

# Strong Libraries, Strong Societies

The Role of Libraries in  
Socio-Economic  
Development

Proceedings of the  
Namibia Library Symposium  
7-9 October 2013  
Windhoek, Namibia



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# Preface

Ellen Ndeshi Namhila

*Chairperson: Namibia Library and Information Council;  
University Librarian: University of Namibia;  
IFLA Governing Board Member*

The various libraries and librarians in Namibia, through the Namibia Library & Information Council (NLIC), embraced the theme of the International Federation of Library Associations & Institution (IFLA) president's *Strong Libraries, Strong Societies: the role of Libraries in socio-economic development* because it resonated with their developmental efforts. While profiling the development of Namibian libraries, the symposium provided an opportunity for librarians in Namibia to not only learn from their international counterparts, but present papers on specific issues within the library and information field from a Namibian perspective.

The objectives of the symposium were to bring together the dispersed community of the library professionals through a common platform to share experiences, to encourage discussion of new ideas and to facilitate interaction between experts and non-experts, to bridge the information gap between developing and developed countries.

The three-day symposium featured plenary sessions where challenges, problems and issues were probed and discussed, as well as, panel discussions and networking breaks.

The sub-themes included:

- Building strong knowledge societies through libraries
- Libraries supporting National Development Plans
- Creating Awareness on the importance of Libraries
- Libraries in support of education and knowledge creation
- Libraries supporting e-learning initiatives
- Libraries supporting human rights
- Libraries empowering local communities

The symposium took place at a time when numerous unsubstantiated reports and research suggest that Africa is predominantly a consumer of knowledge, and rarely produces any. It was held in the wake of reports suggesting that the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa only contributes 0.7% of the world's knowledge, and that a number of African author's

papers to international journals are said to be rejected supposedly on account of not being current.

Namibia's libraries need serious upgrading to meet the demands of an information society as envisioned in the Namibian development blueprint, Vision 2030. Against this background, the symposium presented a unique opportunity for Namibia and Africa to share its knowledge and experience with the rest of the world.

The symposium was graced by among many, three distinct individuals. They were the sitting IFLA president, Finnish born Sinikka Sipilä, as well as two past presidents of the body, Botswana's Kay Raseroka and South Africa's Ellen Tise.

Namibia became one of the first countries the IFLA President visited, and her visit put Namibian and African library in the limelight.

Ms. Sipilä was taken to showcase, state of the art Regional Study and Resources Centres in Oshakati and Helao Nafidi, as well as the University of Namibia School of Medicine and the upgraded Community Libraries with public ICT Access in Otjiwarongo and Okahandja.

Apart from sharing and exchanging of ideas and knowledge, an important outcome of the symposium is the publication of the proceedings containing papers of cutting edge research in the field of information and library science.

The symposium attracted about 300 participants. Namibia delegates were joined with participants from the following twelve (12) countries: Botswana, Ethiopia, Finland, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and the United States of America. It was a great achievement to attract such calibre of people. It gave us a sense of belonging to bigger families of librarians around the world, especially when international participants provided Namibian librarians with an empowerment opportunity, to see beyond small libraries. It was a great opportunity for Namibian librarians to listen and to be listened to, and be inspired by these international library experts. The experiences from the symposium continue to inspire our daily efforts towards informed, educated, well researched, knowledgeable and stronger societies.

# Introduction

What is a strong library in an African context? This question was posed to potential authors in the Call for Papers for the Namibia Library Symposium 2013. The overall theme stressed the idea of ‘strong libraries, strong societies’ but specified the role of libraries in socio-economic development. What does a strong library look like? What are roles played by librarians in a strong library? How do the daily activities of an African library assist in national socio-economic development?

The symposium was organised by the Namibia Library and Information Council in cooperation with the Namibia Library and Archives Services of the Ministry of Education and Namibian Higher Education Institutions.

The contents within these proceedings are organized under a number of sub-themes. The first section deals with the opening speeches creating the framework for the symposium. In her keynote address, IFLA President Sinikka Sipilä, speaking of her presidential theme, ‘strong libraries, strong societies’ stated that regardless of the state of national economic development, the better libraries are developed, the better they can support their user communities and promote socio-economic development to the benefit of all sectors of society. Public libraries can offer something for everyone in the community – the children and youth, women and girls, the vulnerable and marginalised, the entrepreneur and established businessman, the inventor or the health worker. In the following papers, the Namibian Deputy Minister for Education, Hon. Silvia Makgone outlined how Namibia is striving to become a developed society driven by knowledge and highly skilled manpower. This is the time to develop an ICT infrastructure & network and the appropriate human capital to realize the national aspirations. She articulated that libraries have an exciting opportunity to help bridge what is often called the digital divide through the provision of ICT facilities for Namibian communities. In his response and vote of thanks, Dr. Elia Kaiyamo acknowledged support given to Namibian libraries by the people and Government of Finland over many years. Librarians have received training and libraries have developed as a result of this international cooperation.

A number of papers appear under the sub-theme Libraries Supporting National Development Plans. Kauaria outlines the current state of public libraries in Namibia noting many positives including sustainable national government support and international development cooperation contribution. However the critical shortage of professional librarians is hindering promising development in this sector in Namibia. Lahti, who has a long history of involvement in Finnish support for Namibian and African libraries, outlines the Finnish/Namibian/Tanzanian Libraries for Development Programme and its adherence to national development plans. The programme also

accords with the UN Millennium Goals and poverty reduction strategies. If libraries are to support socio-economic development, they must be staffed by knowledgeable, informed professional librarians. In his presentation, Dr. Mchombu focuses on building strong library education that prepares librarians to function in a knowledge society. He provided the outline for a new curriculum which will instill in librarians attention to life-long learning, an awareness of digital technologies and the ability to demonstrate public value and accountability.

Continuing with this sub-theme, Dr. Asamoah-Hassan spoke of some of the lessons learnt from the recent African Library summit and the commitment of participants to focus on the strengthening of the ability of public libraries to contribute to development agenda, particularly through advocacy with policy makers; and to form a continental Library Network to continue sharing knowledge and engagement. Makhalira focuses on the vulnerable citizens of Malawi who need knowledge and information regarding the impact of climate change on their agricultural lives, but where relevant information is mostly found in a language society cannot comprehend. From Zimbabwe, Mutondo discusses how despite an Act of Parliament supporting 'culture houses' in each district, little has occurred, leaving citizens bereft of access to information that could support rural communities in particular. One of the difficulties facing Namibia and many other African nations is the lack of skilled, professional librarians. Often new graduates are placed immediately in very responsible positions with little time to learn from a more experienced colleague or to gain specialist skills. Iilonga approaches this by looking at ministerial libraries and their staffing while Hillebrecht raises many points regarding the skills required for curation and storage of a nation's important historical and scientific data. The ability to form beneficial partnerships with others in the information environment is stressed by Katjepunda in her paper.

A number of speakers noted that at various times libraries have been forgotten by policy makers and have languished for lack of resources and budgets. The sub-theme Creating Awareness on the Importance of Libraries allowed Dr. Mcharazo to focus on the importance of positive, effective marketing plans that take libraries to the people in order to raise the awareness of citizens and policy makers. Middleton continues with a paper noting the pro-active initiatives that have been taken by librarians to build and promote information literacy programmes in academic institutions. Addressing the issue of awareness of the profession, Mupambwa and Fusire research the perception of the profession in Zimbabwe, from the viewpoint of encouraging students to study library and information management and also from employers who are often unaware of the skills and knowledge a librarian could contribute to their organization or company.

Libraries in Support of Education and Knowledge Creation was a sub-theme with a focus on research and education. Toivonen's paper outlines a myriad of ways in which the University of Tampere Library has broadened its horizons and the skills of its librarians

to respond to changes in academic funding, new technologies and requirements for new roles of the academic library in supporting research. Research by Manga examines the effectiveness of school libraries within Namibia. Schools may have libraries but these could range from a dedicated space to a locked cupboard. His paper notes a number of shortcomings for school libraries, among them the lack of school librarians with the skills to assist learners and teachers. Chanakira looks at the extent to which academic institutions in Zimbabwe have implemented Information and Literacy Skills programmes for their students and discusses whether a national ILS policy would assist to embed ILS programmes in institutions.

A key role of public libraries is to empower local communities, particularly throughout Africa where other forms of accessing information may be out of the reach of many people. In the sub-theme of Libraries Empowering Local Communities, Haavisto notes how libraries in Finland are aiding democracy by hosting signature sheets for citizens' initiatives and by advocating for e-books in libraries. A local view is provided by Ngula and Leonard who outline the support provided by a library to students and other members of a disadvantaged community in Windhoek. Mataranyika outlines how the University of Zimbabwe Library has moved away from its standard offerings to provide specialized information to local farmers using mobile telephone technology.

Libraries across Africa are in different states of development. Some are at the forefront of technological developments in libraries and this is highlighted in the papers addressing the sub-theme Libraries Supporting E-Learning. Leonard provides many examples as to how academic libraries can develop new services and adjust old ones to participate in e-learning and e-learning support. Botha's paper on the digitization of resources holds many lessons in terms of the staff skills required, the organization and supervision needed and the accessibility of outcomes. Acknowledging that users are now in charge of information in an online environment, Peltonen advocates a focus on developing digital literacy and media skills and teaching these to library users. These skills will be a critical part of a person's ability to navigate in the digital age.

A strong society recognises all its parts, its history and the values that will guide its future. Papers in the sub-theme Building Strong Knowledge Societies Through Libraries encompass this idea. Namhila discusses the role of libraries in opening up forgotten documents and manuscripts, which can assist to break down the accepted view of a nation's history and ensure it encompasses the voices of those sidelined by traditional colonial historians. Niskala and Muleka bring us to the present day and outline the strategy and advocacy required to obtain funding to build new regional resource centres – places that will strengthen regional development through access to information, educational resources and ICTs in Namibia. Okojie provides details on how Nigeria has moved to enhance the profession of librarians by means of a Registration Council and ongoing skills development.

Freedom of information and the ability to access it is a keystone of library ethics. In the sub-theme Libraries Supporting Human Rights, Dr. Mnubi-Mchombu recommends that libraries are the ideal starting point for providing information on human rights but notes that many people are unaware that libraries may hold relevant information. Bibuli examines the situation in Uganda where human rights are both upheld and abused. He notes the role of libraries in promoting an informed citizenry and therefore an informed democracy and strong society. Nakuta concludes this theme with a paper examining access to government information, and the perceptions of the population in terms of their ability to gain access to information they require.

These proceedings conclude with a summary of the Symposium outcomes and recommendations providing the readers with insight into future perspectives on the capacity of libraries to contribute to social and economic growth and provide a strong foundation for a knowledge based society.

# On the IFLA President's Theme: Strong Libraries, Strong Societies

Sinikka Sipilä

*President: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)*

*Chairperson: Finnish Library Association*

## Introduction

First I would like to thank the Namibian library and information sector for their kind invitation to visit Namibia and address you today. I am honoured to share the platform with so many distinguished speakers focusing on how libraries can promote development here in Namibia and other African countries – and delighted to be able to share my own IFLA President's theme of "Strong Libraries, Strong Societies" with you.

Let me also acknowledge the hard work of our hostess Ellen Namhila and her team in organising this important exchange of views. We at IFLA have much to learn from all the regions we serve and I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts on how libraries can best promote development in Namibia.

This is my first visit to your beautiful country. One would not think at first hand that a remote northern country like Finland and a southern country like Namibia have much in common. And yet there are many connections. The first connection was established during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first Finnish missionaries arrived in Ambo-Kavango, the Northern part of Namibia, 140 years ago. More recently Finland had a role to play in the process of Namibia gaining independence from South Africa. President Martti Ahtisaari, later a Nobel Peace Prize winner for his work for peace, facilitated the negotiations between the Namibian independence movement SWAPO and the South African Government.

Even when it comes to library personnel we have connections. Our Finnish Library Association hosted two grant holders from Namibia in the 1980's and 1990's and since then our two nations have run a number of library cooperation projects.

For over 85 years IFLA has been the leading international body representing the interests of libraries and information services and their users. The Federation is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation. Our strength comes from our 1400 members representing nearly 150 countries. Our administrative offices are located in The Hague in The Netherlands.

IFLA's aims are to promote high standards in the provision and delivery of library and information services, to encourage widespread understanding of their value to the communities they serve, and to represent the interests of our members throughout the world.

## **The Presidential Theme: Strong Libraries, Strong Societies**

I have been active in the Federation since 2003 and started my two-year term as IFLA President this August in Singapore at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress.

Each President selects a theme that best describes her or his values and goals for the duration of their Presidential term. The core message of **Strong Libraries, Strong Societies** is this: libraries exert their critical influence on societies and their development by promoting equal opportunities and access to lifelong learning and education, research and innovation, culture and recreation for all. In so doing, they contribute to building stronger societies.

## **Background of the theme**

I chose this theme, in part, because it springs from our own experiences in Finland that can now be regarded as an active and strong library country. But it wasn't always that way.

Finland developed from a poor agrarian country to a modern, knowledge based economy in a very short period of time – over the past fifty, perhaps sixty years. We differ from most developed Western countries in the late timing, rapid speed and intensity of our transition to a 21<sup>st</sup> century industrial state.

Although Finland gained its independence in 1917, it wasn't until after the Second World War that the pace of development began to pick up. Since then, the government has promoted an effective education system and free access to information through an extensive library network as part of state policy. According to our constitution, it is a basic right for citizens to have freedom of access to information. Libraries are seen as crucial actors in promoting such access and they are included in what is called the Government Platform, which is the highest political framework for action and public policy in Finland.

I believe that it is because of such enlightened government policies that today about 80% of Finns are regular library users. Both public and research libraries are open and free of charge to all. In a national library customer survey conducted in 2010, over 70% of the 13,000 respondents stated that libraries had improved their quality of life somewhat or considerably.

## **IFLA, Libraries and Development**

Whether you are from a so-called developed, developing or transitioning economy, one thing is very clear. The better libraries are developed, the better they can support their user communities and promote socio-economic development to the benefit of all sectors of society.

And yet, just like most other public institutions, libraries have not remained immune from setbacks - stemming principally from the global economic downturn. All over the world, libraries are experiencing cuts in their funding which of course affects their functioning and development in so many ways. Collections are not renewed, as there are not enough funds for new books. There is not enough staff with professional education. Personnel are not replaced in cases of retirement. Equipment like computers goes missing or is outdated. The opening hours are too short due to the lack of sufficient staff. The spaces are too small or not appropriate and so on and so on.

In many cases libraries must also contend with neglect by local governments who quite wrongly, in my opinion, regard libraries as a frill, and often cut their budgets first.

Public libraries, in particular, must also deal with the implications of rapidly changing business and access models. In some cases the physical use of libraries is declining due to the developments in information and communication technology. Those who show up at our doors expect to be able to access the Internet, and otherwise have use of digital and online services that libraries are increasingly providing, or in some cases, are struggling to provide.

Having said that, the core functions of libraries - access to, organisation and delivering of **quality** information have not disappeared, in fact they are more important than ever in the digital world.

As one of my IFLA colleagues<sup>1</sup> recently noted, "Public libraries offer expertise. Dedicated staff provide advice, which can be the difference between users simply accessing information or being able to use it. Public libraries can offer something for everyone in the

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<sup>1</sup> Stuart Hamilton, Guardian Professional, Tuesday 12 March 2013.

community – the children and youth, women and girls, the vulnerable and marginalised, the entrepreneur and established businessman, the inventor or the health worker.

## **IFLA, Libraries and Development**

Just as libraries can offer critical support to individuals, so too can they become centres of community support and development at the local level.

To that end IFLA is working actively on libraries and development issues and projects, which I also had in mind when I planned my Presidential theme. We have recently published a new website '**IFLA, Libraries and Development**' which includes resources relating to the role that libraries play in supporting development. It also highlights what IFLA itself is doing to promote increased development through libraries.

Effective and efficient economic development in the 21st century, by definition, demands access to information by all segments of society on an almost infinite range of topics: from how to get the best prices for a farmer's crops, to how to start a business, or how to provide medical care to patients. We believe that libraries can promote growth by helping people get the information they need to access economic opportunity, improve their health or support their communities, to name but three benefits that libraries can provide. In this way libraries can help governments achieve their own development goals by offering access to the Internet and online information resources to citizens.

But here is the key.

Policy makers, funders, and development agencies need to start looking at the potential of libraries as partners in development activities. Conversely, libraries themselves must be doing more to draw attention to the services they offer and the role they can - and are - playing in the economic and social life of the communities they serve.

So let us take it as a given that libraries **can** and **must** play an important role in socio-economic development by providing access to essential information - enabling individuals and communities to make informed decisions to achieve their educational, economic, and social health goals. And perhaps in their own development they then become active participants in the democratic process of their country.

It is important to stress here, that if libraries are to make meaningful contributions to the socio-economic development of their respective nations, then the process of information delivery and exchange must be extremely efficient.

## Framework for strong libraries

For libraries to be strong, I believe that they must operate within the context of a legal framework. By that I mean, governments must recognize that rights of free access to information and freedom of expression must be established as a basic civil right, **constitutionally and through legislation**. Library legislation, in fact, must provide strong support for the development of comprehensive library and information services.

National library policies with strategic documents outlining this path are critical. National recommendations or standards also are needed to promote consistency in service delivery. It follows then that with such recognition and policy support from government, libraries can legitimately request sustainable funding for the key services they provide to the community. Not just for the provision of improved physical infrastructure and collections, but also the availability of library education to train more professional staff.

## How to define a strong library?

So how do we define strong libraries? Perhaps their strength is defined by their mission. Professor R. David Lankes, of Syracuse University has suggested that the core mission of libraries, public and otherwise, is creating a nation of informed and active citizens and the job of the library is to fulfil the needs of the community members, and not simply to house materials.<sup>2</sup>

From my perspective, to accomplish this, they must be seen by their user communities as welcoming safe places, with adequate space and catalogues, staffed by competent and helpful personnel, and provide access to up to date resources relevant to their needs, including digital content.

Of course this all can't be left to individual libraries and librarians. The burden is too great. They must be supported at the local and national levels by their library associations, and at the international level by IFLA. They, and all of us, must act as advocates and spokespeople for all libraries. We must do that so that the decision-makers and politicians and other relevant stakeholders are made aware not only of the benefits of libraries for society but, at the same time, of the needs of libraries if they are to fulfil their mandates, including fostering community development.

Among other things it would be useful to point out to decision makers, and perhaps especially to politicians, that the economic return for investing in libraries is excellent. Surveys have consistently shown that for every \$1 spent on libraries about \$4 is returned to the economic benefit of the communities they serve. It is only through such advocacy can libraries hope to secure adequate funding even during tough economic times.

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<sup>2</sup> R. David Lankes, *Expect More, Demanding Better Libraries For Today's Complex World*, pages 20 and 29

## **What is a strong society like?**

So, if that is what strong libraries look like, then what is the profile of a strong society. It only stands to reason that strong societies consist of informed citizens who actively participate in the life of their community.

They are open, free and equal, giving their citizens the possibilities to use all their knowledge, abilities and skills to benefit their own and their families' lives, the community they live in and thus their entire society. And that lies at the heart of its socio-economic development.

For its part, IFLA, through a variety of strategies and services, helps to build the strategic capacity of its members to strengthen the role of libraries and library associations in the knowledge society worldwide. In this regard, a little later in the day, I am going to give you a comprehensive review of the IFLA Trend Report that was officially launched in Singapore in August. The report is not just concerned with what libraries will look like in a decade's time, but also what society might look like and how libraries may adapt to best serve society's needs. Of course, since it is the nature of technology to change so rapidly, there will never be a final report; rather it will continually be a work in progress. It will be a living document that will evolve over time and an substantial overview is currently available online - providing opportunities for discussion and debate over the next few years, to assist our sector in realizing its place in the information society and society at large.

## **Conclusion**

With that, let me conclude my remarks.

I am very happy to have had this opportunity to share with you today my thoughts about Strong Libraries and Strong Societies. It is clear you can't have one without the other. In this room, everyone knows, it is how legal and policy frameworks play out in practical terms in individual libraries, that is what really counts. Sometimes good theories and good practices do not go hand in hand. Undoubtedly many of the speakers here today will be discussing further recommendations for improvement in library practices in this part of the world.

I know it will be a fascinating debate.

I am looking forward to discussing these matters further with you during the next few days. Please do not hesitate to give me your feedback and suggestions on how IFLA can best support your library associations here in Namibia and other African countries.

I will leave you with a quote from 150 years ago by the American social reformer Ward Beecher who said: '*Libraries are not a luxury, they are the necessity of life*'. Never were truer words spoken, and I believe they have more relevance today than ever before, particularly in the context of your discussions this week.

Thank you.



# Official Opening Speech of the Namibia Library Symposium

Hon. Silvia Makgone

*Deputy Minister of Education  
Ministry of Education, Namibia*

Ministers and Deputy Ministers here present

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Hon Kaiyamo, the former Chairperson of the Namibia Library and Information Council (NLIC)

Her Excellency Chargé d'Affaires Embassy of Finland: Ms. Anne Saloranta

Members of parliament and Regional Councils

Distinguished Hon. Governors

Mayors, Representatives of Municipalities, Cities and Village Councils

The IFLA President, Ms. Sinikka Sipilä

Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia: Prof. Lazarus Hangula

Rector of the Polytechnic of Namibia: Prof. Tjama Tjivikua

NIPAM Executive Director: Prof. Joseph Diescho

Former IFLA Presidents: Dr. Kay Raseroka and Ms. Ellen Tise

Chairperson of the Namibia Library and Information Council (NLIC): Ms. Ellen Ndeshi

Namhila and Members of Library Council here present

Distinguished Invited Guests, Librarians from Botswana, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, USA and Qatar who travelled all the way to share their experiences with us;

Colleagues and Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Namibia, It gives me great pleasure and honour to welcome all of you to our beautiful country to attend this important Library Symposium taking place in this historical city of Windhoek.

I hope that you will find time during your stay in Namibia to visit our different tourist attractions, and to interact and feel our rich and diverse cultural heritage as well as the warmth and hospitality of our people.

## Theme of the Symposium

The theme of this symposium “*Strong libraries, strong societies: The Role of Libraries in Socio-Economic Development*” comes at the right time when Namibia’s libraries need serious upgrading to meet the demands of an Information Society as envisioned in the Namibian development blueprints, namely Vision 2030 and NDP4.

Our Vision 2030 acknowledges and recognizes the significance of libraries in attaining the status of a knowledge-based society.

By hosting this Symposium, Namibian librarians and information professionals have been accorded an opportunity to learn and exchange views on contemporary issues linking dissemination of scientific evidence, timely access to up-to-date and relevant information and knowledge and socio-economic development, with continental and international experts on the challenges and opportunities in the library and information service sector.

The symposium further provides scientists, national and regional decision makers the opportunity to widen and deepen their understanding on the role of libraries, knowledge management and information in the achievement of NDP4 goals and Vision 2030.

I am happy to note that the IFLA President Ms Sipilä is gracing this occasion and pleased that Namibia is one of the first two countries she is visiting in Africa as the IFLA president. That is very commendable indeed taking into consideration the long historical ties and association between Finland and Namibia. Her presence will raise the profile of Namibian libraries within the world.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, our countries might have different socio-economic and political traditions, but we share a common vision with regard to the role of libraries in information and knowledge management, knowledge production and the subsequent dissemination of scientific results with a view to promote advancement of our societies and economies.

In this regard, it is imperative therefore to build a strong human capital with requisite skills and knowledge to manage our libraries, information centers and research institutions as we create learning institutions and societies.

In the same vein, I would like to encourage all Namibian decision makers who are joining library professionals here to take time to reflect on the significance and future role of libraries in our national development endeavours and similarly, the development of other societies.

A learning society is on its way to greatness. This symposium comes at the right time when Namibia's libraries need serious upgrading of its human capital, physical and ICT infrastructure in line with the demands of a knowledge based society as articulated in the Namibian development blueprints, Vision 2030 and NDP4.

We are striving to become a developed society driven by knowledge and highly skilled manpower. This is the time to develop an I.C.T. infrastructure & network and the appropriate human capital to realize our aspirations.

I therefore urge all participants to be actively involved in the discussions pertaining to libraries and ICTs, employment creation and economic development. Libraries have an exciting opportunity to help bridge what is often called the digital divide through the provision of ICT facilities for our communities.

Libraries and information centers are very important institutions as they are the key drivers of knowledge production and information dissemination. Although ICTs have revolutionized the provision of information and knowledge to the general public, libraries continue to maintain a prime position as the hub of academic and general public knowledge facilities.

This is crucial because access to knowledge is critical for the development and growth of a society and for participation in democratic processes. They form an integral part of the society that surrounds it.

Research has shown that libraries and information centers are a good return on investment and that the direct economic benefits that communities derive from libraries are significantly greater than the cost of operating these libraries.

This Symposium provides Namibian librarians and information professionals a unique opportunity to learn and exchange views with regional and international experts on the challenges and advancements of the library and information service sector. The Ministry of Education and the Namibia Library and Information Council seized the opportunity to host and financially support this Symposium and hope that the deliberations will provide a good return on investment.

Today, libraries serve as hosts to global information and knowledge and are key drivers of education, research, individual and national socio-economic development. Libraries act as conduits to promoting access to information, and also play a critical role in facilitating knowledge production and dissemination; unhindered access to knowledge is essential in any developmental process. If properly utilized, libraries powered by good ICT infrastructure and facilities, can serve as liberators from poverty and deprivation and a springboard for innovation and change.

## **Expected outcome of the symposium**

The Symposium will afford librarians and information professionals an opportunity to share and exchange ideas on contemporary issues in the profession.

More importantly, the symposium will facilitate networking and promote interaction between experts, trainees and young professionals, thereby bridging the knowledge gap prevalent between developed and developing countries.

Apart from the sharing and exchanging of ideas and knowledge, I am reliably informed that, one of the important outcomes of this symposium will be the publication of the proceedings report. The publication shall comprise of papers to be presented by participants, and will be available both in print and electronic formats. It is in this spirit that we look forward to the success and the outcomes of this Symposium.

I wish you fruitful deliberations as well as the development of partnerships that will become a source of inspiration for future generations.

On this note, I would like to declare the Namibia Library Symposium 2013 officially opened.

I thank you.

# Vote of Thanks and Acknowledgements

Hon. Dr. Elia Kaiyamo

*Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration  
Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, Namibia  
Namibia Library and Information Council (NLIC) Chairperson 2001-2012*

Hon Deputy Minister of Education: Sylvia Makgone  
Hon Ministers, Deputy Minister, Members of Parliament here present;  
Her Excellency Chargé d'Affaires Embassy of Finland: Ms. Anne Saloranta  
President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institution: Ms. Sinikka Sipilä  
Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia: Prof. Lazarus Hangula  
Rector of the Polytechnic of Namibia: Prof. Tjama Tjivikua  
NIPAM Executive Director: Prof. Joseph Diescho  
NLIC Chairperson: Ms. Ellen Ndeshi Namhila  
Dr. Kay Raseroka of Botswana and Ms. Ellen Tise of South Africa: Former IFLA Presidents;  
Chairperson of the IFLA Africa Section, Ms. Victoria Okojie  
Distinguished Invited Guests;  
Members of the media;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institution (IFLA): Ms. Sinikka Sipilä, who made Namibia a country of choice for her visit at the very beginning of her IFLA presidency.

It is my privilege to have been asked to say a vote of thanks on this auspicious occasion. As a previous Chairperson of the Namibia Library and Information Council, this is a particular pleasure to me.

On behalf of Namibia Library and Information Council and the Organizing Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of those who have contributed in various ways to enable the hosting of this very important symposium. I wish to single out our very own Ms. Namhila, the current Chairperson of the Namibia Library and Information Council, the brainchild of this workshop. Ellen, we thank you for all your patriotic efforts, over many years.

I wish to thank the Honorable Deputy Minister of Education, Silvia Makgone, for gracing this occasion with her presence despite her very busy schedule. It only serves to show that the Government of Namibia takes seriously issues of providing library and information services to our people.

I wish to express our gratitude to the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Finland in Namibia, Ms Anne Saloranta, for her presence here, and wish to further acknowledge the Finnish Embassy's support to Namibia, especially in the field of library services. As we speak, the Government of Finland is supporting libraries in Namibia through the Libraries for Development Project to the tune of around N\$2,000,000. As a matter of fact the Finnish support to libraries in Namibia is difficult to quantify because some of it is given in kind through professional cooperation networks. The Embassy of Finland has generously offered to host a reception for the delegates to the symposium and in honor of our keynote speaker.

To our keynote speaker, Ms. Sinikka Sipilä, President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), thank you for the inspiring words of your theme "strong libraries and strong societies". This has certainly set the pace for debate and sharing of information and experiences in the next few days of the symposium.

A debt of gratitude is also owed to the following Namibian institutions responsible for organizing the symposium:

- Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS), Ministry of Education
- Namibia Library and Information Council, NLIC
- Namibia Information Workers Association, NIWA
- University of Namibia, UNAM
- Polytechnic of Namibia
- Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management, NIPAM

You have contributed in various ways to the hosting of this symposium, including critical funding, expertise and manpower and let it be known that without your contribution, this symposium would not be realized.

I would also like to pay particular attention to our distinguished guests coming from various countries represented here, our neighboring Botswana, Ethiopia, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, our brothers and sisters from West Africa – Ghana, Nigeria, as well as United States of America, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Finland.

As for Finland, I want to recognize Marjatta Lahti, a friend and comrade who spent many years of her young life dedicated to libraries of the Liberation Movement, especially, SWAPO and the ANC of South Africa. She was part of our liberation struggle living amongst us in the camps in Zambia and Tanzania, and educating our young people.

She is still going strong and since Namibia's independence Marjatta has been instrumental in initiatives to strengthen library development in Namibia through cooperation with the Finnish Library sector and the ongoing South-South-North cooperation between Finland, Namibia and Tanzania. Evidence on the impact of these efforts are visible at Greenwell Matongo and Okuryangava libraries in Katutura, a community which is showing so much appreciation of this service through active use of library services.

We truly appreciate your participation in this symposium. We say to you 'Welcome to Namibia and be part of the family of Strong Libraries!'

Finally, I wish to thank the organizing committee under the able leadership of Ms. Ellen Namhila and Venno Kauaria. I want to single out Hertha Lukileni who dedicated her entire weekends to organizing the symposium.

Our regional and local authorities have responded positively to our call. We greatly appreciate your participation.

I want to thank every one of you who is here today. Enjoy the deliberations. We are celebrating Strong Libraries; we are looking forward to strong knowledge-based societies. We celebrate every effort made in raising awareness of the important role of Libraries in national development. Enjoy the symposium; enjoy the warmth of Namibia; and let's empower our people with information and build strong knowledge-based societies.

Thank you.



Theme 1

Libraries  
Supporting  
National  
Development  
Plans



# Libraries Supporting National Development in Namibia

Veno. V. Kauaria

*Director: Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS)*

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**Note:**

This paper is a conversion from a Powerpoint presentation.

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## **Introduction**

I cannot talk about libraries and development without talking about the NDP4/ VISION 2030/MDGs and how libraries fit into all of the above. Libraries around the world are being recognized for the role they are playing in making countries reach their Millennium Development Goals. In some countries this role/ contribution is noticeable where else in others the magnificent work being done in Libraries go below the radar since there are other “important” things to focus on and librarians are not always the best at public relations.

## **Number of Namibia Libraries per category**

Public Libraries/CLDC/RSRC – 64

Special libraries/Ministerial – 18

School libraries – 785 as per the Education Management Information Systems(EMIS). NLAS counted not more than 350 actual school libraries.

## **How does NLAS support development: some key issues**

Namibia has signed a two-year partnership agreement with the Finish Library Association and the Tanzania Library Services Board. The main focus of this agreement is to teach ICT skills to staff members in order for them to teach community members especially, out of school youth and women basic ICT skills. 22 libraries are part of this project. To date over 1000 people have been trained.

About 93,000 people access ICT through 44 of our Libraries across the country. Some reported that they are looking for jobs online, while others were registering for online courses or accessing their Universities online.

Lack of infrastructure for information and communication technology in Namibia was identified as one of the challenges our education system is facing under NDP4.

Libraries are already addressing this problem. We have the infrastructure and some trainers, we just need more trainers.

The Windhoek Public Library, Omuthya and Luderitz Public Library have various programs for children including reading and story hours to encourage the young children to read and write. Okahandja will soon start with a similar program with the assistance of the British BookAid International.

NDP4 remarked that Namibia is spending a lot on education and not having a good return on its investment as per SACMEQ or Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality. SACMEQ reported that Namibian children's literacy and numeracy results are below average. Libraries have a mandate to inculcate the culture of reading and this has been for centuries. Reading is a foundation to learning.

Libraries in Erongo Region have started mobile libraries in order to reach members of the community in remote areas in order to take information to the people.

For the majority of the population, libraries are their only source of job hunting information. They go to the libraries to see what is listed in the newspapers and use library computers to type their CVs.

Reduction of Poverty: One of the challenges identified in NDP4 is a lack of research and lack of access to quality public services. Strategies to address the challenges include strengthening research capacity and improving access to basic infrastructure by innovative ways. Researchers need information. Through libraries and e-governance, rural communities will be assisted to access government grants and cut bureaucracy.

## **The Good News**

- Work of libraries gaining momentum in the country
- Support from Regional Councils
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Public Library Advisory Membership
- Bill and Melinda Gates International Network of Library Innovators program
- BookAid International continuous support
- Finnish Library Association support

- Ministry of Education Management support
- Reasonable Budget
- Approval of structure for school and public library staff
- Preliminary approval of IT Administrators and Technicians for Regional Libraries and budget approved for those positions
- MCA support for the building of three Regional Study and Resource Centres and Mobile Libraries

## **The Not So Good News**

There is a critical shortage of professional staff in the country. This issue is being addressed within the University of Namibia and also with our colleagues outside Namibia.

## **The Future**

Repeatedly we are saying that resources in Namibia are being spent creating something new instead of strengthening what is already existing. We would like to see libraries being strengthened by merging Telecentres into libraries and seeing how this can benefit the communities. Libraries have the infrastructure and staff to do this.

# Libraries for development: Community libraries as tools for national and local development

Marjatta Lahti

*Project Coordinator: Libraries for Development Project: Finnish Library Association*

This presentation intends to give a practical example of the impact of community libraries on the societies, both on a national and local level.

## Background

A number of Finnish library organizations have had contacts with both Namibian and Tanzanian libraries long before the Libraries for Development Project was started.

The first ones can be traced down to the 1970's and 1980's in Tanzania, when the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs sent volunteers to work with the Tanzania Library Service (TLS) in the 1970's, and later the Finnish Library Association administered the ANC Library Project in 1985 -1992. The project was based at Morogoro, Tanzania, and FLA worked then in a close cooperation with also TLS.

The latest project in Namibia took place in 2003 -2014. The cities of Vantaa in Finland (later joined by the city libraries of Helsinki and Espoo) and Windhoek in Namibia cooperated in establishing Greenwell Matongo library in the informal sector of Windhoek, and the functions established in the framework of this project served to a great extent as an example for the Libraries for Development Project.

The cooperation project between Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS), Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) and the Finnish Library Association (FLA) was started by a planning phase in 2011.

The partners met both in Finland, Tanzania and Namibia, and a project proposal was compiled and submitted to the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry granted funds for the Libraries for Development Project for 2012 - 2014. The Ministry was to cover 85 % of the expenses of the project while the Finnish Library Association which

was to administer the project, was expected to raise 15 % of the expenses. NLAS and TLSB were expected to contribute by providing library premises, staff and supervision of implementing the project in their respective countries.

## Objectives

The Libraries for Development Project observes the national development plans and the poverty reduction strategies of Namibia and Tanzania.

The objectives are in accordance with the UN millennium goals.

Decision makers of both countries, both on a national and local level are informed about the role of libraries in improving people's lives and advancing democracy. It is emphasized that libraries are powerful tools in promoting both the economy and educational systems of the countries. They are also advancing democracy and strong civil societies. Education, equality and democracy are important pillars in creating a peaceful society – which again is a requirement for a steady economic growth.

The decision makers are informed that promoting library services is a profitable investment for the society and not just an unproductive expense. Libraries don't bring in easy rewards as they don't bring in money in cash. They produce much more important values which are important for the society.

## Implementation

*Capacity building* in both Namibia and Tanzania is a vital part of the functions of the project.

The project is implemented at 23 community libraries in Namibia and 2 in Tanzania.

In Namibia, two ICT instructors were employed by the project, and they have been training the staff of the above mentioned 23 NLAS libraries in IT skills, information search and the objectives of the project.

In Tanzania, several TLSB staff members have attended IT courses offered by local IT institutions. After completing the courses, they have acted as ICT instructors, giving training both to their colleagues as well as to library users. In total, ten staff members are presently working as ICT instructors.

FLA has organized, together with NLAS and TLSB conferences and training seminars during their annual mentorship visits both in Namibia and Tanzania. Besides staff members of the above mentioned project libraries, also decision makers of the highest level in both countries have been invited to attend the conferences.

*Taking services of the information society to the grassroots level* is the core target of the implementation of the project.

The staff of the libraries is conducting regular, free courses for library users. The participants of the courses are taught the basics of the computer use and information retrieval.

Besides the general public, special target groups are identified, and services are tailored according to their needs:

- Small and medium sized entrepreneurs (SME)
- women
- out of school and unemployed youth
- farmers
- new literates
- health information

The above groups are taught useful skills, e.g. how to look via internet for information about employment, further education and scholarships. The participants are taught how to write CV's and job applications. The SME's and farmers are learning about better products for their business, and how to advertise and market them. They are advised e.g. how to write invoices and tenders or how to create a logo or business cards for their firms. Also applying for loans and funding for their business is taught.

Lectures on health and agricultural information by outside lecturers have been arranged, and information search on health issues via internet has been taught to people.

## **Risk analysis**

In the beginning of the project the participating organizations were required to make a risk analysis of the implementation of the project. A question was posed: can these ICT and other services really be offered through libraries? What can probably go wrong?

The following risks were identified:

1. Personnel would not be interested in learning and teaching ICT skills

This fear proved to be unfounded. The personnel in both countries have by and large been very eager to learn new skills. Teaching ICT skills to users has proved to be a rewarding task since the response from the public has been very positive, and this has encouraged the staff to continue arranging the courses. Some of the older members of the staff have naturally found learning new skills a bit challenging, but in due course most of them have learned to use the new methods.

The library staff is expected to teach people only basic IT skills and information retrieval. Those users wanting to learn more advanced information are advised to make use of other educational institutes.

2. Users will not be interested in attending the training courses organized by libraries

Also this fear was completely unfounded. There has been a great interest in the courses from the users' side. At many libraries there have been long waiting lists for the training, and the need for more assistance has been expressed. As the libraries are reaching people at the grassroots level and the courses are free for everyone, the threshold to enter the library premises and participate in the courses is very low. Libraries are among the very few institutions to reach people on this level, and are therefore making a great contribution to the communities.

3. Problems with electricity, equipment

Power cuts have occasionally occurred, and there have been some problems with the IT equipment or the internet connection. The maintenance of the computers and the network needs continuous attention, but these problems have not seriously hindered the functions, as can be seen from the results of the project.

## Results

The following is the statistics of the functions in 2012, a total for both Namibia and Tanzania. It is worth noting, that although half a year went to all kinds of preparations for the project, all the set targets were exceeded.

Results 2012, total Namibia and Tanzania:

Activity	Goals	Results
Number of staff trained	127	137
Number of community members trained	1000	1350
Number of participants in specific groups (women, youth, SME)	330	501

## Innovations, outreach

A very detailed project plan was made together with the partners, and the staff was required to implement it. And as can be seen from the statistics, they really did so.

The project has a Facebook group where ideas are shared and news about the progress of the project are presented. Suddenly it was discovered that staff members had started

working far beyond the original plans since they had their own ideas and innovations which they started implementing. And they even left their libraries and went out to reach more people in their surroundings. One can say that they actually became barefoot librarians.

The following are examples of some of these innovations and outreach activities of the barefoot librarians both in Namibia and Tanzania:

- Library staff brought along a tent and spent time with the San community, learning about their culture and telling them about library services
- Library staff attended an agricultural trade fair to inform the visitors about library services
- Lectures to nurses were arranged
- Mobile services to outskirts of the region were arranged
- Visits to regional authorities were paid
- Maasai women were introduced to library services
- Top Corner SME group gathering near a bus stop of the town were introduced to library services
- Life skills were taught to participants of the courses

## **Evaluation, impact study**

The project will be evaluated both in Namibia and Tanzania by Professor Kingo Mchombu by the end of 2014. However, a preliminary survey was already conducted in Namibia in July 2013, and the following are some of the results of the survey:

- 253 answers were analysed
- 61 % women, 43 % unemployed, 62 % very little use of computers
- 91 % felt that training increased their potential to be employed
- 63 % used the internet at the library for income related information, e.g. job announcements, writing CV, etc.
- 30 % of the SME's started or improved a small business
- 60 % of the students improved their grades at school
- 40 % of out of school youth started further training
- 58 % looked for health information in the library
- 83 % felt that library has become much more important than before

The results were very encouraging and showed that the services rendered were vital for the communities. The project seemed to be on the right track, and therefore it has been continued in the same lines even after this preliminary survey.

## Comments by users

During the above survey, participants of the training courses were asked to give their views in their own words about the training. These are some of their comments:

- "My life has changed because I can now search for jobs, courses etc. "
- "I am busy starting my own business now."
- "As an entrepreneur, I can now use the computer myself to do my invoices, quotations, etc."
- "From this training I have improved my IT skills and am now capable of searching and reading news on the internet."

## Conclusions

Response from the community members has been overwhelming. Libraries have met the needs of people, and it has been proved that this kind of service is in a great demand. Libraries have attracted new users, and they have gained more recognition by the community members.

First experiences of the project have been positive, but the services can still be developed further, according to the experiences gained through the training courses and comments by the participants.

South to south cooperation has benefitted all the partners. Namibians have visited Tanzania and vice versa, and the visits as well as discussions with each other have given food for new ideas.

# Building strong library science education that prepares librarians to function in a knowledge society

Kingo Mchombu

*Professor of Information and Communication Studies & Dean:  
Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Namibia*

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**Note:**

This paper is a conversion from a Powerpoint presentation.

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## **Background and Context**

This first part provides a background and context to set the scene for building a strong library science education for a knowledge society in Namibia

Namibia's strategy for national development is guided by Namibia's Vision 2030, which aims to improve the quality of life of all Namibians to the level of developed countries and ensure Namibia becomes a knowledge-based economy by 2030. (Republic of Namibia. Office of the President, 2004)

Namibia's Vision 2030 also promotes, in addition to a knowledge based economy, good governance and democracy, regional integration, and decentralization, good health and well being, commercialized agriculture and food security, a high standard of living with good quality life, skills development and capacity building, competitiveness in the export sector, equal access to excellent to high quality education and vocational training.

Further areas emphasized in Vision 2030 include: reduction of economic inequalities and access to land, active regional integration with other SADC member states, and partnership between Government, civil society and community based organizations. (Republic of Namibia. Office of the President, 2004). All of these goals have vast knowledge needs implications which have not yet been fully explored.

The main vehicle for implementing Vision 2030 is national development plans. The current National Development Plan 4 has three main goals, namely: faster and sustainable economic growth, the creation of employment opportunities, and enhanced income equality. Apart from calling for a new mindset which sees opportunities and possibilities rather than obstacles, NDP 4 has a strong implementation and execution strategy orientation coupled to an M & E mechanism (Republic of Namibia, 2013).

The Education Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) has the strategic objectives of equity, equality, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, economic growth and pro-poor approach (Republic of Namibia, 2007). The ETSIP report identifies the role of libraries as vital for the improvement of general education, early childhood development, tertiary education, vocational training, and adult and life-long learning (Davies et al, 2011).

All the policies described above show Namibia's has a high commitment to development matters making the country a developmental State. The developmental state is described by Mkandawire (2001) and Meyns and Musamba (2010) as consisting of four main features: i) development oriented political leadership ii) an autonomous and effective bureaucracy iii) a production oriented private sector and iv) performance oriented good governance.

## **Namibia's libraries in a knowledge society era**

This section attempts to focus on the implications of issues raised in the background and context of this presentation to Namibia's libraries. Emerging opportunities from the information and knowledge environment are also focused upon.

One key implication of the developmental focus of the Namibian government is that libraries also have to practice developmental librarianship, which demands a clear focus on development information support, including:

- Community development including survival information
- Agriculture and rural development
- SME development
- Education and literacy including all levels of the education system
- Tourism development
- Health
- The environment
- Technology and access to the internet for digital information
- Legal and government information (Davies et al 2011:23)
- Regional Resource and Study Centres – expands role of Community Libraries in each region – ICT driven and development oriented (MCA-Namibia 2014; Namhila and Niskala, 2012).

## **Knowledge society and knowledge management for development**

Firstly some basic definitions:

“Knowledge management is the explicit and systematic management of vital knowledge and its associated processes of creating, gathering, organising, diffusion, use and exploitation. It requires turning personal knowledge into corporate knowledge that can be widely shared throughout an organisation and appropriately applied” (David Skyrme, 1997)

It has often been claimed that there are two main types of knowledge - tacit and explicit. Explicit knowledge has been captured and written down in documents, databases, websites or any digital format. On the other hand, tacit knowledge is knowledge people carry in their heads including ideas, experience, skills and intuition. Within an organisation context, tacit knowledge is considered more valuable than explicit knowledge because it provides context but it can also be more difficult to transfer.

Knowledge society, on the other hand, has been described as a new society in which the production, recording, processing, and retrieving of information in organised networks plays a central role (Castells, 2010).

The Knowledge society rests on four pillars, which have been identified as i) education ii) ICT iii) innovation iv) science and technology - all these pillars, work together towards facilitating the creation of a knowledge society (World Bank, 2004, GESCI 2011).

Another form of knowledge found in African society is indigenous knowledge. The indigenous knowledge system refers to knowledge held by a group of people and has been handed down from one generation to the next using oral communication and the content includes knowledge of local animal and plant species and ecosystems (Nakata, 2002).

Furthermore, indigenous knowledge includes, among others: music and song, stories, symbols, dances, rituals, architecture, arts, and crafts, agriculture, ecology, soil science, health, medicine, botany, water resource management and many more (Nakata 2002). Indigenous knowledge systems need to be incorporated into the library collections side by side with other forms of information to create more comprehensive and holistic knowledge centres.

A major infrastructural development in Namibia has been the submarine undersea cable technology which will make available abundant bandwidth and broadband and remove connectivity problems in Namibia. This has major implications for Namibian libraries, internet access and the creation of a knowledge society in the country.

Libraries role in the social change towards a knowledge society is determined by certain forces in society. Martin for example, has claimed that these drivers for change transforming libraries towards knowledge societies – have three aspects, namely: i) need for lifelong learning and learning how to learn ii) potential and possibilities of digital technologies iii) importance of demonstrating public value of libraries and accountability (Martin 2003; Thornhaug, 2010)

## **Library and information science education and research for Namibia in a knowledge society**

Given the preceding discussions what should the library and information science education consist of in order to prepare future librarians to play a role as change agents towards a knowledge society in Namibia or elsewhere in Africa and other developing societies?

Below we provide a curriculum outline to fit the purpose identified in the above discussion (Nakata, 2002, University of Washington, 2013, Abdulsalami et al 2013): The assumption is that this will be a postgraduate level programme in Library and Information Science with duration of two years, including a Masters research thesis.

### **SEMESTER ONE**

1. Developmental librarianship – the concepts of development and role of information in development including specific case studies of education, health, agriculture, SMES and community development etc.
2. Information behaviour - Introduction to the user-centred approach to information behaviour. Theoretical foundations of need, creation, seeking, sharing, assessment, management, and use. Synthesis of information behaviour studies.
3. Information storage and retrieval – to principles and practice of cataloguing and classification (1)
4. Indigenous Systems of Knowledge - conceptual foundations and comparative analysis of indigenous knowledge systems. Use of contemporary knowledge organization mechanisms including thesauri and ontologies in expressing the cultures and artefacts of indigenous peoples.
5. Information Resources, Services, and Collections - Access to information materials as context for selection, development and management of library collections in academic, public, school libraries.

## **SEMESTER TWO**

6. Information storage and retrieval – to principles and practice of cataloguing, classification, abstracting and indexing (2)
7. Digital Librarianship – concepts of digital libraries and creation of digital collections and objects
8. Records and archives management - Selection, organization, and uses of records and archival collections
9. Information and digital literacy for learning - Explores theories, process, and practical applications of information literacy. Introduction to innovative and specialized topics in instructional and training strategies for information digital literacy including training of trainers.
10. History and foundation of librarianship - the history of libraries, African librarianship, major issues in contemporary library and information work, and types of libraries. Examines the role of libraries in society and librarianship as a profession.
11. User services and reference work – different types of user services in different libraries and reference services

## **SEMESTER THREE**

12. Knowledge Management - Introduction to management of knowledge production, sharing, storage, transfer, taxonomies, and organisational knowledge management principles and practices
13. Strategic Marketing and Planning for Libraries - Approaches to planning and marketing library products/services. Information needs assessment. Partnerships that can be forged between elements of marketing and appropriate futures strategies for libraries.
14. Technology Management - Developing criteria for selection and design of information technology systems for libraries and information centres. Applying criteria in evaluation of hardware and software. Web page design
15. Research Methodology – concepts of research methods, proposal writing, conducting research and presentation of research reports.
16. Dissertation/Thesis -

## Conclusion

The presentation has attempted to show there is need to build a strong library science education that prepares librarians to function proactively in an emerging country in transition towards a knowledge society. The background is anchored around the government's philosophy of a developmental state, which among others, has the goal of building a knowledge driven economy. An outline of a curriculum is proposed which takes cognizance of the country's philosophy. In reality, many of these courses are already being offered by the Department of Information and Communication Studies as part of the bachelors and diploma programmes, hence the proposal for a postgraduate studies programme.

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# The African Public Libraries Summit – Lessons Learnt

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## **Abstract**

Public Library Services are relevant for the development of people. It is a social service for the public good and is therefore supported by public funds. The paper discusses the African Public Library Summit (APLS) which was held in Johannesburg from 19th -21st September 2012 from its planning stages to its execution. It further discusses the outcomes of the Summit including the decision to set up the African Public Libraries Network and the way forward for the further development of public libraries to more effectively carry out their role in national development. The lessons learnt relating to the planning and execution of the Summit are discussed, including challenges faced in accessing addresses of public libraries in Africa, time allocation for presentations and discussions and also languages used at the Summit, to serve as a guideline for more successes to be chalked at any such Summits in future.

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**Keywords:** Library network, public library, collaboration.

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## **Introduction**

The Public Library is often affectionately referred to as the “poor man’s university”. This is because its services cover all subject areas and are open at no cost to all members of the community irrespective of age, sex, race, religion or educational background. It is funded through public funds, that is, with taxes. The public library is a platform where members of the community go to learn, get educated and informed, meet to exchange ideas, create knowledge, foster the spirit of the community and carry on other activities relevant to the lives of people. It also provides a space for the community which may be used to engender intercultural dialogue and exchange of economic, social and cultural knowledge which often comes through its planned services and activities.

## **Planning of the African Public Libraries Summit**

The main sponsor of the Summit, Global Libraries of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, put together a Committee consisting of experienced librarians from different parts of Africa to plan the Summit. The Committee worked effectively with the assistance of ICWE, a conference organizer. It came up with the conference theme “Informing Africa, Developing Africa”, chose the dates for the Summit, that was 19th – 21st September 2012, and the venue as Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa.

It invited participants from African countries who were public library leaders, policy makers and other key stakeholders. 2 persons each, one responsible for public library services and the other, a policy maker responsible for public libraries, from 44 countries in Africa were selected and sponsored to attend. Also invited were participants from outside Africa, from 8 countries, to attend to present best practices and developments in public library services in their regions. Other persons representing economic groupings in Africa also participated.

## **Execution of the Summit**

128 participants, from 52 countries, 44 in Africa attended the African Public Libraries Summit. These included the Minister of Arts & Culture from Mauritius, seven(7) Permanent Secretaries, two (2) Under Secretaries and representatives from the economic groupings in Africa such as, the African Union Commission (AUC), the East African Community (EAC), SADC Parliamentary Forum, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UNESCO.

The main aim was to enable public library leaders, policy makers and key stakeholders to interact with each other on what the expectation is from public libraries in the 21st century; to highlight the successes achieved by public libraries in African countries in the development of communities; to enable countries to emulate good public library practices; and to map out ways for further public library development to ensure a holistic success of public library services on the continent.

The 3-day summit had plenary sessions, panel discussions, parallel and a speed-geeking session. The theme for the 1st day was “Towards an enabling policy environment for public libraries”, the 2nd day had “Public libraries addressing development goals: a focus on good practices” as the theme and the 3rd day had “Going forward: what must happen to improve public libraries”. In summary, presentations and discussions centred around achievements and innovations of public libraries in Africa and globally; challenges public libraries in Africa face; the existing opportunities for public libraries to grow as well as the importance of a network for African public libraries to operate within.

At the end of the Summit a communiqué was produced and was signed by all the participants from Africa that attended as a sign of commitment. The Communiqué stated the main concerns, challenges and recommendations to surmount these challenges.

The major outcomes of the Summit were as follows:

- Countries that do not have a national policy on public libraries should develop one and connect the library policy to national development;
- Public and community libraries should be created to serve as catalysts for development;
- Public and community libraries should build partnerships within the community as well as on a national and international level;
- ICTs should be used for development of library services and the community.

[www.african-public-libraries-summit.org/resources/apls2012/div/communiqué-framework\\_african\\_public\\_libraries\\_summit.pdf](http://www.african-public-libraries-summit.org/resources/apls2012/div/communiqué-framework_african_public_libraries_summit.pdf)

The participants also committed themselves to two main tasks to:

- renew the focus on the strengthening of the ability of public libraries to contribute to development agenda;
- Form a continental Library Network for the public library community to continue sharing knowledge and engaging with themselves as has been begun at the Summit.

## **After the Summit**

Some progressive actions have been taken after the Summit, the main ones being the following:

- A draft of the structure of the Network has been made and circulated.
- An online discussion list has been set up and invitations have been sent out to Public and National Library Directors and librarians who attended the Summit to subscribe to. The moderator of the list is Ms. Gertrude Mulindwa, the Director of Uganda National Library Service.

## **Way Forward**

Definite plans have been laid out for the future of African Public Libraries that will ensure the sustenance of the gains made at the Summit with the main ones being the following:

- Plans are far advanced for the discussion of the format and structure of the Network as well as for the topics of interest that will be discussed on the list.
- Creation of a website for the Network which the Kenya National Library Service has offered to do and host.
- Creation of structures for the operation of the Network.

## **Lessons Learnt**

Several lessons have been learnt in the planning and execution stages of the African Public Libraries Summit by the Planning Committee and participants. Comments and views from participants were known through the analysis of the completed evaluation sheets after the Summit.

## **Database of Public Libraries in Africa**

It was very difficult to access addresses especially email addresses of most public libraries in Africa. This posed a challenge relating to where and to whom to extend invitations to. In all, public libraries in 44 African countries were reached leaving those from the remaining 13 countries. In some countries those that were reached were not national public library services but some individual initiatives.

One of the positive outcomes of the Summit is that there is now a list of public libraries on the continent, albeit incomplete, but it is a beginning point which could be completed with a little more effort and which will bring about a database of Public Libraries in Africa just like the brilliant one of the National Libraries in Africa compiled by the National Library of South Africa under the direction of Mr. John Tsebe, the National Librarian of South Africa.

## **Face-to-Face Meeting**

In recent times the over dependence on technology has brought about online meetings, video conferencing, discussion lists and several other e-meetings. These have taken away the favourable effects of face-to-face meetings.

Most often face-to-face meetings enable creation of knowledge and sharing of information and forging of personal relationships for the benefit of library services. It is easier to effectively communicate with people one has met face to face in future than people one has met only on the internet, since the personal touch comes into play. The Summit met this need effectively. It is important to always remember that face-to-face meetings are the easiest ways to start networking among people. Such Summits should therefore be encouraged.

## **Practitioners and Policy Makers**

Professionals may work very hard to plan for improved services but it is the policy maker who will have the last say in allocation of resources. When resources allocated to public libraries are inadequate this may be as a result of lack of appreciation or understanding of the issues involved in funding public libraries on the part of the policy maker. The Summit has done very well in bringing these two groups of people together to talk,

share views and understand each other better, to ensure that public library services are effectively offered to the community. The global economic down turn in recent years has accentuated the need to share rather than own information in order to conserve funds. People therefore now look up to public libraries to provide such information and even to leverage current information technologies for provision of new services and improvement of existing ones. When practitioners and policy makers work together, this will be achieved. What the Summit has begun needs to be sustained in-country for the desired results.

### **Inadequate allocation of Time**

Some participants observed that time allocated for presentation of papers was not enough and even less for discussions. This prevented participants from sharing their views. Most often participants may have very useful suggestions to enrich discussions or even burning questions whose answers will open wide doors for improved library services. In future Summits it may be necessary to either ask an expert to raise issues in a keynotes address for a session and the rest of the session may then be used for discussions, or the number of presentations should be reduced to enable more time for discussions.

### **Tours / Free Time**

When the brain absorbs information and it gets saturated, any additional information is rejected. Agreeably, Summits of this nature are financially intensive and so organizers wish to push in a lot of content in order to have maximum return on their investment alongside using a few days. When diminishing return sets in, participants may get bored, sleepy, leave the room or hang around the corridors. Squeezing in a free afternoon halfway into the total programme for participants in the form of tours or visits to sites will go a long way to unwind and refresh participants to enable them to think creatively and come out with fresh ideas the next morning.

### **Language Challenge**

There were more sessions rendered in English Language than there were in French and Portuguese, the other languages spoken on the continent. This placed participants in these other languages to a disadvantage especially in contributing at plenary sessions. However, they had parallel sessions where they discussed among themselves. In future efforts should be made to ensure that these French and Portuguese language groups do not feel left out in the proceedings of the Summit.

## **Formation and Sustainability of the African Public Libraries Network**

One of the key outcomes of the Summit was the formation of the African Public Libraries Network. The moderator has received only a few sign-ups for the discussion list and unfortunately some participants have already expressed comments that the network will not survive. What these pessimists need to know is that the beginning of every activity is at a slow pace before it picks up through the dedication of people to the cause. Usually only a small group of people carry a dream until it becomes a reality for all to appreciate. The Network will survive when a small group of people believe in it and work hard to grow it. In every profession there are leaders and followers so the leaders in the public library service in Africa cannot afford to fail. Currently the structure of the network has been drafted, the creation of the listserv completed and the extension of invitations to public library service Directors to subscribe to it is in progress. The Kenya National Library Service has offered to create and host the Network's website which is a welcome development. Structures for the Network are also in the process of being established. The Leaders must have the determination to drive this Network in order to achieve the objectives it was set up for, especially the building of partnerships within the community and at national and international levels which will assist in the provision of more effective public library services.

## **Conclusion**

In years gone by when information was scarce, public libraries were looked up to, to provide knowledge and be an assembling point for diverse cultures to interact. Today, there is a lot of information available. The public library again must come in with innovative ideas to harness and disseminate information that is very relevant for the society's development. This calls for public library services being made available in cities and rural communities, to the advantaged and disadvantaged. Each public library will however need to assess the community it serves and offer services based on the results of the assessment.

In brief, public libraries must be organized, accessible and instructive to make them relevant to the community. This is one of the aims the APLS set out achieve by rekindling the spirit of public library service as very relevant to development.

According to a study by KPMG (2007) public libraries are most often inaccessible to the rural community and also rarely offer what people need. This is the situation in most African countries which makes them less relevant in the national development agenda. This is yet another aim of the Summit to bring to the fore what needs to be done to position public libraries in rural and national development.

McNicol (2006) sees community libraries "as public libraries too and so must be well served". They need to be pulled out and exposed to the global information society

through the use of computers and the internet, since people who live in those areas are also citizens. These citizens need to be taught to become information literate for lifelong learning and improved lives. Again it will bring about social inclusion, cultural dialogue, unity in diversity in cultural and religious areas to ensure peaceful co-existence and national development.

A last word, school libraries take some load off public libraries by producing users of libraries who are information literate (Hart, 2004) and who will be able to use public libraries effectively. It is therefore very important that school libraries are given the lift and attention that they need.

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# A Research Legacy: Tracing Knowledge Management in Zimbabwean Academic and Research Institutional Repositories

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## **Abstract**

The Internet has brought new ways of publishing that encourage academic and research institutes to engage in scholarly communication with researchers all over the world. Most academic and research institutes in Zimbabwe have an Institutional Repository. The most touted benefits of publishing using institutional repositories in Zimbabwe have been the number of citations from peers a paper receives as well as its wider readership. Yet this focus, although being correct, over clouds the fact that Institutional Repositories can be used as knowledge management tools. The paper outlines Zimbabwe's legacy of a good research base, the impact of Zimbabwean scholars amongst their peers and their overall contribution to local or international development. The paper argues that a legacy of research is critical to these indicators: citations, altmetrics and impact on policy development and therefore lead to socio-economic development. Methodologies of generating these indicators are evaluated on the basis whether or not they lead to knowledge management. The paper aims to encourage libraries, librarians and researchers to constantly engage in sharing research, using the Open Access model so as to increase and manage knowledge gathered.

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**Keywords:** Institutional Repository; Citation Analysis; Publish or Perish; Google Scholar; Impact; Altmetrics; Patents; National Development; Policy making

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## **1.1 Background on Zimbabwe's Research Legacy**

Zimbabwean academic and research institutes share a strong commitment to research in their mission statements. To realise their research goals, academic and research institutes

are expected to seek research funding, participate in peer reviews, write research papers and publish research publications such as newsletters or journals. A nation's share of world science is measured by the number of papers its scholars publish in Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) indexes. The statistics below exemplify Zimbabwe's research legacy.

**Table 1. Zimbabwean ISI Output (Number of papers published in the 7500+ journals of the ISI Web of Science)**

1990-1995	1996-2001	2002-2007
1458	1548	1460

Source: SARUA (2008) – *CREST Report*

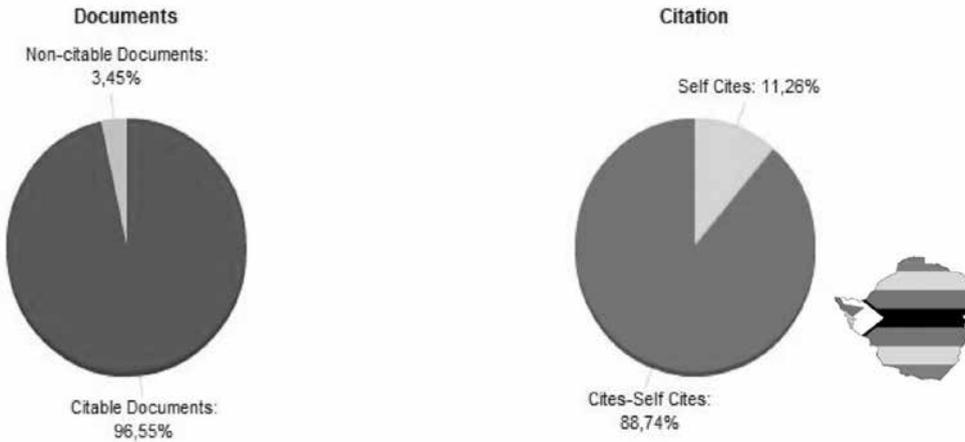
Table 1 and Table 2 illustrate Zimbabwean academic and research institutes engagement in research. From the two tables, it can be observed that Zimbabwe has traditionally been amongst the top nations in sub-Saharan Africa that have a high contribution to the ISI indexes.

**Table 2. Social science and humanities output by country in sub-Saharan Africa according to ISI, 1987–2007**

Year	87-89	90-92	93-95	96-98	99-01	02-04	05-07	1987-2007	% distribution	Overall growth rate 1987-2007
South Africa	975	1,089	1,196	1,462	1,482	1,906	2,785	10,895	50.7%	+185%
Nigeria	748	626	438	382	341	475	542	3,552	16.5%	-27%
Kenya	182	153	189	189	259	353	414	1,739	8.1%	+127%
Zimbabwe	106	145	127	168	122	154	163	985	4.6%	+54%
United Republic of Tanzania	71	63	99	106	111	130	238	818	3.8%	+235%
Ghana	50	87	88	96	124	101	137	683	3.2%	+174%
Botswana	41	42	71	119	117	137	133	660	3.1%	+224%
Ethiopia	42	57	42	56	65	108	147	517	2.4%	+250%
Uganda	16	24	46	60	79	103	159	487	2.3%	+890%
Cameroon	17	54	41	51	66	81	95	405	1.9%	+2,282%
Zambia	72	36	44	25	23	33	73	306	1.4%	+325%
Malawi	25	36	54	40	22	30	48	255	1.2%	+920%
Namibia	7	10	33	38	28	40	48	204	0.9%	+2,814%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>2,352</b>	<b>2,422</b>	<b>2,468</b>	<b>2,792</b>	<b>2,839</b>	<b>3,651</b>	<b>4,982</b>	<b>21,506</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>+112%</b>

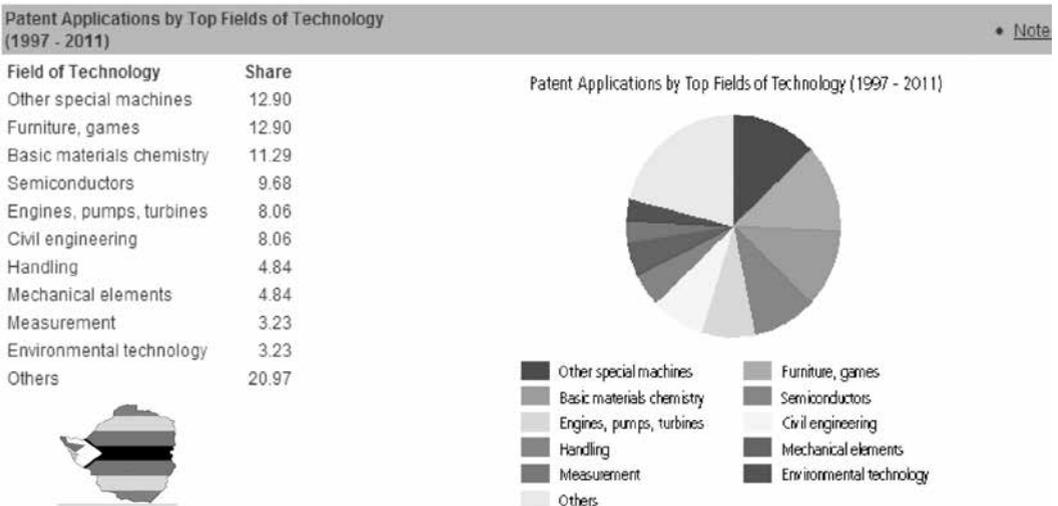
Source: UNESCO (2010), *World Social Science Report 2010: Knowledge Divides*

Fig 1. Citations to Zimbabwean Papers in Scopus Indices



The Global Research Report 2010, (Adams, King, & Hook, 2010), states that Zimbabwe still maintains a strong legacy research base despite its poor performance economically. These claims are well supported by the data in from Scopus in Fig 1, which shows how much of the documents that come from Zimbabwe have been cited by scholars (Scimago Lab, 2012). The data used to come up with the tables was accumulated from 1996-2011. From Fig 1, it is noted that 96.55% of these papers were cited, and the remaining 3.45% have not been cited.

Fig 2. Zimbabwean Applications for Patents from WIPO



Source: WIPO statistics database; last updated: 05/2013

Fig. 2 shows the data from WIPO on the applications for patents that have been applied for by Zimbabwean scholars and inventors from the period 1997-2011. The highest number of applications made was for special machines, special games and furniture and basic materials for chemistry.

## **1.2 Institutional Repositories, Knowledge Management and Zimbabwean Scholarship**

The Internet has in-turn brought new ways of publishing that encourage academic and research institutes to engage in scholarly communication with researchers all over the world. The mantra of Open Access has seen the development and growth of Institutional Repositories in Zimbabwe academic and research institutes. The Institutional Repositories collect, acquire, scan and upload artefacts or articles produced by their staff, or in collaboration with other institutes or persons. Nyambi & Maynard, 2012 explain that African universities and colleges have implemented Institutional Repositories to support a broad, pan-institutional effort on research and to offer express and instant benefits to each organization that implements a repository.

There are four academic institutions in Zimbabwe with online repositories: namely the University of Zimbabwe, the National University of Science and Technology, Africa University and the Research Council of Zimbabwe. All three university repositories are listed under the Directory of Open Access Repositories. The Research Council of Zimbabwe is not listed, perhaps because it is mainly identified as a national research database rather than an Institutional Repository.

Yet, this identification may be faulty, because the research work, of universities and research institutes, whether offline or online finds its way into databases. Research institutes mainly use their websites as repositories for the research they have conducted. Institutional Repositories not only act as modes of scholarly publishing but are also knowledge management tools. In the language of Open Access, the repositories that are in Zimbabwe fall under the "Green Model", which promotes self-archiving of articles online to ensure free accessibility (Bernius, 2010). Researchers from these institutes as well as peers constantly refer to what they have published in the past when making new literature. Institutional Repositories therefore act as knowledge repositories, in the language of knowledge management. Fig 1 above (page 4) illustrates this position, where self citations accounted for 11.26 % of the citations to papers and citations by self and peers made 88.74%.

### 1.3 Historical Perspective of Open Access and Institutional Repositories

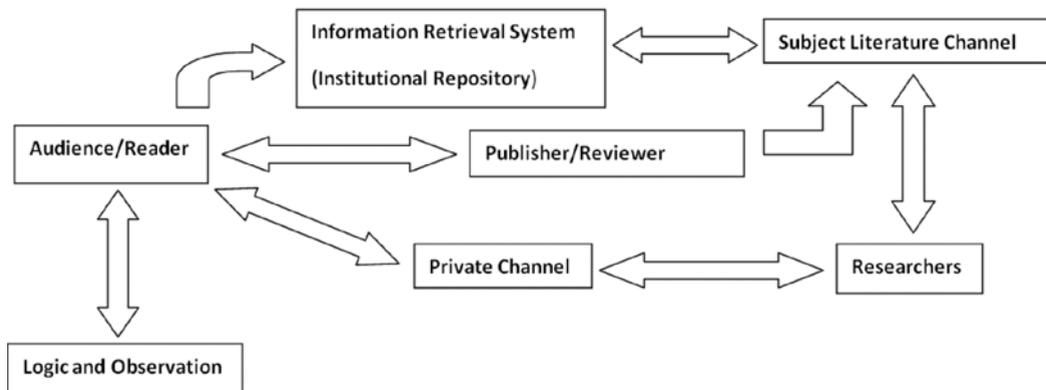
Institutional Repositories emerged in the 1990s, with discipline based repositories being the first of their kind. Cullen and Chawner (2008) quoted Jones, Andrew and MacColl (2006) who identified arXiv repository launched in August 1991, as the first repository. arXiv was initially developed for physics researchers to ensure access to findings at a speed comparable to which new discoveries were made. The repository later expanded to serve as other disciplines such as mathematics and computer science.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century is viewed as the era of the 'explosion of scientific, technical and medical (STM) publishing with a consequent impact on libraries and the research process' (Oppenheim, 2008). This era of scholarly publishing, has the full support of academics, who want to disseminate their results quickly in order to claim research output before others, and also as a formal record to obtain comments from peers. The views of Ippolito et.al (2005:1) shed light to the above mentioned points noting that publications are the sole currency of scientific research. Ippolito et.al go on further and state that published research is as significant as the research results since the influence of the research article has the ability to attract an audience of readers and thereby disseminate throughout the field.

However, the resultant high costs of subscriptions to print and online journals in particular in the 1990s, reduced subscriptions to journals (Mukherjee, 2009). This turn of events led to another era of scholarly publishing known as the Open Access movement, which emerged as a solution to the serials crisis. Another reason for the establishment of the Open Access movement was the globalization of science. Voronin, Myrzahmetov, & Bernstein (2011), note that the Open Access movement has increased the involvement of researchers from the developing world, and has made scientific information to be available on a level playing field throughout the world. Open Access goes beyond the provision of Institutional Repositories and Open Access journals, it is about increasing the impact and thereby the progress of research itself.

## 1.4 Conceptual perspective: Knowledge Creation in Repositories

Fig 3. Boyce's Model of Scholarly Communication

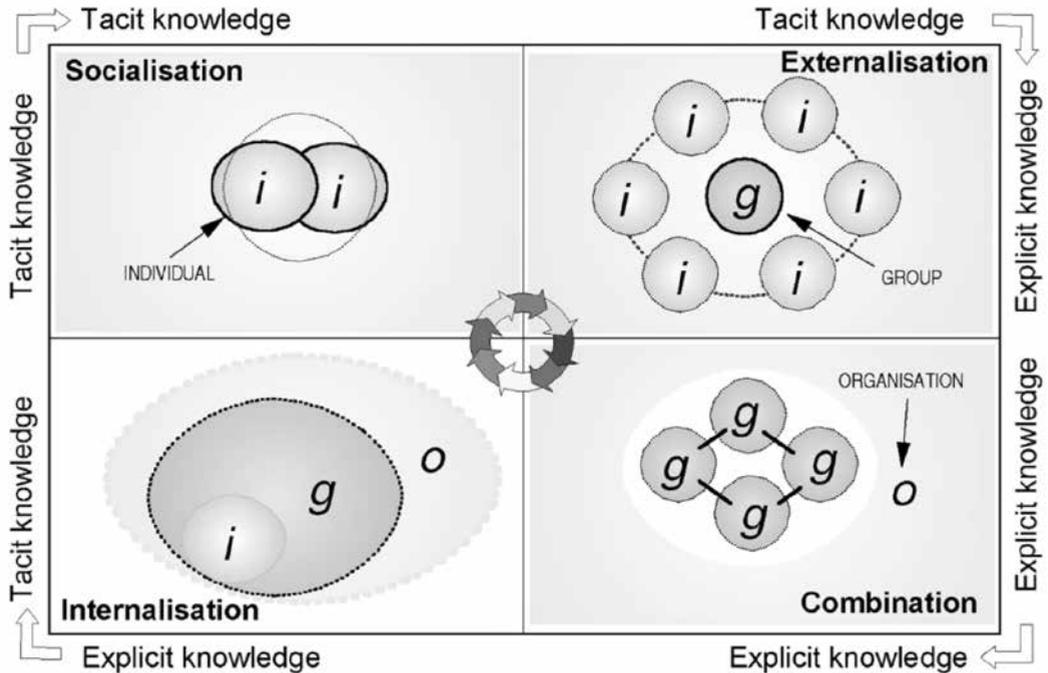


Source: Boyce (1974, 148)

Firstly, how do Institutional Repositories fit into the jargon of Knowledge Management? A good starting point would be an understanding on the operations of scholarly communication. Fig 2, illustrates Boyce (1974), understanding of how scholars, publishers, information retrieval systems and the audience interact with another in sharing knowledge. The model suggests scholarly communication may be achieved through conventional channels such as the journals, databases, books and newsletters (all these being found present in Institutional Repositories) and also through informal channels like discussions groups, meetings, and more recently social media (where discussions can be made on items available in Institutional Repositories). Therefore, it is not surprising that the results of both channels will be eventually shared with peers, audience, publisher and reviewer and will subsequently form part of the subject literature. Furthermore, the model portrays that new knowledge is gained at each stage by each recipient as they can act as an audience as well.

Secondly, though Boyce's model (Fig. 3) was designed to explain literature growth in scholarly communication, it fits into the Knowledge Creation model perpetuated by Nonaka (1994), better known as the SECI. Nonaka derived that knowledge is created through the processes of socialisation, externalisation, internalisation and combination.

Fig 4. The SECI Model



Source: Nonaka - Californian Management Review; Spring 1998

In the context of scholarly communication, the SECI can be explained as:

**Socialisation** - sharing and creating tacit knowledge through informal interactions such as group meetings, brainstorming and social media. Knowledge is shared through experiences and or mutual relations among research peers create knowledge.

**Externalisation** - tacit knowledge is written down to research papers, experiments, trials and reports and stored in Institutional Repositories.

**Combination** - research papers, experiments, trials and reports in Institutional Repositories are reviewed by research peers at conferences, literature reviews and meetings.

**Internalisation** - research papers, experiments, trials and reports in Institutional Repositories are read and become part of an individual’s knowledge.

Institutional Repositories perfectly fit into the Knowledge Management discourse, because they advocate for a non-transactional value to knowledge and content and foster an environment of knowledge sharing freely. Thirdly, the extent to which knowledge is shared in Institutional Repositories is captioned in the boxes of the SECI

model vs. the Components from Model for Scholarly Communication in Table 3. The indicators for Knowledge Creation are shown on the last box.

Table 3 shows that Altmetrics are present at each stage of the process, because there is discussion among scholars, at each stage of the SECI. These discussions can be measured through “spiders” that collect the discussions from social networks - that is what altmetrics are. From the table, the impact on policy development and new inventions/ patents are also prevalent in the boxes; this is because research generates new ideas, challenges existing norms, aims to cover gaps in knowledge and develop society as a whole. Therefore librarians, as knowledge workers, ought to trace knowledge conversations that are happening at each stage of the SECI in their repositories, to bring out the indicators that have been identified in this paper. The conversations may be different from institution to institution, it may then not be able to get all indicators in one organization, and also possible to come up with more indicators (Lankes, 2013).

Table 3. How Institutional Repositories fit into Knowledge Creation

SECI Model	Components from the Model for Scholarly Communication	Indicators for Knowledge Creation
Socialisation	Private Channel	Altmetrics, Impact on Policy Development
Externalisation	Private Channel, Subject Literature Channel, Publisher/ Reviewer	Number of Papers Experiments / Inventions/ Patents, Altmetrics on a Subject/ Author’s works
Combination	Private Channel, Subject Literature Channel, Publisher/ Reviewer	Number of Citations, Altmetrics/ Policy Development, Inventions/ Patents
Internalisation	Logic and Observation	Altmetrics , Policy Development, Inventions/ Patents

## 1.5 Contextual Perspective

These sections discuss the methodologies that are used to obtain the indicators identified and that the paper seeks to point out.

### **Citation Counting**

The widely known methodology used to gauge knowledge conversations in the scholarly field is the citation. Open Access publishing through the Institutional Repository is

theorised by writers such as Lynch as having an impact on the works of the writer, by increasing citations to an author's work. Citations can be analysed, as shown by Chanson (2007:947) who observed this can expose the ranking research publications in terms of standing impact. Partington & Jenkins (2007) explicate that citation analysis can take three different forms, which are:

- Citations can be used as a form of shorthand or code, which allows the author to connect their study with existing studies.
- Secondly, citations can be used to strengthen the position of an article by finding research gaps.
- Thirdly, citations can support a clear explanation of the research approach or theoretical position.

Citation counting is appropriate because researchers cite works that reflect the organization of a scientific community and its knowledge base and the value of the community on such works (Garfield, 1979). A high citation count is therefore an indicator that the work of the author is of relevance, of high quality, and has contributed to the progress in the field.

Traditionally, scholars have used Thomson Reuter's indexes and Scopus for citation counting. Studies that have been conducted using these tools include those by Inglesi-Lotz, R. and Pouris (2004), study on the influence of scientific research output of South African academics on their country's economic growth which relied on data from Thomson Reuters. Kousha and Abdoli 2010 used data from Scopus and Thomson Reuters for citation counting and also Google and Google Scholar for locating the self-archived articles published in the non-OA journals.

However, Bensnam (2011:330) reviews Thomson Reuters database, observing that its ideology of citation counting is based on a journal-oriented system, which fits well into the needs of biochemistry and molecular biology. Bensnam explains that the ideology behind ISI WOS is based on a belief on cumulative advantage, which simply reads "success- breeds-success" leading to the dominance of a few scientists, institutions, journals and countries. Banneyx (2008) adds on her observations of the ISI Web of Science (WOS), stating that:

*"The WoS has proved itself in the natural sciences, but in the humanities, especially for scientists who do not publish in English; its use is not so advantageous...It is necessary to be able to retrieve the publications in national languages. The publication of books is one of the most important means to spread knowledge in the humanities and social sciences, but they are not well indexed in the WoS. Coverage of the humanities is therefore difficult to assess as a whole, which is particularly prejudicial to researchers in this field."*

If these views about ISI WOS are put into account, it can therefore be seen that the citations retrieved from these tools might miss out publications in languages other than English, and articles that have been published in less prominent journals, as well as books. In the case of most Institutional Repositories and journals in Zimbabwe, a large number of their content may not be found in the ISI WOS and Scopus (Okafar 2011).

### ***Google Scholar***

More recently, Google Scholar (GS) has been presented by its developers as an alternative to ISI WOS and Scopus. Google Scholar's ability to obtain metadata in many disciplines, institutional repositories, presents Zimbabwean authors with far much greater chances of citations for their work than using the ISI WOS and Scopus. In addition Google Scholar's content is free and available for all to use, this content covering full text, metadata and citation statistics. This tool might best be preferred as most Zimbabwean academic and research institutes do not subscribe to ISI and Scopus. It allows each individual author or institution to trace the impact of their research.

### ***Publish or Perish***

This is a software application that is used for citation analysis. This software package was developed and made available by Professor Anne Wil Harzing, a specialist in international management at Melbourne University from Australia (Harzing, 1997-2009). Publish or Perish uses Google Scholar to obtain the references, the sources which cite them and then it analyses those presenting the following statistics: Total number of papers, the total number of citation, the medium number of citations per article, the medium number of citations per author, the total number of papers by the author, the medium number of citations per year, the H-index, G-index, Hc-index and HI norm

Publish or Perish has come into the spotlight of academic inquiry, since its inception. An exploratory study conducted by Repanovici (2011), at the Transylvania University of Brasov found that professors with high H-index calculated using Publish or Perish are those with papers indexed in ISI WOS. However, Publish or Perish does not come clean without faults. This is explained, PLoS One (2012), that the crawlers from Google Scholar are not very good in capturing articles and citations, or citations in books or book chapters in languages other than English. As a result, citation metrics in the Social Sciences and even more so in the Humanities will always be underestimated (Harzing, 2009).

### ***Altmetrics***

Resources in Institutional Repositories are envisioned to have a wider readership than those in the traditional publishing framework. Since Open Access publications

are often funded through the use of public funds, they allow non-scholars, who may be university students, or the general public to have access to research that has been conducted by academic and research institutes. Altmetrics should be used to trace knowledge conversations of academe in social media (Private channel) in websites such as Facebook, Tweeter, PLoS, PubMed, PubMed, Slideshare, Wikipedia and Mendeley among others .

Hence it is prudent to use websites that track altmetrics, such as ImpactStory, Altmetric and Mendeley. Altmetrics can be used in evaluative studies because; the use of formal citation metrics alone cannot measure for example the number of times an eclectic reader has read a particular article.

### ***Impact on Policy Development***

Altmetrics, also cannot provide a picture on how resources from the Institutional Repository have made a difference in a reader's life or work. Some Open Access resources were created with an intention to influence policy decisions at a local, national or international level, whether formally or informally. This is called evidence based research model, where researchers go into the field to learn about a problem and create close to perfect models which can simulate reality can be used for decision making. O'Brien (2011) explained in a newspaper article that academic research can benefit society as a whole; if it is written in a simplistic form can be shared with non-specialist peers and politicians. More often, academic and research institutes write articles in the local press, exposing research work that they have conducted or in the process of conducting. These articles have created opinion among the general public, raised debate among politicians and enabled the development of policies.

### ***Inventions, Patents and Copyrights***

What is more interesting, are the number of inventions that are produced from a country through research. Inventions will accordingly warrant the inventor, exclusive rights which are called patents. The World Intellectual Property Organization (2013), make mention that governments and parliaments grant patents to ideas and knowledge that will benefit society as a whole. In a way, patents, though not free open an invention to society. The inventors or creators of the idea are protected by copyright laws which grant them intellectual property -which are intangible assets. Patent statistics can also be used as indicators of the inventive accomplishments of individuals, universities, companies, industries and countries. The number of times a patent is cited can be used to gauge its usefulness to a scientific community (Karvonen and Ka" ssi, 2011).

## 1.6 Conclusion

Knowledge creation is an active process in scholarly communication; it is present in every stage, from the inception of idea right up to the time it is internalised by an audience. Every member of the audience, including the author takes part in conversations that create knowledge, the conversations may be formal or through private channels, yet both affect the dissemination of an idea. Institutional Repositories are fundamental for knowledge to develop societies, as their free nature and willingness of scholars to disseminate knowledge makes places them at the centre of knowledge conversations. Therefore, the content in Institutional Repositories can be used to gauge the extent to which knowledge is managed among various participants in the chain of scholarly communication. The paper has shown indicators that reveal impacts of knowledge on society as a whole. Open Access resources in repositories afford the public to view information in perpetuity, even when a project has been closed for years. Hence, the indicators and methods highlighted in the paper may influence some policy issues about the content which is deposited into the Institutional Repositories in order to make the repository an academic source for teaching, learning and research.

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# The Role of libraries in the provision of climate change information for good livelihood in Malawi

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## **Abstract**

In response to global environmental change, the world has greatly been affected by climate change which is negatively affecting the economy, health status of the people, food production and world food prices among others. Malawi, being a member of the global village, is not spared. Climate change has led to declining quality and standard of living due to our heavy reliance on rain-fed food production; the changes in temperature; emergence of non-communicable as well as communicable diseases; persistent crop pests and a change in the eco-system. Despite the recognition that climate change has hit Malawi hard, access to information about climate change and its effects on the livelihood of vulnerable people has been skewed in Malawi. The nation has a high illiteracy rate and it is facing problems of disseminating vital information for development as it relies on the media which is friendly to the elite society. Currently, climate change information is found in both print and electronic media in a language that a vulnerable society cannot comprehend. Therefore, this paper underscores the importance of libraries in disseminating climate change information to various sectors of the economy in order to improve the livelihood of the masses in Malawi.

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**Keywords:** Environment-Information and knowledge, Climate Change-Malawi, Libraries – Climate Change Information, Livelihood - Climate Change Knowledge.

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## **Introduction**

Globalization coupled with urbanization has brought with it the challenges of climate change which is negatively affecting the economy, the health status of people, food production and world food prices among others.

Malawi being a member of the global village is not spared. Climate change has led to declining quality and standard of living due to our heavy reliance on rain-fed food production, the rise and changes in temperature, emergence of non-communicable as well as communicable diseases, persistent crop pests and a change in the eco-system.

In view of these developments, the Malawi Government has embraced climate change issues in such key policy documents as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2 (MDGS 2) and National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) among others. Malawi is also a signatory to a member of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) including United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

The signing and ratification of the international agreements by the Malawi government clearly demonstrates that there is a global concern over climate change.

## **Defining climate change**

Climate change is a significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. It may be a change in average weather conditions, or in the distribution of weather around the average conditions (i.e., more or fewer extreme weather events). Climate change is caused by factors that include oceanic processes (such as oceanic circulation), variations in solar radiation received by Earth, plate tectonics and volcanic eruptions, and human-induced alterations of the natural world; these latter effects are currently causing global warming, and “climate change” is often used to describe changes from human-specific activities. (Wikipedia,2013)

The most general definition of *climate change* is a change in the statistical properties of the climate system when considered over long periods of time, regardless of cause.

(The Wikipedia, 2013) further states that the term sometimes is used to refer specifically to climate change caused by human activity, as opposed to changes in climate that may have resulted as part of Earth’s natural processes.

## **What is climate change?**

Climate includes patterns of temperature, precipitation, humidity, wind and seasons. “Climate change” affects more than just a change in the weather; it refers to seasonal changes over a long period of time. These climate patterns play a fundamental role in shaping natural ecosystems, and the human economies and cultures that depend on them. Because so many systems are tied to climate, a change in climate can affect many related aspects of where and how people, plants and animals live, such as food production, availability and use of water, and health risks.

For example, a change in the usual timing of rains or temperatures can affect when plants bloom and set fruit, when insects hatch or when streams are at their fullest. This can affect historically synchronized pollination of crops, food for migrating birds, spawning of fish, water supplies for drinking and irrigation, forest, health, and more.

Some short-term climate variation is normal, but longer-term trends now indicate a changing climate. A year or two of an extreme change in temperature or other condition doesn't mean a climate change trend has been "erased."

Worldwide, people are paying serious attention to climate change. In the USA climate change is already disrupting the environment, economy and communities. In India the sacred Ganges River is beginning to run dry and in West Africa the Volta River is failing to provide enough hydropower for the bauxite-smelting company owned by American Company in Ghana. (Brande & Ollenu,1999)

## **Causes of climate change**

On the broadest scale, the rate at which energy is received from the sun and the rate at which it is lost to space determine the equilibrium temperature and climate of Earth. This energy is distributed around the globe by winds, ocean currents, and other mechanisms to affect the climates of different regions.

Factors that can shape climate are called climate forcing or "forcing mechanisms". These include processes such as variations in solar radiation, variations in the Earth's orbit, mountain-building and continental drift and changes in greenhouse gas concentrations. There are a variety of climate change feedbacks that can either amplify or diminish the initial forcing. Some parts of the climate system, such as the oceans and ice caps, respond slowly in reaction to climate forcing, while others respond more quickly.

Forcing mechanisms can be either "internal" or "external". Internal forcing mechanisms are natural processes within the climate system itself (e.g., the thermohaline circulation). External forcing mechanisms can be either natural (e.g., changes in solar output) or anthropogenic (e.g., increased emissions of greenhouse gases).

## **Are climate change and global warming the same thing?**

Many people use the terms interchangeably. Global warming causes climates to change. "Global warming" refers to rising global temperatures, while "climate change" includes other more specific kinds of changes, too. Warmer global temperatures in the atmosphere and oceans leads to climate changes affecting rainfall patterns, storms and droughts, growing seasons, humidity, and sea level. (Jain, 2008) confirms that global warming is gradual increase in the earth's surface temperature while also "global warming" is

planet-wide but “climate change” can refer to changes at the global, continental, regional and local levels. Even though a warming trend is global, different areas around the world will experience different specific changes in their climates, which will have unique impacts on their local plants, animals and people. A few areas might even get cooler rather than warmer.

## **Malawi’s strategy on climate change adaptation and mitigation**

During the opening of Malawi Parliament by the State President Her Excellency Dr Joyce Banda in May, 2013, she emphasized the Malawi Government’s concern about the effects of climate change on the social and economic development of the country. She further informed the nation that the government, in order to mitigate impacts of climate change, had embarked on various projects on climate change that would involve promoting sustainable land management and climate adaptation in rural livelihoods and agriculture. It had also developed a strategic climate change investment plan and climate change policy which will guide investments in climate change development projects.

In 2012, the Malawi government launched a project known as “Climate Adaptation for Rural Livelihood and Agriculture’ (CARLA). This project’s main goal was to increase resilience and adaptive capacities of smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities through development of adaptation strategies in light of vulnerabilities caused by impacts of climate change. The notable impacts of climate change that Malawi is currently facing are as follows: floods, erratic rainfall and drought.

These impacts of climate change have caused a great imbalance in the livelihood of many Malawians. For instance – food production – Malawians rely on rain fed agriculture and it is hampered by late rainfall which lasts for few months before the plants are ready for harvest. Droughts are common in other parts of the country. In addition, the plants are highly attacked by crop pests at both vegetative stage and post harvest stage. The rise in temperature has also led into public health challenges and poor nutritional food intake that has resulted to persistent malnutrition and HIV/ AIDS.

We have noted the increase of environmental degradation which has also led to (a) deforestation (b) soil infertility due to soil erosion as it loses its cover and use of organic fertilizer (c) rapid degradation of water quality (d) degradation of human habitat (e) pollution that has increased in the use of non degradable materials like plastics.

## **Information and knowledge**

The Malawi National Policy on Library, Documentation and Information Services (1996) states that “Information and knowledge are a critical force that shapes the world’s economy and sustainable human livelihood. The speed at which information and knowledge is

created , its accessibility and the myriad, uses, causes fundamental changes in nations' poverty reduction strategies. Sustainable development requires that populations be the user of information and knowledge and packaged experiencing".

Information and knowledge are often used interchangeably. However information is a stage in development of knowledge. According to the Nicholas model (2000), Knowledge Management has evolved through four main stages; data, information, knowledge and wisdom. Good knowledge is built on a foundation of strong information systems.

Information is data that has been processed to add or create meaning and hopefully knowledge for the person who receives it (Power, 1999).It is the result of processing, manipulating and organizing data so that it adds to the knowledge of its recipient.

### **Importance of information and knowledge**

Information is power and power belongs to the people. Having said that, I feel information could be the engine that drives people to better understanding that would eventually leads to sound judgments and decision making. So it is important to make climate change information accessible to people in order to mitigate the effects of climate change.

As it is now conventional wisdom that "we live in the information age" - in a communication era characterized by a global expansion in the reach of mass media, by electronic information "super-highways" that span the globe. At the same time, there is concern that the gap between the information rich and the information poor is getting wider. The observation clearly emphasizes the importance of equal access to information despite of the economic status. This imbalance can be remedied by librarians or information specialists who can repack the climate change information so that it can be accessed without difficulties regardless of the status of the individual. Librarians have also the ability to increase the quantity, relevance and accessibility of climate change information.

### **The need for libraries to provide climate change information.**

Libraries serve as a bridge between the government's goals by developing, acquiring and providing information (in book format, electronic format, e.g. CD ROMs, computers, etc.) and provide access centrally to communities. Libraries can adequately and effectively contribute to actualizing MGDS 11 by making climate change information available to all different sectors of our society in order to appreciate and mitigate possible climate change impacts.

Libraries are also engines for rural development and can be identified with community activities. They can also provide information on issues affecting the community, e.g. climate change, HIV/AIDS pandemics, agriculture, civic education and sustained life

long learning. So the information centres in the rural set up would do its best to make its collection to be in a format that will be easily accessed by the illiterates. In this case repackaging and use of pictorial materials on climate change would be ideal.

In addition to what has been highlighted, the central purpose of an information centre or library is to provide a service, access to information. As we are in a modern era of information and communication technologies especially computers, information networks and software applications have made the library to provide a variety of library and information services to its clients (Chisenga, 2004). Clearly this shows that the need to provide climate change information and knowledge is paramount as a way of mitigating its effects to the livelihood of the masses.

### **Librarians role in climate change information delivery.**

There are many definitions that have been coined by other experts in the profession that try to spell out the roles of librarians. According to Bengé in his attempt to spell out the roles, has stated that all available definitions of librarianship include four main areas of activity. These areas of activity are as follows:-

- The collection of material appropriate for libraries/ information centers
- The preservation of the material
- The organization of the collections
- The dissemination of the material or the information it contains.

Arnold further states that “Librarians and all information specialists who are involved in library and information services share one common aim: they focus their efforts on collecting and making accessible information for use to the communities they serve.” From the definitions above there are areas that are very important to the roles of the Librarian or Information specialist in order to deliver climate change information. He/ She has to do the following:-

- Ability to best describe, analyzes, integrate, and organize Climate Change Information for use;
- Ability to collect policies that are set at all levels of government e.g Forestry Policy, Climate Change Policy, Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, Library and Information Policy, among others
- Ability to have the know-how of using information and communication technology-based information systems e.g On –line information sources.
- Ability to create awareness of climate change causes, effects, adaptation and mitigation through exhibitions, open days, etc.
- Ability to collect, internalize and repackaging information into knowledge to make it reach every one in the community in a most accessible, user- friendly and understandable format.

- Ability to network both local and international climate change institutions like green librarians.
- Ability to partner with other climate change agencies, lobbyist organizations to collaborate in training the community and exchange information and knowledge.

## Conclusion

The role of climate change information in the quest to mitigate the impacts of climate change cannot be over emphasized. We may say that the key concept is to work together in sharing climate change information. Access to climate change information through the libraries will empower citizens to act responsibly at their respective levels of decision – making and thereby promote effective management of climate change. As we noted that drought, erratic rains, floods are the current notable impacts of climate change in Malawi, information as a resource, will mitigate if we work collectively. The result would be the improved living standards of the people because of good harvest of their agricultural products, reduction of diseases and promotion of economic enterprises.

Therefore, libraries play a critical role in the provision of climate change information for the country to improve the living standards of its citizens.

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# Libraries for research and development: A special libraries programme in eleven points

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*National Archives of Namibia*

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This paper has been updated with new developments since it was delivered in 2013.

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We, librarians and archivists, like to talk of a knowledge-based economy as it is envisaged in our Namibian development guideline Vision 2030. This is the catchphrase that seems to come to our rescue, as the internet is pulling the carpet from under our legs. It is true, a knowledge-based economy with scientific research and scientific teaching cannot function without scientific information resources, which is the domain of special libraries. Libraries which, I would contend, cannot now, and not for a long time be fully replaced by the resources in cyberspace. But to remain relevant, we must realize exactly what our role as knowledge providers is and what is expected from us.

In my contribution, I want to focus on some critical issues where special libraries should transform and play a vital role – but do not currently do it in Namibia. Librarians tend to understand the phrase “Libraries for development” mainly in the sense of supporting education. Supporting education and life-long learning is important, but we have to recognize as well that libraries play a critical role in hard science.

## **1. The importance of Namibia-specific information and knowledge for development.**

If we want our country to develop, we have to make optimal use of the advantages that Namibia possesses, and those are its natural, cultural and historical heritage. This heritage – whether it is uranium deposits, pumpkin biodiversity, the Hoodia plant, the fish-rich Benguela Current, the Ovahimba culture, prehistoric rock art or colonial architecture, or the legacy of a people who fought for over hundred years against colonialism and never

gave up – this rich heritage will forever be exploited by foreigners alone if we do not develop the local capacity to research, document, access, manage, and utilize it. Institutions such as libraries, archives and museums play a critical role in this process.

An incredible amount of research on Namibia is being done in these and other areas. This research is frequently done by foreign researchers, and very often we do not even become aware of their results, as they are published abroad in books and journals that we cannot afford. Some copies or offprints may be sent to Namibia by those researchers, but they end up in private hands or in poorly catalogued library collections where they remain inaccessible because nobody can find them.

Likewise, valuable research is done locally but remains inaccessible. Local publishing opportunities are few, and slow. Unless local researchers succeed to publish in a prestigious international journal (which again, is expensive to access for Namibians), their results remain in in-house papers in poorly accessible special collections.

Then there are the ubiquitous consultants that are liked so much by our bureaucracies and by international organisations. Sometimes – not always – they deliver excellent results, which subsequently are delivered in a few copies to a few offices, where they disappear in drawers and never again see the light of day. Rarely, they find their way into a library, and even more rarely these stapled or plastic-ringed piles of paper are then actually catalogued and made accessible.

Anybody who ever tried to research any Namibian topic knows how difficult it is to find adequate information. But the information institutions are underfunded, understaffed, under-qualified, and uncoordinated.

Why? I want to outline a number of wrong perceptions, and some serious deficits in our procedures, and necessary measures to improve the situation.

## **2. Wrong perceptions**

There are several wide-spread wrong perceptions that contribute to the low priority given to libraries and professional librarians in Namibia.

*Everything is on the internet anyway.* – Nothing could be more wrong. Not only is there a vast amount of important information that has never been scanned or uploaded: also, a large amount of information that actually is on the internet, is hidden behind paywalls that are unaffordable to the Namibian student.

*Libraries today don't need to catalogue, they can download catalogue records.* – Well, somebody has to catalogue in the first place. And in the case of Namibian material, it is we who should do it, because we have the primary interest, we have the local expertise, and

we (should) get the locally created material first. But apart from that, the process of cataloguing imparts critical skills in recognizing and retrieving information. The strict division between cataloguers and reference librarians is most detrimental to both activities. Unfortunately, managers schooled in the obsolete tradition of strict specialization and industrial division of labour don't realize it.

*Just google it.* – Well try, and see what you get. Not only are there large amounts of information online that are not indexed by Google. The valuable information is also often hidden amongst mountains of irrelevant data returns. Although clever search strategies and tools like Google Scholar help to sift the right information out of a sea of garbage, the problem of information overload (or rather, dis-information overload) remains a problem.

And if you already know exactly what piece of literature you need? If you google a specific book, you find it at Amazon (at a price). Or you find it at Google Books – and if it's still under copyright, you are allowed a tantalizing glimpse at a few pages, and just where it becomes interesting, the selected section ends. But Google will not tell you that the book is actually available at NAWIC, our National Agriculture and Water Information Centre at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Because that library's catalogue is not on the internet, and even if it was, it wouldn't be indexed by Google.

### ***A typical experience***

Let me illustrate the current situation with an example. Imagine a distance education student at Opuwo. Let us assume she has a stable and fast internet connection (which doesn't exist there yet). She googled and found just the journal article she needs for her assignment on the hydrology of the Kunene river, by a foreign researcher, - and is asked to fork out US\$50 for an article of 10 pages. Even if she had the money, she won't have the credit card to pay for it. She now contacts NamPower which had facilitated the foreigner's research at Ruacana. The local manager remembers that the researcher has sent him a personal copy but doesn't remember where he put it. She emails NAWIC but the only librarian of our only special library on water affairs is on leave and the student intern left in charge lost the connection to the database on the server. Finally she finds out that this electronic journal is part of a package subscribed by UNAM Library. But UNAM is not allowed to download and email a copy to her, because our Opuwo distance student is registered at a South African Technikon, and UNAM's subscription licence agreement covers only its own students. Anyway, the friendly UNAM librarian thinks, what the heck, downloads and emails the article to Opuwo. All's well that ends well, and let's hope the international journal publisher never finds out about it.

What do we learn from examples and experiences like this?

### **3. There is no efficient control of scientific information generated by foreign researchers, or even of scientific information published abroad by local researchers.**

Many researchers come into the country on tourist visas, because research/study/work permits and visas take forever to obtain. This deprives us of the opportunity to keep track of ongoing research, and to encourage or enforce the repatriation of research results. An unbureaucratic but stringent procedure, obliging researchers to feed back their research results and to deposit primary research data, is needed. A highly bureaucratic and restrictive research permit procedure, as it is provided in the recent regulations for the Research, Science and Technology Act, is counterproductive, as it will lead in many cases to one of two outcomes: either to prevent the research being done at all, or to circumvent the procedures, thereby again depriving us of effective measures to collect and access the results.

There is no unified structure of permits in different areas of research. Nature Conservation, the National Heritage Council, the National Archives, the National Film Commission, and lately the NCRST all have their different procedures and sets of rules, but they are not coordinated, and there is no coordination between their procedures and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. As a result, there are too many loopholes and people come and go and take what they want without giving back, especially in the field of social and cultural research.

For the local research, some opportunities are in place, such as UNAM's institutional repository, but so far they cover only a fraction of our local research output.

### **4. Libraries are seriously understaffed, and librarians are seriously underqualified to take care of scientific literature.**

Let us face it, the library graduates coming from UNAM have largely been unable to distinguish between a book, a journal issue, a conference paper, and an offprint of a journal article, and unable to use a thesaurus for subject indexing and instead use random word combinations from a book title to invent subject indexing terms. These are basic minimum skills for scientific documentation. Libraries employing these librarians have to teach them these skills in-house, but our scientific special libraries are one-person libraries, so who is there to teach them? Theoretically they are supervised by a Chief Librarian at Ministerial Library Service, but in practice it is impossible to teach basic skills from a distance just with occasional inspection visits.

Let me make this clear, I am not blaming the UNAM Department of Information Studies for this state of affairs. Or rather, I blame it only to a certain extent. They are faced with school graduates who hardly saw a library during their school career, who have

inadequate English language skills, who - even if they had science as a subject at school - could only learn it from books and would not be able to make a difference between chemistry, biology and physics. With all effort, it would not be possible to turn them into librarians capable of running a special library within three or four years. We have to live with this situation and devise strategies how to develop these new graduates professionally. During the last few years, we have seen that there is clearly a promising student potential that can be developed, but because of the public service salary grading structure, until two years ago all that potential was drained away by the UNAM and Polytechnic libraries. The salary reform of 2013, which finally recognized librarians and archivists as professionals and not as clerks with another name, has now created conditions that could retain skills and experience in the public service. But this first step needs a follow-up in other aspects of librarianship.

## **5. Special libraries are too small and scattered to be efficient.**

I consider it high time to re-think the entire concept of ministerial libraries. What we are having now are small scattered units, basically one-person libraries where it is not even possible to pass on special skills and procedures because once the single librarian leaves, the next one – probably appointed with a delay of at least half a year, during which the library will not function at all - will again start from scratch finding his/her way through the system. Every time this happens, the chain of institutional memory is broken and some crucial information gets lost. Also, every time the librarian goes on leave or is sick, the library is closed or unsupervised. I want to advocate centralising the operations of libraries with closely related subject matter. Why must we have the libraries of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism separate from each other? Why not integrate them into a central library of living natural resources that could also support the needs of the Ministry of Fisheries, and the natural science sections of the National Museum, and can be adequately staffed? This will be difficult to implement, because everybody wants their cosy little resource centre close at hand, but really, we cannot afford this luxury. What these little libraries gain in proximity to the users, they lose in functionality.

## **6. Libraries are not cooperating.**

We are too poor to duplicate expensive library resources, but pooled together, there would be a quite substantial resource that could be shared. Sharing requires a joint catalogue to which everybody has access, ideally a catalogue that is updated continuously, and that is both on the internet and regularly distributed in local copies where bandwidth or connectivity is a problem. Only through such a tool can we share our meagre resources and make them efficiently available to the entire country through a system of inter-library loans by paper or digital copies. The technological possibilities exist, but we lack the staff who would compile and maintain this catalogue. Without dedicated staffing

solely for this purpose, there can be promising initiatives like we had in the past, but they would not be sustained because they rely on the initiative of individuals who go out of their way to do the extra effort beyond their normal duties until they are tired, or retire.

There is a whole host of issues that have to be addressed for a functional joint catalogue. Although a number of the relevant special libraries use basically the same software and data structure, namely WINISIS under UNIMARC, most of the other most important libraries in Windhoek such as UNAM, Polytechnic, DRFN, Parliament and the now closed UNICEF library are using different library management systems. They are not completely incompatible, but incorporating their data would require a special conversion effort that under the present circumstances of understaffing nobody can tackle. Once the technicalities have been worked out, these conversions would be routine operations, but currently the basis has not been laid. Alternatively, we could establish a gateway under the Z39-50 protocol to give simultaneous access to several distinct databases on the internet. Again, this is not a trivial undertaking that works on its own. And most of our special libraries are not yet online.

Since last year, the Namibia Library and Archives Service in the Ministry of Education started a process to build a joint online catalogue of community libraries and to add the resources of the National Library to it. This process is far from completed, as a large backlog of catalogue records that exist only in paper format remains to be converted. Whether the special libraries can join in, has not yet been seriously considered.

Apart from that, cooperative (consortium) negotiations for a favorable deal with commercial internet content providers are needed. Digital subscriptions should cater for all library users in Namibia, not only one institution. The overall population of Namibia is so small that we should have quite some space for negotiation with the service providers.

## **7. Standardization or the lack of it**

The issue of standardization is closely related. There is no common body in Namibia that could try to harmonize and advise on critical issues such as, whether we should all switch our electronic catalogues to the MARC-21 format instead of the UNIMARC that is currently still used by most special libraries in Namibia. The merits of MARC-21 are doubtful and in my opinion a big step backwards, but the American colleagues have the largest library catalogue resources and are thereby effectively forcing it upon everybody who wants to make use of their huge pool of catalogue data.

Another issue that has to be tackled is the standardization of a Namibian language alphabetic character set, and the localisation of our languages for internet purposes, especially for the Khoisan languages but also for Otjiherero, which all have alphabetic characters that are not found in the standard character sets, otherwise we will forever

marginalize their languages and literatures, distort their personal names and placenames, and make their indigenous knowledge difficult to access. Most of our daily newspapers have managed to deal with the issue – why not the librarians?

Apart from the alphabet, there are other serious obstacles for effective scientific knowledge organisation and transfer. For example, we have no standardised place name list (gazetteer) that could be used to describe locations. Standardised place names, although they are now getting rapidly displaced by GPS coordinates, are a key resource in any evaluation of historical scientific data, but do not exist for Namibia. The pre-independence Place Names Commission, which no longer exists, cared for place names only as an issue of cultural heritage and never made any attempt to produce a reference work. Since independence, this issue and the contact to UNGEGN (the responsible UN body for geographical names) was left to the Directorate of Culture, who apparently considered it as of minor importance and never got a grip on it, despite several UN-sponsored workshops. But standardised place-names are not all that is needed. For cataloguing knowledge, there is also a need for standardised geographical divisions based on natural features instead of administrative divisions. There is even a need for standardised ethnic denominations for the recording of cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge. For example should the small ethnic group on the Kaokoveld and Angola's Cunene province be spelt Simba or Cimba or Dhimba?

## **8. Libraries are not taking advantage of the technical opportunities.**

Resource sharing and information provision has come a long way since the days of sending books via the postal service on inter-library loan. This method is not only slow, it has even become slower and at the same time more expensive. The inter-library loan system that was re-established in Namibia about ten years ago is a cumbersome dinosaur, based on paper forms, the postal system, and payment by coupons from library to library. It is rather designed to prevent, than to share information resources. I have not come across any statistics of its operation, but I doubt that more than 50 items have been moved around within a year, while we have students in rural libraries desperate for study and research material who cannot finish their assignments because they lack access to literature. It costs much less time and money to scan and email an article than to photocopy and wrap and address and post an article, and it is definitely cheaper. Instead of juggling around with coupons, we should rather keep statistics and if a library can prove that the document delivery is seriously increasing their workload, it can maybe be compensated from the Library Fund or another source.

This should go hand in hand with a digitising effort for much-needed materials if there are no copyright restrictions. This will not only assist our preservation efforts, and make the material more widely available, but also make its content much more accessible.

Many people don't yet realize that digitization also facilitates research because combined with OCR it enables us to search for any word in the digital text.

What is however needed is a digitization office that can systematically tackle the relevant questions – copyright clearance, state of the art hardware and software to produce optimized digital versions, servers to keep high-resolution preservation copies in non-proprietary formats, how to care for safe backups and to coordinate and prevent duplication of efforts. There is little use in decentralising these functions widely. And this is not a Namibian issue. In Europe and America nowadays everybody thinks they can scan, because the technology is so cheaply available, and I have seen horrible examples of do-it-yourself scans on websites and in email communications. This is acceptable for quickly sending a copy of an article, but not appropriate for a digital repository.

## **9. Libraries and librarians do not get enough subject guidance.**

However good and experienced a librarian might be, however well he or she might be trained in the subject area, they are not scientists of a specialized field with its own terminology and methodology. They will not do the field research, attend the international conferences on the subject area, keep correspondence with other specialists. To select the really necessary, up-to-date and relevant literature, librarians will need substantial input from the specialists. This is currently not happening to the extent that we need. I think the poor staffing quality of our libraries is one of the reasons: the scientists have given up on the librarians, they don't expect anything anymore from us. This is a relationship that has to be built, over time.

## **10. The potential of non-governmental special libraries is not being realized.**

There are a number of very valuable non-governmental libraries in Namibia. They should be supported to play their role adequately. Unfortunately the non-cooperation goes both ways: Government is reluctant to fund private initiatives, and private initiatives are reluctant to accept funding that might come with strings attached. But a process must be initiated to talk to each other, and find ways to cooperate. Currently the National Archives and National Library and the private Namibia Scientific Society have very good mutual relations, exchanging cataloguing data and surplus materials, but this is more based on good direct contact between the staff and not on institutionalized relations. We also have currently examples how important private resources are becoming inaccessible to the general public because they charge exorbitant user fees that only foreign researchers can pay. The governing bodies of these institutions seem to believe that this is the way to survive. I rather believe this is the way to die, but we have no forum in place to talk about it, the private libraries and archives are not represented in the Library Council.

We also have an example where a really rich non-governmental resource did almost go down the drain. This is the economic research think-tank NEPRU, which through foreign core funding did in the past assemble the only substantial economic research library in the country. When NEPRU closed its doors due to a financial crisis, its library was almost scattered like two other economic libraries, namely the Private Sector Foundation and the IMLT which closed in the 1990s. Luckily, in this case, the Polytechnic of Namibia came to the rescue and took over the entire library. Unfortunately, another rich and - a most important factor! - excellently catalogued resource, the local UNICEF library, was closed down due to global policy changes of the mother body, and no local library came to its rescue.

I think the way ahead is to disburse public funding for services to the public, possibly based on user statistics and contributions to document delivery, and also an emergency fund for critically endangered resources. One might argue that such funds should rather go into new acquisitions for the governmental sector libraries, but it is precisely the value of historically grown collections, and also their international connections that grew over time, as well as the substantial and often unpaid or underpaid voluntary work channeled into their collections that makes those non-governmental libraries irreplaceable. And it is not only their books, but also other documentary resources which have been built over time, such as theme-centred, newspaper cuttings collections.

## **11. Namibian scientific data is underutilized.**

I have mentioned the problems to get access to foreign-based research. But it is even more difficult to get access to, or even to become aware of unpublished locally generated data. All kinds of statistics and data collections exist in government, parastatal, and non-governmental institutions, but are treated like state secrets or as an unwanted burden, and not as the tools for scientific and economic development they could be. If they are electronic, they are in constant danger of becoming inaccessible through technological obsolescence. We have experienced two decades of detailed educational statistics vanishing through the Y2K bug. If such data collections are stored on paper, they are in constant danger of being trashed for lack of space, or because consulting them seems no longer fashionable in the electronic age, or just because they are old. But as any ecologist or climate scientist can tell you, long time-lines of data are crucial for many scientific endeavours.

I see an important role for special libraries in facilitating access to these data collections. Of course, this requires not only the qualified personnel we are all dreaming about, but a change of mindset from the apartheid legacy where everything was a state secret and only a select few could get permits to access information. I work in the National Archives and have seen examples of files from the 1980s where even collections of newspaper cuttings were stamped "SECRET/GEHEIM" in red capital letters. It is about time to get rid of this

mentality and realize the development potential of data. Special libraries as scientific information providers have a role in identifying and safeguarding these resources and making them accessible, possibly together with the National Archives who should take a lead in this and give guidance on their permanent preservation.

I am aware that this is unsystematic and far too much to be chewed in a brief session, but I thought it important to make you aware that we have to get away from old habits if we really want to take information for research and development seriously.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that this network of special libraries, of scientific information and scholarly communication, should not be limited to the special, national, and academic libraries. Anything in this network should become accessible, through digital document delivery, to the remotest community library. I do not doubt that the catalogue and the open-access resources would eventually, and maybe faster than we think, become accessible through mobile phone even beyond the remotest library. But what is usually forgotten in the visions of technology fetishists is the human interface that will still be needed to awaken the sleeping beauty and to convert the raw resources into recognizable and retrievable information. I do not really care whether these interfaces are called librarians, documentalists, knowledge managers or any other fancy name, but their skills are key to this vision.

# Knowledge Management practices: The role of Namibian ministerial librarians

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## Abstract

In the information/knowledge society era, the library manages both external and internal knowledge of its host organisation. This can be achieved through the process of collecting relevant information, processing, organising and dissemination to ensure that information/knowledge contents housed in the library are retrievable and accessible to the targeted audience, using various dissemination channels. Librarians ensure that the targeted audiences are equipped with the skills to locate, evaluate, and use available and useful information/knowledge effectively, by providing information literacy training to them. Studies have found the visibility of librarians in the knowledge management environment to be very low and the utilisation of their skills to be minimal. This study investigated the practice of knowledge management by ministerial librarians in Namibia. The study relied on the Bukowitz and Williams Knowledge Management (KM) framework (2000). This framework is appropriate to the study because it consists of different stages (GET, USE, LEARN, CONTRIBUTE, ASSESS, BUILD/SUSTAIN, AND DIVEST) that address the themes of the focus of the study, thus making it relevant to effective and efficient knowledge management in an enterprise such as the government ministries.

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**Keywords:** Knowledge Management; Information Management; librarians; libraries; ministerial librarians

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## 1. Introduction

The knowledge-based economy of the twenty first century brought with it the development of information communication technologies for the enhancement of the practice of knowledge management in both the private and public sectors. Cong and Pandya (2003:26) point out that the concept of Knowledge Management (KM) and

its benefits, which have been much talked about in many organisations, need to be better understood in order for the organisation to be competent in the practice of KM. Namibia is one of the developing countries which have shown an interest in becoming a competent knowledge-based society. The evidence for this Namibian desire is to be found in the Namibian Vision 2030 document section 4.3, a text which recognises the need to develop a knowledge-based society because the modern world is moving from heavy industry to knowledge-based economies based on specialist services, specialised industries, communications, and information technologies. The Namibian vision 2030 also urges that, for Namibia to successfully contribute to the knowledge society, the Namibian community needs to transform itself into an innovative and knowledgeable society, supported by a dynamic, responsive and highly effective education and training system (Office of the President 2008:25).

Smith, Fouche, Muirhead, and Underwood (2008) in a strategic assessment study conducted in the Namibian library and information service sector, describe the government/ministerial libraries as responsible for serving the executive and the staff members of the different branches of government. The libraries' contents and organisation of the collections need to reflect the needs of their users, and should typically include reports and semi-published or unpublished materials. Besides the employees of the institution, access to the collections may also be extended to bona fide external researchers.

The present study investigated the practice of ministerial librarians in managing the organisation knowledge that is available in the libraries' repositories such as print collections, electronic collections, and audio-visual collections and in making it accessible to the ministerial community. The study also focused on how ministerial librarians share and transfer knowledge amongst themselves. Therefore, the study clarifies the contribution of ministerial employees to KM, by finding out if internal knowledge that is produced within the ministry is being deposited in the library to be organised in the system for equal access.

### **1.1 The study aimed to address the following questions**

What are the viewpoints of Namibian government ministerial librarians towards the concept of knowledge management as part of their professional work?

How are librarians practising knowledge management using the seven stages of knowledge management framework (Get, Use, Learn, Contribute, Assess, Build & Sustain, and Divest) as developed by Bukowitz and Williams (2000)?

### **1.2. Methodology**

A qualitative research approach was employed to collect data from librarians working in diverse ministries under the establishment of the Namibia Libraries and Archives Services (NLAS). The reason for this approach was that it enabled an unearthing of rich

data that could not be obtained with quantitative methods; data which included answers obtained through interview probing. Its flexibility had provided complex diverse descriptions that explained how people conduct business the way they do, by asking open-ended questions that allowed participants the freedom to respond as they felt. The choice of a qualitative method aligns with Creswell (2007:40) who asserts that qualitative research is used when researchers are in need of a complex understanding of the issue, that can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their places of work, and allowing them to tell their stories unencumbered by what researchers expect to find or what they read in the literature. Qualitative research helps makes researchers understand the context in which participants in a study address a problem or issue, and helps to explain the linkages in causal theories or models.

## **2. Qualitative semi-structured interviews**

In this study, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from ministerial librarians working under the establishment of the directorate of Namibian Libraries and Archives Service (NLAS).

This method enabled the gathering of insights, opinions, attitudes and experiences generated by the librarians' views on knowledge management and how they are practising it in the ministerial libraries, guided by the stages (Get, Use, Learn, Contribute, Assess, Build & Sustain, and Divest) as purported by Bukowitz and Williams (2000). The interviews were aided by the use of a digital tape recorder to record interview sessions.

### **2.1 Population and Sampling**

Population is defined as "a group of or set of elements where the research sample will be selected, whereas sampling is the process of selecting certain members from a group or population to represent the entire population / group" (Babbie 2010:199). The population for this study involved all librarians working in government ministries in Namibia. The government has 25 ministries, with more than one library. Since libraries under the jurisdiction of the ministries are special or scientific, each library is administered by one librarian with few supporting staff. All ministerial libraries under the establishment of the NLAS are headed by the chief ministerial librarian from NLAS, whose duties are to oversee and ensure that there is an effective and efficient operation and management in the libraries.

The sample size was 24 librarians and one chief ministerial librarian (NLAS). Twenty four librarians represented 24 government ministries and agencies falling under NLAS.

Table 1. Below illustrates the list of ministerial and agency libraries under the establishment of the Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS).

Table 1: Libraries under (NLAS) Directorate

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Forestry	13. Ministry of Health and Social Services (MHSS) Documentation Centre
2. Ministry of Education Resource Centre	14. Ministry of Works and Transport Library
3. National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) (Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Forestry)	15. National Meteorological Library (Ministry of Works and Transport)
4. Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources Library	16. National Earth Science & Energy Information Centre (Ministry of Mines & Energy)
5. Kamutjonga Inland Institute Library ( Under Ministry of Fisheries)	17. National Museum Library (Ministry of Education)
6. Environment and Tourism Resource Centre	18. National Planning Commission Information Centre (Government Agency)
7. Habitant Research & Development Centre Library ( Ministry of Local Government and Housing)	19. Ministry of Trade and Industry Information Centre
8. Katutura Intermediate Hospital Library (Ministry of Health and Social Service)	20. Supreme Court Library: National Legal Library (Ministry of Justice)
9. Israel Patrick Iyambo Police College Library (Ministry of Safety and Security)	21. High Court Library (Ministry of Justice)
10. Library for the Office of the Auditor General (Government Agency)	22. Ministry of Gender, Equity and Child Welfare Resource Centre
11. Oshikoto Ministry of Education Regional Office Resources Centre	23. College for the Arts Library (Ministry of Youth)
12. Ministry of Defence Library	24. Khomas Regional Council Library (Ministry of Education)

Table 2. Illustrates the list of the government ministries and agencies with librarians that participated in this research study:

**Table 2: Ministries and agencies libraries that took part in the study**

1. Ministry of Education Resource Centre	7. Ministry of Defence
2. National Planning Commission (Agency)	8. Ministry of Work and Transport
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development	9. Ministry of Mines and Energy
4. Ministry of Trade and Industries	10. Ministry of Youth (College of Art )
5. Ministry of Environment and Tourism	11. NLAS
6. Supreme Court Library: National Legal Library (Ministry of Justice)	12. National Museum of Namibia (Ministry of Education)

Twelve (12) of the twenty four (24) ministerial and agencies librarians under the NLAS participated in the study as shown in Table 2. Three (3) of the ministerial libraries under the NLAS and which were not part of the present study, are located in different geographical areas which the researcher could not reach. For the other nine (9) libraries that were not part of the study, numerous attempts were made to get hold of librarians to set up appointments but they were all out of reach until the set period to collect data was over.

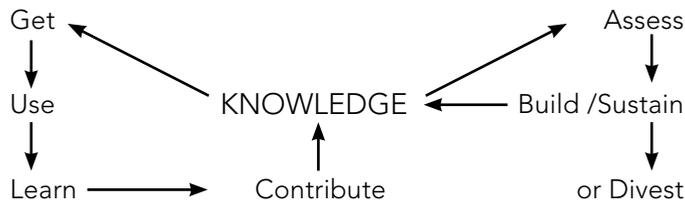
### **3. Theoretical framework/model**

Useful theoretical models in KM exist in the literature. Amongst others are those of: Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) *Knowledge Creation Spiral Model*; Goh, Chua, Luyt and Lee (2008) based on *Knowledge access, creation, and transfer mechanism for KM in web portals*; Senge (1990) *Learning Organisation and Organisational Learning framework*; and Edvinsson's (1997) *Intellectual Capital Model*. The Bukowitz and Williams *Knowledge Management (KM) framework* (2000) was chosen because it consists of different stages that address the themes of this study by giving the stages as guidance to effective and efficient knowledge management in ministerial libraries.

#### **3.1 The Bukowitz & Williams Knowledge Management (KM) (2000) model**

Bukowitz and Williams (2000: 8-9) describe a knowledge management process framework that outlines how organisations (libraries as independent entities) generate, maintain and deploy a strategically correct stock of knowledge to create value in the organisation. The model addresses how volumes of knowledge can be managed effectively and efficiently using different stages of KM processes, discussed as follows:

Figure: Bukowitz &amp; Williams (KM) Model (2000)



Bukowitz & William's model is a seven stage framework that articulates around key concepts as presented in the figure.

#### 4. Presentation and Interpretation of Data

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that the researcher accumulates to increase his/her own understanding that enable him/her to present what he/she has discovered. Analysis involves working with data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to present to others (Bogden & Biklen, 1992:153).

In this respect, all the recorded data from the digital tape recorder were transcribed. The data from the interviews were transcribed to enable proper analysis involving identifying the major recurring themes, and relating the themes to the literature review that permitted the construction of the original findings. After transcription, this was followed by data coding according to the identified themes, which was guided by the research questions of the study. This was done by searching for common and recurring themes using a thematic analysis which is a qualitative analytic method for: "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes datasets in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic" (Braun and Clarke 2006:79).

##### 4.1 Viewpoints of Namibian ministerial librarians towards the concept of knowledge management as part of their professional work

Viewpoints given by ministerial librarians on knowledge management make sense of what knowledge management is when you compare them to the definitions of some of the leading authors of KM, such as Davenport and Prusak (1998): "knowledge management is managing the corporation's specified process for acquiring, organising, sustaining, applying, sharing and renewing both tacit and explicit knowledge by employees to enhance the organisational performance and create value" and by Duhon (1998:9) "a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating,

retrieving and sharing all of an enterprise's information assets". Those definitions give the same meaning as the understanding of KM by the study participants. In this study, some participants' understanding of KM does not match the definitions provided by authors in this study. One of those views is:

KM is the expertise that people have for problem solving at an individual level (participant 11).

A holistic analysis of the understanding of ministerial librarians toward KM indicates that the majority of librarians know and understand what KM is as part of their profession. The next section indicates how ministerial librarians practise KM at their respective ministries since they understand what is entailed in KM.

## **4.2 Knowledge management practices using the Bukowitz and Williams (2000) model**

**4.2.1. Stage one: GET:** the first stage consists of seeking information needed in order to make decisions, solve problems, or innovate. Bukowitz and Williams (2000) affirmed that information professionals have traditionally fulfilled this role, insisting that they are needed now more than ever in order to match information seekers with the best possible content by knowing the whereabouts of knowledge resources and how to access them.

The most commonly identified themes with regard to the process of acquiring and getting external and internal information to help users solve their information problems, are that librarians are guided by the library collection development policy, and specific users' needs. They collect information/knowledge through the purchasing of external resources and donations that are relevant to the needs of the users as well as from other libraries through the resource sharing practice of referral of users to a specific library that meets the needs of users. Librarians collect or acquire internal resources going from office to office to search for projects, theses, and conferences reports, and searching the internet. This study corroborates what the Bukowitz and William (2000) model states, namely that information professionals identify the knowledge contents of value that match the needs of the information seekers that need to be acquired and then they manage this knowledge effectively and efficiently. The study by Lee (2007), supported the Bukowitz and William (2000) model that argues that information on the web can be useful if librarians can employ advanced artificial intelligence tools to surf the internet and select, find, arrange, classify, and automatically deliver the needed information to each user based on the user's special interests and needs.

The study affirmed that some ministerial librarians look for where knowledge is residing to bring it together in the library where it can be accessed by all users. This has been proved by the fact that librarians go from office to office in the ministry to get information

produced in the ministry by the ministry's employees to be catalogued in the library system.

The study has proved that some librarians have moved away from traditional library practice to practising knowledge management as it was urged by Mchombu (2010). One of the ways is by harvesting organisation knowledge. The findings also support the Bukowitz and William (2000) model that pointed out that "GETTING" of contents encompasses not only traditional explicit content (e.g. a physical or electronic document) but also tacit knowledge. The tacit knowledge in this stage is internal knowledge harvested within the organisation, and subject experts which, in this stage, librarians refer users to specific libraries and individuals with information meeting their needs. The model, therefore, urges that information seekers need to be connected not only to contents but also to content experts.

Another occurring theme was budget. Librarians consider the budget allocated to them when purchasing library materials to meet the needs of users. This finding replicates a study by Emojorho (2011) who reported that effective collection management involves budgeting and allocation of necessary resources.

**4.2.2. Stage two: USE:** This stage deals with the means of combining information in new and appealing ways in order to foster organisational innovation by focusing on the individual and then on the group to encourage the use of knowledge. The researcher used the USE stage to find out how librarians ensured that users have access to the knowledge contents collected in stage one.

In this stage, the focus was on the means to market the available knowledge in the library to the targeted group, to create awareness and the usability of the resources so that they can add value that can lead to innovation. The results indicate that some participants market their acquired information/knowledge to the users' group through scanning of contents pages of books and journals and emailing them to their users. It shows also that the same participants market their acquired information through publishing current awareness of new arrivals in the ministry bulletin, shelve new books, journals, conference and project reports, and theses on display shelves and place a list of new arrivals on the notice board. Ministerial libraries with active websites publish on the ministry website, information on library training, and new acquisitions.

The study has found that the majority of participants conduct training, or user education as it is referred to by some of the participants, to educate users on how to effectively use knowledge. The study supports the findings of Syed-Ikhsan and Rowland's (2004a:101) study who assert that knowledge gained by employees through training will enable them to translate their knowledge into the organisation's routine, competencies, job

descriptions and business processes, plans, strategies and culture. Therefore employees need training to improve their knowledge and capabilities.

Bukowitz and Williams' (2000) model states that in the USE stage, techniques to promote out-of-the-box thinking or creativity, and the use of knowledge are made, and these connect to the study's findings in conducting information literacy training, and other means to promote the use of knowledge that enhance thinking out-of-the-box for innovation.

**4.2.3. Stage three: LEARN:** This refers to the formal process of learning from experience as a means of acquiring a competitive advantage when learning the knowledge content. Learning is an essential process that follows after the acquisition and application of content; it is important to avoid circumstances whereby the content is simply warehoused somewhere and does not serve to increase or improve knowledge or foster a difference in the way things are done within the organisation.

The study did not include the impact of users on learning from knowledge contents held in the library to acquire competitive advantages; rather, it focused on librarians gaining knowledge and skills from conferences, workshops, training, and presentations provided for knowledge sharing with other librarians in NLAS, locally, regionally and internationally as a way of transferring tacit knowledge. The study finds that some participants gain knowledge and skills through attending conferences, workshops, training, discussion forums for knowledge sharing, and debates usually created on NLAS Facebook pages. This finding supports a study by Smith et al. (2008:38) which also found that the directorate of NLAS provides full in-service training that consists of short courses facilitated by external training service providers, or in-house by experienced staff.

Some participants share knowledge learned from attending conferences, workshops, and training with their colleagues in office who were not privileged to attend; and some participants have indicated that only library staff with degrees get invited to conferences, workshops, trainings and so forth; and that those librarians without a librarian's title or qualification do not attend, and they also do not present to their colleagues when they come back. This means that library staff who do not attend are missing out on tacit knowledge in the form of skills and competencies, which, according to Al-Hawamdeh (2002), can only be transferred from one person to another through training and interaction. Al-Hawamdeh also affirmed that the know-how knowledge which is tacit knowledge can be documented, and Komanyane's study (2010:54) suggests that knowledge in the form of reports from trainings, workshops, and conferences be stored in the library or databases (knowledge management system) for staff especially those who do not attend, and are even important for those who attend to refer to at any time, and the knowledge will form part of the organisational base.

**4.2.4. Stage four: CONTRIBUTE:** Deals with getting employees to share their knowledge via the communal knowledge base (repository, intranet for knowledge transferring). With the CONTRIBUTE stage, the researcher concentrated on how the different ministry departments contribute their knowledge to the library to be processed and be made accessible to the entire organisation and library users. (Knowledge is conveyed via project reports; workshops, seminars, conferences; and short courses reports, policy and regulation, and documents produced in different departments in the ministry.)

In the CONTRIBUTE stage, with regard to ministry staff contributing their knowledge to the library which is part of the ministry repository, the findings indicate that some ministries have implemented the knowledge sharing portal, SharePoint, with enforced policy for all employees to deposit all relevant documents to the portal for knowledge sharing. Some ministry departments do not contribute by depositing their documents to the library, and they have no SharePoint in place for knowledge sharing documents, which indicates that those ministries do not have a knowledge sharing culture. Syed-Ikhsan and Rowland (2004a:101) have pointed out that an organisation should have a knowledge sharing culture for people to make it a natural habit to share by depositing documents in the organisation repository. The findings are that the majority of the participating ministries have adopted ICT to facilitate knowledge sharing. This study finding is in support of Komanyane's (2010:41) and Chong, Sallem, Syed Ahmad, and Sharifuddin's (2011:509) findings that indicated that knowledge sharing technologies and communication technologies are highly significant KM enablers in the organisation.

Bukowitz and Williams' (2000) model urged that the point of the exercise is not to post everything on the company intranet but to cull experiences from which others in the organisation may also benefit. The model implies that organisational content to be shared must be repackaged in a generic format in order to be of use to a wide audience. Librarians as knowledge professionals have the responsibility for gathering, repackaging, and promoting knowledge nuggets. Contents that employees must contribute include the sharing of best practices and lessons learned so that others do not repeat the same mistakes.

**4.2.5. Stage five: ASSESS:** Refers to the evaluation of intellectual capital and requires the organisation to define its mission and critical knowledge as well as the mapping of current intellectual capital against future knowledge needs.

The findings reveal that the majority of participating ministerial librarians map out current intellectual capital against future knowledge needs by conducting library needs assessment surveys for users to assess the quality and relevance of resources. Some participants indicated that they have suggestion boxes and some reported that they have never conducted any assessment or evaluation of collections for quality assurance. Based on data provided, this finding supports a study by Nitecki (1996:183) whose

finding affirmed that the assessment of how well a library succeeds depends on the user as a judge of quality, and this has been advocated for several reasons, among which are, for example, to gain insight into quality, for political benefit, to establish demand, to establish how well needs are met by the service, and again to assess topical relevance and usefulness. Findings from a study by Thompson, Kyrillidou and Cook (2006:16) also match with this study's findings that reveal that librarians conduct market surveys intended to help them understand users' perceptions toward the resources, and this helps improve service quality, and better meet patrons' information needs. It is therefore crucial for librarians to continuously assess library intellectual capital against the needs of the users.

Bukowitz and Williams' (2000) model states that assessment must focus on how easily and flexibly the organisation can convert its knowledge into products and services of value to the customers' information needs. This includes the evaluation of the knowledge base assets to be incorporated into the overall management process

**4.2.6. Stage six: BUILD & SUSTAIN:** Ensures that there will be intellectual capital in the future that will keep the organisation viable and competitive.

The findings reveal that participants capture information/knowledge to be preserved for future use. Knowledge capture, organisation, and retrieval is done by using open software called CDS ISIS open software, which is used by the majority of librarians, and few librarians are using ABCD library automation software which is an integrated package for library automation (both traditional and also digital/virtual libraries), and is web based with the online public access catalogue. Participants indicated that CDS ISIS is old unreliable software, but it allows migration of data from one system to another. NLAS is currently working on finding the best integrated library management system for all libraries in ministries but it needs the support of libraries' parent bodies since they are the ones responsible for funding for their libraries' resources and facilities. Yet, they do not seem keen to support.

The study findings support the findings by Lee (2007) which recommended getting the best information/knowledge management system that recent developments on knowledge management systems have come up with, and that have other new methods of capturing digital information in large electronic information databases and on the internet, such as data mining, text mining, content management, and search engines. Yet those applications cannot be done with CDS ISIS and ABCD software. This finding proves that KM organisation and storage in Namibian libraries is weak, and this finding is similar to the finding reported in a study by Nengomasha (2003:64) that discovered poor retrieval of information in Namibian government.

In the GET stage, the study discusses how librarians refer users to specific libraries and individuals with information meeting users' needs. This can be effectively done when there is a proper system in place at the libraries, as Cong and Pandya (2003:27) emphasise – with a good information/knowledge management system in place, employees should gain knowledge, skills and experiences by contacting subject-matter experts through skills databases or searchable repositories of skills profiles. The present study found that the CDS ISIS software, which is in most ministerial libraries, is not a web tool; therefore, librarians could not integrate or bring together information harvested internally/externally from sources and different disciplines, and they could not organise it in a systematic manner either.

The study concentrated on knowledge/library management systems, and librarians as human resources and intellectual capital that need to be built and sustained in order to keep the organisation viable and competitive. On building and sustaining human resources, the study findings revealed that there is a high staff turnover in NLAS with well qualified librarians leaving the ministries for the greener pastures of the private sector. Lower salaries and lack of recognition of the librarianship profession from the top management were the main motives for the high turnover. NLAS is on their knees praying for a salary increment from the office of the Prime Minister through negotiation, and recognition of librarians' value in the government ministries so that they can attract and keep experienced and skilled librarians in their system.

In the BUILD and SUSTAIN stage, Bukowitz and Williams' (2000) model urges that the inability to locate and apply knowledge to meet an existing need results in a lost opportunity, and coming short on the right knowledge delivers a much more serious blow – loss of competitiveness and ultimately of organisational viability as well.

**4.2.7. Stage seven: DIVEST:** In this final stage, the organisation needs to examine its intellectual capital in terms of the resources required to maintain it. This might include terminating training programmes, redeploying staff, replacing or upgrading technologies, ending partnerships or contracts as well as the weeding of the library collection. This needs to be done after a strategic decision-making process. Therefore, the organisation should not hold on to assets – physical or intellectual – if they are no longer creating value.

With divesting in the form of terminating of resources, the study findings revealed that ministerial librarians are not directly involved in termination of training programmes, but NLAS, being responsible for capacity building of all ministerial librarians, scrutinises programmes of any training or workshop available, and the credibility and reputation of the facilitators before deciding to invite facilitators, and before sending librarians to any training or workshop. With regard to the redeployment of staff, NLAS considers the staff's experiences and qualifications, and even more their commitment, in order to place

them in any job designation. With regards to replacing and upgrading of technologies, the study findings revealed that ministerial libraries are using out-dated software or library management systems for organising and retrieval of information. The Bukowitz and Williams' (2000) model states that the organisation should not hold on to assets if these assets are no longer creating value.

The study has found that some participants consider the opinions and comments of library users on the value and relevance of knowledge to be weeded. Some participants indicated that they consider the budget allocated for purchasing and renewing subscriptions, compare prices of different suppliers, and the reputations of the suppliers. The majority of participants have never done weeding, or they have never terminated any subscription, and a few participants have no ideas. According to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (2008:13) weeding enhances libraries' reputations for reliability and currency and builds public trust, and it allows librarians to keep up with collection needs by having greater knowledge of the collection.

Bukowitz and Williams' (2000) model points out that if knowledge is no longer relevant to the strategic mission of the organisation, it should be transferred outside the organisation where it may be valuable. The study supports the model, which states that the organisation needs to examine its intellectual capital in terms of resources required for maintaining it and whether these resources would be better spent elsewhere. This involves understanding the why, when, where, and how of formally divesting parts of the knowledge base. The model urges that an opportunity cost analysis of retaining knowledge should be incorporated into standard management practice. It is necessary for sustaining competitive advantages and industrial viability.

## **5. Conclusion**

In a nutshell, the Bukowitz and Williams (2000) framework adopted for this study has unearthed different aspects of librarians' involvement in KM. The strength of the application of the framework to the library sector is that it practically sets out the actuality of how librarians do business, and what it is that they do to contribute to the strategic mission of government ministries. The study findings, however, showed evidence that librarians were concerned about the lack of support and recognition from the top management, as there were some weaknesses in the BUILD & SUSTAIN stage.

Based on the perception that stated that 80-95% of the information used in organisations is generated internally, and in which librarians have no involvement, in support of the perception the study finds that some ministries have a portal or SharePoint where they deposit everything produced internally for the purpose of knowledge sharing and transferring, and this is not managed by librarians

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# Partnership as a tool to build strong libraries in Namibia: A case study of the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management Library

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## Abstract

The rapid changes that are taking place in the information communication technology (ICT) industry are compelling libraries to collaborate and network with each other. The networking and collaboration that are taking place in Namibian libraries are not formalized but based on personal contacts. The purpose of this paper is to look at fundamental reasons for libraries to formalize these networking and collaborations to form partnerships. Partnership can be used as a tool to build strong libraries and strong societies in Namibia. The paper contends that no library will be able to fulfill all its information needs due to various constraints, such as financial, skills and competence and ICT infrastructure needs. E-Resources are one important component of the collection building activities of libraries that is growing very fast and that are very costly. They represent a number of challenges such the selection, acquisition, management and cost. A further point brought out in the paper is that it is in this area where Namibian libraries need to enter into partnerships and tackle these issues. The findings indicate that if libraries form partnerships, libraries will improve in their service delivery and contribute to innovation. This study is of significance to library managers in Namibia to establish and manage partnerships in order to improve on service delivery.

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**Keywords:** Partnership, Networking, Collaborations, Strong Libraries, E-Resources, ICTs in libraries

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to look at fundamental reasons for libraries to formalize networks and collaborations to form partnerships. Partnership can be used as a tool to build strong libraries and strong societies in Namibia. No library will be able to fulfill all its information needs due to various constraints, such as financial, skills and competence and ICT infrastructure needs.

The author is of opinion that libraries in Namibia can build a strong society through partnership. Libraries need to learn from business sectors and expand their networks and collaborations in partnerships. Through partnerships, economic resources will be used effectively to ensure better access to information resources, avoid duplication of resources and faster provision of information.

In this paper the author gives background information of libraries in Namibia and defines the concept of strong libraries and strong societies, highlights the importance of partnerships in information provision, discusses the areas of partnership and the elements of good partnership and concludes with the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) as a case study. A combination of literature review and a case study are used to provide theoretical and practical understanding of partnership in libraries.

## **Problem Statement**

The Namibia Library Information sector will build strong libraries if there are collaborations and partnership among Namibian libraries. Lack of partnership among Namibia libraries will not contribute to development of strong libraries.

## **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate how libraries in Namibia can use partnerships as tool to build strong libraries.

## **Objectives of the study**

1. Highlight the importance of partnership.
2. To identify problems, issues and constraints facing the Namibian library sector.
3. Highlight the importance if libraries in building strong libraries.

## **Background of the study**

The library and information service sector has been globally recognized as a critical support structure for development. For any nation to develop, it needs to have and

provide relevant, updated and adequate information on food security, health, democracy, population, education, family planning, youth empowerment, gender equality, environment etc. Libraries are there as proper management tools for provision and dissemination of such information. Libraries in Namibia are considered as a key area to support national development strategies that can contribute to the realization of Vision 2030 (Namhila and Niskala, 2012).

Vision 2030 is the Government initiative to transform Namibian society into a knowledge society and make Namibia a prosperous and industrialized nation developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony and political stability (Vision 2030, 2004). The goal of Vision 2030 is to improve the quality of life of Namibians and it is expressed in the National Development Goals (NDP 4). NDPs serve as guides to the Government and present a clear view of where we are and where we want to be. The Vision is concerned with people in relation to their social and economic well being.

The objectives of Vision 2030 require that the country operates totally integrated, unified to contribute to economic and social development of the citizens. Both private and public sectors must work together. This entails partnership between Government, communities, non-governmental organizations between urban and rural and all members of society.

Vision 2030 provides both opportunities and challenges for the library and information services to contribute to the achievement of Namibia's national goals. Libraries and information services in the country are required to re-define their positions and objectives because the situation is changing. A knowledge based economy is an economy where knowledge and information add value and become part of production, manufacturing and services. A knowledge based society is characterized by learning organizations, information driven environments, competitive advantage, innovation and ICT.

Librarianship is one of the professions that can be exploited as invaluable assets in knowledge based economy because librarians have the skills to transfer information in a variety of ways and can serve as mediator between a vast variety of information resources and the needs of user. Hence, the library sector is facing many challenges such as limited resources, rapid changes in information communication technology, and the high cost of information resources. These challenges are compelling the libraries to collaborate and network with each other (Fine, 1990). Van Rooi noted that cooperation amongst libraries in Namibia remained confined to interlibrary loan services. She argued that these collaborations should be expanded to enter into partnership to establish a consortium for acquiring and sharing of e-resources. (2012).

## **Libraries and information services in Namibia**

The history of Namibian libraries and information services can be traced back before the independence of Namibia. Totonmeyer in (1993) observed that the new government

of Namibia inherited a number of fragmented, uncoordinated, inadequate and geographically unequally distributed libraries and information services (Totenmeyer, 1993 et al.).

After independence, the Government of Namibia and other role players had put legislatives and policy frameworks in place to address the imbalance in the sector and to govern the provision of information services in Namibia. The legislative frame works includes:

- the Constitution of Republic of Namibia 1990,
- Archives Act 1992,
- Policy framework for Libraries and allied information agencies: information for self-reliance and development 1997
- Namibia Library and Information Service Act, of 2000.
- A renewed library and information policy framework for Vision 2030, 2013

The Namibia Library and Information Service Act 2000 made a provision for the establishment of the three entities namely; Namibia Library and Information Service (NLIS), National Library, and the Namibia Library and Information Council. NLIS is a component in the Ministry of Education and its function is to ensure that the country has a functional library network and that public, school; national and special libraries work together (Namhila and Niskala, 2012).

The function of the Namibia Library and Information Council is to advise the Minister of Education who is responsible for the work of the Namibia Library and Archives Service.

The Ministry of Education under the Directorate of Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS) is responsible for budgets, staffing, physical facilities to the National Library, public libraries, ministerial and school libraries (Namhila and Niskala, 2012).

In addition to the libraries under the Ministry of Education, the Library and Information structure in Namibia consists of other libraries serving tertiary education (such as the University of Namibia Library and Polytechnic of Namibia Library) and special library services also refers to documentation centre and they include private companies, financial institutions, legal firms and research institutions. These libraries are attached to their organizations and support the mandate of their organizations such as the Bank of Namibia Resources Centre, SACU Resource Centre, Human Rights Documentation Centre, NIPAM Learning Resource Centre etc.

It is imperative to note that all kind of libraries in Namibia should play a critical role in support of national priorities as expressed in Vision 2030.

## Challenges facing libraries in Namibia

A renewed library and information policy framework for Vision 2030 identified the following challenges facing the Namibian libraries and information sector:

- Gap that exist between rural and urban areas in Namibia
- Uneven infrastructure and lack of access to facilities.
- Lack of sufficient qualified human capacity.
- Adequate supply of information resources
- Management of information in digital format
- Insufficient content in vernacular languages
- Lack of indigenous knowledge
- Inadequately funded libraries and information services.

*(Supporting peoples' need in Namibia's knowledge based economy: a renewed library and information policy framework for Vision 2030).*

These findings are supported by Nuut who argued that electronic era has brought changes in to the libraries working environment and acquisition of information resources. Even though, modern society requires that libraries should be managed in a more democratic way and should be based on the quality and user orientation of services (Nuut, A, 2010)

These challenges are not unique to the Namibian library sector, universally libraries and information services are expensive and faced with limited resources. Libraries must be fed and nurtured, they must be weeded of the obsolete items and the useless. They must be constantly updated as times and conditions and social values change.

Hence, the role of the Namibian Library sector should shift and focus on creating a knowledge based information society – where scientific research, scholarly information and the implementation of human knowledge and skills are the primary source of economic development and raising the quality of life.

There is a need for a network of library and information services in Namibia to redefine its position and become engaged as active partners in order to contribute to the achievement of Vision 2030. A strategy of collaboration should be implemented, to avoid duplication of materials, resources and manpower and to ensure that the most efficient and cost-effective means of meeting user needs and demands are in place.

## Strong Libraries

All libraries provide access to information resources. The Namibian library sector can use partnerships as a tool to strengthen the libraries' position as a means to develop strong libraries and strong societies. Partnership as strategic tools can expand library resources, gain new users and reach out to customers in new ways

Libraries should act as a force for change and secure equitable access to knowledge and information for development. To build strong libraries in Namibia the sector should improve the services for library users, provide equitable access to information and develop the library and information profession.

Strong societies enable their citizens to enjoy a good standard of living which covers the essential and luxuries. It includes key issues such as wealth, environment and infrastructure, health, jobs, peace and security and personal development. Strong societies have access to a variety of information and knowledge. These enable the society to be enriched intellectually and empowers the individuals to make choices, make informed judgments and participate fully in society (Vision 2030, 2004). This is the society that the Namibia Government envisages by the year 2030.

## **Partnership**

### ***What is partnership?***

Partnerships were initiated in the business industry. Business people use opportunities to form strategic alliances with others for profit. The driving force behind partnerships in business is the desire to reach out to customers in new ways and make better use of resources through joint ventures (Crowther, J, L and Trott, B.T, 2004). This paper adopted a simple definition of partnership as a formalized relationship of strategic alliance between two or more organizations. The purpose of establishing partnerships is to add value in working with other organizations including sharing resources such as staff, financial, information, infrastructure and other resources.

### **Elements of good partnership**

Establishing effective and inclusive partnerships takes time and it is important to start with a right framework.

1. Clear vision
2. Commitment
3. Leadership
4. Trust
5. Communication

### **Areas of Partnership**

E-Resources are an important component of the collection building activities of libraries that is growing very fast and is very costly. They represent a number of challenges such as selection, acquisition, management and cost. It is in this area where Namibian libraries need to enter into partnerships and tackle these issues.

## **Conclusion**

Access to information is a basic right that breaks the cycle of poverty and support sustainable development. The library is the only place in communities where people can access information that will help improve their education, develop new skills, health decision and make informed decisions.

## **Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) Learning Resource Centre (LRC) Case Study**

### ***Background***

NIPAM is one of the Namibian Government initiatives to respond to the challenges outlined in Vision 2030. NIPAM was established by the act of Parliament, NIPAM Act 2010 (Act 10 of 2010) and was officially inaugurated on 25 February 2012. The purpose of NIPAM is to transform the public sector in Namibia through the improvement of management, leadership and professional competencies. It also aims to foster a climate of purpose, values and professional traditions among public sector employees.

A fully functional LRC has been established to support NIPAM activities and currently this state-of art-library hosts an assortment of over 3370 volumes, including various collections. The LRC uses LIBWIN Library system to manage its collection. The Library services are promoted to all public servant and participants attending NIPAM courses.

One of NIPAM's strategic objectives is to form strategic partnerships as stated in Vision 2030. As part of this objective the LRC has to foster a sound strategic partnership. The LRC has identified potential partners and come up with a framework to work with identified partners. The purpose of this framework is to explain how and why the partnerships are taking place and about how we understand its activities.

Benefits of effective partnership do not appear overnight. Establishing effective and inclusive partnership takes time and it is important to create the right framework from the start and review their process of partnership on an ongoing basis to measure its success or failure.

### ***The Need for Partnerships***

The goal of partnerships is to achieve more together than an individual organization can achieve on their own and to learn good practices from each other. Through partnerships, a small and upcoming library like NIPAM Learning Resource Centre can contribute its small part and learn the best practices from the existing libraries in the country. No library will be able to fulfill all its information needs due to various constraints, such as

- Financial constraints,

- Shortage of skills and competencies
- ICT infrastructure needs.
- Complexity in procurement and management of E-Resources.

Forming partnerships will have the following advantages to the LRC:

- Having the opportunity to experiment and uncover new opportunities.
- Gaining new competencies
- Using resources in new ways.
- Creating better connections with other local libraries.
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### **Forming Partnerships**

We adopt a working definition of partnership as a formalized *collaborative relationship between libraries to work towards shared objectives*.

Therefore, NIPAM LRC has identified the following libraries or information professional bodies to partner with:

- Polytechnic of Namibia Library
- University of Namibia Library
- IUM
- Namibia Library and Archives Services
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
- Namibia Information Workers Association

Each of these organisations have assets that make them partners for NIPAM LRC.

### **Starting the process**

It is imperative that the partners meet (two or three times) in the initial stage of building partnership to start

- Questioning the purpose of partnership.
- Assigning roles and responsibilities of partners.
- Identifying the goal/ vision.
- Partnership reaching shared agreements,
- Investigating access to resources (human and financial ) through institutional partners

### **Desired Partnership Achievements**

#### **Short-term interest**

- Establishing and management of E-Resources
- Sharing information resource
- Training of Library staff on new developments in Libraries

**Long-term interest :**

- Organize workshops, conference and symposium in Namibia
- Sharing facilities
- Establishing Library consortia
- Develop leadership and management programme for Library Managers
- Provide leadership and management training to Librarians in Namibia

**Key Components of Partnership Development****Leadership**

Who is providing leadership in the partnership?

- Mr. Michael Conteh – Coordinator of Partnership at NIPAM
- Ms. Marianne Gei-khoibes – The Director of E-Learning
- Ms. Sylvia Katjepunda – Manager Library Services

**Funding**

It is imperative that financial provision is budgeted for the partnership.

**Goals**

Goals can be set in absences of resources, these can be developed through consensus decision making or they can be accepted because one party is the expert in certain area.

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# Poor implementation of the National Library and Documentation Service (NLDS) a cause for concern for national development in Zimbabwe's marginalized communities.

Grand Tinashe Mutondo

*Africa 2000 Network*

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## **Abstract**

The NLDS is a body corporate established by an act of parliament referred to as 'The National Library and Documentation Services Act' of 1985 in Zimbabwe. In pursuant to the desire to establish the National Library and Documentation Service (NLDS), the National Free Library of Zimbabwe was dissolved and its functions were assumed by the NLDS. The NLDS was supposed to establish a Culture House in each of the fifty-five rural districts of Zimbabwe but only one prototype Murehwa Culture was established. The paper notes that the development of Culture Houses and community libraries in each of the remaining fifty-four rural districts of Zimbabwe will depend on the government's willingness to support and embrace library and information services development in its national plans. The introduction of information and culture centers by the NLDS was suppose to drive development by fighting poverty through provision of relevant information especially pertaining to agriculture and other correlated areas in the rural areas. Failure to implement the NLDS has seen different NGOs trying to cover the niche left by the NLDS although most of efforts are not sustainable and lack tangible results. Despite the establishment of an Act of parliament for the provision of information through the NLDS, the rural areas in Zimbabwe have always lagged behind in both infrastructure and information provision. This has disadvantaged the Zimbabwe rural population in terms of access to information. Rural farmers in their effort to access agricultural knowledge and information from available sources, for better farming systems and improved agricultural yield, are confronted with certain constraints especially the absent of information centers and trained information personnel to help them. The paper advocates that the lack of adequate funding and staffing in rural areas

can be alleviated by combining the community centers and school libraries. Access to information is now more of a right to use, rather than providing the much needed information to the right users in Zimbabwe disadvantaging the rural people.

## **Introduction**

For a developing country like Zimbabwe to achieve economic growth, it is vital that it should give attention to the needs of its marginal communities, which are frequently ignored because of their economic and social disadvantage. Usually these are the communities which work in the primary industry of agriculture bringing in food into urban areas. Access to information is an important requirement for a community because such access brings much needed improvement in social life and thus less dependency on the government. The development of community libraries is of fundamental significance in Zimbabwe, as they are part of the human and financial capacity necessary for economic and social transformation.

The NLDS is a body corporate established by an act of parliament referred to as 'The National Library and Documentation Services Act of 1985' in Zimbabwe. It was established when it was recognized that all people in Zimbabwe needed access to facilities for the dissemination of knowledge and for research, recreation and study. The functions of the NLDS are to promote the widespread enjoyment in Zimbabwe of publications of an educational, scientific, cultural and recreational or sporting value; ensure, maintain and develop a high standard of library facilities; operate a documentation facility and interlibrary loan facility; and to train librarians and ensure, maintain, coordinate and develop a high standard of librarianship. The NLDS was supposed to establish a Culture House in each of the fifty-five rural districts of Zimbabwe but only one prototype Murehwa Culture House was established. Regardless of the fundamental importance of libraries in communities, the NLDS has remained silent and is showing signs that no more development is to come in trying to provide information to the masses. The role of NLDS has been confined to government libraries mainly found in urban areas to the detriment of communities where rural councils and municipalities do not support or fund libraries. Bearing in mind that the majority of the people in Africa live in rural areas, and have specific information needs, there is great concern that the NLDS should spread its wings and keep its mandated functions and establishment of all the culture centres in every district.

## **The NLDS in picture**

The National Library and Documentation Service Act [Chapter 25:10] was established through an Act of Parliament in 1985 and implemented in 1988. In pursuant to the desire

to establish the National Library and Documentation Service (NLDS), the National Free Library of Zimbabwe was dissolved and its functions were assumed by the NLDS. 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 movements makes 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 and implementation of the NLDS is considered by the Government (Chisveto. E, 2013). The earliest appearance of a well-articulated version of the idea of the NLDS seems to have been in the rather untypical social circumstances of the then Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1928. Dugald Niven, the long-serving librarian of an old-established institution – Bulawayo Public Library, founded in 1896 – suggested to the Carnegie Corporation of New York that the country needed a form of national library system. This would include ‘a central library, acting as a national lending library for schools and a central reference library’ (Made 1985, 53). By 1943, in response to his prompting, a National Free Library Service had been set up with Carnegie financial assistance and was operating from Bulawayo. The idea did not materialise until 1982. The convening of the National Library and Documentation Council in 1982 was certainly an expression of the national library services idea. Sadly the Zimbabwean National Library and Documentation Service has never succeeded in filling the gaps in national provision and has, indeed, presided over the sad decline of the National Free Library Service in Bulawayo. The National Free Library today is more like a book museum showcasing irrelevant material and old books.

## **Rural library situation in Zimbabwe**

The rural areas in Zimbabwe, in particular, have always lagged behind in both infrastructure and economic development, and this has led to the current situation where rural people, despite being the majority, remain marginalized. The further development of Culture Houses and community libraries in each of the fifty-five rural districts of Zimbabwe will depend on the government’s willingness to support and embrace library and information services development in its national plans. Zimbabwe which currently has a poor human and financial resource base because of the current economic meltdown now needs concerted efforts through the co-operation of all the important stakeholders with the NLDS being the focal point to develop community libraries and to fully implement the NLDS.

## **Information needs for rural people**

Information need is construed in the sense of data or a set of data specially required, enabling the user to make an appropriate decision on any related problem facing him or her any particular time (Solomon, 2002). Approximately 75% of Zimbabwe's population is rural, In Zimbabwe and the rest of the continent, it is still worrying that rural areas continue to be marginalized in terms of access to simple appropriate technologies, information and communication technologies and modern technologies. Tise (2009) argues that knowledge is foundational to all spheres of life and critical for the growth of society. It is produced when information is absorbed, processed, and internalized by individuals. Libraries, as critical providers of information, have an important role to play in the creation of new knowledge, arguing further that knowledge is functional at many levels: it can alleviate poverty and deprivation; it serves as a springboard for innovation and changes; and, it is a catalyst for national development and personal achievements. The introduction of information and culture centers by the NLDS was supposed to drive development by fighting poverty through provision of relevant information especially pertaining to agriculture and other correlated areas in the rural areas. It must be noted that the failure to implement the NLDS Act might have lead to retardation of development in rural areas of Zimbabwe evidenced by the poor harvests mainly recorded in the last decade as farmers did not have proper information to the environmental changes in relation to climate changes.

The National Library and Documentation Services (NLDS) embarked on an ambitious project to build centers throughout the country. This resulted in the development of the multi-purpose Murehwa Cultural House with space for reading, an auditorium, exhibitions dances and other cultural activities. The cultural aspect was meant to allow the library to tap into the indigenous knowledge of the surrounding communities and thus promote development. Walford (2011) notes that when Murehwa Culture House first started operating " ... visitor would be greeted by the sharp rattling sound of wooden instruments being shaken followed by a loud and deep drumbeat, wild ululations and earsplitting whistles...". The failure to continue with its mandate have rendered the Murehwa cultural center a shadow of itself whilst the remaining fifty four (54) other remaining culture centers in other districts have remained a dream which might not come true if the current scenario is maintained.

## **Helping forces for the rural digital divide**

NGOs like Africa 2000 Network and RLRDP who are implementing information and cultural centers in rural areas of Zimbabwe are failing to provide relevant information to the farmers using the right platforms that are sustainable and their coverage in terms of locations is limited. A good example is an ICT centre implemented by Africa 2000 Network as a pilot project in Zimbabwe. The Zamuchiya Information and Communication Centre in Chipinge district of Manicaland has been of strategic importance in providing the scarce energy in the form of electricity to remote farmers through installation of a solar

project. The ICT centre has a television set and three personal computers. Although the television offers information which might be absent in this remote area, this information is not packed in such a manner that it answers to the needs and queries of the community as and when information is needed. The three computers offer nothing besides typing as they are not connected to the Internet and the codan radio servers which were procured to offer the Internet service failed, rendering the ICT centre to be a television centre and community gathering place where very little knowledge is generated. As society now depends more and more on advanced technologies, bridging the digital divide and equalizing information accessibility in rural communities should be the priority issues for the Government of Zimbabwe. Encompassing information technology to the NLDS Act becomes a priority besides focusing on its implementation.

The case of Africa 2000 Network just shows how Non Governmental Organisations in Zimbabwe are feeling the digital gap but failing to close it because of minimal resources and failure by the government to utilise these structures put in place by the NGOs. Efforts by the Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme cannot go unnoticed with their innovation of the popular donkey drawn library in Zimbabwe. According to RLRDP the donkey drawn library is expected to address the anomalies between rural and urban communities, between women and men and between young people and old people, in terms of access to ICTs. Of concern is the sustainability of the project of the donkey drawn library after the drying up of the donor funds that such NGOs rely on for the operations of the projects. Operating the donkey drawn libraries is very effective in the short term but should be cemented by establishing a fixed information centre in the area in form of a building that can continue to stand when donor funds are no longer available. Libraries under proper building structures offer continuity especially in terms of identity as an information center and are easy to equip and manage, restock and patrons visit the center as and when open rather than the mobile that operates on a time table that moves from point to point. There are other disadvantages to the mobile library that offers Internet mainly to do with small screens which is supposed to help a multitude of people, users interface is often difficult to learn how to use because of the limited time available, limited bandwidth in the rural areas, technology constraints of mobile devices (memory, processing power, display capabilities, input methods) and cost of establishing mobile and wireless broadband infrastructure. This means besides being innovative RLRDP still needs the support of the NLDS in order to come with viable projects that are sustainable and offer benefits to the communities.

## **Agriculture and rural libraries**

Rural populations in Zimbabwe deal mostly with agriculture. This category has been neglected in cultural, social, economic and political issues. Impoverished villages come to the point where it is necessary to find new patterns to modernize backward agricultural production, in order to improve the socio-economic status of farmers. Over the years, rural

farmers in Zimbabwe have depended on indigenous or local knowledge for improved farming system/ animal husbandry. Such indigenous or local knowledge refers to skill and experience gained through oral tradition and practice over many generations. The current situation where one AGRITEX officer is placed in one rural ward with approximately 10,000 farmers is not sustainable and has not helped either. Even still these AGRITEX officers, besides being well trained in the field of agriculture, need a constant supply of relevant and up-to-date information supplied to the library and information centers to keep abreast with the current trends in the field. Relevant and up-to-date agricultural information is always meant to get to rural farmers via extension workers, community libraries, radio, television, film shows, agricultural pamphlets, state and local government agricultural agencies. Rural farmers in their effort to access these agricultural knowledge and information from available sources, for better farming system and improved agricultural yield, are confronted with certain constraints especially the absent of information centers and trained information personnel to help them. Having access to agricultural information is an essential ingredient that would always lead to better crop and livestock production in any community.

For easy access and effective utilization of agricultural information in this digital age, there is need for establishment of information centers in all rural communities in Zimbabwe. Garrith and Smith noted that information centers in every rural community should be equipped with up to date information and communication gadgets, such as computers with internet access, local area and wide area networks, radio and television sets, telephones and fax machines, multimedia projectors, video and audio recorders. Abdulla (1998) states the constant demands for information by farmers in rural areas remain unfulfilled because of illiteracy. Fulfilling the needs for information to rural areas should not be based on print materials alone but seconded with visual, audiovisual, drama, meetings at common areas such as the information community centre. By so doing, such community libraries would be able to engage the services of qualified librarians who would be in position to liaise with the staff of information centre in their area so as to help in capturing relevant agricultural information from Internet, ministries of agriculture and other agro allied establishments. Such captured information would then be repackaged in a format that the rural farmers would understand and put into practice for better farming operations. The unfinished job of establishing the Culture Houses could have been the start by the NLDS in the provision of information to the farmers. To show the confusion in the provision of information, the First Annual Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2011-2015 Implementation progress report noted that a total of 5 Community Information Centres (CICs) have been equipped. The report goes on to say the project is expected to take 8 years to complete. The report does not mention where and how these CICs are being implemented and their relationship to the NLDS.

## Advocacy

Lack of adequate funding and staffing in rural areas can be alleviated by combining the community centers and school libraries. The school libraries should have the capacity to absorb community members, school staff and students. Staffing shortages can be relieved to some degree by hiring librarians to oversee rural school libraries by the government. By so doing money can be saved by using existing school structures for the libraries whilst more money is channeled to buy resources and paying staff for the library. Martin (2000) notes that “research shows that the reading scores for students in schools that focus on improving their library programs are, on average of eight to twenty one percent, higher than similar schools with no such development”. The school library in the rural area can help to share and otherwise preserve the few information media available in this marginalized community. The rural school libraries must be gathering places for people of all ages in the community and all interests to explore and debate ideas. School libraries should have the most significant impact on learning outcomes when they are supervised by a library media specialist employed through the NLDS, who works collaboratively with teachers, to help all students develop a love of reading, become skilled users of ideas and information, and explore the world of print and electronic media resources. The Research Foundation (2008) noted that a school library program that is adequately staffed, resourced, and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the community. Ideally, the library system should incorporate both oral and print-based modes of information transmission. However, with the current poor spending priorities on the current government of Zimbabwe it is a milestone before establishment of proper school libraries is functional. Zimbabwe spent \$500,000 on public schools in 2012 compared to over \$50 million on foreign trips.

## AIPPA and POSA major obstacles to NLDS

Nyangoni (1981) argues that democracy demands that the masses, the source of authority, should be well informed about all important matters. Although many are receiving this instruction in schools, the work of schools cannot be complete without the backing of libraries and information centers. Libraries are an indispensable companion to formal education. The public library must give persons of all ages the chance to keep abreast with their times in all matters. By offering them, impartially, works representing conflicting points of view, it enables them to form their own opinions and preserve that attitude of constructive criticism towards public affairs without which there is no freedom. The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) is law in Zimbabwe. It was enacted to oversee how the print and electronic media operated in the country. The first independent constitution of Zimbabwe, which came into force in 1980, sets out a legal basis for FOI when it provides for the “freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference”. As with much Zimbabwean law, this provision appears formally stronger than it is in reality, but the basis for a right of access does appear in the rights provisions of the Constitution. The main provisions of the

law (AIPPA) give the government extensive powers to control the media and suppress free speech by requiring the registration of journalists and prohibiting the “abuse of free expression”. Section 15 of POSA and Section 80 of AIPPA criminalize the publication of “inaccurate” information, and both laws have been used to intimidate, arrest, and prosecute information workers. Even if the NLDS is implemented as prescribed by the Act, the government cannot work alone, it has to work with individuals, NGOs, librarians and journalists, among other information professionals. Part IIV of AIPPA section 39 (1) (d) states that a Media and Information Commission (MIC) will be established “ to comment on the implications of automated systems for collection, storage, analysis or transfer of information or for access to information or protection of privacy”. It is very sad that the MIC has focused on accreditation of journalists and media houses at the expense of other information professionals who work directly with the general public in collecting, storing and disseminating information in the communities. Access to information is now more of a right to use rather than providing the much needed information to the right users. Looking at the emphasis that has been bestowed on AIPPA compared to NLDS shows that AIPPA is a political act to control information flow to the masses rather than making the masses have access to information they need on a daily basis as stipulated in the NLDS Act. Changing times and political landscape in Zimbabwe have meant AIPPA and POSA are now government priority over the NLDS.

## **Other challenges**

In general, the provision of library services in Zimbabwe has been hampered by the lack of human, material and financial resources. However, the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) together with Zimbabwe Open University are now offering degree programmes, with NUST offering to a Masters level. This means human resources is no longer a challenge but material and financial resources which also can be eliminated by the seriousness of the Zimbabwean government in recognizing that information is vital for the development of the nation especially the marginalised in the rural areas and periphery of urban areas.

## **Conclusion**

Access to information is by no means an end in itself, rather it is a means through which communities and individuals alike obtain knowledge of the rights that accrue to them and demand their fulfillment. Further, it is a tool for enhancing citizen engagement and participation in their governance, attaining mass-based empowerment and local level poverty reduction. It builds the organizational capacity of local communities by creating a critical mass for the demand of accountability and realization of other fundamental human rights. It cannot be overemphasized that operationalising the NLDS is to the advantage of national development and enlightenment in Zimbabwe marginalized communities.

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## Theme 2

# Creating awareness on the importance of libraries



# Creating awareness on the importance of libraries: A case of Tanzania Library Services Board

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## Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of creating awareness of the importance of libraries: a case of Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB). In doing so the authors trace the historical background of publicity and marketing in TLSB libraries. Several ways of attracting public attention to TLSB libraries and their services over the past years have been demonstrated. The practices have proved to instill to the minds of the people that public libraries exist for their welfare: education, social and recreational aspects for both adults and children and by their wide spread influence they can help to make a better nation. The tremendous shift of publicity tactics and strategies for TLSB functions and services have been traced. The pre 2000 period is characterized by use of specific but limited traditional publicity activities for newly, established mobile and postal services as well as few rural library services. The post 2000 period TLSB came with the first Five Year Strategic Plan (1999 – 2004) with a specific strategic objective on marketing of library services. The use of publicity activities such as the use of mass media, school visits, organised library talks, cultural activities, user education programmes and book exhibition festivals was intense. Furthermore the authors reveal that the introduction and expansion of functions and services necessitated TLSB to make use of both traditional and modern ways of publicity ranging from establishment of close relations with the government via the parent Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, establishment of favourable press relations, use of website, facebook, newsletters, annual reports, participating in community book - reading tents in urban and rural areas as well as joint-projects between TLSB and development partners. This has brought about the notion of a satisfied customer who spread on the news about library services to other individuals

and communities. It has also been observed that, the impact and outcomes of TLSB's new publicity mechanism include more awareness of TLSB's role and services by the public; increase numbers of customers, more support by partners and of course, the challenges born out of the highlighted outcomes have been identified as ever-growing demands for more services, facilities, training, curriculum-based textbooks, ICT based equipments and services, training of library personnel and replication of projects somewhere else. Finally the authors have disclosed that, publicity of TLSB services and functions have not been carried smoothly, and as a result of inadequate skills, passiveness amongst librarians themselves, false belief by librarians and others that libraries need not to be publicised and lack or inadequacy of funding to run publicity activities.

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**Keywords:** Awareness; Public Libraries; Tanzania, Tanzania Library Services Board; Approaches to awareness creation; Library Publicity

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## 1. Introduction

Any public business, trade or service that is meant and created for the public use needs to market and publicize itself. Marketing and publicizing is directly correlated to the achievements of any public - centered service objectives. For the value of the business, trade or service to be appreciated and optimally used by their clients, they need to be known, used and give an opportunity to them (clients) to assess their usefulness.

Libraries, especially public libraries are institutions that offer information and learning goods or resources that are required by various segments of the communities. Public libraries are also charged with the task of converting non-user individuals into habitual library users. It is worth stating that many public libraries are financed by tax-payers funds. Tax-payers have the duty to finance public institutions such as libraries, libraries are duty-bound to inform tax-payers of whatever service is available in libraries and that they are also providing value-for-money services. Failure to create awareness of the importance of libraries and its services would mean less utilization of library resources and services – the undesired outcome! But it is worth mentioning here that publicity would, naturally, be a next move after an organization or a service has been established. Publicity is not about, or for, non-existence service. While in the past public libraries might have been slow to respond to outside influence, to date they have to be as active as other business counterparts. Approaches to publicity would depend on various aspects such as targeted audience, budget, size of targeted audience, available media etc.

This paper explores strategies and issues of publicity of the Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) and its services to the general public, especially in these times of service

expansion. The service expansion time is characterized by forging links with national and foreign partners to introduce new services that have never been offered before. These include information communication technology (ICT) training to the general public and specific groups. The new services necessitated the expansion of publicity exercises. New approaches are required. Some of these new approaches include formation of a strategic plan, emulating experiences from elsewhere, use of the new media and training services as in itself a tool for publicity. The outcome of this publicity has manifested itself in more awareness of TLSB services by clients; increase in numbers of customers, more support for TLSB and more challenges. The paper intends to demonstrate all of the above, by using TLSB as a case study.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Publicity and marketing**

Writing on the history of library services marketing, Das and Karn, (2008) comment that, its history began long before the concept was born and that, it could be said that today's marketing of library services has its roots in parts of the USA and Northern Europe; in countries with few illiterates and more money, libraries and library schools than the rest of the world. This certainly does not mean that the idea of libraries reaching out to "the common man" has not occupied librarians in other parts of the world. For instance, there is the example of the "library movement" in India at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Block, (2001) is of the view that, to use the concept "marketing" librarians have brought over some management tools from the commercial world. That has been advantageous for the global library world. It has forced librarians to look at the libraries as the enterprises they are. In the early conceptualization of a library and information centre's business, Ranganathan had the concept of customer orientation embedded into it. He described a library as: "a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighborhood into a habitual library user and reader of books".

#### **2.1.1 What publicity/marketing means in a library and information unit environment?**

Awareness is, literally, the outcome of a deliberate move or effort to inform. A person or community needs to be informed before they can be made aware. For information to be effectively communicated it needs effective media. It is at this juncture that aspects of marketing and public relations are brought to the information science discipline. It is stated that "a public relations program may include merchandising, press agencies, promotion and publicity. The available literature reveals that libraries have vigorously made use of the public relations philosophy and techniques.

It is maintained that publicity and marketing in libraries and information units is not so much about “selling” information products to users, as it is more about spreading the word about potentially useful information resources. It is also about keeping users informed about library activities and involving them in collection development. It is more about integrating new research tools into existing, effective research processes, and in some way enhancing researchers’ work, rather than selling the tool to users as an end in itself.

In recent years, marketing has been gaining importance in libraries throughout the world. Self-support policies, increasing competitiveness in the marketplace, rising customer expectations, and widening access to information are some of the main reasons for this trend. To survive in such an environment, libraries and information centres must identify their users’ needs and integrate this information into the everyday workings of the library. The need to market the library and information services arose essentially from pressures out of competition for customers, technological advancements, competition for resources, maintaining relevance, not being taken for granted, promoting an updated image, rising expectations, survival and customer satisfaction.

## **2.2 Background to TLSB**

TLSB is a parastatal organization under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, established by an Act of Parliament in 1963, which was later superseded by a subsequent Act in 1975. This Act confers upon TLSB a wide range of responsibilities, including the establishment and administration of libraries and documentation centres, training information personnel, and consultancy on issues pertaining to libraries and information centres in Tanzania.

The main objectives of TLSB are to provide information and reading resources to the general public, including students, researchers, professionals, civil servants, peasants, business people, politicians, and the newly literate. TLSB’s vision is to be a reputable institution in the provision of timely access to current and relevant information, and, diligently and efficiently, to provide high quality services to the general public for educational development in the global context. TLSB’s mission is to play a leading role as an information institution, putting knowledge available in libraries and on the internet to work for the benefit of the public, and to support life-long learning for society at large.

Additional to running a network of 21 regional, 19 district public libraries and a library school that has more than 1,500 students studying at non-graduate certificate and diploma levels, TLSB also acts as the national copyright library of Tanzania. It is duty-bound to acquire and store national literary output for future use.

The materials deposited as a result of the above law form a basis for compiling the Tanzania National Bibliography (TNB) by the National Bibliographic Agency (NBA) and others. Currently, it is estimated that the NBA holds about 28,008 volumes (14,004 titles) of books and other literary materials, and 159,349 volumes (734 titles) of periodicals used by scholars and the general public.

The above functions, responsibilities, duties and activities carried by TLSB for the citizens of Tanzania and beyond are many and vital for the nation's and individual's development. As stated earlier on, TLSB as a public institution is funded by tax payers' money. All these make it obligatory for TLSB to publicize its services so that they are optimally used.

### **3. Awareness Creation Practices over the Years**

#### **Pre 2000**

It is maintained that the interest in publicity and marketing has tremendously increased over the past few decades in libraries like in other fields such as education, health, transportation, insurance, banking, etc. There is, however, a continuing debate as to whether concepts derived from the business world can readily be transferred to public service organizations such as universities, hospitals and libraries. It is argued that, conventional organizations are funded differently, have different objectives, and operate in a different environment. But while in the past libraries might have been slow to respond to outside influence, they are now as active as their business counterparts in adopting strategic marketing (Gupta, 1998). Scholars such as Bukenya (2006) have maintained that marketing in the library and information science (LIS) context is the process of planning, pricing, promoting and distributing information/library products that satisfy the library and information centres and the customers. It is more of informing the public about policies, activities, resources and services of a library through the use of various media.

The above observation is true of what has been happening in TLSB. In the 1960s to 2000s, TLSB experienced varying degrees of development. In 1964 to 1974 TLSB enjoyed economic booming that was characterized by, *inter alia*, government support, massive training of staff, establishment of regional libraries with basic information services, establishment of mobile, postal and a few rural library services. The period from 1975 to 1999 saw the decline of services offered by TLSB. This was due to world economic difficulties and the effects of the war to topple the dictatorial regime in Uganda. Services were continued but not at the pace it was planned for.

What was clear, in terms of publicity of TLSB and its services, was the fact that there were no rigorous efforts used to publicize the TLSB and its services, apart from limited use of publicity tools such as newsletters and words of mouth. It was obvious that the

management of that time thought that established services would publicize themselves – an old-fashioned way of publicity. This is evident from planning tools (including five –year development plans) that had no specific suggestions on how to publicize TLSB. Of course, the natural outcome of this was the low usage of public libraries in the country.

### **Post 2000**

From 2000 on-ward, the country has been witnessing quite a number of positive progresses in the education and information sectors. The expansion of basic education, more recognition of the importance of libraries and information unit, recognition of information as an important commodity for development and decision making, favourable government policies that have encouraged the establishment of libraries in various many institutions, etc. are but a few moves that have boosted the library sector. In public library sector, specifically in TLSB, new library services such as ICT-based, establishment of the School of Library, Archives and Documentation Studies (SLADS) and opening of more branch/rural libraries. This expansion can only be meaningful if the services are used by citizens. Based on oral cultures and lack of public libraries in rural areas, their late introduction needs to be supported and supplemented by practical activities coupled with purposeful publicity.

Being aware of the above, the first Five Year Strategic Plan (1999- 2004), for the first time, came up with a Strategic Objective : Marketing of Library Service, under which specific activities such as the use of mass media, school visits, organized library talks, cultural activities, user education programmes and book exhibitions and festival. These have helped a great deal in promoting the word of public libraries.

## **4. New Approaches**

The post-2000 period, shows that TLSB was increasingly using both traditional (i.e. making the library advertising itself) and modern forms of communication/publicity. Some of the modern forms used by TLSB include establishment of close relations with the government through the parent Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, establishment of favourable press relations, creation of publicity for specific services, representing TLSB and participating in community development, use of website (s), facebook, newsletters, annual reports, etc.

The idea behind using new awareness strategies and methods emanates from the TLSB Strategic Plan: 2008/9 – 2018/19. The strategic plan that was developed out of wider consultation with many stake-holders, specifically identified and came up with a strategic objective of marketing of library services (Tanzania Library services Board, 2008). The rationale for coming up with this objective is well summed up as:

*TLSB markets and promotes its resources and services through newsletters; brochures; library websites and participation in public exhibitions. Despite these efforts the general public and even some key decision-makers are not aware of the role of public library services and resources. TLSB will examine innovative strategies that can adequately help to sensitize the general public and decision-makers on the need for well funded public libraries.*

Gorge (1951), when presenting a paper on Public Library Publicity Campaign, at a UNESCO conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil, observed that:

*“the best publicity is, in all probability, one of the oldest in existence, namely, word of mouth from a satisfied patron, this type of advertising is one of which doctors, lawyers, dentists, and other professional men depend to a large degree, and one which pays the greatest dividend with the least capital expenditure...”*

The above contention still holds water for TLSB. It suggests that there has been a shift from letting the library market itself to a new and modern approach of letting a satisfied customer spread the word of public library. For the past ten years, and in partnership with the East African Book Development Association (EABDA) and Tanzania Book Development Council (BAMVITA), TLSB has been participating in staging community book reading-tents in both rural and urban areas during annual book week festivals. The purpose of these tents is to introduce and promote the reading culture amongst communities. The outcome of this activity is the inculcation of reading culture and promotion and publicity of public libraries and their services.

One of the TLSB's agenda, as per its strategic plan, is to take the public library to the grass-roots; where it is needed most. Public libraries are now introduced in urban and rural districts of Tanzania. The opening of these libraries, in itself, is a practical publicity activity that attracts many people. But the deliberate publicity activities that are done by local authorities and TLSB prior to the actual day of officially opening the library include, *inter alia*, spreading the word-of-mouth to local residents, usually using cell battery operated microphones; inviting local authority top leaders (including district commissioners and members of parliaments of the concerned constituents); inviting students from primary and secondary schools and the general public. In some cases the reading tent activities and *ngoma* (traditional dances), plays (usually promoting aspects of public libraries) are carried out one or two days before the opening ceremony.

Many primary and secondary schools, especially those owned by the government, do not have libraries. Occasionally, the schools arrange for their students to visit the public libraries. Students are shown around various departments and units in TLSB's public libraries. They are also shown various services that could be of help to their studies. When they leave they pass on the word about public libraries to their colleagues in school

and their communities. All these activities play a significant role of publicizing the public library to the communities.

It should also be stated here that most of TLSB activities would not have taken place without the financial, material, and moral support from stake-holders, library sympathizers and lovers. Recently established joint-projects between TLSB and Finnish Library Association under the name Libraries for Development and TLSB and Electronic Information for Public Libraries (EIFL) are good examples. The projects support communities in equipping them with ICT skills and knowledge on how to master their small businesses including cattle and chicken rearing. The business lives of beneficiaries have been transformed tremendously; and as result they pass on the news about library services to their colleagues. This has worked well with the TLSB strategy for publicity.

This reminds us of the significance of fund raising and of working in partnership to bring about best results. This is what has been referred to as “a helping hand to the working hand” or “working in partnership”. The obvious outcome of all these is the strengthening of public libraries and their services. Some of the services are new and have direct relevance to communities. TLSB is also aware of the fact that what it has addressed so far is just a tip of an iceberg. There are more issues that have relevance with libraries and information that are yet to be addressed. Some of them are on aspects of poverty alleviation, gender, the environment, the national vision 2025 and others. This means more fundraising, more collaborative ventures, more user satisfaction, more credibility for TLSB and more publicity of the services offered with the purpose of benefiting the citizens.

## **5. Impact/Outcomes of Publicity**

Publicity for libraries and library services is a continuous process, and tactics are introduced and changed in accordance to the needs and circumstances of the day. It was perhaps fine in the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s for TLSB to use traditional and limited publicity tools. The coming of the new millennium (2000) was witnessed, as shown earlier, by a number of aspects that necessitated new approaches to publicity. The efforts invested in publicizing TLSB and its services were not all in vain, as its outcome was manifested in the following:

- a) Awareness of TLSB: many citizens, in urban and rural areas, are now aware of the existence of TLSB, its role and mission.
- b) Increase of customer numbers: being aware of TLSB importance and type of services it offers, TLSB has been witnessing an increase of customers. The more vivid evidence is the influx of new library users from areas where TLSB has development projects
- c) More support from partners and supporters: the use of media such as newsletters, website(s), Facebook, and the word of mouth have well illuminated TLSB to some

partners/donors outside the country. These tools have sold TLSB well in the eyes of partners and donors.

- d) TLSB is now mentioned and discussed in higher circles such as in parliamentary sessions. In the 2013/14 parliamentary budget session(s) TLSB was mentioned by a few parliamentarians in view of convincing the government to invest more on it.
- e) It is natural, in these circumstances, for the positive outcomes/outputs to create even more challenges and demands. TLSB is increasingly witnessing the ever growing demands for more services, facilities and trainings. More curriculum based textbooks and others, ICT based equipment and services, training of library personnel, libraries in rural areas, replication of projects somewhere else, conducting of reading tents to rural areas, etc. are demanded.

## **6. Publicity Issues**

The task of publicizing TLSB has not been a smooth walk in the park. There have been problems and issues that have been confronted by TLSB and some of them have hindered the smooth operation. As once observed by Jestin (2002), publicising and marketing information services faces the issues of lack or inadequate skills, passiveness amongst librarians themselves, false belief by librarians and others that libraries need not to be publicised and lack or inadequacy of funding to run publicity activities.

Over the years, TLSB has experienced the above issues. This was mainly caused by the training and education that did not put emphasis on publicity and marketing of information. Some of the staff have been re-trained through continuous education programmes, but there are many that have not. Another factor has been budget inadequacy that compels TLSB to cut down on and prioritise on activities. Unfortunately, publicity is one of the areas that have been experiencing cuts.

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper has practically demonstrated practices, strategies and issues of publicity of TLSB during times of modernization and service expansion. It has shown that publicity, marketing and advertising are important tools in linking the public library with actual and potential customers, in terms of informing them of what is available and useful to them.

The paper shows the development of publicity strategies and methods that have been used over the years by TLSB. It is evident that approaches and strategies would always depend on the circumstances of the day: availability of funds, positive attitude of leaders, working in partnership, provided relevant services and resources, and others. The uses of modern publicity approaches have increased the visibility of TLSB and as a result it continues to enjoy support and recognition. The outcome of this publicity has

manifested itself in more awareness of TLSB services by clients; increase in numbers of customers, more support for TLSB and, of course, more challenges that would create more opportunities for the library fraternity and its clients.

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# Leading with Creativity: Outreach efforts to develop Information Literacy Programmes in the Gulf Region

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## Abstract

This paper will describe how library leadership plays an active role in establishing a supportive and conducive environment for building and promoting information literacy programmes in academic institutions in the Arabian Gulf region. Examples of how librarians, administrators and other critical stakeholders within the academic enterprise are working together to build proactive information literacy initiatives are reviewed. Readers will be inspired to cultivate successful information literacy initiatives through creative collaborative partnerships across organizations.

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**Keywords:** Leadership, Information Literacy, Outreach, Qatar, United Arab Emirates

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The role of the library director is critical in effecting creative leadership and outreach in building information literacy programmes, especially in such an international and multicultural environment as the Arabian Gulf region. Support is needed at every level of the library organization for building and marketing information literacy (IL) programmes. Library administrators need to be key members of the IL team, working closely with the instruction and reference librarians as well as with external partners and participants such as professors and other campus administrators who are focused on student learning. Involving library directors closely can increase the likelihood of support

for facilities, and staffing to assist with everything from professional development to facilities to photocopying.

Careful planning, involving the broadest range of library activities, is needed to market IL programming at higher education institutions in the Gulf region. The IL program needs to be clearly part of the library mission and vision. Learning outcomes and assessments need to be delineated in public on the library or institution web site. The library director can take the lead in initiating conversations with critical partners such as those in charge of the core curriculum, the Writing Center, Institutional Assessment and Student Affairs.

At VCUQatar student learning is at the forefront of the organization chart. Traditionally libraries have organized personnel around collections and services. Information literacy becomes a more central part of the organization when human resources are designed to directly support the core areas of the curriculum. The Library Liaison/Instruction role is the first line of support for faculty and student interaction with the curriculum resources, materials and services to support student learning. This is the position which most enables student learning and is therefore most important in supporting the mission of the university.

More and more of information sharing is clearly driven by social networking and online relationships. In IL programmes we need to use social motivations to fuel IL learning. It is important to recognize information literacy learning happens beyond the classroom or reference desk. Library administrators can help expand the settings where information literacy learning occurs by careful partnering with IT and other campus partners. By creating a variety of opportunities to enhance student learning in the library, online and through library resources, the library director can assist in marketing IL programmes and promoting student learning.

We live in a society of ubiquitous connections, the library and the IL programmes we develop and support can definitely provide students with the conceptual structure to navigate our highly global and social information and media environment. Enabling students to learn in real world settings is key to learning in the global environment of the Arabian Gulf and beyond. Creating environments enabling the flipped classroom, peer editing, students teaching students, and where highly active learning occurs should be at the core of our instruction toolkits. Social interactions through online settings from Facebook, to blogs to Twitter to Flickr are all a part of today's IL. Gaming and tablets are definitely a part of this now, wearable IT and 3D technologies are closer than they seem. The role of the library administrator is to make sure the right technologies are available and that staff are highly trained and engaged with new technologies to support IL.

As examples of creative outreach efforts to develop the IL program at VCUQatar, the library has introduced a gaming lab, and innovative media center, and writing and

technology tutors in the library. The gaming lab invites graphic design and other students to understand games and gaming, their role in entertainment and education. The gaming lab also teaches students to expand their definitions of libraries and to better realize the diversity of library collections. The library has recently added an “Innovative Media Center” as a part of the library, reinforcing the need for students to learn visual as well as information literacy skills. This center engages students and faculty with video collections and interactive media production. The center contains an editing lab and green screen room. The library is developing a new and important partnership with the Writing Center. Writing tutors are now working in the library every day directly supporting student writing and research. In addition the library has hired technology tutors to assist faculty with better using new technology and social media in their teaching. Each of these initiatives brings students into the library more often and engages students and faculty with many more library resources, all of which reinforces information literacy learning. In December 2013 the Director of the VCUQatar Libraries initiated and held a very successful open house inviting all members of the campus and other local librarians to learn about the IL program and the new initiatives which support student learning and the IL program.

At the Petroleum Institute the library administers an Independent Learning Center (ILC) promoting further English language acquisition necessary for developing reading, writing and research skills. The ILC’s mission has been expanded to address retention among first year students; through proactively delivered academic support intervention, assessment and coaching. The library has implemented a Library Peer Tutor program to empower first year students with the information literacy skills required to achieve successful academic involvement during their first year. Another information literacy initiative includes an *Information Literacy Mobile Scavenger Hunt*. Mobile proliferation among United Arab Emirates youth is extremely high; therefore we sought to impart information literacy skills through devices high utilized and easily accessible via their mobile device later for future consultation. Faculty outreach information literacy programming is equally critical to the success of overall information literacy initiatives. Therefore, The Petroleum Institute Library initiated a new professional development grant to create a cadre of information literacy champions among faculty. The Faculty *Information Literacy Champion Grants* have increased student and faculty use of the library and increased their IL learning. Faculty submitted a proposal describing how they would like to enhance a course with information literacy and instructional technology. Each selected faculty member is required to spend ten days of intensive professional development training with librarians, technologists and instructional designers to improve a current course through embedding library resources into courseware and redesigning research assignments to ensure their students utilize critical information literacy skills and other IL strategies.

Academic libraries throughout the Gulf region are implementing successful information literacy programming to enhance the academic achievement of second language learners. Fortunately, Gulf region librarians understand the critical need for imparting information literacy skills to future lifelong learners; and future leaders of these countries. For instance, Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates a learning commons and online tutorials have been used to expand learning. An informal professional group, called Information Literacy Network of the Gulf Region has been successful in raising awareness of information literacy beyond the institutional walls. This group has hosted conferences, informal networking sessions, and information exchanges to ensure a broader community of information professionals are aware of information literacy and learn more successful implementation of IL programming within their respective institutions. Library administrators played a vital role in the founding and coordination of activities of the Information Literacy Network of the Gulf Region.

Promotion and marketing outreach strategies for information literacy should be very similar to other traditional advertising strategies deployed to promote any product or service, emphasizing point of need marketing strategies. Creative strategies to promote information literacy throughout the campus are essential; thereby administrative support to secure necessary resources to implement a successful marketing campaign is essential for a dynamic information literacy campus initiative. There is a need for quantitative and qualitative research to investigate the correlation between administrative support and success of information literacy programmes within higher education. Understanding the spheres of influence will significantly help information literacy designers navigate the administrative landscape to achieve successful information literacy programming. These efforts are more complex within an international setting; as the dynamics of powers may be very different. In addition, baseline understanding of information literacy and the role of the library within the academic enterprise are very different within an international context; given the historical, cultural and political environment within which the academic enterprise must function.

It is important to recognize the perception of libraries, librarians and the profession within the context of the society and culture of the developing nations within the Gulf region. Almost all of our students in the Gulf region have English as a second language and are studying in English. Most students at both the Petroleum Institute and at VCUQatar come to higher education from a variety of school environments. Many come from a background with very limited public or school libraries, and some come from very advanced and well funded international secondary schools. The library needs to educate students from a variety of backgrounds and language levels about information literacy and the nature of academic libraries. These environmental factors increase the need to make sure students learn to use the library and appreciate the value of libraries in such an open and rapidly developing economic and cultural climate of the Gulf.

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# Demystifying the Library and Information Science Profession in Zimbabwe: Perspectives from Library Schools and the Corporate World in Bulawayo

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## Abstract

Although there are different types of libraries in Zimbabwe, observation shows that very few students who train in Library and Information Science (LIS) find their way to the corporate sector for industrial attachment or formal employment. There seems to be little or no recognition of the value of the profession within this sector, with the majority not understanding why they should hire someone whose 'role of stamping and shelving books' does not contribute directly to the profit motive. Statistics on industrial attachment placements' in the Department of Library and Information Science at the National University of Science and Technology show that most students get placements in Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Academic Libraries whilst at the Bulawayo Polytechnic College, the trends have been such that more students get absorbed by government institutions and NGOs as well. The problem of low recognition or low visibility also extends to students themselves and their parents because they seem to take up the programme as a last option. The University itself 'throws' into Library Science, anyone who cannot fit into a programme of their choice because of low entry points. The problem was initially viewed as two fold; either the Teaching Departments were not doing much in terms of marketing the profession or there was a general lack of awareness on the relevance of the profession. In this age, organisations must view information as a crucial corporate resource requiring management by trained professionals who authenticate its value. This study was therefore an attempt to try and demystify the myth surrounding the LIS profession in the corporate sector, at the same time creating a basis for its acceptance for the benefit of both graduates and the industry at large.

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**Key Words:** Corporate Librarian; Corporate Libraries; Embedded Librarianship; Multitasking Librarianship

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## Introduction

Libraries in every sector of life play an important role of providing a platform for access to information which informs various developmental activities. Although their contribution in the development of a society is acknowledged by many, their existence and impact in some sectors such as corporate entities has been questioned. This has been caused by a number of factors, including but not limited to a general lack of recognition of libraries as vital components of the entire business system because they do not bring in any significant income, if at all they yield something. In distressed economic environments, libraries in corporate entities are usually among the first departments or units to be cut off the budget, thereby exposing them to imminent closure.

This study was done after the realisation that fewer students who train in Library and Information Science (LIS) were finding their way to the corporate sector for industrial attachment or formal employment. At the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), trends were such that most students were being absorbed by Academic and Non Governmental (NGOs) whilst at the Bulawayo Polytechnic College, students were mostly absorbed in Government Departmental Libraries. Several reasons were cited for this situation; that corporate libraries were little to non-existent, that corporate entities had little to no knowledge about the existence and capabilities of a library professional, that the Library and Information Science curricula was not tailor-made to produce a librarian able to work in such organisations, that students were not aware of the existing employment opportunities or that marketing efforts on the existence and value of the profession were inadequate.

## Relevancy and the Corporate Librarian

Corporate libraries were defined by Ard (2011) as libraries that are maintained by private businesses to serve the information needs of their employees. These include hospital libraries, libraries in law, architectural design, marketing firms and scientific libraries of major research companies. The main aim of these libraries is to satisfy the information needs of a particular organisation or company. A corporate librarian is therefore a person who manages and maintains all the information resources and the associated content of a particular company. He or she ensures that the storage, archiving, and taxonomical layouts of information are consistent across and throughout the organization, (ITBUSINESSEDGE: n.d.)

Black (2011) pointed out that early corporate libraries had many different names which included reference libraries, technical libraries, information centres and research departments. Black made an indication that there is, “a high correlation between library activity and the development of new sectors in the economies of both the United States and UK.” According to him, the growth of company libraries paralleled the rise of organised science and research, and the associated realisation that improvements

in management and production were increasingly dependent on the retrieval and assimilation of recorded knowledge.

Over the years however, specialized librarians and other information professionals have been exhorted to measure their relevancy and contribution to the organizations that they serve. The situation is more complicated in corporate entities because these are profit oriented, yet, library services are generally free of charge. Some literature suggests that the phenomenon of relevancy is difficult to quantify and there is no known comprehensive assessment of it. However, return on investment, time and costs saved have been highlighted as some of the measures that are used to demonstrate this value.

There are a lot of reasons why the relevance of librarianship as a profession has been questioned. Referring to the Zimbabwean situation, Hadebe (1994) pointed out that there was little understanding of what LIS workers do and the responsibilities that they take. He added that the profession itself had not done much to educate the public about what they do, hence the prevailing image of a librarian as one of a passive person concerned with shelving and issuing books. Martin (1996) wrote that “in the eyes of many youths, maybe librarians lack the glamour...” Saur (2009) alleged that society perceives librarianship as merely dealing with administrative or clerical tasks, a misconception which hinders the society’s appreciation of the profession. There are some members of our society who also think that the library is basically there to support the education system and therefore it has no place in industry and elsewhere. Back in 1991, Horowitz suggested that the name of the profession itself was an obstacle to the acceptance of the profession because the word library itself is derived from ‘a book’ which is more of a conventional information source. It therefore means that the conventional library may have no place in today’s global network where people and organizations rely on the Internet for connectivity and access to information.

Davenport and Prusak (2000) suggested that librarians are invaluable to every other organisation that relies on information for the success of its operations. Their main argument was that information practitioners add value to information, without which organisations would find it useless. The authors used a 3 point based value chain from data to information and information to knowledge. They went further to the 5Cs criteria for value addition, suggesting that data becomes information when its creator adds meaning. The Cs were listed as follows:

*Contextualized:* we know for what purpose the data was gathered

*Categorized:* we know the units of analysis or key components of the data

*Calculated:* the data may have been analyzed mathematically or statistically

*Corrected:* errors have been removed from the data

*Condensed:* the data may have been summarized in a more concise form

Davenport and Prusak (2000) went on to highlight the importance of librarians in Knowledge Management (KM). They defined KM as “a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information.” They added that KM originates and is applied in the minds of knowers wherefore in organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms. They argued that if information is to become knowledge, humans must do virtually all the work, with the transformation taking place around the Cs such as:

*Comparison:* how does information about this situation compare to other situations we have known?

*Consequences:* what implications does the information have for decisions and actions?

*Connections:* how does this bit of knowledge relate to others?

*Conversation:* what do other people think about this information?

KM activities were said to be even more complicated in situations where the organisation is a global enterprise with offices, plants, functions and the product mix distributed on a wider geographical scale. In such situations, information and knowledgeable individuals are difficult to locate, hence the need for qualified KM managers to identify and implement the right tools to network the organisational members. Davenport and Prusak (2000) concluded that,

*“The mere existence of knowledge somewhere in the organization is of little benefit; it becomes a valuable corporate asset only if it is accessible, and its value increases with the level of accessibility. If there is no system in place to locate the most appropriate knowledge resources, employees make do with what is most easily available. That knowledge may be reasonably good, but in today’s competitive environment, reasonably good is not good enough. ”*

Tools suggested for managing information and knowledge resources for institutional members include e-mail, groupware, the Internet and intranets and computers and networks which can point to people with knowledge and those who need to share that knowledge over a distance. Desktop videoconferencing and multimedia computing that transmits sound and video as well as text make it possible to communicate some of the richness and subtlety of one person’s knowledge to another.

Whitmire (2002) remarked that librarians or information practitioners are important in organisations as they provide context to information and authenticate its value. They know what good information looks like and they can save the organisation money. Donnelly (2012) declared that information professionals have great knowledge in the total management of information resources including the identification, selection, evaluation,

and the provision of access to pertinent information resources in any media or format. They have the ability to harness current and appropriate technology tools to deliver the best services, provide the most relevant and accessible resources as well as develop and deliver teaching tools to maximise clients' use of information. Skilled librarians are therefore a necessity in corporate organisations because they possess the relevant professional competencies to help the organisations prosper. Nkala (2013), however lamented the lack of qualified librarians in most sectors outside education in Zimbabwe.

## **Embedded Librarianship as a Strategy for Incorporating Corporate Librarians**

Literature reviewed for this study pointed to the view that embedding librarians is a strategy that is used for strengthening and refocusing the library's presence within an organization and demonstrating librarians' added value. Shumaker (2012) defined embedded librarianship as a distinctive innovation that moves the librarians out of libraries and creates a new model of library and information work. Emphasis is not only on forming strong working relationships with organisational members, but also on the librarian being fully engaged in the work of individuals or a group of people who need his information expertise. If librarians are embedded, it is easier to develop and provide information and resources that are specifically tailored towards the individual or group needs. Thus, the modern approach to librarianship requires a shift from the passive custodial mode to a more integrated and analytical approach to serving clients.

Similar sentiments were earlier on echoed by Davenport and Prusak (1993) saying that "librarians, or rather information managers, must view themselves not as warehouse custodians, or even as providers of centralized expertise, but rather as overseers of a multi-media network." According to Riccio (2012), Davenport and Prusak drew up an eight-point plan where the first two became the foundations for the embedded model: "1. Get out of the library, and into the business and 2. Actively assess who needs information, and who has it—then help them to connect."

Bauwens quoted by Shumaker (2012) envisioned the new corporate librarian as being "in the middle of a concentric circle of cyberspace (i.e., the electronic information space or ocean)." He advocated that the corporation that takes information seriously should create "a network of cybrarians (i.e., librarians able to navigate in 'cyberspace'), strategically located throughout the company." He foresaw that these information literate individuals would be integrated into management teams.

Riccio (2012) noted that the cycle of learning, observation, communication and feedback is one that continues throughout the life of any embedded librarianship program. She added that embedded librarians learn on the job, participate in meetings and calls, join email distribution lists, and engage in individual conversations with their customers.

This is done so that they get to know their client better. She went on to cite a survey conducted by “3 Geeks and a Law Blog” in which respondents identified the following as tasks and duties of embedded librarians:

- Research
- Product assessment and recommendation
- Cost-effective research education
- Analysis and summarization of research findings
- Development of contribution to current awareness streams
- Research project management (schedules, checklists, calendars, best practices, etc.)

To this list, Riccio added competitive intelligence, knowledge management and database development/ management. Benefits of embedded librarianship to the librarian included knowing the users’ individual needs, cross-training of the library staff, and increased recognition within the firm. She concluded that the successful embedded librarian is one who has the abilities to discern, develop and implement tasks or duties that have the highest customer benefit.

According to Shumaker (2012), the Models of Embedded Librarianship research project funded by the Special Library Association (SLA) found that corporate and government embedded librarians were much more likely than librarians in other types of organizations to perform a number of research and information delivery tasks, including the following:

- Competitive intelligence
- Evaluating, synthesizing, and summarizing the literature
- Current awareness and news alerting
- Interlibrary loan and document delivery

Similarly, the project found that in the corporate and government sectors, embedded librarians were more likely than in other sectors to participate in the management and analysis of internal knowledge and information. The kinds of tasks in which the study found differences included structured database development and management, information architecture, and management of document repositories. In some literature, the phrase multitasking librarianship is used to refer to the same concept of embedded librarianship.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Even though information and knowledge are some of the key driving forces for knowledge economies and knowledge societies, students training in Library and Information Science were and are still failing to penetrate corporate entities for internship or permanent career opportunities. This raises questions about the relevancy of the profession to business entities which are mainly profit oriented.

## Research Objectives

The broader aim of this study was to find out strategies for creating a fit between corporate entities and Library and Information Science graduates. The study was premised on the following specific objectives:

1. To establish the information expectations of selected corporate organisations in Bulawayo,
2. To find out the existence of corporate libraries in these organisations,
3. To determine the extent to which the selected organizations were knowledgeable about the existence and capabilities of Library and Information Science professionals.
4. To measure the extent to which students were aware of the various internship/employment opportunities in the corporate world, and;
5. To assess the marketing structures in place in Library Schools and the College or University wide system for linking students with industry.

## Significance of the Study

The study was meant to inform curriculum developers in library schools on the quality of graduates expected to be assimilated in corporate libraries. The study was also meant to assist in creating and raising awareness on the value of professional librarians/information practitioners in corporate organisations in view of the era of knowledge societies and knowledge economies.

## Assumptions of the Study

1. It was generally assumed that all business entities regardless of form and size rely on information and knowledge for the execution of day to tasks.
2. Without closely guarded information and knowledge assets, organisational goals such as expansion, profit, market share, product innovation may be jeopardised.
3. It was also assumed that the effective utilisation of information and knowledge resources depends on the availability of qualified personnel to source and guide its use.

## Limitations

The researchers were constrained for time due to examinations and subsequent block teaching. Unavailability of students during the research time was also a constraint because they could have given meaningful insights about their own experiences and feelings towards the profession. At NUST, undergraduate students go for the Winter Holiday around end of May and only come back to School beginning of September. At the Bulawayo Polytechnic, students were writing exams during the fieldwork exercise.

The researchers resorted to collecting data from the few students who could be reached via their mobile phones, the available lecturers and industry representatives.

## **Methodology**

This study was qualitative in nature. The study population included ten directors from companies in the Bulawayo CBD and the Belmont industrial area, one lecturer responsible for industrial attachment coordination at the Bulawayo Polytechnic, and three lecturers who had been responsible for industrial attachment in the Department of Library and Information Science at the National University of Science and Technology. Participating companies were purposively and conveniently selected, because of problems of gaining access to respondents since most companies in Bulawayo are headquartered in Harare. The researchers relied on in-depth interviews and observations for their data collection tools. A total of 10 companies based in the CBD and Belmont industrial area participated in this study. These included 3 banks, 1 pharmaceutical company, 2 funeral assistance companies, 2 construction companies and 1 industry and mining entity. At least 35 students participated in this study.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The study sought to demystify the misconceptions and myths around the LIS profession as viewed by corporate organisations in the Central Business District of Bulawayo. It targeted 10 directors of corporate organisations of varying types and three lecturers responsible for industrial attachment coordination in two library schools being the Department of Library and Information Science at the National University of Science and Technology and the Department of Library and Information Science at the Bulawayo Polytechnic College. Interviews conducted revealed the following findings:

### **Information Expectations in Corporate Organisations**

All organisations concurred that they were operating in a competitive environment where the availability of market information provided a competitive edge. They agreed that corporate libraries/ information centres were a necessity in their companies and that the libraries needed not to adopt the traditional library services but develop proactive services which would enable staff to understand how to manipulate the Internet and other information sources to retrieve useful business information. Information expectations varied with the type of corporate entity and sector but it was apparent that companies needed the most up-to-date information available. They also agreed that companies in today's fluid economic environment needed to benefit from connectivity with useful databases and sister entities through the Internet. Most companies indicated that they were failing to effectively link with world markets to make their products visible because of information overload and a general lack of information retrieval and evaluation skills.

These sentiments are in line with views of authors like Davenport and Prusak (2000) who highlighted the importance of knowledge managers in identifying and evaluating expert information; as well as Shumaker (2012) who noted the importance of librarians in linking business experts through cyberspace.

Organisations admitted that information professionals were not among their priority list of employees but most of their employees lacked information skills to be able to manipulate information effectively. Some of the company directors interviewed felt that adding information professionals to their staff list would be burdensome. These views are in line with the observations made by authors like Hadebe (1994) and Saur (2009) who alleged that society keeps a generally low profile for librarians.

### **Existence of Corporate Libraries**

It was established that while corporate libraries were essential in all types of companies, nine of the company directors interviewed admitted that they did not have corporate libraries within their companies. Only one company had a library. The one company that had a library, however, admitted they had not sought the services of a qualified librarian to run their library. This was because they did not have an established post of a librarian. They relied on temporary or contract workers to run the library and as such, other employees were not benefitting much from the services of the library. All directors interviewed admitted that they had not sought assistance from library schools to establish libraries in their companies and had not bothered to create an internship post for students studying in library schools. This concurred with a point raised by Saur (2009) when he said that the invisibility of the profession was limiting employment opportunities for graduates and this came as a barrier to young people wanting to enter the librarianship profession.

### **Knowledge of Existence and Capabilities of LIS Professionals**

Six directors said they knew about the existence of LIS professionals but only four out of the ten directors had a fair background of what librarianship is all about. The remainder of the directors could not really unpack the role of a librarian within a corporate entity saying that most of their information related jobs were being done by Information and Communication Technology experts. Observations made confirmed that most information related jobs were being done by secretarial and Information and Communication Technology staff.

The old perception that libraries were about acquisition and dissemination of traditional books still prevailed. Horowitz (1991) noted that the word library itself sends a lot of confusion about the role and functions of a librarian. Hadebe (1994) pointed out that

there was little understanding of what LIS workers do and the responsibilities that they take.

## **Students' Awareness of Employment/Internship Opportunities in Corporate Organisations**

Data gathered from the lecturers responsible for industrial attachment in the two library schools showed that students were not aware of the various employment options available to them. This was because the lecturers tended to place students in institutions which were 'traditional' attachment places for students. These normally constituted government departments, academic libraries and NGOs. Observation showed that industrial attachment coordinators tended to rely more on lists of addresses from previous years' placements for attaching students, thereby limiting the available choices. The industrial attachment coordinators indicated that while some students found attachment in corporate organisations, these were very few and it was not a consistent trend. One of the reasons given for such an anomaly was that students on attachment were expected to be supervised by an information professional during industrial attachment; yet most of these corporate organisations lacked qualified staff. This state of affairs was corroborated by findings by Nkala (2013) who said most organisations outside the education sector do not have qualified information managers.

Industrial attachment coordinators highlighted that while such strategies like field trips to industry, career guidance, and open days were available to link students with industry, these could not be done consistently because they required planning and were time consuming. However, according to Nkala (2013) most students returning from internship were aware of the various career opportunities in the industry. This was mostly because of their exposure and link with industry during attachment. NUST students were however concerned about Part 4 courses which were said to be industry specific and therefore need to be taught before they went on attachment. The courses are Special Libraries, Academic Libraries, School Libraries and Media Centres, Children's Libraries and Public Libraries.

Interactions with students showed there was a general lack of confidence and fear of the unknown in view of corporate libraries. Most of them said that they deliberately avoided these libraries because it was obvious that their services would not be appreciated. They felt that they could not compete with students from other attractive and well rewarding professions such as Accounting. Slowly, Information and Communication Technology students were taking over their jobs, as evidenced by the recruitment of Computer Science lecturers into teaching some LIS courses. The name term 'librarian' itself was viewed as traditional by many students, representing a conventional approach to Information Management that is premised on acquiring, organising and disseminating books. This corroborates with assertions made by Horowitz (1991) who implied that the name of

the profession was seen by some as an obstacle to improvement of image, status and reputation. Martin (1996) also concretised this assertion when he indicated that in the eyes of many youths, librarians lacked glamour.

Most parents who followed their students' progress were quite sceptical about the profession and career opportunities. Most used it as a stepping stone to other 'lucrative' opportunities in areas such as Information Systems Management, Web Design and Development Studies. The current programme was viewed as lagging behind technological innovations that are taking place in the corporate world.

### **Marketing Efforts in LIS Schools**

It was revealed that the LIS profession was obscure to many in the corporate world and its value to such organisations was still not very clear. All company directors interviewed concurred that they had never been invited to open days in library schools and were not aware of any efforts to market the profession by NUST or the Bulawayo Polytechnic College.

The University/College wide system used Alumni and the Career Guidance offices, yet, the people in charge of these offices were either not interested in the profession or had little knowledge about. Students blamed these offices for prioritising other programmes outside Library Science.

Industrial attachment coordinators admitted that very little had been done to try and penetrate the corporate world. It was admitted that even during curriculum reviews, little or no input was being sought from corporate organisations. As such, there were possibilities that the LIS curriculum was still very much biased towards producing a traditional librarian who could only be absorbed in traditional libraries and information centres which are generally non profit making. Hadebe (1994) said that the profession itself had not done much to educate the public about what they do, hence the prevailing image of a librarian as one of a passive person concerned with shelving and issuing books.

### **Conclusions**

At the end of this study, it was concluded that the hosting institutions had a generally low view of the importance of libraries in corporate entities. There was a general feeling that the words 'library' and 'librarian' did not really mirror the nature of the job within the corporate entities. The library is associated with books for formal reading, not for supporting specific job situations. The programme title was therefore misleading in view of the nature of specialised information management.

Although, the profession was generally looked down upon, information and knowledge remain vital tools for supporting business operations. Corporate entities require expert information but they lack the skills to retrieve and evaluate the information. However, librarianship posts are not on the priority list for the majority of corporate entities.

The traditional library does not have a place in the modern business environment where technology has become the in thing for connecting individuals across space and time. However, the librarians are not the only professional who can manage information as more and more organisations are turning to their Information and Communication Technology departments for Information management expertise.

Students had a general fear of ridicule if they were to work in a corporate setup. Students felt that qualifications in LIS could not compete against their counterparts in other professions that were viewed as more attractive and more rewarding. For the few students who found their way into the corporate world and other forms of special libraries, it was noted that the teaching departments or College/University had no tracking systems, hence there were close to nonexistent networks with the corporate world.

There was a general lack of marketing for the LIS profession in general and the graduates in particular. The Departments relied on a reactive system of attaching students where students would identify their own places of interest. Apart from this and organisations who came on board looking for interns and prospective employees, the Departments were doing little to identify other alternatives placements for students.

## **Recommendations**

The corporate world should find ways for creating synergies with universities in general and LIS teaching departments in particular. Knowledge and libraries should now be treated as ingredients that are vital for business success. For instance, so many companies have closed down in the major cities of Zimbabwe, a situation that requires not only company Chief Executive Officers but Research and Development Units to rethink viable operating solutions.

The Curriculum should be constantly revised to incorporate new market trends. Constant review of course content is also a necessity. Part 4 second semester courses which focus more on specific types of libraries including special libraries should be done in the second year before students have gone out on attachment so that theory can be linked to practice. This will also enable students to provide meaningful feedback to the Department in terms of the fit between programme content and industry's demands. At the Polytechnics, courses should be revised to incorporate more Information and Communication Technology based content.

NUST should emulate the Polytechnic Colleges system where students have access to a library for practical information processing. This is with the realisation that Zimbabwe still lags far behind in terms of development and most libraries where students can be absorbed are not yet computerised. The strategy can go a long way in boosting individual confidence especially where one is required to set up a library from scratch.

The teaching departments need to relook at the programme in order to see if there is merit in changing the title. The term 'librarian' seems not attractive to the corporate world where terms like knowledge management and competitive intelligence are gaining more popularity.

Department – industry liason is required where the teaching departments discuss on a personal level, issues of concern about the development of the profession and the programmes. Currently, industrial attachment coordinators have tended to rely on attachment visits to discuss these concerns but the time is limited since students will be scattered.

Internal marketing should also be done so that other students and the faculty members have a general feeling and appreciation of the profession. For instance, the Research and Innovation Department at NUST has gone a long way in making the academic community aware of the capabilities of LIS students. This is because interns are given responsibilities such as the production of the Office's newsletter, compiling and maintaining the researchers' database, linking up academics with research funders and Current Awareness on general research issues and events. The resultant interaction with the academic community comes with visibility of the profession and awareness on the roles and capabilities of librarians.

The institutional authorities should support key library events and developments. For instance, the Vice Chancellor of NUST recently attended an Indigenous Knowledge Conference hosted by the Faculty of Communication and Information Science. This enticed other academics into wanting to know more about what records managers and librarians do. If marketing symposiums could be organised and be chaired by the principal officer himself, chances are that industry champions will support such events.

Students should be encouraged to scan various organisations for job opportunities. Methods of job seeking such as unsolicited applications and enquiries can go a long way in shedding light on the importance of libraries and qualified librarians.

In addition to field trips and career guidance, individual lecturers and tutors should constantly talk to students about career prospects. This can help dispel the stigma that normally hangs around Library and Information Science students. Students should also

be encouraged to join the alumni which in addition to other advantages can give students access to mentorship and career opportunities.

The Professional Associations should do more to engage in industry wide talks so that job opportunities can be created.

Outreach programmes can assist to have parents and the general public gain a positive attitude towards the profession, unlike the current situation where most parents are sceptical because job opportunities seem to be scarce or less attractive.

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## Theme 3

# Libraries in support of education and knowledge creation



# Academic Libraries Supporting Research

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## 1. Introduction

University libraries in Europe are facing fundamental changes in their operation due to the recent changes in higher education, changes in scholarly communication, advances in information technology and new funding models of the universities. Clark (1983) has compared national higher education systems according to the dimensions of state, market and academic systems. In Clark's triangle of coordination, these three factors could be used to illustrate major differences in how coordination and changes took place. All these changes have demanded that university libraries, in addition to performing their "old duties" (e.g. arranging access to knowledge and collections) in a more cost-effective way, offer new kinds of services for their customers paying at the same time attention to the competence of the staff.

In the Lisbon treaty the member states of the EU agreed on the common objectives of how to develop the competitive economic zone. The European Research Area was established in order to promote the objectives of Europe and to intensify international cooperation and information division of research. European Union has invited Member States to define and coordinate their policies on access to and preservation of scientific information, to harmonise access and usage policies for research and education-related public e-infrastructures and to adopt and implement national strategies for electronic identity for researchers giving them transnational access to digital research services. European Union has invited research stakeholder organizations to adopt and implement open access measures for publications and data resulting from publicly funded research, to implement and promote the uptake of electronic identity and digital research services and to improve recognition and professionalization of knowledge transfer activities and strengthen the role of knowledge transfer offices. (A Reinforced European... 2012.)

In Finland the Ministry of Education and Culture has developed a new funding model for universities. Universities will receive an increasing share of their finance on the basis of the quality and amount of scientific publications. This will mean that in the future active and high-quality publishing of research results is of primary importance for universities and researchers in order to sustain and gain financial resources. (Financing model <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/yliopistot.html?lang=en>)

The scholarly communication has change during last decade, the researchers are now sharing and publishing their research both printed and electronic publications and also through traditional scientific publishers but also new open access publishing is another publishing channel. (Forsman, Iivonen & Namhila 2012, 237).

## **2. Aims of the study**

The intention of this paper is to review the means and approaches by which university libraries can enable academic research. The paper includes a literature review and some interesting examples about the services offered to researchers. The current services offered by Finnish university libraries, using Tampere University Library as a case university library, are described and discussed in more detail.

## **3. Background**

### **3.1. Academic libraries in Finland**

The main tasks of universities include scientific and artistic education and the highest academic research. The role of scientific libraries is to support education and research in universities. The scientific libraries in Finland include the national library, the university libraries, the polytechnics libraries and the special libraries. The academic libraries in this article refer to university libraries.

The national library (operating in connection to the University of Helsinki) offers national library services for all the library sectors and is responsible for the storing and access of the national publication inheritance. The FinELib service unit also operates inside the National Library. FinELib is a consortium which includes universities, polytechnics, research institutions and general libraries. Its task is to provide electronic materials to support education and research.

The recent trends in the development of the higher education library services have been to have emphasis on the information literacy teaching and on the providing of tailored services for researchers. From the point of view of researchers, especially bibliometric and knowledge management services produced by libraries have become more and more important. (Iivonen et al. 2009; Saarti & Tuominen 2012; Forsman, Ndinoshiho & Poteri 2012.)

### **3.2. The research in universities**

The state of Finland finances universities (about half of research financing in Finland) and universities can decide the focus of this funding. About half of the research funding

of the Finnish universities is external financing (research programs) that has mainly been competed for.

The amount and quality of the research in universities is evaluated through research publications. The Ministry of Education and Culture collects the information about the publications (number, type, quality, research field, etc.). There is a new open publication portal called *Juuli* (<http://www.juuli.fi/>) in which the detailed information about the publications of universities will be found in the future.

The quality of Finnish university research is evaluated by the “Publication Forum System” (<http://www.tsv.fi/julkaisufoorumu/haku.php?lang=en>). The Publication Forum classifies the publications into three levels: class one is a basic level, class two is a leading level and class three is the highest level. This classification will be used from the year 2015 onwards in the financing model of universities. The universities will get noticeably more financing from the publications which are placed in classes two and three than from other publications. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö (Ministry of Education and Culture) 2013, 22.)

## **4. Literature review: university libraries enabling university research**

### **4.1. Roles of the libraries**

Ithaka Faculty Survey has tracked the attitudes and practices of faculty members at US colleges and universities (5261 responses) in 2012. The collected results in Table 1 show the attitudes of faculty members towards library services by means of the six roles of the libraries. The respondents needed to rate for each role: “how important is it to you that your college or university library provides each of the functions below or serves in the capacity below”. The first three roles were: gateway, buyer, and archive and they are directly related to the library’s collections. The role that was rated most important (the largest share of respondents) was the buyers’ role (80 %). The last three roles were teaching, research, and undergraduate support, which are all more service-oriented roles. The most important role of these was “undergraduate support” (58 %). “Research support” was rated lowest (50 %) among these roles. (Ithaka 2013, 66-67.)

Table 1. Roles of the library (Ithaka report 2012)

Role of the library	Definition	Percentage of respondents who rated the role important
Gateway	The library serves as a starting point or “gateway” for locating information for my research	62 %
Buyer	The library pays for resources I need, from academic journals to books to electronic databases	80 %
Archive	The library serves as a repository of resources; in other words, it archives, preserves, and keeps track of resources	62 %
Teaching support	The library supports and facilitates my teaching activities	57 %
Research support	The library provides active support that helps to increase the productivity of my research and scholarship	50 %
Undergraduate support	The library helps undergraduates develop research, critical analysis, and information literacy skills	58 %

Another interesting question was also “How dependent would you say you are on your college or university library for research you conduct?” The result was that 40 % of the respondents felt that they were very dependent on the library. This number has remained basically constant (40%) for each cycle of the survey since 2003. The share of respondents who described themselves as very dependent on their library is roughly the same across all research fields. (Ithaka 2013, 72-73.)

#### 4.2. *New innovative library premises for researchers*

The planning of new university library buildings is very challenging today. Historically library buildings have been built primarily to store library collections and to accommodate study and research (Leighton 2001). Libraries are facing a paradigm shift in their understanding of the form and the function of library facilities. Moving away from the traditional repository conception in which the libraries are storage centers of material,

the new facilities are more complex, enhanced interactive research environments with a multitude of functions (Cantor and Schomberg, 2003; Boone, 2003). There is a lot of literature about changes of the library space (Appleton, Stevenson and Boden, 2011) but less about the researchers' ways to use the library facilities.

The reports by the Research Libraries UK (RLUK) and the Research Information Network (RIN) present the findings for the study of the value of the services that libraries in the United Kingdom provide for researchers. One of the key outcomes was that dedicated spaces provide a better work environment for researchers. The physical library is valued as a place to work, if the researchers do not have their own work space or if they need some printed material or manuscript content held in the library. In order to meet researchers' needs, some libraries have therefore created dedicated areas for researchers. (The value of...2011, 8.)

According to the report the researchers think that "Since content is now usually delivered directly to researchers' desktops, the library as a physical space is frequently considered as irrelevant. Many of them, particularly in STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) where research is heavily dependent on journal publications, say that they never visit the library. For many of the AHSS disciplines (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), however, the library is the research laboratory, where researchers use books, archives, and special collections. If the primary content they need is not available in digital form, visiting the library is considered essential. (The value of ... 2011, 52)

Furthermore, Sinikara (2013) also clarifies the usage of the library services between different academic disciplines: "The extent to which researchers use library facilities depends on the research processes of their academic discipline. Researchers in the natural sciences and medicine in particular – all over the world – prefer digital library resources to actual library facilities, whereas such facilities are still very useful for humanities scholars and are an important workplace for students".

An interesting example of new innovative libraries is Wolfson Research Exchange at The University of Warwick. It offers exciting and innovative facilities for research. The Wolfson Research Exchange offers space to connect (collaboration starts with conversation), space to plan (structure the project at one of the round tables, whiteboards, flipcharts) and space to interact (seminar rooms provide a space where to present research outputs). (University of Warwick, 2011.)

### **4.3. Benefits of electronic collections for researchers**

Another important conclusion from the reports by the Research Libraries UK (RLUK) and the Research Information Network (RIN) was that the **easy access to high-quality**

**content is a key foundation for good research.** This simply means that the access to high-quality content remains crucial to research, and its value is widely recognized by researchers. University libraries use large amounts of money to develop their collections and researchers now have access to a larger number of databases and collections than earlier. With the declining budgets, libraries should take more evidence based strategic approach to content procurement and this could help libraries to meet researchers' needs even more effectively. (The value of...2011, 7.)

One other interesting finding was that **repositories increase the visibility of the institution** and raise its research profile. Many institutions have repositories to store and to make research papers and theses available. In many cases, the library manages the repository on behalf of the institution. The repositories can increase the visibility of the institution's research and raise its overall research profile. However, it should be noted that the repositories are only valuable if their contents are up to date. Libraries have role in educating researchers to deposit their research documents in a timely manner and actively. (The value of...2011, 8.)

In 2007 The FinELib service unit in Finland has carried out a user inquiry together with the department of Information Studies at Tampere University. The effects of electronic documents were analyzed with the aid of this user inquiry. According to the results, the researchers felt that the supply of electronic documents have helped in finding of suitable materials, in getting access to them and in the follow-up of their own research field. This has also extended the material supply in several cases and has saved a lot of working hours. (FinELib user survey 2007.)

The Finnish researcher Vakkari examined the views of researchers about the effect of electronic information resources on their work and about the connection of this effect on the overall productivity of the researchers. The results showed that the e-collections had a considerable effect on the number of the international publications produced by the researchers as well as on the total number of publications. Younger scientists (mainly doctoral students) seem to benefit more from the usage of electronic literature in terms of the number of international publications. On the other hand, the availability of electronic materials had not had a similar effect on the number of the domestic publications. It is also interesting to note that the effects also varied considerably according to the discipline and according to the researcher's status. Vakkari also noticed that the differences appeared so that in humanist fields there was no connection between the availability of materials and productivity. (Vakkari 2008, 602 –612.)

Furthermore, the user survey performed in 2012 clarified the researchers' opinions on the electronic collections in Finland. In the survey the most important task of the libraries was found to be to ensure the availability of comprehensive collections. In addition, the scientists hoped to get more information about the resources available, for example about

the form of presentations. The scientists also complained that they did not have time to update their knowledge about information retrieval changes. They also hoped for training as well as assistance in information retrieval. In general, the researchers are not familiar with the services offered by libraries and they said that they want more information about library services. Fig. 1 lists the services that scientist would like the libraries to provide according to the survey by Merimaa. The scientists prioritize having more information on the available resources. (Merimaa 2012, 74-75.)

Fig.1. The support services that the respondents would like their libraries to provide (% of the respondents) (N=3830) (Merimaa 2012, 74)



## 4.4 New services of the university libraries for researchers

### 4.4.1. Reference tracking services

Helsinki University Library had the development project *Knot Working* between years 2009-2011. The main objective of the project was the development of intervention which allows to model, test, practice, and evaluate library staff and research teams in new kind of partnership activities. Helsinki University Library has developed the following services: a literature and data acquisition, research groups' visibility in the scientific community, research evaluation tools (TUHAT-service), research data management and training related to these sections. There were two interesting examples: the development and deployment of *FeedNavigator*, and the creation and testing of the *board room*. *FeedNavigator* has been developed by Helsinki University Medical Library and it is a new tracking service. It allows the user to get up-to-date references of publications according to the keyword directly to his e-mail. The idea of *Board Room* was to serve as a guideline for researchers about the study material at different stages, and it consisted of three parts: the

study and the data entity description data, the information about analysis and the description of recorded items. (Engeström et al 2011, 2, 6-8)

#### 4.4.2. Open Access publishing fund services

University Library in Oslo administers the publication fund for university authors who wish to publish in Open Access (OA) journals. Authors will have the opportunity to apply for financial support to cover article processing charges. The University Library administers the publication fund of NOK 500 000, and processes applications. Guidelines for applicants have been prepared. (Publication fund, <http://www.ub.uio.no/english/publishing/scientists/publication-fund/>)

#### 4.4.3. Research visualization tools services

Finnish Aalto University Library has presented the visualization tools of research for the use of their graduate students. The idea is that with these visualization tools it becomes easier for researchers to acquire information about their own field of study. The visual presentation will help to map the most important researchers and their research networks. The reference databases *Web of Science* and *Scopus* are easier to use because the search results include the analysis and visualization tools. The users of *Scopus* can use virtual applications (such as SciVerse Applications) which make it possible to use visual representations (maps, networks and word clouds). *Web of Science* – database includes citation map services that allows citation relations of articles. There are also freely available or commercial visualization tools available. (Toimintakertomus (Annual report ) 2012, 12.)

#### 4.4.4. Publication list analysis services

Aalto University Library has also produced systematic data on researchers' publications for the personnel to be utilized in e.g. processes of job applications and selection decisions. The main academic career path is Tenure track, which offers researchers a clear career path towards professor-level task. Tenure-track is an open international recruitment process and the library receives publication analysis orders through HR coordinators. For the tenure-track analysis, the library usually has access for applicants' publication lists and CV. The analysis is carried through the ISI Web of Knowledge and Scopus as well as Google Scholar, so the analysis usually includes amount of publications, amount of citations and H-index. (Toimintakertomus (Annual report) 2011, 19-20.)

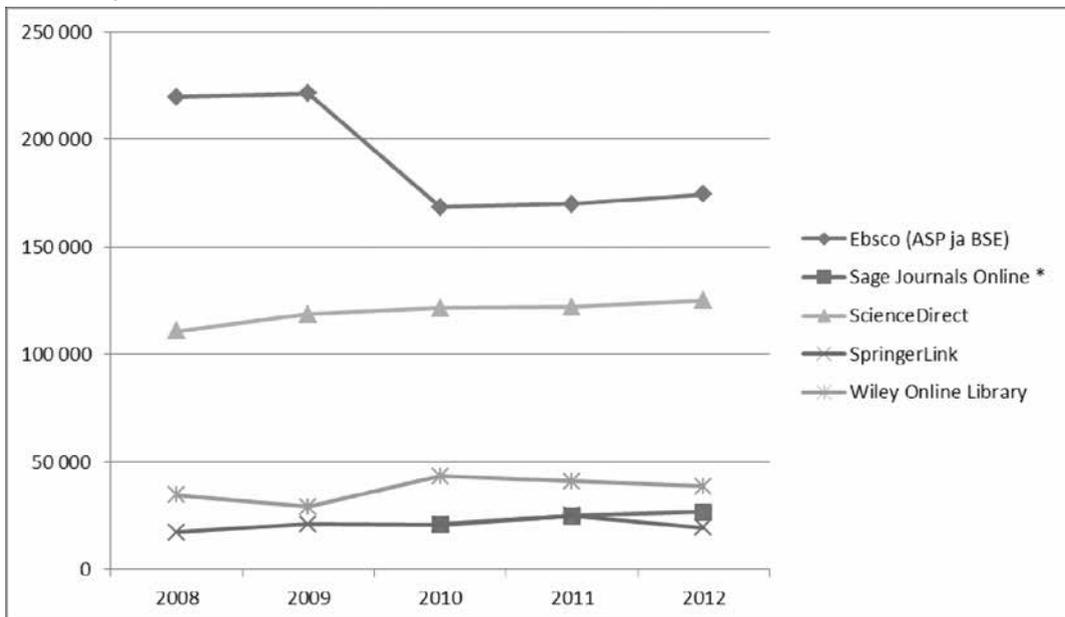
## 5. Enabling research: Case Tampere University Library

Tampere University library offers several services for the researchers. Tampere University has about 800 researchers studying different fields of research.

### 5.1. Providing extensive electronic collections

The literature review confirmed that electronic collections can have several positive effects for the research community. Although Tampere University Library has acquired its first electronic collections already in the late 1990's, the amount of electronic resources has increased substantially only in this millennium. When the number of e-journals in the year 2001 was 2689, in 2012 the University of Tampere had access to 35 769 e-journals. The number of e-books was in 2003 only 558 but in 2012 already 373 163. The Fig. 2 depicts the level of usage of electronic collections and how these services have been heavily used.

Fig 2. Usage statistics (loading of articles) of electronic journal collections in Tampere University



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ebsco (ASP ja BSE)	219 515	221 367	168 533	169 828	174 392
Sage Journals Online *			21 167	24 935	26 864
ScienceDirect	110 913	118 670	121 499	122 091	125 107
SpringerLink	17 389	21 229	21 044	25 304	19 463
Wiley Online Library	34 580	29 311	43 531	40 967	38 595

\* in use since 2010

## **5.2. Publishing services supporting scholarly communication**

Tampere University Library manages the publishing services of the university. The Tampere University Press (TUP) was founded in 1994. Currently it produces publishing services mainly for researchers. Tampere University Press is also considered as a “classified” publisher since it has Publication Forum level as first class; therefore TUP provides the university community with a viable publishing platform.

### **5.2.3. Publishing of dissertations and other scientific books**

Tampere University Press publishes both dissertations but also other scientific books. Most dissertations written at the University of Tampere are published in the Acta Universitatis Tamperensis series and online in the Acta Electronica Universitatis Tamperensis series. The authors can use the Library’s layout service to typeset their manuscript. The doctoral students can have comprehensive guidance in the internet both in Finnish and English. Individual questions can be sent to email-list. Furthermore each candidate receives personalized advice from the contact person of the publication service. Tampere University Press publishes about 100 dissertations yearly. Electronic dissertations are published in open archive (*Tampub*).

### **5.2.4. Open access services**

Tampere university library has been actively promoting open access policy in the university. In open access publishing there are two paths: golden road and green road. The green road allows the author to self-archive the publication into the repository of the organization. The golden road allows the author to publish the publication in an open access journal by paying a fee. The medical departmental library was enabling to use of open access journals in medical sciences by membership of BMC, which allowed the authors to pay fewer fees (Huuskonen, Ahtola & Pesonen 2004). The green road (the parallel publishing) has been the other major issue. The university rector gave the recommendation that researchers should self-archive copy of their research articles into organization’s repository since 2011. The library is responsible for the repository , which is an electronic full-text database called TamPub (<http://tampub.uta.fi>).

In the literature review above (chapter 3.3) it was mentioned that in the research area one of the key findings was that repositories increase the visibility and raise research profile. The ranking of repositories is done by the Cybermetrics Lab. The ranking-list is “The Ranking Web of World repositories” and it shows the amount of links that are done to the repository. The ranking of Tampub was 341/1563 in September 2013. (<http://repositories.webometrics.info/en/world>)

#### 5.2.4. Bibliographic services

Tampere University manages SoleCris research database (solecris.uta.fi). The researchers annually add the references of their own published research publications (references of monographs, articles etc.). The library is responsible for the bibliographic checking of those references in order to maintain the quality of the database.

#### 5.2.6. Bibliographic management services

The library has acquired the reference management tool called Refworks. It is an online research management tool for writing and collaboration of references. The researchers can easily gather, manage, store and share all types of information, as well as generate citations and bibliographies. The library offers guidance for the beginners. There are also free reference management tools such as Zotero. Many comparisons of these management tools are available in the net.

### 5.3 Teaching or guidance services

#### 5.3.1. The teaching of good scientific practice

The University of Tampere is renewing the teaching of good scientific practice to ensure that each student will have sufficient scientific writing skills. The given lessons provide a systematic discussion and learning forums for learning on ethical issues. Tampere University is introducing new of electronic programme to identify plagiarism (*Turnitin*-programme). The programme is used primarily to teach good scientific practice. Both students and researchers can use it in the future to check the authenticity of their documents. The programme will be piloted in the autumn of 2013. At the beginning of 2014 the authenticity inspection for all doctoral dissertations is to be made by *Turnitin*. The University will renew the guidance and arrange training sessions for the supervisors of dissertations. The libraries, especially information specialists, are also involved in this process.

#### 5.3.2. Teaching information literacy

The Finnish university libraries had a joint project during 2004-2006 to promote the role of information literacy (IL) in higher education. Several university libraries have strongly developed their own IL-training programs during last decade. The University of Tampere carried out an educational reform during 2010-2011. A three-stage model of IL training for new degree programs was developed. The model was based on a national recommendation of the university libraries in the IL-teaching. The future holds many challenges due to the development of technologies and pedagogical methods. There are plans to extend IL training to cover the post graduate students (graduate school) (Toivonen 2012.).

Tampere University Library has offered workshops on information seeking and publishing for researchers during both spring and fall semesters. During the training day there are two different workshops: Information sources for researchers - e-books, e-journals and Tools for publishing - Web of Science, Scopus, publishing services and self-archiving. The researchers can register beforehand using a web form.

### 5.3.3. Book an Information specialist -service

Tampere University Library provides individual guidance in retrieving data. The service concept is called "Book an Information Specialist". The Department of Health Sciences Library initiated the service in 2009. The customers have the possibility to book a free one-hour personal consultation for information searches related problems. Service was an immediate success, and it was marketed in educational events and website. The content of guidance is built according to customer needs. When a student has tested information retrieval about the topic before instruction, usually gets an hour to build a search among domestic and foreign central database. At the same time information specialists give the customer a wider variety of tips for searching. The guidance aims to strengthen customers' confidence in their own abilities to independently make information searches later on. If, however, the client finds it difficult to make information retrieval, it is possible to order information retrieval service with fee. (Forsman, Ndinoshiho & Poteri 2012, 188-190.)

## 6. Assessing the quality of research

One of the recent trends in Finland, like many other countries, is that the quality of university research is evaluated through bibliometric quality indicators. The Tampere University library is taken as a partner into bibliometric analyses project in order to evaluate the research of the university. The evaluation of the university research is planned to start in 2014.

The library had an earlier pilot project with one of the departments, the School of Information Sciences (SIS) and its preceding institutions. Bibliometric analysis was done about the publications of the SIS for the period 2008-2010. The basic publication lists of researchers were acquired from university's own research database (SoleCRIS database). In the project the aim was to calculate the citation reference amounts of the SIS unit research publications and data sources used were Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases. In addition, it examined how the unit's main publications are located at different levels of Publication Forum. (Forsman, Ndinoshiho & Poteri 2012, 190-192)

The library was involved in Tenure Track recruitment process of one of the Schools in another project. Information specialists collected bibliometric indicators (e.g. number of publications, number of citations and H-index) in Web of Science and Scopus on the basis

of the publication lists of the applicants. Bibliometric data analysis was used as part of the evaluation of the applicants' scientific activity in the recruitment process.

One useful step to simplify the evaluation processes could be that researchers have their own Researcher ID that would help to solve the problem of how to recognize the researchers. With the ID, researcher could check and link his or her own publications. This is already possible in Web of Science (ISI) database. The researcher ID is easy to acquire (<http://www.researcherid.com/>). The task of libraries is to inform researchers about these kinds of possibilities.

## **7. Communication services**

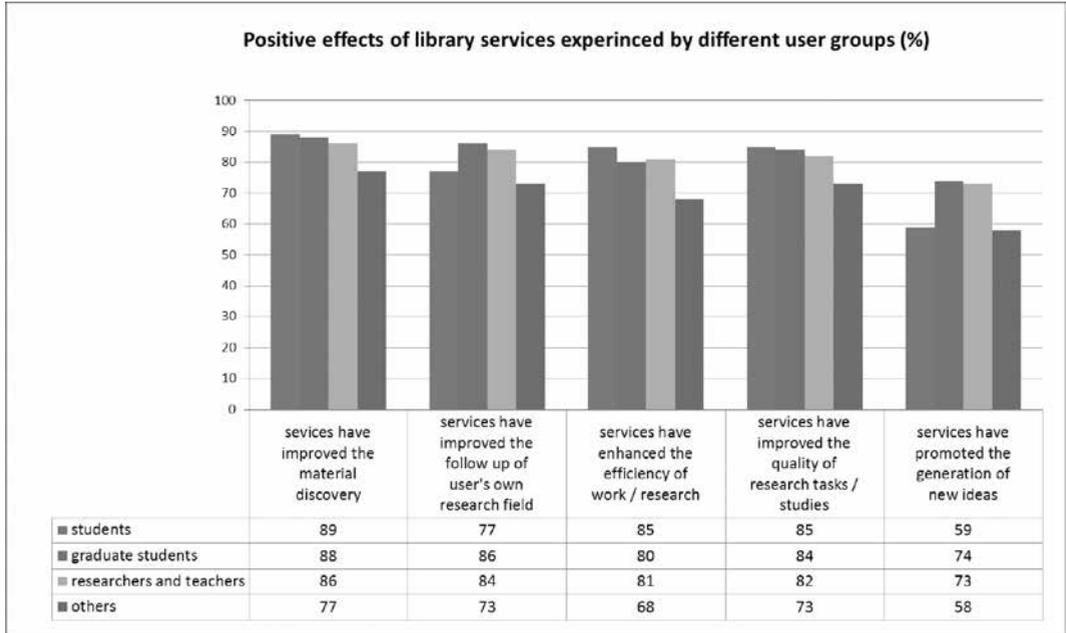
One of the challenges is how the library can reach researchers and communicate about the services it is able to provide for them. In 2012 the library management team established a working group for designing a new communication method for university researchers. This communication working group designed a welcome message for new researchers of the university. The welcome message included a brief summary of the key services of the library for research, as well as the relevant contact information. The welcome message is sent at the beginning of the each fall semester both in Finnish and in English by e-mail to all new researchers and teachers, whose employment had begun during that year. Information Management of the University gathers the contact information into an email list.

The library also provides a researcher services homepage which includes important information about the information sources and databases that especially researchers could use.

## **8. Impact of Library services**

Tampere University Library had the quality of service survey (in the spring of 2010). In the survey was asked the library users' perceptions of the effectiveness of services. Respondents were asked how the library services have facilitated the discovery of material and the monitoring of their own research fields, improved the quality of the studies or job, contributed to study or work, as well as contributed to the generation of new ideas. Survey results show clearly that the library services are seen to have a positive impact on learning and the work (see Figure 3). Most library services were considered to improve material discovery. For post-graduate students as well as researchers and teachers, the answers were very similar. For both groups the services of the library were also important when monitoring their own field or emergence of new ideas. (Iivonen 2010.)

Fig. 3. Impacts of library services (livonen 2010)



## 9. Conclusion

The aim of this article was to describe the different ways that university libraries can support university research. Surveying of users’ needs provides valuable knowledge for libraries when the new services are developed. There are several studies in the literature about the user needs concerning premises and collections.

To summarize, in the Ithaka study (2013) the roles of the libraries were: gateway, buyer, and archive and these first were related to the library’s collections. The other three roles were teaching, research, and undergraduate support, which are all more service-oriented roles. According the study the role that faculty members valued most was buyer’s role. The survey in Finland (Merimaa 2012) also brought out that the most important task of the libraries was to ensure to availability of comprehensive collections. In addition, the scientists hoped to get more information about the resources available.

Providing new services for researchers is seen as a way to raise library status. The changes also mean changes for library staff. With all these new services (for example bibliometric analysis, teaching of good scientific practice and open access repositories) there is also a demand for new competencies among library staff. Academic libraries should be aware of the changes in their operating environment and be able to anticipate within their universities. User surveys are also a suitable way to monitor users’ perceptions and the impact of library services.

The operating environment has changed. There is more competition between universities and in the academic research in general. Therefore, university libraries should support research in universities in more and better ways than has been done up to now. In addition to collections management and access to information resources, there is a growing need for new services which require not only knowledge of what the scientists need but also the library staff with new skills and the courage to take on new challenges.

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# School Libraries still at the periphery of the Namibian School Curriculum: Promoting an Enhanced Academic Performance

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## **Abstract**

The paper reports on a study into the challenges facing school libraries as they are perceived to be at the periphery of the curriculum with regard to promoting and enhancing academic performance in secondary and primary schools in Namibia. The study is based on a review of literature surrounding the topic, particularly from a Namibian perspective and context analysis using a mixed research of qualitative and quantitative research approaches based on a survey design supported by questionnaire and group interviews which were used as data collection research instruments. The questionnaire was targeted at the first school population, comprising principals/Head teachers in the thirteen (13) regions. The group interviews were targeted at teacher librarians/Basic Information Science teachers drawn from the 13 educational regions of the country. The research used a purposive sampling technique in its selection of research respondents. In the final analysis, the findings affirmed that school libraries are indeed at a cross roads regarding their impact on influencing and promoting academic performance within Namibia's School Curriculum. The main conclusion of this study is that challenges such as serious shortage of qualified teacher librarians; lack of specific library budgets to support the school libraries in most schools; limited school library opening hours for research and study purposes; from limited to no access to internet in some school libraries; outdated and not syllabi supportive book donations; and a shortage of skilled teacher librarians are among a host of the challenges that are affecting the meaningful service delivery of school libraries in Namibia. The study advocates a rethink regarding the challenges that came out of this study and emphasizes the seriousness of purpose in building capacity for school libraries so that they contribute meaningfully to Namibia's knowledge based economy as envisaged in vision 2030.

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**Keywords:** School libraries; Namibia School Curriculum; lifelong learning skills; pre-primary and primary schools; combined and secondary schools; knowledge based economy; Vision 2030; Information literacy skills; Education Library Service; Namibia Library & Archives Service; Basic Information Science; Learner

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## Introduction

The positive impact of school libraries in enhancing academic performance has been empirically documented through various research works. Therefore it has become imperative for stakeholders in education to make concerted efforts in reviewing and strengthening policies and guidelines capacitating school libraries. Valenza J (2010) argued that *“The library plays a vital role in empowering our students in their learning and to become lifelong learners. It is in the library that information literacy skills are taught”*.

Technological advancement in education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the global paradigm shift in the role that school and community libraries can play towards information literacy and socio-economic development; necessitate vigorous advocacy and adequate funding of these indispensable resources.

With a relatively high unemployment rate of the population aged 15 years and above at 27.4 percent in Namibia (Namibia Labour Force Survey Report 2012), literacy and skills development remain the priority for the education sector. However poor library infrastructure in many schools, poor reading and writing skills, high drop-out rate at secondary level (grades 10 + 12) are among the indicators that lead to an acute shortage of skilled labour force. Adequately resourced school libraries managed by professional qualified teacher librarians may assist in addressing these inefficiencies within the Education system. There is a general consensus that the education system in Namibia requires significant interventions, the Honourable Minister of Education Dr. Dawid Namwandi, at the University of Namibia’s Annual Education Conference held in Windhoek from 10 – 12 September 2013 asserted that *“There is lack of quality across the education sector as well as the mismatch in the demand and supply of skills in the country”* (The Namibian, Thursday, 12th September 2013).

Next, in stating the problem, a few issues will be raised that could have attributed to the perception that the school libraries have been kept at the periphery of the school curriculum.

## Research Problem and Objectives:

The dawn of Namibian Independence in the early 1990s, ushered in the Constitution, the New Education Legislation which incorporated education for all and a new curriculum. The change in the medium of instruction brought fresh optimism in the Namibian education scenario. It seemed to have been prompted by two lines of thought. Firstly, it was anticipated that the merging of the previously segregated ‘education authorities’ and a fairer provision of resources would sufficiently redress access, equality, democracy and quality of educational outcomes. Secondly, like many developing nations, Namibia’s education reform resonated with international trends in its emphasis on developing lifelong learners who are able to compete in a knowledge-based economy.

Despite all these developmental initiatives geared towards a totally integrated, flexible and high quality education and training system, the role that libraries in general and in particular at school level should play is not adequately strengthened in the implementation of the school curriculum. In fact there seems to be no concerted efforts in nurturing the synergy among NIED, PQA and the Education Library Services all under the auspices of the Ministry of Education in order to bring about continuous improvement and the development of school libraries.

Several studies have been conducted on the role of school libraries in supporting the curriculum. Donaldson G (2004) asserted that; *“Access to structured information skills’ programmes, run by professional librarians and well-developed libraries in Primary Schools will help to develop critical thinking skills.”* Marais, A (2002) in presenting the current state of school libraries in Namibia raised a concern that many of the schools still use classrooms, storerooms, offices or book cupboards to house their book collections. Montagne Ian (2001) further summarised the state of school libraries by commenting that, *“As the decade came to close, school libraries were said to have the lowest of priorities in educational spending. The majority of schools possessed no library. Where some semblance of a library did exist, it was often no more than few shelves of outdated and worn out material, inadequately staffed.”*

Notwithstanding the growing body of research on the role of school libraries and how these institutions help in the enhancement of academic performance, very little is written on their role in the Namibian School curriculum. Very little mention is made of the role of the library both in the Lower Primary Phase – Grades 1-4 (2005) and the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2010). On the contrary the Upper Primary and Junior Secondary syllabi include Basic Information Science as a non-promotional subject which has been allocated less than 5 per cent teaching time. In that regard the study had the following objectives:

- To examine school library resources, services and how these are intergraded into the activities of the school curriculum.
- To highlight challenges faced by Basic Information Science teachers and librarians tasked with the management of school libraries in the regions.

- To encourage school library advocacy campaign and raise awareness of the educational value of school libraries
- To recommend a rethink on the part of the stakeholders regarding seriously the issue of capacitating school libraries so that they contribute meaningfully to Namibia’s knowledge based economy as envisaged in vision 2030.

Since Independence in 1990, Namibia has made good progress in overcoming the educational disparities of the past and to date the largest portion of the National Budget (almost 25 per cent) is appropriated to Education. According to the latest Education Statistics data (EMIS 2012) there are 1,723 schools countrywide with a joint learner population of 617,827 and a teacher population of 24,660 with an average learner: teacher ratio of 25.1. Table 1 shows the figures as recorded in the 2012 school year.

Table 1: Education Statistics for Namibia in 2012: Facts and Figures



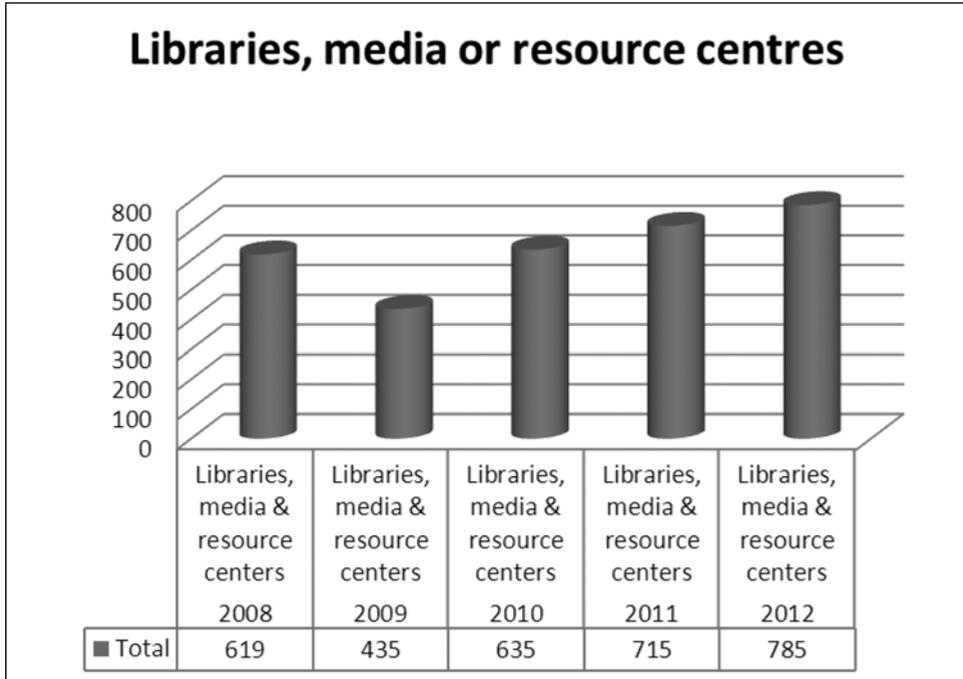
Regions	Learners	Teacher	Schools
Erongo	32114	1280	66
Hardap	21886	845	55
//Karas	20110	826	49
Kavango	77314	2876	323
Khomas	73302	2983	100
Kunene	20332	838	60
Ohangwena	90703	3421	243
Omaheke	18365	706	42
Omusati	86430	3632	247
Oshana	50740	2137	137
Oshikoto	60439	2407	200
Otjozondjupa	36284	1315	72
Zambezi	29808	1394	102
	617 827	24660	1723

(as per 2012 Education Management Information System (EMIS) data)

Having presented the overall factual picture of the education system for 2012 in terms of the number of learners, teachers and schools above, it will be opportune for the purpose of this study to further look at the development of school libraries during the period under review. The total number of the teaching facilities i.e. libraries, media or resource centres have been reported for five years. It is further reported in the 2012 Education Statistics that from 2008, rooms were regrouped into specific purposes they are serving in schools.

The following table indicates the number of school libraries, media or resource centres in relation to the schools over a period of four years (5):

Table 2: Libraries, media or resource centres



(As per 2012 EMIS data)

Looking at the scenario on libraries, media and resource centres in Table 2, it can be concluded that as per 2012 learner population, the library:learner ratio stood at 1 school library for every 787 learners. It can further be inferred from the secondary source data (EMIS, 2012) that with a total of 1,723 schools and 785 libraries, media or resource centres as per the graph above, about 45 percent of the schools nationwide had school library facilities by 2012.

The drastic drop of 30 percent in the provision of libraries, media or resources centers (184) in schools between 2008 and 2009 seems to confirm arguments raised by some interviewees that with an increase in the demand for classroom space, library buildings are used for teaching purposes. Equally when the need arises, libraries converted into classrooms are regrouped to be used for instructional purposes.

On emphasising the importance of a library in any school, Ellen Forsyth (2000) argues that: *“It is important to keep in mind that whatever the cost of providing public/school library services to community, the cost of not providing it is higher.”*

The education system in Namibia cannot be effectively delivered without equitable access to well-managed collections of learning resources. Namibia's realisation of Vision 2030 and its aspiration to compete in the global knowledge economy depends on producing information literate school leavers. As such there is need for Namibia to go back to the basics of educational provision and re-look at the role and place of school libraries in the school curriculum.

## Literature Review

The review of literature surrounding the impact of school libraries on learner achievement brings out discussions on various trends which have emerged within the Namibian and global context. Libraries are vital resources for school pupils across the country. Graham Donaldson (2004) writes that; *"Libraries are places that bring learning to life and encourage the development of vital research and study skills that pupils can take with them to further and higher education and into workplace. Good experience in the school library can stroke enthusiasm for learning that can last a lifetime"*. Arko-Cobbah (2004) identified four objectives of school libraries as:

- providing resources for wider and deeper understanding by students of various subjects in school,
- promotion of reading habit among the younger generation,
- initiation of career interests among the youth and
- assurance of feeding philosophical and social values into community.

Information literacy defines levels of educational success and the ability to participate economically and socially in society. As the hub of information flows within the school, the school library needs to be a central player in making pupils information literate. Open-ended responses from the questionnaire confirmed that school libraries have an indispensable role to play in providing resources for wider and deeper understanding of the various subjects in the curriculum. Evidence however suggest that the provision of well-resourced school libraries is sporadic. In many primary schools, rural as well as urban, the concept of the school library as a vital element of teaching and learning is neither widespread nor embedded in school planning;. In the secondary school phase, provision varies from excellent in private schools to the invisible in many of the public schools.

Magina & Lwehabura (2011) argue that; "school libraries also provide teachers with access to materials relevant to the curriculum they are expected to teach and to their professional development." The approach of teaching and learning both in the Curriculum for the Lower Primary Phase (2005/6) (Grades 1 – 4) and the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2010) is based on a paradigm of Learner Centred Education. This approach to teaching and learning further integrates the use of ICTs as a tool to enhance the instructional process. Both curricula articulates that; *"Good management of resources,*

*especially at school level can support curriculum interventions and learners benefit from effective all-round education” (NCBE, 2010, p37).*

In the Curriculum for the Lower Primary Phase, for example Environmental Studies promotes among others the following aim in the curriculum guide: *“develop a lively, questioning, appreciative and creative intellect, enabling learners to discuss issues rationally, to make careful observation and analysis, to experiment, to think scientifically, solve problems, and apply themselves to tasks” (p.91).* In the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2010) the aim in relation to developing an information society is *“to develop information literacy; skills in seeking, evaluating, using and producing information and information sources appropriately. The sources include traditional and local knowledge, libraries and ICTs” (NCBE, p9).* The content of the curricula is definitely “library friendly”, however in implementing these noble goals, the role of the school library has been kept at the periphery.

Susan Neumann (2011) concluded that *“Libraries are vital for children’s achievement and developing informational needs. Children need libraries in their classrooms, schools and communities. But all children will not use the materials to their fullest extent without supportive adults and librarians.”* Libraries that are “well equipped with current and relevant materials are considered to be great asset as they provide an avenue for consulting materials that will provide factual knowledge needed for the day to day challenges the users face and in the end, make intelligent decisions concerning their personal lives” (School Library Support, 2012)

Guidelines for Principals (Ministry of Education document, December 2005, p101) stipulates under the heading Cross-curricular teaching that; *“All teachers share responsibility for ensuring that Career Guidance, Life skills and Basic Information Science are not left to separate lessons only, but are dealt with explicitly in different subjects.”* The approach used in deploying teacher librarians, more especially teachers assigned with the teaching of Basic Information Science is definitely not going to nurture information literacy skills among the learners.

Academic improvement in schools should be regarded as a shared responsibility; therefore the proactive approach in considering libraries as key stakeholders towards academic improvement is definitely a move in the right direction. The Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP 2005) has identified the need to upgrade and refocus the library and information service network and knowledge management systems to provide access to knowledge and information for all Namibians, both in formal education and lifelong learning, recognising that:

- Libraries are the obvious choice for public access points to overcome the digital divide and also assist in improving the academic performance of the learners.

The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2006) gives the mission of a school library as: *“The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today’s information and knowledge-based society. The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.”*

Good community and school libraries are essential to the transformation of the Namibian education system, which aims to provide quality schools and improved academic performance for all learners. International research has provided convincing evidence of the vital contribution of community/schools libraries to quality education and student/learner achievements (Ken Haycock 1993, S. Krashen 2004, Keith Curry Lance Research 1993 – 2003).

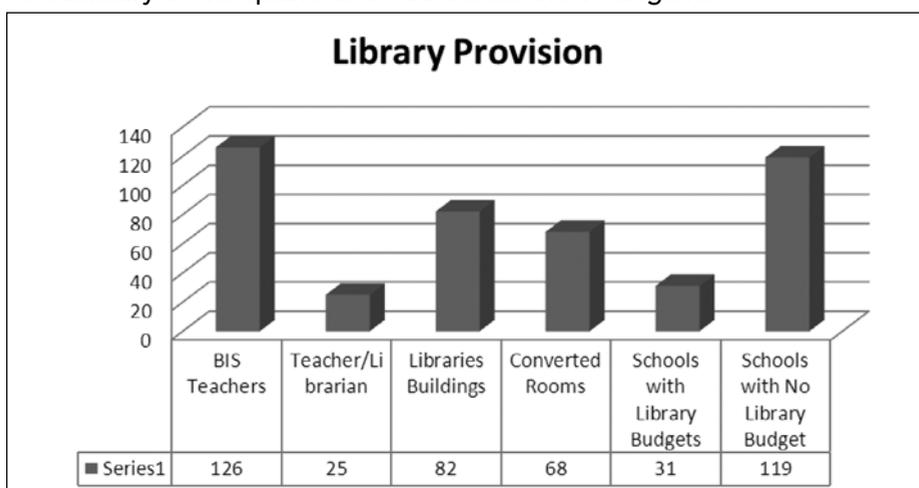
## **Study Methodology**

Khotari C.R. (1990) argued that research methods or techniques are approaches the researchers use in performing research operations whereas methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. Qualitative and quantitative research approaches based on a survey design supported by use of questionnaires and group interviews were employed as data collection instruments. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) defined the combination of qualitative and quantitative in the methodology of a study as “mixed methods”.

The questionnaire was targeted to the first population, comprising school principals and head teachers in the thirteen (13) regions. Since the study attempts to establish the state of school libraries in all thirteen education regions (at the time of the survey there were only 13 regions), only a set of 15 copies of questionnaires were dispatched to each region. The principals or head teachers were purposely targeted since they are believed to be reliably in charge and further oversee that the educational programmes are implemented on time.

The sample sizes for principals/head teachers, teachers, librarians/Basic Information Science teachers, learners and school libraries were based on their population size and not necessarily on that of the entire respective regions. Though the questionnaire was targeted at the first population, comprising school principals/head teachers as the immediate respondents, their number is also included in the teacher population. Table 3 is a summary of the quantitative data from the 13 regions covering the different school phases, learners, teachers the state of school libraries (storerooms, classrooms used as library facilities are referred to as “converted rooms”).

Table: 3 Summary of the quantitative data from the 13 Regions



(as per the study)

Since the main focus of the paper is on demonstrating how school libraries are still at the periphery of the school curriculum, table 4 and the bar graph below indicate that almost 45% of the schools in the sample still use converted rooms (classrooms, storerooms, book cupboards to house book collections) and only 17% of those managing those libraries, media or resource centres are librarians/teacher librarians. Vision 2030, Policy Framework in ensuring effectiveness directed that, “the objective of ensuring quality service is made possible by increased funding for social services and human resource development.” (p37).

Table 1. State of school libraries as per the respondents from the 13 regions

Different Phases		Learners		Teachers	
Primary school	16	Primary school	7731	Prim without	269
Prim with Pre-primary	55	Prim with Pre-primary	32989	Prim with Pre-primary	1181
Junior Sec/ Combined	33	Junior Sec/ Combined	15941	Junior Sec/ Combined	808
High School	46	High School	30678	High School	1283
<b>TOTAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>TOTAL LEARNERS</b>	<b>87339</b>	<b>TOTAL TEACHERS</b>	<b>3541</b>

(as per the study)

The school library, being closest to the education system, certainly does not only have the responsibility to provide support materials for the day to day teaching and learning, but can (if well-resourced and managed professionally) equip learners with the skills

that will enable all Namibian learners to take advantage of a rapidly changing global environment which could contribute to their economic and social development.

## **Sampling size and selection**

Looking at the total number of 1,723 schools in Namibia as given in Table 1, for convenience, each region was requested to select 15 schools to complete the questionnaires which were supposed to give a sample of 195 schools that constitutes 11 percent. Some schools returned more than the required 15, whilst there were others that submitted below 8 questionnaires. This led to the use of a sample of 143 Government schools and 7 Private schools for the study.

As mentioned earlier, the study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were collected through questionnaires and interview methods, while both the probability and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Under the probability sampling, the stratification technique was used to sample from the school population of teachers, learners in the regions stratified by the school phases. Simple random sampling was used to select principals/head teachers within each region.

## **Data Collection**

The data were collected from a random sample of 150 schools in the regions using questionnaires that were sent out to principals/head teachers in the thirteen (13), at the time of the study, education regions. The survey data were supplemented with data from the 2012 Education Management Information System (EMIS) data on Education Statistics for Namibia: Facts and Figures. Part I of the questionnaire mostly consisted of closed questions since the respondents had to give the following information;

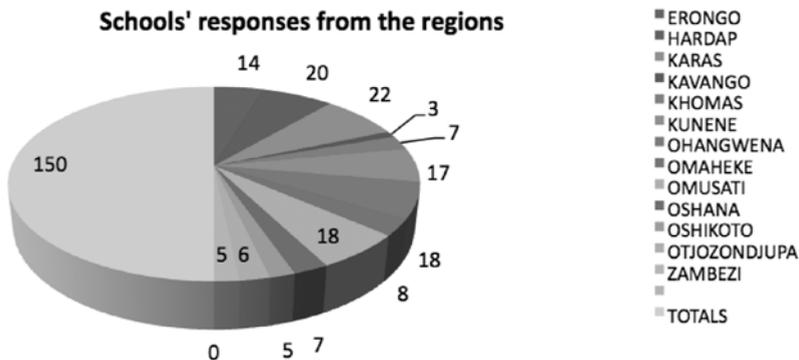
- Number of learners, teachers and the school phase i.e. primary, primary with pre-primary, combined or high school
- Staff member in charge of the school library, whether it's a professional librarian or Basic Information Science teacher
- Whether the school library has a budget or not

Part II of the questionnaire contained more open-ended questions that permitted a free response and gave the respondents considerable latitude in phrasing their replies.

During a training session arranged for teacher librarians/BIS teachers (July 2013) by Education Library Services in Windhoek, focused interviews were held with 14 respondents in order to gather in-depth information on their perception on how school libraries could assist in enhancing academic performance.

Before mailing the questionnaire packets on 23 July 2013 to the regions, the research exercise and rationale were discussed with the coordinators of the Education Library Services in the regions respectively in order to randomly select the participating schools. The research approach focuses on collecting, analysing and mixing qualitative and quantitative data in one survey, in the light thereof the first part of the questionnaire focuses on the quantitative data whilst the second part appeals for qualitative responses.

Although sufficient time was given to the respondents to return the questionnaires, two of the regions namely Oshikoto and Zambezi (former Caprivi) forwarded most of their responses way after the analysis of the data was done. Only three schools from the Kavango region were able to forward their responses. The chart below shows the responses from the respective regions:



(as per the study)

The group interviews were targeted at teacher librarians drawn from the 13 regions of the country. The research used a purposive sampling technique in its selection of research respondents. Taking into consideration that many of the schools do not have professional school librarians, of those selected for the interviews, only 2 respondents were librarians and 10 were Basic Information Science teachers who are tasked with the management of the school library. Structured interview technique was used considering Kothari C.R's (1990) advice that, "Every effort should be made to create a friendly atmosphere of trust and confidence, so that respondents may feel at ease while talking to and discussing with the interviewer" (p99).

## Findings and Discussions

The quantitative data collected using the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics, while the data collected from the qualitative (open-ended) responses and structured interviews were summarised and deductions and inferences made. From the analysis of the data, a number of findings were made but the respondents from the

different regions also identified shortcomings and challenges with regard to the support these schools receive from the Ministry of Education, especially from the sub-division Education Library Services which is tasked with school libraries.

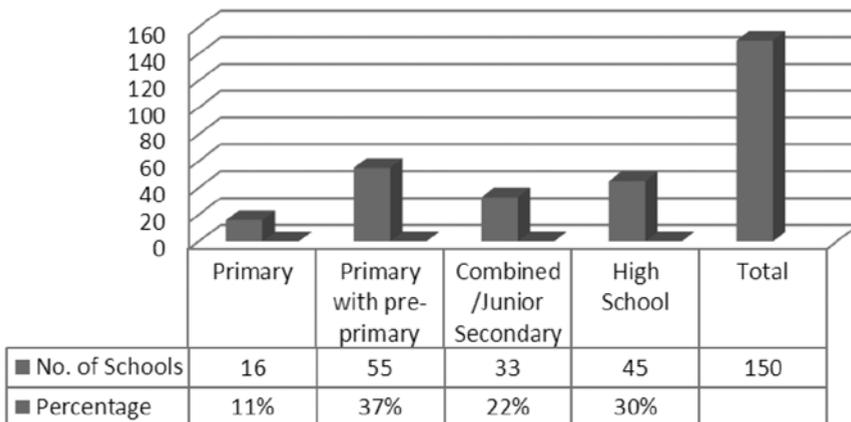
### Effective integration of the school library and curriculum in most of the regions a stern challenge

The integration depends primarily on the organisation and administration of the school i.e. buildings, equipment, curriculum, materials and teaching staff should back-up the unifying aim of quality outcomes. In other words, each part of the entire school should be directed so as to contribute to the achievement of an enhanced academic performance. The library, being part of the school once it is adequately resourced and managed by professional librarians, can serve as the primary integrating agency; however this integration fundamentally depends on the understanding and cooperation of its stakeholders.

From the data gathered there is a clear indication that the principle of “one size fits all” seems not to be effective in the provision of school libraries services. The high demand for school places during the mid-1990s and the addition of the pre-primary phase to formal education at the beginning of 2010 led to combining two to three phases in some school in Namibia. More especially when a school accommodates more than two phases, for example offering classes from Pre-primary up to the High School level then even the provision of library facilities will have to take the different age groups into consideration, which to a certain extent can become a costly integration.

In the bar graph below, the responses indicated the number of schools as per phase that took part in the survey:

Figure 5. School phases in the survey



According to the table 5, Primary Schools with Pre-Primary Phase were the highest with 37% followed by High Schools with 30%. It was reported that due to lack of instructional space, some school libraries are converted into classrooms. One of the interviewees (Basic Information Science teacher), during a training session held in Windhoek for school librarians in July 2013 remarked that; "At this moment the library is not functional at all because of the renovations done by the MCA - Namibia in order to establish a library. The room was previously use for classroom teaching."

### **School library structures in the regions**

For the school library to contribute meaningfully to the teaching and learning process, appropriate structures are very important because these facilitate a good and conducive learning environment. The study tried to find out more about the available school library structures, management of the library and whether there was any budgetary provision for development. It was found that with the exception of 5 schools that indicated that there were no library facilities at all; almost 57% of schools have appropriate library structures, whilst 43% of the schools in the study were still using classrooms, storerooms, book cupboards to house book collections.

According to the data collected in the study only 25 (17%) of the 145 schools confirmed the availability of conventional library facilities and were managed by professional librarians, the majority of them being at high school level. The number of qualified teacher librarians employed in Namibian school libraries declined with the implementation of the new staffing norms for schools and hostels in the late 1990s. This seems to be a global trend as highlighted by the Australian experience. (Lonsdale, M, 2003).

Furthermore, more than 80% of the Basic Information Science teachers responsible for managing the school libraries as shown in the study, were tasked to manage the school library, yet many of them had no training in library management. In the structured interviews, 75% of the respondents confirmed that since Basic Information Science is a non-promotional subject, they sometimes use those periods to teach promotional subjects they are responsible for in the school curriculum.

Only 21% of the schools in the study indicated that specific budgetary provision is in place for the school library, whilst others relied on donations from the business/ corporate world, from tourists who visit their schools and non-governmental organisations.

### **Resources available in the school library that is being used by learners and teachers**

Most schools indicated the follow as resources available in their schools;

- Reference books, encyclopaedias, fiction and non-fiction books, dictionaries, magazines, newspapers, computers, DVDs, TVs, posters, fliers, pamphlets, games.
- Book donations from NGOs and some friends of libraries.

Few schools reported that the school library is also used as the ICT classroom, whilst only 10% have confirmed access to internet facility in the school library. The primary source of supply for library materials is the Education Library Service, a subdivision of the Directorate: Namibia Library and Archives Services (NLAS) in the Ministry of Education. The major challenge raised by respondents in schools with the pre-primary phase was that some materials in the libraries are beyond the reading and comprehension level of pre-primary learners. Where BIS teachers are in charge of the school libraries no stocktaking or weeding of old books is done. Consequently many old and outdated books take up shelves space leaving very little room for innovativeness.

### **How the school library assist in developing reading, learning and literacy skills of the learners**

The following are some of the ways in the school libraries help as presented by the respondents:

- Library literacy skills compulsory from grades 1-7, at the same time Grade 5 - 7 learners are shown how to make use of the reference books when they work on projects. From time to time language teachers select reading materials for learners from the library to promote reading culture during the national Readathon week.
- Library opens during break time (Tuesday – Thursday) and Mondays after school for learners to borrow books. Reading and debating clubs in some Combined, Junior Secondary and High Schools require learners to use library books; encyclopaedia and internet access where available.
- “Our library helps learners in many ways such as knowing how to use a computer, how to play different games and help them use critical thinking because they are always expected to find information in reference books to complete their task, develop reading skills.”
- School libraries in some towns and settlements also provide study space for learners who because of socio-economic conditions do not have proper study space at home.

The biggest drawback as per the respondents was the absence of professional librarians in many of the school libraries. Most school libraries are managed by Basic Information Science teachers yet no regular training workshops are arranged for them in key areas such as cataloguing, classification, stocktaking weeding or processing of books.

## **School libraries not properly integrated into the Curriculum at most schools in the survey**

In demonstrating the relationship between the school library and the curriculum, Morris B. (2004) argued that: “school libraries serve as “learner-oriented laboratories which support, and support the school’s curriculum ..... A school library serves as the centre and coordinating agency for all materials used in the school.” (p32). According to the respondents in the study, 5 schools had no libraries thus could not comment on this question, in 7 schools mostly private schools, school libraries were properly intergraded into the school curriculum. However respondents from 95% of the schools in the survey agreed that school libraries are considerably marginalized for them to meaningfully enhance academic performance. The following are some of the responses to that particular question:

- Yes, “the School libraries are white elephants, these facilities are out there, but not used, because no trained or qualified librarians are available to assist teachers on how to look for information.
- Yes. I do support the view because some principals argue that the staffing norm in Namibian Schools does not make provision of the appointment of librarians.
- Yes. I do support the view because of the following: No proper infrastructure at schools for libraries; inadequate materials, no knowledgeable staff members at school to run the libraries effectively.”
- I agree, this is because subjects like BIS are given to teachers that are already overloaded with promotional subjects and they pay less attention to the library services. I would prefer to have a full-time librarian who will be able to assist both teachers and learners.
- I support the view because not every school in Namibia has a school library, and some of the schools have mini-libraries which have only insufficient resources to cater for everyone at school. Not every learner will benefit from those limited resources. All schools in Namibia should have libraries and those libraries should be equipped with needed resources to promote academic performance.

Finally, the study also served as a services evaluation tool to establish as to how the Directorate: Namibia Library and Archives in general and in particular the subdivision, Education Library Services can assist in strengthening the effectiveness of school libraries in enhancing academic performance.

- Use media to introduce and educate the public on the importance of libraries. Once a year pop in at the schools to see what is happening in school libraries. Train Learner Representative Council members/Media prefects at schools or unemployed youth to take care of libraries.
- The Ministry should on the capital budget make provision for the inclusion of libraries with each new school to be built. Teacher librarians should regularly be given in-service training which means Education Library Service staff members should visit schools in the regions to advise and render the necessary support.

- Provide timely and relevant resources per region on their budget to bring libraries up to standard.
- Ensure that there are proper buildings to be used as libraries at Government schools. Appoint library assistants at schools with secondary phases. Recommend for librarian posts for schools with libraries and assist where necessary.

## Conclusion and recommendation

This study found out that in general there is no strong articulation and emphasis on the integration between the school curriculum and the role that the school library ought to play in enhancing academic performance. Some teacher librarians are of the opinion that the role that school libraries should play with regard to the integration of its activities into the Namibia curriculum is not well defined as the school library is not at the centre of the curriculum.

With too much emphasis on excellent examination results, non-promotion subjects like Basic Information Science have been allocated less than 5 per cent teaching time per week. The study further highlighted the concern that the misconception that the teaching of Basic Information Science is equitable with being able to run the school library services efficiently should be done away with so as to appoint professionally qualified school librarians. This view strongly supports the content of the Formal Education circular (12 July 2013) that revives the appointment of school librarians; "If a school principal, through the school board can prove by providing statistical evidence over a period of 6 months or longer, the regional director can consider allocating the additional post to the school" p4. By rendering proper school library services at schools, managed by a professionally qualified librarian working closely with the school management and other teachers, the whole learning process will improve.

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are advanced to the Ministry of Education, in particular to the Directorate Namibia Library and Archives Services in collaboration with the education regions in order to improve school library services:

- There must be a deliberate shift in policy of nurturing a reading culture in Namibia using an indigenous approach to learning in Namibia through encouraging young learners to learn home grown Namibian languages. Namibia Library and Archives Services should lead this process in partnership with other directorates in the Ministry of Education.
- The presence of the Education Library Service (ELS) must remain visible in supporting the development of school libraries. This seems not to be the case as felt by some of the teacher librarians who were interviewed
- There is general consensus that school libraries can contribute positively in fostering young learners with lifelong learning skills as well as higher academic achievement in schools. Therefore strong library programmes that are adequately staffed and funded school be promoted.

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# The teaching of Information Literacy Skills (ILS) within Zimbabwe's Academic Institutions

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## **Abstract**

The paper is a cross sectional descriptive survey which explores the teaching of the Information and Literacy Skills (ILS) programmes at six (6) Zimbabwean universities. The survey was occasioned by a need to investigate the teaching of ILS within academic institutions in Zimbabwe. The survey did not seek to prove causal relationships but was a fact-finding study to determine the extent to which Zimbabwean universities have adopted the teaching of ILS. Data was collected using questionnaires which were self-administered to respondents using e-mail targeting university librarians; university students and their lecturers. All respondents were asked the same questions in, as far as possible, the same circumstances. The data analysis was used and derived from a purposive sample of a certain percentage cross section of the target population. A review of literature surrounding the historiography on what constitutes ILS & its teaching at a global context & from some selected universities in southern Africa was also done with the view of supporting arguments on ILS definition and research work done by other scholars. The survey revealed that there is a strategic partnership between libraries & faculty departments regarding the teaching of ILS within Zimbabwe's academic institutions. A major finding of the survey study is that ILS is being taught in Zimbabwean universities as a curriculum subject but most of those teaching the subject are librarians & lecturers, some of whom lack pedagogy training in the teaching of ILS. The survey study concludes that most of the universities in Zimbabwe are teaching the ILS Programme with the strategy of empowering students to be equipped with lifelong learning skills in order to survive the demands of academic learning & challenges of life after university learning. The paper recommends academic stakeholders in Zimbabwe work in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education to develop a national ILS policy which embraces the teaching of ILS within the country's education curriculum agenda programme.

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**Keywords:** Zimbabwe; information literacy skills; lifelong learning skills; pedagogy; lecturers, librarians; Zimbabwe Universities Library Consortium (ZULC), Zimbabwe Open University; University of Zimbabwe; Africa University, Great Zimbabwe University, Midlands State University & National University of Science & Technology (NUST).

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## Introduction

Zimbabwe's literacy level is rated at 92% ranking which is number one in Africa. Explanations as to this best rating are rooted in Zimbabwe's investment in education when the country got its independence in 1980 as well as a good grounding within Zimbabwe's British colonial educational heritage system. There are fifteen (15) state and private universities operating within Zimbabwe's ten (10) provinces. These universities are: University of Zimbabwe (which is the pioneer university); Zimbabwe Open University; National University of Science & Technology; Solusi University; Great Zimbabwe University; Africa University; Bindura University of Science & Education; Zimbabwe Ezekial Guti Church University; Catholic University; Reformed Church University; Midlands State University; Lupane University; Harare Institute of Technology University; Chinhoyi University of Technology & Women's University. This paper will focus on the teaching of Information Literacy Skills (ILS) in Zimbabwe's academic institutions with particular focus on the following six (6) universities namely: Africa University; Zimbabwe Open University; University of Zimbabwe; Midlands State University; National University of Science & Technology & Great Zimbabwe University.

The Africa University is credited for introducing the concept of teaching of ILS in Zimbabwean universities in 1999. Other universities later followed suit with the University of Zimbabwe adopting ILS teaching in 2003; the Zimbabwe Open University in 2009 & the Midlands State University in 2010. The National University of Science & Technology (NUST) has also adopted the teaching of ILS and the Great Zimbabwe University is yet to introduce the teaching of ILS but plans are underway to teach ILS at this university. There is a striking resemblance regarding the manner in which the teaching of ILS was introduced and adopted within Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions as the process was led by library departments.

## Literature Review

A review of the literature regarding the background to information literacy & its teaching within universities points to its accreditation as being led by scholars such as Paul Zurkowski in 1974. (Phiri, D, 2010). However James Herring (2011) argues that

information literacy was only used as a recognised term in the 1980s. Prior to that it only existed as “study skills” which was a library activity that was popular in European universities during the 60s and was developed to the term “library instruction” in the 70s (Ibid).

Professor Steven Mutula has also played a major academic role regarding popularizing ILS research rooted in the southern African context primarily focusing on the ILS evolution in Botswana (Mutula, Stephen, M, 2010). The University of Zimbabwe later adopted the teaching of ILS having been influenced by the Botswana ILS trends. (Chanakira, T. W, 2008). ILS is now a popular concept which is taught to students in many universities in southern Africa including Zambia (interview with Paul Zulu, 2013).

## **Definitions of Information Literacy**

There is no consensus regarding the definition of information literacy but various schools of thought have compromised at the definitions that consider information literacy as constituting the following issues namely: ability to know when information is needed; ability to find the information; ability to evaluate the information; ability to use the information that has been found to effectively solve a research need. (S Mutula, 2011).

Other scholars; notably (Bothma et al, 2008) have defined information literacy skills as embedded in one’s ability to realize the following set of skills: understanding how the information is organized; identifying the best sources of information for a given need; locating those sources; evaluating the sources critically and sharing the information and the knowledge of commonly used research techniques. Other scholars also emphasize on independent & critical thinking as central to ILS (Herring & Tarter, 2007). Kutlthau’s research into ILS has also been recognised as crucial as it is believed to be the most quoted in defining ILS as alluded to by James Herring. Other definitions on IL capture the recognition of intellectual property copyrights. There is also a school of thought that highlights information explosion as a development that has created information literacy as defined by one’s ability to be equipped with computer literacy skills within the definition of an information literate individual. (Mutula, S, 2011).

## **Definition of Pedagogy**

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2013) defines pedagogy as the study of teaching methods.

## **Pedagogy ILS teaching in the African context**

The dilemma of pedagogy teaching practice and experiences in many African contexts (Akyeampong, Pryor, & Ampiah, 2006; Pontefract & Hardman, 2006) tends to draw

on dictatic, teacher-centred methods in education where individuals are encouraged to 'memorise' and relay facts. While this may be an effective way to build a body of knowledge and technical skills, it does not provide the environment in which individuals can critically reflect on their attitudes or behaviours (Ibid). Capacity development programmes are more likely to be successful if trainers focus on the technical as well as the softer skills, such as critical thinking, and reflective practices.

Over the last three years, BLDS, ITOCA and partners have focused in supporting trainers to make the paradigm shift from didactic training methods to more learner-centred approaches. This effort has also been directed to Zimbabwe targeting librarians & other education stakeholders. By modelling techniques and approaches IDS has discovered that trainers are better capacitated to transfer the approaches in their organisations independently and sustainably (M Hepworth, S Duvigneau, 2012)

## **Methodology**

Five (5) sets of questionnaires, interview schedules and an observation checklist were employed as data collection instruments. The questionnaires were targeted to the first population comprising the heads/deputy librarians of the six Zimbabwean universities as well as one deputy librarian from a Zambian university. The other questionnaire was targeted to mostly students of the Zimbabwe Open University where the author is a part-time lecturer teaching Library Science & Records Management. Another set of questionnaires was directed at ZOU & NUST lecturers teaching Library Science & Records Management at the two universities. The author also observed ZOU students' understanding regarding ILS through marking some ZOU assignments as a part-time lecturer. The questionnaires contained mostly open-ended items which were sent to population participants by e-mail. The questionnaire on pedagogy was targeted at one IDS participant based in the United Kingdom.

The responses to questionnaires were content analysed & interpreted qualitatively. Ngulube (2003) argues that content analysis involves the collection & organization of information systematically in a standard format that enables analysts to draw conclusions about the characteristics & meaning of recorded material. The content analyses are based on around certain words or concepts within texts or set of texts. Researchers quantify & analyse the presence, meaning & relationships of such words & concepts & then make inferences about the messages within texts. (Garaba, F, 2012).

The source of the text could be anything written, visual or spoken that serves as a communication medium & includes interviews; discussions etc. Content analysis is usually categorised into conceptual analysis & relational analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:492). Thematic or conceptual analysis involves establishing the existence & frequency of concepts usually represented by words or phrases in a text as argued by Colorado

State University (2007). Relational or semantic analysis looks at the relationship among concepts in a text (Ibid). The author therefore used both recurring & related concepts represented by words & phrases from respondents in the regulatory instruments of the surveyed university institutions to examine meaning.

## **Findings**

ILS is being taught in all the universities surveyed except for at one tertiary institution where preparations are under way to include ILS in the curriculum. Librarians are leading the process of ILS teaching within Zimbabwean tertiary institutions and have received pedagogy training through workshops organized by independent organizations based outside the country.

### **Zimbabwe Open University & ILS teaching**

The teaching of ILS at the ZOU was introduced in 2009. The ILS teaching is integrated into the teaching curriculum but currently it's targeted at ZOU students studying for a LIS & Records Management degree programme using a module approach. Plans are underway to teach ILS across all programmes. The teaching of ILS at ZOU is led by two (2) departments namely the Library & Information Service (LIS) & Department of Library & Records Management division which teach ILS using a module approach.

The Library has delivered ILS teaching to forty one (41) ZOU students (2013) using computer lab sessions primarily focusing on teaching ZOU students how to access e-books; e-resources & citation & referencing. There are 21 ZOU librarians who are teaching ILS. Most ZOU librarians/Part Time Lecturers have received ILS pedagogy training through workshops. Most ZOU students are aware of the implications surrounding being equipped with ILS as they have applied when writing their assignments & during exams.

### **Great Zimbabwe University & ILS teaching**

The survey revealed Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) as the only one which has not yet started teaching ILS for administrative reasons stated as follows:

The Senate has not yet approved the regulations of the revised Communication Skills Course. The teaching of ILS will be offered at the GZU as part of the Communication Skills course & the regulations have not yet been approved. The process of delaying the teaching of ILS at the GZU was delayed because there was one holder of a Master's degree available to teach ILS but the university now has three (3).

A committee composed of library & academics will draw up the ILS course content which will be based on the following objectives:

- To introduce students to the concept of IL

- To enable students to effectively use information in different formats
- To understand the economic, legal, & social issues surrounding the use of information, & access & use information ethically & legally
- To use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose

The ILS proposal is to be included as a compulsory university wide communication skills course that is offered to all first year students. Three (3) Librarians will be teaching ILS at the GZU when they start teaching it. Those who will teach ILS have attended ZULC & INASP workshops on pedagogy & learner centred instruction. These workshops were primarily on how to teach ILS.

### **Africa University (AU) & ILS teaching**

Data gathered from a questionnaire sent to the AU Library confirms the university as the first to introduce the teaching of ILS by librarians in Zimbabwe. ILS teaching was introduced at AU in 1999 as a not examinable course but became a credited & examinable course in 2012. ILS is taught as a one (1) hour credit course under the Communications Skills 1 to all first year undergraduate students. Sessions are organised for undergraduate students though this is not examinable. 540 AU students have been taught ILS in 2013. Three (3) librarians are teaching ILS at AU. The AU librarians have received pedagogy training through workshops & courses organized by ITOCA & INASP in conjunction with the University of Zimbabwe through the Zimbabwe University libraries Consortium (ZULC).

### **University of Zimbabwe & ILS teaching**

The UZ introduced ILS teaching to its students in 2003. The UZ ILS teaching is modeled on teaching students information searching skills & personal information management. The ILS teaching is done by UZ librarians & is integrated into the UZ teaching curriculum under communication skills. Over 1000 UZ students have received ILS teaching in 2013. Twenty (20) UZ librarians teach ILS. UZ librarians have received ILS pedagogy training through workshops and one of them was sponsored by IDS & ZEPARU which was titled: *“Pedagogy of Senior IL Trainers”* & was held on 4 – 8 June 2012 at the UZ.

### **National University of Science & Technology (NUST) & ILS teaching**

The NUST teaches ILS through the Library & Information Science Department. The LIS teaches ILS as aspects of courses they teach to LIS students. This ILS teaching is modeled in courses like Online Retrieval Systems, Application of IT in libraries & Archives & Communication Skills. The LIS Department takes it that the teaching of ILS to all university students should be done by the university library. Therefore they only teach first year students as part of their qualification in LIS.

## Midlands State University & ILS teaching

ILS teaching was introduced at the MSU in 2010. The teaching of ILS is done through a course module which has been put on the time table. It is taught alongside another module and shares the times equally. Students write assignments and tests and are examined at the end of the semester. The overall marks are fused together to register a pass. If one fails to register a pass, they are asked to repeat the course. The MSU teaches ILS courses to +/-2600 students per year. Eight (8) librarians teach ILS course at the MSU. The Department of Education organised vacation school pedagogy sessions to impart teaching skills to all library staff with the necessary ILS teaching skills.

## IDS & Pedagogy teaching in Zimbabwe

The evidence relating to the teaching of ILS in Zimbabwe targeting librarians is traced to January 2010 as led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) which is a British based independent research institute based at the campus of the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK (interview with IDS Information Literacy Manager 27/08/13). The teaching of ILS by IDS was conducted through workshops which went on until March 2013 (Ibid).

In Zimbabwe, IDS worked with ZEPARU to develop a national curriculum for Zimbabwean librarians teaching IL in University settings. This work concluded in March 2013, with a sensitisation workshop aimed at the faculty teaching Library Science in polytechnics and universities across Zimbabwe. Two workshops held in Harare and Bulawayo aimed to raise awareness of the pedagogical approaches to teaching IL and to plan for an IL module to be included in Library Science curricula.

The following Table 1: highlights the IDS number of workshops done in Zimbabwe covering the period June 2012 – Oct 2012 as illustrated:

- The IL programme at IDS was sponsored by the Department for International Development (DFID).

Partner	Title	Organisations	Participants
ZEPARU	Pedagogy of senior IL trainers (HEI) <b>Jun 2012</b>	3	28
ZEPARU	Pedagogy of senior IL trainers (HEI) <b>Oct 2012</b>	7	28
ZEPARU	Integration of IL / Pedagogy into LIS Curriculum Workshop (Harare)	6	11
ZEPARU	Integration of IL / Pedagogy into LIS Curriculum Workshop (Bulawayo)	3	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>82</b>

Source: Siobhan Duvigneau, Information Literacy Manager, IDS, August 2013

Two (2) TOT pedagogy of trainers' workshops took place in Zimbabwe at the University of Zimbabwe (Workshop 1) and the Harare Institute of Technology (Workshop 2) on 4-9 June and 15-19 October 2012 respectively. This project was co-developed and delivered with the Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis Research Unit (ZEPARU) and the University of Zimbabwe.

A total of 56 senior IL trainers from 10 universities in Zimbabwe and Malawi (1) attended the workshop and included participants were drawn from the University of Zimbabwe, Midlands State University, Africa University, Harare Institute of Technology (HIT), Chinhoyi University of Science and Technology (CUT), National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Great Zimbabwe University, Women University in Africa, Lupane State University, Mzuzu University (Malawi)

Two (2) IL / Pedagogy strategy workshops were developed with ZimLA and the Research Council of Zimbabwe to introduce Library Information Science faculty (LIS) to the national curriculum in information literacy and pedagogical theory. The workshop was held in Harare (4-5 January, 2013) and Bulawayo (18-19 February, 2013) and was attended by 18 faculty librarians from 9 institutions including: universities/ polytechnics, a public library, the public affairs library and a secondary school.

The workshop afforded BLDS, ZimLA and the Research Council of Zimbabwe a unique opportunity to engage with faculty members and broaden their conception of IL as well as explore opportunities for integrating IL and pedagogical approaches in their LIS curriculum. The aim of the workshop was to formulate a strategy for writing a specific IL module for all library information science curriculums. This aim has been achieved and will lead to a programme of activities in 2013: the co-ordination and development of an IL module for all LIS curriculums (Ibid).

## **Discussion**

In the surveyed Zimbabwe tertiary institutions ILS teaching is being led by librarians supported by specific teaching departments from the Zimbabwe Open University & NUST. Most universities have targeted teaching ILS to first year students and are integrating ILS teaching into the university teaching curriculum. The Great Zimbabwe University is on the brink of introducing ILS teaching and is awaiting authorization from its Senate. Most students from academic institutions within Zimbabwe; Namibia and Zambia who answered the questionnaires are aware of the importance of ILS and confirmed having been taught ILS at their respective universities.

The ZOU case regarding the teaching of ILS is rather punctuated with some paradoxes in that there is no coordination in the teaching of the ILS programme by one teaching faculty and the Library Information Service unit. The teaching of ILS at the ZOU is modelled on a distance learning approach using a module that only targets students

reading for the LIS & Records Management degree programme and excludes students from other faculties. Plans are under way at the ZOU to synchronize the teaching of ILS to cover all students & staff.

The ZOU lecturer perception as noted from the personal experience observations by this writer and other ZOU tutors points to a conclusion that some ZOU students are struggling and scoring very low marks in their assignment due to a lack of exposure to ILS teaching. Marks allocation ranging from 5% are a clear indication that such ZOU students have limited knowledge regarding LIS concepts & how to apply them in their academic learning process.

The writer in his capacity as a ZOU part-time lecturer has noted that some ZOU students are victims of plagiarism due a lack of ILS. One student actually defined plagiarism very well by admitting that he had been its victim due to a failure to cite properly through a “cloud computing cut & paste process” during an assignment presentation! Some ZOU students particularly struggle with in text citations where they fail to differentiate paraphrasing & direct quotations as observed by one ZOU tutor.

The ZOU students who are ILS literate have at one point or another transferred their ILS to fellow students during group discussions for exam and assignment writing purposes which is very pleasing to note. The ZOU ILS experience assessment mirrors the general situation prevailing in other universities in Zimbabwe and beyond as demonstrated by the answers that came from other students and librarians who were targeted from Zambia & Namibia.

There is also a reverse dilemma regarding the teaching of ILS at the ZOU as argued by one student who rated some ZOU lecturers as:

*“Setting ambiguous assignment questions whose effective answering is further complicated by a lack of guidance from tutors. Markers should note that the ZOU marking scheme is a moderate answer only & some of the ZOU markers don’t have vast knowledge about the subject in question leading them to mark according to the marking schedule only thereby giving us very low marks”*

This ZOU student analysis most probably explains why some ZOU Part Timer Lecturers need ILS pedagogy training which could also be the case across other universities in Zimbabwe.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The main conclusion of this survey is that ILS is being taught in most universities modeled along strategies of teaching that suit the particular university. First year students are in most cases targeted for ILS teaching except at the ZOU & NUST. ILS pedagogy training of university librarians & lectures have come by way of workshops which are offered

by organizations based outside Zimbabwe led by IDS; INASP & ITOCA. The pedagogy training workshops are in most cases coordinated by ZULC consortium initiatives.

The findings and conclusion of the survey lead to the following recommendations:

1. There is need to formulate an ILS policy framework at a national level in Zimbabwe which should be integrated into the country's education curriculum. This is because ILS teaching is being led by universities only in partnership with outsiders.
2. Universities in Zimbabwe should incorporate ILS teaching in their Strategic Plans especially with respect to the university curriculums.

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## Theme 4

# Libraries empowering local communities



# Libraries empowering citizens and local communities

Tuula Haavisto,

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Literacy, nowadays also media literacy, is a necessary tool in fulfilling a persons' citizenship. One cannot be an active member of society without a proper understanding of the world around them. The simplest benefit of improved social awareness is that one avoids being cheated. I like the mobile phone stories from Africa, Asia and Latin America which tell about villagers, food producers, communicating by cell phone about the market prices with their relatives living in cities. Knowing the retail prices improves their negotiation position with product buyers coming to villages. The provisions in this example include three elements: literacy, counting skills and the mobile communication infrastructure.

## **Libraries as places of democracy**

In ones' own country one is easily blind in relation to important issues. For instance I have really understood the relation between literacy and libraries only in Tanzania and Namibia. Even though I myself established my literacy by reading half of the children's books in the Tampere City Library, I had to come to Namibia to put into words that schools are not enough to root literacy properly. Libraries are the next step, they feed the need of literate people, and they are often also the best places and venues to read.

Nordic countries as well as countries in this part of the world are lucky to be genuinely democratic. Free access to a variety of information is self evident in our countries – if there are limitations, they are economical, not political. Books, articles in daily papers, journals and magazines give alternative views to themes discussed in the society. Libraries also offer access to many kinds of views, but you need to be literate and get access to them to benefit from them. Libraries indeed are the institutions to support literacy after school.

Again, I learned the real importance of access to a large collection of material in another culture. Singapore is known for quite a strong political control of both citizens and the availability of information. During the Singapore IFLA conference in August 2013, an appreciated local library pioneer, Dr. Chris Chia was asked about the problematic control. Though his answer was insufficient and difficult to accept from the Nordic point of view,

he had a point. He described how the Singapore public library network has been built up very systematically since 1995. For ordinary Singaporeans, this process in itself means a big improvement in availability of materials. Public libraries do empower citizens there also in terms of access to information, although we can discuss the level and coverage of materials.

In places or situations where internet information does not exist or the connections are weak, the importance of public libraries as places of democracy can be very concrete. I have heard a similar story from two different countries: from Angola after the civil war, and from the Soviet Union just when transforming to Russia, in other words after the collapse of an undemocratic government. There were citizens pioneering the usage of their new political possibilities by walking kilometers to the nearest library to read law books. In the dawn of a free political situation they want to see on which legal basis they possibly could lean in solving their problems.

So, the space is an important library resource. It is crucial for those wanting to study or work independently. If homes are small and families are big, you need a place a space to study and read. The high season of studying in Finland is from February to June, in Namibia one can see school children and students in public and school libraries all around the school year.

As places libraries have many advantages. In Finland we point to them as neutral, non-commercial and safe surroundings. I'm not sure which would be the best descriptions concerning Southern African public libraries, but for example in Katutura I would mention the words inspiring, empowering and safe. In all countries libraries surely encourage learning and raise awareness. Knowledge and understanding are growing in libraries.



Neutrality is important for people such as immigrants. According to several Finnish studies, libraries are among the most welcoming venues for immigrants, and the most empowering environments. Many libraries want even to strengthen this neutrality by declaring themselves as 'discrimination-free zones'.

## **E-books, a challenge and a possibility**

In Finland, two new elements of libraries in empowering citizenship are to be seen. E-books and other commercial e-material in Finnish have recently made a breakthrough. Consequently, Finnish people expect libraries to teach them to use e-material. We recognize two challenges here, both international by nature.

The availability of e-material is the first crucial matter. Concerning materials which interest public libraries, the libraries' negotiation status differs from that of research libraries and their vendors. When academic libraries are the only existing market for research information, public libraries want to offer their users material, which can also be sold directly to end-users click-by-click. The international copyright legislation is stricter in delivering e-material than in selling paper based books. It is even legal to refuse to sell material in e-format to public libraries. This has happened in Sweden, where the Swedish version of the internationally popular novel '*Fifty Shades of Grey*' was published only in e-format. The publisher refused to sell this book to libraries.

We now ask the politicians, and IFLA is asking the same, if our citizens have the same right to access to e-material as to analogue content? No proper answer has been heard yet. In my eyes it seems that we are in the beginning of a strong re-shaping of the international copyright system.

When it comes to teaching citizens about e-reading, our libraries are running in competition with time. As we know, librarians tend to be people of books and print, often reluctant to adapt themselves to the new virtual world. However, we have to follow our users and the material that are directing more and more to the net. This is especially true in younger generations. It is a substantial educational challenge for the profession.

## **Grassroots democracy in public libraries**

Another Finnish case concerns the citizens' initiative. It is a new form of participation at the state level, and offers citizens a possibility to have their initiative considered by the Parliament. The objective of the new system is to promote free civic activity. Here again, the role of libraries as neutral, independent and non-commercial venues in their communities is strongly recognized. The Ministry of Justice, in charge of treating citizens' initiative, recommended public libraries to be venues to both inform about the initiatives and also offer spaces to sign initiatives. It is up to the initiation makers, if they want to use libraries or not. Many do, and especially libraries in city centers are often contacted by initiative activists.

Consequently, a row of concrete issues had to be solved in libraries, all connected with democracy.

- The amount of initiatives, have we space for them? This has appeared to be a smaller problem than we expected.
- How to present the initiatives equally enough? Libraries cannot prioritize any initiative, but the material we got was originally in very varying formats. The activists behind the initiatives might come in with big 'voting' boxes and posters, others come with some paper sheets.

- How to protect 'voting secrecy'? According to law, we have to protect the signed initiatives carefully, so that e.g. no one else can see the document. Libraries are not basically equipped for this kind of situations.

Libraries had to make a policy on how and in which form the initiatives can be presented in libraries and how to secure privacy protection of those signing the initiatives. The initiatives are available both in paper and in e-format. In Helsinki we decided to prioritize net signatures and be prepared to help people to use this possibility. In other words, an element of e-literacy teaching is included in this process, too.

## **Conclusion**

The Danish colleagues have a good leading idea in their new public library strategy: libraries must serve citizenship. This target covers the traditional promoting of books and reading, but is also challenging us to offer a larger set of services. Many of these services are realized absolutely in the library space. In future, it will be enough to be a library, but not only a library.

# The role of community libraries in the society: The case of Maxwilili community library

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## **Abstract**

This study intended to determine the role of Maxwilili Community library in the community. A mixed method research design was used whereby questionnaires and structured interviews were employed to collect data. The study was conducted among 100 library users, two (2) library staff members as key informants as well as one (1) community leader. The study found that the Maxwilili community library is playing a major role in the community in terms of education and social wellbeing. The library offers after-school classes for school learners and literacy classes in English, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo for all users. The study also found that Maxwilili Community Library plays a major role in contributing to the social wellbeing of the community members, by providing counseling to students and the general public. However, the study also found the challenges of lack of relevant resources and lack of enough reading space for users.

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**Keywords:** Community libraries, social development,  
Maxwilili community library, Namibia

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## **1. Introduction and background information**

Information is recognized as an essential resource for the social and economic development of the world through its provision of information and library services. Although it is lowly accorded, it is an indication that the potential values of information is not yet fully recognized (Mchombu, 2012). Community libraries are crucial to providing information and meeting the information needs of the people in their communities and

therefore contributing to the social economic development of their communities and countries. Community libraries also play a role in society and their impact in social and economic development should not be underestimated. The UNESCO Libraries Manifesto (1994) emphasized that libraries are gateways to knowledge, as they provide a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. They do this through the provision of free access to information and information communication technology facilities to their communities. Community libraries also contribute to community development in different spheres. Studies done by scholars such as Greenhalgh, Landy & Worpolek (1993), Kerslake and Kinnel (1997), Zapata (2009) and Pannel (2008), identified areas in which libraries are playing a role and have an impact. These areas include: education, social policy, information, cultural enrichment and economic development. Therefore, this study aims to determine the role of Maxwilili community library in the society as perceived by the community members.

## 1.1 Background to the study

In Namibia, community libraries formerly known as public libraries have been in existence during the German colonial and South Africa colonial period. However, during the colonial time the public libraries were strictly open as a service for the white community. During the two colonial eras there were no library services serving the black community (Totemeyer, 1991). At Independence there were 23 public libraries that were funded by the administration for whites and four privately funded libraries. After independence, the administration of libraries was then taken over by the Ministry of Education under the Directorate of Namibia Libraries and Archives Services. As time moved on after independence, the Namibian nation began to realize the significance of public libraries in their lives, and thus the number of community libraries started to increase in the country. Between 1990 and 1999, eight community libraries were established and then from 2000 to 2005, 20 more community libraries were established. According to Namhila and Niskala (2012), community libraries are scattered all over the thirteen regions of the country, in order to improve the quality of life for the people in their respective communities. There are about 64 community libraries in the country to date.

Community libraries are regarded as the critical interface between the communities and the nation's information services, and are therefore mandated to serve as:

- Community learning centres, focusing particularly on the promotion of literacy, information awareness and the support of lifelong learning.
- Centres for the promotion and participation of living culture.
- Centres for the dissemination of information in all fields with particular emphasis of information needed for participation in democratic decision making and further successful implementation of national development plan.
- Centres for recreational reading.

## 1.2 Description of the Maxulili Community Library

The Nathanael Maxuilili Community Library is situated in the Babylon area of Katutura on the outskirts of Windhoek, Namibia. The name derives from Nathanael Maxuilili, a freedom fighter who fought for the liberation struggle of Namibia. The library was established in the year 2000 with the aim of bringing library services closer to the community as well as serving all the residents of Babylon and the surrounding areas with the necessary information. The Maxwilili community library is a state funded library that falls under the Directorate of Namibia Library and Archive Services (NLAS) in the Ministry of Education.

After Namibia's independence in 1990, the Government made tremendous efforts to improve the living standards of people living in Katutura. Katutura has attracted many rural migrants who moved to the city in search of a better life. Most of the migrants have put up shacks made of corrugated iron sheets, without sanitation, water, and electricity (Mchombu 1992).

The community of Babylon also faces the same problems as many informal areas in Katutura. The majority of the residents face many hardships including high unemployment rate, high rate of crime, and shebeens (informal places selling alcohol) many of which are open throughout the day and night selling alcohol to anyone who has money regardless of age (Muronga, 2011 as cited by in Mchombu (2012).

The building where the library is currently housed is too small and it cannot cater for the number of users. As a result, a very big resource centre is being constructed on the same premises which is expected to open very soon.

## 1.3 The objectives of the study were:

- To identify services offered by the Library to the community
- To determine the adequacy and satisfaction of library resources and services
- To determine the role of the library in social development as perceived by users

## 2. Literature review

Information is an essential ingredient in community development and is an important factor working toward participatory democracy. (Lor 1996) as cited in Mchombu (2012) argues that, access to information is a fundamental significance to fulfill the day-to-day survival needs, to ensure a competitive economy, promote education and lifelong learning. He further argued that the capacity of local community to cope with economic and social changes depends heavily on access to information, and if communities are not well informed, other policy measures will fail (Harris, 1992). Many poor communities are still disadvantaged in terms of access to information and addressing this deprivation

requires an improvement to the existing information environment model or coming up with an appropriately redesigned new model (Mchombu, 2012). Nyberg and Geises (2012) noted that, the role of the libraries has been defined as to empower people from the disadvantaged communities, to improve their quality of lives.

According to Robbins and Fraser (2000), they regard the public library as an information centre designed to contribute to local economic development by anticipating needs for specific information. On the same issue, Hamilton-Pennell (2008) conducted a study to examine the role that public libraries can play in supporting local economic development efforts and in significantly helping to create vibrant communities and meeting the information needs of local entrepreneurs. Hamilton-Pennell further argued that, public libraries are natural partners in local economic development efforts. Libraries are usually centrally located in a community and provide a variety of resources designed to foster growth and develop workforce capacity.

In addition, Zapata (2009) also conducted a study to determine the role of public libraries in literacy education and identified two lines of action that public libraries serve in literacy education. These are identified as an ally of institutions and organizations which carry out literacy activities and as a service unit which provides information resources to people participating in literacy education. Some researchers believe that the role of public libraries is to serve as a base for lifelong learning (McClure, Berto & Beachboard, 1996), whilst Akporobore ( 2011 ) believes that it is to provide information literacy.

However, in order for public library staff and community leaders to create a productive partnership, librarians must get out into the community (Hamilton-Pennell, 2008). Library staff should be prepared to spend at least ten percent of their time in activities outside the library building in order to understand the community information needs. It can be done by organizing meetings with the community leaders, and learning about projects currently underway and the information resources needed to support these community efforts.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study applied mixed methodologies by using questionnaires and structured interviews as methods of collecting data. Questionnaires were physically handed over to 100 participants resulting in a high response rate. Structured interviews were conducted with the three key informants (two library staff and one community).

### **4. Findings and discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of Maxwilili community library in the Babylon community and surrounding areas. 100 library users were surveyed using

questionnaires, and interviews. Interviews were conducted with two (2) library staff and one (1) community leader. The findings and discussions of this study will be presented below.

## 4.1 Findings from library users

### *Sex and age category*

A total of 100 users were consulted including 2 staff members as well as 1 community leader. Data on the sex of the respondents are indicated in figure 2, which shows that most of the respondents were male, only 33 females took part in this survey. The age category of the users as indicated in figure 2 also shows that, 45 respondents are from the age of 16-19 while 35 are at the age of 20-25. Only 29 fall in the category of 34-49 of age. There were no participants in the age range of 26-29 and 50 and above.

Fig 1 Gender

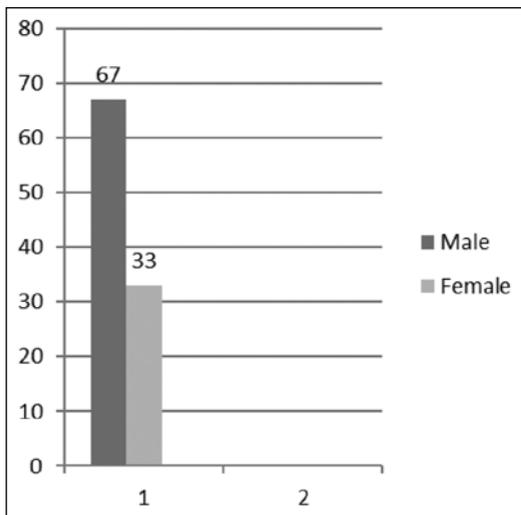
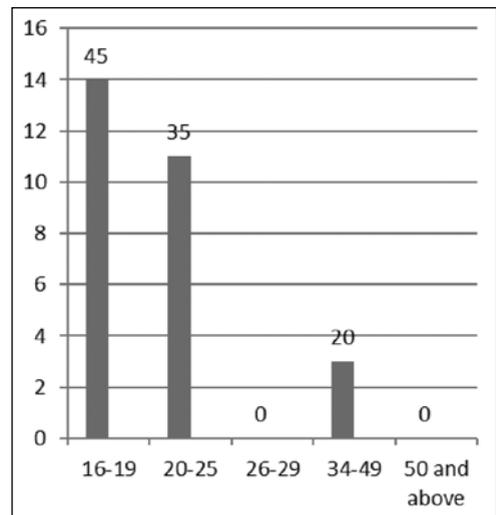


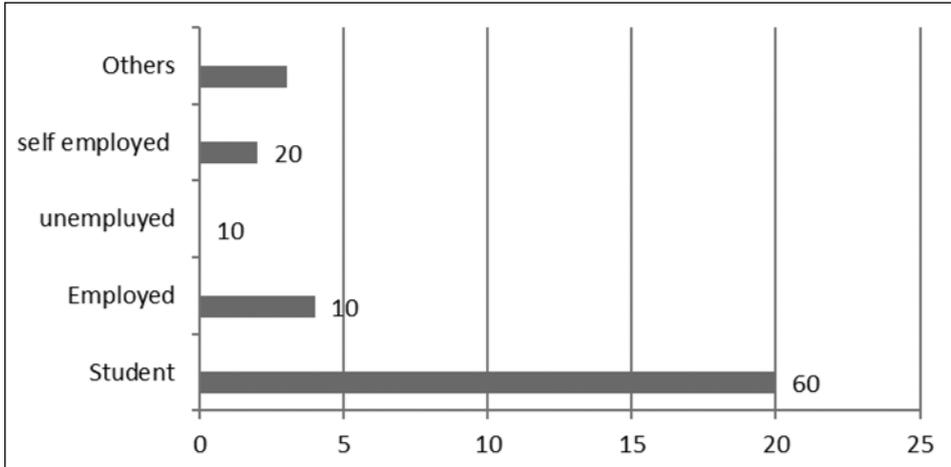
Fig 2 Age category



### *Occupation*

The researchers also wanted to know the occupation of the respondents which is indicated in Table 3. 60 respondents were students, followed by 20 respondents who are self-employed, while 10 respondents indicated that they are employed. This shows that, the majority of the users at Maxuilili community library are mainly students.

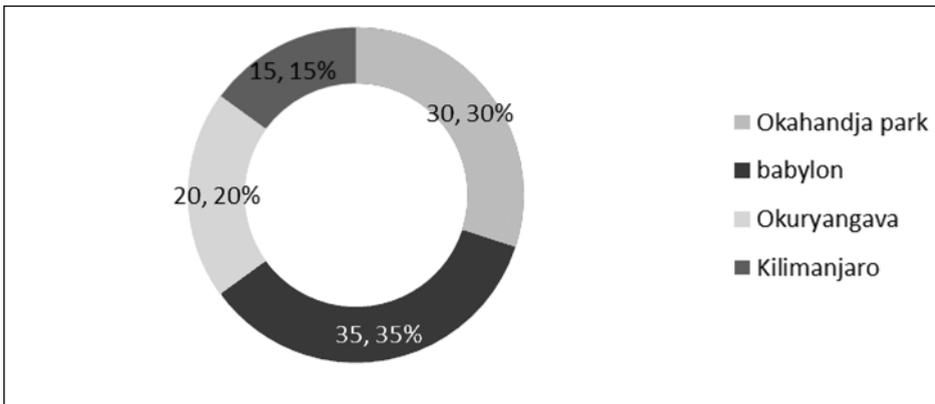
Fig 3 Occupation



**Location**

35% of respondents are from Babylon, the suburb where the library is located, 30% are from Okahandja Park, while 20% are from Okuryangava and 15% from Kilimanjaro. The study found that the Maxwilili Community library is not only being used by people in Babylon, but also by people from other surrounding areas such as Okahandja Park, Okuryangava and Kilimanjaro.

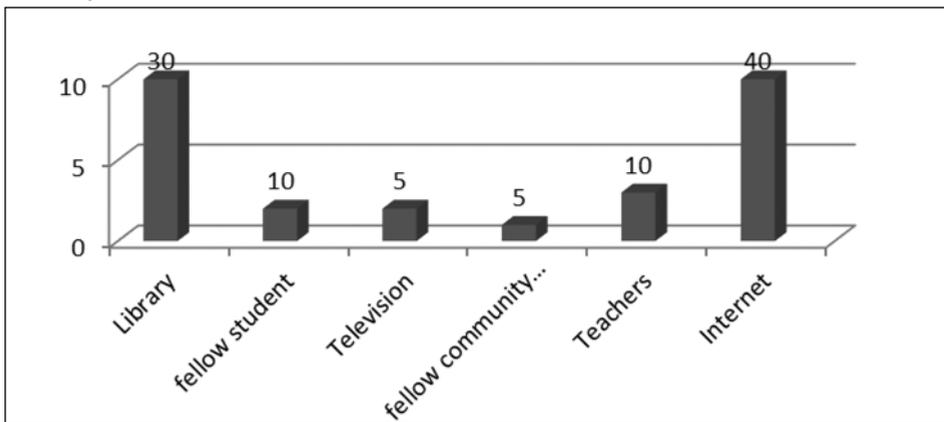
Fig. 4 Location



### ***First point of information***

The respondents were asked to state where they turn to in order to satisfy their information needs. 40 % participants indicated that they rely on the internet in order to satisfy their information needs. While 30 % of the participants indicated that the library is their first point of information. Fellow students and teachers were regarded as first point of information by 10% participants, while 5% of the participants indicated that, they turn to the television and another 5% to the fellow community members' in order to satisfy their information needs.

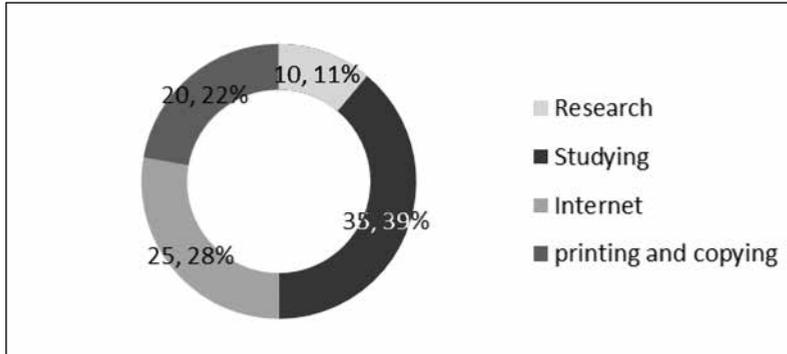
Fig. 5 First point of information



### ***Reason for visiting the library***

Respondents were requested to indicate why they go to the library, in order to determine what services they use at the library. Figure 6 above indicates that 35%, of respondents visit the library for studying purposes, 28% to use internet, while 22% go to the library for printing and copying purposes and only 11% of the respondents go to the library to do research. This is an indication that the library is mostly used for studying purposes which also corresponds with the findings on the occupations of participants, of which students were majority. This also concurs with the findings of Albert, Fuegi & Lipeikaile (2012) in their study to understand the perception of national and local stakeholders in countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. They also found that the majority of library users visit the library for educational purposes, mainly to study and to do homework.

Fig. 6



**Adequacy of information Resources**

Table 1

	Adequate	Fairly adequate	Not adequate
Studying	20, 79%	70, 70%	10, 00 %
Research	10, 10%	50, 70%	40, 40%
Leisure reading	50, 50%	20, 20%	30, 30%

One of the aims of the study was to assess the extent to which the different sources of information found in the library are adequate to cater for the information needs of the community. 70% of the respondents indicated that the library materials for studying are fairly adequate and only 20% indicated that the materials are adequate to cater for their information needs. 50% of the respondents also indicated that the resources are fairly adequate for research information needs and 40% reflected that the materials are not adequate for research. 50% indicated that materials for leisure readings are adequate, while 30% indicated the leisure reading materials are not adequate. Only 20% of respondents feel that leisure reading materials are fairly adequate. The Maxwilili community library resources were overall rated fairly adequate for studying and research purposes. Iwhiwhu & Okorodud (2012) argued that public libraries must be proactive, vibrant and abreast of the latest development in information dissemination to maintain relevance and keep up with multifarious needs and expectations of all library users. Thus, it is important that the community library should be able to provide the right materials to meet the information needs for all users, including business people, school learners and students at higher institutions.

## Level of satisfaction

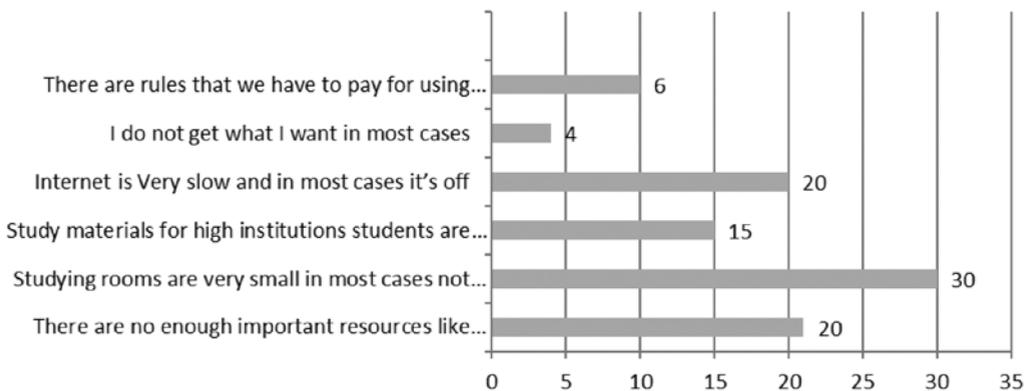
Table 2: Satisfaction

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Library collection	28	35	37
State of the shelves	15	25	60
Staff assistance	20	55	25
Photocopier & printing	20	70	10
Computer and internet	10	20	70
Rules of the library	12	28	60
Opening hours	50	35	25

Respondent were further asked to indicate whether they were satisfied with the different services and facilities found in the library. It was indicated that less people were very satisfied with different services and facilities found in the library except for opening hours which gained 50% of respondents. 37% respondents were not happy with the library collections, and 60% respondents were also not satisfied with the state of shelves and library rules. 70% of the respondents were similarly not satisfied with the computer facilities. However 50% of respondents were satisfied with the photocopier and printing services, while 55% are satisfied with staff assistance and 37% indicated their satisfaction with the library collections.

The respondents were asked to give reasons for their choice in the two tables above; some feel that their resources are not sufficient for higher institutions education; there are not enough dictionaries and encyclopedias etc. The respondents are quoted below:

Fig 7

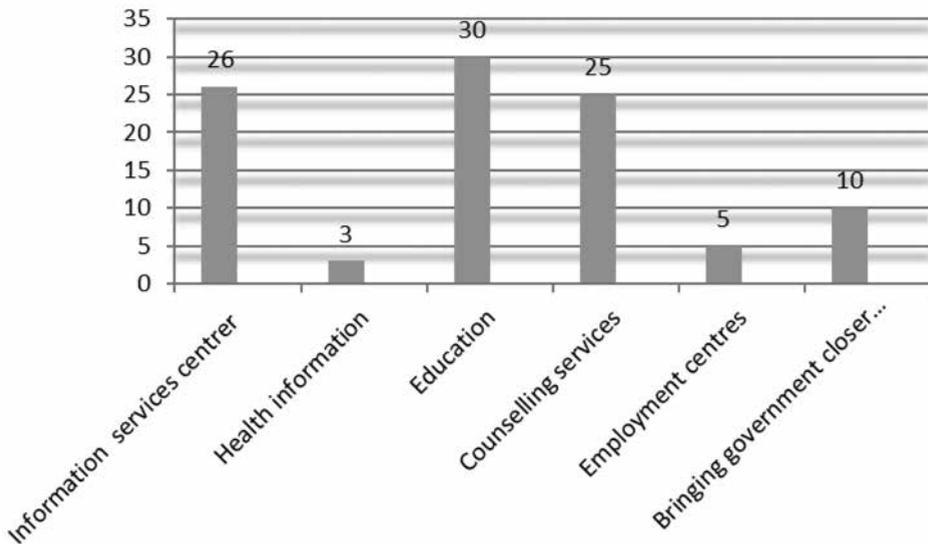


As indicated in Fig 7, 30 respondents feel that the studying rooms are very small and sometimes are not available for users as they are also used for after school classes and literacy classes. The issue of space was also confirmed by the librarians who indicated that the library space is very limited. The librarians also indicated that, although there is a children section in Maxwilili community library, children are not allowed to come to the library in the afternoon due to the limited space. The issue of space, is also making it difficult for the library staff to expand their collections and facilities. However, there is a new library building under construction, which was expected to be completed already but there were some delays. 20% of users also indicated that there are not enough important materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, while 20 respondents also argued that the internet is very slow and in most cases off. This was also confirmed by the librarians, that they have a small bandwidth, which is why the internet is very slow in most instances. 15% of respondents indicated that there are no materials for students at higher education institutions. Despite the space issue whereby a new library is under construction, and is expected to be completed soon, the library generally needs to do more to cater for all its users' needs. For the library to function well and to unleash its potential in society, it needs to have up-to-date and relevant materials for all its users.

**Role of the library contribution to the community development**

Respondents were asked to indicate what role the library is playing in the community and how it is contributing to the community social development.

Fig 8



The identity issues around the use of library reflect the role of the library for individuals, in which respondents identified the educational support, computer and literacy training as the main role the library is playing in the community. School learners and higher education institution students in the area of Maxwilili and surrounding area need a place to study and resources to aid their study and the Maxwilili community library as the only library in the constituency is the place to run to. In addition the students are also getting motivational support to cope with their studies through counselling services provided by the library.

## 4.2 Findings from key informants

Interviews were conducted with the key informants (library staff members and community leader) of the Maxwilili community library to identify the services and project offered in the library.

In identification of library services, both librarians and community leaders identified the following services as the major services provided by Maxwilili community library:

- Checking the books in and out of the library.
- Literacy classes: Morning English, Afternoon Afrikaans, Evening Oshiwambo.
- Computers for Internet services and typing.
- After school classes.
- Photocopy services.
- Newspapers and Magazines.

They were also asked about the relationship between the library and community in ensuring that, resources provided meet the information needs of the community.

Despite the lack of relevant resources for students at higher education institutions as indicated by users, library staff reflected that they ask their users to indicate the kind of materials they want the library to provide, especially books. They however raised a concern that that due to a lack of space they cannot add more books.

Asked about whether the library has an outreach program, all respondents indicated that there is nothing and this is due to the shortage of staff members to carry out this task, but schools visit the library regularly.

Key informants were also asked about the role of the library and how the library contributes to the socio-economic development of the community.

The library staff indicated that, the library tries to equip people with the necessary skills and knowledge that they need in order to cope with the fast changing world. The library contributes to socio-economic development by providing newspapers, for example the sewing project at the centre uses the old newspaper to cut out some designs etc. They also read newspapers on a daily basis, so that they are informed about the latest happenings in the country and beyond. Library users also use newspapers when searching for

employment. Computer facilities in the library also help them to type their CVs as well as complete government application forms when applying for a job. It was indicated that the library gives training to youth and community leaders on different programs, for example how to be good leaders.

When asked about whether the library is currently involved in some projects, all respondents indicated that, there is an after school program, which give classes to orphans and vulnerable children. Maxwilili community library offers computer training to help community members to be equipped with computer skills. There is a literacy program to help eradicate illiteracy in the community. There is also a Sewing project which is aimed at empowering women to start up their own tailoring business. A social worker is based at the centre, who helps people to deal with the social problem such alcohol and drugs, family and domestic abuse, school and job related problems, health and teenage pregnancy, as well as marriage problems.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to determine the role of Maxuilili community library in the community of Babylon. The findings indicated that the library mainly has an educational role through the provision of information and computer & literacy classes offered to the community. The library also has a role to play in ensuring the social wellbeing of the community through counselling services provided by the library. However, there are challenges of too few computers and slow internet connection that the community feels needs to be addressed. There is also a challenge of lack of relevant materials and limited reading space for the users that the library management needs to look into. Although libraries are seen as essential to individuals and to communities in general, they need to engage with the community to raise the awareness of the library facilities and services. Besides the provision of information, librarians need to facilitate community interaction with services providers of health, entrepreneurship etc. This study provides information to start a discussion with stakeholders about the role of libraries in the community and their potential for ensuring development and sustainability of library services.

Based on the findings the authors made the following recommendations:

- The library needs to employ more qualified staff members to be able to carry out the activities of the library, including outreach programs.
- Provide more computers, as the current ones are not enough to cater for everyone, because the library is used by everyone including University students.
- More space needs to be created, as the current space is not enough to accommodate all the activities taking place.
- To carry out outreach programs by taking their services to the people, marketing the library services as well as raising more awareness about the importance of the library.
- More up-to-date and relevant sources of information to cater for all users, especially for students from institutions of higher learning.

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# Customized information solutions for farmers: University of Zimbabwe Library's response to local agricultural information needs : Part 1

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## **Abstract**

Information and communication technologies, use of mobile phone technology in particular, is now a widespread phenomenon in developing countries. Academic libraries in developing countries have an obligation, by virtue of being custodians of research based knowledge and information, to see to it that this information translates to community empowerment and development as well as the general improvement of livelihoods in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). African academic librarianship becomes unique in that the parent institution in most cases is publicly funded and serving the wider community becomes an expectation. This paper documents how the University of Zimbabwe library has managed to come up with agricultural information dissemination services geared towards the provision of customized information services for local farmers in one of the districts of Zimbabwe. The journey to the establishment of these services was initiated as a response to local agricultural information needs and the wider prospects of establishing vibrant agricultural information systems for rural communities. E-Farming project development is discussed and an overview of the challenges and opportunities inherent with such within the Zimbabwean context are highlighted.

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**Keywords:** Information Communication Technology, mobile phones, agricultural knowledge and information services and local farmers

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## Introduction

The realization that access to timely and relevant information is essential for citizens of developing countries to successfully mitigate challenges and harness opportunities within the agricultural sector cannot be disputed. The Agricultural Sector Review (URT, 2008) identified some key challenges facing the agricultural sector, among these being marketing information regarding crops and current marketing information systems are characterized by isolated efforts. The growing demand for agricultural products offers opportunities for rural populations to sustain and improve their livelihoods. Information Communication Technology's potential in addressing challenges faced and uplifting of farmers livelihoods cannot be overstated. The role of ICT in enhancing food security and supporting rural livelihoods was officially endorsed at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2003-2005; Stienen J. (2007:1). The application of technology in agriculture has seen an intense use of computers, internet, geographical information systems, mobile phones and the more common radio and television, in the dissemination of agricultural knowledge and information. However like most digital based initiatives, the developing world has been caught without proper models, infrastructure and necessary capabilities for harnessing these gadgets. Digital literacy levels are also a barrier to the full realization of how ICT's can improve agricultural productivity, knowledge and information communication in particular.

The University of Zimbabwe Library upon realizing these trends in agriculture sought to explore ways through which information communication technology (ICT) based platforms could be established. This paper seeks to document how an academic library has sought to research and develop ICT based solutions meant to bridge the 'supply of agricultural information gap' existing within the farming communities. The initiatives also focused on ways through which the local farming community, agricultural researchers and custodians of agricultural information could interact in a more intimate way through the use of ICT's.

## The University of Zimbabwe Library Farmers Nexus

The University of Zimbabwe Library's interaction with farmer's dates back as far as 2006 when the library partnered with a Netherlands-based organization known as the Centre for Agricultural Cooperation. In this arrangement, the library administered a service for rural based farmers known as Question and Answer (QAS) from 2006-2008. The service was initially designed to bridge a gap between rural based farmers and the University's agricultural knowledge and information resident at both the library and the Faculty of Agriculture. The QAS operated by way of farmers sending their information requests to the Faculty of Agriculture librarian, (project coordinator) based at the university's main library. Upon receiving the requests, the faculty librarian conducted searches from available print and electronic resources, and when found, this information was photocopied. In the event that the information was not readily available or further

clarification was required, the librarian could engage the relevant subject experts from the Faculty of Agriculture. The gathered information was then collated, packaged and sent to the farmer. For the two years that the service was administered a 57% success rate was registered. During the same period the library held several workshops for other agricultural librarians who were drawn from universities and colleges that offered various qualifications in agriculture.

With time, the QAS service proved to be relatively limited in its effectiveness because of the fact that:

- Posted materials took time to reach the farmer, so there was no instant access to information;
- Sending information via post did not allow for probing or further clarification;
- Most materials were available in English, a factor which became a barrier to accessing information for most rural farmers who otherwise were literate in Shona and Ndebele in most cases;
- Materials in English also proved difficult to work with especially when there was need to harmonize with indigenous knowledge-based agricultural information

The challenges highlighted above encouraged the library to seek alternative ways around these problems and this resulted in the formation of partnerships with two University of Zimbabwe departments namely; the Department of Agricultural Engineering and Soil Science, in the Faculty of Agriculture, and the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI). The two departments were found to be useful in that specialized technical knowledge and information from the Department of Agricultural Engineering would give the envisaged project depth while (ALRI) would provide all the translations. The library remained the coordinating department within this arrangement. In January 2011 it was agreed that there was a need to conduct a preliminary survey so as to collect data from local farmers which would feed into content development for the project.

### **Pre-assessment survey at the Harare Agricultural Show 2011 edition**

In August 2011 the University of Zimbabwe made its maiden appearance at the Harare Agricultural Show held from the 19th to 27th August 2011, in Harare, under the theme “Knowledge based Agro-Solutions”. The Library therefore saw this as an opportunity to conduct a pre-assessment survey so as to establish trends in agricultural information requirements.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey was the research design used to gather information. This method was suitable given that the Harare Agricultural Show is the most prestigious annual agricultural exhibition at a national level. This meant that an array of stakeholders

in agriculture ranging from commercial and subsistence farmers, animal and plant breeders, agric-equipment producers among others were to grace this show. The survey method was ideal given that the show was allocated nine days. A total of two hundred questionnaires were self administered by the researcher and ten interviews were held. The targeted research participants were small scale farmers and those organizations that deal with them.

### **Limitations of the survey**

In gathering this data it should be borne in mind that the Harare Agricultural Show was not accessible to all farmers in the country in terms of logistics and as such may not be a true reflection of the distribution of farmers in Zimbabwe. Most farmers however were afforded transport and accommodation by various Non- Governmental Organisations working with farmer groups and organizations. However consolation is found in that Harare exists in agricultural region and the assumption that most farmers at the show in this survey were from areas within Harare can be true to an extent. This validates the issues that the survey sought to bring to the fore. Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South have the least number of farmers who attended the show mainly because of distance as these places are over 436km from Harare. Given the time frame available for the survey the above distribution reflects a fair national representation of farmers at the agricultural show thus making the results applicable to a wider community.

### **Research Objectives**

Specifically this survey sought to:

- identify what kind of agricultural activities farmers took part in
- establish current and future agricultural information needs
- identify the agricultural knowledge and information of communication channels available to farmers
- establish which language farmers were most comfortable with in receiving agricultural information materials

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were to be answered by the survey:

1. What agricultural activities were visiting farmers engaged in?
2. What were these farmers current and future agricultural information needs?
3. Which information communication channels were available to farmers?
4. Which languages were farmers comfortable with in sending requests and receiving responses?

## Results and Discussion

Table 1: Typology of Visitors

Nature of visitor	Percentage
Farmers	68.5
Agricultural Extension Officers	5.5
Researchers	8
Agro-inputs suppliers	7.4
Agro-Produce buyers	4.6
Others	4

The table shows that at the 2011 Harare Agricultural show nearly seventy percent of the respondents were farmers whilst thirteen percent of the respondents were agro-business people who in one way or the other were on the inputs supply and output consumption. Important to note is the group that is classified as agricultural extension officers who expressed that lack of access to current information relevant to the farmers needs was a barrier to execution of their duties. This group bemoaned the lack of research facilities and credible agricultural information and knowledge services. Researchers constituted four percent and in most cases were affiliated with local universities and colleges that offer various qualifications in agriculture.

### Provinces of Origin for Visiting Farmers

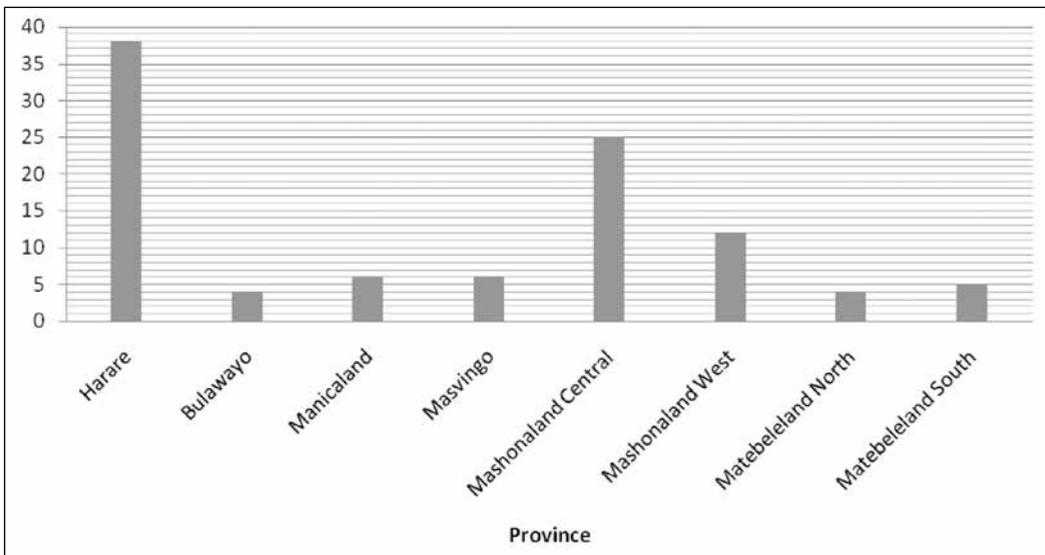


Table 2: Type of agricultural information required

Type	Percentage
Crop Production	25%
Animal Production	23%
Poultry	18%
Markets and Marketing	17%
Research Based	9%
Soil Management	8%

Overall there is high demand for information to do with production in the field. Crop production tops the list of required information and this demand is almost the same as that of animal production. The other categories of information which ranked second and are almost the same are information on poultry and markets. Soil management and research based information are also on the list of the required information though they are ranked third in the above diagram.

Table 3: Specified information Request under Selected Categories

Animal Production	Crop Production	Farm Management	Research
Rabbits	Maize		
Cattle	Sugar		
Goats	Beans	Water Conservation	Cassava
Pigs	Potatoes	Irrigation	Maize
Fish	Paprika	Agrochemicals	Technological Applications
Indigenous chickens	Soya Beans	Land management practices	
Chemicals for treatment	Sunflower	Conservation farming	
Broilers	Pumpkins		
	Cassava		
	Vegetables		
	Sweet Potatoes		
	Pesticides		
	Horticulture		
	Indigenous medicinal plants		

Table 4: Preferred mode of communication for receiving agricultural information

Mode of Communication	Percentage of farmers accessible via mode
Mobile Phone	95
E-mail	25
Radio	100
Television	85

The results above show that information communication technologies are becoming popular with farmers. Whilst radio access is the widespread mode of communication for most farmers, the difference with mobile phones is quite marginal and encouraging to note. The distribution of these modes of communication mean that models for establishing agricultural knowledge and information services will not be misplaced but rather suitable for such a context. However the low percentage of farmers accessible via e-mail, is a reflection of how the internet maybe a preserve of urban dwellers against the large numbers of rural dwellers.

Table 5: Preferred Language of Use

Language	Percentage
Shona	45
Ndebele	5
English	50
English/Shona	60
English/Ndebele	50

The above statistics show that for any agricultural knowledge and information system to be effective in the context of Zimbabwean farmers the language factor has to be taken into account especially where the provision of print resources such as instructional manuals are concerned.

## Results and the concept of E-Farming

From the survey results it became apparent to the library that an ICT driven intervention or solution was needed to solve the problem of timely access to customised agricultural knowledge and information. Kapange.B. B, 2003 contends that access to ICT's provides information prices, markets, technology and weather. Selected ICT's that include mobile phones accelerate the wider dissemination and use of appropriately packaged agricultural information. Furuholt and Matotay, 2011, postulated that, "A lack of access to information has traditionally made rural farmers in East Africa vulnerable to several risks, both during farming and transportation as well as marketing their crops". This realization prompted

the library to further look into how a mobile based platform could be created to leverage the agricultural information asymmetries existing in Zimbabwe.

In their Mobile Development Report, Nokia recommends that, in order to enhance rural development, mobile phones could be used in the following four levels (Sood, 2006):

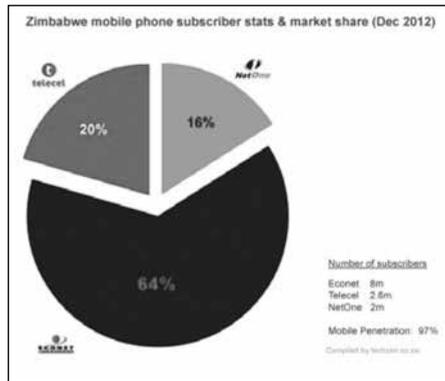
- to provide communication
- to provide access to information
- for passive or inter-passive consumption of media
- to interact with systems, institutions, communities and other users

McNamara claimed that mobile devices and services can help create a “virtuous circle” of innovation that can benefit even the poorest farmers and increasingly integrate them into local, regional and global markets. This assertion further invigorated the library to pursue a mobile based agricultural information dissemination platform and the vision for the project became very clear given such ideological contributions.

The E-farming project became an attempt to mitigate the challenges that the QAS service had experienced over time and was necessitated by prevailing and conducive factors present within the ICT landscape in Zimbabwe. It is a rather a given in Zimbabwe that the mobile phone is the most widely used ICT gadget. Chamboko .T, (2007:10), points out that in Zimbabwe there has been marked increase in the use of ICT’s with the main advantage being that they can be used for mass dissemination of information and are relatively cheap, reaching a wider audience at the same time. An array of opportunities have been identified as key in facilitating the fast uptake of ICT’s in Zimbabwe and these include an expanded rural electrification programme, deregulation in the telecommunications sector, massive computerization of government ministries and continued expansion in the fixed line and mobile networks. In developing countries, Zimbabwe in particular, it is generally agreed that agricultural knowledge and information is spread over different institutions with no clear cut platform or mechanism that collates this knowledge and information for easy access and use by the majority of stakeholders in agriculture. Custodians of this knowledge and information include universities, collages, ministries, a n d non-governmental organizations among others. The following factors prevalent in Zimbabwe’s information communication technology landscape gave rise to the notion of E-Farming and these were:

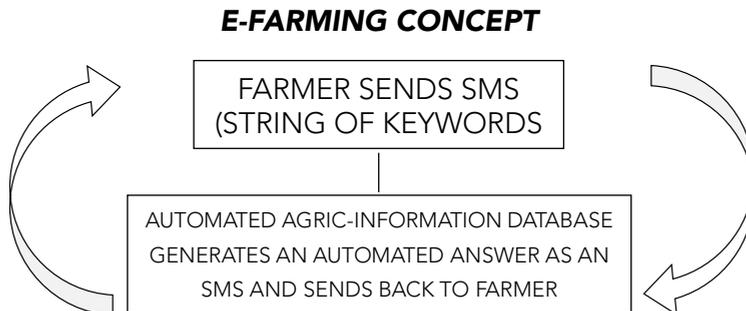
- Increased tele-density with virtually five million people having access to mobile communication technology. The diagram below shows the subscriber statistics by mobile phone operator in Zimbabwe as of December 2012

Figure 1: Pie chart showing the subscriber statistics for the three mobile operators in Zimbabwe



- Wider mobile network coverage, almost all areas in Zimbabwe are serviced by one of the three mobile phone operators namely ( Econet , Netone and Telecel), who at most charged US\$1.00 per sms
- The availability of human; agricultural knowledge and information resources, subject experts at the university provided immediate content for the project
- Increased demand for agricultural knowledge and information following the national land reform programme of 2000 that created more than 10,000 new farmers
- The absence of a readily available, later on publicly accessible, agricultural and information platform

The survey gave impetus to the birth of the E-Farming project. Using a custom designed software that enables bulk two way sms text messaging, an internet modem and a computer, all housed at the University of Zimbabwe Library the project started to operate in June 2011 .E-Farming provided selected farmers with instant, individualized and up to date agricultural information. The information gathered from the Harare Agricultural Show was used in populating the database with agricultural information. The database provided instant feedback when queried via text messaging by registered farmers. A simplistic view of the project is shown below;



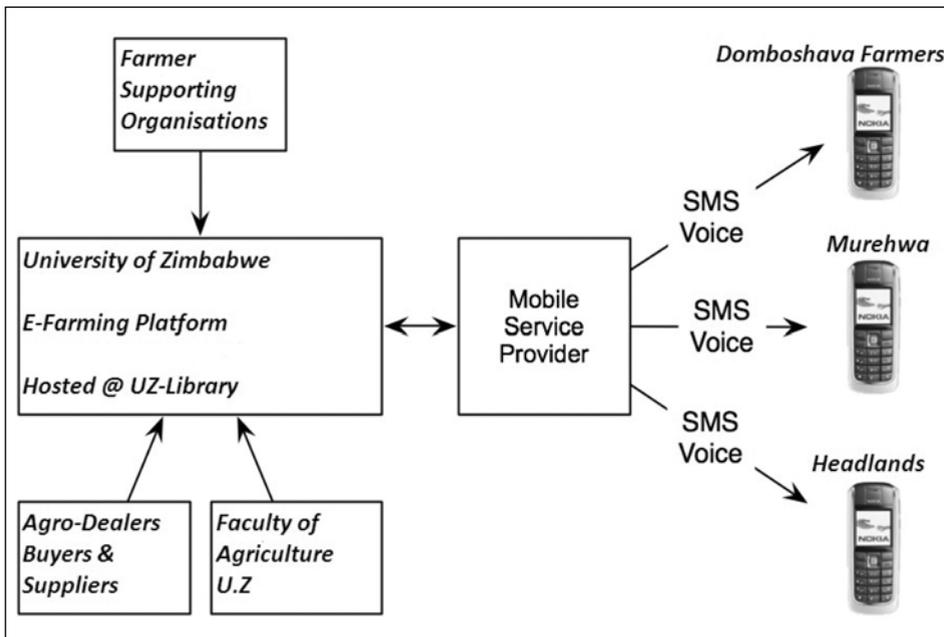
Due to logistical reasons, the project was initiated on a trial basis with a group of eighty (80) farmers drawn from cooperatives and farmer groups in areas around Harare namely Murehwa, Headlands and Domboshava were selected and their details captured into a database.

## Registration onto the Platform

Registration onto the platform takes two forms where farmers have the opportunity to either complete a registration form that could later be uploaded onto the database or registration could be done directly on to the platform when they physically visit the University of Zimbabwe Library.

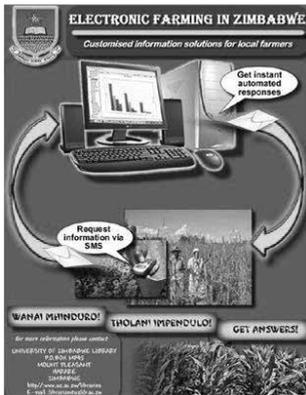
A series of familiarization workshops were held and the concept of the project was explained to participants. Focus points were created at major agricultural markets in Harare that included Mbare “musika” where identified knowledge workers sent messages on prevailing prices to the database and these prices would be automatically sent to a farmer upon request through text messaging. Agricultural information on this platform is meant to be accessible to all members of the public who have access to mobile phones and are registered with the University of Zimbabwe Library

## E-Farming organizational structure



The above structure shows the main contributors to the database and the overall systems architecture that make up the project. Farmer supporting organisations assist in a meaningful way in that they provide updates and records on farmers that help in the construction of the database. Agro-dealers buyers and suppliers are the lifeblood of the project as they exist on the platform for a fee. The subscription paid by this group enables the project to send back automated responses to farmers without necessarily having to charge the farmers. Agro-dealers provide the required agricultural inputs, price lists and locations which the farmer can interact with via their mobile phone thus the platform becomes a marketing tool for them. Dealers also provide the buying prices they are offering for various produce such that farmers can get in touch with them and make informed decisions without necessarily having to travel back and forth. The availability of buyers has empowered farmers in that they can watch trends and sell their produce when demand is high. The Faculty of Agriculture is the knowledge and information base of the project where subject experts are consulted from time to time as queries are received from the farmers and the database is constructed. At times experts are available to supply information by use of voice calls

## Marketing and Promotion of the E-Farming project



*Farmer Registration*



*University Officials at the stand*

Marketing and promotion of the project has mainly been done through exhibitions at notable annual national shows namely the Harare Agricultural Show and the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair editions of 2011, 2012 and 2013. The University of Zimbabwe administration has played a pivotal role in championing the publicity of the project through unveiling of financial resources for exhibiting at the afore mentioned platforms

## Challenges and Opportunities

The vision to incorporate information technology into the dissemination of agricultural knowledge and information dissemination in a way that bridges the gap between ordinary citizens and researchers is not misplaced given the fact that most economies in Sub-Sahara

Africa are agro-based. Whilst this kind of environment is an unknown territory within the operational lines of an academic library, the fact that public funded universities are now supposed to contribute meaningfully to the national agenda of converting research information into tangible developmental solutions inspires the University of Zimbabwe at large.

Agricultural Knowledge and Information Services have taken shape in East Africa and there is no excuse why such cannot occur in Southern Africa. In coming up with this project the major hurdles experienced involve obtaining buy in by critical sectors such as mobile phone operators for the system is hinged upon low costs of accessing information for farmers yet negotiating for subsidized prices was difficult. However the future looks bright given the vast enquiries and partnerships that have been proposed by an array of organizations locally and abroad.

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## Theme 5

# Libraries supporting e-learning



# Academic libraries in support of e-learning: The case of University of Namibia Library

Anna Leonard

*University of Namibia Library*

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## Abstract

E-learning is defined as the use of the internet to access learning materials, to interact with the electronic content, instructors and other learners and to obtain support during the learning process. It is also commonly known by terms such as virtual learning, online learning, distance learning, internet learning, networked learning, tele-learning, web based learning, etc. E-learning is becoming more common in academic institutions and its significance is growing as a delivery mechanism for electronic contents. The key advantages of e-learning are flexibility; the ability to work at any place where an internet connection is available; and being able to work at one's own pace. Technological advances are turning the traditional libraries into digital and/or hybrid libraries to enable them to support virtual users. In support of e-learning, library resources and services are crucial to research and teaching of higher learning institutions. Libraries have a great potential to offer boundless resources to support e-learning for the benefit of both academics and students. Academic libraries respond well to the increasingly important e-learning aspects, by providing relevant information resources and services to meet the demands and needs of all the stakeholders. The purpose of this paper was to identify and provide insight into the practice and initiatives in support of e-learning by the University of Namibia( UNAM) Library. In support of e-learning, the UNAM library aligns its resources and services to the virtual users, through the provision of electronic resources (e-books and e-journals), e-reference services to attend to the needs of the e-learners and interact with virtual users, information literacy instruction to train users on how to locate and effectively use the vast amount of information available to them; and finally social networks to interact and communicate with the users to determine and attend to their needs.

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**Keywords:** e-learning, online learning, virtual learning, academic libraries, University of Namibia library

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## 1. Introduction and background information

Technology has changed all spheres of life, including education and the distribution of information. The advancement of technology has changed the form of education into new ways of teaching and learning, known as e-learning, online learning, virtual learning, internet learning etc. The importance of e-learning is growing in academic institutions. The benefits of electronic learning are flexibility, convenience, and the ability to work anywhere, anytime. Libraries are effective tools of dissemination of information and knowledge. With the emergence of e-learners libraries have to change the way in which they provide their resources and services in order to accommodate the newly emerging users (e-learners).

The use of ICT in education in Namibia is actually aligned to the long term strategic plan objectives of Vision 2030 of Namibia, which aims to achieve a fully integrated, unified and flexible education and training system that prepares Namibian youth and other learners to take advantage of a rapidly changing environment and contributes to the economic, moral, cultural and social development of the country (Vision2030). In support of Vision 2030, the ICT policy for education was created to enhance the use and development of ICT in the delivery of education and training.

In Namibia, the implementation of e-learning started in 2006 when the Namibia e-learning Centre (NeLC) was launched as an independent entity through a collaboration between the NOLNET and the INWnt (Capacity Building International, Germany). The Namibia e-learning Centre (NeLC) was then founded in 2010, after the realization of the growing need of Vision 2030 and the national development plan (E-learning Africa, 2013). The NeLC was founded to provide support on content development and e-capacity building through blended learning and performance support solutions to Namibian public and private education and training institutions. After the introduction of e-learning in Namibia, stakeholders from various educational institutions have been trained.

According to Beukes (2006) several public and private institutions, through the support of NeLC, are already implementing individual strategies towards the use and applications of e-learning technologies and capacity building. This is the case with the University of Namibia and other stakeholders. In addition to the Polytechnic and the University of Namibia, the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) has recently launched Notes Master Namibia, a freely accessible e-learning platform designed specially to facilitate the development of a global education network for secondary learners in the country. The wish is to broaden e-learning to all secondary schools in the country and support the attainment of the national development plan in terms of education and of Vision 2030.

E-learning in Namibia is gaining pace; many institutions, especially academic institutions, are recognizing the significance of e-learning. As information is the source of success and

learning, academic libraries are the heart of the academic institutions, and thus they have to attend to the needs of their academic community. This article identifies and discusses the services offered by the University of Namibia to the virtual learners.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 E-learning: an overview**

E-learning is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. Karin & Dih (2011) refer to the use of ICT for advancing student-oriented, active, open collaborative and lifelong learning. According to Anderson, as cited by Ojedokun (2003), e-learning can occur “anytime, anywhere, characteristic of e-learning tools and the fact that they are available from devices including desktops, notebooks, can also accelerate the productivity gains by making education more accessible. Actually, e-learning can be considered as enhancement on the provision of open and distance learning.” Jayaprakash & Venkatramana (2006:3) define e-learning as “an interactive learning in which the learning content is available on-line and provides feedback to the students’ learning activities”. E-learning covers a wide range of applications and processes such as web based learning, computer based learning, virtual classroom and digital collaboration. It also includes the delivery of content via the internet, intranet/extranet, satellite broadcast, interactive television, etc. Trapathi (2007) denotes e-learning as computer enhanced learning that includes courses offered online, courses offered face to face with online access to course materials and courses that provide access to online discussion forums, notes, and other course materials. The above definitions implies that e-learning is not necessarily for students at a distance but is suitable and can be applied to all forms of learning, be it face to face learning, distance learning, online learning virtual learning etc. E-Learning can be described by the following terms: distance education, computerized electronic learning, online learning, internet learning and many others.

### **2.2 Benefits of e-learning**

The benefits of electronic learning are flexibility, convenience, and the ability to work anywhere, anytime and at one’s own pace as long as the internet is available (Sharifabadi 2006). E-learning avoids the burden of transport and remote geographic location in education as learners can communicate and get the course materials at their local destination without having to travel and go to classes every day. It is convenient for people with more commitments and who, due to other factors, find it difficult to study full time and go to face to face classes on daily basis. Otebelu (2011) reflects that e-learning offers the ability for students to communicate with classmates and lecturers regardless of their distances. Sharifabadi (2006) also mentions that e-learners can use the internet to access up-to-date and relevant learning materials, and communicate with experts in the fields which they are studying through their e-learning platform. In

addition to access to learning materials and communication with experts and colleagues (Eke, 2010 added that e-learning provides a potential means of providing both access and quality in educational delivery in a relatively cost effective way.

### **2.3 Role of libraries in e-learning**

In the e-learning environment, digital libraries are considered as a federation of library services and collections that function together to create a digital learning community (Sharifabadi, 2006). Bennett (2003) finds two main swings in education. Firstly, he argues that higher education is moving away from a teaching to a learning culture. Secondly, the revolution in information technology is changing delivery of education. Bennett (2003) argues that an academic library should take these two shifts into account while planning their services. Bennett (2003) also argues that academic libraries should not be seen solely as a traditional storage facility for books, or simply as a technology center, but instead the library should focus on the process of learning that takes place within its space, bringing resources, learners, and experts into easy proximity to facilitate collaborative learning. This was also supported by Sharifabadi (2006), who noted that libraries must not be seen merely a digitized collection of information objects plus related management tools, but as an environment bringing together collections, services, and people to support the full cycle of creation, dissemination, use and preservation of data, information and knowledge. Freeman (2005) has referred to libraries as learning laboratories that accommodate learning in a variety of formats. This requires libraries to provide their services and resources to their users 24/7, whenever and wherever they are.

As part of e-learning, academic libraries must remotely provide their services to their virtual users, According Sen (n.d.) these services include:

- New acquisitions to indicate newly acquired materials for each department.
- View your patron record to see materials borrowed by an individual customer with an option to renew the borrowed materials without physically visiting the library.
- Request for materials that are borrowed by other users / reserve or place on hold materials borrowed by another user.
- Online request of materials by users based on their information needs.
- E-reserve of materials by lecturers for specific courses.
- Online charges and fines are made available to users.
- Digitize and make available the past examination question papers.
- Provide access to full text of electronic journals and books on campus and off campus.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2010) pointed out the significance of distributing libraries' virtual presence over incorporation into learning management systems, social networks, development of online tutorials and interactive

web pages. Although libraries' e-services are crucial in learning management systems, usually they are totally absent in these systems. The possible reason for the absence of libraries' e-services from learning management systems lies in the fact that digital libraries were primarily designed as repositories, similar but independent from LMS (Pina, 2007).

Furthermore, some experts point out reasons of integration of libraries' e-services into learning management systems: reduced costs, empowering relationships between teachers, librarians and students who started to ignore libraries and instead satisfied their information needs directly on web. Students' information needs can be categorized as the following: define and explore topic, select and evaluate, recognize information sources and how to find them, prevention of plagiarism, citing sources, understand nature of scientific research and scientific communication, recognize key journals and sources in field, identification of key authors in field, conduct detailed literature review, conduct case studies and know how and where to publish (Whitehead & Quinlan, 2002). It is crucial that the library e-services are integrated into the learning management system, as this will allow the users, both students and academics, to have access to both their learning notes, discussion and to the library services and resources (electronic) at one platform without necessarily having to go browse around different browsers.

PapiD & StriDeviD (2012) conducted a study to determine the students' attitudes toward integration of libraries' e-services into the e-learning management system. Their result found that students regarded the general effects of integration of libraries' e-services into learning management system highly, as it reduces time searching for learning materials, gives unified access to sources for learning, supports information literacy skills development as recognizing information needs, information retrieval and information evaluation through the context of subject, enables learning how to access and use information, expands possible options for choosing materials for e-learning, encourages use of library's e-services which otherwise would not be used, makes easier access to relevant sources for learning, gives direction to relevant sources for a specific subject, makes teaching process dynamic, encourages development of skills for lifelong learning and encourages development of skills for critical thinking. This reflects the significance of libraries and shows that library services do have an impact on e-learners, and the services that libraries provide makes the lives of virtual learners easier.

### **3. UNAM Library services to support e-learning**

The University of Namibia Library was established in 1992, when its main body, the University of Namibia, was established. The UNAM library was established to support teaching, learning and research at the university through the provision of information resources and services. The Library has grown since its establishment; to date the library has about 11 branch libraries and 8 satellite centres. Library Automation at the University

of Namibia started in 1992, when the URICA library system was implemented, and then in 2006 the library started using a new system, “INNOPAC Millenium”, after receiving a donation from Andrew Mellon Foundation. The University of Namibia operates as a hybrid library in the sense that it offers the traditional services of the library and it also serves as a digital library. The library provides services such as online catalogue, reference services, electronic resources (journals and books), circulation, ILL, information literacy, user orientation, etc.

### **3.1 Electronic resources**

In order to support the teaching, learning and research services of the university, the library has acquired electronic resources, starting in 2003 with e-journals. The library continues to further develop their e-collection in order to meet the demands of the users and provide virtual full text access to electronic journals and books to its users across the country and beyond, both on campus and off campus. The library provides access to databases and makes accessible other freely available online resources. The databases provided include: AGORA, Britannica, EBSCO, EMERALD, HINARI, OARE, Oxford, Sage, Science direct, Springer link, SA E-publications, Taylor & Francis, in addition to various free or open access databases like DOAJ, DOAB, and others.

In mid-2012 the library started to acquire electronic books: about 300 titles acquired from EBSCO, 10 E-references from Science Direct, about 10 e-books from IET and a subscription to Britannica online encyclopedia. In 2013 the priority was to buy electronic prescribed books for various subjects. DOWSON Era was found to be the suitable publishers which have most of the prescribed books. To date the library has purchased about 300 e-books, and has access to over 14000 journals cutting across all subject areas, excluding journals from Research 4 Life databases such as AGORA, HINARI, OARE.

The library’s electronic resources can be accessed by our users at their convenience, wherever they are as long as they have internet access, so students do not have to come physically to the library to have access to the information. In addition, the University provides wireless access to the internet so that students can connect to the internet and access the library resources wherever they are around campus.

### **3.2 Information literacy instruction**

E-learners are frequently silent and invisible as they search and explore a library’s online resources, and they do not have the same access that on-campus learners have to formal library instruction sessions. With the amount of digital resources available to them, the diversity of interfaces and search tools, and the need for evaluation and critical thinking when using the electronic resources and internet for research, “information literacy” skills are a must-have for e-learners. According to the Association of College

and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2013) information literacy is defined as a set of abilities requiring individuals to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information”. An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

The library is seen as a source of training and guidance to a community of learners who are concerned with navigating the complexities of locating and using digital resources and services (Johnson, Tabela, and Tin, 2004). Thus in order to produce lifelong learners, with a set of abilities and skills as provided above, that are able to easily locate and effectively use the digital information, the University of Namibia Library, through subject librarians, offers information literacy. Although the information literacy instruction is not formally offered in that it is not integrated in the curriculum, subject librarians are assigned to faculties and have to consult with lecturers in their departments to arrange for information literacy classes for students. In addition, there is a librarian assigned to the Centre of External Studies, who is obliged to assist distance students and support them in searching for resources and also giving information literacy classes. The information literacy instruction for distance students is usually given during the vocational classes, which are held once a semester, but other initiatives to make guides and training information available online are underway. However, the information literacy is still only given through the mode of face to face. There is a need to expand the information literacy instruction through the use of technology by including the instruction module on the library website.

### **3.3 Reference services and e-learning**

Traditionally, a reference librarian acts as an additional type of resource, one who can be counted upon to provide expertise in making sense of library systems and research tools, and to offer a helping hand along that often slippery path known as the research process (Johnson, Tabela & Tin 2004). An E-reference service is a service by which library reference is conducted online, and the reference transaction is done through the use of the ICT infrastructure, e.g. computer and internet. In order to accommodate virtual and distance students, libraries established e-reference services, in addition to the traditional face to face reference services. The University of Namibia makes use of the modern virtual reference service; the one-on-one reference services; general and specific library resources delivered via face to face, phone, and instant messaging, e-mail, online forms

etc. The use of e-mail is also another form of communication services that is being used in reference services in most libraries, although there might be a challenge of immediacy. The e-mail can be set up to the default of reply when open with instructions to when the user might expect feedback. This can free the users from doubt as to whether the e-mail sent has reached the library or not.

The University of Namibia also uses live chat technology, which allows e-learners and librarians to send text messages back and forth instantly, using a form of communication that is familiar to most internet users. The instant messaging is a good form of reference service, as the user is interacting live with the librarian. There is no delay in live chat, as there is with e-mail communication. In addition to the telephonic reference services, the library recently established the "ask a librarian" form, a web form which a user can fill in to request information or ask any sort of question relating to the library services and submit it online. There is an identified group of people that can attend to the query, depending on the type and nature of the question asked. The form can be delivered to the subject librarian and reference Librarian.

### **3.4 Social networks and e-learning**

Many academic libraries are using social network sites to interact and communicate with their users, potential users and extend their library services (Mahmod and Richardson. Jr, (2011). The American Libraries Association (2012) claimed that "Facebook and Twitter in particular have proven themselves useful tools not only in publicizing the availability of online collections, but also in building trusted relationships with users". According to Chen, Chu & Xu (2012) libraries use social networks for knowledge sharing, information dissemination, communication and knowledge gathering. MacManus (2012) also explains how social media are used in libraries and states that "*Social networking is used to publicize library events such as gaming nights; to alert users to additions to collections; to provide links to articles, videos, or Web content that might prove relevant or helpful to patrons; and to provide a conduit for community information. Social media also play an important role in fostering relationships with the community by allowing patrons to ask questions or provide feedback about library services.*"

The University of Namibia is one of the libraries that take initiatives in adapting to the use of web 2.0 version tools such as social networks to interact with their users and promote their library services and resources. In addition to the live chat, the University of Namibia uses social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and RSS feed to communicate and interact with their virtual users. It is indicated on the library Facebook page that it has about 313 people that like the library on Facebook and 3 posts that talk about the library. All the posts on the library Facebook were mainly to introduce new products in the library or to inform users of the recent activities taking place in the library and to invite users to the library training.

## 4. Conclusion

Digital libraries have the potential to offer unprecedented resources for supporting e-learning. Libraries are an essential component of a quality e-learning system in higher education institutions. There is an increasing number of virtual learners demanding quality information services and the library can offer that without learners having to come physically to the library. The aim of this article was to identify the University library services and resources in support of e-learning. Librarians have a role to play in e-learning by providing e-reference services, information literacy training, electronic resources (e-journals and e-books) wherever they are, communicating and interacting with e-learners using social network sites in order to understand their needs and promote library services to the learners.

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# Resources Digitization: Sharing archival knowledge to build the community

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## Abstract

Noting that the Unisa Institutional Repository fulfills a role in lifelong learning and personal development, the Unisa Library is looking beyond its traditional role of providing information resources to registered patrons only. Open and freely accessible information resources allow the effective sharing of knowledge, the building of communities and opens up traditionally “preserved” and often inaccessible archival resources. The University of South Africa’s stated Vision is to be ‘the African University in service of humanity’ and this gave impetus to the decision to digitize some of the rare and, in certain cases, fragile resources which were housed in the Unisa Library Archives. The Unisa Library, in collaboration with the Archives staff, selected a number of the resources that are most in demand. A business case was made for these items to be digitized. The Library’s objective was to serve the widest community possible, particularly those who might have an interest in, or a research need for, these items. The selection of formats ranged from typed documents, manuscripts, posters, and photographs of musical instruments. Some documents were brittle, aged and rare, and the condition of some documents indicated that extended handling would cause permanent damage and loss of the documents. In order to serve a knowledge society in want of information in these resources we had to apply our minds to provide specifications regarding digitization to ensure that the condition and future of the original scripts would not be sacrificed in any way.

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**Keywords:** Digitisation, Digitisation advantages; Digitisation Disadvantages, Archival Resources, Outsourcing, Selection Criteria.

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*“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.” Nelson Mandela.*

*[http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/n/nelson\\_mandela.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/n/nelson_mandela.html)*

## 1. Introduction

Archives are codified collections of people's memory of the past, and are collected over time. Archival collections could be collections of primary source documents or artifacts. Archival collections are normally selected due to their long term value, reflecting the work and activities of an organization, citizens, cultural groups - or are a representation of historical or evidentiary records of specific activities of an individual, cultural groups or organization.

Unisa library decided that sharing of valuable resources must have a positive influence on the lives of the frequent user or digital tourist. By providing electronic access to some collections, Unisa acted in a small way fulfilling its social mandate to facilitate knowledge sharing with interested communities.

The Unisa Archivists and Librarians acknowledged the fact that traditional knowledge is under threat to be eradicated as it is deeply rooted within people, their customs, value systems, spiritual practices, praise songs and traditional laws. Traditional knowledge is passed on orally to next generations, and is inseparable from its owners.

In the past these rich, oral knowledge systems were seldom recognized by the West. Knowledge Managers know that (cultural) knowledge can never be 'completely' codified as some of its distinct characteristics would be lost and most often knowledge and the wisdom contained in it, is part of a person's 'daily living and doing'. We also recognize the fact that a wealth of valuable knowledge is contained in cultural heritage, which could contribute to understanding of current health issues, legal systems, agriculture practices, communal activities etc. (World Bank Group, 1995). Written and published literary and artistic works on folklore and stories, emanating from cultural groupings, are codified examples of a *minute* fraction of heritage knowledge that have residence in archives and libraries.

## 2. E-strategy for Unisa's Archival Collections

The Unisa Library Archives houses several valuable and unique collections, often consulted by researchers. The collections represent a variety formats, ranging from handwritten manuscripts, photographs, political posters and government publications ranging from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Digitization of *some* of these rare resources had been identified as strategically important for the Unisa Archives and Library. The objective of digitizing was to extend the reach and access to the content contained in these archival resources.

Digitisation would ensure that the collections be protected from further deterioration due to extensive handling as e-copies of the originals would be available for access and

research. The project would also place Unisa in the online research space in support of the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) model.

Digitisation would also align the Unisa Archives and Library's e-strategy and its desire to shift towards open distance e-learning at Unisa and towards an entirely digitized transactional environment.

Due to capacity and skills challenges, the Unisa Library decided to test the ability to acquire 'sourced in' services of an external service provider for migrating Archival analog information into digital format. A set of agreed standards for the digitization of Archival resources was in place, to ensure effective online storage of digital images.

- Utilizing Unisa's resources and capacities for the upliftment of the disadvantaged;
- Raising awareness of its resources across Unisa's and global scholarly communities
- Working towards increased access to the content contained in the rare historical resources housed in the Unisa Archives.

### **3. Feasibility of the Project**

Demand and access to the originals was a guiding principle for digitisation. Longevity of the originals and unrestricted access to online content, informed the Executive of the Library's decision to commence with the digitisation of a carefully selected group of archival collections.

The library team decided to work strictly according to international standards and to follow internationally approved digital preservation and digitization principles in document handling and description.

#### **3.1 Process**

A business case was developed and a project plan was drafted. The projected activities included activities performed by several directorates and divisions therefore the project team had to be inclusive of representation of all identified Library and Archives constituencies.

The process evolved as follows:

- Economical viability of the project was determined prior to formulating the business plan;
- A detailed business plan was drafted taking all possible variables, risks and mitigating factors into account;

- The Project Plan was approved by the Library Executive Team (LET) and forwarded to the Unisa project funders to request funding;
- Legal issues were sorted out and copyright clearances were obtained;
- Standards for digitisation and description were identified, discussed and agreed upon and the necessary work templates were approved prior to commencement of the process;
- Handling and special care procedures had been identified for discussion with the successful service provider;
- Server space and access to the images were obtained from the University's Information Technology Department to ensure longevity of access.

Under the leadership of Unisa's Director of Information Resources Content Management (IRCM), a Project Working Committee was established to oversee and manage the project process and to provide direction and support to the serving members of the Committee. Processes that were to be followed and decisions taken were carefully noted.

### 3.2 Selection criteria

A qualitative assessment was made on possible archival records that could be digitised and the following decisions and criteria provided direction for the selection of the resources.

- **Use:** the focus was to concentrate on „*high in demand*’ collections, and collections that would contribute to Unisa's social mandate to serve the broadest possible community with access to information;
- **Uniqueness:** the Unisa library decided to digitise rare, brittle and unique resources that would enhance the usefulness of the original resources;
- The collections identified for digitisation consisted of different formats, and were in various conditions of deterioration, wear and tear. The identified collections consisted of handwritten documents, fragile bulletins, originals typed on extremely thin paper, photographs and oversized posters. In some instances the handwritten documents did not have page numbers to ensure sequential image filing;
- **Condition** of the resources: the Archives staff had to identify resources that were in need for a digital surrogate due to deterioration and brittleness and in high demand of use;
- **Context:** it is considered of importance that the collections' origination carefully be documented and the items inventoried before digitisation was considered.

### 3.3 Identified Collections

Seven carefully selected Special Collections housed and preserved in the Unisa Archives were identified for digitisation. The selected collections included handwritten

manuscripts, photographs of musical instruments and historical South African government publications from the 19th and 20th centuries.

The following collections (Ryke & le Roux, 2009) were identified for digitisation:

- **ZK Matthews & PA Moore Matthews Documents:** Handwritten manuscripts, letters, pamphlets, photos, typed reports and lectures;
- **Hesse Collection - diaries of Rev Carl Hoffman and Albert Nachtigal:** original documents equalled to 3000 pages with 4000 pages transcribed text.
- **South Africa. Native Commission:** Government Commission: Political Evidence;
- **Marivate - Valdezia Bulletin 1931-1937:** A Tsonga Newsletter: originally handwritten. Later published as *The Light*. (Africana);
- **University of the Cape of Good Hope/University of South Africa (Unisa) 1850-1918:** Council and Committee minutes;
- **Unisa Musical Instrument Collection:** photographs and word processed descriptions of musical instruments - some ethnic;
- **Political Party Posters.**

### 3.4. Outsourcing

Unisa Library decided that outsourcing would be considered due to the need of highly specialized scanning equipment, expertise and knowledge. At the time of the project, the library lacked these skills. The digitisation process had to be performed on-site, within a range of conditions specified by the Unisa Library.

#### 3.4.1 Conditions stipulated that the service provider must

- specialise in digitisation of archival materials;
- provide references and contact details of successfully completed similar projects;
- apply ISO standards for metadata and digital imaging;
- be able to digitise large volumes of items of brittle materials of different sizes;
- digitise examples of the items of the proposed collections that will be evaluated by the technical specialists of Unisa;
- complete the scanning process within a 24 month period;
- digitise the collections on the premises of Unisa, in the Archives;
- not use high speed scanners or automated document feeders for scanning;
- handle the items with the utmost care according to the instructions of the staff of the Unisa Library Archives;
- not cut any spines for the scanning process;
- remove all copies of the digitised materials from its equipment after completion of the project.

It was decided that the successful service provider would perform data conversion and quality check the scanned images before uploading on the Repository. The service provider also had to capture basic metadata on the system.

### **3.5 Scanning**

The aim of the scanning was to provide a digital image, authentic of the original, for the use by any researcher or user. The Archives and Library decided that the scanned image had to be an exact replica of the original and did not allow for the removal of 'background noise' to enhance the scanned image pixels. No desktop publishing was considered.

#### **3.5.1 Conditions for scanning**

Scanning had to be performed on site.

- The original collections would be kept in the Unisa Archives, safely stored where they were initially housed and preserved and only provided to the scanner operator, when scanning commenced;
- The Archives staff would supervise the physical handling of the rare and brittle resources, giving guidance to the scanning staff;
- The Archives staff would be able to provide additional information on the content of the digitized items, as and when required, to support the description of the scanned images;
- The Archives staff retracted the materials from the shelves, ensuring optimal safety and proper handling of the original materials and reshelfed the originals when scanning was completed.

#### **3.5.2 Specifications for Scanning**

The Library decided to request a Production File (PF) and a Master File (MF) for each digital image. The service provider was responsible for the scanning to Tagged Image File Format (TIFF). Images had to be converted to Portable Document Formats (PDF) to enhance search-ability and speed of downloading images.

The following requirements were called for in the tender requests:

- Scanning to be performed to 600 dpi TIFF and converted to PDF/jpeg files
- Uncompressed images to be stored on the Unisa database;
- Image formats need to be platform independent to ensure migration when required.
- To add administrative metadata during digitisation process;
- Digital images would be saved on DVD/Ds as additional back-up copies.

Post scanning operation: Unisa's cataloguers upgraded the service provider's metadata structures to ensure quality descriptions in the catalogue and to facilitate optimal irretrievability.

### **3.6 Funding**

The University allowed the Library to request special funding to commence with this initiative. The funding allowed the Library to scan multiple collections in a very short time, optimising staff skills and time for selection and extended description. The funding was provided for two years. The Project manager had to submit a quarterly progress report to the funders.

### **3.7 Quality control**

A mutual working relationship was formed between the service provider, Unisa Archives staff, Collection Developers and Cataloguers and the quality criteria were established beforehand.

It was determined that the service provider's staff performed initial quality checks of the scanned images and to ensure that each page is fully rendered, properly aligned and free of distortions. The agreement between Unisa and the service provider was that images and/or metadata identified as unacceptable or incorrect be returned to the service provider with specific comments on the nature or scope of the problem and that it would be removed. It was further agreed that the original be rescanned and inserted in the proper image file sequence.

The library's Cataloguing Division will perform complete quality checks, based on sampling. Quality checks were to be done on ten (10) per cent of all the scanned and uploaded images. The following would also be evaluated for completeness: the directory structure, file name, and corresponding physical page numbers with associated image numbers

## **4 Digitisation**

The advantages and possible challenges had been identified. The project team acknowledged the fact that the digitisation of resources would not warrant a replacement or a permanent alternative for the original. It is a recognised fact that digital images need to be migrated continuously to newer, advanced platforms and servers. Therefore storage of digital images should allow seamless migration if and when required. (Sitts, M.K. 2000)

#### 4.1 Digitisation: Advantages

The main purpose for digitisation was to ensure access to previously „invisible“ Archival resources housed in the Unisa Archives. The library’s cataloguers had to be trained in description standards for historical materials and images. Image preservation was required to ensure prolonged preservation of the original fragile and brittle resources. An obvious advantage is that digitised collections would allow minorities to have a ‘voice’ from the past.

- The digitised collections contributed to the Open Distance e-Learning (ODeL) *model* of the University in support to life-long learning, allowing simultaneous, and multiple accesses to content regardless of geographical residence or time restrictions;
- Through the digital imaging of these heritage collections, the Unisa library facilitated knowledge sharing amongst communities and promotes African scholarship;
- Interoperability enables sharing across systems through metadata harvesting;
- The University and collections’ profiles were raised;
- Due to an agreement, the digital images of the *sister* collection of German Missionary Africana, currently housed in the *Humboldt University* in Berlin, was also made accessible online;
- The preservation of the fragile and brittle originals ensured elimination of wear and tear;
- Outsourcing allowed the Library additional time:
  - to obtain the needed server space from its Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Department;
  - To train its own staff to perform digitisation in future and
  - To research the market for the best equipment within the budget to perform digitisation in future.

#### 4.2 Digitisation: Challenges

Present static collections, reflecting some of the daily activities and genealogical structures of the South African people housed in archives need to be made available to enhance equitable access and unrestricted use.

Digitisation done at Unisa Library identified the following challenges and or disadvantages:

- The context must be described in detail in order to facilitate relevant metadata descriptions that would enhance access to the content. Individual articles within the collections, without a good description of context, makes these items ‘meaningless’ for the researcher or digital tourist and adds additional hours of pre-research and challenges for description;

- Digital images do not replace the originals. Preservation for both original and digital formats needs to be planned for;
- The digitisation cost was high. Due to lack of capacity, outsourcing with regulatory specifications, was an alternative option and added to the cost;
- Additional server capacity for the growing Repository had to be obtained;
- Obsolescence of hardware and operating systems remains a constant challenge and migration of images needs to be planned for in advance.
- All collections identified for digitisation had to be carefully prepared and inventoried. This was time consuming but a pre-requisite before the commencement of scanning:
  - Collation of pages to ensure correct order, completeness and legibility of the text were done by the Archives staff;
  - Flagged instructions were left for the scanner operator, in case of any anomalies detected within the specific document. (e.g. thin paper, added notes, etc)
  - A production note had to be prepared for each volume containing the information on:
    - » Number of pages expected to be scanned;
    - » Starting and ending page numbers;
    - » Anomalies such as missing pages;
- Due dates had to be met, and scope creeping was managed throughout;
- Possible risks and measures to mitigate them, were identified in the planning stages already;
- The handling of rare, fragile and brittle documents had to be done according to prescribed archival methods. Scanner operators had to be informed prior to scanning each collection. This was an added burden on time for the Archives staff;
- Outsourced service providers had to be informed on handling, imaging and metadata capturing procedures as the due date for delivering the scanned resources had to be adhered to.

## 5. Risk factors identified

Apart from obvious risks of a service provider going out of business, the following were also identified:

- **Risk:** Theft of the originals during the imaging process;  
**Mitigation:** *the scanning to be performed under close supervision of the Archive staff on Unisa's premises.*
- **Risk:** Loss of originals;  
**Mitigation decision:** *Originals will not be moved to another site for scanning. This will effectively eliminate losses, theft or unnecessary and careless handling of the brittle and rare materials.*

- **Risk:** Illegal copies made during the process which could be sold off to external parties;  
**Mitigation decision:** *this matter was successfully addressed during tendering process, information session and stipulated conditions within the contract.*
- **Risk:** Obtaining copyright permission is complex and time consuming and needs to be clarified before scanning could commence;  
**Mitigation decision:** *Copyright must be cleared before digitisation. Due care had to be taken to timely find family members if and when private collections were identified for digitisation on which copyright clearance is needed and where the primary copyright holder passed away.*
- **Risk:** Possible damage of the original materials due to poor handling;  
**Mitigation decision:** *Due care will be taken to alert the scanning operators on how to handle fragile, old and brittle documents. An information session to be held with all interested vendors to communicate correct handling procedures.*
- **Risk:** obsolete technologies;  
**Mitigation decision:** *Care must be taken to plan for the preservation of the images in standard formats that would be compatible to any platform if and when migration is considered.*

## 6. Project Evaluation

Evaluation of use is needed to determine the level and success of marketing and to determine the impact of the collections on potential user communities. The evaluation of use is also required by the funders of the project. Current use statistics is an indication of the interest in these resources.

## 7. In Conclusion

The Library managed to facilitate digital access to rare and brittle materials to enhance the knowledge of the indigenous peoples of the Sotho, Swazi, Bapedi, and Tsonga communities.

The current online access and use of the digitised collections, is an indication that Unisa moved into the right direction. The combined effort between Unisa Archives and the *Evangelisches Landeskirchliches Archiv* to jointly build on a comprehensive German Africana collection contributed towards access to distributed knowledge at a single click of a button.

Outsourcing of scanning provided Unisa time to obtain the needed skills from the service provider, and to plan for acquisition of relevant hardware. Publishing the content on the Unisa Library's Institutional Repository ensured free use to virtual tourists, knowledge seekers and researchers.

A proper business plan and project management plan is essential. The management of the processes became part of each concerned individuals' performance targets. It is good for discipline to give monthly feedback and report on progress.

The project was well aligned with the University's strategic objectives. Reachable and well defined goals must be identified. All stakeholders must be involved from the conceptual phase onwards. Correct procedures for reporting problems need to be identified and applied early in the process.

Not all collections are worth digitising therefore selection was based on predetermined criteria. Apart from extending the reach of these collections, digitisation raised awareness of other archival collections preserved by the University. Interaction with the collections ensures that communities, who were previously unaware of the existence of these collections, could benefit by finding lost histories or fill knowledge gaps relating to their past.

## **8. The wealth of knowledge hidden in the Digitised Unisa Archives Collections**

### **8.1 Hesse collection of German Africana**

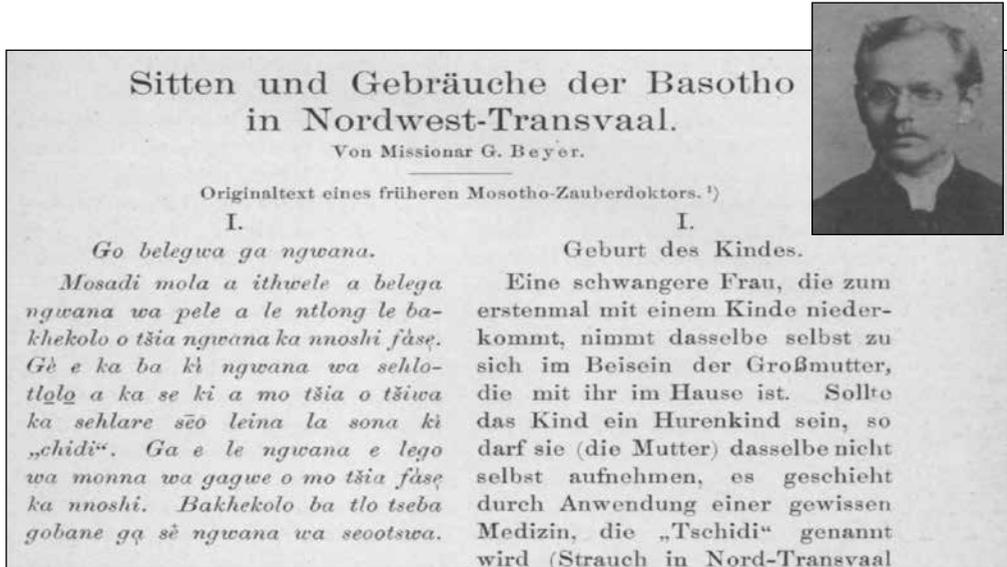
The Unisa Archives is the proud owner of the collection of German Africana in its holdings. The collection was initiated by Dr A.O. Hesse, a Berlin missionary who lectured at Unisa from 1958 to 1972. The Unisa Archives added more material, ranging from original manuscripts, biographies and rare periodicals to its Hesse Collection of German Africana and it houses at present 92 archival accessions and 150 manuscripts, separately catalogued.

The digitization of accessions in this Collection opened up a world of knowledge about the Northern Sotho people, their culture and daily activities, etc., in the early 1900s.

Within the Hesse Collection of German Africana is the collection of another missionary, Carl Adolf Hoffmann (Accession 28). This Collection consists of eight volumes of illustrated diaries, covering the period 1894 – 1910. Hoffmann is remembered for his extended knowledge of the Sotho culture, language, legends and history. (Coetzee, M. 2010)

The information contained in the Hesse collection of German Africana lends itself to research by language practitioners, anthropologists, theologians and people interested in visual arts. Within the collection, the following could be found: handwritten diaries, notes and sketches, printed essays and black and white drawings of the Basotho culture, customs, fables and stories, medicine and folklore.

Plate 1: Example of the text in Sotho from the Hoffmann collection. (Hesse, C.A. 1912)



## 8.2 The Nightigal Diaries – a manuscript in the Hesse Collection of German Africana

### **Background: Albert Nightigal**

Albert Nightigal was a missionary working in the district of Lydenburg. He was one of the first missionaries granted permission by the Pedi ruler, King Sekwati, to work in this area. After Sekwati's death, his son Sekhukhune extended this invitation to Nightigal to continue working amongst the Pedis. Nightigal was continuously in contact with the chief of the Pedis, Sekhukhune, and played a vital role in negotiations between the Lydenburg government officials and the communities.

### **The Manuscript and transcription**

The Nightigal Manuscript is a valuable resource of nearly 2000 pages which include accurately described genealogical tables of the Bapedi, Swazi and Zulu tribal chiefs. These diaries were transcribed by Dr. A.O. Hesse in 1973. The following is a copy from his writings on the genealogy of the Bapedi. (Nightigal J.A. 1973)



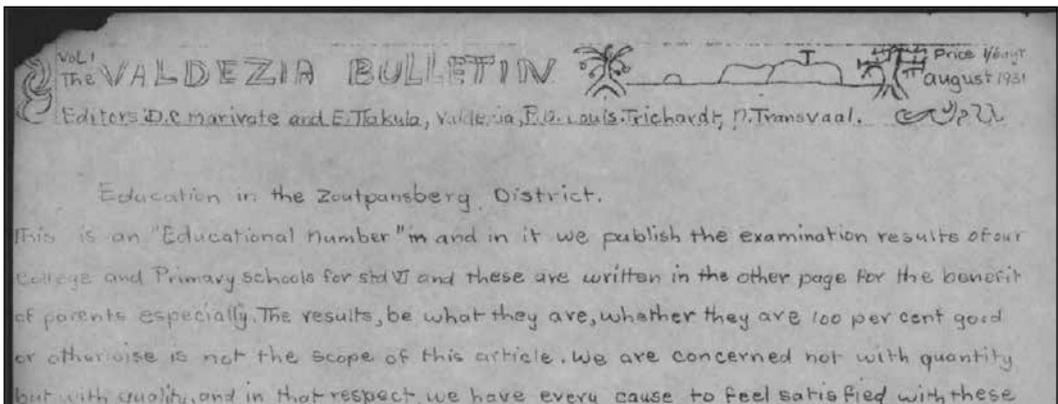
### 8.3 DC Marivate Papers (Acc 124) – Valdezia Bulletin in the Documentation Centre for African Studies

Reverend Marivate was a minister of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church in Atteridgeville. (Marivate, D.C. 1931) He was described as a true Tsonga Shangaan from the tribe of the Shembo. He was born in the Northern Transvaal, and was recognized as a person who was thoroughly educated, who understood European culture and was a gifted guitar player. He collected a number of his tribe's folksongs.

Under his leadership, the initially handwritten *Valdezia Bulletin* was published. Later it was published by the *Spes Bona* Printing Works situated in Alexandra Township in Johannesburg under the title: *The Light*. The *Bulletin* reported on community issues, e.g. poultry shelter, local news and cultural activities. Of special interest is that the *Bulletin* was owned and controlled by Africans. The originals in the Unisa Archives are very fragile and brittle due to environmental conditions. This publication was identified for preservation in order to keep a lasting digital record of this precious archival resource. Reverend Marivate was also active in the translation of the Bible into Tsonga. The *Valdezia Bulletin / The Light* is an enlightening publication which spans the years 1931 to 1937.

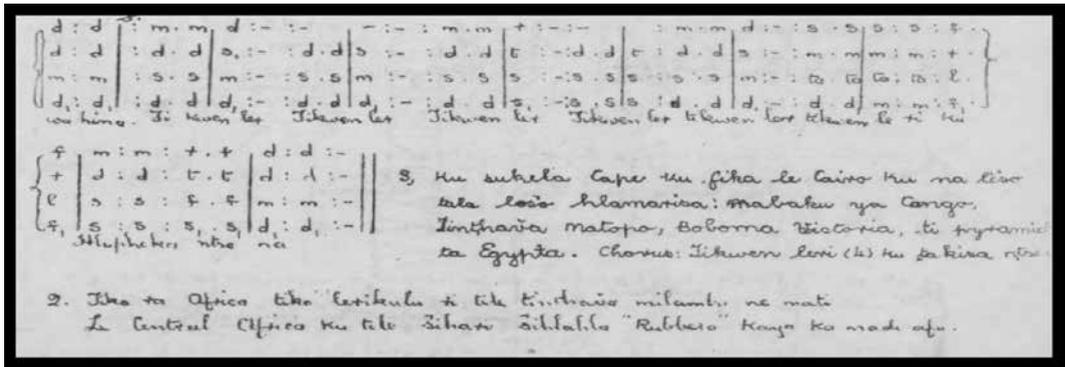
An image from the handwritten *Valdezia Bulletin* is provided below.

Plate 4: Valdezia bulletin August 1931.



In this collection, a songbook, written in Tonic Sol-fa (a method where the staff notations were replaced by anglicised solfège syllables, known to us as do, re, me, fa, etc.) for school choir competitions was compiled by D C Marivate and it is a valuable compilation of Tsonga songs. (Marivate, D.C. 1934)

## Plate 5: School Songs for Choir Competitions.



Through these publications it is noticeable that the Tsonga ethnic identity was firmly established at the time of Marivate.

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# Building critical digital skills: Libraries and media education

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## Introduction

I've worked as a librarian for children and youth in Espoo City Library since 2002. Media literacy, digital fluency and reading promotion in all shapes and formats are my favorite subjects. I love feeding curiosity and it is easy to get me going about building a fact-based world view, and finding all necessary information no matter what the subject.

However, something happened the other day that made me question my professional competence...

My son was angry with me for not properly investigating a subject, a spare-time activity we both enjoy. It is a game we both play, and he says that I don't play as well as I could. It's not because I'm old and slow, it's only because I haven't done my research accurately. You should look at this and that video on YouTube, he says.

It has been predicted, that reading and textual literacy is not so much needed, even dead, by 2050, in forty years' time. Knowledge and information will live in other places than long texts. What will happen to libraries?

## Knowledge society in the digital era

*How to build a strong knowledge society in the digital era? How may libraries support education and the challenges of being and learning in the online world? How may libraries support and nourish the essential digital skills, and use the internet's potential to inform, empower and enlighten?*

The library's traditional role as a provider of access to knowledge needs to be looked at. I can't ignore YouTube. The future significance of libraries is much defined by how quickly we adopt the role of providing support to knowledge, creativity and innovation in all means available and in the digital world. Doing so, libraries will still be an important part of capability cultivating services and building strong societies.

When a non-librarian thinks of life before Google, the following *image* tells the story. We librarians might think that we had the means to find about almost everything also back in the pre-Google-era, but it is not an experience everyone has shared.

It might seem that librarianship was a simpler thing before all this online information, with no competition and with the power of choosing and evaluating the best information sources to the user.

The solution is definitely not this: ignore Google and YouTube and carry on teaching the art and science of information retrieval from library shelves and the more selected and organized sources of information. We also can't ignore visual information and the use of videos as a prominent source of information.

Information has left the building. No matter if librarians think that they know better. A couple of years ago, I visited two libraries near Swakopmund, Namibia. The other one was lovely and busy, the other one was a very nice building, had a huge collection but barely any customers. The explanation given to me was the economic structures of the neighborhood, the other one being poor, the other one rich. My message is, however, that both the poor and the rich need their libraries. I'll soon explain.

I often hear librarians and teachers lament that many, especially children, forget or never learn the art and science of looking for a specific piece of information using well-organized information sources that combine physical and computer-based services. It is not a question of either/or. Even though Google might sometimes seem a superficial, hit-or-miss type of source of information, compared to good old days of well selected materials in a data base or a book shelf.

Good information retrieval skills are still the very core of learning.

A good teacher doesn't see knowledge as a cumulative store of objective information. Learning is not primarily what individuals know or do not know, but more what are their skills in acquiring, diffusing and creating knowledge that are important for both economic progress and social change, says Pasi Sahlberg, a Finnish education official.

*From a librarian's point of view, the task of selecting and evaluating information really is now the user's task.* The internet is widely used and also trusted as a source of information. The amount of information available at the click of a mouse is huge. Critical digital judgment skills are especially important for young people.

## **Digital natives in action: digital literacy skills in the light of two studies**

How do Finnish high school students get on? A recent study about online reading by Carita Kiili shows, that the ease of asking Google is a myth. Many students, very skilled in social networking, finding answers to practical questions and entertainment in the internet, managed a simple task of searching online for a school essay rather poorly and had considerable difficulties in locating reliable information. The relevance of information was more frequently evaluated than the credibility of online information. A lot of time went to browsing, which left little time for processing and writing the actual essay. When searching, good sources of information were found but then lost again in the process. Kiili calls out for literacy learning activities that challenge students to accomplish complex sources and tasks that promote content processing that goes beyond simple gathering of facts.

Another study from the UK shows, that although young people are confident users of online information, they often trust the first thing they find, don't apply fact checks, double check or try to find out, who is behind a pretty web page. Teachers report that they often end up discussing inaccurate content, online misinformation and even conspiracy theories in the classroom. There is a lot of information, masses of wrong information, and misguided decisions are made. And yet we need to allow children to use the content, it is the only way to learn. Just need to remember that the skills of selecting and evaluating were never so important.

## **Building digital literacy and media skills in the library**

It's the core knowledge of librarians; we've been the evaluators and selectors. It is more important than ever to be able to tell good information from the bad. We've got loads of information in hand, but building a fact-based world view is a challenge.

Librarians, among others, should acquire skills to educate the youth to be critical consumers of online content, to be a web savvy generation. We need to jump from the task of evaluating and selecting information to teaching the skills of judging information, to evaluate, select and make informed choices.

How do we do it, then? I could spend all my working hours talking about digital critical skills, but I doubt that not very many would remember what I was going on about. Especially if the audience is consists of under-15 year olds. I also have limited time for one class, one school, as librarians are few even in Finland, compared to teachers and schools.

Learning, in my experience, is most effective when it's participatory. What happens in the library, should also be about participating and creating. Learning from a lecture is a

very demanding task – you should in fact be doing something right now, too, in order to learn something. When I meet school groups in the library, I always try to create action and only talk for a very limited amount of time.

There should be a surprise factor in all teaching, so that the audience is a bit shaken and thinks that this library visit/lecture is not what I thought it would be.

Learning classification and **keywords** helps searching both in library catalogs and online. I've made kids take a book they've read and think of keywords for it. It is a surprisingly difficult task – no matter what I say, the first thing they do is nearly always describe, is the book fun, sad, good or bad. Once they get to rounding up actual keywords, the task is an eye opener. My library catalog also allows users to add their own keywords, so we do that and then search the catalog with the newly added words. Always fun.

Searching exercises have traditionally been such that you need to find a book on a subject or a simple fact, an answer to a question from the internet. I've noticed that unless the exercise in itself urges you to evaluate the book or the site, an average student aims for quick results without thinking too much.

Lately, I've tried to focus on giving tools for evaluating the information in my searching exercises. The question to be answered is why did you choose this book/internet site, instead of what did you find. A list of things to consider is attached.

A task for the audience: google *daily life Namibia*. Select one web site, for example TIME for Kids. Read the article and evaluate: is it accurate and to be trusted? If so, please let me know, as I am planning to use the text as an exercise for Finnish children, but feel I haven't got the background information to judge.

Keeping track and finding their way back to good internet sites once found was a challenge to the students in Carita Kiili's study. I've introduced bookmarking in cloud services like bit.ly or scoop.it. A good bookmarking service allows the user to make notes (and in my classes, it is obligatory to comment and make notes) and to share the notes and bookmarks with others.

I've made kids think about inaccuracy by making them select and use outdated books as craft materials. Lovely new books have been created in classrooms, using outdated books. The lesson involves Google, too, with a task of using time limits when searching. Try googling for old news on a chosen subject, for example.

A great way to reserve time for participation is to go for flipping. At school, a flipped classroom means that students watch a lecture on-line or read about the subject as homework and the time in the classroom is spent doing own assignments. The valuable,

limited classroom time with the teacher is spent with the activity, where most of the learning takes place.

Digital fluency is only half-way when it's merely the wise use of content. Full digital fluency is participating in and creating content. I was doubtful, however, of ever having enough time to actually create media products with children, until I was lucky enough to visit Greenwell Matongo library in Windhoek, Namibia.

Greenwell Matongo community library involves school kids to help as library prefects. The prefects have various tasks, and as a treat, they've had a Night in the library, where they got to watch a movie, eat something nice and enjoy the library without the crowds. Inspired by this, I've now had several African nights in the library for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. In the Tapiola Library version, we first work and then have fun, all during the same night. The task is making short educational videos, using smartphones. An empty library at night is a perfect setting for filming. And kids love making something that is not just for fun or education, but actually useful for the library.

Furthermore, making their own media products is a great way to do media education. If you learn how to dance, you look at other people dancing with new eyes; you have a better eye for detail and nuances, tricks and methods. It is the same with making videos, pictures and other media products.

Working nights is a bit of a challenge for my bosses and family, so I'm been processing ways to do similar projects at day time. One experiment was making posters for library and reading promotion. The making of these posters only took 1.5 hours. With 4<sup>th</sup> graders, we had a short introduction to slogans and posters, and then the kids had the task of thinking what stories, books and libraries mean to them and what they want to say in a poster. They took photos and made the posters using ipads. Beforehand, the teacher had asked the parents if the children are allowed to be in the pictures or not.

### **...and outside the library**

*Then, an example from the UK.* Luckily, educational materials produced in one country are often useful also elsewhere. In future, I wish to see more sites like this UK based project Digital Disruption. The project says that it combines traditional critical thinking skills, such as source verification, with the new knowledge about how the digital world works, such as understanding search engines and YouTube. They promise to equip educators with the skills and resources they need, to effectively teach digital judgement. At a grassroots level, the site issues propaganda techniques, shows examples of effective YouTube hoaxes, questions and gets student to discuss the consequences of thoughtless clicking and sharing.

<http://www.digitaldisruption.co.uk>

## Conclusion

Media education is beneficial for adults, as well. Parents need to be digitally fluent, to be able to understand and educate their children. Senior citizens find lots of useful information and possibilities online, if they are digitally fluent. Libraries need to work on narrowing the digital divide between generations, too.

As a Finnish librarian, closely involved with education, I've seen the effect and possibilities of strong libraries. With the digital era, we are faced with new challenges. Librarians need to call out their knowledge, be important, be quick to adapt new skills and take an active part in the digital society.

They say that Google before you tweet is the new think before you say.

Google well before you share, say I.

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## Theme 6

Building  
strong  
knowledge  
societies  
through  
libraries



# Strong local archives/library content: A mirror of society

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## Abstract

Africa continues to be depicted in literature as a marginal contributor to world's knowledge, "silent", "voiceless", yet the continent is host to rare and irreplaceable pre-colonial manuscripts in its Libraries and Archives. The National Archives of Namibia (NAN) houses remarkable and original handwritten work with high cultural, historical and genealogical research value, written before the formal colonization of the country. These manuscripts and records are largely unknown and under-researched and this perpetuates the knowledge gap in the existing scholarly work that contributes to shaping what is known about Namibia and its people. This paper describes pre-colonial writing in Namibia. It urges scholars to utilize these pre-colonial documents, records and manuscripts as valuable research resources for cultural, genealogy and local history.

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**Keywords:** Pre-colonial, manuscripts, reading, writing, research, local content, Namibia

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## Introduction

Africa has been described as "unhistorical, underdeveloped spirit still involved in conditions of mere nature... devoid of morality, religion, and political constitution." (Hegel, cited in Kuykendall, 1993, p.572). This despondent interpretation of Africa is further characterized as "the heart of darkness" (Conrad, 1899) "has shaped not only how outsiders have viewed Africa, but also how Africans themselves view their continent." (Gatune and Najam, 2011)). Yet, the continent has produced documents and manuscripts

of world significance, written before the colonization, as exemplified by the Bamun script in the Cameroon<sup>1</sup> and the Witbooi Papers in Namibia.<sup>2</sup>

The 18<sup>th</sup> century Hegelian view of Africa is still underlying much of the writing on Africa although not so often openly proclaimed. An example is the widely reported lecture by Hugh Trevor-Roper on the BBC of 28 November 1963, where he claimed that “there is only the history of Europeans in Africa, the rest is darkness.” He also described Africa’s past as “the unedifying gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corner of the globe.”

Although this verdict has been widely criticized and no serious historical scholar would dare to utter such a statement today, the echo of such claims continues to reverberate in official academic speeches. The speech given by the former French President Nikolas Sarkozy, at the University of Dakar, on July 26, 2007, is a recent example. He stated: “The tragedy of Africa is that the African has not fully entered into history. The African peasant, who for thousands of years has lived according to the seasons, whose life ideals was to be in harmony with nature, only knew the eternal renewals of time, rhythmmed by endless repetition of the same gestures and the same words.”

Further, the writings of current scholars find that Africa continues to be “viewed as a consumer of the world’s knowledge production” (Raju et al, 2013, p.44), and that the continent has supplied only about 0.7% of the world’s published knowledge. Overwhelming literature evidence supporting these claims exists (Gatune and Najam, 2011; Nwagwu and Ahmed, 2009, p.90) and even some African scholars have jumped onto the bandwagon to condemn the continent as passive consumer of the world’s knowledge. Shortage of locally relevant content combined with lack of writing culture is another common feature in literature (Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011; SACMEQ III, 2010; Tella & Akande, 2007; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2004), about Africa despite continuing efforts to eradicate its persistence. Is the much lamented lack of knowledge production and the writing culture really based on a cultural trait of a timeless African character, or a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Statements such as “0.7% knowledge production in Africa” are being repeated without questioning the methodology behind these figures. There is lack of clarity of what is measured and how it was measured. The persisting condemnation of Africa as a failure is damaging especially to younger generations who have to carry Africa into the future. Being constantly reminded as a continent with a history out of which no goodness shall come is a heavy burden and a stumbling block for those wishing to propel Africa’s development agenda into the future.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bamumscript.org/font.php>

<sup>2</sup> NAN: A.0002

This paper therefore concurs with a view advanced by Craig (1992, p.12) who, while speaking of archivists, said: "Just as personal identity is anchored in a strong historical sense, so is our professional identity - both come from ability to experience self as something that has continuity. Surely if you have nothing to look backward to, and with pride, you have nothing to look forward to with hope." During liberation struggle, Namibians took strength from the example of their forbearers, Hendrik Witbooi, Samuel Maharero, Mandume yaNdemufayo and others who resisted against colonialism. Colonial education prepared the learners to celebrate the history of the colonizers and the indigenous history was associated with inferiority and defeat. Now after independence, they became aware that there is so much more their ancestors have said and done, so much more to be remembered and explored, and to be built upon. This heritage has been covered and silenced under layers and layers of colonial brainwashing. It needs to be unearthed and popularized by libraries and archives, to be researched thoroughly and the research outcomes would serve as strong foundation for a knowledge-based society.

The indigenous people of Namibia authored manuscripts of outstanding universal value, such as the Hendrik Witbooi papers inscribed on UNESCO memory of the world. Namibia's pre-colonial manuscripts include handwritten laws and constitutions, a regional cooperation treaty, the official archives of African leaders, and oral traditions written down for posterity. These manuscripts have immense research and historical value to Namibia and to the world. Although we have these manuscripts preserved, they are hardly known, not taken up in research and teaching to enrich the understanding of the philosophy and ideas from Namibia's past.

I am focusing on my motherland Namibia, but this can certainly be applied across the African continent. One pertinent example is, the Bamum Script of the Bamum Kingdom in the Cameroon. It was invented by King Njoya, and valuable traditional knowledge was written down in it. Such materials must be studied, published and widely popularized. It is encouraging to know that now, almost 100 years after the Bamum script was forbidden by the French colonial power and its letter-press destroyed, the Bamum Scripts and Archives Project at the Bamum Palace is reviving the script, it is being taught again, has been standardized into Unicode, and even a beautiful computer font has been designed for it.<sup>3</sup> It is not clear whether the local library in Cameroon is involved in this project, but it should be in the forefront of such activities. Such local content in our local libraries and in our internet presence will go a long way to keep our heritage alive, restore African cultural pride and produce self-confidence youth and instill pride in their identity.

The pre-colonial manuscripts are not taught in schools in Namibia, I became aware of them only while in the service of the National Archives of Namibia. Libraries and archives have a responsibility to disseminate and popularize such relevant local content that gives society a sense of their written history from pre-colonial times and to expose and make

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<sup>3</sup> <http://bamumscript.org/font.php>

known under-researched local sources. The librarian and archivist know the contents of collections in libraries and archives. They are best placed to expose the contents of their collections for the public good. As Craig (1992) writes: “In our past lies our future ... the seeds of our future are germinated in the soil of our past.”

## Indigenous writing in Namibia

The need to write, to paint, to document human activities did not start with the written words. The first ever known written record of human activities in pre-literate Namibia are the prehistoric rock engravings found all over the country, wherever the terrain supported the production and preservation of such artifacts.



Above and below: Figurative and abstract petroglyphs at Twyfelfontein.  
Photographer: John Kinahan. Source: Twyfelfontein Nomination Dossier, National Archives of Namibia, A.0862 (1)



/Ui-//aes or otherwise known as Twyfelfontein, one of Namibia's world heritage sites proclaimed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List, has one of the largest concentrations of petroglyphs (rock engravings) in Africa. This site has material culture from Late Stone Age, and "forms a coherent, extensive and high-quality record of ritual practices related to hunter-gather communities in this part of southern Africa over at least 2,000 years, and eloquently illustrates the link between the rituals and economic practices of hunter-gathers."<sup>4</sup> And while this rock art gallery has probably not been created with the intention of making a record but for cultural practices and ritual purposes, it has been argued that certain wide-spread abstract petroglyphs have been created with the intention of marking territorial rights, denoting boundaries, proclaim trade monopolies and group identities. (Schaafsma, 1985; Heizer and Baumhoff, 1959; Hewett, 1904; Snyder, 1966). These communities have made history through these petroglyphs, contrary to the colonialists' view that Africa has not entered into world history.

<sup>4</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1255>

## Pre-colonial manuscripts in Namibia

The concept of literacy, numeracy and preserving written documents and manuscripts was introduced into Namibia by Christian missionaries in pre-colonial times when they brought spiritual education. The London Missionary Society (LMS) was the first to send its missionaries to Namibia, in 1805, to establish missions including mission schools. Other followed in their footsteps. They produced and maintained records, manuscripts and documents in a form of baptismal, confirmation, marriage and death registers, minutes of meetings, letters, reports, photographs etc. which later became archives and are often preserved, either in the country of origin or at the seats of the mission societies in Europe.

The traditional leaders soon embraced the culture of reading and writing. They encouraged their people to acquire these skills, predominantly in Dutch language. The local leaders made use of the newly acquired skills to write down the laws governing their communities and developed a culture of recording their business transactions and maintained records and manuscripts. The most well-known include the Laws of Bethanie “Ryksboek” of (1847), the Laws and Constitution of the Swartboois of Rehoboth (1849), the “Vaderlike Wette” Laws of the Rehoboth Basters of (1870-1872) and the Laws of the Rietfontein Basters (date unknown) were written and enforced. The Laws of Bethanie were the oldest written Laws in pre-colonial Namibia, beginning in 1847.

Most of these documents are written in Cape Dutch which at that time was considered as useful in the communication with white traders, with the missionaries<sup>5</sup> and soon also as a lingua franca between communities with different linguistic background.<sup>6</sup>

Some of these laws, such as, the laws of the Rietfontein Basters and the Swartboois were unfortunately not preserved and there is no evidence on how and when they got destroyed. While the laws of the Rietfontein Basters were made known in a published German translation<sup>7</sup>, the existence of the laws and constitution of the Swartboois is made known through references made to them by Missionary Kleinschmidt<sup>8</sup> while the original of the Law is assumed destroyed or lost.

The Ryksboek and Vaderlike Wette survived and they now form part of the pre-colonial records at the National Archives of Namibia.<sup>9</sup> These pre-colonial laws made provision

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<sup>5</sup> Many missionaries came from a Northern German background with a home dialect which was quite close to Dutch

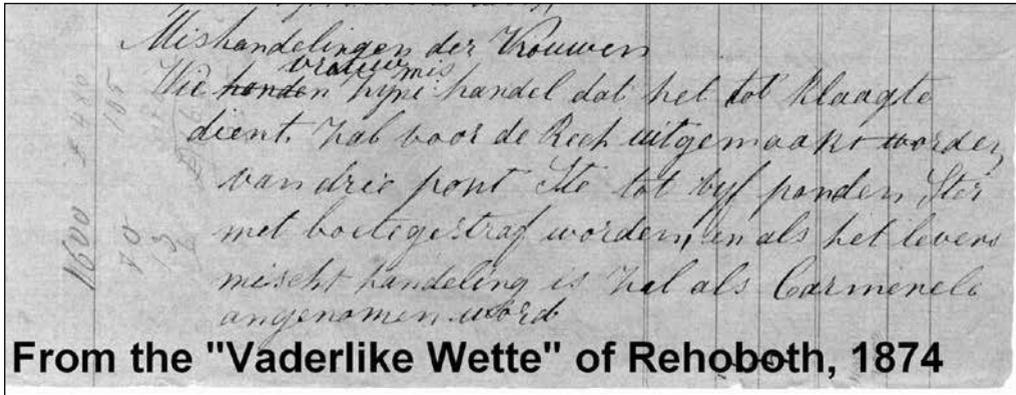
<sup>6</sup> Stals, E.L.P. (2001)

<sup>7</sup> Francois, Curt von (1899)

<sup>8</sup> Kleinschmidt to Rhenish Mission Board, 17.11.1851. This original letter is in the Archives of the Vereinigte Evangelische Mission, Wuppertal (Germany) a copy is in the National Archives of Namibia (NAN Accession A.786, Vedder Quellen, vol.30a p.8-9).

<sup>9</sup> Vaderlike Wette, in: NAN, Private Accession A.219. Ryksboek of Bethanie, in: ELCRN Archives, no. X 15.21

for the administration of justice, and punishment. An excerpt from *Vaderlike Wette* shows:



National Archives of Namibia, A.0219.

This provision deals with women abuse and reads as follows:

“Women abuse. If a man abuses his wife and she sues him about it, the Court shall fine him to pay between 3 £, and if the abuse is life-threatening, it shall be deemed a criminal case.” These pre-colonial communities provides for the right of women, a condition which even in today’s world some countries are still struggling to understand.<sup>10</sup>

However, the most systematic effort towards producing records and manuscripts and maintaining them was made by Kaptain Hendrik Witbooi, who kept his government administrative records in letter copy books. The Kaptain Hendrik Witbooi manuscripts include the registration of births and deaths, and lists of office-bearers in his government, letters he wrote and letters he received, things he sold and bought.

Amongst the Witbooi papers were commercial records and manuscripts created by traders that came through the Cape or through Walvisbay to trade in Namibia. Evidence from the Witbooi journal 2 and 3 shows that they are “recycled” record books formerly kept by traders.<sup>11</sup> The Witboois recycled these books and used them to create their own commercial records such as the “Witbooi debt book”<sup>12</sup>. Witbooi’s financial record books were seemingly created as evidence of business transactions between his government and the European traders. These record books were maintained as a proof of what took place so that the traders could not cheat his government. Witbooi used these record books to protect his government and to maintain reliable trading partnership.

<sup>10</sup> *Mishandelingen der Vrouwen. Wie zyne vrouw mishandel dat het tot klagte dient, zal voor de Reg uitgemaakt worden, van drie pont Ster[ling] tot vyf ponden Ster[ling] met boete gestraf worden, en als het levens mischthandeling is zal als Carmenele angenomen word.* (Translated by W. Hillebrecht)

<sup>11</sup> NAN, Private Accession A.650

<sup>12</sup> NAN, Private Accession A.177

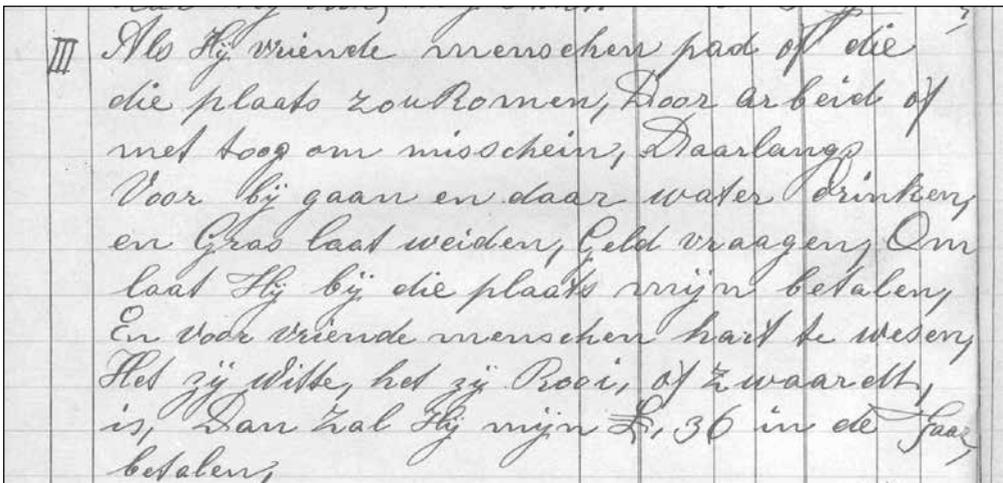
Below is an extract from the Hendrik Witbooi letter-copy book, National Archives of Namibia, Accession 002. It include four paragraphs taken from a Contract of Witbooi with François Daniel Voeis dated 9 January 1893 (pages 289-291) which attempts to express traditional communal land use practices in the language of modern lease contracts. The original text and its translation by Heywood and Maasdorp:<sup>13</sup>

*I "Als Iemand aan mijn pla[a]ts huurt, en als ik hem aanneemt, Dan vraagt ik hem £12 in de Jaar, Ik meent aan die ééne wat ik niet zijn bezit of waardes zien, maar wanneer als ik zijne bezet zien, Dan zal ik weer veranderen, Als daar verandering is."*

If somebody is renting a farm from me, with my permission, I ask from him 12 Pound annually. This is provisional. Once I have assessed his worth, my price will be changed as follows.

*II "Als Hij eigene regten op die plaats gebruiken, en ve[e]lmeer op die geld wat hij betaaldt denken en daar door mijne zwak[k]e menschen, wat bij hem komen, Om tog mond vol aan hem te loeren, om vriendelijke te wesen, en zijne hart van die zwak[k]e menschen toemaken, Dan zal hij voor mij £24 in de Jaar betalen."*

If he applies his own rules on his land, and shows more concern for what is due to him than for my poor people, and is unkind to them when they come to him to fill their mouths, and closes his heart to their want, than he shall pay me 24 Pound annually.



An insert from the Hendrik Witbooi Diary No.1, National Archives of Namibia, Accession No.2. The translation of the above handwritten text read as follows:

*If friendly people come that way on business or moving through with their herds, and he asks them money for grazing and water, because he is hard to strangers, be they white, red or black, he shall pay me 36 pound annually.*

<sup>13</sup> Witbooi, Hendrik (1995)

III *“Als Hij niet onder mijn wet wil buigen, en daar door mijne Ampenaars tegenstand, Wat ik naar hem stuiren en mijne Ampenaars zijne kwaadrigheid en Toornigheid toonen, en met hem vecht, of met mijne natie strijdt of vecht houden, of zetelijk en als ik met mijne oogen Dat zien Dan zal ik Die eene van mij en van mijne plaats en van mij streekt uitsloden, want ik kan niet twee honden wat niet Dracht malkanderen in eene bak laat drinken, dat kan ik tog niet doen.”*

If he cannot abide by my laws, and resists my officers with roughness and scorn, and fights with them, or quarrels or fights with my nation, and if I see that with my own eyes, then he shall be turned off my land, because I cannot keep two dogs who will not drink from the same bowl.

This innovative rendering of African *Ubuntu* philosophy in the form of a European-style written contract reveals the level of development of these communities at the time the colonizers came. Is this Sarkozy's peasant speaking who knows only “the eternal renewals of time, rhythmmed by endless repetition of the same gestures and the same words”?

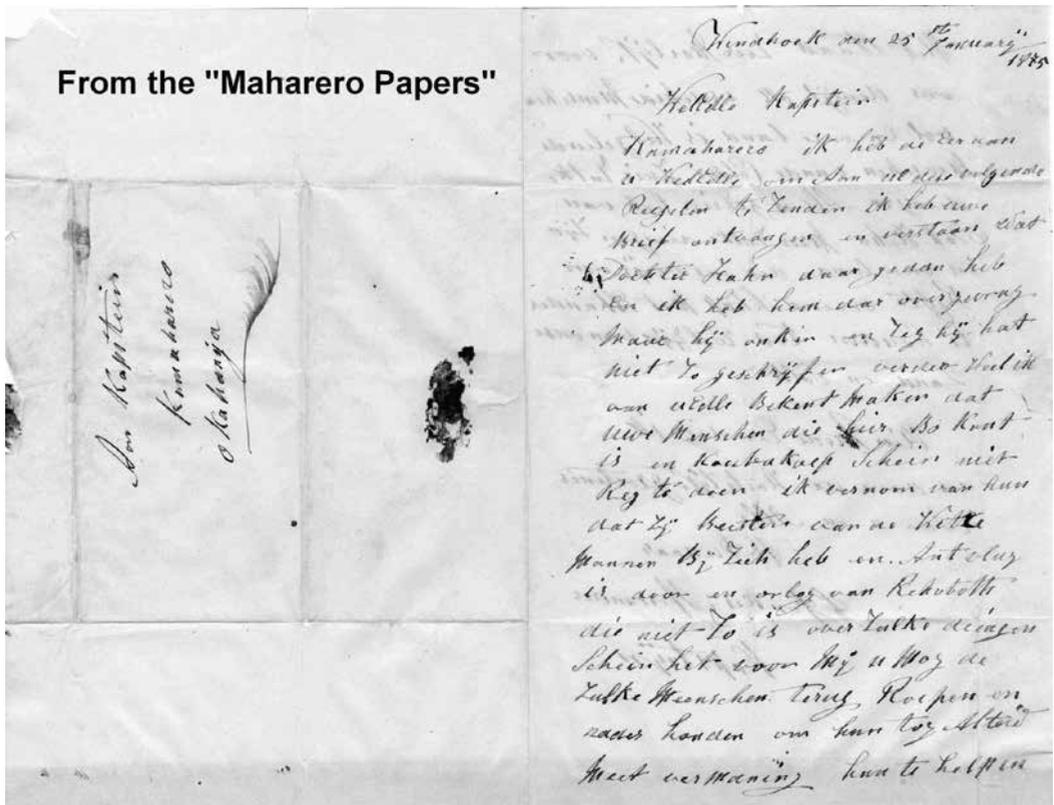
There is so far no written evidence that other indigenous leaders in Namibia created such a rich body of records as Witbooi did. However, it can be assumed that many leaders kept archives, papers of their governmental affairs, but that many of these records perished in the colonial wars. Some of the Witbooi manuscripts that survived the wars with the Germans were looted and barely escaped the fires that were set by the German troops on defeated local homes and villages.



Source: National Archives of Namibia, Photo collection. From Stuhlmann Diary

An album with a similar photograph of Hendrik Witbooi's house in Rietmond being burnt down in 1904 was recently auctioned in Germany. It disappeared again into a private collection. African archives rarely have the means to purchase such documents for the public domain.

Another significant source that survived is the Maharero Papers. They consist of seventy-five handwritten documents. Apart from letters addressed to Maharero, and Maharero's own proclamation about the borders of Hereroland, they contain mainly correspondence between various Nama Chiefs such as Jan Jonker Afrikaner, Willem Swartbooi, Moses Witbooi, Kido Witbooi, to name but a few. Chief Maharero Tjamuaha captured them during his wars with the Nama Chiefs.

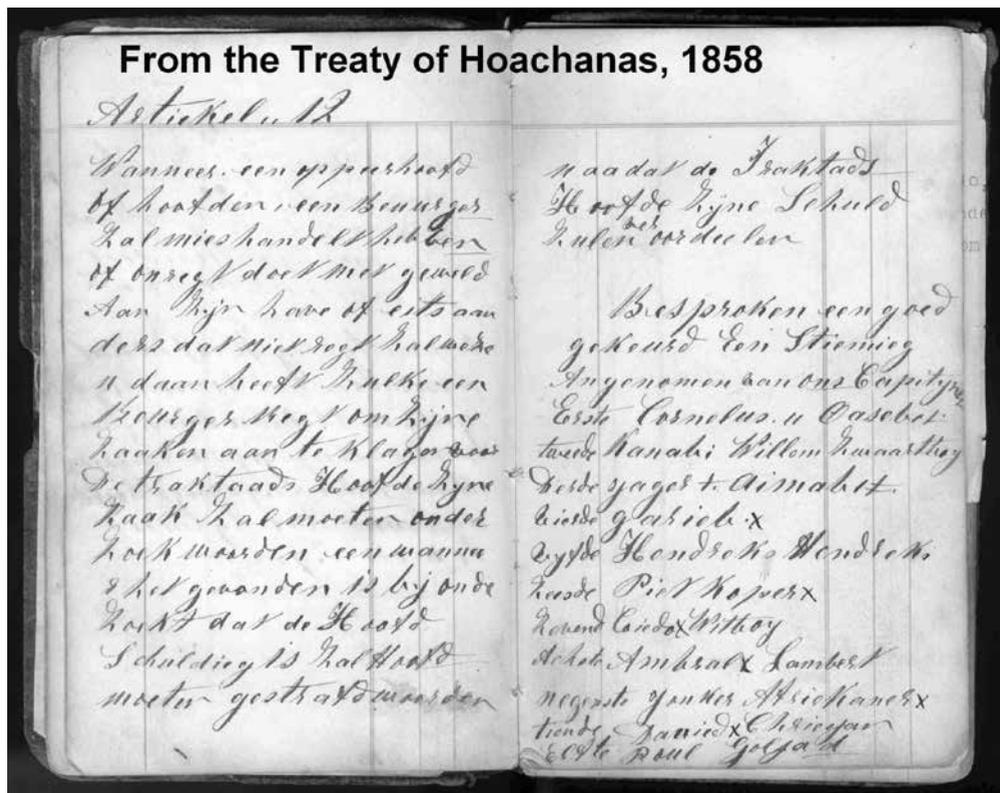


He did not destroy them because he saw their significant value, but he kept them and after reading handed them over to the local missionary for safekeeping. Thus, these manuscripts survived the 1904 war with the Germans, where presumably many records were destroyed, because Mission homes were usually not targets of the German aggression. Although neglected, these letters were allegedly rediscovered by accident by missionary Vedder in the 1920s, and they now form part of the pre-colonial manuscripts at the National Archives of Namibia, as accession A.0002.

They are remnants of a rich diplomatic, commercial and private correspondence of Africans in 19<sup>th</sup> century Namibia. Given the vast distances to be covered between the headquarters of local leaders from one another, this proved to be more practical than

meeting face to face and possibly more reliable than sending messengers with oral communication. The Chiefs wrote on their own or frequently used school teachers as scribes or secretaries (or occasionally the missionaries – who were however too much meddling in local politics to be much trusted with such matters).

Another outstanding example is the original handwritten *Treaty of Hoachanas 1858*, one of the oldest original records in the custody of the National Archives of Namibia.<sup>14</sup> This is the earliest written manuscripts of political and diplomatic relations between the different indigenous communities of Namibia. It is written in Dutch language and addresses issues that are still relevant today.



National Archives of Namibia: A.0178

According to this treaty the various Nama groups, in the presence of some Herero observers, agreed on various issues of common concern. The treaty covers amongst others a common policy how to deal with foreign mining companies, a non-aggression policy agreement between their kingdoms, a human rights policy provision for good governance. For example, the treaty provided for an appeal procedure for a subject who feel unjustly treated by his own Chief can appeal against that Chief's decision with another

<sup>14</sup> NAN: A.0718

Chief and he would be given a fair hearing. Kaptain Hendrik Witbooi in 1904 invoked this *Treaty of Hoachanas 1858* as the legal basis for unifying the various communities of the Nama and Herero in a joint struggle against the German colonial forces.

These valuable pre-colonial manuscripts are hardly known, despite being available and accessible; current research is not benefitting from these manuscripts. They need to be exposed, to inspire the young generation to look at their past with pride, to draw inspiration from the intellectual achievements of their forefathers instead of the continuing colonial brainwashing that label Africa as a continent without history and other mindsets. If libraries and archives could take this active role, they will make themselves relevant to society, in overcoming the stigma of the unhistoric, stagnant, and uncreative continent.

### **Provenance and integrity**

However, it is not only the popularization of already available records that must be addressed, but also their discovery in forgotten repositories or private hands and their introduction to the public domain.

By the time the first German imperial commissioner Dr. Heinrich Göring was sent in May 1885 with two other officials by the German Foreign Office to Namibia, the then South West Africa, there was already a substantial body of written records in the country. A great number of local Namibian communities knew how to read and write and actively documented their business transactions and maintained archives. Within a few decades of colonial rule, much of this heritage was scattered, destroyed, or disappeared and the governance structure of indigenous communities destroyed by colonial forces.

It is important to mention that such valuable historical documents do not come to archives and libraries in an automatic process, nor do they fall from heaven. The stigma of unhistoric Africa had relegated them to be treated as “curiosities” instead of historical documents, and they had been displaced and forgotten.

The Treaty of Hoachanas, for example, had been kept for many decades by the Undercaptain of the Bondelzwarts in Warmbad, Timotheus Snewe, who served as secretary to the Conference of Hoachanas. It somehow got into the hands of a local farmer, Mr. LeRiche, who eventually was convinced to donate it to the National Archives.

It is quite instructive to look at the history of the Witbooi Papers, listed in 2006 on UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register. The currently known Witbooi papers at the National Archives of Namibia mainly consist of four journal books, into which Witbooi, respectively his scribes, entered copies of in-and outgoing diplomatic and administrative correspondence, treaties and proclamations. Journal 1 is fully intact and had been

captured by German troops at their attack on Hoornkrans in 1893, and eventually ended up at the National Archives soon after it was established in 1939. Journals 2 and 3 were looted by a German trader in Gibeon at the outbreak of the German-Nama War in 1904, taken to Germany, eventually sold to a museum in Bremen, entirely forgotten and only rediscovered in 1990. This museum, in a rather exceptional case of cultural restitution, returned the originals to Namibia and kept only a microfilm copy.<sup>15</sup> These two journals cover the period after 1893 until 1902. But unlike the Journal 1, which consists of carefully written copies in a clean book, they contain mostly drafts, written in a re-used traders account book on empty or half-used pages. There is reason to assume that another more “official” book with clean copies existed, which may not have survived or may not yet have been re-discovered. Journal 4 is only a fragment of a few pages, but clearly taken out of a larger book. That book – of which we do not know any further detail – had apparently been looted by German soldiers when they attacked Witbooi’s residence at Rietmond, and probably taken apart and distributed among themselves as war memorabilia. The fragment was in unknown private hands in East Germany, and after German re-unification was sold to a Namibiana collector in Munich who publicised the discovery and eventually agreed to return it to Namibia at no cost.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, there is evidence that during the 1960s another Witbooi journal appeared in private hands in Namibia, was given to the National Archives, and disappeared again without a trace. During the 1960s, Namibia was occupied by South Africa, the Archives was a “depot” of the National Archives of South Africa, and more concerned with white settler history than with African records. Research about the further fate of this document, in the hope of re-discovering it, is still going on.

These document histories make it clear that libraries and archives cannot be content with what they have. Because of the previous neglect, African records and manuscripts must be actively sought and safeguarded and repatriated, if needs be.

## Conclusions

The stigma of Africa as being unhistoric, illiterate, uncreative, and not innovative is a self-fulfilling prophecy that is hindering the development and uplifting of African nations. It must be recognized that Africa has

- A rich history that is largely untold
- A rich documentary heritage that is neglected, scattered, and hidden.

African libraries and archives must therefore

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<sup>15</sup> NAN: A.0650. The Überseemuseum Bremen also had the two volumes professionally restored by the Bremen State Archives before returning them.

<sup>16</sup> NAN: AACRLS.117. The National Archives of Namibia expresses its gratitude to the donor, Dr. Goebel of Munich, and the assistance of the German Ambassador Dr Massing in obtaining the document.

- Make active efforts to identify, secure, and repatriate this heritage;
- Make active efforts to publicize its existence and promote its use in research and education.

A strong society is built and sustained by its own will to develop and succeed on the basis of its historical and cultural roots. If a society does not believe in its own ability to make things happen and relies entirely on the philosophy of others, it is a lost society.

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National Archives of Namibia  
A.0002 Hendrik Witbooi Journal 1  
A.0003 Maharero Papers  
A.0109 Stuhlmann Tagebuch  
A.0177 Witbooi debt book  
A.0178 Treaty of Hoachanas  
A.0219 Vaderlike Wette van Rehoboth  
A.0650 Hendrik Witbooi Journals 2 + 3  
A.0786 Vedder Quellen  
AACRLS.117 Hendrik Witbooi Journal 4

# The Regional Study and Resource Centre concept: A Namibian library strategy

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**Note:**

This paper is a conversion from a PowerPoint presentation.

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## 1. Background

### **Namibia**

- Vision 2030<sup>1</sup>: Namibia's strategy for national development (Launched 2004)
  - Aims to improve the quality of life of all Namibians to the level of developed countries and ensure Namibia becomes a knowledge based economy by 2030
- Upper middle income country (World Bank classification 2009)
- High levels of income inequality – Poverty
  - According to the recent Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey<sup>2</sup>, more than one in four households live in poverty.
  - The poorest 10 percent of households command just 1% of the country's total income whereas the wealthiest 10 percent control more than 50%

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<sup>1</sup> Namibia. Office of the President. (2004). Namibia Vision 2030: Policy framework for long-term national development. Windhoek: National Planning Commission.

<sup>2</sup> Namibia. National Planning Commission. Central Bureau of Statistics. (2006). Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2003/04. Windhoek: CBS.

- According to the crude international poverty line of US\$1 per day, 35% of Namibians are living in poverty
- Low score on economic Competiveness – lack of skilled labour
- High expenditure in education – But low quality in performance (See Grade 10 and Grade 12 results, SACMEQ results)
- Decentralization – practical implementation in 2003/2004, created increased need for access to information in the regions for economic development, town planning, technical skills etc.

## **Namibia's library network in view of Vision 2030**

### ***Researching the status of Namibian libraries***

- Haavisto, T. and Karhula P. (2004). A status report on Namibian libraries: Bottlenecks and how to solve them. In: Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture: Library and Archives Consultancy report. Namibia Library and Information Service. Windhoek
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### ***State of Namibian libraries***

- 60 community libraries (2006)
- Unevenly distributed – based on apartheid era history
- Small, packed rooms - recreational reading and lending

- Community libraries: Manual card catalogues. No ICT
- Scientific information centres and thus access to up-to-date information is concentrated in Windhoek (14 Special libraries, National Library, 2 fully resourced academic libraries)
- Library staff consists mostly of secondary school graduates
- "Namibia's libraries are poorly equipped to play their vital role in a knowledge based economy" (Vision 2030<sup>3</sup>, 2004, p. 78)

### ***Do Namibians need community libraries? - Results from the studies 2002-2010***

- Need and high usage of libraries as conducive study spaces – less and decreasing use for borrowing
  - Lack of space in existing library buildings
  - Need for appropriate furniture and air-conditioning to provide for conducive study environment
- Requests for facilities and resources to support distance studies - Need for ICT for communication and access to up-to-date information on diverse subjects
- Resources requested:
  - Textbooks / Learning materials: primary, secondary and tertiary level
  - Materials in local languages
  - Namibian legislation and other legal materials
  - Technical, scientific and professional resources (access to e-resources)
- Valued practical resources: Newspapers for current affairs and for job hunting as well as photocopy services

### ***Relevance of libraries to the national development agenda***

- Need for response to decentralisation, education sector challenges and knowledge based society
- Need for paradigm shift: Access to relevant user needs based information, ICT access and need for a learning centre library model

## **2. The Regional Study and Resource Centre (RSRC) – a multidimensional concept**

- Regional knowledge centre providing comprehensive access to knowledge in an organised manner and study space and resources to support education, decentralised planning and development, economic empowerment and poverty alleviation programmes
- Combination of community / public library and scientific / special Library

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Namibia. Office of the President. (2004).

- Functions as regional branch for ministerial /special libraries and information centre for the Regional Council and Local Authorities
- Coordinates resource sharing and collection of relevant resources through proactive cooperation with national and regional institutions.
- Cooperation procedures and structures with ministerial / special libraries to be established
- Adequate study facilities, public ICT and internet access, facilities for distance studies, access to e-governance systems, research, training and community meetings
- Study and learning centre supporting especially open and distance study opportunities and providing conducive study facilities and resources for youth from disadvantaged population segment
- Support to early childhood development: conducive recreational and learning space for children
- Collections: Study materials for all levels; all documentation published in and about Namibia and the region (policies, consultancy reports, legislation, statistics, monographs and periodicals); technical and professional materials to facilitate research, updating skills, innovation, income generating activities, planning and administration; access to e-governance systems; comprehensive collection of resources in local languages; extensive children's literature collection with special focus on African and African American materials. ICT and audio-visual equipment for using all types of information and learning materials including equipment for digital conversion.
- Requires high professional skills and diversified staff

### ***Regional impact***

- Administrative regional library: Regional coordination and LIS sector professional support
- The library needs to have a central collection and professional expertise through its staff to serve information needs of the whole region
- Mobile collections to support community and school libraries with distance study materials and wide variety of resources
- Mobile library: 4x4 truck converted to a mobile library equipped with ICT equipment and internet access

### ***Social, economic and community development functions***

- Incorporates the idea and functions of a Community Learning and Development Centre, CLDC (Ministry of Education: Directorate of Adult Education.)– Supporting and implementing adult education and community development activities in cooperation with Regional Education Division: Adult and Continuing Education

- Community hall and videoconference facility for public meetings, events, training activities
- Recreational and social space, “living room” in the community (alternative to bars/shebeens for adults and young people)
- SME support, agricultural information, health information and community development programmes in cooperation with the different Miniseries, NGOs and local authorities
- Buildings include space to be rented for income generation business functions
- High level technology hub addressing digital divide in access to ICT and ICT skills development
- Free public use computers and high quality internet access (+50 workstations; WIFI)
- Basic ICT skills training programmes
- Equipment for copying, scanning, digital conversion; software for desktop publishing, photo-editing etc. based on community and SME needs
- ICT equipment for children with games and educational programmes to address digital divide in exposure to ICT and to support learning
- Government information centre with E-Governance access hub
  - Access to legal information
  - Forms, applications for social grants, scholarships, business registration procedures etc. with professional advice
- Will incorporate Regional Records Centre/Archives: Plans in place; funding through government development budget

### **Design**

- Architectural brief for the envisaged Regional Study and Resource Centre developed by Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS) in 2006-2007
- Solar energy and energy saving construction techniques
  - Support to green economy: First public buildings that incorporated solar energy solution in Namibia (Currently widely applied): Using solar energy in the public building like library can function as practical advocacy for regional/local public and private applications of solar energy
  - Savings in operational costs to secure sustainability of features like ICT equipment and air-conditioning
  - Energy efficiency in the national framework

### **Beneficiaries**

- Direct beneficiaries will be learners and students in all levels, out-of-school youth, adult/distance learners, pre-school-age children, emerging entrepreneurs,

researchers, professionals and technicians working on planning and development; professionals and technicians like engineers, doctors, nurses, legal professionals.

- Gender aspect: A major group of library users in Namibia are girls and women looking for conducive conditions to study away from social norms focusing on domestic responsibilities at home
- Specific emphasis on supporting distance study opportunities; decentralisation and poverty alleviation programmes.

### **3. How NLAS secured funding for construction of the first three regional libraries: library sector included in major national development programmes**

#### ***Education and Training Sector Improvement programme (ETSIP)<sup>4</sup> 2006-2013 (originally until 2020)***

- Education sector response to Vision 2030 – Inclusion of library sector based on active advocacy by Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS) - secured Government support and funding through ETSIP (Namhila, E.N., 2003<sup>5</sup>)
- Funding for major transformation of the public library network to respond to requirements of knowledge based society:
  - Equipping all community libraries with public ICT equipment and internet connection
  - Establishing regional libraries in three formally disadvantaged regions (accepted as a goal – funding a challenge)
- Staff development through scholarships for further studies

#### ***MCA-Namibia Programme (2009-2014)***

- USA Government large-scale development grant programme administrated by Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)<sup>6</sup> to support economic growth in eligible developing countries
- November 2005, Namibia became one of three lower middle-income countries that were identified as eligible to apply for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) assistance of the USA Government

<sup>4</sup> Namibia. Ministry of Education. (2007). Education and Training Sector Improvement programme (ETSIP): Planning for a learning nation. Programme document: Phase I (2006-2011). Windhoek. [Available online: <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Namibia/Namibia%20ETSIP%202007.pdf>]

<sup>5</sup> Namhila, E.N. & Niskala, R. (2013). Libraries supporting national development goals in Namibia. *Ifla Journal* 39(1), 58-69.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mcc.gov/>

- Major development assistance programme with the aim of improving economic conditions in a country: increase income levels and eradicate obstacles for poverty alleviation
- The country programme is based on proposal prepared by a high level national team, which then is rigorously evaluated by Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) team based on the criteria in expected real impact on economic growth and poverty alleviation
- In 2006 the Namibian Government established a team under the National Planning Commission to prepare a country investment proposal
- As Ministry of Education was in a process for an ambitious reform plan, the Ministry started the process of preparing part of the ETSIP plan<sup>7</sup> to be funded through MCA-programme
- Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS) took the initiative to prepare proposal for building three regional libraries as part of possible education sector component of the country proposal
- MCA-Namibia country proposal was completed through wide national consultations in 2006 and submitted to USA Government/MCC in September 2006<sup>8</sup>
- MCA-Namibia Compact<sup>9</sup> signed between the Government of Namibia and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in 2008 – Implementation started 16 September 2009
- MCA-Namibia<sup>10</sup> five year grant programme (2009-2014): US\$ 304,5 million (approx. N\$/ZAR 3 billion) investment on three sectors: Education, Tourism and Agriculture

### ***NLAS advocacy process to include funding for Namibia's first three Regional Study and Resource Centres (RSRC) in MCA-Namibia programme***

- MCA funding relies on country-led proposals: MCA-Namibia planning process was based on wide regional and national level consultations first to identify critical activities and secondly to consolidate the final proposal
- MCA-Namibia programme goal: Poverty alleviation through economic growth
- Proactive lobbying/ Advocacy by Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS) management focusing on decision makers at national and regional level during

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Namibia. Ministry of Education, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Namibia. National Planning Commission. (2006). Millennium Challenge Account Namibia. Full proposal (Submitted to MCC 29 September 2006). [[http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/mca\\_full.pdf](http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/mca_full.pdf)]. [Accessed 19.05.2012]

<sup>9</sup> Millennium Challenge Account Namibia 2008. Millennium Challenge Compact between the United States of America acting through the Millennium Challenge Corporation and The Republic of Namibia [http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/PDFs/signed\\_compact\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/PDFs/signed_compact_pdf.pdf) [Accessed 19.05.2012]

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mcanamibia.org/>; <https://www.mcc.gov/pages/countries/program/namibia-compact>

the consultation process on preliminary proposal, to raise awareness of the importance of establishing regional libraries as regional knowledge hubs

- NLAS team's active participation in the MCA-Namibia education sector planning meetings
- Economic rate of return (ERR): Public library economic impact studies
  - MCC process required scientific evidence and relevant data for calculation of ERR: Economic rate of return as a requirements for a component to be included in the investment proposal
  - NLAS was challenged to provide evidence on contribution of library use to the increase in lifetime real income of people
  - Economic impact studies on public libraries<sup>11</sup> carried out in USA, Europe and Australia as evidence on methods to calculate return of investment on public libraries
  - Studies were accepted as basis to establish ERR for investment in RSRCs and thus the library construction component met the requirements for sufficient data for economic analysis – and was included in the MCA-Namibia country proposal.
- Qualitative data on usage and impact of community libraries in Namibia
  - Before final approval all components of the country proposal go through rigorous due diligence by MCC
  - MCC due diligence economist team rejected public library economic impact studies as evidence for calculation of ERR. Methodologies considered “too soft” to establish ERR.
  - Education sector due diligence supported the component based on high usage of Namibia's community libraries for education and income generating functions – component was approved without establishing ERR
  - Role of access to information and knowledge and conducive study and ICT facilities on educational achievements, research, innovation, social improvements and entrepreneurship and business advancement
- Education and population statistics
- Importance of library sector inclusion in the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) – National recognition for community libraries as an essential function within education in Namibia. To be accepted to the MCA-Namibia Programme, the activity had to be well planned and part of Ministry's strategic plan – which that time was the education sector improvement strategy, ETSIP.

<sup>11</sup> Eg. José-Marie Griffith & Donald King (2004). Taxpayers return on Investment in Florida Public Libraries. <http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/bld/roi/publications.cfm>  
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### **Best practice example: Greenwell Matongo community library**

- Due diligence on evaluating feasibility of investing on community / public libraries in Namibia: Observations:– Visits by the MCC Due Diligence team to Greenwell Matongo and Okahao Community Libraries
- Greenwell Matongo library opened in 2005 in Katutura, Windhoek, attached to a community centre established by the Windhoek municipality
- Library in a large, underprivileged, informal settlement in the capital Windhoek.
- High usage numbers (+300 users/ day)
- Full to capacity usage as a conducive study place (from primary to tertiary level students)
- After school programmes: homework assistance; subject tutoring; sports, cultural activities, games
- Cooperation with near-by schools in the underprivileged suburb
- Public use ICT and internet: Used by students, unemployed youth, SME's and other community members
- Basic ICT skills training to community members – by staff and youth volunteers
- Children's activities
- Community information centre / Community involvement in planning and management
- Part of cooperation programme (2002-2014) between Windhoek Municipality and Vantaa, Helsinki and Espoo Municipalities in Finland<sup>12</sup>
  - Cooperation with the Finnish Municipal libraries has provided technical and professional support 2003-2014 with planning, study visits and sharing of best practices and capacity building through annual seminars and workshops.

### **4. Three Regional Study and Resource Centres (RSRCs) constructed as a component in the MCA-Namibia Programme 2009 – 2014**

- Funding to establish Namibia's first RSRCs in three (3) of the 13 (now 14) regions: Oshana, Ohangwena and Omaheke
- Funding for construction; furniture; ICT equipment; mobile library; community analysis and leadership training
- Fruitful cooperation between NLAS, MCA-Namibia and MCC Namibia office: Shared goals in developing a regional library relevant to national and regional development needs resulted to a very productive cooperation sharpening the RSRC concept and implementation solutions

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<sup>12</sup> Nyberg, R. & Geises, T. (2012): Empowering people for life: Vantaa-Windhoek library project. Conference Presentation IFLA WLIC 2012. Helsinki. (Available online: <http://conference.ifla.org/past-wlic/2012/118-nyberg-en.pdf>)  
Lipponen, T. (2013). Gateway to knowledge [Documentary film about Greenwell Matongo library] <http://www.kirjastokaista.fi/gateway-to-the-world-english-subtitles/>.

- Efficient procurement, technical assistance to ICT infrastructure planning as well as advocacy support for staffing from MCA-Namibia / MCC Namibia contributed critically to the successful implementation
- Investment of US\$ 17.5 million (approx. N\$/ZAR 175 million)

## 5. Sustainability

- IPA: Implementation Partnership Agreements signed between the Government of Namibia and MCC and between Ministry of Education (MoE) and MCA-Namibia
- IPA between MoE and MCA Namibia confirmed commitment for Government funding for adequate staffing and budgeting for future resources and maintenance costs of the RSRCs
- Budget: Ministry of Education – Namibia Library and Archives Service
  - Appropriate budgetary allocation for internet connectivity to all community libraries since 2009
  - Increase in budget allocation for library resources after initial ETSIP funding ended – conditions for healthy collection development
  - Staff budget approved and implemented for full RSRC staffing structure
- NLAS and MCA-Namibia funding: ICT and audio-visual equipment and start-up collections based on user needs analysis
- New library sector regional staffing structure approved 2012 secured required professional expertise to fulfil RSRC functions
  - Approved by Public Service Commission and budgeted fully by the Ministry of Education for the three regions in 2012; prioritized positions for other regions from 2013.
  - Adequate professional staffing structure and requirement of staff part of IPA between MCA-Namibia and MoE
  - Existing 2006 library staffing structure in the regions was based on library assistant with only senior secondary level qualification running community libraries and professional position concentrated at central level (NLAS)
  - Changed to professional regional structure supporting decentralized planning, budgeting and specialised information services
  - New Chief Librarian (G6) position (under Deputy Director: Adult education and Libraries: Regional Directorate of Education): Strategic planning and development of the regional library network and services of the RSRC
  - RSRC: professional expertise with four senior level (G7) librarian positions (user services and mobile library; research and business information services; children's section; school library and information literacy services)
  - System administrator and 2 x IT technician to all RSRCs responsible for technical support and maintenance of the ICT equipment for the regional community and school library network; library management system;

- e-resources; local digital collections; website; videoconference facility and IT skills training (Positions approved 2013)
- Professional staff: Qualified librarian in all community libraries / gradually to school libraries
- Re-grading of librarian's salaries
  - Problem: low salaries on government funded libraries – loss of experienced and talented librarians to greener pastures
  - NLAS proposals for re-grading of librarians' salaries established that salary scales in Government funded libraries were based on categorisation as a non-professional clerical occupation category and salary scale
  - Job evaluation implemented as part of Namibia's overall public service re-grading process 2011-2013
  - Job evaluation process carried out by The Office of The Prime Minister resulted to librarians graded as professionals:
    - » Significant improvement is salary scales in all three librarian levels: (librarian (G9), Senior Librarian (G7), Chief Librarian (G6))
    - » Library assistants re-structured as para-professionals and re-named assistant librarians (G10) (Requirement of a 3-year diploma replaced senior secondary school certificate requirement)
  - Created conditions to attract and retain professional expertise and provide services meeting requirements of the knowledge based economy
- Policy level sustainability: Ministry of Education (MoE) 2012-2017 strategic plan:
  - Public use ICT equipment and free internet in all community libraries – Started with ETSIP funding – continued to be supported (in 2014 implemented in 48 of the 65 community libraries)
  - RSRCs as regional knowledge hubs to be established in all regions
- Government / Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture capital project to build the 4<sup>th</sup> RSRC in Outapi, Omusati region approved – construction in progress

## 6. Where are we now?<sup>13</sup> (Updated May 2015)

RSRC opened in Oshakati (Oshana) and Helao Nafidi (Ohangwena) in September 2014; in Gobabis (Omaheke) November 2014.

Total space: 2465 - 2940 m<sup>2</sup> including multipurpose community hall; videoconference room; three study rooms; 30 seat ICT training room; 56 computer workstations; scanning and photocopy equipment; space for 35 000 book/ library resource collection.

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<sup>13</sup> See photos in p. 367-372

Immediate high usage has surprised even library staff – most obvious is the clearly observed need for conducive study and recreational space for young people and children. The table below demonstrates the usage statistics from the three new Regional Study and Resource Centres (RSRCs) for January - March 2015 compared to the average 2013 statistics from the community library (CL) facility before establishing the RSRC<sup>14</sup>. As demonstrated by the statistics the use of library as a place has proved to be important confirming one aspect of the goals of establishing the RSRCs to respond to the needs of spacious multipurpose knowledge, study and public ICT access hubs in the regions.

Table 1: Usage of RSRCs Jan-March 2015 compared to the previous small community library statistics from 2013

	<b>Oshana RSRC Oshakati</b>		<b>Ohangwena RSRC Helao Nafidi</b>		<b>Omaheke RSRC Gobabis</b>	
Population: <sup>15</sup> Town	36 541		19 375		19 101	
Population: Region	176 674		245 446		71 233	
<b>Average monthly statistics</b>						
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2013(CL)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2013(CL)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2013(CL)</b>
Library users/visits	13 667	838	2 739	114	3 275	2 785
Circulation/Lending	296	301	148	No circ.	326	1 143
Computer usage (excl. WI-FI)	3 527	251	1 696	n/a	466	270

Performance evaluation of the Namibia Regional Study and Resource Centre implementation process including outcome evaluation commissioned by MCA-Namibia is in progress, carried out by the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington Information School. (See: <http://tascha.uw.edu/projects/namibia-regional-study-resource-center-evaluation/>) Results will be of interest for the library community in Namibia and internationally in view of initiatives to include libraries in national development plans.

Fourth RSRC is being constructed in Outapi (Omusati region) with Government/Ministry of Education Arts and Culture development budget funding.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Namibia. Ministry of Education. Namibia Library and Archives Service. Community Library Service.(2015). Annual statistics 2013 for Community Libraries. Three month statistics 2015 for Regional Libraries. Windhoek.

<sup>15</sup> Namibia Statistics Agency. [2013]. Namibia 2011 population and housing census. Main report.

# The Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN): A model for sustainable library and information services development

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## Introduction

As a result of the dynamic nature of the information age, propelled by the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), libraries continually need to re-invent themselves to meet the expectations of society. This implies that new approaches and new models that improve the quality of service delivery have to be developed to ensure that libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially in Africa are sustainable and relevant to the community. The information age is characterized by challenges such as information explosion; dynamic and rapid changes in information sources and infrastructure; users' sophistication; dwindling library funding; increasing need for justification of information service by employers or organization. It is obvious that these challenges require multidimensional approaches to tackling them (Okojie and Omotoso, 2013). Many libraries receive most of their funding from government sources at the Federal, State and Local government levels. The global economic recession has therefore had a great impact on funding libraries. In many countries across the globe, libraries are experiencing budget cuts and in some cases outright closure. Libraries need to develop creative strategies to stem this tide.

Nigeria has over 1500 libraries, 25 library schools as well as over 5000 qualified librarians. The legislative framework for library and information services is very robust with legal recognition of the National Library of Nigeria (Act 1970); the Nigerian Library Association incorporated as a civil society organization by the Corporate Affairs Commission in 1962 and the Librarians' registration Council of Nigeria Act 12 of 1995. The main challenges of the LIS sector include inadequate funding; inadequate infrastructure (internet, telecommunication services and so on) and inadequate staff skills, especially in the use of information and telecommunication technologies (ICTs). In addition, the new generation librarians do not want to be identified as librarians but as information

scientists, cybrarians and so on. This paper uses the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria as a case study of how library and information centres can sustain their services.

### **The Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN)**

The library and information profession in Nigeria was for many years an all-comers affair. Clerks, cleaners and indeed anybody working in a library addressed himself as a 'Librarian'. This led to the perceived low image of a librarian amongst the public. In view of this, librarians decided to 'do something' about the challenge. Furthermore, other professionals such as doctors; lawyers; accountants; pharmacists and engineers had established regulatory Councils to standardize professional practice and librarians felt that such regulation would improve the quality of service delivery. The third reason that led to the agitation to establish a regulatory Council was the fact that many libraries sprung up from the 1960s leading to the steady growth of librarians and libraries in number and strength thereby requiring regulation. These, and many others, led to advocacy for the establishment of a professional Council for librarians from the mid 1970s. The advocacy campaigns finally culminated in the establishment of the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) by Act 12 of 1995 (CAP L13, LFN 2004) as a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education. The major breakthrough came in October, 2009 with the appointment of a Registrar and Chief Executive Officer as well as provision of a budget for the Council. The Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Council has the same status as the National Librarian and the CEO of any federal government parastatal. The main aim of the Council is to regulate the library and information profession in Nigeria. The mandate of the Council includes:

- Determining who are librarians
- Determining the standards of knowledge and skills to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as librarians
- Establishment and maintenance of a register of persons entitled to practice the profession and the publication of the list from time to time
- Maintaining discipline within the profession
- Capacity building, training, retraining and up-skilling of librarians
- Developing minimum standards and benchmark for monitoring and evaluation of different types of libraries
- Developing benchmarks and conducting accreditation of Library School programmes
- Performing such other functions as may be conferred upon the Council.

The LRCN Act also makes provision for a Governing Council (GC) made up twenty nine members. The GC members were to hold office for a period of three years and are eligible for re-appointment for another three years, and no more. The Council consists of twenty-nine (29) members drawn as follows:

- I. 5 members appointed by the Honorable Minister of Education, one of which must be the National Librarian
- II. 5 Directors of State Library Boards
- III. 12 Persons elected by the Nigerian Library Association
- IV. 3 Persons representing Association of Librarians (eg Association of Law Libraries)
- V. 4 Persons from Library Schools.

The principal funding of the Council comes from the Federal Government of Nigeria in the same manner as other government parastatals are funded. The Council may raise funds from other sources in line with government regulations and may not borrow money except with the prior consent of the Minister. Salaries, wages and emoluments of employees of Council are the same as obtains in the Federal public service. Funding is expected from four main sources namely:

- government subvention
- sale of Application Forms
- payment of practicing fees and annual subscription; and
- donations/grants from other sources.

## Relationship between the NLA and LRCN

Perhaps, because the concept of having a professional regulatory agency is relatively new, it is important to note the relationship between a professional Council and a professional association. Table 1 is a summary of the relationship between the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and the Librarians’ Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN).

Table 1: Relationship between the NLA and the LRCN

S/N	NLA	LRCN
1	An NGO registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission.	A statutory government organization, a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Education.
2	Have different categories of membership, including non-librarians.	Made up of only qualified librarians.
3	Does not have the statutory powers to register or de-list librarians, accredit library school programmes, etc.	Has the legal right to define who is a librarian, accredit library school programmes, organize examinations for members & regulate practice of profession. It registers librarians and has powers to delist them. It has powers to prosecute non-members who practice as “librarian”.

4	Honours deserving members with different categories of awards e.g. Fellows of the NLA can use FNLA after their name	All librarians registered by the LRCN can use 'CLN' (Chartered Librarian of Nigeria) after their name.
5	Management of NLA is guided by its Constitution	Guided by an Act of the National Assembly
6	Has agreed procedure for maintaining discipline	Has agreed procedure for maintaining discipline
7	A legal entity that can sue and be sued	A legal entity that can sue and be sued
8	Officers are not employees of government	Staff of the Council are public servants

### LRCN as a Model for Sustainable Library and Information Service

Soon after it became operational, in December, 2009, the Council developed a three year Strategic Plan (2010-2012) which plan is reviewed annually. To achieve these strategic objectives, the Council has creatively deployed relevant methodologies and best practices. Some of these include:

- **Regulation**  
There are many ways in which the profession is regulated. Some of these, in line with our Mandate are to:
- **Define who is a librarian**  
The LRCN defined a librarian as anybody with a minimum of first degree in library and information science. Anybody with a Masters Degree in Library and Information Science, in addition to a first degree in another discipline. In line with this, the Council wrote to all employers of labour informing them that only LRCN certified librarians should be appointed as librarians as empowered by the Act 12 of 1995. Certification should also be used as a criterion for promotion. Many organizations and institutions have responded positively to the letter and are beginning to comply.
- **Registration of Librarians**  
As at the end of 2014, four thousand one hundred and forty one librarians had been registered. The Council organizes an induction programme annually and all registered librarians are expected to participate in the induction exercise before they can collect their certificate to practice.
- **Review of Library and Information Science (LIS) Curricula; Development of Benchmarks for Library Schools/Institutions and Accreditation of LIS Programmes in Universities**

In June 2015, a Summit was held on the review of LIS curricula in Lokoja, Nigeria. 22 out of the 25 library schools attended the Summit (2 programmes had not started admitting students as at the time of the Summit). Overall, there were more than 60 participants made up of the President and some officers of the Nigerian Library Association, LIS school lecturers; practitioners from university, polytechnic, college of education, public and private sectors. At the end of the Summit, a draft Benchmark for LIS Education and Training was developed. The main changes were in infusing more ICT courses into the LIS curricula and developing a more robust entrepreneurship curriculum. A copy is on the LRCN website for stakeholders comments. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the intervention programme is to develop a list of facilities required by the institutions with a view to developing a proposal for support. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase will focus on building the capacity of LIS lecturers such that they will be able to deliver the new curricula. It is expected that by end of 2016, a new curricula for LIS schools would have been developed.

## **Development of Standards and Regulatory Instruments (including Monitoring & Evaluation)**

The LRCN is engaged in development of minimum standards for different types of libraries. These are regulatory instruments that will eventually be used as benchmarks to monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of libraries. The standards also assist the Council in identifying skills gap of librarians; determining the state of the libraries, especially in terms of facilities, equipment and services as well as developing intervention strategies that mitigate the challenges faced by these libraries. So far, the Council has published the following:

- School Library Manual
- Register of Certified Librarians in Nigeria
- Statistical Digest of Libraries and Librarians in Nigeria

In addition, draft Minimum Standards for Academic; Public and Government libraries have been produced. These are currently posted on the LRCN website for stakeholders comments.

Another way that the practice of librarianship in Nigeria is being regulated is through writing to all employers of labour requesting them to employ only LRCN certified librarians to practice as librarians. This is sometimes advertised in national newspapers. In addition, the Council monitors daily newspapers to ensure that advertisements for jobs as a librarian comply with the requirement as well to enforce the policy that only certified librarians can organize training programmes for librarians.

- **Needs Assessment of School Libraries**  
The Council has been engaged in assessing the needs of school libraries, using Abuja as a pilot. This involved development of instruments for collecting data from

school administrators; teachers; students and school librarians. All the available secondary schools (about 200) had been visited as at July 2015. The report which will reveal the state of school libraries; the skills gaps of the librarians would be used to design appropriate intervention strategies. The main aim of the survey is to work with school libraries to develop robust programmes that will improve teaching and learning; and the quality of education.

- **Human Capital Development**

The Council is actively engaged in building the capacity of librarians in order to improve the quality of service delivery. The focus is to re-skill and up-skill librarians especially in the application of ICTs in library operations and entrepreneurship development. Capacity building has been done mostly in collaboration with other agencies and as such is discussed under the section on collaboration.

## **Strategies Employed by the LRCN**

In carrying out its regulatory functions, the Council has employed strategies that have proved successful. Some of the strategies used are:

- **Collaboration**

Collaboration has been variously defined in different contexts. According to Parkinson (2006), “collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals”. The major factor that drives successful collaboration by various agencies is common goals, vision and objectives. It usually sets out to solve a challenge or enhance innovation with shared resources in a mutually beneficial manner to the collaborating partners. The importance of collaboration was put succinctly by Sacchanand (2012) as changes in the higher education environment, paradigm shift in the library and information profession, and the instructors’ and librarians’ changing roles. Collaborative projects arise from the view that there is a need to be met because as rightly observed by Lippincott (1996), no individual or profession has all of the skills now needed to create an information infrastructure for a community of users. Furthermore, Al-Suqri (2010) noted that LIS education is becoming highly competitive requiring the latest technology and teaching methods, but without collaboration with others in their profession, LIS departments are unlikely to be able to keep up with these developments. In line with this, TechSoup (2013) stated that successful collaboration can have many benefits which include sharing talents and resources, providing superior quality services, increasing funding and grant opportunities, and accomplishing more than any single organization could. Collaboration encourages the pooling of both tangible and information-based resources, sharing of ideas and information, and gaining access to skill sets of a person or group of people that may only be required

for a certain project (Parkinson, 2006). In spite of these advantages, there are a number of factors militating against the adoption of the collaboration. Al-Suqri (2010) identified some of the barriers to collaboration in the LIS sector to include inadequate funding, relatively weak information technology (IT) infrastructure, lack of relevant professional skills, and government support. Ocholla (2007) also indicated barriers to collaboration in LIS in Africa to include lack of time, costs, geographical distance, management bureaucracy, and culture.

Partnership has been mainly in the area of continuous professional development (CPD) as well as in development of benchmark and accreditation of LIS programmes. Ocholla (2007) noted that some of the key challenges of LIS education and practice in Nigeria included low capacity building among librarians; delay in review of LIS curriculum and lack of uniformity in the curricula of LIS institutions. In order to address these challenges, the LRCN developed a model which provides an annual calendar for the training of library and information professionals. Through these partnerships, the capacity of librarians has been improved, LIS programmes in institutions are being accredited and the quality of information services in Nigerian libraries is improving. Engagement in collaboration by the Council is generally based on:

- Identification of organizations with common interest and shared responsibilities
- Need to avoid duplication of services
- Insufficient Financial resources
- Need to multi-task as required in the information age
- Need for quality and standards

Table 2 shows some of the capacity building activities of the Council with emphasis on those that have been enhanced or made possible through collaboration with other organizations.

Table 2: LRCN Capacity Building Programmes

Activities	Location	Collaborating Agency	Date	No of participants
Workshop on Mission-oriented approach to library development and management for education effectiveness in Nigerian schools and colleges	Katsina State Secretariat, Katsina, Katsina State	National Library of Nigeria	2010	120

Workshop on Functional approach to library development and management for effective learning in Nigerian Schools.	Oyo State Library Board, Ibadan. Oyo State	National Library of Nigeria	2011	97
Workshop on E-Library services as a tool for achieving the transformation agenda in Nigeria.	Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Kogi State	US Mission, Nigeria	2012	146
Workshop on establishment of eLibraries	University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State		2013	114
	ELIM-Top Suite Ltd., Kachikau, Nasarawa State		2014	167
Workshop on Application of free and open source software in library operations.	University of Calabar, Cross River State.	National Information Technology Development Agency	2012	102
	University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State.		2013	70
			2014	77
			2015	37
Workshop on electronic publishing	National Universities Commission, Abuja.	EmeraldInsight, UK	2013	92
Career Talk to young LIS professionals on opportunities in the field of librarianship	Best West Hotel, Abuja. FCT	IFLA Africa Section	2013	67
Workshop on quality assurance for librarians and information managers in Nigeria	ELIM-Top Suite Ltd., Kachikau, Nasarawa State	-	2012	85
Workshop on Proposal writing, grant-seeking and fundraising	Modotels, Enugu, Enugu State	-	2013	75
Workshop on Entrepreneurship in librarianship	ELIM-Top Suite Ltd., Kachikau, Nasarawa State	-	2013	36

Open Access Workshop for Library and Information Managers	Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Kogi State	-	2013	57
Workshop on Integration of Social Media and Web 3.0 in Library Operations	Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Kaduna State	-	2014 2015	85 50
Workshops on Sustainability of USPF eLibrary Project	Held in 6 geo-political zones in Nigeria	USPF	2015	222

### Communication with stakeholders

Another strategy that has been successfully used by the Council to ensure sustainability is communication and active engagement with stakeholders. The various methods employed are:

- Through the LRCN website (<http://www.lrcn.gov.ng>); Online Forum; Bi-Annual Newsletter; Monthly Bulletin; National Newspapers; SMS; Television; Radio; Email; Facebook and other social/mass media.
- Librarians Forum: established in May 2013 to discuss topical issues.
- Visits to as many libraries as possible to discuss with librarians face-to-face has proved to be very useful. The visits are used to sensitize the librarians about the activities and policies of LRCN; provide information on what is going on in libraries locally and internationally; deal with issues faced by librarians in the workplace and advocate on library issues. This strategy has boosted the morale of librarians and has enhanced the communication between the Council and key stakeholders. About 30-50 libraries can be visited annually. In order to be more cost effective, visits to libraries are made usually when other activities are taking place in such a city; for instance, libraries in cities where LRCN workshops are held are visited by the Secretariat staff during the period of the workshop.

### Research

Research is a veritable tool for providing data for planning. Mapping of Public Libraries in Nigeria was one research project carried out by the LRCN providing data that was not previously available. There is now verifiable data on the number of public libraries and national library and their branches. Data on the facilities, staffing and resources in these libraries are also available. The needs assessment of school libraries is another example of survey that is being done by LRCN which provides data that can be used by decision makers.

## Challenges

In spite of all the achievements, some challenges were faced in carrying out the Mandate. The main challenge was funding. Some of the activities that would have been completed have not been carried out because of paucity of funds. However, inadequate funds is partly responsible for the Council's ability to think out-of-the-box and work creatively. The challenge has been greatly minimized by the window of opportunity provided by collaboration.

Another challenge is inadequate skills of librarians in general. This means that the Council sometimes finds it very difficult to identify resource persons to train librarians especially in the application of open source library management software.

Lack of ICT facilities is another challenge faced by the Council. In carrying out training, it is sometimes difficult to find appropriate venues with adequate ICT facilities. The participants may then have to share PCs which slows down the pace of teaching and learning.

Weak enforcement of regulatory framework is a challenge that promotes flagrant disobedience to the Council's Mandate. This is often linked to apathy by some librarians towards the profession and the low perception of the status of librarians. The LRCN Act, for instance, prescribes a fine of less than US\$4 for an offender. This can hardly discourage quacks currently engaged in practicing the profession and the cost of litigation is certainly much higher than that! Fortunately, the Act is currently being reviewed to take cognizance of such issues.

## Suggestions, Recommendations and Conclusion

In order to develop a sustainable model for providing quality LIS services, the following suggestions are made:

- There is need to develop a robust policy framework that ensures regulation of every aspect of the profession. An Act that provides for stiffer penalties and enforcement instruments is a prerequisite to success. The Council can provide a platform for library-friendly legislation through research and advocacy.
- Active engagement with activities that stretch the lean resources of the Council is of critical importance. For instance, collaboration, partnership building and networking especially for human capital development is encouraged. The concept of Public-Private-Partnership should be fully embraced. There is need to develop standard guidelines for collaboration and embark on environmental scanning for potential partners.
- There is need to expand the activities of the Council to include a framework for professional examinations which will be conducted after graduation in order to standardize education and training of librarians.

- Enforcement of the Mandatory Continuous Professional Development programme which will ensure that librarians' skills are kept up-to-date is key to the success of a Council. As currently occurs in some other professions in Nigeria, MCPDs will eventually be weighted with a minimum grade point expected to be attained by a librarian before his license can be renewed annually. This will force employers of librarians to support them to attend LIS training programmes annually.
- It is important to publish minimum standards for all types of libraries. These will serve as benchmarks for assessing the libraries and in designing intervention programmes. The curriculum of LIS schools should also be continually reviewed to ensure that it is in tandem with global best practices and produce graduates that are ready for the workplace.

## Conclusion

The LRCN since it started full operations has taken full advantage of being a government agency with an annual budgetary provision to provide a more regulated library and information profession sector in Nigeria. It has been able to use its resources optimally to improve the quality of service delivery provided by libraries. Regulatory instruments and strategic intervention programmes have improved the environment in which the librarian operates and raised the status of librarians in Nigeria. The Council has engaged in collaborative activities and communicating with stakeholders to stretch its lean resources. However, most of these activities would have been impossible without strong government will and financial support. The Council, therefore, highly recommends the adoption of a similar model for all libraries.

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## Theme 7

# Libraries supporting human rights



# The Role of Libraries in supporting Human Rights

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*Know them, demand them, defend them*

(World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. English and Stapleton, 1997:5)

## Introduction

Human Rights can be defined as those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity as human beings. Human rights are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. Their respect allows the individual and community to develop fully.

Mubangizi (2004) stated that human rights are referred to by various names and phrases. These include fundamental rights, basic rights, natural rights and sometimes common rights. Although these phrases don't mean the same thing, they are usually used interchangeably.

Hubbard (2001:27) defined human rights as universal moral rights that belong equally to all people because they are human beings. It has been stated that, one person's right to swing his/her arm ends where the other person's nose begins.

Fundamental and basic rights are these rights which must not be taken away by any legislation or act of the state and which are often set out in the fundamental law of the country E.g. bill of rights in the constitution.

Human rights are entitlements or legal claims one has by virtue of being human - against the state. Human rights are protected in the constitutions of the country; e.g International Bill of Human Rights, treaties or agreements that the government has signed which obliges them to ensure these rights and freedoms.

Historically, human rights principles have been in existence for ages, but it was not until the end of World War II that member states of the newly established United Nations agreed on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and set down for the first time a list of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These were considered by

the community of nations to be minimum standards by which governments should treat their citizens.

Knowledge of human rights is important in order for the citizen to demand their rights; to respect and to defend their rights. Former President Nelson Mandela once commented that, human rights education is important in the campaign to develop human rights culture (Amnesty International, 1998:13)

## **Objectives**

The objective of this paper is to establish and to recommend the role of libraries in supporting human rights. In addition, the paper aims at motivating library and information workers to create human rights awareness in their communities.

## **Methodology**

The human rights survey took place from 26<sup>th</sup> April to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012. One of the main objectives of the study was to support the Office of the Ombudsman to develop the 1<sup>st</sup> National Human Rights Action Plan for Namibia (Nakuta, 2013:25).

A baseline survey was conducted in order to determine the views and opinions of respondents on different human rights issues in Namibia. This includes: legal guarantees of human rights in domestic law as well as commitment to international human rights instruments such as UN conventions. The result from the study will guide the Ombudsman office to formulate the National Human Rights Action Plan in Namibia.

The study used three methods of data collection, which were interviews, focus group discussion and questionnaires. There was a response rate of 1272 which is 99% interviews which took place in the thirteen regions. This was followed by 20 focus group discussions which were held over a period of May to September 2012 on various themes which took place in each region, and there were 50 key informants who were interviewed on various issues based on the expertise on the subject in the 13 regions (Nakuta, 2013:26).

The household survey included questions on knowledge of human rights; socio and economic rights (right to housing; poverty; water and sanitation); civil and political rights; access to information; women's rights; environmental rights; minority rights; children's rights; corruption; and detainees and prisoner rights.

The centre used experienced enumerators from 13 regions and University of Namibia students to collect data for this study.

Before the main survey was conducted, a pilot study took place in Khomas region in April 2012 with the aim to test the instruments. Some questions were amended as a result of feedback. The target was to have 128 participants which represent 10% of the sample. The actual sample was 83 (65%) participants in the study from Khomas region who took part.

## Literature Review

Libraries and information centres provide a very important role of acquiring, preserving and disseminating information in any country. In Bhutan, South Asia, for example, public libraries provide safe spaces for women and girls to develop their talents and build confidence with a violence free zone. (Deibert, 2013 Online). They learned how to solve problems together. In Jhuwan library in Nepal, the library provided different programs to educate women about key maternal health issues in order to achieve one of the Millenium Development Goals (READ Nepal, online). In Namibia, the Legal Assistance Centre, publishes all the research findings reports on their website in order to disseminate the information. In addition, cases which the center has litigated are also provided on the website for the public to read. A good example is the corporal punishment case where the magistrate court ruled that corporal punishment is not permitted in private schools (Legal Assistance Centre 2013 Online). Such information is very important for the people to know decisions taken by courts and also defend their rights.

## Characteristics of human rights

According to Amnesty International (1998:2), human rights provide the following characteristics:

- Human rights do not have to be given, bought, **earned or inherited**, they belong to people because they are born with them. In other word, human rights are inherent;
- Human Rights are **universal**- human rights are the same for all human beings regardless of sex, gender, religion, political affiliation, social origin or race;
- Human rights are **inalienable**- people still have human rights even when the laws of their countries do not recognize them. For example, a country which practices slavery, these slaves still have rights even though these rights are being violated; and
- **indivisible, interrelated and interdependent**
- It is insufficient to respect some human rights and not others.
- In practice, the violation of one right will often affect the respect of several other rights.
- All human rights should therefore be seen as having equal importance
- For example **indivisible** – to live in dignity, all human beings are entitled to freedom, security and descent standards of living. In other words the categories of rights are dependent of each other.

## **What does it mean to have a Human Right?**

Having a human right is having an individual entitlement (or freedom) to act in a particular way or for the state to act in a particular way towards you (Amnesty International, 1998 and Hubbard, 2001).

### **Human rights can be categorized into three different groups. These are:**

1. Civil and Political Rights- freedom of people to think, act, and make choices. Conte, Davidson and Burchill (2004:2) pointed out that, civil and political rights are these rights which are calculated to protect an individual's physical and mental integrity; to ensure that they are not victims of discrimination; and to preserve their right to a fair trial. Political rights are those which ensure that individuals are able to participate fully in civil society. For example: Freedom of conscience, freedom of religion; freedom of expression, freedom of speech; freedom of assembly; freedom of association; right to vote; freedom of movement; right to life and right to liberty.
2. Economic and social rights - According to Hansen (2000:4) these are security-oriented rights such as: the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and his or her family, including adequate food, adequate clothing, clean water and adequate housing; right to education; right to work; right to privacy and family life; the right to social security.
3. Environmental, cultural and developmental rights - These include the right to live in an environment that is clean and protected from destruction, and rights to cultural, political and economic development.

The discussion above demonstrates the importance of human rights in Namibia. The next section presents data on the perceptions of respondents to human rights including level of knowledge and preserved protection of human rights.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

### ***Demographic Information***

There were 83 participants, 49 (59%) were male and 34 (41%) were female. The study showed that, majority 41 (51%) of the participants were young people below 30 years of age. Around 3 (4%) of respondent did not indicate their age groups.

Table 1: Age Groups

Age	N	%
<=19	9	11
20-24	22	28
25-29	10	13*
30-34	17	21
35-39	7	9
40-44	4	5
45-49	8	10
50-54	2	3
55-59	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

## Education Level

The study showed that, majority 53 (64%) of the respondents have attended or completed secondary education. A few 2 (2%) had no formal education, while 17 (21%) had tertiary education. Around 4 (5%) did not indicate their educational level.

## Marital Status

The majority of the respondents 59 (72%) were never married or singles. A few 11 (13%) of the respondents were married.

## Language Used

In this pilot study, 58 (70%) of respondents were Oshiwambo speakers, followed by 9 (11%) Otjiherero; 8 (10%) Nama-Damara; 3 (4%) each were Afrikaans and English speakers. A few, 2%, were Rukwangali speakers.

## Employment Status

The study showed that the majority 24 (30%) of the respondents were unemployed, looking for jobs or casual labourers. About 23 (28%) of respondent had formal wage employment while none of the respondent were involved with farming. Since the study took place in an urban area, this is not a surprise because it is not easy to get land for farming in urban areas like Khomas.

## **Knowledge of Human Rights**

The study wanted to find out the knowledge of human rights. Participants were asked if they have heard the word human rights before, more than half 75 (90%) responded positively. All 11 (100%) who were 45 years and above, confirmed that they have heard the term before, 45 (92%) were female respondents of which, 17 (100%) were those who attained tertiary education and also 2 (100%) had no formal education.

## **Constitution**

The study wanted to find out if the respondents have seen a copy of the constitution. 48 (72%) of the respondents have seen the copy of the constitution. When we look the results by gender, 29(85%) of male respondents have seen the copy of the constitution compared with female respondents. More than half, 13 (78%) who were 30 years and above, have never seen a copy of the constitution.

A follow up question was asked if the respondents have read the constitution. The study showed that, 24 (39%) have not read the constitution. When the results were cross tabulated, the results showed that 6 (75%) with 45 years and above have not read the constitution.

The next question was to find the relevance of the constitution. The majority 53 (84%) suggested the constitution was relevant in their life.

## **Human Rights**

The study asked where the participants had learned about human rights. The majority, 27 (55%), who were 30 years and below learned the term human rights at school. A good number, 10 (46%) of these who were 45 years and above learned through radio, newspaper or television. The study shows the distinction of sources used between a younger generation and older people. When the results were tabulated based on gender, they showed that, the majority 28 (42%) of females got the information both from school and 24 (36%) from radio, newspaper or television. On an educational level, those who attained secondary and tertiary education learned the term human rights at school with 26 (32%) and 12 (46%) respectively.

## **Human Rights Protection**

A question was posed to find the perception of respondents as to whether human rights are protected.

The study showed that, 31 (76%) of these who were 30 years and below, believed human rights are protected. Around 10 (30%) of male respondents believed that human rights are not protected. The 2 (100%) respondents with no formal education believed that human rights are protected in Namibia.

Another question was asked what the respondents would do if their rights are violated. Table 2 shows the responses where the majority 69 (56%) suggested they would go to the police. A few 10 (8%) respondents suggested that they would go to the Ombudsman; and defend themselves.

**Table 2: What would you do if your rights are threatened or violated by other persons?**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Go to the Police	69	56
Inform family /neighbours	14	11
Go to Ombudsman Office	10	8
Defend myself	10	8
Inform traditional leader	5	4
Other	16	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>

When data was cross tabulated by gender, it showed that 42 (61%) of female respondents would go to the police and 8 (15%) of male respondents suggested to defend themselves.

Another question was where the respondents had learned about the term human rights. Adults from 45 years and above, learned from radio, newspaper or television. In contrast, more than half 27 (55%) of respondents with less than 30 years learned from school. Unfortunately, the library was not mentioned by any group. Data by educational level shows that, respondents with no formal education and those with primary education 1 (5%) and 4 (50%) both learned from radio, newspaper or television; while those with secondary and tertiary education learned from school with 26 (32%) and 12 (46%) respectively.

## **Discussion of Findings**

Data presented in the study shows that the, majority of respondents, 13 (78%) who were 30 years and above have never seen a copy of the constitution. In addition, those who have seen a copy 24 (39%) have not read the constitution. These are young and active members of the society, it is important for them to access the constitution in order to read and know their rights.

The schools play an important role in educating the learners about human rights, as 27 (55%) who were 30 years and below learnt the term human rights at school. A good number, 10 (46%) of these, who were 45 years and above, learned through radio, newspaper or television. Libraries did not feature in any of the responses, either the respondents are not aware of their existence or they did not consider libraries as a place where one can get information on human rights.

It is not surprising when 44% of respondents did not know where to report human rights violations. Some 11% of respondents suggested informing family / neighbors; while 8% each suggested they would defend themselves; or they would use other means to protect their rights (13).

In Namibia, violence against women and children is one of the major human rights violations. The community needs to know their rights so that they can defend and demand them. Thus, the role of libraries and information centers to promote human rights is very crucial, but respondents were not aware that their libraries could provide such information.

### **How can libraries promote human rights:**

There are several methods by which libraries and information centers can promote human rights, these include:

- Libraries and information centers should provide copies of the constitution for people to read to understand their rights. For example in 2012 and 2013, the human rights and documentation centre secured copies of the constitution and distributed them to the University students so that they could read and know their rights;
- Libraries and information centres should work in collaboration with civil society to organize discussion forums in order to disseminate information on domestic violence. For example, the Legal Assistance Centre conducts a lot of research on gender based violence, but the research findings are disseminated through their website. One finds that not many women in rural areas will access such information due to lack of connectivity and ignorance in using technology. Such forums will popularize the dangers of domestic violence and create awareness of this evil practice in society.
- Libraries can make use of professionals like social workers from the Ministry of Gender or Ministry of Labor to organize workshop to sensitize the people on issue of child abuse. For example to sensitize people about the danger of child labour. The Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI) conducts a lot of research on labour issues which include the danger of child labour. The Ministry could work closely with libraries in order to sensitize people about the issue of child labour

- The use of posters and other illustrations to create awareness on the contact information on where to report if a person's rights are violated
- The Office of the Ombudsman or Anticorruption Commission, can use libraries and information centres to publicize their work and also use the libraries to distribute their materials so that people can have access to them
- Libraries and information centre should have in stock all international instruments which have been ratified by their countries for the citizen to familiarize themselves. For example, the Human Rights and Documentation Centre provides all instruments to its users.
- Librarians and information workers must be involved in research in order to find solutions to problems. For example, the Human Rights and Documentation Centre was involved in a human rights baseline study on behalf of the ombudsman office. Such a study is important because it provides an insight on human rights perceptions by the sample, in order to provide the right materials at the right time.
- Libraries can assist job seekers to prepare CVs and seek employment; or providing materials for entrepreneur to improve their skills in order to reduce poverty in the country. As we know, a number of youth are unemployed, thus they are looking for different opportunities such as tenders from government; and other job opportunities.
- Libraries should provide internet services for the users to access human rights information. Libraries and information centres in the rural areas where youth need more access to HIV/AIDS information can subscribe to different databases providing information on HIV/AIDs or information on jobs availability. We know that our youth are technology savvy whereby they make use of their smart phone for example to access information which will assist them to make the right decision.

## Conclusion

Human rights are values we all share because they are about recognising the value and dignity of all people. In learning about human rights, we learn about ideals of respect, fairness, justice and equality. We also learn about standing up for our own rights and about our responsibility to respect the rights of others. Understanding human rights shapes our thinking and our actions because human rights are about real-life issues.

Strong libraries and information centers can play an important role in ensuring citizens know their rights, demand, and defend them.

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# From Human Wrongs to Human Rights: Libraries and the Right to Know in Uganda

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## Abstract

This paper examines the challenges encountered by libraries in promoting and respecting civil and political rights in Uganda. Human rights are inherent and naturally accrue to any living person. These rights in Uganda have been protected and violated in equal measure. Legislations and constitutional provisions that protect and guarantee the civil and political rights have been undone by extensive measures of oppression (torture, arbitrary arrests) used to suppress discontent. Libraries enhance knowledge of human rights which is a prerequisite for individuals and groups to reasonably expect and demand respect for their rights and freedom. These rights cannot be promoted and protected in an information vacuum. The protection of human rights depends on people knowing about the rights to which they are entitled. Literature searches, document analysis and key informant interviews were used to collect information for this paper. The findings reveal the feelings of the interviewees on the challenges libraries encounter in promoting civil and political rights. Recommendations provide a basis for addressing these challenges.

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**Keywords:** Human Rights, Civil and Political Rights, Libraries, Uganda

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## Introduction

Today's society is highly dependent on exchange of information. The right to access information ensures that citizens are not only aware of how the government is operating but also gives citizens powers to hold the state accountable. Zamir (2008) observes that freedom of access to information is not only a fundamental right of an individual but also a means to power because once an individual has the right information; they will be in position to respond and make appropriate decisions concerning how they are

governed. In Uganda, Article: 41 of the Constitution states that every citizen has a right to access information in the possession of the State or any other organ or agency of the State except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the State or interfere with the right to privacy of any other person. In making this right a reality, the Access to Information Act 2005 was enacted with the purpose of promoting an efficient, effective, accountable and transparent government. This Act also seeks to protect individuals disclosing information as well as empowering the public to effectively scrutinize and participate in government's decisions that affect them. The National Library of Uganda Act 2003 is another important piece of legislation that sets the ground for public libraries to provide information and information services to their users.

Libraries therefore have an existing legal mandate and role to provide information to all. As observed by Byrne (2003) libraries provide access to information and good libraries provide uninhibited access to information for all members of the community they serve. He adds that a healthy democracy depends on an informed and participative community. This view is echoed by IFLA in its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary declaration that championed libraries as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture and vanguards of development, maintenance of intellectual freedom, democratic values and universal civil rights (IFLA, 2002). With 26 public libraries, approximately 23 academic libraries, a host of school libraries and a number of civil and governmental libraries, libraries are undoubtedly the bridge to an open government. i.e a two way exchange between the public and government.

This paper will argue that libraries in Uganda are pivotal in building an informed society and are committed to supporting an informed society but are constrained by a number of factors.

## **Human rights**

Human rights are universal legal guarantees protecting individuals and groups against actions and omissions that interfere with fundamental freedoms, entitlements and human dignity (HURINET, 2008). Human rights law obliges Governments (principally) and other duty-bearers to do certain things and prevents them from doing others. HURINET (2008) adds that the protection and promotion of human rights is the first responsibility of government and respect for them therefore is an essential safeguard against the might of the state. There are important links which exist between the features of democratisation and good governance, such as the rule of law and respect for human rights. UDHR (1948) describes human rights as; universal and birthright of all human beings; focus on the inherent dignity and equal worth of all human beings; equal, indivisible and interdependent; cannot be waived or taken away; impose obligations of

action and omission, particularly on States and State actors and have been internationally guaranteed.

The proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 by the United Nations heralded a new era in the international protection of human rights. Chapter 4 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda pronounces itself on these rights. Among the rights guaranteed to all human beings under international treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are the following;

- The right to life, liberty and security of person
- Freedom of association, expression, assembly and movement
- Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention
- The right to a fair trial
- The right to just and favourable working conditions
- The right to equal protection of the law
- Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence
- Freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Freedom from slavery
- The right to a nationality
- Everyone has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- Everyone has the right to privacy.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and to leave and return to one's country.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- Everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and association.
- Everyone has the right to take part in government of one's country.

## **Civil and Political Rights in Uganda**

Civil and Political rights are considered first generation rights. They emphasize equality and liberty of the individual in law and morality, including the freedom and liberty to pursue equally property or poverty (Shivji, 1989). Few African governments openly acknowledge that they violate human rights. To do so could be self destructive and dangerous to the 'interests' of the state. Protection of human rights is espoused in every African state as national duty in which the interest of the regime forms the axis around which human rights issues spin (Abdullahi, 1996). The situation is no different in Uganda where the constitution is the supreme law of the land and all other laws must adhere to it. The 1995 constitution guarantees several rights and freedoms that have significance for the right to know, either by enhancing access to knowledge or by concretising the protection afforded to rights holders. HURINET (2013) reports that the 1995 Constitution described as a human rights document is punctuated with human rights principles at every turn and neither the 1962 nor 1966 constitution placed as much emphasis on human rights.

The Civil and Political rights situation in Uganda presents a mixed picture with successes being registered in some areas while setbacks have also been encountered in some areas. For instance Government has formulated a number of policies to ensure equality and freedom of discrimination of all persons regardless of social status, political affiliation or religious or ideological belief. Affirmative action of various minorities, marginalised or vulnerable groups in politics and education is credited for increasing access to education for women among others. However such successes are curtailed by the state's failure to promote public awareness of the constitution and constitutional freedoms, a scenario that has given rise to inequalities at the hands of both the state and the private sector.

In Uganda a person's right to life can be lawfully disregarded as reported by the New Vision newspaper which carried a story on the hanging of prisoners on death row in 1999 (Newvision, May 4 1999). The right to personal liberty and the security of the individual even when guaranteed in the constitution continues to suffer abuses and limitations mainly from the security forces. Many opposition politicians have been confined to their homes without due cause. Cultural leaders such as the Kabaka (king) of Buganda have been denied access to counties in their kingdoms (Masaba, 2013). The New Vision (2012) reports that unexplained murders, robberies and of late child sacrifice are some of the crimes that on the rise. This implies that the state is failing in its obligation to provide physical protection of individuals. Citizens are now opting for private security which is a vote of no confidence in government's ability to protect them. Furthermore, even while the right to bail is constitutional it has not been spared violations from the state. The right to apply for bail is a component of the wider right to personal liberty (Mugalula, 2009). The right to bail has been abused by the executive arm of government. On 16<sup>th</sup> November 2005 People's Redemption Army (PRA) suspects were rearrested within the precincts of the high court by heavily armed soldiers after court had granted them bail (Muyita, 2007). The courts on their part should be credited for vigorously upholding this right in the face of an onslaught by the Executive. Government is in the process of drafting legislation that would make it hard for Ugandans to walk out of prison on bail. (Sserwaniko, 2007)

The arbitrary arrests and disappearance of individuals to ungazetted detention facilities has been reported with some detainees dying in custody due to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment at the hands of security forces (Odyek, 2013). This has cost the state heavily in terms of compensation to victims and law suits. However it's important to note that progress has been made if the enactment of the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act 2010 is anything to go by. The Act strengthens the constitutional provision on torture and makes individual security officers liable for their actions.

The right to privacy has been the subject of numerous violations. Reasons advanced for these violations have included, among others, enforcement of national security, the fight against terrorism or the prevention of illegal immigration. The protections envisaged

under this right include communication such as the tapping of phone calls, intercepting mails and the illegal access of bank statements. These are seriously constricted by the Anti-terrorism Act 2005(Sections 18 & 19) and Interception of Communications Act 2010 which infringe on the right not to have information relating to family or private affairs unnecessarily required or revealed( HURINET,2013). Wesaka (2013) observes that the individual's right to a fair and speedy trial has been constricted by delays occasioned by retirements, delayed replacements of judicial officers and absence of legal representation. He for example cites the failure of Government to appoint a substantive Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) which has created an unnecessary case backlog that has caused delay in delivering justice.

The media and other information institutions have not been spared the violations. Naturinda & Butagira (2010), report that the banning, harassment and intimidation of the press and closure of media houses has greatly infringed freedom of expression. Restrictions set up in laws such as sedition and publishing of false news have only served to constrain the enjoyment of this right. The right to assemble, oppose, demonstrate and associate for causes in which one believes in has not been spared the heavy hand of the state. The situation is likely to deteriorate further with the passing of the Public Order Management Bill 2009 that constricts the enjoyment of the right to associate and assemble.

While the Constitution provides every Ugandan with the right to move freely throughout Uganda and to reside and settle in any part of the country, the right has been subject of a number of violations. Some entities right to free movement has been curtailed. The Kabaka of Buganda, in 2009 for instance, was prevented from visiting Kayunga District, an area in a kingdom he reigns. Dr Kiiza Besigye, opposition leader, has on numerous occasions been confined to his residence in what the police has termed preventive arrest, a colonial law that is still on the statute books(Masaba, 2013).

The situation in Uganda presents a fuzzy picture of the prevailing civil and political rights. The Government seems to have struck a balance between protection and violation. In the words of Abdullahi (1996) the problems facing the individual and the community in the protection of individual and communal rights are immense.

## **Libraries and Human rights**

Without information/knowledge on human rights, it is impossible for citizens to claim and enjoy their rights. Ikoja (2010) notes that libraries are essentially democratic institutions whose goal is the improvement of society and helping individuals understand themselves and the world to which they are part. Libraries reflect and shape society itself and manifest specific forms; National, University, Research, Government, School, Public and Special libraries. IFLA (2002) posits that libraries play a fundamental role in society. They take the knowledge of the past and present and lay it down for the

future. It adds that libraries have always been one of the major institutions for giving access to knowledge. Segbent & Karun (2010) observe that for many people libraries are the only place to access computers and the internet. The public library manifesto a UNESCO/IFLA document positions libraries as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture, which contribute to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom and help to safeguard democratic values and universal civil rights. These underscore the importance of libraries in promoting and protecting human rights.

Kamar & On'gond (2007) note that information is not only crucial in the development of any nation but its availability is a basic right for each citizen in a democracy. Badisang (2010) concurs arguing that access to knowledge is a human right that is achieved mainly through education in early stages of human development and lifelong and continuing learning. Radijeng (2008; 18) on his part advises that "Access to knowledge is a 'demand for justice' both an issue of economic development and an issue of individual participation and human liberty". This right is embodied in the constitutional right to know (access to information). Kakhongwe & Mpekansambo (2010) add that allowing people to seek and receive information serves as a critical tool for fighting corruption. They note that it enables citizens to participate fully in public life and that it is citizens' participation that makes governments more efficient. With information, citizens can better secure and exercise their democratic rights. Libraries are therefore integral to the promotion, protection and realisation of human rights and as echoed in the words of Thomas Jefferson, no nation can remain free and ignorant at the same time. Free access to information is part of the human rights issue that underlies the concept of democracy. Intellectual freedom is a fundamental human right, for without the freedom to think one's thoughts, conceive ideas, formulate views and express them freely there is no possibility of democratic governance (Byrne, 1999).

## **Challenges for Ugandan Libraries**

Knowledge of human rights is a prerequisite for individuals and groups to reasonably expect and demand respect for their rights and freedom. Human rights cannot be promoted and protected where people have not been informed and educated about them. As observed by Waliggo (1994) an ignorant person does not know the laws to protect him/her or where to go for redress. The protection of human rights therefore depends on people knowing about the rights to which they are entitled. In an effort to raise awareness on human rights libraries in Uganda have encountered numerous challenges.

## **Services for disabled users**

Difficulty in providing services to disabled users was identified as one of the challenge encountered by libraries. Libraries (100%) reported lack of specialised equipment and

materials as one of the constraining factors. The Disability Act 2006 which requires all public buildings to have provisions for persons with disability to access their buildings was identified as another constraint. They argued that given their limited budgets, they couldn't finance modifications of their buildings to make them disability friendly and compliant with the law. Failure to provide access to library services to disabled users could be construed to be a violation of their right to equality and freedom from discrimination.

### **Limited human rights collection**

Because human rights are not a core subject in most institutions and information materials are expensive, libraries (83%) have tended to rely more on donations than purchase. The acquisitions budget they argued is dominated by materials on subjects such as accounts, public relations and a host of other subjects that are taught in University and secondary schools. The limited human rights collection they argued did not allow them to carry out human rights education.

### **Theft and mutilation of information materials**

Because Libraries cannot buy materials for each individual user they operate on a principle of sharing and this can only work if there is ultimate cooperation of the users. However it was reported (90% libraries) that a number of users were in the habit of stealing information materials and tearing pages out of books. This uncouth act denied other users the opportunity to access the information in the stolen and mutilated materials.

### **Disrespect for librarians**

The early librarians were majorly uneducated or those that failed to find suitable employment in their field of study. In most schools it was common to find a teacher's uneducated wife serving as the librarian. The institutions then thought that librarianship was a profession that didn't require skills and knowledge. They often argued that one did not need skills to keep and issue books. It is this mentality that today's librarians, the majority of whom are professionals, confront in their day to day work.

### **Intellectual property**

Librarians (20%) reported finding difficulty in accessing certain information that was produced by scholars and students in their institutions. They pointed out that the research output once published was out of their reach because of copyright limitations from publishers and the library had to pay to access the research.

## **Limited funding**

Libraries (90%) continue to suffer inadequate facilities like space, furniture, collection. In some extreme cases the environment was not conducive for users. The limited funds they argued did not allow them to diversify their collection to enable them provide a rich menu to their users .Other activities that were severely affected by lack of funding included outreach services on human rights provision and human rights education.

## **Censorship.**

Censorship was reported in some libraries (10%).The homosexuality debate especially with regards to the Anti Homosexuality Bill 2009 currently before Parliament of Uganda promoted prejudices and encouraged censorship in some institutions. In one government library a donation of gay literature was declined for fear of being branded promoters of homosexuality. This act denied researchers, users and gay rights campaigners' access to information.

## **Conditional grants**

Conditional funding that constrains libraries (10%) from stocking materials to meet the varied needs of users was another challenge reported. In one particular case, because the parent body of the library was primarily a human rights organization, funding was tied to the acquisition of human rights materials.

## **Interruption of Service**

Libraries (70%) reported disruption in their services because of other non library activities. Space challenges in most offices have forced most organisations to use their library spaces as boardrooms and meeting spaces. In times of meetings libraries experience interruption in their service to their users. This, in some extreme cases, has happened for two weeks.

## **Culture of secrecy in Government**

Librarians also reported difficulty in accessing information from some public institutions. This was attributed to the pervasive culture of secrecy in these institutions. Information on Performance of Government Contracts, Oil Production Sharing Agreements, and Bilateral and Multilateral Trade Agreements among others that should ordinarily be in the public domain (libraries) and subject to public scrutiny is not within reach of these institutions.

## Recommendations

Currently civic education is the mandate of Uganda Human Rights Commission which is severely constrained by capacity and funding challenges. Libraries, because of their wide reach, should be mandated to conduct civic education and raise civic awareness since they are grounded in the community and relate easily with the needs and aspirations of the community.

There is need for advocacy and sensitization of communities about the role of librarians in raising civic conscience. Librarians should transit from just being custodians/intermediaries of knowledge and take an active role in social justice issues in their communities.

Mobile technology should be adopted for the use of information dissemination. Mobile technology has been credited for raising awareness on maternal health. Libraries could adopt the same given that there are approximately 15 million mobile phone users in Uganda.

There is a need to develop specialized services for marginalized and vulnerable sections of society. These include the elderly, sexual minorities and prisoners. These will help extend information services to those that are excluded from society.

Amend laws that constrain the right to access information. These include; the Official Secrets Act, Article 9(1) of the Public Service Act and Article 22(12) of the Education Service Act, 2002 which limit access to information in government custody by criminalising the disclosure of information by Public Servants.

## Conclusion

Citizens need to be empowered if they are to exercise their rights and duties as citizens and it is the job of the library to provide them with access to the information they need in this respect. Libraries enhance knowledge of human rights which is a prerequisite for individuals and groups to reasonably expect and demand respect for their rights and freedom. The information/knowledge provided by libraries allows citizens to participate in governance processes. Information provided by libraries also ensures that citizens understand what politicians and public servants have done and how that affects them. For instance when tax exemptions are granted to an investor, citizens get to know why investor X and not investor Y benefited, how much revenue was lost as a result of such a decision, what benefits accrued to the economy, was such a decision subject to review and who is liable in case of any wrong doing. Despite the numerous challenges they encounter, libraries have endeavored to build an informed citizenry that is vital for a healthy democracy. If Uganda is to realise maximum benefits from these institutions,

there is need to address the challenges that constrain them, given they are a good vehicle for development and are vital for the development of a healthy democracy.

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# Accessing Government information in Namibia as a human right issue<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

There is general consensus that access to information is indispensable for a functional democracy. It is for this reason that access to information has been recognised and guaranteed as a fundamental human right in various international, regional and national instruments. The right to access to information is not explicitly guaranteed in the Namibian Constitution but is claimable through article 144 of since Namibia acceded and / or ratified various international human rights instruments which provide for this right. This article evaluates the question as to whether access to information is regarded as a human rights issue in Namibia. In determining this, the paper analysed the findings of the pilot study of the baseline study on human rights in Namibia with that of the main study with a specific focus on the theme dealing with access to information. Both studies found that it is almost as easy as it is difficult to access government information in Namibia. Both studies also show that elderly respondents and those with no formal education found it more difficult to access government information. Both studies show that the media was considered to be the main source of government policies, programmes and services. A mere 4 percent of the respondents in both studies indicated that they use libraries as a source for accessing public information. Distance to government departments and

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is an adapted version of the chapter prepared for the 'Baseline Study Report on human rights in Namibia' (2013) for the Office of the Ombudsman: Namibia by the Human Rights and Documentation Centre (HRDC) of the Law Faculty of the University of Namibia. It specifically focuses on the data obtained during the piloting of the human rights household survey in Windhoek for the Human Rights Baseline Study for the Office of the Ombudsman. The authors sincerely thank the Office of the Ombudsman for their kind permission for the use of this data.

rude members of staff/poor service delivery were listed as the main barriers to accessing public information. Respondents in the pilot study listed outdated website content as their third major barrier, whereas respondents in the main study singled out too much bureaucracy as their third highest impediment to government information. The article asserts that the current situation whereby obtaining government information is at the discretion and disposition of civil servants is untenable and inconsistent with the right to access to information. The paper will explore how Namibians, from all walks of life, access human rights information. The paper is based on research which took place in Windhoek, Namibia in April 2012. The various aspects explored include access to government information and channels used to access information including the mass media. The final part of the paper will investigate barriers to accessing government information. Some recommendations will be made on how to improve access to government information in Namibia.

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**Key words:** democracy; human rights; human rights-based approach; Namibia; Office of the Ombudsman; Namibia; Human Rights and Documentation Centre (HRDC).

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## 1. Introduction

James Madison a leading figure in the drafting of the US Constitution described the importance of information to citizens in a democratic country as follows:

*“A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or, perhaps, both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” (Coliver, 1999:54)*

Scholars such as Fletschner and Mesbah (2010), Mendel (n.d) and Daniels (2011) similarly highlighted the importance of having access to State-held information. To them, access to information about government decisions, data, policies, legislations and research findings are important because it affects every citizen in society. Citizens, whose access to information is limited, or very costly, may be unaware of other resources available to them.

Access to information is a prerequisite for the exercising of choice and making informed decision in one’s life. Access to information is important for the attainment of human potential. This includes access to free internet, public libraries and government information. Mathies (n.d) argues that, the right to access information is not merely a liberty right but also a welfare right. He pointed three reasons to support the argument. Firstly, human beings are creatures with a capacity and a desire for knowledge. A

life deprived of adequate access to information and knowledge is thus a seriously impoverished life. Secondly, knowledge is not only good in itself, it is pragmatically essential that a person has access if they have to make an informed decision; and lastly, in order for a person to effectively exercise and protect their rights, they need access to information.

A study by Daniels (2011) on access to information in Namibia suggested that, there is no country which can call itself democratic, unless the citizens have a right to access and request information that is held by public and private bodies. Access to information is a key component of a transparent and accountable government. Mendel (n.d) and Daniels (2011) both pointed that, it is important to enable citizens to know what is going on within government, to expose corruption and mismanagement. A number of researchers conclude that, there is a relationship between access to information and economic growth in any country achieving society.

Access to information implies quality information which means: information must be accurate, complete and timely. Citizens need sufficient and accurate information to evaluate options and decide the right choice. Given the importance of information, many countries have enacted legislation which guarantees access to information.

Furthermore, access to information is important because it enables political participation. For example the internet may be used to publicise government policy and draft legislation for educational purposes and for people to debate. The education sector including institutions of higher learning, and research entities exchange information through emails or online periodicals. In the health sector, doctors exchange notes on the causes and treatment of different diseases; and people need information on how to obtain titles deeds for their land; and they also need to know the requirements for obtaining loans with favorable conditions.

Providing access information is not an easy task. Decisions need to be made as to which type of information will be available; to whom will it be available; and under what conditions. Much existing legislation makes available only information in the possession of government departments or institutions funded by the state or acting on behalf of the state. Some information from institutions is regarded as confidential information, thus it is restricted to public access. The obligation to inform is important because it gives rise to the duties of the state and its citizens to reveal information on their respective actions.

Abid Hussain, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, similarly, highlighted the importance of access to information in his 1995 Report to the UN Commission on Human Rights. In this regard he noted that

*[i]n contemporary society, because of the social and political role of information, the right of everyone to receive information and ideas has to be carefully protected. This*

*right is not simply a converse of the right to impart information but it is a freedom in its own right. The right to seek or have access to information is one of the most essential elements of freedom of speech and expression. Freedom will be bereft of all effectiveness if the people have no access to information.* (UN Commission on Human Rights, 1995)

The aim of this article is to examine whether the right to obtain information held by public bodies is considered to be a human right in Namibia. The research question is studied by analysing the data obtained during the piloting of the human rights baseline study which was conducted in April 2012 in 2012 in Windhoek for the Human Rights Baseline Study for the Office of the Ombudsman. The main study was carried out over the period May – September 2012.

## **2. The right to access to information**

In 1946 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it recalled that “[f]reedom of information is a fundamental human right and [...] the touchstone of all freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated.” (UN General Assembly, 1946: online) Two year later, the Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which expressly guarantees the rights to access to information as discussed below.

### **2.1 The legal framework<sup>2</sup>**

The right to access information held by the State is regulated in several international human rights treaties. Consequently, a number of international bodies with responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights have authoritatively recognised the fundamental and legal nature of the right to freedom of information, as well as the need for effective legislation to secure respect for that right in practice.

#### **2.1.1 United Nations-level**

The UN General Assembly, as noted earlier during its first session in 1946 formally recognised freedom of information as a fundamental human right. In ensuing international human rights instruments, freedom of information was not set out separately but as part of the fundamental right of freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek, receive and impart information. In 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 19 of the UDHR states “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference

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<sup>2</sup> This section is a verbatim presentation of the chapter: ‘The right to access to information in Namibia’ in the recently launched Baseline Human Rights Report’ for the Office of the Ombudsman: Namibia. The said chapter was also authored by the same authors Nakuta and Mchombu

and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". Although the UDHR is not a legally binding document, the principles contained therein are considered to be legally binding on States either as customary international law, general principles of law, or as fundamental principles of humanity.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), widely considered as the central instrument of protection for the right to access to information, guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and expression in very similar terms as the UDHR. This right is guaranteed in article 19 of the ICCPR. The right to information (RTI) is also recognised in numerous other international human rights treaties, some of which are of general application while others address the human rights of specific groups such as women, children, or people with disabilities. Namibia ratified or acceded to most of these international instruments. These, amongst others, include the United Nations Convention on Corruption (UNCAC), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Namibia acceded and/or ratified to all these instruments and is thus bound by their provisions.

### 2.1.2 African level

The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) guarantees the right to access to information in Article 9. In 2002, the African Commission adopted a Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa. The Declaration clearly endorses the right to access information held by public bodies, stating that:

*"Public bodies hold information not for themselves but as custodians of the public good and everyone has a right to access this information, subject only to clearly defined rules established by law."* (African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, 2002: online)

Further to this, the Declaration set forth several principles which should underpin an access to information regime. The part of the Declaration relating to freedom of information is presented verbatim below.

1. The right to information shall be guaranteed by law in accordance with the following principles:
  - everyone has the right to access information held by public bodies;
  - everyone has the right to access information held by private bodies which is necessary for the exercise or protection of any right;

- any refusal to disclose information shall be subject to appeal to an independent body and/or the courts;
  - public bodies shall be required, even in the absence of a request, actively to publish important information of significant public interest;
  - no one shall be subject to any sanction for releasing in good faith information on wrongdoing, or that which would disclose a serious threat to health, safety or the environment save where the imposition of sanctions serves a legitimate interest and is necessary in a democratic society; and
  - secrecy laws shall be amended as necessary to comply with freedom of information principles.
2. Everyone has the right to access and update or otherwise correct their personal information, whether it is held by public or by private bodies.(Ibid)

Namibia is a State party to the African Charter. It is thus bound by its provisions. As a State party Namibia is also bound by the declarations, resolutions and jurisprudence of the African Commission.

### 2.1.3 National/domestic level

The Namibian Constitution does not expressly provide for the right to access to information. It does, however, guarantee the right to freedom of speech and expression which includes press and media freedom. (Namibian Constitution, Article 21(1)(a) It is commonly understood that the RTI is implied within the right to freedom of expression. However, whereas international human rights treaties establishing the right to freedom of expression to include the 'right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, such a construction is glaringly absent from the phrasing of the right to freedom of expression as founded under Article 21(1)(a) of the Namibian Constitution. The ACHPR, arguably, as a way to discard all doubt, guarantees the right to freedom of expression and the right to access to information as two distinct rights. The right to access to information is thus neither expressly nor impliedly guaranteed under article 21(1)(a) of the Namibian Constitution.

Namibia also does not have access to information legislation. In fact, the prevailing trend seems to be to control rather than availing State-held information. The Namibia, as noted by a key informant for the baseline study, is having '*...hordes of restrictive legislation which [...] curb instead of promote access to information*' (KI, Media Institute for Southern Africa, Windhoek, 2013). In 2009, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa of the African Commission, Adv. Pansy Tlakula, expressed her concerns about the "*lack of access to information provision in the Namibian Constitution [.....] and of information legislation*"(ACPHR,2009: online). She has recently reiterated her concerns in this

regard, during her address at a two-day conference on 'Access to Information' held in Windhoek on 21-22 August 2012. In this regard, she specifically urged Namibia to leapfrog the access to information legislation-making process by using the draft model law on the right to information for the African Union (AU) member states as a basis for drafting its own.

Does this then mean that the right to access to information is not guaranteed and/or claimable in Namibia? Most certainly Not! This is so because article 144 of the Namibian Constitution explicitly and unequivocally declares that:

*"Unless otherwise provided by this Constitution or Act of Parliament, the general rules of public international law and international agreements binding upon Namibia under this Constitution shall form part of the law of Namibia."*

The status of this part of the law of Namibia is further enhanced by article 96(d) of the Constitution which provides that:

*"The State shall endeavor to ensure that in its international relations, it [...] fosters respect for international law and treaty obligations."*

By way of getting the government to give effect to such international and treaty obligations the Namibian Supreme Court in the *Cultura 2000* case pointed out that:

*"Article 144 of the Constitution sought to give expression to the intention of the Constitution to make Namibia part of the international community by providing that [...] international agreements binding upon Namibia ... shall be part of the law of Namibia."*

Similar sentiments and affirmations were also expressed in the *Kauesa*, *Mushwena* and *Mwilima* cases, amongst others. From this, it ought to be beyond doubt that the law referred to in article 144 clearly includes international law provisions. This is why, for example, the High Court and the Supreme respectively found that the Government of Republic of Namibia (GRN) had a treaty obligation (under the ICCPR) to provide all the accused persons in the marathon Caprivi-secessionists trial with legal aid despite the fact that this right is not expressly guaranteed under the Namibian Constitution. There is no reason in logic or principle why the same argument cannot be made to apply to the right to access to information. These authors, thus, forcefully argue that the right to access to information is fully claimable and enforceable in Namibia either under article 19 of the ICCPR or article 9 of the ACHPR.

Having established the legal basis for the existence of the right to access to information in Namibia, the rest of this article will seek to shed light on the extent to which this right is currently enjoyed in Namibia with data collected from the Human Rights Baseline Survey Report referred to earlier.

### 3. The enjoyment of the right to access information in Namibia: A case of the Khomas Region.

The Human Rights Baseline Survey gauged people's experiences in accessing State-held information. To this end, the survey posed six questions on how respondents generally obtain/access information from public bodies. Only the three questions most relevant to this article will be considered and analysed. An attempt is made to compare and analyse the data gathered from the pilot study conducted in the Khomas Region (urban and rural) with that gathered from the national household survey.

The responses (pilot versus national survey) to the question 'Is it easy to access information on government policies/ programmes/ services?' were as follow:

#### Responses from pilot:

Table 1: Is it easy to access information on government policies/ programmes/ services?

	N	%
Yes	39	47.6
No	43	52.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Responses from national household survey:

Table 2: Is it easy to access information on government policies/ programmes/ services?

	N	%
Yes	632	50.2
No	626	49.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1258</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The responses from the pilot study and the baseline study on this question were very close. Generally, the respondents in both the the pilot and the baseline study, were almost equally divided when we asked if it was easy to access information on government policies, programmes and services. For instance, the pilot responses show that almost 48 percent of the respondents were of the view that it was easy to access government information on policies, programmes and services, whereas slightly more than 51 percent shared the same view during the baseline study . The no-responses show similar trends. During the pilot more than 52 percent of the respondents answered this question in the

negative compared to the almost 50 percent negative responses gathered during the baseline study. Upon desegregation the pilot reveals that those below the age of thirty (61 %), those with tertiary education (65 %) and men (62%) found it more difficult to obtain information on government policies, programmes and services. In the same vein, the baseline study shows elderly persons i.e. those older than sixty (59%), those with no formal education (63%) and men (51 %).

These results imply that accessing of government information in Namibia is very much linked to one’s age, level of education and sex.

Our respondents were also asked to list the most common sources from which they usually obtain information on government policies, programmes and services. The results from the pilot study show the following responses.

**Table 3: How do you access the government information?**

	<b>Resp</b>	<b>Col R %</b>
Visiting the offices (Ministries)	30	25.2
Through media (radio, TV, newspapers)	51	42.9
Calling/ phoning offices	2	1.7
Visiting websites	16	13.4
Public/ community libraries	5	4.2
Politicians	7	5.9
Other	8	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The pilot results showed that the most common source of information on government programmes, policies and services was found to be the media (43 %), followed by visits to government ministries (25 %), accessing websites (13 %) and politicians (6 %). A mere 4 % of respondents indicated that they use libraries as a source of Government information.

The results from the baseline study for the same question show the following responses.

Table 4: How do you access the government information?

	<b>Resp</b>	<b>Col R %</b>
Visiting the offices (Ministries)	418	24.5
Through media (radio, TV, newspapers)	727	42.5
Calling/ phoning offices	57	3.3
Visiting websites	125	7.3
Public/ community libraries	76	4.4
Politicians	106	6.2
Other	200	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1709</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The responses from the baseline study on this question were almost identical to that obtained in the pilot. The only difference was found in the use of the internet as a source for obtaining State-held information on government programmes, policies and services. The baseline study, in a mirror-image fashion, revealed that the most common source for such information was also the media (43 %), followed by government ministries (25 %), websites (7 %) and politicians (6%). As was the case in the pilot study, a mere 4 % of respondents indicated that they use libraries as a source of Government information. Although the media was the main source of information for all age groups, visiting websites was more prominent amongst the youth, while visits to ministries was most common amongst the middle-age respondents. The use of websites and libraries was more common amongst respondents with higher levels of education. The results from both the pilot and the HHS also showed that more female respondents singled out the media as their preferred source of information compared to their male counterparts.

The two most common barriers for accessing State-held information identified in both the pilot and the baseline study were listed as the distance to government offices (23 % versus 28%), and rude staff members/poor services delivery (19% versus 20%). Respondents in the pilot study listed outdated website content as their third major barrier (8%), whereas respondents in the main study singled out too much bureaucracy as their third highest impediment to government information (14%). Young and middle-age respondents (tended to identify rude staff members and too much bureaucracy, as well as the distance to government departments as their main obstacles, while the elderly identified the distance to government departments as by far the most pressing obstacle. This problem also featured more prominently in rural areas than in urban ones. Distance to government departments was more commonly cited as an obstacle by respondents with lower educational levels. They tended to live in rural areas and thus the response is consistent with the one provided earlier. The obstacles of too much bureaucracy and outdated websites were cited more frequently by respondents with

higher levels of education. These were the results for both the pilot and baseline study. A key informant for the baseline study also observed that: *“Getting information in Namibia is largely dependent on the attitude and goodwill of the civil servant you are going to encounter in your quest for information- this should not be the case!”* (Nakuta, 2013: 134). A recent study by Mnubi-Mchombu (2013:254) highlighted the same issues as identified in the two studies as barriers for accessing government information for orphans and other vulnerable children and their caregivers.

#### 4. Conclusion

Generally, the situation with regard to obtaining State-held information in Namibia is less than ideal. The results from both the pilot and the national household survey showed that the current situation mainly affects the most vulnerable. These include elderly persons, the least educated and those living in rural areas. Certainly, the current situation whereby obtaining information held by public bodies and/or officials is at the discretion and disposition of civil servants is untenable and inconsistent with the right to access to information. It is worth iterating that public bodies hold information not for themselves but as custodians of the public good. It is no hyperbole to assert that the current practice and experiences pertaining to access to information as highlighted in this article do not connote a human rights-based approach to access to information on the part of public officials. The Government of the Republic of Namibia will have to do much more to dispel the notion that the absence of access to information legislation connotes a lack of political will. The need for adopting a human rights-based approach to access to information by all in the country cannot be overemphasised. This presupposes several things. Amongst others, the enactment of access to information legislation; the repeal and /or amendment of overly secrecy laws to comply with freedom of information principles; the capacitation of both duty-bearers and rights-holders in respect of their obligations and entitlements respectively; the construction of more public libraries in rural and urban poor areas; all public libraries should well-stocked with updated government policies and programmes; concerted efforts must be made to keep government websites current; the office of the Ombudsman should work in collaboration with libraries to sensitise the general public on how to lay complaints with this office regarding harsh, insensitive and discourteous treatment they receive from civil servants in their quest to access State-held information.

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# Summary of Symposium outcomes

The major aim of the Namibia Libraries Symposium was to create an opportunity for libraries and librarians to engage in critical issues that support an enabling environment for strong libraries to emerge and to be sustained. Providing and resourcing an enabling environment, particularly within the Namibian and African context, prompted speakers to comment on a range of experiences. Following on from the IFLA President, Sinikka Sipilä's keynote address theme 'Strong Libraries, Strong Societies', emerging issues touched on how libraries can promote development and exert critical influence on societies. Discussants particularly recognized the fact that access to information is a key aspect of a knowledge-based society and the current global economic and social reality. Libraries should be a prominent factor in promoting wide and equal access to information. However if libraries are to function as critical tool for innovation, research and economic, social and educational development in their institutions and communities they must be adequately resourced and staffed with knowledgeable, motivated and well informed professional librarians. Equally important, the discussions acknowledged the implications of rapidly changing technologies in the information sector globally. This affects how libraries operate in today's information environment even though the core functions of libraries have not disappeared completely but only need to be re-positioned in order for them to be relevant and effective. For these reasons, policy makers, funders and development agencies must begin to explore the potential of libraries as partners in development strategies. The role of the government is to provide a conducive legal and policy framework which recognises access to information as a strategic resource in national development and good governance. On the other hand, discussants particularly noted that libraries need to evaluate and re-position their services and resources based on national development concerns and local community needs. When this is achieved, libraries can safely ask for funding and point out the economic returns for investing in libraries.

Based on the presentations and deliberations of the symposium, the following statements were drawn up as outcomes of the symposium:

1. Libraries contribute to building of stronger societies, and key to this is recognising information as a strategic resource in national development and good governance.
2. Governments, policy makers, funders and development agencies need to begin to explore the potential of libraries as strategic partners in development.

3. Our societies need to be provided with free and relevant information that adds value to national development because access to information is a tool for enhancing citizen engagement and participation in governance.
4. Information should be available in local languages that promote the recognition and growth of the African identity. In addition, a reading culture should be promoted from an early age, including reading in local languages.
5. Librarians need to be proactive, reach out to the government, policy makers and other strategic partners for support.
6. Educators of librarians need to establish a link between the relevance of library science education and the perceived new roles of librarians in a knowledge driven society.
7. There is need to formulate a national LIS policy framework and LIS should be incorporated in the teaching curricula. There is a proposal to establish a new postgraduate programme focusing on knowledge management for development targeting degree holder practicing librarians for them to become key drivers in the formation of knowledge societies.
8. Librarianship is about knowledge facilitation and knowledge creation. Therefore, libraries should serve as tools to empower people in the 21st century.
9. Libraries need to market, publicise and brand themselves in order to create awareness of the importance of information. They should write and publish for their cause to be visible.
10. The development of efficient school libraries should be a top government priority. School libraries need to be managed by professional librarians who work closely with teachers.
11. Information literacy needs to be integrated into school curricula in order to enhance academic performance and lifelong learning skills.
12. There is need to merge libraries with similar interests and covering the same subject areas. This may result in a policy framework to enable the sharing of ministerial information.
13. There is a paradigm shift going on in libraries around the world and we need to embrace this change by taking appropriate action.

14. The government should come with a realistic benchmark regarding affordable internet bandwidth solution for schools and public libraries.
15. Embrace the use of new ICT in information dissemination. The Ministry of ICT should be the driver in finding a viable bandwidth solution.
16. User satisfaction and community needs should be at the core of all library work and development.
17. Libraries should continuously carry out user surveys to assess the needs of their clients.
18. Access to information should be regarded as a basic human right.

These outcomes articulate many of the ways in which libraries and access to information can continue to improve. However they are meaningless if each of the participants at the Symposium leaves and returns to their workplace as if nothing had happened. The outcomes will only live if each of us incorporates the outcomes into our daily work. When we are planning our annual activities; when we are speaking with ministers or other officials of government, the outcomes of this symposium and their ability to drive community access to information forward; should be at the forefront of our minds. As library professionals and as educated people in each of our countries, we have a duty to use our expertise for the benefit of our fellow citizens. It is only by taking action that the theme of “Strong libraries, strong societies” will become a reality.



## The Authors

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**Ellen Ndeshi Namhila**, was born in Namibia and educated in Angola, Zambia, then The Gambia and Finland. Ellen is a mother, wife and a professional woman. She obtained a M.S.Sc in Library and Information Science at the University of Tampere, Finland in 1993. She will complete her Phd studies in 2015 at the University of Tampere. She has worked as a Deputy Director: Research, Information and Library Services at the Namibian Parliament (1995-1999), as a Director of Namibia Library and Archives Service in the Ministry of Education (1999-2007) and is currently the University Librarian of the University of Namibia. She is the author of *The Price of Freedom*, her autobiography which was published in 1997; *Kahumba Kandola Man and Myth: the Biography of a Barefoot Soldier* published in 2005; and *Tears of Courage: Five Mothers Five Stories One Victory* published in 2009. Ellen is currently the Chairperson of Namibia Library and Information Council (NLIC). She was the Chairperson of the National Heritage Council of Namibia (2005-2010) and Secretary of Namibia Library and Information Council (2002-2008). Ellen served as the Vice President of the UNESCO International Advisory Committee on Memory of the World (2007-2009). She prepared the nomination dossier for Kaptain Hendrik Witbooi Diaries that are now part of the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. She has served as a member of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Africa Section since 2003; IFLA Journal Editorial Committee since 2008; and member of the PAC Advisory Board since 2004. In 2013 she was elected as a member of the IFLA Governing Board 2013-2015 and in 2015 re-elected for second term 2015-2017.

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Opening the Symposium

Master of Ceremonies, Ms Ellen Ndeshi Namhila (University Librarian, Chairperson of the Namibia Library and Information Council) and Her Excellency Finnish Chargé d’Affairs Ms Anne Saloranta (since 2014 Ambassador of Finland in Namibia).

Honourable Silvia Makgone, Deputy Minister of Education and IFLA President Sinikka Sipilä.

Honourable Dr. Elia Kaiyamo, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration; Ms Veno Kauaria: Director: Namibia Library and Archives Service, Ministry of Education & Chairperson: Namibia Information Workers’ Association (NIWA) and Professor Lazarus Hangula: Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia



In her Official Opening Speech Honourable Silvia Makgone, Namibia’s Deputy Minister of Education referred to studies indicating that libraries have a good return on investment and that the direct economic benefits that communities derive from libraries are significantly greater than the cost of operating these libraries.



Vote of thanks in the Opening Ceremony of the Symposium by Honourable Dr. Elia Kaiyamo, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration & former and the first Chairperson of the Namibia Library and Information Council (2001-2012).



Ms Veno Kauaria (Director: Namibia Library and Archives Service & Chairperson: NIWA) welcomed the symposium delegates on behalf of the Namibia Information Workers' Association (NIWA) as well as concluded the symposium deliberations by addressing the recommendations of the symposium at the closing ceremony.



Sinikka Sipilä with Namibian Librarians.



Dr. Kay Raseroka leading way to the decision maker session on the role of libraries in socio-economic development. The first day of the symposium comprised of setting-the-scene with the opening ceremony and a World Café discussion session with Namibian national, regional and municipal decision makers.



Mr John Tsebe, National Librarian of South Africa: Introduction to the Conference of African National Libraries (CANL).



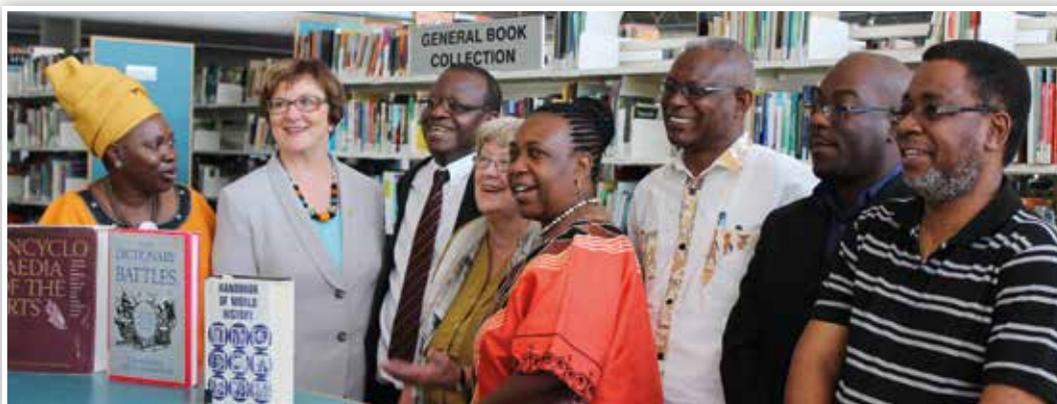
Meeting of three Presidents in the Namibia Library Symposium (from the right): The sitting President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Sinikka Sipilä with past IFLA Presidents: South Africa's Ellen Tise (2009-2011) and Botswana's Dr Kay Raseroka (2003-2005).



Ellen Tise (Executive Director of Library Services: University of Stellenbosch ), , Dr. Buhle Mbambo-Thata, (Executive Director of Library Services at the University of South Africa, UNISA; Ellen Namhila, John Tsebe (National Librarian of South Africa); Veno Kauaria (Director: Namibia Library and Archives Service & Chairperson: NIWA); Dr Kay Raseroka and Dr. Victoria Okojie (Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) & Chairperson: IFLA Africa Section).



Over 300 delegates, librarians and decision makers participated in the Symposium and contributed to vivid and inspiring plenary sessions as well as individual face-to-face deliberations on libraries as part of national and local development plans as well as various aspects on library practice in the African context.



Representatives of the Symposium organisers and some of the delegates in the pre-symposium press-conference at the National Library. The Symposium attracted wide media coverage for libraries through newspapers, radio and TV. From left: Ms Ellen Ndeshi Namhila, University Librarian: UNAM & Chairperson: Namibia Library & Information Council; Ms Sinikka Sipilä, IFLA President; Mr John Tsebe, National Librarian of South Africa; Ms Marjatta Lahti, Project Coordinator: Libraries for Development, Finland; Dr. Chiku Mnubi-Mchombu, Senior Documentalist: Human Rights Documentation Centre, UNAM & Chairperson: IFLA Social Science Libraries Section; Mr. Elia Manga, Deputy Director: Namibia Library and Archives Services; Regional Councillor and member of the Namibia Library and Information Council, Steve Biko Booy and Dr. Alli Mcharazo, Director General: Tanzania Library Services Board.



Public / community libraries - Conducive educational institutions.



As per the new community / public library strategy community libraries in Namibia provide free access to public use computers and internet.



Newspapers are in demand in community/public libraries.



Community libraries have changed – 57 of the 66 community libraries in Namibia provide public use computers and free internet for wide global information access.



Public Library ICT skills training activities are being developed as part of Libraries for Development – North-South-South Cooperation project between Namibia Library and Archives Service, Tanzania Library Services Board and Finnish Library Association. Unemployed youth attending ICT skills training provided by the Morogoro Regional Library Tanzania.



Health workers attending training on electronic access to health information.  
(Tanzania, Morogoro Regional Library)



Maasai women learning to use the computers as part of outreach programmes by Tanzanian National and District libraries



Library staff member attending Libraries for Development ICT skills training , Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



Tanzania, Morogoro Regional Library: taking ICT skills to the people to bridge the digital divide. With Edward Fungo, "The Street Librarian" in charge of the ICT skills outreach programme in the Morogoro Regional Library, Tanzania.



Library Cooperation - Librarians from Finland, Tanzania and 22 community libraries in Namibia attending a workshop on ICTs skills and new services in Windhoek in 2012. Far right Marjatta Lahti, coordinator for Libraries for Development Project.

*Libraries supporting national development plans in Namibia: strategic change in public library development*

*One of the main strategic initiatives is to establish knowledge and ICT hubs in each region to support regional economic and educational development.*

*First three Regional Libraries/Regional Study and Resource Centres (RSRCs) were established with the funding of MCA-Namibia, USA government grant programme supporting poverty alleviation through economic growth. Fourth is being built with Government funding.*



Regional library in Gobabis. Open for public since November 2014



Regional library in Oshakati opened for public September 2014



Ohangwena Regional library in Helao Nafidi opened September 2014



Bridging the digital divide through access to educational ICT applications – Children’s section in the new regional libraries



Interest for locally relevant library services...



Conducive study space and resources for learners/students from primary to tertiary level – continued to lifelong learning



Study areas for students and researchers



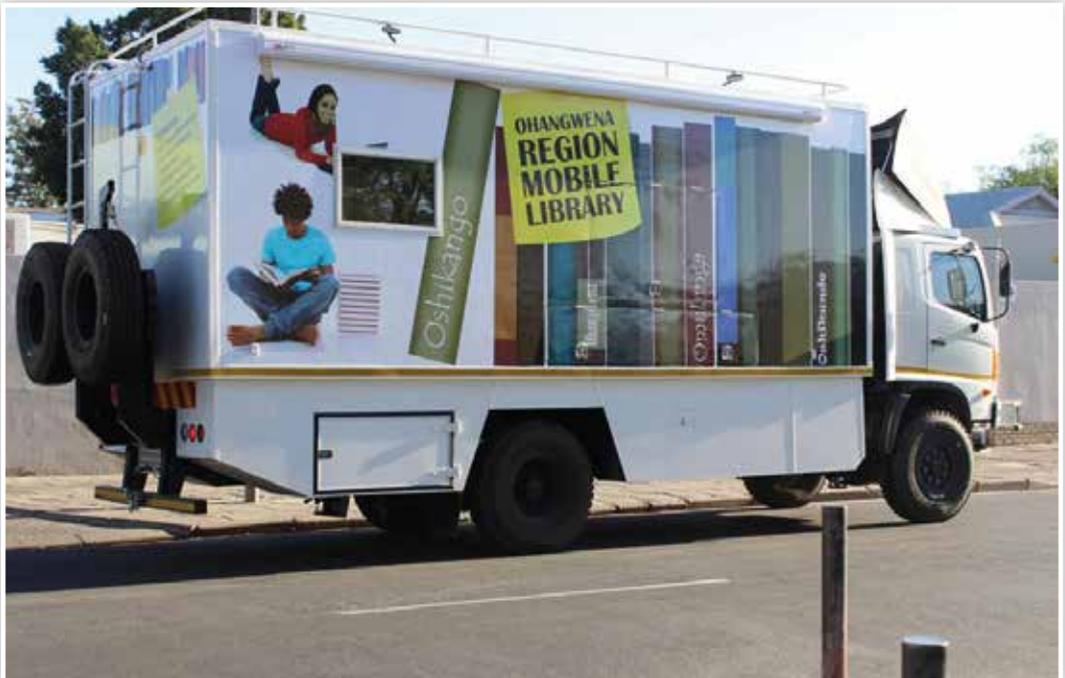
Extended library services based on local needs



From Right Renza Sibolile, RSRC ICT technician introducing youth ICT training programmes to Honourable Kaiyamo.



Popularity of children's section has revealed high demand for inspiring educational spaces



Namibia's first Mobile libraries built on 4x4 truck to be able to reach settlements, schools, health centres through the sandy, muddy rural roads. Funding provided for a heavy-duty IT equipped mobile library for each of the three new regional libraries by MCA-Namibia programme.







Need for conducive study facilities addressed with the new regional libraries and extension of community libraries



Change from manual to ICT based library management system



Site meeting January 2013: Ohangwena Regional Library. Namibia's first three regional libraries were constructed as part of a main stream development programme MCA-Namibia addressing poverty alleviation through economic growth. Representatives from MCA-Namibia, MCC Namibia Office, IREX Namibia project, the Nina Maritz Architects, Ohangwena Regional Education Directorate, Ohangwena Regional Council and Namibia Library and Archives Service.



## NAMIBIA LIBRARY SYMPOSIUM

### Strong Libraries, Strong Societies: the Role of Libraries in Socio-Economic Development *edited by Ritva Niskala, Ndahambelela Hertha Lukileni and Helen Mandl*

What is a strong library in an African context? How are libraries contributing to improving the fabric of society? How are librarians adapting and changing the services they offer? The first Namibia Library Symposium brought together speakers from across Africa and Europe to discuss these questions. In addition to acknowledging challenges and issues facing libraries in developing or transitioning nations, the speakers highlight the tremendous ability of libraries to change lives. Some of these changes may seem small but each crumb of knowledge can empower individuals and communities, providing opportunities for education, for employment, for establishing a small business and for encouragement. The capacity of libraries to contribute to social and economic growth and provide a strong foundation for a knowledge based society is emphasised in these papers that will inform and inspire the reader.

