tools needs to be encouraged. Systems of cataloguing and classification, and subject headings that are relevant to African literature and contexts, need to be developed.

- Support should be given to projects aimed at developing a reading culture, especially among children:
  
  - by supporting literacy projects;
  
  - by encouraging the evolution of reading rooms into community resource centres by providing recreational reading material. Mchombu states that ‘many a public library survives only because of the large number of school children using its services’ (Mchombu, p. 151);
  
  - by supporting the publishing of children’s books and books in the mother tongue suitable for new literates, e.g. photoplay magazines, cheaply produced ‘Onitsha Market’-type literature. Olden observes that the popular reading material falls into three categories: news, material containing a religious message and educational textbooks (Olden, Libraries in Africa, p. 22). He also states that only school textbooks have a viable market for publishers – schools and parents will find the money to purchase them, whereas other books are luxuries unaffordable for most of the population unless they are subsidized in some way, e.g. the Foundation for the Promotion of Children’s Science Publications in Africa (CHISCI) discount book store and similar endeavours.
  
  - by encouraging and funding projects which are active in providing reading opportunities and resources for children.
● Librarians should be encouraged to supplement stocks of books by the careful acquisition of books from donors (e.g. Book Aid International), and to get rid of books that are irrelevant.

● Investigate further the use of radio in information transfer. It is a familiar medium and is established as a source of entertainment.

● Provide aid for the development of the infrastructure needed for information technology to be used effectively. ‘Those who work with people and seek to inform them on matters of health and hygiene, citizens’ rights or the law, need the very best access to the information for which they are intermediaries’ and it is ‘at this intermediate level that IT can, and probably should, be introduced’ (Sturges and Neill, p. 39). The sophisticated urban public library service may be able to provide full telecommunications and computerized facilities for their users, who are often able to pay a fee to cover the costs. For these users the library’s metamorphosis from a traditional to a 21st century library, as outlined by Donald E. Riggs (p. 199), is a real possibility:

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<tr>
<th>Traditional Library</th>
<th>21st Century</th>
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<tr>
<td>Facility-centred</td>
<td>User-centred</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centralized collections</td>
<td>Distributed collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just-in-case strategies</td>
<td>Just-in-time strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value = collection size</td>
<td>Value = access to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local focus</td>
<td>Global focus</td>
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</table>

He suggests (p. 195) that ‘enabling technology, via national or international co-operatives, may be one of the better solutions for improving local and global library services’. In countries where government policies have deliberately suppressed information in printed form, however, the development of telecommunication information networks is likely to be a sensitive political issue.

● Investigate the potential of the model of the Citizen’s Advice Bureau as a non-government organization which is wholly information focused and could undertake the networking role necessary to direct users to a wide variety of sources of information.

Gaps in present knowledge

● Sturges and Neill contend that ‘there is nowhere contained a fully worked-out and justified set of proposals that could be considered as constituting a new paradigm for these new directions in information and library work’ (p. 226).

● They emphasize the need to take into account the development and communication literature and suggest that there is a great deal of scope for user-related studies using techniques that can be taken from the social sciences. Such studies could evaluate such topics as: the use of the performing arts in disseminating information; the potential for the use of radio; the special information needs and practices of minority groups in communities. They cite Mchombu’s INFORD studies in Botswana, Malawi and Tanzania as being informative (Sturges and Neill, p. 132).

● There is need for an African classification system and subject headings (Sturges and Neill, p. 104).
Conclusion

Mchombu, while acknowledging that the present African library scenario is not bright, remains optimistic that the ‘situation can be turned around through strategic planning, including clarification of vision and mission statements, consultation with all stakeholders, and setting priorities’ (Mchombu, p. 155).

Sturges and Neill comment that the spontaneous creation of new libraries would be a sign of a future for libraries. That examples of these exist – e.g. in Dakar, Senegal, where they form part of community centres, Centre de Lecture et d’Animation Publique (CLAP), and in and around Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, where there is an unusually high concentration of small community libraries – are therefore an encouragement.
Section IV
Public Libraries in Africa: Country Reports

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BOTSWANA

Public Libraries in Africa: The Case of Botswana
A Brief Summary of the Issues

Ntlamelang Baratedi
BOTSWANA

Background

The Republic of Botswana is a landlocked country in southern Africa, bordered on the north and west by Namibia, on the north-east by Zambia and Zimbabwe, and on the south-east and south by the Republic of South Africa. The total area of Botswana is 581,730 sq. km (224,548 sq. mi). The capital is Gaborone. Most of Botswana is a plateau, lying at an average height of 1,000 m (3,300 ft.) above sea level. The Kalahari Desert covers most of the south and west of the country.

The population of Botswana (1996) is 1,504,000, giving the country an overall population density of about 2.7 people per sq. km (7.1 per sq. mi). Average life expectancy is about 59.5 years for men and 65.6 for women. Most of the population is concentrated in the eastern part of the country, in towns or large villages surrounded by agricultural land. English is the official language, but most people speak Setswana, the language of the Tswana, which belongs to the Sotho sub-group of Bantu languages.

In 1990, Botswana’s adult literacy rate exceeded 73 per cent. In 1994 Botswana’s primary schools had an enrolment of about 301,370, and secondary schools about 99,560. Specialized education was provided by teacher-training colleges and vocational schools. About 4,500 students were enrolled at the University of Botswana (founded 1976), in Gaborone, in 1991. In 1994, 8.2 per cent of the country’s gross national product (GNP) was spent on education.

Since independence in 1966, Botswana has been transformed from a near-subsistence economy into one of the wealthiest and fastest-growing countries in Africa. In 1995 the GNP was US$4,380 million a year (World Bank estimate at 1993—1995 prices), equivalent to just over US$3,000 per person. The transformation resulted from the discovery of mineral resources, in particular huge deposits of the diamonds that now account for about 80 per cent of export earnings. Botswana is the world’s second-greatest diamond producer. Diamond production amounted to more than 16.8 million carats in 1995. There are also important copper, nickel, coal, cobalt, manganese, asbestos, and salt deposits. The country also benefits from sound economic management. On the other hand, water is scarce; rain is so precious that the word for the country’s currency, ‘pula’, means ‘rain’.

Introduction to the Botswana National Library Service

The Botswana National Library Service (BNLS) was established in September 1967 by an Act of Parliament (National Library Service Act No. 29, 1967). The main objectives of the department are to make the library service accessible to all members of the community for the purpose of education, culture, recreation, research and information, and to provide a professional advisory service to government, private organizations and other institutions interested in the development of library services.

The service was officially instituted in April 1968. The Department is headed by a Director, who reports to the Permanent Secretary (through the Deputy Permanent Secretary) of the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. There is also the National Library Service Board, which is charged with the responsibility of advising the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs on matters related to the provision of library services in the country. The Director of the National Library Service is Secretary to the Board.
At present, BNLS has nine divisions which are headed by Principal Librarians and Senior Librarians, with the exception of administration division which is headed by the Chief Executive Officer. The divisions are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Management Division</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Reference and Special Libraries Division</td>
<td>Deputy Director (Chief Librarian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Libraries Division</td>
<td>Principal Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Libraries Division</td>
<td>Principal Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic Support Services Division</td>
<td>Principal Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Publications Division</td>
<td>Principal Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Division</td>
<td>Senior Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Division</td>
<td>Senior Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Services Division</td>
<td>Senior Librarian</td>
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</tbody>
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BNLS, like any other government department, is financed from the public funds generated from public taxes and other means. Section 9 of the National Library Service states, ‘There is hereby established a Fund to be known as the National Library Service Fund, which shall be administered by the Permanent Secretary and which shall be used for carrying out such functions as may be conferred on the Minister by the Act’. It goes on to say that the fund shall consist of:

- Such moneys as may be appropriate by law for the purposes of the National Library Service;
- Any moneys which may accrue to it by virtue of any regulations made under the provisions of section 11 or by reasons of any charge reasonably made for services performed by the National Library Service;
- Gifts, grants and bequests derived from any public or private sources; provided that the Minister may decline to accept any gift, grant or bequest which is made subject to conditions which, in the opinion of the Minister are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, or the general spirit in which it is administered.

This Act sets the foundation upon which library funds may be based, regardless of whether they are locally or externally generated. BNLS depends largely on government funds, but because, in most cases, the share of such funds is limited it cannot meet the full requirements of the service. The amount of funds made available is influenced mostly by the state of the national economy and the number of government functions that require funding. The government tries its best to distribute the resources equitably, but not all the services get what they request. There are priorities, and BNLS does not fall among the priority services.

The development budget for the development projects of BNLS has in the past been dominated by finance from donor agencies. The projects are geared towards rural areas because that is where most of Botswana’s population live. The rural areas have limited or no essential social services and, as a result, government has given rural development a high priority; this is also an area which some external agencies are interested in funding.

The public library system in Botswana is characterized by the pressing demands from the public for a library service. Communities show that they are aware of the benefits of reading. Gone are the days when the government, through its officials, would determine which would be the next village/community qualifying to benefit from the provision of a library service. Today such a task is difficult to perform because most communities are demanding a library service of some sort, but the department is quite incapable of meeting the demands out of the limited funds available to it from the government.
Present position of the public library service

Under the provision of the BNLS Act, the Botswana National Library Service is expected to provide an efficient library service throughout the country, to promote a reading culture among the general public, and to cater for the information needs of Botswana. The different types of library services are provided through the nine functional divisions all reporting to the Director. The department has a total of about 140 staff, 95 females and 45 males. There are ten senior management positions: the heads of the nine divisions plus the Director.

On the whole, the library services that have been developed over the years have benefited a large number of Batswana. The services have been extended to more areas in the country and many people are aware of the nearest library services in their area. This fact was proved by the 1994 survey on User Information Needs of Communities served by Public Libraries which showed that both users and non-users of libraries were aware of library facilities that existed in their villages or towns.

The increase in literacy levels and the need to retain the literacy skills acquired through literacy classes have created an awareness within communities themselves of the need to sustain a general reading culture through the means of BNLS library provision. However, the growth and expansion of the library service can never be discussed without identifying problems encountered in the various areas of the service. Such problems may be summarized as follows:

Staffing

There is a chronic shortage of manpower. The demand for manpower capable of providing professional information services has outgrown the rate at which training is being carried out at the University of Botswana. Such a situation is most hard on the Village Reading Rooms as they are run by untrained staff.

Inadequate space and information resources in public libraries and village reading rooms.

This situation continues to affect the service and the general culture of reading in the country. There is need to help communities to construct proper building structures to be used as village reading rooms.

Inadequate hours of service

Due to shortage of staff, opening hours are either too short or inconvenient for the general reader.

Computerization of services

This is a new project funded by the Botswana Government and like other projects it needs adequate financial support and skilled manpower.

Ways in which library services in Botswana could be developed

BNLS operates from limited government funds, and it is for this reason that every effort should be made to consolidate the service to ensure sustainable development. For such consolidation, co-ordination and co-operation with other stakeholders are of vital importance. Although donor agencies like the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) have withdrawn their financial aid from BNLS, there remains a need for external funders to help the Government of Botswana to develop the library service in the country. This includes support to such projects as the new Unit for Service for People with Disabilities.
In the area of library provision in rural areas, communities are charged with responsibility for providing the building structures for village reading rooms from which such a service would be provided. There is quite a pressing demand for a library service from the public as can be seen by the initiatives that communities themselves are taking by erecting buildings from which a library service can be provided. Sometimes communities start a library service through book donations of some kind.

The need for financial aid is necessary to meet the pressing demands from the public. Such demands outweigh the rate at which BNLS is able to provide information materials, furniture and equipment and staff (trained), as is the arrangement. Donor assistance would therefore help communities put up proper building structures for the library service and also help BNLS to provide materials and staff at a rate which can satisfy the demands from the public.

**Concluding remarks**

Public libraries in Botswana are striving to provide a library service which satisfies the information needs of different communities/individuals. Provision of such a library service is through public libraries, village reading rooms, mobile libraries and a book box service. The service is funded by the Botswana government and, as indicated in this report, with a history of being financially supported by donor agencies. Though such donor agencies (like Sida) have pulled out because it was felt that government now has the capacity to sustain the already established projects/services, there is still need to be financially aided, more especially in the area of reaching out to the rural communities.

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Public Libraries in Ghana

Anaba Alemna
GHANA

Background

The Republic of Ghana lies in West Africa, bordered on the north and north-west by Burkina Faso, on the east by Togo, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by Côte d'Ivoire. Ghana achieved independence in 1957. The total area of Ghana is 238,537 sq. km (92,100 sq. mi). The capital is Accra. It is a lowland country, except for a range of hills on the eastern border, which at its highest point reach about 884 m (2,900 ft.) above sea level. To the north lies an undulating savannah.

Ghana has a population (1996 estimate) of 16,904,000, giving the country an average population density of about 70 people per sq. km (183 per sq. mi). The population is divided into more than 50 ethnic groups. The majority of the people depend on agriculture and live on farms or in small villages. The most densely populated parts of the country are the coastal areas, the Ashanti region in the south-central part of the country, and the two principal cities, Accra and Kumasi. Seventy per cent of the total population lives in the southern half of the country. Life expectancy in 1996 was 56 years.

Six years of primary education and three years of secondary education are free and compulsory in Ghana. In 1992 some 1.8 million pupils were attending about 10,000 elementary schools; about 5,700 secondary schools had an enrolment of about 816,000. More than 130 vocational and teacher-training institutions had over 40,000 students. Higher education is provided by the University of Ghana (1948), in Accra; the University of Science and Technology (1951), in Kumasi; the University of Cape Coast (1962); The University for Development Studies (1992) in Tamale; and the University College of Education of Winneba (1995). Total university enrolment is now approximately 20,000. In 1992, 3.1 per cent of the country’s gross national product (GNP) was spent on education.

English is the official language and is universally used in schools, but in 1962 the government selected nine Ghanaian languages, in addition to English and French, for use in educational institutions: Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi, Dagbani, Dangbe, Ewe, Fanti, Ga, Kasem and Nizima.

The economy of Ghana, a country rich in natural resources, is based on the production of a few primary agricultural and mineral products. Following near economic collapse and hyper-inflation in the early 1980s, drastic economic reforms, including successive devaluations, privatization programmes, increases in agricultural producer prices, and cuts in government spending led to sustained economic growth after the mid-1980s. Overall growth continued at a rate of approximately 5 per cent in 1995, due largely to increased gold, timber and cocoa production, all major sources of foreign exchange. The economy, however, continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture. While Ghana has twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa, it remains dependent on international aid. In 1995 Ghana’s GNP was US$6,719 million (World Bank estimate, 1993–1995 prices), yielding a per capita income of about US$390. The estimated national budget in 1993 showed revenues of about US$1,050 million and expenditures of about US$1,200 million.

Public library services

The public library movement in Ghana began around 1928. The pace was set by the Right Reverend John Aglionby, then Anglican Lord Bishop of Accra. He opened his personal library of some 6,000 volumes at the Bishop’s House in Accra for members of the Parish.
In 1946, the public library service began in Accra under the name of Aglionby Library in honour of the Bishop for his pioneering efforts. In 1970, the Gold Coast Library Ordinance 1949 was re-enacted under the title Ghana Library Board Act (No. 327, 1970). The Act required the Board to ‘establish, equip, manage and maintain Public Libraries in Ghana’.

To carry out its functions as set out under the Act, the Board has the following broad objectives:

(i) To provide materials and other educational aids to support formal education and to facilitate and encourage informal education through self-education with a view to developing enlightened and informed citizens and also help develop the manpower needs of the country.

(ii) To act as a Centre for the dissemination of information and other information services by providing books, newspapers and periodicals necessary for such purposes.

(iii) To provide facilities for study and research.

(iv) To participate actively and fully in the national and community activities where possible by providing literature and information for such programmes.

(v) To promote and encourage the reading habit generally.

The Ghana Library Board, as presently constituted, is responsible for the running of all public libraries, including the Commercial Library Service, Research Library on African Affairs and the School and College Department.

The library service is based on the ten administrative regions of the country. Each region has a regional library. Each region has a network of branch libraries that serve the district and rural areas. The book-box service and mobile libraries are administered from and coordinated at the regional level by the regional libraries. The regional librarian is the local representative of the Board and is directly responsible to them. Thus, the regional librarian provides a combination of urban and rural services. These services cover the pockets of literate populations in the urban and rural areas.

By the 1970s the Ghana Library Board had formulated its policy on rural library services. The policy was that however small and scattered the literate population in the rural areas, they have a right to library services.

**Present situation**

Public library services in Ghana have been very poor of late. This is due mainly to inadequate provision of resources such as finance, manpower and library materials. As a result of the poor funding, very little is coming in the form of new books. Low salaries have also affected the recruitment of new staff and the retention of older ones. Most of the public libraries, especially in the rural areas, have become reading rooms for students to read their school materials.

**Community initiatives**

The poor performance of the public libraries in Ghana, led the Ministry of Education to set up a Community Libraries Project in 1986 with the aim of improving the standard of education of pupils in the country. At present, there are six community libraries in Accra. These libraries are expected to serve the various communities, not only the school children. Unfortunately, barely over ten years after they were set up, facilities and services in these libraries are deteriorating fast. The same problems faced by the public libraries – inadequate funding, materials and personnel – have caught up with the community libraries.
A couple of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also made attempts to establish libraries for the public, especially school children. One of these is the Ghana Book Trust. It was established by the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) based in Ottawa, Canada. It has helped in establishing libraries, providing books, and training library assistants in all the regions of the country.

The future

It can be seen from this report that the public library system is not new in Ghana. Nevertheless, the development of these libraries has not been systematic and official interest appears to have been cool and casual rather than active and sustained.

However, all is not lost. There is presently an Act in the Parliament of Ghana to establish the Ghana National Library Service. This Act will supersede the Ghana Library Board Act of 1970. Based on the new local government system which places much more emphasis on decentralization, the new Act empowers metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies to establish their own libraries. It is expected that this Act will create an environment for the improved operation of the Board, and accelerate the development of libraries in Ghana.

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KENYA

A Brief Summary of the Position of Public Libraries in Kenya

Wacango Kimani
KENYA

Background

Kenya has an area of 582,646 sq. km (224,961 sq. mi). It falls into several well-defined topographical zones extending from the Indian Ocean coast upward to mountain ranges reaching more than 3,048 m (10,000 ft.) above sea level. Kenya's main resource is its land, of which about 11 per cent is suitable for agriculture. About one third of this is arable; the remainder is used mainly for grazing. The northern region, covering two thirds of Kenya, is mostly desert or semi-desert.

The population of Kenya (1996) is 29,137,000, giving an overall population density of about 50 people per sq. km (129 per sq. mi). The population was increasing at the very rapid rate of 4.2 per cent annually in the late 1980s; the rate of increase in 1996 was 2.27 per cent. About 76 per cent of the people live in rural areas. Average life expectancy in 1995 was 57 years for males and 56.8 years for females. Collecting accurate population statistics is complicated by the large-scale movement of nomadic groups and of the influx of refugees across borders.

Nearly all the African ethnic groups in Kenya have their own distinct languages, some of which are closely related. The official language is Swahili, which has become a major African language since the early 20th century. Kikuyu, Luo, and English are also widely used.

Education is not compulsory, but the first eight years of primary school are provided free by the government. In 1993 some 5.4 million pupils attended about 15,800 primary schools with a teaching staff of more than 173,000, and some 517,500 students attended more than 2,600 secondary and teacher-training schools staffed by some 18,400 teachers. Kenya has five public universities: the University of Nairobi (founded 1956) and Kenyatta University (1972), both in Nairobi; Egerton University (1939), in Nakuru; Moi University (1984), in Eldoret; and the Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology, and five private universities, i.e. Daystar University, United States International University, Nazarene University, Baraton University, and Catholic University of East Africa. Specialized colleges included Mombasa Polytechnic (1948) in Mombasa; and the Kenya Conservatoire of Music (1944), Kenya Polytechnic (1961), and Strathmore College (1960) in Nairobi. Some 88,000 students were enrolled at higher education level. Adult literacy in 1995 was 78 per cent.

In 1994 Kenya's GNP was about US$7,583 million (World Bank estimate; 1993–1995 prices), equivalent to US$280 per head. Agriculture, including forestry and fishing, is the most important economic sector, accounting for 29 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1994, 19 per cent of employment, and more than 60 per cent of export earnings. Tourism is also a vital part of the economy.

Introduction to public libraries

Two authorities provide public libraries in Kenya – the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) and the Nairobi City Council (NCC). KNLS, which was set-up by an Act of Parliament in 1965, is a parastatal organization under the ministry of Home Affairs, Heritage and Sports; it operates 24 provincial, district and community libraries. The Nairobi City Council (NCC) operates four libraries within the city.
State of facilities

All libraries in the KNLS and NCC networks are experiencing serious infrastructural problems. The El Niño rains gravely affected many libraries in 1998. Among the worst hit was the historical Macmillan Memorial Library where many books were damaged; the Library is currently being renovated. Readers have complained about the poor state of furniture and buildings. Many buildings have leaking roofs and broken furniture. Many of the tasks planned for this year are meant to improve the physical structures. These include repairs or construction of toilets, roofs, furniture.

State of collections

The library collections in the KNLS network grow each year with local and foreign books. Book Aid International, UK, is the major donor of books. The purchase of books has steadily declined owing to financial constraints. This means that the collections do not reflect the publishing output of Kenyan publishers or the needs of the readers. The KNLS Board has requested publishers to offer attractive discounts to enable the stocking of locally published books.

Membership of KNLS libraries has grown, with over 5,000 new members each year and over half a million books borrowed. With this growth has also been increased damage to books. User-education programmes have been found wanting. Damage to books and the high cost of repair of materials means that many books go out of service after a short time. To reduce the costs of repair the KNLS has purchased a binding machine from the Engineering Department of Moi University.

The NCC libraries have not purchased books in over ten (10) years and rely solely on donations. The books at the NCC libraries are old and borrowing has declined. However, use of the libraries by students is high. They seek study space rather than use library materials. The Macmillan Memorial Library is unique as a historical and city-specific collection and it receives many information requests from throughout the country.

Book recovery has affected the collections. Books worth thousands of shillings are lost each year. The mechanism for recovering books has not been effective. One librarian suggests the introduction of punitive measures for members who do not return library materials. Major theft also affects the collections. One of the most startling thefts was experienced at the Macmillan Library where antiques and out-of-print books were stolen and have not been recovered.

The libraries are viewed as places for students, a role that is stated in public functions especially at the launch of new libraries. Community libraries are said to have improved the performance of students in national examinations. For example, the KNLS has set-up a community library in a typical rural setting characterized by lack of basic amenities such as electricity, telephone, good roads and tapped water. The library is credited for improving the locations' results in the national examinations. The Service has also made deliberate efforts to provide books for the Kenya education system.

The KNLS libraries have found it difficult to attract adult readers. The libraries have taken deliberate steps to attract new users and diversify their membership through media supplements giving details on what the Service offers to the Kenyan worker.
Financial constraints

Financial matters have been a dominant theme in the past five years. The management and public have decried the decline in the libraries. An editorial entitled ‘The library service must be propped up’ in the largest daily newspaper, the Daily Nation, on 6 April 1996 noted with concern that the KNLS may grind to a complete halt because it has no money on which to operate. The editors called on the government to increase funding to the organization and develop a long-term strategy to ensure the continuity of the essential service.

The Board of KNLS has stated on many occasions the dire need for financial support. While opening a community library in the Rift Valley town of Naivasha the Chairman of the Board said the service was experiencing severe financial difficulties. The Treasury allocates fewer and fewer funds to the Service, and the allocation now barely covers staff costs.

Directions and policies

The KNLS is determined to continue and the Board had recently begun a strategy to provide library services through community participation. This involves the establishment of community-based libraries. The community provides the infrastructure - the building and furniture, while the KNLS provides the books and staff, and, hopefully, covers recurrent expenditure. According to the Chairman, the strategy had received overwhelming support from the communities across the country because people own the libraries and are committed to their success. To date there are eight community libraries and more are in the offing.

To further ensure sustainability, the KNLS has established income-generating activities. These include photocopying services, printing, and hire of halls for private functions. Internet and e-mail services are offered to the public at minimal fee. The service intends to establish nurseries and pre-primary schools in the future.

Membership fees are not charged by the KNLS; however, the NCC has charged fees since the 1980s as a way to cover the cost of running the library. The KNLS has indicated that membership fees will be introduced in the future. A district branch librarian is quoted in the press as urging for the introduction of fees in order to maintain services.

Programmes

The past five years have a seen the development of innovative outreach approaches to public library provision. The KNLS began a community-based approach to information provision to ensure that rural communities get access to reading materials. This strategy also takes reading materials closer to where people live, making reading a convenient pastime. The strategy is noted in the current five-year National Development Plan, which states that rural communities need to be provided with appropriate information.

This approach involves the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of each programme. The KNLS officers become part of the local administration mechanism to ensure that the programmes are effective and conform to acceptable library regulations.

The now famous camel mobile library serves distant and nomadic populations in the arid north-eastern province. Two such services are operated from two towns, Garissa and Wajir.
The book-box scheme was also the outcome of community wisdom. A community leader challenged the need for library buildings saying, ‘Why do you need a building? Take books to our children and to the farmers on the farms to read. Tell us to raise money for books and we will listen.’ The primary schools book service is part of the rural library development strategy. Local communities provide the funds for buying books and the provincial KNLS library helps transport the boxes, each of which contains 200 books, to different schools. Within a year, nine boxes have reached each school in the programme and a student is expected to have read 36 books. The book-box programme also includes training of teacher-librarians to ensure the proper management of the books.

To meet the current information needs of readers the KNLS has started two services. These are the AIDS-awareness services and the constitutional review information service. The AIDS service includes provision of books, screening of videos, and seminars.

A Braille Unit has also been initiated to meet the reading needs of the blind; it has also trained several blind users on the management of the unit. The unit has received support from the British Council. Other outreach services include the training of teacher-librarians, technical assistance in setting-up libraries in schools and higher institutions, and talks to schools on topical issues such as drug abuse.

According the Director of KNLS, a library is a foreign concept in most parts of the country; therefore there is need to market the concept. Additionally, the library is expected to promote a reading culture in the country. To meet these roles the library has a public relations office that produces the *Kenal Newsletter*, provides information to the media, and participates in exhibitions, such as the agricultural shows and the national book week.

**Options for strengthening information provision**

 Readers constantly request local information. Publishers do not meet the leisure or adult reading needs because of the small market. However, public libraries can be a major outlet for non-textbooks. The readership exists. More people would be encouraged to join libraries if they knew that they could get current and local books. Collaboration needs to also involve non-commercial publishers, such as local and international non-governmental organizations, the Government Printer and UN agencies. The development-related information produced by these bodies would boost readership greatly. The Library of Congress acquisitions list indicates that these bodies produce much-needed information.

Various legal mechanisms need to be enacted and strengthened. These include the much talked-about National Book Policy (Makotsi and Nyariki) and the Legal Deposit. These will ensure that local information is collected and distributed effectively.

The Nairobi City Council library services are in dire need of pro-active and interested management. The proposal made in the mid-1970s to have the NCC libraries become part of the KNLS needs to be revived. The KNLS has made some progress over the years despite the constraints it has faced. However, the NCC services have made no progress and continue to decline. They are also under the Nairobi City Council, an establishment that does not prioritize library services. These libraries need serious consideration and improvement. The service requires visionary and highly qualified staff. It also requires major physical renovation. The NCC libraries are strategically located and but are not making any input into the community around. The Macmillan Memorial Library requires particular attention because of its location and history.
Public libraries should not be the sole preserve of the government. There is a need to create strategic partnerships with other stakeholders. The KNLS has been successful in forming strong partnerships with rural communities. The KNLS has noted the need for partnership with the private sector. This includes publishers and other private-sector establishments, such as members of the construction, paper and printing industries. The partnerships will ensure that all stakeholders work together to establish and sustain information provision within the country.

A focus on user needs should be strengthened. Research has shown that user education and audience-specific information is limited. Modernization of user and back-room services is necessary. The KNLS headquarters has plans to computerize its acquisition and administration departments. The introduction of Internet and e-mail services should be strengthened and made more available. As space continues to shrink, the use of modern storage capacities is necessary. This will include the use of CD-ROM technology.

The outreach services to institutions will ensure that more people are provided with books. These include technical assistance to institutions to set up libraries. Services to populations such as the fast-growing poor neighbourhoods in cities and towns need to be addressed. A high percentage of these populations are literate and require information to improve their lives.

Security and material preservation measures also need review. Many buildings are in a state of disrepair. This is a risky environment for both staff and users. All improvements suggested will need to be supported by appropriate training for staff — such as computer training, that is expected to be launched at the KNLS headquarters. One initiative could be used to enhance staff skills in the network and to offer training for other librarians.

**Innovations**

Other initiatives to provide information to the public have been set up by other people. These include a programme targeted at rural women. Kenyan author Asenath Odaga has helped set up community libraries. Community groups registered with Mrs Odaga’s organization, the Gender and Development Centre in Kisumu, are encouraged to locate buildings that can be used as libraries. The Centre acquires books from various organizations, such as the Kenya Book Foundation, and deliver them to the groups’ buildings. The groups meet at the buildings regularly and are allowed to borrow books at a charge of Ksh.20 per book. Another initiative has been started in Nairobi, in which books are delivered to readers at a fee. These initiatives indicate that there is a growing reading public, overturning the notion that Kenyans do not read.
MALAWI

The Malawi National Library Service

G. W. P. Kishindo
MALAWI

Background

Malawi is a small country occupying the southern part of the East African Rift Valley lying between 9° and 17° south of the Equator. It has an area of 118,484 sq. km (45,747 sq. mi), nearly a quarter of which is water, mainly Lake Nyasa and three smaller lakes. It is landlocked, bordered on the north by Tanzania, on the east by Lake Nyasa, on the south-east and south by Mozambique, and on the west by Zambia.

The country is divided administratively into three regions. The southern region is hilly and relatively densely populated and contains a high proportion of the modern sector commercial and industrial activity with its supporting infrastructure. It contains the commercial centre of Blantyre, and the old administrative capital, Zomba. The central region is a fertile, well-populated plain with the new administrative capital, Lilongwe, at its centre. The northern region is a mountainous, relatively infertile, and sparsely populated.

The total population in 1998 was estimated at 9.8 million and was growing at 3.2 per cent a year. Almost 50 per cent of the population is under 15 years old and 51.8 per cent is female. Some 13 per cent of the population live in an urban environment, although there are only three urban centres with population of over 50,000.

Malawi is one of the world’s poorest and least developed countries. It had a GNP (World Bank estimate; average 1993–1995 prices) of about US$1,620 million in 1995, equivalent to about US$170 per capita. Economic activity is dominated by agriculture which employs 85 per cent of the population and contributes 37 per cent to GDP. Within this sector, there are two sub-sectors, smallholder agriculture and estate agriculture. The former accounts for 80% of all agricultural production and meets the country’s demand for staple foods (maize, beans, groundnuts, sweet potatoes and rice) as well as providing some agricultural raw materials (cotton, as well as sun- and fire-cured tobacco) for domestic industry and export. The estate sector contributes 20 per cent of agricultural production but accounts for over two thirds of all exports, largely in the form of flue-cured and burley tobacco, tea and sugar.

In the education sector the government has given a high priority to the eradication of illiteracy and the provision of universal basic education.

The government introduced the free primary education. It also wishes to end illiteracy among adults, promote a self-help mentality, and establish an indigenous publishing sector.

Illiteracy rates are still very high in Malawi. The Centre for Adult Literacy and Education has put the illiteracy rate at 60 per cent, largely among rural communities and others in peri-urban areas throughout the country. The National Adult Literacy Programme has been running literacy classes since 1981, but high birth rates, high primary-school drop-out rates, and the lack of properly planned post-literacy services have rendered this battle against illiteracy a futile exercise. The Malawi National Library Service has 400 registered rural library centres that provide reading materials to the community, but these are inadequate. While the provision of public libraries in urban areas exists, borrowing statistics show that a small percentage of the population makes use of the facilities.

Malawi has a total of 3,706 primary schools, 74 government secondary schools and 50 private secondary schools. All of these lack adequate library facilities. The Ministry of Education has no provision for the development of school libraries. The few schools with library facilities stem from community participation and contribution. Owing to the limited network of formal
institutions, Malawi turned all distance education centres into community day secondary schools, with 230 of these being registered. However, these too are handicapped by serious shortages of reading and course materials. At present, Malawi has two universities.

The Malawi National Library Service (MNLS)

The Malawi National Library Service is the only public library service and is funded by the government. It was established by an Act of Parliament in 1967 which became effective in 1968 when the first director was appointed.

As a free national public library service, its services are provided through the headquarters library (city centre) and branch library both located in Lilongwe, regional branches in Mzuzu (northern region) and Blantyre (southern region), and district branch libraries in Luchenza (Thyolo district), Mulanje, Zomba, Karonga and Namwera (Mangochi district).

The Malawi National Library Service also runs a community information centre at Chiwamba. This is a joint pilot project between Malawi National Library Service and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada. Over 1,114 library centres have also been established throughout the country in primary and secondary schools, colleges, agricultural development projects, clubs, adult literacy centres, mission stations, prisons, hospitals and community centres.

However, this rosy picture is tainted by meagre resources and a myriad of competing priorities in the national budget that have resulted in funds allocated for books, buildings, staff and other essentials dwindling to levels far below the rates of inflation, expansion of education and literacy programmes and population growth.

If MNLS cannot do the impossible by continuing to provide all the services to its patrons as if nothing was amiss, it is at least striving to maximize the use of the meagre resources at its disposal while at the same time stretching its ever dwindling budget.

Staff structure and duties

The present establishment provides for 90 posts, divided into core library personnel and administrative support personnel. The National Librarian is the chief executive of the MNLS. He is responsible for the planning, organizing, controlling and co-ordinating the activities of the entire Malawi National Library Service. He is answerable to the Malawi National Library Service Board. The Head of Branch Library Services is responsible for the supervision of branch libraries. Below him are branch librarians who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the branch libraries. They are assisted by library assistants.

The Head of Extramural Services is responsible for planning and co-ordinating activities of extramural services department. This department, it should be noted, is responsible for the rural library service and school library service. Below him are three regional heads representing the three regions, north, central and south. They are also assisted by library assistants.

The Head of Technical Services is responsible for the co-ordination of all book selection, orders, processing and major repairs from the regions. Technical services in the Malawi National Library Service are centralized for efficiency and economy. The cataloguing and classification of books is carried out in this department, and branch libraries receive their latest additions to stock already fully processed and ready for loan to members of the public.
The Book Development Unit is a small unit and is responsible for the preparation, printing and binding of all publications published in printed form by Malawi National Library Service as well as for printing and binding for internal and external use. The following publications are produced each year: annual reports; staff newsletter (quarterly); The Werengani Series (children’s books).

The MNLS has been associated with the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) for over eighteen years, and accommodates several CODE-funded projects involving book purchases, the publishing of children’s story books, and the training of school librarians. Malawi has been getting books from CODE over the past eighteen years. CODE started by sending books targeted at children. Over a period of time it was discovered that children’s literature from Canada was not very suitable for the children in Malawi. A decision was made to purchase locally published books to be distributed to school children in Malawi.

A writers’ workshop produced the first title in the Werengani series. To date, sixteen titles have been published. The books are popular with children as well as with adults because of their simplicity and relevance. MNLS is seriously thinking of reprinting some of the titles for commercial distribution; money realized from the sales will be used for printing more books. The future of publishing for children in Malawi can be viewed with optimism because:

- Children’s books constitute an inexhaustible market for publishers unlike textbooks.
- Over 60 per cent of the readership is made up of young people.

The Accounts and Administration section controls the receipt and expenditure of funds according to the Board’s financial regulations and the requirements of the Auditor General. It draws up preliminary and revised budgets for approval by the Board and ensures adherence to the budget. The activities of the Accounts and Administration department entails particulars the following:

- Control of receipts;
- The supervision of expenses;
- The control and dispatch of debtors’ monthly accounts;
- The settlement of creditors’ accounts, locally and abroad, by means of cheques and bank drafts;
- The application of budgetary controls, and the compilation of financial statements.

### Finance

 Practically all funds are derived from government grants, though sometimes funds come from grants by benefactors. Funds allocated by government are most of the time unrelated to the goals set out for MNLS and there are arbitrary budget cuts in times of financial difficulties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget (Kwacha)</th>
<th>Budget (UK pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998/99</td>
<td>9,032,000</td>
<td>124,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/98 *</td>
<td>13,391,309</td>
<td>183,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>3,961,047</td>
<td>54,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>2,816,540</td>
<td>38,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>2,389,225</td>
<td>32,729</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Extended to 15 months and included provision for the purchase of three vehicles.

Controlling expenditure is becoming progressively more difficult, as very little room is left for expansion and growth. The main source of income, i.e. contribution from the state, fell by 7 per cent compared with an increase of 31 per cent in remuneration alone, notwithstanding the continued practice of freezing posts.
Paradoxically, the structural adjustment programme of the World Bank (which has resulted in the destruction of some libraries in Africa), has helped streamline Malawi National Library Service. It has made the MNLS set realistic staff levels, and reassess its role and comparative values. It has also brought about the development of budgets, so that departments have more control over their own expenditure, rather than the loose funding of the past.

Stock and users

The number of registered borrowers reached and topped the 10,000 mark not all of them are active of course. This out of a population of 9.8 million. MNLS issues annual statistical data of borrowers by locality. Certain areas contain more avid readers. It has been noticed that the year a branch library is opened in a district/locality is the year of heavy influx of new borrowers. These are mostly school children.

The total stock of MNLS is estimated at 339,478 and includes all kinds of books that as far as possible reflect the community’s diverse requirements. There are estimated 4,528 documents in the World Bank collection to date.

General statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of readers</th>
<th>Books loaned</th>
<th>Books added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997/98</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>289,115</td>
<td>36,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>7,490</td>
<td>221,844</td>
<td>30,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>9,217</td>
<td>244,914</td>
<td>22,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>10,264</td>
<td>237,126</td>
<td>26,525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The future

The future of the MNLS is linked to the needs and resources of the Malawian society rather than to internationally accepted professional strategies or beliefs. Services are geared to meet user needs, geared to a specific target rather than to acquisition in general and is more service- and user-oriented. This has resulted in the trimming down of some structures and staff, but the benefits are now more measurable and meet expressed needs. As it is now smaller and more focused, it is hoped it can be more easily financed. The development of professional and human resources will be linked to real needs. If the result of meeting user needs means that the profession of librarianship becomes less distinct from other professions, then so be it.

Conclusion

The Malawi National Library Service has succeeded in avoiding the disastrous decline that has happened elsewhere in Africa because of its ability to create a system of branch libraries and library centres which ably provide access to books and other reading and learning materials to the people who need to read and study.

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NIGERIA

Revitalization of Public Libraries in Nigeria

Gboyega Banjo
Background

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is in West Africa, bounded on the north by Niger, on the east by Chad and Cameroon, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by Benin. The most populous country in Africa, Nigeria has an area of 923,773 sq. km (356,669 sq. mi). Abuja is the capital and Lagos is the largest city. Nigeria became an independent state and member of the Commonwealth of Nations on 1 October 1960. Nigeria can be divided into four distinct geographical regions – a belt of mangrove forests and swamps along the coast, lowlands giving way to a broad, hilly, forested belt that gradually rises to the rocky terrain of the Jos and Bauchi plateaux; beyond these plateaux is a region of savannah, which stretches to the semi-desert Sahelian zone in the extreme north.

Although Nigeria is recognized as the most populous country in Africa, the exact size and distribution of its population have been a matter of continual political controversy within the country. The 1963 census recorded 55,670,055 people; the government rejected the results of a 1973 census. Estimates of the country’s population by the UN, the World Bank, and the Nigerian government in the late 1980s ranged well above 100 million, but the results of the 1991 census showed a total of only 88,514,501. In 1996 Nigeria’s population was estimated at 103,912,000, giving an average density of 113 people per sq. km (292 per sq. mi). At least 40 per cent of the population live in urban areas. The population growth rate in 1996 was 3 per cent; life expectancy at birth was 53.5 years for men, 56 years for women. With more than 250 ethnic groups Nigeria is a complex linguistic, social and cultural mosaic. More than half the population consists of the Hausa and Fulani peoples of the north, the Yoruba of the south-west, and the Ibo of the south-east. Other ethnic groups include the Edo, Ijaw and Ibibio of the south, the Nupe and Tiv of the central part of the country, and the Kanuri of the north-east.

Within the boundaries of modern Nigeria are some of the earliest educational and artistic traditions in western Africa. Superimposed on these have been influences of British colonial rule and European missionary educational systems. There is a rich artistic tradition, with painters, sculptors, and workers in metal, as well as a vigorous film and television industry. Modern Nigerian literature is particularly rich. During the 1970s an increasingly self-confident federal government sought to modernize Nigeria rapidly, using Western-style education as a major tool. Revenue from the sale of crude petroleum helped to finance such modernization.

Traditional Koranic schools are widespread throughout the north, and missionaries brought Western education to the coastal areas as early as the 1830s. Until the 1970s, enrolment in Western-oriented schools was significantly higher in the south. In 1976 free primary education was established throughout Nigeria. Educational facilities are insufficient, however, and the adult illiteracy rate remains at about 57 per cent. In 1994, some 16.1 million pupils were enrolled in primary schools and more than 4.8 million students attended secondary and tertiary schools. Under a new educational system introduced in 1982, primary schooling (officially compulsory) takes six years to complete. Secondary schooling is organized into two successive phases of three years each. In 1994, 1.7 per cent of the country’s gross national product (GNP) was spent on education.

Western-style higher education, begun in 1948 with the founding of the University of Ibadan, is found throughout the country. There are 31 universities and more than 380,000 students attend 133 higher education institutions. Major institutions include Ahmadu Bello University (founded in 1962), in Zaria; the Obafemi Awolowo University (1961), in Ife; the University of
Lagos (1962); and the University of Nigeria (1960), in Nsukka. British-style universities have been augmented by a growing system of American-influenced teachers’ colleges and technical colleges. English is the official language of Nigeria. Hausa, a lingua franca in western Africa, is the most widely used language, mainly in the north, followed by Yoruba, Ibo, Kanuri and Tiv.

Nigeria was traditionally an agricultural country, providing the bulk of its own food needs and exporting a variety of agricultural goods, notably palm oil, cacao, rubber and groundnuts (peanuts). By the 1970s, however, oil had supplanted cash crops as the major source of foreign exchange and transformed Nigeria’s economic fortunes. After oil prices collapsed during the 1980s, the federal and state governments embarked on ambitious development programmes aimed at diversifying the economy. Only some of these have proved sustainable and oil revenues remain the principal generator of economic activity in the country. However, Nigeria’s unpopular military rulers have failed to make significant progress in moving the economy away from over-dependence on oil, 60 per cent of which is state-owned. The government’s domestic and international arrears continue to limit economic growth; the largely subsistence agricultural sector has failed to keep up with rapid population growth, and Nigeria, once a large net exporter of food, must now import food. Inflation runs at around 57 per cent.

In 1995, Nigeria had a GNP of US$28,400 million (World Bank estimate; 1993—1995 prices), equivalent to US$260 per capita. Influenced by rising oil revenues, Nigeria’s gross domestic product (GDP) rose by an annual average of 6.9 per cent between 1965 and 1980. From 1980 to 1988, GDP shrank by 1.1 per cent annually as oil prices and revenues dropped; in 1996, however, it grew by 3.25 per cent. In 1994 GDP was estimated at US$29,990 million (US$280 per capita). Agriculture still makes the largest contribution to GDP (in 1994, 38 per cent), compared with, for example, mining (including crude petroleum, 27 per cent) and industry (8 per cent). Crude petroleum exports dominate external trade revenues: in 1994 they accounted for over 97 per cent of the total value of exports. The volatility of international oil prices in the 1970s and 1980s helped to generate Nigeria’s large foreign-debt burden of more than US$28,000 million (1994).

**Introduction to libraries**

Library provision, within Nigeria’s system of government, is a matter within the powers of all the three tiers of government: federal, state and local. Accordingly, the federal government, through the Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for the provision of the services of the National Library of Nigeria as well as for a number of special libraries within the federal civil service and its parastatals. The responsibility for establishing and running public libraries is that of state and local governments. They do this by enacting laws setting up statutory bodies charged with the responsibility.

Over the course of the past thirty years or so the steady decline in the political and economic power of state and local governments vis-à-vis the federal government has meant that public libraries in Nigeria have fared less well than other types of libraries. In the sharing of national revenue between the three tiers of government, the federal share has grown at the expense of those of the state and local governments. The situation has been made worse by the continual decline of the Nigerian economy, in the most part caused by the sharp drop in the value of oil in the international market and the government’s structural adjustment programme. The steady devaluation of the Nigerian currency since then has dramatically increased the price of imported goods, such as books. Given that over 90 per cent of the book stocks in libraries are imported from abroad, library funding in Nigeria as a whole, and public library funding in particular, has been severely affected. There has been a sharp
increase in the funding requirements for their services and, until recently, the difficulty in securing adequate foreign currency on a timely basis.

Finally, the increase in the number of states and local governments in Nigeria has further decreased the financial standing of state and local governments and their ability to provide adequate funds for their institutions. Compared to a federal structure based on three regional governments at the time of Independence, Nigeria’s federal structure now consists of 36 state governments, 771 local governments and one federal capital territory. This development has sharply increased the proportion of state revenue for maintaining state administrative structures, while further reducing free funds for development and the provision of social services. Indeed, it is now a common feature for state and local governments to be in arrears with the payment of their functionaries and to be unable to back approved subventions for their institutions with cash as and when due.

The crisis in the funding of public libraries in Nigeria is thus, without doubt, at the heart of the problem of public library provision in Nigeria today. Most established libraries have neither been able to implement expansion plans nor maintain existing plant since they were first established. There are many examples of library buildings that are derelict and unserviceable because of the lack of adequate maintenance. The oldest public library in Lagos has been experiencing floods during the rains because of inadequate maintenance over the years. The federal capital territory, Abuja, has no public libraries. There are cases, in many of the newer states where public libraries exist in name only. There are other instances where buildings have been built by, or donated to, state governments, there is no book stock and furniture to run the service. Over the last five years and more, most public libraries, as far as can be ascertained, have not been receiving any funds for their capital estimates. Those that are fortunate have received only funds for their overheads with which they pay staff salaries and not much else. Many libraries are in arrears with the payment of staff salaries.

The funding crisis, combined with the high cost of books, has resulted in the book famine which has been a feature of library services in Nigeria as a whole, and public libraries in particular, during the past two decades or so. Studies have shown that public libraries lack current journals and magazines as well as current reference books, textbooks and fiction. The most recent publications in these libraries are usually donations received from Book Aid International, which has contributed books worth ₦800 million to the Nigerian library system in the past three years. It need hardly be said that, given the circumstance described above, public libraries have not been able to modernize and improve their services through the computerization of their information services. None have been able to provide access to the Internet for their clientele.

Public libraries in Nigeria, in their current state, are therefore not in a position to offer the range of services set out in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. They have largely become reading rooms for students preparing for various examinations.

**The way forward**

The crisis in funding, important as it is, does not, however, fully explain the problem of the underdevelopment and decay of the public library services in Nigeria.

The more urgent task has to do with the need to effect radical changes in the concept of public libraries and adapt the institution to Nigeria’s needs and circumstances. Thus the public library in Nigeria should be designed to serve the needs of a cross-section of the population: urban as well as rural; literate and non-literate; children and adult. It should be
firmly rooted in Nigeria’s oral culture and play an important role in its preservation and promotion. Consequently it should be a combination of the print-oriented conventional public library services and the multimedia-oriented rural/community information service on the model of the Malian *Operation Lecture Publique*.

As part of the programme of re-tooling and revitalizing public libraries in Nigeria, there is a need for effecting an equally fundamental change in their structure. Hitherto, they have hardly taken their services beyond a few urban centres. To achieve their new purpose and mission, they should be reorganized into networks of community libraries, based, possibly, on Nigeria’s zonal structure. Each of the zonal networks would be co-ordinated so as to cater effectively for the information and training needs of its constituent community libraries.

Various ideas are being canvassed about ways in which this new type of public library service could be implemented. Some have suggested new structures of neighbourhood libraries initiated and sustained by the communities. Another idea is to graft the community libraries on to school libraries, which will thus be transformed into dual-purpose school/community libraries which function as school libraries during school hours and community libraries thereafter. Models of such libraries have been in existence in Senegal for a number of years and are now reportedly being introduced into the Nigerian scene by the National Primary Education Commission with World Bank support. The advantage of this option is that tapping into the existing network of schools in the country can create a network of community libraries relatively quickly.

Appropriate staffing and training/re-training are the key issues that will also have to be resolved. There is therefore a need to ensure that the library schools are duly sensitized about these changes and are encouraged to offer appropriate training programmes to equip the staff who would work in the community libraries with the knowledge and skills required for their multi-faceted responsibilities.

Finally, there is still the important issue of funding. It is safe to assume that funds from public sources will continue to be problematic, particularly if they are to come from state and local government authorities, as long as the present formula for sharing the national revenue remains. The solution, therefore, is for the funding of community libraries to be done on the basis of a partnership involving government, local communities and other donors. Community involvement will be vital at every stage in the planning and implementation of each community library to ensure community commitment and project sustainability.

Areas requiring further elucidation in support of the project to revitalize public libraries in Nigeria include the following:

- The comprehensive mapping of the current state of public library services in Nigeria through a baseline study.
- Funding strategies and options.
- Appropriate structure for implementing community libraries in Nigeria.
- Training modules for community information workers/librarians.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Public Libraries and Community Information Services in South Africa: A Brief Summary of the Issues

Val and Tony Hooper
SOUTH AFRICA

Introduction

The Republic of South Africa is the southernmost country of continental Africa. It has an area of 1,224,691 sq. km (472,731 sq. mi). The administrative capital of South Africa is Pretoria, the legislative capital is Cape Town, and the judicial capital is Bloemfontein.

The topography of South Africa typifies that of the continent of Africa as a whole. It comprises an interior upland plateau of ancient rock, occupying two thirds of the country, separated from a narrow coastal plain by a mountainous escarpment known as the Great Escarpment. South Africa has a temperate sub-tropical climate with considerable regional variations caused by differences in elevation, in wind systems, and in ocean currents. South Africa is very rich in mineral resources, which provide two thirds of the country’s exports. Gold and diamonds are the best known, which, together with coal, have traditionally had most economic importance.

South Africa has a population of 42,327,458 (1997 estimate), giving a population density of 34.6 people per sq. km (89.6 per sq. mi). South Africa has a multiracial and multi-ethnic population. Of the 42.3 million inhabitants in 1997, 75.2 per cent of the population was Black African, 13.6 per cent was White, 8.6 per cent was Coloured (mixed ethnic background), and 2.6 per cent was Asian. Racial segregation and White monopoly of power characterized South Africa from before the founding of the Union of South Africa in 1910. This formalized White control of the political structure, but it was only in the 1940s that the concept of racial segregation, known as apartheid, began to be elaborated into a policy reinforced by laws and permeated all aspects of social, economic and political relations between people. During the late 1980s and early 1990s the government dismantled the legal basis of apartheid, but improving the lot of the previously disadvantaged will take some time to effect.

About 60 per cent of the population of South Africa is classified as urban. More than 25 per cent of the total population lives within the Pretoria, Witwatersrand, and Vereeniging (now Gauteng) metropolitan area, which lies within a 70 km (43 mile) radius of Johannesburg. The three metropolitan areas of Gauteng, Cape Town, and Durban account for 38 per cent of the country’s urban population. Concentrations of urban migrants are increasing around the major cities, housed in makeshift settlements or shanty towns, though these are being converted into more permanent settlements.

There are 11 official languages in South Africa. Afrikaans, a variant of the Dutch language, is the first language of almost all Afrikaners and many Coloured people. English is used as the primary language by many Whites and is also spoken by many Asians and Blacks. However, a Bantu language is the first language of most Blacks. In addition to English, many Asians also speak a language of India. In 1991 (census figures) Afrikaans was spoken by 5.7 million people, English by 3.4 million, Nguni languages (mainly Xhosa, Sesotho and Zulu) by over 15.1 million, Sotho languages by about 6.3 million, and Tsonga languages by about 1.6 million people. Fanagalo is a pidgin language developed in the mines.

In 1993 South Africa’s primary and secondary schools enrolled about 6.4 million Black students, about 1 million Whites, 897,000 Coloureds, and 256,000 Asians. In 1993 students enrolled in universities and in teacher-training and technical schools included about 220,000 Whites, 200,000 Blacks, 30,000 Coloureds, and 30,000 Asians. South Africa has 22 universities, open now to all ethnic groups; however, they have different cultural traditions and give instruction in either Afrikaans or English. For the time being, most students tend to stay with the traditional divisions.
Institutions which were traditionally attended by Whites were the University of Cape Town (founded 1829); the University of Natal (1910), in Durban and Pietermaritzburg; the University of Orange Free State (1904), in Bloemfontein; the University of Pretoria (1903); Rhodes University (1855), in Grahamstown; the University of Stellenbosch (1918); and the University of the Witwatersrand (1922), in Johannesburg. However, the student profile of these institutions has changed rapidly over the last few years and in a number of instances, such as that of UCT, the White students are now in the minority. Blacks traditionally attend the University of Fort Hare (1916), in Alice; the University of the North (1959), near Pietersburg; the University of Zululand (1967), near Empangeni; the Medical University of Southern Africa (1976), at Medunsa; and the University of Transkei (1977), at Umtata. The University of the Western Cape (1960), in Bellville, was originally attended mostly by Coloureds, but now Black students are in the majority. The University of Durban-Westville (1961) is attended mostly by Asians. There are also 15 technikons, tertiary education institutions offering technical and commercial vocational training.

Introduction to public libraries

The following report is drawn from the material identified and read in preparation for the Bibliography, and is intended to reflect the views of the professional librarians active in the public library field in South Africa. Views of national, public and academic librarians in addition to those of academics with a specialist interest in public libraries were sought. A list of acknowledgements is given at the end of this paper. Nevertheless, responsibility for the views expressed lies with the authors.

Background

Numerous publications, falling outside the scope of the bibliography, attest to the sophistication of the library system in the Republic of South Africa. A number of very good overviews have been published, notably those by Kesting, Manaka and Zaaiman. These and other documents describe the library system in South Africa that was the foundation from which the current situation developed. They give the background to the period covered by this investigation.

It could be said that the library system in South Africa, with its roots firmly in the British and American library traditions, was the most sophisticated on the continent. However, like the society of which it was part, for all its sophistication the public library system was deeply flawed, principally because it was not developed or funded for the sort of democracy that emerged in South Africa after 1994.

It is not the purpose of this report to analyse the political developments that gave rise to the situation in South African public libraries. An article by Christine Stilwell traces some of the trends influencing the political climate and the way public libraries were viewed both

inside and outside the profession. To some extent, the situation in the post-apartheid public libraries could have been anticipated from the experience of those public libraries that had the courage to open their doors to all race groups in defiance of the laws of the time. Both the Johannesburg Public Library and the Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg opened their doors to all race groups in 1975. The flood of users who responded – mainly school children and students – had to be accommodated initially on the floor, and later in specially constructed study areas. The experience of these two libraries anticipated by twenty years what happened in the other public libraries after democratization in 1994.

The difference between the experiences of 1975 and 1995 are also largely affected by the political events and technological developments that have taken place in the rest of the world. The emergence of what has been termed the ‘information society’ is colouring the common view of the role of books and the way that information is generated and used. In Africa there is a perception that the information society will provide opportunities for developing countries, including South Africa, to benefit by leap-frogging into a new economic dispensation. Nassimbeni explores these influences on South Africa, emphasizing in particular the creation of partnerships in the development and spread of Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs). Ralebipi also reports on MPCCs and similar community initiatives. However, the same perceptions are changing the way that politicians perceive the need to provide funding for educational materials, school and public libraries. The idea that developments in information technology, and especially the Internet, will do away with the need to provide public libraries, or books in schools, has gained an unfortunate but politically expedient currency.

For the purposes of this paper, the earliest and most influential investigation that identified the problem was the report by the Public Libraries Division of SAILIS to the Executive Committee in 1995. At the request of the Executive, the report was then sent on by the then President of SAILIS, Prof. Hennie Viljoen, to:

- the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology;
- the relevant ministers in the nine provinces;
- the Inter-ministerial Work Group on Libraries;
- the American Library Association;
- the Library Association in the United Kingdom;
- the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions; and
- the press.

The responses were indicative of the political climate of the time. The Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology politely recorded that ‘complex issues are involved, which unfortunately will only be solved over a period of time’. Other correspondence was more
stridently defensive and evoked a firm but courteous response from the then President of SAILIS. Other correspondence on the subject is not available.

The SAILIS report having identified a growing problem, the matter came up for further attention in 1998. By then SAILIS and the African Library Association of South Africa (ALASa) had disbanded and their memberships merged to form the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA). The then Chair of the Transitional Executive Committee, Dr Peter Lor, presented a memorandum to the Portfolio Committee on Arts, Culture and Languages, Science and Technology on 23 March 1998. His report was drawn up by a quick survey of public libraries initiated by a letter to relevant practitioners. An analysis of Peter Lor’s memorandum reveals the following concerns:

- An alarming deterioration of library services in many parts of South Africa;
- School libraries closing down as teacher/librarians are retrenched or allocated to other duties;
- Nation-wide, according to the School Register of Needs Survey, 8 million out of 12 million learners do not have access to library facilities;
- Public libraries have been badly affected by the disruption caused by the reorganization of the provinces;
- Funding for provincial library services has failed to reach certain of the library services in the newly established provinces;
- Cash-strapped local authorities are cutting back on library services;
- Academic libraries have all suffered from reduced purchasing power, combined with a declining value of the rand, resulting in a significant reduction in the ability to meet the information needs of staff and students;
- The national libraries – the State Library in Pretoria and the South African library in Cape Town – are in a state of decline owing to steadily declining levels of funding and threatened by poor accommodation and staff retrenchments;
- The country’s book industry has been hard hit by declining sales of school textbooks, with newspaper reports indicating the losses being as much as R4 billion;
- Many imaginative initiatives are being taken to compensate for the reduced funding, ‘but such measures can seldom be more than palliative and short term’.

In his introduction to the memorandum, Lor states:

It has not been possible to verify most of the newspaper and other reports on which the memorandum is based. Heads of provincial and metropolitan libraries to which a draft version of this memorandum was sent for comment, have been reluctant to commit themselves on paper. Certain newspaper reports which we have attempted to corroborate have proved to be alarmist and inaccurate.

Arising from Lor’s memorandum, Leach undertook a more structured investigation of the nine provincial library services (PLSs) and the ten independent public libraries (IPLs). Leach’s survey was intended to establish the accuracy of Lor’s observations from the people actually involved in the public library sector. As such, it is worth quoting from in some depth. Leach’s article records precisely what the provincial and metropolitan librarians identify as the situation in which they find themselves. The following extracts deal with the major issues:

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11 J. H. Viljoen, Letter to the M.E.C., Department of Education, Sport and Culture, Bisho, on the Crisis in Provincial and Public Library and Information Services, 5 August 1996. [Unpublished.]


On rationalization (also known as downsizing, amalgamation, transformation, etc.):

the responses were predominantly negative and related in the main to staff shortages and the negative impact this has had on service delivery. . . . With few exceptions it does appear that any momentum in terms of service delivery which may have been in place prior to 1994 has been lost to a greater or lesser degree with the change and restructuring taking place. It is evident that the lack of funding . . . is making the task of regaining that momentum increasingly difficult if not impossible.14

On funding:

with the exception of one provincial library service (PLS) whose funding has been 'stable' all the remaining eight PLSs have experienced or are going to experience decreases in funding to a greater or lesser degree. . . . Numerous effects . . . were listed by respondents . . . staff shortages . . . negative effect on service deliveries . . . cut back on library and information material delivery to affiliated libraries . . . cut in purchase of materials . . . no building of new libraries in townships and rural areas . . . inability to provide provincial (statutory) subsidies to the (independent) municipal libraries, networking plans with schools not being realized, ageing and irrelevant book stock, less training, fewer professional visits and monitoring, inadequate and insufficient information technology, lack of research and an inability to effect 'meaningful transformation'. . . . With the exception of one Independent Public Library (IPL) which has had no increase in the budget for library material over the last two years (despite a nearly 100% increase in client base), and another which is operating under a 'no growth' budget, all eight remaining IPLs indicated that budget cuts had taken place. One respondent refers to the budget having been cut 'dramatically'; a second to 'ad hoc cuts throughout the financial year'; a third to funding having being 'cut a lot' and the fourth to 'severe budget cuts, up to 80%'.15

On user fees:

The issue of user fees is a complex and, in the South African context in particular, a politically sensitive one as well. One PLS noted that the issue was not applicable. Six of the remaining eight PLSs were categorical in their rejection of user fees. One of the reasons given by respondents was the need to bring about equity and address past imbalances - 'The poor will be deprived of a service they so desperately need'. . . . Four of the IPLs were quite emphatic in their rejection of user fees as an alternative source of funding. One pointed out that 'the income generated from user fees is minimal in comparison with our expenditure' while a second noted that 'Funds generated this way form 1% of the Library’s total expenditure'.16

On staffing:

Six of the PLSs have had no staffing cuts per se. However this is misleading in that two cannot fill vacant posts (accounting for 35% of the posts in one instance) because of a lack of funds, one was a new service and hence had posts created but not filled . . . one had made no new appointments since 1994 with the exception of five managerial positions and one stated that posts are frozen when staff resign (although four managerial appointments had recently been made). When asked what the effects of the staff cuts had been a range of replies were given. These vary from inability to 'move' (that is to actually provide a service) and 'tired and de-motivated personnel in many instances'. . . . There is the realization that much needs to be done but staff shortages . . . 'are crippling'.17

14 Ibid., 5
15 Ibid., 6
16 Ibid., 7, 8.
17 Ibid., 8, 9.
• On affirmative action:

The need for affirmative action has been recognized in order to ensure that the ‘LIS human resources should reflect the composition of South Africa’s population’. While one could list numerous other reasons why affirmative action should take place. . . . according to respondents affirmative action was occurring in all the PLSs. Interestingly it was largely interpreted as correcting racial imbalances as opposed to gender and the disabled . . . ‘Most top management is now black’. As far as the effect of affirmative action is concerned, most IPLs did not comment, or said they were experiencing little, if any, problems. . . . one referred to de-motivated staff as a result of promoting staff. . . . A second respondent mentioned the need for a more intensive training programme and longer periods of supervision but noted that a better understanding of the needs of some clients has been achieved.

• On services:

One PLS mentioned the integrated nature of their service. Unlike in the past the service now being responsible for school and government department libraries in addition to public libraries. The reasons given for such a change are interesting ones. The need to have a holistic approach in addressing post-apartheid imbalances, to improve access to budgets, to improve lines of accountability and the need to have a unified voice to push the library agenda provincially were referred to. . . . One IPL listed 19 changes relating to ‘adapted/expanded services’ and as a result of the amalgamation of two large black areas with the existing city. Seven of these changes concerned either educational material or educational initiatives. Four other IPLs also mentioned a greater emphasis being placed on education with more study material and more study space being made available. One respondent noted that 99% of the use of their reference library was for these two purposes.

• On materials selection:

Probably the most significant change adopted by six of the nine PLSs is in terms of the selection process. Critically, participation in the selection process has been broadened in that the librarians of the affiliated libraries and, in some instances, the community are directly involved in the selection of material. . . . In the context of monetary shortages, one IPL referred to the selection process being ‘stricter – “no nice to haves” and [fewer] copies of a title bought’. The change in user needs was noted with one respondent observing that needs were ‘more student and scholar oriented to the detriment of the old traditional library user’. Three PLSs mentioned the purchase of literacy materials and two mentioned the issue of vernacular literature.

• On users:

Seven of the PLSs (affirmed) that their user base had indeed changed . . . The user group most frequently mentioned by respondents was that variously referred to as ‘scholars’, ‘students’, ‘learners’, ‘young African persons’ and ‘black students’. . . . One respondent remarked that the ‘Reference Library has become a study centre’ with a lack of study space being common. . . . at one of their community libraries ‘2000 to 4000 persons are searching for study places daily’ . . . and that the influx of students at this library is keeping other reference library users away. . . . the impression gained was that PLSs were very much aware

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20 Ibid., 10, 11.

21 Ibid., 11, 12.
of the need to maintain some form of balance between traditional and new clienteles . . . but that there were no easy solutions . . . but the issue requires creativity and sensitivity.\textsuperscript{22}

- On the role of the public library in formal education:

Apart from the various PLSs which are (or should be) providing a school library service, no formal links between the services and formal educational institutions exist . . . Despite the absence of formal linkages, given the serious lack of libraries in schools . . . affiliated libraries are playing an increasing role on supporting formal education . . . The result is a swamping of community libraries by students in search of study materials . . . Despite the obvious pressure and expense . . . little or no responsibility appears to be borne by the educational authorities . . . The vast majority of IPLs considered their role in formal education as having increased and it was patent that all were playing a substantial role in this regard.\textsuperscript{23}

- On the role in non-formal, informal education:

All the PLSs were involved in literacy promotion in some capacity. . . . As with the PLSs all the independent public libraries mentioned that they were involved in some aspect of literacy promotion.\textsuperscript{24}

- On information technology:

it is with those PLSs whose funding has been reasonably secure over the last three or four years . . . that IT developments are taking place . . . All IPLs are using computer technology to a greater or lesser degree.\textsuperscript{25}

- On research:

Given the financial and personnel constraints . . . very little formal research is taking place amongst the PLSs. . . . The lack of research is of concern given that it is research . . . that can contribute towards underpinning and reinforcing the PLSs requests for recognition and funding.\textsuperscript{26}

- On staff training:

All PLSs reported that they were involved in some form of ‘training and staff development’ . . . directed at the staff of the PLSs themselves as well as those of the affiliated libraries. . . . All IPLs mentioned that some form of training or staff development was taking place.\textsuperscript{27}

- On the three most important problems facing the public library sector.

funding, or the lack of it, was by far the most frequently mentioned problem mentioned by seven of the nine PLSs. The next most frequently mentioned problem concerned the low level of LIS awareness - ‘by politicians in particular’ (and hence the need to lobby effectively). Other factors include the effect of affirmative action on staff morale and motivation, and the problem of competing with other services such as housing, health, roads, etc. It also records the confusion existing in government structures at provincial, metropolitan and local level, resulting in duplication of functions, lack of co-operation, waste of scarce resources, and empire building.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 13. \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 14. \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 15. \textsuperscript{25} Ibid. \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 16. \textsuperscript{27} Ibid. \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 17.
At the pit-face, the reality for the public librarian is one of great challenge. Some are amazingly positive and see the challenges as achievable. Others are weighed down by the burden of over-demand, under-supply and the reality of the diminution of a consumable resource. Leach makes some final observations that are worth recording:

It is clearly becoming increasingly difficult (if not impossible) to achieve redress let alone maintaining existing services. . . . the need for effective lobbying is underscored. . . . Without this research, calls for more funding will probably fall on the deaf ears of those who provide the funding. . . . it is evident from the survey that the situation is not all bleak. In spite of the funding and other constraints . . . it is apparent that that change which responds to transformation in society is taking place within the sector. . . . It is evident that the public library sector in South Africa is growing in accordance with Ranganathan’s Fifth Law. . . . to lobbying and research should be added the need to publicize, on an ongoing basis both at local and national level, what has been achieved and what the sector would like to strive for, in order to mobilize democratic grass-roots pressure upon those who hold the purse strings.29

Leach’s findings are substantiated to a large degree by the subsequent work and comments of Hendrikz and the earlier work of Hansen and Gericke.30

The authors of this report are conscious that, throughout time, disadvantaged communities sought the cultural benefits of well-ordered societies. Rome did not fall through military conquest. It was swamped by large numbers of people from the rest of Europe in search of the advantages of a structured society with such amenities as water-borne sewage systems, a legal and government system that worked, education, security and other advantages. That is what the cities of South Africa appear to offer the vast masses of desperate people in the rest of Africa, lashed by famine, war and pestilence. The purpose of the democratic struggle in South Africa was to give such amenities to those who were denied them by apartheid. The problems of the South African public library system are merely reflective of this situation.

**The future**

The authors have been asked ‘to suggest practical ways in which (the public library system) might be developed or improved’. Lor makes the following proposals in his memorandum, based on contributions from practitioners in the field:31

- It is essential to raise awareness among decision-makers of the crucial role library and information services have to play in the promotion and dissemination of arts, culture, indigenous languages, science and technology, and innovation.
- It is essential to raise awareness among decision-makers of the current deterioration of library and information services.
- The problems described above should be addressed in a concerted manner. This implies consultation and co-operation between:
  - national and provincial authorities; and
  - the various national ministries that have a stake in libraries and information.
- Better use should be made of existing and planned infrastructure for the delivery of library services. This implies:
  - co-operation between provinces; and
  - the incorporation of library service points in multi-purpose community centres and the like.

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29 Ibid., 18.
• The establishment of the proposed national council for libraries and information services (as provided for in a draft national libraries amendment bill currently being drafted by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology) should proceed as rapidly as possible.
• The proposed national council for libraries and information services should be a body with ‘clout’: its composition should be such that it will carry weight with the relevant government departments.
• State funding for libraries should be at least proportional to the funding allocated to other services; libraries should not be allowed to be treated as a ‘soft target’ when budgets have to be cut.
• In addition, every effort should be made to redress past imbalances by extending library and information services in cost-effective ways to communities and groups that are currently unserved.
• Various means should be considered to increase funding levels for library and information services. Possibilities are:
  • lottery funding (used quite widely overseas for significant library projects);
  • library levies on the proceeds of sports events and rock concerts.
  • a one cent library levy on every can of beer sold; and
  • recognition of public and national libraries as educational institutions for purposes of company and personal income tax.
• The cost burden on libraries should be eased by measures such as:
  • reduced telecommunications rates for libraries (this will become particularly relevant as we move towards providing school and community libraries with access to the Internet);
  • reduced postal tariffs for inter-library loans and document delivery; and
  • zero-rating of educational and academic books for purpose of VAT.

For the authors of this report to go beyond these suggestions would be inappropriate without a more comprehensive investigation and a longer opportunity to understand the current position, both of local public libraries and information centres. We would like to endorse the view that more research needs to be undertaken, and offer to contribute to any further investigation in whatever way we can.32

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32 Grateful acknowledgement of the valuable contribution made by the following librarians is recorded:
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TANZANIA

Public Libraries in Tanzania

Theophilus E. Mlaki
Background

The United Republic of Tanzania lies in eastern Africa, bordered on the north by Lake Victoria and Uganda, on the north-east by Kenya, on the east by the Indian Ocean, on the south by Mozambique, Lake Nyasa and Malawi, on the south-west by Zambia, and on the west by Lake Tanganyika, Burundi and Rwanda. The country includes the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, and other offshore islands in the Indian Ocean. The total area of Tanzania is 945,087 sq. km (364,900 sq. mi), of which 942,453 sq. km (363,882 sq. mi) is on the mainland. The capital of Tanzania is Dodoma.

The landscape of mainland Tanzania is generally flat and low along the coast, but a plateau at an average altitude of about 1,220 m (4,000 ft.) constitutes the greater part of the country. Isolated mountain groups rise in the north-east and south-west. The volcanic Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 m/19,340 ft.), the highest mountain in Africa, is situated near the north-eastern border with Kenya. Both Zanzibar and Pemba are mostly low-lying.

Tanzania has a population (1996 official estimate) of 29,058,470, of whom 663,000 live on Zanzibar, giving an average population density of about 31 people per sq. km (80 per sq. mi). However, about two thirds of the population lives in the one third of the country that lies north of the central railway, where soils are most fertile. More than 90 per cent of the population of Tanzania consists of indigenous African groups, the majority of whom speak Bantu languages; there are also Nilotic groups, such as the Masai. The largest of the 120 ethnic groups are the Sukuma and the Nyamwezi. The population also includes people of Indian, Pakistani and Goan origin, who make up a significant minority in the urban areas, and small Arab and European communities. Most of the people live in rural areas. Under the form of Africa socialism introduced by Julius Nyerere, the government began to establish rural co-operative villages (ujamaa villages) in the 1970s as a means ofcountering development problems associated with the traditional scattered nature of settlement. By 1980 about 90 per cent of the rural population was living in registered villages, although only a small proportion of these were true ujamaa. Life expectancy in 1996 was around 41 years for men, and 45 years for women. Swahili and English are the official languages of Tanzania; Swahili acts as the main lingua franca, and there are many tribal languages. Many people continue to use the language of their ethnic group.

Tanzania’s GNP (World Bank estimate; 1993–1995 average prices) was about US$3,700 million in 1995, equivalent to US$120 per capita, making the country one of the poorest in the world. The economy is primarily agricultural. Around 80 per cent of the economically active population is engaged in farming, and agricultural products account for about 85 per cent of export earnings though land available for crops is limited to only 5 per cent of the land area. The country is among the largest producers in the world of sisal and cloves (from Zanzibar). Diamonds and gold are currently the most important of the minerals being exploited in Tanzania. Forest land constitutes one of the most substantial natural resources of the country. Forests cover about 30 per cent of Tanzania, mainly in the south and west-central areas. Among the many hardwoods found are mahogany and camphor wood.

Tanzania has made education a priority. Primary education is free and compulsory and there has been a great expansion in the number of schools, which are state-run, although there are still not enough places available to accommodate all of the children. There has also been a major emphasis on adult literacy, and in 1996 around 67 per cent of people over the age of 15 were literate. In 1994 government schools were attended by some 3,700,000 primary pupils and 180,900 secondary students. In addition, many children attended private
secondary schools, which were mostly run by religious groups. Institutions of higher education, including teacher-training colleges, had about 15,000 students enrolled in any one year. Tanzania has four public universities: the University of Dar es Salaam (established 1961), Sokoine University of Agriculture (1984) in Morogoro, the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) and the University of Zanzibar. There are several private universities which include Tumain University with campuses in Moshi, Arusha and Iringa, St. Augustine University in Mwanza, Hubert Kairuki Memorial University in Dar es Salaam, the International Medical and Technological University in Dar es Salaam, and the University of Bukoba in the Lake Zone.

In 1993, 5 per cent of the country’s gross national product (GNP) was spent on education.

**Introduction to public library services**

The public library system of Tanzania is mainly managed and run by the Tanzania Library Service Board (TLSB); the islands of Pemba and Zanzibar, having their own public library programme The Board is a government agency established by Parliament through Act No. 6 of 1975. This Act repealed the earlier Act of 1963 giving more powers to the Board in terms of co-ordination and promotion of public libraries in the United Republic of Tanzania.

The main mission of the TLSB, which is under the Ministry of Education and Culture, is to establish, equip, manage and operate libraries throughout the country. The mode of development is to start with regional libraries, then district libraries and finally village libraries. So far the Board provides its services in eighteen out of the twenty administrative regions of Tanzania (Pwani and Singida being the two without). There are also eleven district libraries and four divisional libraries.

The main objective of the public library system is to provide information resources to support education, culture and mental relaxation. Services offered at the National Central Library in Dar es Salaam, as well as at various service points, include:

- **Lending services** – the lending library provides facilities for borrowing books for home reading. This service is provided to registered library members and is open to any user resident in the area served by the respective service point.

- **Reference services** – most major regional libraries are equipped with reference resources and facilities which enable readers to use these for study purposes as well as to have their enquiries answered by professional librarians.

- **Children’s library** – services to children include lending services, reference, audio-visual materials and story hours.

- **Textbook collections** – these service mainly students in secondary schools as well as open university students.

- **Bibliographic services** – The National Central Library acts as the national bibliographic agency and plays the role of national bibliographic centre. The centre has been in existence for about 15 years. It has five major responsibilities:
  - administration of ISBNs and ISSNs, whose data are sent regularly to the headquarters in Berlin and Paris;
  - document procurement;
  - serials gathering and control;
  - description and processing of documents;
  - production of the *Tanzania National Bibliography*.
Book mobile services - mobile services/libraries were introduced in the early 1970s with the aim of providing books to people in rural areas. They were divided into two - the first one being the rural mobile library service which provided services to Mwanza, Tanga, Mtwara and Coast (Pwani) regions; the second being a school mobile library service which offered services to secondary schools and colleges in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Dodoma, Iringa and Mbeya regions. Both services were cut in the mid-1980s owing to financial constraints.

Other services, such as documentation and consultancy, are offered at the National Central Library in Dar es Salaam.

The Tanzania Library Service is a legal depository. However, the provisions for legal deposit have been found to be rather inadequate. The penalty clause for non-compliance is not binding and there is no time limit for depositing publications. Given this state of affairs many publishers, printers, authors, etc., take advantage of this situation and are unwilling to deposit their products since there is no financial gain. The law on legal deposit needs to be revised to enforce some of the missing elements and to ensure that books are deposited on time.

Library resources

Library resources found in most public libraries in Tanzania are books, periodicals and newspapers. Audio-visual materials are found in libraries around Dar es Salaam, but there are few elsewhere. At June 1999, the total book stock in all the service points of Tanzania Library Service Board was 560,473 volumes. The Board has been unable to purchase new books from publishers both locally and overseas because of lack of funding. This has resulted in the TLS failing to satisfy users' needs. Most books added into the system are received as gifts and donations, in particular from Book Aid International (which supplies the vast majority), United Nations Agencies and the British Council.

Finance

The main supporter of public library development in Tanzania has been the central government. In the past, government funding through the Ministry of Education enabled the stocking of all regional and district libraries in Tanzania. Not only that, support to libraries featured highly among donors since they were accorded high priority within the national development plans. However, in the last ten years this picture has been changing and the development of public libraries has almost come to a standstill. The central government budget to libraries currently only meets staff salaries. There are few financial resources available for book stock development or for the operation of additional extension services. The limited budget provided by the central government is a reflection of the incapacity of most governments in developing countries to meet the appropriate social needs of their citizens. On the reorganization of TLS in 1994, an independent Planning and Projects Development Department was created. In addition to planning, this department also has responsibility for fund-raising activities. The recently inaugurated Multi-Media Centre in the Children and Schools Division funded by UNESCO is an illustration of its success in this sphere.

Whilst the main responsibility for developing public library services in the country has previously fallen on the TLSB, it is the intention of recent legislation (1997) to introduce the decentralization of library services, to increase local government involvement and cost-sharing in any future development, and the expansion of the public library systems at national, regional, district and village levels. As a consequence it is expected that the role of
the TLS will eventually be reduced to one of co-ordination and supervision tasks. The success of this initiative, however, will largely depend on the quality of staff. Training and re-training of information personnel (including regional librarians) who can cope with new challenges and demands from a wider variety of information-seekers at various levels will be of paramount importance. Also, since local authorities unfortunately find it difficult to collect adequate revenue to support the majority of their major activities, it is unlikely even with the creation of local library boards consisting of members of the local communities, that they will be able to be in a position to respond satisfactorily to the need for library development in their respective areas.

Membership enrolment fees were introduced in mid-1990 to support the government policy of encouraging public institutions and organizations to be self-reliant and to enable the libraries to identify serious and potential library users. It was also seen as a means of raising funds, since the government subvention has been reduced since the end of the 1980s. It was intended that the funds raised from the exercise should be used to improve the services provided to users; but, unfortunately, the level of funding raised in this manner has been insufficient to make more than a small impression on the amount required to fully meet the needs of the public libraries.

Users

The total number of registered users, both adults and juniors, at all TLS service points as at June 1999 was 30,051. This number went down drastically when membership enrolment fees were introduced. Most of the users were scared away as they could not afford the fee; however, people are now beginning to return. The membership fee is Tsh.3,000 for adults, Tsh.1,000 for students and Tsh.10,000 for institutions. The membership fee is paid annually and the identity card needs to be renewed yearly. A temporary membership fee of Tsh.500 is non-refundable and payment is made upon entry to the library. Since the membership registration procedure was introduced in February 1996, the National Central Library has so far managed to register a total of 2,104 permanent members and 1,896 temporary members, from whom a total of Tsh.3,612,000 has been collected.

Staffing

TLS realizes the importance of educating and training its staff. In the past it has supported ten staff each year for further training at the School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies in Bagamoyo. However, with the present financial difficulties, the Board cannot manage to sustain this training commitment. Also not a single person has been sent abroad for further studies since 1991. Thus, service points, sections and departments are more often than not staffed by members of staff who cannot articulate the needs and problems facing their users.

To date, Tanzania Library Service Board has a total of 505 employees, there are 44 librarians, 72 library assistants, 254 library attendants, 41 typists, 43 cleaners/gardeners, 46 watchmen and 5 drivers. The actual employee requirements for public library to date are 64 librarians, 106 library assistants, 100 library attendants, 59 typists, 35 cleaners/gardeners, 60 watchmen, 2 drivers – a total of 426. This shows that TLS has excess staff in the lower cadre, while at the same time there is a shortage of librarians and library assistants.
Problems and limitations

The main problem facing the public library service in Tanzania is lack of funds. This situation has seriously affected the TLSB in many ways such as:

- lack of adequate, up-to-date and relevant reading materials for public/general users;
- lack of vigilance in public relations and publicity on the side of professional librarians, and thus a poor response from potential donors;
- training of library staff in new skills has not been possible;
- unavailability of working tools like paper, catalogue cards, typewriters, vehicles, etc.;
- renovation of existing building has been impossible, particularly the regional libraries in Morogoro, Mbeya, Kagera, Iringa and Ruvuma. Furniture is worn out as a result of a lack of maintenance;
- lack of motivation has forced library professionals to resign and look for greener pastures inside and outside the country;
- the Board has been unable to raise the standard of the library school in order to satisfy the needs of the country;
- most development projects have remained incomplete;
- TLS has been unable to update its services because of the lack of funds to buy adequate computers and other modern equipment.

Conclusion and recommendations

Although there are many problems affecting library development in Tanzania, every effort is being made to increase accessibility to library and information services by the majority of the population, as well as collecting and preserving the national imprint for present and future generation. The Board’s future plans for library development include advice and co-ordination of the very many libraries which exist in government ministries, departments, and public and private institutions so as to achieve uniformity in the country’s library system.

The new procedure for membership enrolment is proving successful. Actually it has reduced the congestion of users and many library users are now feeling responsible for the library facilities. Finally, it is the anticipation of most librarians that by improving their services and facilities, they will attract more members as they move ahead. With regard to bibliographic services there is an urgent need to create a computerized bibliographic database which will provide information contained in national publications, journals and official reports. As we enter the next millennium, access to education, books and knowledge will play a vital role in improving human quality. Nowhere is the improvement of human quality of life critical as in many Third World countries.

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UGANDA

The Present Position of Public Libraries in Uganda

Goretti Kyomuhendo
UGANDA

Background

Uganda is a landlocked republic in Eastern Africa, bordered on the north by the Republic of Sudan, on the east by Kenya, on the south by Tanzania and Rwanda, and on the west by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Uganda became a fully independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations on 6 October 1962. It has an area of 236,036 sq. km (91,134 sq. mi). The capital is Kampala. The land surface is diversified, about 85 per cent being an elevated plateau, with the main lowlands located in the Rift Valley, which runs down the western side of Uganda. Much of the south is forested, and most of the north is covered with savannah.

Uganda has a population (1996 official estimate) of 19,136,000. In 1991 it was 16,582,700. The country has an average population density of about 97 people per sq. km (251 per sq. mi). About 12 per cent of the population is urbanized. Average life expectancy in the mid-1990s was about 51 years for men and 54 years for women.

Almost all the inhabitants of Uganda are Africans of the Bantu migration. About 70 per cent of the people speak a Bantu language; most of the remaining people speak a Nilotic language, and these live in the north and east, and include the Acholi, Lango and Karamojong ethnic groups. In the late 1960s Uganda also had a sizeable Asian population (741,000 of Indian and Pakistani origin in 1969). Idi Amin's expulsion of non-citizen Asians in 1972 led to all but about 4,000 leaving the country but many have returned during the 1990s.

Education is not yet compulsory in Uganda, but a universal system of primary education is planned. The British educational system has been influential, and missionary schools have played an important role in educating the people. The literacy rate was about 56 per cent in the mid-1990s. In 1994 about 2.5 million pupils attended some 8,400 primary schools in Uganda, and some 275,300 students were enrolled in more than 900 secondary, technical and primary teacher-training schools. All schools charge fees. Around 7,000 students were enrolled in higher education. In 1994, 2 per cent of the country's gross national product (GNP) was spent on education. Uganda's leading institutions of higher education are Makerere University (founded 1922), Uganda Technical College (1954), both in Kampala, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology. The Institute of Teacher Education and the Uganda Polytechnic are both in Kiambo. English is the official language; Swahili is used as the lingua franca. Numerous indigenous languages are also used.

Uganda’s GNP (World Bank estimate; 1993-1995 average prices) in 1995 was about US$4,660 million, equivalent to US$240 per capita. Uganda's most important natural resource is its rich soil, which provides the basis for the diverse agricultural economy of the country, the Ugandan economy being largely dependent on agriculture. The sector provided about 50 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1995, and almost all export earnings; a good deal of farming is at subsistence or semi-subsistence levels. The principal cash crops - cotton, plantains, millet, maize, coffee and tea - are dependent on fluctuating world markets. In addition, Uganda has exploitable deposits of gold, copper, cobalt, tin, and tungsten, ample water-power resources for producing hydroelectricity, and rich fish resources in the lakes.
Introduction to libraries

Public library services in Uganda began as far back as 1940, with the major aim of providing information to the elite, who were able to read and write in English and were mostly expatriates. Later the role of the public library was expanded to include fighting illiteracy, especially at the time when the East African Literature Bureau (EALB) ran libraries. The Bureau had a prime duty of fostering basic literacy, hence had to be supported by library services, which would provide follow-up reading materials for the rural people to whom the Bureau publications were directed.

Later, the control of public library activities in Uganda was handed over to the Public Libraries Board (PLB) which was established by the Public Libraries Act, 1964, with the sole responsibility ‘to establish, equip, and manage libraries in Uganda’. It currently operates under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

Statement of the problem

Public library services have had, and are still having, a lot of problems. These include:

Financial and moral support from the public and hence from government: the role of the library (and information) must be appreciated. Particularly, the role that libraries can play in the socio-economic development of the country, and that the lack of the financial support from the government (accruing from the lack of an appreciation of the importance of information), has a profound negative impact. A sizeable budget has never been provided to enable the public libraries to be equipped and maintained. Even now, the PLB is hitting a problem in the decentralization of its endeavours. Some district authorities (for example, Mbale District Council) have refused to take charge of the public library service, perceiving it as an additional financial burden. When the issue of decentralization was raised, PLB anticipated this problem and the result it would have. It resisted handing over the libraries to district authorities until the Government Act, 1997, came into force.

The human resource aspect: there are few graduate employees working in public library services in Uganda. Kigongo-Bukenya pointed out the folly of this policy: ‘one can state with certainty that Uganda made a faulty start. The first Chief Librarian to be appointed was inexperienced and had no political base, which, ironically, mattered at that time’. There is generally a poor impression of, and low status of, librarianship as a profession in Uganda, and hence there is a lack of qualified staff in the public library service.

Lastly, the political climate in Uganda has had a role to play in the problems enumerated above. A country which has been at war from the time of its independence may never have an opportunity to plan certain social services like library services. People therefore are apathetic to the usefulness of libraries, and this affects the potential for financial support.

Status of public library services

In view of its prime mission of ‘empowering the public with information so as to enable them make informed decisions and participate in social, cultural, economic and political developments of Uganda through facilitating the provisions of the relevant library services’, PLB has had few activities in place. It has 21 static library service points, indicated in the

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PLB Headquarters is divided into three departments: Technical Services, Library Services and Administration, all aimed at making it easy to manage public libraries in Uganda. The collection and staffing status of the public libraries in Uganda is as shown in the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Collection</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Libraries Board Headquarters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Services</td>
<td>three degree holders; one diploma holder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
<td>one degree holder; one diploma holder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Department</td>
<td>one masters degree holder; one degree holder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one degree (BLIS) holder; one certificate holder</td>
<td>10,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arua Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one certificate holder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entebbe Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one diploma certificate holder</td>
<td>5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gulu Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one certificate holder</td>
<td>10,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hoima Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one certificate holder</td>
<td>5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jinja Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one degree (BLIS) holder</td>
<td>15,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kabale Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one certificate holder</td>
<td>5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kabarole Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one certificate holder</td>
<td>5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kampala Children’s Library</strong></td>
<td>one certificate holder</td>
<td>5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kampala Public Library</strong></td>
<td>two degree (BLIS) holders</td>
<td>30,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kamuli Public Library</strong></td>
<td>untrained person</td>
<td>5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masaka Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one diploma holder</td>
<td>6,000 books and an Internet connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masindi Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one certificate holder</td>
<td>5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mbarara Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one degree (BLIS) holder; one diploma holder</td>
<td>20,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mbarara Public Library</strong></td>
<td>no one appointed</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moroto Public Library</strong></td>
<td>no one appointed</td>
<td>about 5,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moyo Book Centre</strong></td>
<td>no one appointed</td>
<td>about 3,000 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nebbi Book Centre</strong></td>
<td>no one appointed</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teso Public Library</strong></td>
<td>one diploma holder</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tororo Public Library</strong></td>
<td>no one appointed</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lira Public Library</strong></td>
<td>no one appointed</td>
<td>a sizeable collection, computer and video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appreciating the need for library services in the rural areas, where the majority of Ugandans live and work, PLB designed a project for rural library services. Places identified included Zigoti in Mubende District, Ibanda in Mbarare District, Kapachorwa in Kapachorwa District and Nakaseke in Luwero District. The project called upon rural communities to co-operate with PLB by providing a building, the personnel to run it, and the furniture. However, it was only in Mubende and Luwero districts that the rural communities showed immediate interest, and Zigoti Entertainment Centre in Mubende District and Nakaseke Multi-purpose Library were initiated. Progress in Ibanda to create a rural library is now in its advanced stages.

Later, when the Multi-purpose Community Telecentre (MCT) project – funded by UNESCO, the International Telecommunications Union and the IDRC – came, Nakaseke was earmarked and was taken over by this project. Five countries in Africa (Mozambique, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Senegal) were selected to benefit; however, it is, so far, only in Uganda that it has been implemented. The library at Nakaseke now has telephone, fax, e-mail and Internet connections and services in addition to traditional library services. Its success is due to the training workshops that involve the already trained users, who develop their skills as trainers of trainees. Of all the services that are used in Nakaseke MCT, the library services come top, followed by computer services (Internet search, word-processing, data-processing, etc.); communication services are least used because the communication lines are always on and off. Records indicate that, when the project began, 40 people registered for the services and now the number is 80. The first 40 people were trained and are helping the new users. A related project has also been initiated by the IDRC called the ACACIA Initiative (Communities and the Information Society in Africa) at Nabweru in Mpigi District.

Changes taking place in the public library service

The control of public libraries in Uganda has been changed since the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the enactment of the Local Government Act, 1997 came into force. Under this Act, the Public Libraries services have been decentralized to the district and urban authorities. In this Act, the Second Schedule, Part 2, No. 7, specifies that districts will ‘aid and support the establishment and maintenance of [public] libraries in their districts’. It further states in the same Schedule, Part 3, No. 1(h) and No. 23, that the urban authorities will ‘establish, acquire, erect, maintain, promote, assist to control with participation of citizens’, and ‘aid and maintain whether by grant of money or otherwise the establishment and maintenance of libraries . . . and make presentation to local authorities or public bodies’. Hence the position now is that the PLB will continue to maintain its supervisory/inspectory roles, pending attempts to forge the Central Reference Library into a national library as to date there has been no national library, this role at present being played by Makerere University Library.

Recommendations for improvement/development

1 Government will not succeed in its modernization programmes without regarding information as a key player in socio-economic development. That is why as a matter of urgency it should consider making sizeable budgets available for public libraries; it should also take an interest in library development. Books, videos, tapes, etc., have to be purchased for public libraries. Without this kind of support, any talk about libraries is just words.

2 If the process of decentralization of public libraries is to succeed, it should be completed in all the districts. There should also be accompanying sensitization programmes for the district leaders to understand the role that information plays in socio-economic development. Many people, including leaders, do not take anything to do with libraries seriously; after all, many of them have very poor reading habits and therefore cannot appreciate
the use of such facilities. Existing public libraries should be handed over to local authorities only after serious sensitization of district leaders through the use of workshops, etc.

3 An Act of Parliament, whose Bill is yet to be drafted and be presented for debate, must cater for the Central Reference Library (where PLB is located) to become the national library, with the status of a legal-deposit centre, so that the national availability of our information resources can be guaranteed. It should also make the national library a centre for the International Serials Data System (ISDS), and a centre for setting policies and standards for decentralized public libraries.

4 There are no established public information resource-sharing networks in Uganda and no indexes to point where existing resources are to be found. The Central Reference Library at the headquarters of PLB should as a matter of urgency start to compile a bibliography of materials available in all the public libraries. This will provide the foundation for a national bibliography to be prepared, which would facilitate effective resource-sharing.

5 While it is trying to deal with the decentralization process, government (through PLB), district local authorities and international charitable organizations should identify funds on an annual basis to resuscitate mobile, postal and book-box library services. Library buildings require refurbishment and book stocks must be renewed. Until this is done it will be difficult to promote the use of public libraries, readership and literacy in Uganda. Meanwhile, PLB and the district local authorities that are interested in public libraries should diversify the scope of public library services to include many of the new technologies so as to supplement the traditional services that PLB has been encouraging.

6 There is no unity and solidarity among library and information personnel in Uganda. If funds were available to enable a professional association to get off the ground, workshops could be held to bring personnel together periodically to discuss issues on libraries. This could bring about a change in attitude among librarians and their public. To date the profession has failed to inform government, and the people, what a library can mean to the development of the country’s economy.

7 Since there are a number of interested groups, government should diversify the services of Multi-purpose Community Telecentres and allow them to be expanded to cater for the needs of their users. Teachers and students, who will not be able to reach these services very often, could be given special consideration. For example, special services could be created to cater for them, allowing them to prepare lessons and assignments, etc., and also borrow material like video-tapes, etc. Plans to work with specialized institutions in certain fields could be initiated – for example, the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) could be a node for MCT services on agriculture; Mulago or Nakaseke Hospitals could be a node for information on tele-medicine; and so on.

8 Lastly, PLB could also consolidate its library services in institutions like prisons, hospitals, refugee camps, military camps and in public transport facilities such as railway and bus stations so that the people will be able to benefit from the fruit of public library services, especially to the disadvantaged groups mentioned above.

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ZAMBIA

Public Library Services in Zambia

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Background

The Republic of Zambia is a landlocked country in southern Africa, bordered on the north-west by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the north-east by Tanzania, on the east by Malawi, on the south-east by Mozambique, on the south by Zimbabwe, Botswana and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia, and on the west by Angola. Zambia gained independence from the UK on 24 October 1964. Its area is 752,614 sq. km (290,586 sq. mi); Lusaka is the capital.

Most of Zambia is high plateau with a flat or gently undulating terrain. Elevations average between about 1,070 and 1,370 m (3,500 and 4,500 ft.). Compared with many other African countries, Zambia has retained a large percentage of its natural forest. Of overwhelming importance to Zambia’s modern history have been the rich mineral veins of the country’s Copperbelt.

Zambia has a population of 9,715,000 (1996 official estimate), giving an average population density of about 13 people per sq. km (33 per sq. mi). The central areas, the Copperbelt and along the railway lines are most densely populated. In all, more than 55 per cent of Zambians live in towns, making it one of the most highly urbanized countries in Africa. Much of the north-east and far west is sparsely inhabited. The population is made up of more than 70 Bantu-speaking ethnic groups, including the Bemba, the single largest group (36 per cent of the population), who live in the north-east and predominate on the Copperbelt), the Lozi of the west, and the Tonga of the south. The major African languages spoken are Bemba, Lozi, Luvale, Tonga and Nyanja; the official language is English.

School attendance has increased substantially since Zambia’s independence in 1964. In 1990 about 1.4 million pupils were enrolled in primary schools and 161,300 in secondary schools. However, although school attendance has increased in numbers, this represents only 60 per cent of children of school age. Since 1991 the actual percentage of school age children attending school has fallen. Vocational and teacher-training schools had nearly 8,200 students. The University of Zambia (established 1965), in Lusaka, has about 4,000 students.

Zambia’s GNP (World Bank estimate; 1993–1995 average prices) was about US$3,600 million in 1995, equivalent to US$400 per capita. The country’s wealth has been based almost entirely on mining on the rich Copperbelt. The downturn in world copper prices since the late 1970s had severely damaging economic consequences, which were compounded by the fact that the reserves were starting to be exhausted. Attempts have been made to diversify agriculture and to make the country self-sufficient in food, but with only limited success.

Introduction to public libraries in Zambia

Public libraries began in the early years of the twentieth century as subscription libraries for Europeans, and with the provision of social welfare libraries for the African employees of mines and other large companies. The subscription libraries were gradually taken over by municipal councils in urban areas (Livingstone, Lusaka, Kabwe, Ndola, Kitwe, Chingola, Luanshya, Kamuchanga, Kalulushi and Chililabombwe), but the rural areas were thinly served by the book-box service of the African Literature Bureau, which was to be taken over by Northern Rhodesia Library Service two years before Independence.
Andrew Rooke’s assessment of the situation at the time he wrote, in 1983–4, is still valid today, only worse; as the economy of Zambia has continued to deteriorate, so has the funding received by public libraries been reduced.

**Municipal libraries**

The urban areas of Zambia are still served by the municipal libraries mentioned above; Mufulira is probably the best, followed by Lusaka. However, it is unlikely that any council library has funds for purchase of books. They exist on donations of books mainly from North American sources channelled through the Rotary Club or World Vision International, or from Book Aid International (formerly Ranfurly Library Service) of the UK and the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) channelled through Zambia Library Service. The last two sources may be preferred, because with these there is an opportunity of stating priorities in advance; other donors do not seem to have this arrangement.

After about six months without receiving newspapers, Lusaka City Library started to charge for use of newspapers, and purchased them with the revenue raised from the user charge of K100 per 15 minutes (approx. US$0.04). This scarcely reduces their popularity; the cost of a newspaper being K1000 per issue, beyond the reach even of most people in employment. However, apart from this, any other income generated by the library is paid into the general council account, and the library does not have access to it.

Most of the municipal libraries charge a deposit or membership fee. While this may be affordable to the average person, obviously the most disadvantaged will be prevented from using the library. Some libraries charge a fee for study facilities, while Kabwe is reported to charge K20,000 (nearly US$10) refundable ‘security deposit’ for popular and expensive books.

Lusaka City Library is heavily used as a study area, especially now that the British Council has given their textbook collection to the library. However, the general stock is scarcely used; date labels of many fiction titles have not been stamped for more than ten years. Two of the three branch libraries (Chilenje and Matero) were opened with funding from the British Council in 1976. It appears that most of the book stock dates from that time, with very little later, or local, material. The book stock is frequently under-utilized, with two or three loans daily from a library in a heavily populated township. The same branch, however, is heavily used by school children for reading textbooks and doing homework; there is a high demand for quiet places, conducive for studying, as many homes are overcrowded and noisy.

Livingstone Council Library is also much used by students. However, only about four shelves of books are of recent date, and not all of them are relevant – for example, the millennium collection donated by the British government has only about two titles that are likely to be read. Ninety per cent of the books are more than forty years old, and completely unused. Golden Nachibinga’s report on a visit to the Copperbelt illustrates vividly the situation in municipal libraries, from Mufulira, which is managing well, to Mpatamatu, where the community has taken the initiative in acquiring book stock and funding for the library.

Since council staff remain unpaid month after month, and household and market refuse is uncollected, libraries are not of the highest priority. Many large communities in the peri-urban areas are completely without access to books and other sources of information. There is now a move to attempt to serve these areas through community reading rooms, but it is still at the stage of sensitizing the communities targeted. This will be joint project involving Lusaka City Council and Zambia Library Service. As Prof. Lundu said recently: ‘Council libraries have lacked vision, leadership and funding; they have depended heavily on donors, but, without a vision, that doesn’t help.’
Zambia Library Service

Upon the establishment of Zambia Library Service in 1962 (with a grant from the Ford Foundation) it took over the work of the Literature Bureau, and gradually expanded it beyond the book-box service, both in terms of the size of collection and area covered. By 1983 there were approximately 1500 library centres, with upwards of 200 books each, run by volunteers. Many were in schools or other centres of population. Even those in schools were encouraged to serve the surrounding population, and many of them still do. By 1972 Zambia Library Service had built six provincial libraries, but then further development came to a halt as the economy started to decline with the oil crisis in 1975. Nineteen branch libraries have since been opened in converted accommodation identified by the local councils.

Zambia Library Service levies no charges for individual borrowing except for fines on overdue books, the cost of replacing lost books, and, in some cases, a levy on lost readers’ tickets.

Charges are, however, made for the distribution of donated books to private schools and other non-government institutions at a rate of K50,000 (US$20) per consignment of 120-150 books. Government schools and institutions are supplied free of charge. These books are deemed to belong to the school, whereas books in library centres are intended as a circulating collection and are Zambia Library Service stock.

Zambia Library Service is now funded by a direct grant of K300 million annually ($120,000) which covers administrative costs, books, and all costs except salaries. On the whole, this is just enough to keep the institution, with its six provincial libraries and eighteen branch libraries, running, with two newspapers daily for each library, and minimal purchase of books. As with all other public libraries in Zambia, the ZLS relies heavily on donated books.

The Service is, however, able to undertake some additional activities, such as promotion of reading among children, in the form of reading tents and reading competitions, and promotion of libraries. ‘Women’s corners’, which have been established in four libraries in an effort to increase women’s use of the libraries, could also provide an early reading environment for very young children.

Community libraries

Community libraries were originally a ‘donor-driven’ programme, promoted by CODE. However, when they very soon dropped the programme, ZLS staff had already been persuaded that this was the only way to serve larger populations outside the district headquarters where branch libraries are planned. In some cases, where a library centre is serving the community well, it has been suggested that it involve the community in its management and become a community library. At present only five are supported by the ZLS, in rural areas, and three more are in process of being established in deprived peri-urban areas. The community finds the accommodation, staff, and any funding required, and Zambia Library Service provides books, advice and support. Since CODE withdrew its support from community libraries, funding for the purchase of local materials has become a problem that has not yet been resolved.

Community information services

The concept of community information has not been introduced to those manning these libraries. On the whole, this subject is still foreign to Zambian librarians, although every thesis written on Zambian public libraries since 1975 has mentioned the need for this kind of service in a variety of formats, considering the low literacy level of the community.
Library Service is in the process of starting to provide community information services at its provincial libraries, but progress is slow, owing to a lack of staff, training and resources. There is a need to repackage materials, to make them appropriate to the user as to level and language, but no library has the skills or the funds to do this.

Services to the visually impaired

Zambia National Library and Cultural Centre for the Blind was established in 1992 with extensive help from the Finnish Federation for the Visually Handicapped (FFVH). Although it now falls under the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare, it is still very dependent on donor funding.

The institution is on e-mail, and is now well provided with the basic electronic equipment for scanning print and printing in Braille, and for recording and dubbing. In addition to the Headquarters in Lusaka, the public are served through 30 centres, ten of them in public libraries – Kabwe Municipal Library, Kitwe City Library, Livingstone Council Library, Mwense Branch Library, and six ZLS provincial libraries.

Information technology

It is fairly safe to say that no municipal library has a computer; the majority do not even have a telephone, although they are situated in areas with good access to telephone services.

Zambia Library Service received one Macintosh computer from UNESCO in 1996, and three Compaq computers from CODE in January 1999. The Service is not yet connected to the Internet, but will be as soon as a telephone line is available. The six provincial libraries have telephone connections, together with six of the branch libraries. Three provincial libraries and Zambia Library Service Headquarters are provided with fax machines.

Other information initiatives

There may be isolated information centres provided by NGOs, but little is known about them. Most NGO information centres are targeted at professionals in various fields, such as gender or the disadvantaged. NGOs specializing in AIDS/HIV information tend to distribute their materials through schools and ignore other information providers.

The Ministries of Agriculture and Health provide extension programmes and both have a range of leaflets on a variety of subjects, but they tend not to co-ordinate their efforts or work with other information providers.

USAID with the Leyland Initiative hopes to spread access to the Internet throughout the country, but plans of how they intend to do this have not been disclosed.

Publishing industry in Zambia

Although the remit of this report is libraries, it has to be said that the publishing industry seems to form a part of the whole problem. It remains at a very low level of development. Although there are, in theory, 41 publishers in Zambia, very many of these have not produced more than one book. Only a few titles are currently available in the seven Zambian languages in general use and taught in schools (there are 74 languages and dialects altogether). The titles that are available are mainly short novels, or books of traditional sayings – apart from
the school textbooks. There is nothing on agriculture, health or other subjects of local importance.

An assessment of needs

Bearing in mind the importance of public libraries in a variety of fields, such as support to functional literacy, good governance, education, civic education, and problem solving, especially in the present economic circumstances where many children drop out of school, the majority of the population live in poverty, retired people are returning to the land and need agricultural information in their neighbourhood, the following needs are observed:

Human resource development

Public librarians need:
- reorientation and training in the use of computers and the Internet;
- training in community information techniques;
- and probably training in public relations and management.

This training might be by means of attachments, or workshops; a training programme in community information might be developed with the assistance of NGOs working in community information.

Technical and learning infrastructure

The public libraries all require:
- rehabilitation, especially in relation to physical security. Some of Lusaka City Council’s libraries are leaking badly, and Zambia Library Service has just started working on securing and repainting its libraries for the first time since they were built thirty years ago;
- computers, not only to provide access to information through the Internet, or to information on CD-ROM, but also for data management, office management, and word-processing;
- transport; Zambia Library Service needs one vehicle for each of six provincial libraries for servicing the branch and community libraries; the headquarters needs a small truck for carrying new books and equipment to the provincial libraries; municipal libraries need one vehicle each for reaching schools and general administration.

Materials

- All libraries have existed for too long on donated materials, and, inevitably, certain types of materials are rarely supplied by donors; these include appropriate technology (pit-latrines, wells, etc.) tropical agriculture, African history;
- Books are required on subjects of local importance; locally published books; books in local languages; information repackaged to suit local needs;
- Support is needed for publishers or libraries to commission materials on subjects of local importance where nothing is available at present;
- Imported books on subjects not normally supplied by donors are required.
ZIMBABWE

The Present Position of Public Library Services in Zimbabwe

Elizabeth Chisveto
ZIMBABWE

Background

Zimbabwe, officially the Republic of Zimbabwe, is a landlocked republic in southern Africa. The total area of the country is 390,759 sq. km (150,873 sq. mi). The capital is Harare.

It is an upland country with a relatively temperate climate and a diversity of agricultural and mineral resources. The most prominent physical feature is a broad upland that runs south-west to north-east across the country. Along the eastern border is a mountainous range, the Eastern Highlands, which rises to a maximum elevation of 2,592 m (8,504 ft.). Although Zimbabwe lies in the Tropics, both altitude and distance from the sea considerably moderate its climate.

Zimbabwe is rich in mineral resources. Most minerals are found in the Great Dyke, including chromium ores, copper, asbestos, nickel, gold, silver and iron ore. Large coal reserves are found in the north-west near Hwange. Other mineral resources include cobalt and tin. Zimbabwe has the most diversified economy of any African nation apart from South Africa. Mining, agriculture and manufacturing are all well developed, and the country’s financial services sector and infrastructure are highly sophisticated. However, the unemployment rate in 1994 was estimated at 45 per cent of the workforce. By 1995 the GNP was about US$5,900 million (World Bank figures; 1993—1995), equivalent to US$540 per capita.

Zimbabwe has a population of 11,515,000 (1996 official estimate), giving the country an average population density of only 29 people per sq. km (76 per sq. mi). Zimbabwe has a high population growth rate (3% a year in the early 1990s; an estimated 1.4% in 1996). Nearly three quarters of the people live in rural areas. Average life expectancy at birth is 58 years for men and 62 years for women, although this will be considerably higher for the White population. English is the official language of Zimbabwe. The most important spoken languages are Shona and Ndebele.

Education is compulsory. Before independence, the majority of the Black population was excluded from all but the most basic education, while facilities for the White minority were on a par with much of Western Europe. A priority of the government after 1980 was to redress this inequality, and spending on education increased hugely, becoming one of the largest elements in the budget. The policy was very successful: by the early 1990s, 85 per cent of the population aged 5–19 was in school, and literacy had reached almost 75 per cent; by 1995 it was 85 per cent. The need to constrain costs, however, led to the introduction of school fees for primary education in 1991; parents have always been expected to contribute to secondary-school costs. In 1995, 8.3 per cent of gross national product (GNP) was spent on education.

In 1995 approximately 2.65 million students were enrolled in primary schools and 711,000 in secondary schools. There are a large number of private primary and secondary schools, some of them run by church bodies. The large commercial farms are expected to establish primary schools for the children of their workers, and these schools must be registered with the ministry of education. Higher educational institutions include ten teachers’ colleges and several agricultural and technical schools. The University of Zimbabwe (founded 1955) is in Harare; other universities have recently been established in Bulawayo and Mutare. There were around 46,400 students in higher education in 1995.
Introduction to public libraries

Zimbabwe, like many African countries, is going through a very difficult period in so far as the provision of library services is concerned. There are many libraries that are considered to be public libraries in Zimbabwe and the history behind their initiation differs from location to location. The libraries also differ in size and quantity of books they hold.

The history of public libraries in Zimbabwe dates back to the period of the arrival of the first settlers who came into the country in the 1890s. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the Bulawayo Public Library was founded in 1896 with an initial gift of 100 guineas from Cecil John Rhodes and that it is the oldest library in the country. The Gweru Public Library was founded in 1897 while the Queen Victoria Memorial Library, which is now known as the Harare City Library, was founded in 1902 around the same time as the Turner Memorial Library in Mutare. Changes in terms of library location and space, staffing, book acquisition and funding, have been witnessed throughout the entire history of the existence of public library services in Zimbabwe. The public library service has passed through different political and socio-economic eras that have impacted differently on the development of the services in Zimbabwe. The local municipalities within which they are found adopted some of the libraries, while some remained with their founding authorities.

White farmers’ wives who started Women’s Institute (WI) groups initiated some public libraries. One of the objects of the WI was to start recreational facilities, such as libraries, in different farming communities. As a result, these libraries are still found in farming communities near the smaller towns of the country.

Factors which influence the present situation of public library service centre around several major issues:

- grossly reduced financial support to public libraries
- the reduction of library personnel as a result of cost-saving measures adopted by the government
- problems in the entire book sector
- high inflation levels in the country’s economy
- the general situation prevailing in the country

In the past, the policy of local governments/municipalities was that libraries had to be set up as part of community service provision at the time that suburbs were being constructed. These libraries were constructed from the profits realized from beer sales. However, after attaining Independence, the government adopted a policy in which the beer profits were taxed heavily, leaving the local municipalities with few funds to improve the social services. Despite the outcry and protests by urban councils, the central government went ahead with the taxation of beer profits and, at the same time, reduced its own financial support to the urban councils. The effect of these policies was that many services were discontinued – for example, youth recreational programmes were severely cut and municipalities were tasked with the responsibility of building schools for their residents.

Usually where there is a need to decide which service is to be cut as a result of financial limitations, libraries and social services come top of the list. The effect on the public library service provision is that the financial support/grants from the local councils is getting less and less annually. This reduction affects the quality and quantity of books that a library can purchase and the salaries of the library staff members.

In the meantime, the macro-economic situation of the country is changing rapidly. The government adopted the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) that was prescribed by International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Some of the conditions that
were to be met for the success of ESAP included the reduction of government expenditure through the rationalization of government employees and recovering costs from services which were previously provided free by the government. Many posts were abolished and they continue to be abolished as the government has embarked on an economic empowerment strategy. The affect of this process on library services was dramatic, leaving many staff members living in the fear of their posts being axed at any time. Furthermore, those who retire or die are not replaced because the position is immediately frozen. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the morale of the library personnel at its lowest ebb. The workload of the few remaining staff members becomes very heavy and the quality of service is therefore greatly affected.

National Library and Documentation Service (NLDS)

Library services in Zimbabwe are regulated by an Act of Parliament passed in 1985 when the National Library and Documentation Service (NLDS) was established. The NLDS is tasked with the following responsibilities as stipulated in the Act:

4. (a) (i) to promote the widespread enjoyment in Zimbabwe of publications of an educational, scientific, cultural, recreational or sporting value;
(ii) to ensure, maintain and develop a high standard of library facilities;
(iii) to operate a documentation facility and an inter-library loan facility; and
(iv) to train librarians and ensure, maintain, co-ordinate and develop a high standard of librarianship;
(b) In relation to constituent libraries, to provide, maintain, co-ordinate and develop facilities for the consultation by and the free lending to the public of publications for reading, research, recreation and study.

The NLDS is headed by a Director and it is presently operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture within the department of Culture. The Deputy Director of NLDS is also the Chief Librarian of the National Free Library, which is in Bulawayo. It is interesting to note that the NLDS has been moved several times under different ministries and departments. Initially, it was under the ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture and within the Culture division. In 1989 it fell under the Sport and Recreation Council, only to be shifted to the Ministry of Education and Culture. These continual changes make it difficult to know the real place to which the provision of library services belongs, and indicate the level of seriousness with which the issue of libraries is considered.

In the past, the NLDS provided minimum financial support to rural libraries to enable them to set up library services in rural communities. The funds allocated to the NLDS have been reduced annually, making it difficult to continue supporting the rural school/community libraries.

National Free Library of Zimbabwe

The National Free Library was established in 1945, and in its early years of formation was a beneficiary of the Carnegie Corporation fund through the efforts of its first qualified librarian, Dugald Niven, after whom it was named. The name later changed to the National Free Library of Rhodesia (subsequently of Zimbabwe in 1980) after the National Free Library Act of 1970. The Library operates as a national lending library and a national centre for inter-library loans. The lack of adequate financial and human resources has, however, seriously affected the nature of services provided. The increase in postage charges has particularly affected its postal services.
The Library boasts a book stock of 99,000 books; however, the majority of those books need replacement because they are old and worn out. New acquisitions are difficult because the Library’s budget allocation is inadequate and erratic. The continuous fall in the value of the Zimbabwe dollar against major currencies also affects book purchases. This makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to make book purchases from countries outside Zimbabwe. Acquisition externally might have become a thing of the past. However, local publishing offers only a limited number of titles each year and the range is not adequate to meet the needs. The books are also of varying quality and are not durable for library use. It is difficult to improve the quantity and quality of production as almost everyone in the book sector is facing similar financial problems.

The Library therefore tries to find ways of seeking donations from overseas organizations such as the British Council and Book Aid International, which ship cartons of books which are no longer required in the UK. Ideally, the library should be able to send someone to the United Kingdom so as to enable them to select what is relevant to the community they serve. However, owing to financial limitations, it is not possible to justify that expenditure. Mr Robin Doust of Bulawayo Public Library has assisted the library to a great extent by undertaking some selections on its behalf during his own personal visits to Book Aid International, UK. Nevertheless, donations of any kind should be a supplement to the library stock and not the sole source of acquisition. The position with regard to journals is even more serious.

The salaries of library personnel are very inadequate and are also eroded by the inflation level in the country. Generally, librarians are not well paid and vacant posts cannot attract qualified staff. Since 1991, there have been a number of unfilled positions and there is no hope of ever filling them because there is no money to provide salaries.

The Library charges a membership fee of Z$50.00 (US$1.30) to non-formal and college students while A-level students pay Z$20.00 (US$0.50). The library is patronized mainly by students and people undertaking formal and non-formal studies. The wish of the Library’s administration is to have book-binding facilities within the Library to prolong the life of the books. Since the number of staff is greatly reduced, it is felt that computerization would provide a saving on human resources who would otherwise be performing labour intensive tasks such as lending and inter-library loan.

During the study visit to the National Free Library in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe, there was an anticipated reduction of nine staff members. Everyone was unsure of their position and none knew who would be the next person to receive the notification of termination of employment. In a situation of such uncertainty, it is impossible for staff to provide a service, let alone plan for the future.

This scenario is replicated in many public libraries in Zimbabwe. The common situation is that most of the libraries are old and dilapidated. They are also in need of redecoration but the cost of redecorating is prohibitive, and the general state of most libraries is depressing. The number of library users has increased significantly and they impose a lot of pressure on existing facilities. However, some initiatives can be found where libraries have taken it upon themselves to fund-raise aggressively for their libraries. It is an uphill task, but one which sometimes bears fruit.

**Bulawayo Public Library**

One positive role-model of a public library that has tried to survive under difficult circumstances is the Bulawayo Public Library (BPL). As mentioned previously, it is the country’s oldest library. The library has other branches in the city and operates a mobile
library service, which goes to western suburbs of the town. The Zimbabwe Historic Reference Collection is for reference only and is a legal-deposit collection of local publications, used mainly by researchers.

The BPL has been through difficult times to the point of almost closing down its operations. The support it was getting from the Bulawayo City Council and the government had been reduced significantly such that salaries for the staff were difficult to sustain. The library embarked on cost recovery measures by charging for the services it was providing to its clientele. The services were made more attractive because the public had to pay, they have to see value in the service. The payment for services could be seen as another way of dividing serious users from those who are not so serious. However, as to be expected, there was a lot of resistance from users. The library can only be used by those who can afford to pay; it is possible that it no longer serves the community that needs the services most.

Examples of services provided and charged for are: the Internet; photocopying; book-binding; video and audio cassette hiring; access to red-carpet service where, through the payment of a certain fee, one is able to access recently published books in a very relaxing environment; access to reserve textbooks; payment for sitting down and reading in an area specially designated for students; and the inter-library loan system.

The library benefits from donations from other countries through such organizations as BAI and the British Council. Not so long ago the library received a donation of a mobile library that services mainly children from the high-density areas of Bulawayo city. The bus is very popular with the children.

Through public appeals the library was able to secure long-term pledges of support from private individuals and organizations. The services the library offers are going a long way towards making the library a self-sufficient venture. Binding of books within the library has substantially prolonged the shelf life of the library’s book stock. The layout of books and their appearance on the shelves really strike one as one enters the library. All this is possible through a dedicated team of staff who have been with the library for a long time and weathered the storm. The personal dedication of the Director of the BPL must be commended. The case of the BPL clearly indicates that people are willing to pay for a service that they consider useful and important to them. However, because information has to be made available to the public, it becomes very difficult to decide whether to provide a free service and face closure, or to make people pay for the service and fund the improvements. The case of Bulawayo Public Library, considered against the present economic trends in the country, probably needs closer scrutiny by the legislators and society at large. Perhaps it could even result in an overhaul of the section in the NLDS Act which refers to ‘free lending’ of publications by the library.¹

The success of the BPL cannot necessarily be replicated in other libraries for several reasons - the most significant being the dearth of a dynamic, committed and visionary leadership with a catchment area of users who are able to pay for a service. Other librarians differ in terms of their socio-economic standing and social status, and the majority of users cannot afford even a small membership fee.

Municipal libraries

The local authorities, both before and after Independence, have provided public library services in urban areas. Municipal libraries serve the poorest members of the community and they cannot afford to charge the public except by subscription. Making the members

pay for other services would definitely discourage the clientele and subscription fees have to be minimal. Students over-use municipal libraries for study purposes during examination periods.

In Harare, there are a total of 10 libraries in the former Black township areas, the main one of which is Highfield Central Library. Highfield has a total book stock of 28,000 books, while each of the branch libraries has about 9000 books. The Harare Municipal Libraries now charge subscription fees of Z$100 (US$2.50) per year for adults and Z$40 (US$1.00) for children and youths. In 1997 the nominal fee of Z$1.75 for adults had been increased to Z$50, and that for children to Z$25. The library had a book-binding facility; however, the book-binder was recently removed and posted to the training department of the municipality’s vocational training programme. The library now has to rely upon occasional student book-binders, but they are not as effective. As a result, the problem of worn out stock remains; the lack of finance means that replacement is not possible. The libraries do benefit from Book Aid International book donations and they send the librarian to the BAI annually.

In Bulawayo, municipal libraries face similar problems. In 1999 the City Council has not been able to put aside any funding for library book acquisition. This is the most serious thing that has ever happened in the history of the libraries. Not a single book will be purchased during 1999 as a result of the financial constraints the council is facing. The implications of this state of affairs are very saddening. It compromises the standard of librarianship and the people’s access to information, defeating the whole purpose of the existence of libraries. It also means that the libraries will end up just accepting donations of books that are not relevant to the communities they are serving.

The main library in the Bulawayo municipality is Mzilikazi Library, which manages seven branches. In the past, children used to subscribe at 25¢ per year but the subscriptions have recently been raised to Z$10 (US$0.25) and Z$20 (US$0.50) for children and adults, respectively. While the amounts sound very low, the increase is not within the capacity of many parents and this has affected the level of membership, which has dropped significantly for children. The total book stock for the eight libraries is 160,000 and there are 20,000 members. The libraries have a book-binding facility which helps to keep the books in reasonable shape and increases their shelf life. They also get donations from Book Aid International. In the past, donations had also been received from Aberdeen, the Scottish city twinned with Bulawayo, but these have ceased, probably owing to other problems such as shipment. The staffing situation has been affected by the wish of the local government to reduce staff. Three members of staff resigned in 1999 but have not been replaced.

The examples of Highfield and Mzilikazi give an insight into the situation in urban areas of Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, in an effort to combat the inadequacy of information in rural areas, other initiatives are being made, a few of which are outlined below.

**Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme (RLRDP)**

The history of Zimbabwe has been such that libraries were provided in urban areas as a service and as a right for the people. No similar provision was ever made for rural communities. Since independence in 1980 a quantitative expansion of rural schools has been made and the underlying principle of community participation has been embarked upon. Unfortunately, no qualitative expansion was made to match the massive expansion of schools in terms of providing libraries in all rural schools and providing adequate and relevant information to rural communities. Schools remained with serious shortages of textbooks and reading materials. Rural communities generally continued to lag behind their urban counterparts, despite the fact that 75 per cent of the country’s population live there.
This realization is one of the reasons that motivated the establishment of organizations such as the Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme (RLRDP). RLRDP was founded in 1990 at a seminar attended by educationalists, information organizations and relevant government ministries. The objectives of the organization are to help to establish rural information resource centres in rural communities, as well as to provide relevant reading materials identified by the rural communities themselves. These libraries are based mainly in primary schools with a few being found in secondary schools. The libraries are used by the school children, teachers, community members, school leaders and all interested parties around the school. Each person has a contribution to make to the library as the RLRDP encourages print and non-print methods of using information. Drama, poetry, singing and dancing are some of the mediums used to disseminate information on topical issues. Adult literacy tutors have been trained through co-operation with another adult literacy NGO and the Ministry of Education.

The RLRDP also engages in a gender and development programme. This was initially undertaken in conjunction with another NGO, the Zimbabwe Women’s Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN). The programme is centred on the dissemination of information to rural women. Cultural factors and practices, which tend to favour the boy-child, have invariably resulted in women lagging behind in accessing information.

Training workshops are held to equip both teacher and community librarians with basic skills to run the rural libraries. The Library Management Committees (LMCs) are also given training that enables them to manage the libraries effectively. They are taught how to develop their library constitutions and skills to network and source more information from other organizations. To date, RLRDP works with 200 member libraries and over 200 associate member libraries throughout the country. The organization works with donor partners who provide either financial resources or reading materials.

There is a contention that rural community libraries are ‘in a basic sense, a rural equivalent of an urban public and school library service combined in one’. The rural libraries are open for use by all community members. There is community ownership since the library project is a community initiative that is only facilitated by the organization. This community ownership is crucial for the future sustainability of rural libraries. As opposed to traditional libraries, rural libraries are active and places for meeting by community members. Users sit outside or in the library and discuss topics of interest. The issue of the voluntary community librarian who is compensated in cash or kind by the community for the time spent in the library, is an interesting phenomenon. Some school authorities – for example, school development committees and LMCs – have agreed to levy school children in order to give an allowance to the community librarian. These examples differ within communities, some of which have purpose-built libraries.

A natural development has occurred in some districts where they have found it convenient to work in clusters of four to six libraries within the same geographical vicinity. The older libraries with which the RLRDP has worked are helping new librarians to start their libraries. There are various networking activities which the cluster networks undertake together as a way of encouraging each other. Where clusters exist, trainers have been trained to initiate and facilitate library development skills before the RLRDP steps in. The clusters in a district then choose two representatives who sit on the district networking committee which runs the affairs of the cluster libraries within that district. This is seen as the way forward in sustaining the library services in rural areas.

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RLRDP has gone further and developed donkey-drawn library carts in order to access areas that are not easily accessible. Seven library carts are operating in Matabeleland North and South provinces where donkeys are in abundance. Another invention by the organization is an electro-communication library cart which is solar-powered and donkey-drawn. The purpose of this cart is to take audio-visual information to the libraries and communities. Video cassettes can be played for educational and entertainment purposes. The cart has the potential for a satellite dish to be installed, to access the Internet and use e-mail, to use a computer and printer, and have a telephone connection. In the future, such carts could offer a solution to teachers and other prospective students who want to embark on open-university learning through satellite television.

Other initiatives

Other initiatives have been made in rural communities by a wide range of NGOs — for example, the Zimbabwe Book Development Council (ZBDC), the Africa Book Development Trust (ABDT), and the Edward Ndlovu Memorial Trust Fund. The ZBDC has received funding to support both urban and rural libraries with financial assistance to purchase reading materials from bookshops. The libraries are given a voucher for Z$2500.00 (US$65) and a catalogue from which they can select books. The scheme supports local publishing and also encourages local authorship. The RLRDP works closely with the rural libraries that are supported by the ZBDC and assisted in the identification of the 66 libraries that are involved in the initial phase of the programme.

The ABDT encourages communities to produce reading materials and they are supporting some libraries with reading materials. The NLDS has a mandate 'to establish new libraries at local, district and provincial level' (National Library and Documentation Act, 1985, Section 5.5). The programme is hampered by a lack of funds and inadequate human resources and transport. A number of libraries have been initiated by NLDS in Matabeleland South province. Through co-operating with RLRDP, some success has been realized in certain communities. The RLRDP also co-operated with the Edward Ndlovu Memorial Trust Fund in setting up some rural libraries in Matabeleland South Province. The Ministry of Education is still trying to set up district resource centres using funding received from the Netherlands government in its Better Schools Project of Zimbabwe (BSPZ). The idea is to have resource centres in every district, which are equipped with computers, fax machines, photocopiers and books. The centres are to be used by teachers and other community members.

The way forward

Information is a basic human right and it is a precondition to a developed community and nation. With information, people develop skills to improve their situations and they learn to make informed decisions and choices on issues concerning their lives. It therefore goes without saying that information has to be accessible to all citizens of Zimbabwe as opposed to a few urban dwellers. The question is what is the best strategy that can be used to reach the rural communities of the country, where the majority of people reside?

Efforts are being made in Zimbabwe towards fulfilling this need. Experiences need to be drawn from the successes scored by organizations that are already spearheading this work. NGOs that are already working at a grassroots level need to be supported financially so that they can cover more ground, where the need is already overdue. RLRDP already has in its files a total of over 5000 applications for help in establishing rural libraries. The numbers of applications continue to rise by the day. The situation needs to be addressed before communities despair completely. There is need to streamline the intervention strategies of
the grassroots organizations involved in the provision of information and establishing rural libraries so that their activities are co-ordinated. The rural district councils need to take an active interest in the provision and support of rural libraries in their localities. This is already provided for in the Rural District Council Act (1985) which empowers rural councils to develop libraries in rural areas.

All stakeholders in the information and book sector need to come together and find ways of supporting each other in the endeavour of public library support. The training of Zimbabwean librarians has to take into cognizance the realities of the present situation where librarianship is changing its face to meet the dynamism of social changes. The question is how can the library profession/training be geared to meet the demand for information by the rural communities? Change in attitude has to come from the policy-makers, who do not seem to value the contribution of information, let alone the need to have libraries in rural areas as a priority in educational institutions and rural schools.

The training of librarians also needs to include skills in creativity, public relations with the communities they serve, interpersonal and human relations, and fund-raising. The NLDS has already produced some guidelines for rural library service development and that is the framework within which organizations such as the RLRDP operate. RLRDP has even gone further to incorporate experiences from the ground and they have responded to these needs in many ways.

The question of maintaining the free service in public libraries needs to be addressed. It is necessary to define the issue of ‘how public are public libraries?’ in the Zimbabwean context. In Zimbabwe, rural schools are built from contributions by the communities. The same applies to the library structures because they are within the school premises and are therefore school/community libraries. So can we say that the ‘public libraries’ in rural areas are free? NGOs probably have a bigger role to play in the future of public library service because the government has not been able to fulfil its role meaningfully. More resources are required. NGOs tend to do a more thorough job than governments in both monitoring and evaluation. Funds could be made available to those communities that are ready to build purpose-built structures.

For those already developed urban public libraries, the need to have computers that will keep them in line with modern developments in the global village is crucial. Gradually this computerization can be introduced to communities that are ready to use them and also to schools where electricity exists. Solar energy is one source of electricity that needs to be used to make new technology accessible in libraries.

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