

THE NEED AND USE OF COMMUNITY LIBRARY SERVICES IN NAMIBIA

Ritva Niskala

University of Tampere
Department of Information Studies
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ABSTRACT

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The overall aim of this study is to investigate the use of community libraries in Namibia. The study aims at finding solid data on the actual use of libraries, who needs them and what do they need them for. Main questions addressed in the study are as follows: (i) Who are the users of Namibian community libraries? (ii) For which purposes do people use the services provided by community libraries? (iii) In which ways do the users' demographic characteristics relate to the purposes of use? (iv) Which are the main usage patterns of the community libraries? (v) What are the needs for the development of the services of community libraries based on the suggestions and problems experienced by library users?

The study was carried out as a survey in three community libraries in North-Central Namibia. The libraries were chosen to represent community libraries in the previously disadvantaged regions to represent the majority of Namibian population and provide information on emerging user needs and usage patterns. The empirical data on demographic characteristics of all users and services used in those libraries was gathered during six days in October-November 2003. The data was analysed using frequencies of variables and their cross tabulation.

The working hypothesis of the study was that Namibian community libraries have changed from the pre-independence Anglo-American model of recreational and cultural institution and lending library mainly used for leisure reading and borrowing out fiction and hobby type of books, to a primarily educational institution. The hypothesis was clearly supported by the data on the users and usage patterns from the case libraries. Almost 70% of the users in the three case libraries were learners and students. Community library was mainly used as a learning place, to study and do school work in the library. The other main functions used by varied groups of the community were photocopy service and public ICT access. Although lending continued to be a way of using the library it was not the major function usage pattern. 64% of users did not borrow books and only 1.5% of clients used the library only for borrowing. The main usage pattern of the community library as a study place and the most popular resources: textbooks, photocopy service and public ICT access, were interpreted to respond to important educational and socio-economic needs of Namibian communities.

Keywords: community libraries, public libraries, user studies, Namibia

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BETD	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
CLS	Community Library Service (Ministry of Education, Namibia)
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ELCIN	Evangelic Lutheran Church in Namibia
EU	European Union
HIGCSE	Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
LIS	Library and information service
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
NLAS	Namibia Library and Archives Service
NOLNet	Namibian Open Learning Network
ODL	Open and distance learning
SAQMEC	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SCECSAL	Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations
TSA	Technikon South Africa
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNISA	University of South Africa
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the library and information service (LIS) sector research on library usage focuses on information needs and segmentation of library clientele. Exploratory basic studies on who uses the libraries and for what purposes are in general not considered relevant any more. However in the Namibian context this area has not been studied, but the discussions on the development of the library sector, especially community libraries circulate very much on the questions who uses the community libraries, who needs them, for whom should the collections and services be provided. These discussions have been related to the positioning of the library sector in the administrative government structures. It has been asked, for example, are libraries part of art and culture or part of the education sector? There have also been discussion about motivations for funding the community library network and lately positioning of libraries in the education sector ICT programme. Internal discussion about the selection and acquisition policies have also focussed on the question of who actually uses the libraries and for what purposes would the limited acquisition resources be used for. In this context a concentrated survey to identify the actual library users and purposes of community library usage seemed to provide very relevant information.

One of the key aims of this study was to clarify the question of the actual usage patterns of the Namibian community libraries. The traditional concept prevailing in Namibia is clearly a lending library associated very much with the idea of library as a reading institution for leisure reading. Historically and in reality even today this perceptions features in the selection and acquisition policy on the importance of fiction. The emerging concept that can be observed in the libraries in the previously disadvantaged areas is the community library as a study institution and physical study place.

As background for the Namibian community library sector the vast literature of evaluating the library sector in African countries is briefly reviewed from the point of view of functions of the community library sector in Chapter two. It provides analysis of conceptual framework in which the community library systems function in African countries. Main aspects of Namibian socio-economic and educational reality and development challenges are also briefly described as background for interpreting results of the study. The study itself describes usage of Namibian community libraries based on empirical data collected in three community libraries in North-Central Namibia during six days in October-November 2003. The empirical research setting will

be specified in Chapter 4. The respondents were recruited among all library visitors during those six days. The analysis of the empirical data focussed on identifying the users and the purposes of library use. In a more general sense it was believed that these three libraries represent very well the contemporary usage of community libraries in Namibia at least in previously disadvantaged regions and communities – which would mean usage patterns of the majority of Namibian communities. Chapter five reports the findings of the empirical study. Chapter 5.1. describes the demographic characteristics, gender, age, socio-economic status and educational level of the library users. Chapter 5.2. analyses the purposes of library use. User needs based on suggestions provided by the users are described in chapter 5.3. This chapter also discusses an issue that has caused controversy in the Namibian library sector, that is, whether textbooks belong to the community library? This issue is approached by analysing the usage of a collection of textbooks that was provided to these libraries through the NOLNet project that was coming to an end. Chapter 5.4. concludes the empirical study by discussing the main library usage patterns, user needs and relevance of the community libraries in Namibia.

It should be noted here that the concept used for public libraries in Namibia is *community library*. Therefore, this particular concept will be used in the present study while referring to the public library sector. However when reviewing research literature, the concept public library will be referred to as the main concept by taking into account that it is the major concept used in literature.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. BRIEF REVIEW ON PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Many texts analysing and reviewing the development and present situation of public libraries in Africa have been published since the beginning of 1990's. It seems relevant to review briefly the main conclusion of these studies as a background to the Namibian library sector, especially as background to the discussion on how the purpose of the community library is defined and executed in a society in which public resources are very limited.

I have chosen two books as my main sources. Both of them review the published material on African libraries during 1990's when the discussion and analysis by Africa's own library practitioners was very vivid. Paul Sturges and Richard Neill's "The Quiet Struggle"(1998) is based on extensive literature review as well as the authors' combined experience in different African countries as well as a lecturer and head of department at the University of Botswana, Department for Library and Information studies. The other study, "Public libraries in Africa", by Aissa Issak (2000) is a comprehensive annotated bibliography including country reports from nine African countries. It is a study commissioned by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) and carried out as part of her M.Sc. at the University of Sheffield. She worked as the director of the Library of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique. Both these studies concentrate on the so called Anglophone African countries which is quite valid from the point of this study. Although there is a clear German influence in the scientific library sector in Namibia, the Namibian public library system was developed during the time when Namibia was under South African rule and its roots are in the British and American library systems (Hooper 2000, 156).

It must be mentioned that there had been libraries before the colonial era at least in the Islamic African countries as well as in Ethiopia and historic Egypt. That early library history is however outside the scope of this work, because the current public library systems in Sub-Saharan African countries came about during the colonial era and after independence based on the already well defined European and American public library models.

Sturges and Neill (1998, 88) analyse the status and state of libraries including public libraries in Africa against the general information environment, cultural and economical reality in African

countries. Based on the extensive written materials and personal observations the main conclusion is that libraries provide an example of the persistence of the colonial heritage and illustrate how stultifying the effects of the dependent relationship between Africa and the Northern industrialized countries can be.

The current public library systems in African countries were established during the colonial era for the recreational use of the people from the colonial European powers. After independence the systems continued to be developed by expatriate librarians considered as necessary social and educational institutions for the new independent states. From the written accounts and memories it can be seen that many of those expatriate librarians expressed a clear perception of the problems of establishing libraries in developing countries. They clearly had the intention of developing systems and services that would be properly integrated with the social and political circumstances of their host communities. Many of them were not only aware of the need to tailor library systems to the characteristics and aspirations of a newly independent Africa, but also recognised both the cultural diversity of the continent and the need to develop services that would accommodate the shifting patterns of a transitional era. However what actually emerged from the early days were systems which directly reflected practice in the metropolitan countries. (Sturges & Neill 1998, 89-92.)

In the 1980's and 1990's discussion on public libraries, the serious problem expressed by many African LIS sector researchers and practitioners was that the public library systems in African countries were clearly deteriorated. The point of view was not to say that the African countries should not support and maintain public library system but that there was something wrong in the way the systems were built and functioning. Public library system or a similar social institution was considered necessary and the analyses were concerned on what went wrong or how to change or recreate the system to serve the communities in the diverse cultural and economical realities of African countries. There were very strong views that the public library system as it exists is unsuitable to African countries. From those points of view, however, library and information services are needed, but implementation needs to be planned based on African political, socio-economic and cultural realities. (Issak 2000, 12; Mchombu 1991; Sturges and Neill 1998, 128-136; 146-149.) Experiments on appropriate models have been carried out but implementation of an African public library and information service system model on a large scale has not been established (See Sturges & Neill 1998, 179-221; Mostert, 2001, 7).

According to Sturges & Neill (1998, 89-91) the failure to carry out the ideals of creating systems relevant to the existing reality can mainly be explained by lack of any philosophical debate of actual alternatives in the library philosophy and practices in Europe and USA that time. Since library development in African countries in the early days was about establishing the whole system of public library services this stagnation of the Anglo-American library tradition was highly significant. The mission in Africa was carried based on pragmatism on certain necessary procedures and professional systems which were prevalent in both British and American library professions.

Based on the financial support from international organizations and acceptance of the newly independent governments many countries after the independence witnessed a remarkable quantitative expansion of the library services. Most of the effort then was concerned with the establishment of structures and creation of patterns of bureaucracy and establishment of formal professionally acknowledged processing and reference tools and procedures. It seems as though there had not been time available to discuss or study Africa's or particular countries' There does not seem to have been the time available to discuss or study Africa's or particular countries' own information needs and appropriate ways of meeting them. (Sturges & Neill 1998, 90-93; Mchombu 1991)

The public library concept has in fact been defined as an alien implant based on the way it was exported and developed in Africa without reference to the African economical, social and cultural reality (Sturges and Neill 1998, 88-115) The strong cultural reason frequently stated is the strength and importance of oral culture in opposition to the reading culture based library concept. The library system was also interpreted as part of colonial indoctrination, as a tool to rule through changing the mind sets and culture of peoples – that is why it by definition cannot function in the reality of independent African countries. This viewpoint either sees the whole system as irrelevant – or as Sturges & Neill (1998, 137) state that the concept and practical establishments, training and procedures have to be re-planned starting from the analysis of local socio-economic, cultural and linguistic reality as well as real information needs and appropriate means to respond to them. Kingo Mchombu, from Tanzania, later a scholar in Botswana and Namibia, brought the issues of poverty to the discussion as a key factor for plans to change and develop library models suitable for Africa (Mchombu, 1982). According to him the economical situation should be taken as a starting point and based on that plan what kind of system and procedures and staff solutions are sustainable and still beneficial to the communities.

From the point of view of this study the criticism is relevant to be looked at as far as it refers to responding to users needs. Discussion on structures and library procedures is out of scope of this study. The practical approaches to bring about an African library model from the user needs point of view have been on the other hand information needs studies (Mchombu, 1993) and on the other hand experiments on alternative information centres or networks. Many of the experiments on alternative feasible models have brought positive results in relation to user figures and documented positive feedback from users e.g. Zimbabwean Rural Libraries and Resources Development project, Bulawayo Home Library project, and Kenya Camel libraries (Chisveto, 2000, 196-198; Sturges and Neill 1998, 184-188). However the sustainability is again a problem: they seem to function only with outside financial support. They do show that some kind of information service system in fact would be used – however to function in a level that responds to user needs requires considerable continuous funding – and they do not seem to manage to get institutionalised without outside funding. Is a library system as such too expensive for African countries? The solutions have also been sought from practical fund raising activities, services that can be charged and thus create self-sustainability. Fund raising has raised quite an interest including publications that report success – however it appears clearly it has not raised to a general institutional level – success is reported on case by case and it appears clearly and is stated openly that is very dependant on the skills and commitment of individual people. (Atuti et al., 2003, Chisveto 2000, 194-195.)

ICT development has brought a new aspect to the discussion seeing libraries as more relevant information centres through public access to information, up to the level of contributing to national electronic information management and creation of national online content. However practical applications do not feature strongly in the African library networks – rather different kinds of telecentres and community information centres are emerging in African countries without any connection to the library network.

According to Sturges & Neill (1998, 113-114) the dependency on Anglo-American values continues to retard the re-evaluation and development of library and other information systems in African countries. The imported attitudes and preconceptions of librarianship which dominate in Africa at present both permit and encourage the ways in which this dependency manifests itself. Economic constraints are worsened by this dependency that limits options for breaking out of the poverty. This psychological dependency which is nurtured by modes of thought and philosophies

developed in other parts of the world, where both information needs and resources to meet them are quite different, guides the decision making and planning on such matters as library buildings, acquisition of materials, procedures like classification and cataloguing as well as education of library professionals.

According to the review on the literature on public libraries in African countries in Issak's (2000) study by the end 1998 the public libraries in the most African countries, except for Botswana and South Africa, were in a stagnated and deteriorated situation mainly because of financial constraints. The detailed country reports covered the following countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana and South Africa. In many countries funds had for years only been available for salaries. Libraries relied totally on donated and thus mostly irrelevant materials. Requests from users for books that they actually needed could not be met as the library system did not have funds for acquisitions. Locally published materials were totally absent from the public library collections. Salaries were low and most libraries were run by staff that did not have professional training or only had a practical certificate or diploma level training. Physical infrastructures had deteriorated with leaking roofs and broken furniture and funds could be acquired for renovations. (Issak 2000, 5-11, 119-199).

The picture provided by the above mentioned country reports is supported by Sturges and Neill (1998, 92-93), who also analyse the reasons, responses and solution efforts. According to them governments and decision makers in most African countries have lost any initial enthusiasm they had for libraries. Thus libraries have deteriorated to a non-functional level because of lack of basic government support including lack of funding. At the same time libraries have failed in their call to have population use the libraries. The way this situation has been confronted by the library profession has been different types of marketing efforts and programmes to convince the decision makers of the importance of libraries and to convince the public to use the libraries. "This faith of the power of reason more or less unsupported by evidence has been of little avail. The reality is that after more than three decades of independence libraries are at best tolerated by governments and are placed low on any national list of priorities." To the majority of adult Africans the libraries have appeared to have very little to offer. The response by the library professionals has been the conclusion that more effort is needed to persuade the public that libraries can help them. "Anyone involved with marketing could tell them that you do not just persist in pushing an unpopular product at the consumer, you find out what the consumers really wants and offer them that. This was not however a message that was heard very often".

Studies on information needs and information seeking patterns of rural population and specific socio-economic groups especially small entrepreneurs in Africa countries have provided new information to challenge the public library systems. Results have identified critical every day information needs related to health, agricultural practices, income generation, education and government procedures. From the point of view of the library services the main result has been that libraries do not actually respond to these information needs and are very little if at all used for looking for information. The book and printed material based model of libraries does not tackle practical problems that people and communities face in their every day life. Neither are people used to using written information – information is searched for and communicated verbally. (Aboyade, 1984; Mchombu 1993; Mchombu 2007). In relation to indigenous knowledge, contributing to collecting, preservation and dissemination of local indigenous knowledge has been identified as a relevant but normally not addressed task for the library sector. The SCECSAL¹ conference of 2002 in South Africa had as its theme indigenous knowledge systems and conference papers discussed widely methodologies and knowledge management applications for gathering, preserving and disseminating and securing legal rights in relation to indigenous knowledge (SCECSAL 2002). In relation to community libraries verbally communicated information is not part of the established public library model and thus the application of this idea to develop a genuinely local information centre especially in rural areas does not seem to have not become part of the community library systems. Findings in these two areas of African oral culture seem to correspond with the argument that the public library institution has not been able to adjust to the local information environment.

Sturges and Neill (1998) conclude their analysis of literature and practical experiences in the field on public library systems in African countries by presenting the need and principles for a new paradigm for information services which are locally rooted, precisely targeted at real and potential local information users and based on financial realism. It is left open what it would mean in each country or community. The main argument of necessity for a strong relevance to the society and to the users in the local cultural and socio-economic reality as the only guarantee for sustainability provides a tool for further considerations. It also provides one tool for considerations about the results of this study.

¹ Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations

2.2. NAMIBIAN SOCIETY AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

Namibia's national development plan Vision 2030 sets a very ambitious target for Namibia becoming one of the high income countries and affording all its citizens a quality of life that is comparable to that of the developed world by 2030. With emphasis on enhanced quality of life for all, Vision 2030 calls for rapid economic growth accompanied by equitable social development, technological advancement and highly skilled labour force. (Office of the President 2004.) Currently Namibia is rated to be a lower-middle income country. However income inequalities are among the highest in the world, demonstrated by 0.6 GINI coefficient level. Only 10% of the households with the highest income account for nearly half of the total income, whereas 90% stand for the other half. 25% of the households with the lowest income account for only 6% of total income. Close to 30% of Namibian households live on subsistence agriculture, 46% on salaries, 7% on business, 1% on commercial farming and close to 10% on pension income. In North-Central Namibia, where the case libraries of the study are located, close to 60% of households live on subsistence farming (in Omusati 80%), 21% on salaries, 4% on business and 10% on pension income. (National Planning Commission 2006, 17, 40-41.) Differences in everyday life conditions and problems of rural poverty can also be described by the fact that 61% of households continue to collect firewood for cooking. Only 25% have access and can afford electricity. In the North-Central regions 84% of households rely on firewood for cooking. (National Planning Commission 2003, 55.)

Namibian national economy is based on raw materials from the mining sector, commercial agriculture concentrating on livestock production due to generally dry climate, commerce, tourism and fisheries. Public sector is one of the largest employers. The main problems the country is facing are related to very weak manufacturing sector, high unemployment, rural poverty and regional socio-economic inequalities. Namibia's labour market is characterised by persistently high levels of unemployment and inequity. Independent Namibia inherited a highly segmented labour market where every defined ethnic group had substantially different access to employment and wages. A major underlying factor for the inequality was unequal access and deeply uneven quality of education. The apartheid based education system produced on the one hand a large army of unskilled and unemployed persons, and considerable skills shortages on the other hand. Unemployment is currently calculated between 20-34% depending of the strict or broad definition of whether the person is considered actively looking for employment. It is especially high among young people, up to 40%. In relation to the targets of Vision 2030 one of

the key impediments to productivity in Namibia is the shortage of skilled workers of various levels and types. Namibia receives low international competitiveness ratings because of its inability to meet firms' demands for skilled labour, the low absorptive capacity for existing technology at the firm level and low investment in research and development. (Westergaard-Nielsen 2003, 8-10.)

According to the 2001 National Population and Housing Census Namibia's total population is 1,8 million. Population is unevenly distributed over a vast territory of 843 000 km² with highest population density in the rural areas of the northern part of the country. Urbanisation is increasing and especially young people are migrating to Windhoek in search of employment and study opportunities. About 40% of the urban population live in Windhoek. However 67% of the population continue to live in rural areas. Children and young people form majority of the population: about 40% of the whole population is aged 15 and younger. Only about 7% is aged 60 and above. (National Planning Commission 2003, 19-24.)

The quality and performance of the Namibian education system has been evaluated to be alarmingly low. During 1999-2006 less than 50% percent of the learners at grade 10 achieved examination results that qualified them to be admitted to Grade 11 (Ministry of Education 1999-2006). At the final secondary school examinations in 1999-2007 only 12-26% of learners obtained results that would qualify them to continue their studies at the Namibian higher education institution, University and Polytechnic. The proportion in 2007 was 19%. (Maletsky 2000-2008.)

One of the reasons for the low learning outcomes is lack of textbooks. Because of limited financial resources schools in the disadvantaged regions and suburbs like Katutura in Windhoek cannot provide the required textbooks for learners. Textbooks are also normally shared and cannot be taken out of school to study and prepare for examinations. Experience in studying without books and lack of funds creates a culture that continues in further studies with students continuing to study only their lecture notes without books. Level of English language skills also continues to be a problem. Like in most African countries an European language, English in Namibia, is the official language, while the mother tongue and home languages of majority of the population are indigenous Namibian languages. English is the official language since independence (1990) and the medium of instruction in schools, but the education system has not

achieved capacity to ensure mastering the language. Students may graduate from the University of Namibia (UNAM) without the level of English language that the labour market would require.

Namibia has a high literacy rate, since 81% of both female and male population can read and write. However in the rural areas illiteracy rate is close to 25%. Enrolment in primary education covers almost the whole age group at the level of 89%, but secondary education enrolment is below 50%. According to latest census only 2% of Namibians had achieved University level education. (National Planning Commission 2003, 34-35; Marope 2005, 25). In relation to literacy there seems to be problems in attaining functional literacy at the school system. Results obtained on the SAQMEC² 2000 assessment of performance in reading literacy and mathematics confirm that Namibian children achieve significantly below their peers in neighbouring countries. The findings from the IALS³ screen test showed that many children at grade six had alarmingly low levels of functional literacy. (Makuwa 2005)

Open and distance education is considered an important channel for studies in Namibia as a functional and affordable medium for redressing the inequalities inherited from the apartheid era and continuing because of economic inequalities. Open and distance learning (ODL) programmes offer a highly cost-effective means of meeting the educational needs of a country with a small population unevenly distributed over a vast territory. Since independence the ODL programmes funded by Namibian publicly funded institutions have expanded considerably. In addition, with the emerging access to ICT and Internet connectivity, possibilities for using of South African and international distance education opportunities have been improving. In 1998 over 8300 student were enrolled for ODL programmes with higher education institutions in Namibia and South Africa, representing over half all Namibians studying at tertiary level (NoLNet 2002, 1-2). In addition the out-of-school option for secondary school education offered by Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) enrolls more that 20 000 learners annually. 32 400 adults and young people studied through NAMCOL in 2002 (Marope 2005, 24).

The main constraints that especially Namibian tertiary level distance students are facing are lack of access to computers and internet and the availability and cost of textbooks. Textbooks have to be ordered from Windhoek or from the educational institution itself and are very expensive for the Namibian economic realities. The importance of online access and electronic resources has been felt also in the library sector with many of the library assistance, who have been financially

² Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

³ International Adult Literacy Survey

supported by NLAS⁴ to study for professional qualifications through distance studies, ending up looking for opportunities to move to Windhoek to have access to computers and internet to enable them to actually carry out their studies.

2.3. NAMIBIAN COMMUNITY LIBRARY NETWORK

Namibia has a publicly funded network of community libraries. The administration and funding of the community libraries is based on the Namibia Library and Information Service Act (2000). In 2003 there were 53 community libraries throughout the country. 46 of them were under the administration of Ministry of Education Directorate Namibia Library and Archives Service, one was part of the Municipality of Walvis Bay, one funded and maintained independently by the Evangelic Luther Church (ELCIN), one by a mining company and four by an NGO, Rössing Foundation. By the end of 2007 the network consisted of 59 community libraries, 54 of them under the administration of NLAS including the ELCIN library and one of the Rössing libraries, which had become part of the government administrated community library network. The network is however still quite unevenly distributed as a heritage of the apartheid era during the South African administration until the independence in 1990. Under the South African administration, based on the apartheid system, library services functioned according to racial segregation and in fact libraries were only provided for the white population. In the large northern part of Namibia where 70% of the population lived in the so called communal areas reserved for indigenous black population there was only one public library, the one maintained by ELCIN in Oniipa. During the first 13 years on independence the NLAS administrated community library network grew from 22 to 46 libraries, more than doubling the number of libraries. The libraries where this survey was carried out belong to the new libraries established after independence to the Northern part of Namibia.

This study focuses on the government maintained community library network. Administratively the community library network functions under the Namibia Library and Archives Services (NLAS), which is a directorate of the Ministry of Education (MoE). Public funding for of the community library network is based on the Library and Information Service Act (Act 4 of 2000). The general policy of decentralization to the regional and local administration applies to the community library staff and library buildings. The country is divided into 13 administrative regions and the regional offices of the Ministry of Education are responsible for providing

⁴ Namibia Library and Archives Service

physical facilities for libraries, for having the posts for the staff in their staffing structure and for taking care of filling the posts and administrating the staff. Costs of daily running of the libraries like stationary (except for specialised library stationary), utilities like electricity and other maintenance costs also fall under regional budgets. Selection, acquisition and processing of books, newspapers, journals and other information materials is administrated centrally by the Community Library Service Division (CLS) of NLAS. CLS functions as a central professional unit to provide for in-service-training, acquisition and processing of library collections for the community library network. In 2008 the newspapers and magazine subscriptions were decentralised because of distribution problems with centralised subscriptions. Book acquisition and processing remained centralised.

Staff working and providing services at the community libraries are library assistants, entry requisition is certificate of the secondary education and no professional training is required. In 2003 when the survey was carried out, 45 of the 46 community libraries under NLAS were staffed only by library assistants. Professional administration at the regional level is planned to be provided by regional librarians. In 2003 the MoE regional offices had one or two posts for a professional librarian, but 90 % of those posts were vacant, because of lack of professionally qualified librarians. The requirement for these posts is Bachelor's degree in information studies. The few Namibian professionals of this sector work mostly in higher paying posts in the University, private and parastatal institutions. Before independence professional training was acquired through South African universities and in a few cases in Europe and USA. The University of Namibia however now has a degree programme for librarians and the first graduates acquired their degrees in 2004 and 2005. The principle of a much centralised library administration has been motivated by the lack of professional posts at the regional level, lack of LIS professionals and lack of commercial book trading outside the capital. There are still bookshops only in four major towns Windhoek, Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, and Oshakati. As part of the overall public sector decentralization policy framework Ministry of Education structure was revised in 2006 and now all regions have at least posts for one senior level librarian and one entry level librarian in their structure. That however means only four to six professional posts for the entire community and school library network in each region. In almost all regions two of these professional posts had been secured by budget allocations in 2007.

The Namibian community library network was built under the South African administration as an exclusive institution for the white minority. Although libraries were opened to the whole

population already before independence many other aspects of the pre-independence Anglo-American based public library model continue. Most prominent is the strong tradition of a lending library demonstrated in many aspects of the current reality of the library network. The statistics collected reflect only lending consisting of membership and circulations figures.

The perception of a lending library can also be clearly seen in the library architecture. Before independence community libraries were clearly built and used as lending libraries. Library users came to borrow and return books, which they read at home. Physical space consisted mainly of shelves and library counter. A few chairs and a reading table was available for reading newspapers and magazines, but not for users spending time using the library as a study and reading place. This tradition has prevailed after independence as can be seen in the Katima Mulilo library, purposefully planned based on the functional model and instructions provided by the Community Library Service. When the library was ready and inaugurated in 2002 it consisted of a library hall full of shelves, shelves for adult literature, youth literature and reference. A children's corner and newspaper and magazine reading area were part of the plan, as well as a working room, an office and a storeroom, but there was very little space for tables and chairs for library users to sit and study and read in the library. Tables and chairs for the little space that was available around the shelves were not included in the construction budget and thus not part of the library when it opened. The same perception of a lending library can be seen in the budget allocations: funds allocated for library furniture mean providing new community libraries with a card catalogue box and a trolley for shelving. There is no allocation for study tables and chairs. When purposefully built, the library building plan and budget include shelves and counter but not study tables and chairs for users, as could again be seen in the Rundu community library building inaugurated in 2005.

The emerging new usage pattern which can be observed in the libraries in the previously disadvantaged areas is the community library as a study institution and physical study place. For instance in Katutura in Windhoek one can see fully backed libraries with young people sitting and studying in the library. From this point of view especially many of the staff members from these libraries view user needs as concentrating on textbooks and other study materials and space, tables and chairs in the library to use it as a study place. However this perception continues to be challenged within the LIS sector discussions on acquisition policy principles and priorities referring to internationally acknowledged perceptions of community library as a layman's

recreational and reference institution, not gathering for textbooks and especially not for university level books.

The Namibian Open Learning Network, a Trust established to promote open and distance education and e-learning in Namibia, supported the community library network quite extensively during 2001-2003. NOLNet started as a joint project between NAMCOL, UNAM, NIED and the Polytechnic of Namibia, supported by the two education sector ministries, Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) and Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation (MHETEC), now one Ministry, the Ministry of Education (MoE). NOLNet continues to exist as a national Trust with the same mandate.

One of the main purposes of initial NOLNet project, financially supported by the EU, was to promote and support open and distance learning through provision of prescribed textbooks and other educational materials to a network of centres throughout Namibia. The selected libraries and resource centres were to be developed to function as open learning centres. The centres identified to receive support were community libraries, teacher resource centres and University of Namibia (UNAM) Regional Outreach Centres. They were 47 centres all together, 28 of them community libraries. The centres were divided into two categories. The main difference was that only one centre in each region was provided with public ICT access equipment, subsidised internet connection and tertiary level textbooks. All centres were provided with secondary level textbooks, full sets and several copies for almost all grade 10-12 subjects, photocopier, fax machine, TV/VCR and radio/CD/cassette player. To also gather for relevant self-study materials to support distance learning, book collection was supplemented with educational videos, examination preparation CD-ROMs for grade 10-12 subjects and English and Afrikaans languages cassettes to prepare for grade 10 and 12 examination's listening tests. Each centre was expected to have full time professional staff to assist in locating the information the students required and comfortable, quiet, and well lit study area. In relation to staffing the project relied on existing staff, thus supporting existing libraries and resource centres by improving their facilities. In relation to study area NOLNet assisted financially in providing tables and chairs especially to community libraries, which mostly did not have furniture for sitting and studying in the library.

2.4. THE CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY LIBRARY

The main role of public library is to serve the whole community as an information provider and local archive, a meeting point for leisure, learning and entertainment, where people can socialise in safe environment, (Usherwood & Linley, 1998). Such services, give the public library uniqueness among other various information provider institutions. In terms of the impact that public libraries have in the community, Usherwood & Linley (1998), conclude that, libraries can develop social cohesion and help to build individual's confidence in playing a social role. On the other hand, public libraries have been seen as the important sources of information for training, awareness and career progression and especially in the developing countries as information providers for coping with new developments in the society.

According to the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) the services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific materials must be provided for those users who cannot for whatever reasons use the regular service and materials for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospitals or prison. All age groups must find materials, which are relevant to their needs. The library collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Materials must reflect current trends and evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.

In the African and South African LIS literature the community library concept refers to a different type of public library on two aspects that can be combined or separate. Firstly it may mean a library that is established and run at least partly by the community itself. It relies on community participation and normally means libraries in poor and disadvantaged rural and urban settings. Often it is also run totally without public funding. Secondly community library concept has been used to mean a library that in its functions, services and collection responds to the needs on the critical community information needs especially in rural and non-literate communities. In that sense the concept is related to information needs studies. The concept clearly relates to criticism towards public library institution emphasizing the need especially in African countries to see disadvantaged sectors of the community as a new or even main target group of the community library – including especially the illiterate and newly literate people. According to

this approach public libraries and librarians must redefine their roles and create new services, which can have a dynamic nature in serving disadvantaged communities, especially in developing countries, where these communities do not have access to sources of information because of their high levels of poverty and illiteracy. Public libraries should play an important part in helping all disadvantaged communities to raise the quality of their lives. According to this approach public libraries need to move away from the traditional library-oriented approach, which at present serves only a formally educated community of users – towards information needs analysis and new type of services to provide information to the majority of the population. The priorities of the library services and collections need to be based on the identification of the information needs of the users, especially those coming from disadvantaged communities. In part of the literature the emphasis is changing the way public libraries function, in part of the literature this type of approach means changing to a different type of library with the concept community library. (Raseroka 1994; Alemna 1995; Stillwell 1997; Mostert 1999.)

The concept used in Namibia after independence is community library. Before independence the term for the same libraries was public library. I have not managed to identify any official documentation on the reasons for the changing of the concept. What is clear is that when after independence (1990) the NLAS administration focused on developing Namibian legislation and policy documents to secure the continuation and maintenance of this sector in the country the public library concept was replaced with the community library concept. Ms Namhila, director of NLAS, 1999-2007, confirmed that the reason for the NLAS administration to change the concept after independence had been to break away from the reality of the past when public libraries were meant only for the white population. Community library concept reflected the change of exclusive institution to a library network for the whole population. It was meant to change the impression of what the library is in people's minds including decision makers and politicians. As cultural background a young CLS librarian also explained that in Namibia nobody talks about "public" when referring to people in general, it is always community. Community is the population, the people of a village, town even the nation. Thus the new concept reflects correctly an institution meant for the whole community through a culturally meaningful term.

Original written references on the definitions of the two concepts in the Namibian context can be found in professor Töttemeyer's (Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Namibia) survey on the state of the Namibian library sector carried out just before independence. The concept she used for the existing network and as a title of the report on this sector was public

library. In a few times she however used the double concept public/community library and without actually defining the concepts referred to the concept of community library as meaning a library that reaches to serve the whole community. She states that although there was one library that called itself “community library”, most of the Namibian public libraries in the time of the survey, 1989, were serving “the more educated members“ of the society and their children and very few were making any efforts to reach the broader community. Because of that it had been decided in the report to use the concept public libraries and not public/community libraries (Töttemeyer, 1991, 7). The change of concept happened after that and in the library and information service sector policy framework paper approved by Cabinet in 1997, community libraries is the only and official concept used, public libraries is not mentioned. (Information 1997)

The Namibian library sector policy framework defines community libraries as institutions serving all Namibians through user-friendly provision of information and through promotion of reading culture. They are committed to serve as

- community learning centres, focussing particularly to the promotion of literacy and information awareness and the support of lifelong learning;
- centres for the promotion of, and participation in, living culture;
- centres for dissemination of information in all fields, with particular emphasis on information needed for participation in democratic decision-making and for the successful implementation of national development plans; and
- centres for recreational reading

(Information 1997, 25-26.)

Thus in Namibia the definition provided by the policy document to the community library concept seems to correspond with the definition of a public library. The concept community library is not used in the sense of a library focussed on disadvantaged communities but as a general concept for a library network meant for the whole population as a life-long learning, information and recreational reading centre.

3. COMMUNITY LIBRARY USER STUDIES

General factors identified in the literature on public library users can be summarised as follows:

1. Public libraries are used mainly by educated and relatively well off section of the society
2. Users are a minority of population,
3. Library use concentrates in a relatively small group of frequent library users and to well educated part of the population
4. Distance to the library is a very strong determinant in library use

It was not easy to find relevant literature to illustrate general factors identified in public usage as background to this survey. However Smith's (1999, 303-314) article on public library usage proved relevant in illustrating general findings on public library usage over a long period of time. It summarises the results of public library user surveys in Britain over 50 years. For this study it provides basic material to compare the findings of the Namibian library usage survey to European and especially British public libraries. Namibian public library system is based on Anglo-American model and thus the materials from Britain seem very relevant. The article examines the extent and type of library use and the social and demographic factors influencing use. According to Smith public library use has basically remained constant in Britain during the 50 years surveyed. Public libraries were principally used as a leisure time activity institution and main type of usage was borrowing books and other materials. 70-90 % of users used library to borrow books and other materials like music. Only 10 % of clients used the library totally for other purposes than borrowing. In relation to stated principles of libraries as information centres the survey results on usage did not support this perception. Library was not prominently used as information/knowledge institution but as stated above as part of leisure time activities. In relation to users the educational level had a strong correlation to library use. Library users were in general young, from the middle class and well educated. According to Smith the originally expressed goal of the library institution supporting low income and least educated portion of population through self-study opportunities had also not materialised. This section of the population used the library very little.

An interesting case study which investigated many socio-economic factors related to library use was carried out by Yilmaz (1998) on public library use in Ankara, capital of Turkey. The aim was to determine the level of public library use and identify the factors affecting the use. The demographic factors used were age, gender, marital status, educational level, occupation, income

level and geographic past. The study is of interest for this study because it was carried out in a large city in a developing country socio-economic reality of problems of poverty, unemployment, large economic and educational inequalities including low literacy levels of the poorer part of population.

Main results of library usage in Ankara can be summarised as follows (Yilmaz, 1998). Majority of the population had never used public libraries. Majority of the public library users were children and young people using the library for educational purposes. The strongest relationship between the use of public libraries and socio-economic characteristics was level of education. When educational level increased, the usage also increased. Public library use also showed some relation to socio-economic status: measured through different socio-economic areas in town areas of low socio-economic conditions had the lowest usage. On the other hand in the highest socio-economic classes the usage was also observed to be very low, probably because of economic conditions that provide for purchasing books instead of using the library. In relation to occupation the highest usage was observed among unemployed and then students and manager level occupations. High usage of unemployed people was explained based on it that the majority was high school graduates preparing for central university exam – thus study related usage. Manager level usage was explained to have a positive correlation in the level of education factor – thus to the high usage in fact correlated with higher level of education.

In Yilmaz's (1998) study geographical and cultural background interpreted as whether or not the person experienced library system and literate community when child/young was one of the variables studied and found to be a significant factor for future library use. There was a considerable difference in library usage between people having lived their childhood in town with access to libraries and in rural areas where there were no libraries, independent of other factors. This result relates to the Namibian history in library usage: In Namibia the majority of population did not have any access to libraries before independence (1990). Based on Yilmaz's findings most probably library use would not be part of the cultural and social reality of the majority of Namibian households neither part of every day life of key professionals like teachers.

3.1. COMMUNITY LIBRARY USE IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

It appears from the literature reviewed earlier on public libraries in African countries during 1980-1990's that in general the majority of the libraries in African countries were unable to satisfy the recreational and information needs of the communities they serve. They seemed to offer little in the reality of the majority of people and were often perceived as foreign institutions, "aloof, inaccessible, expensive, alienating". (Sturges & Neill 1998, 135.) According to Sturges & Neill's review to the majority of adult Africans the libraries have appeared to have very little to offer. (p. 92). There were however exceptions: several libraries in South Africa and the Bulawayo Public library in Zimbabwe are cited – and the reason suggested for their success are "a sophisticated and demanding community" and "an energetic and innovatory managements style" (Sturges & Neill 1998, 147).

A classical study on a library to provide for information needs of non-literates and rural population was carried out in Nigeria in the beginning of 1980's (Aboyade 1984). Although long time ago it seems quite relevant in relation to studies on rural information needs in African countries. It was a pilot project carried out by a team from the Department of Library Studies, University of Ibadan. The key result was that the new information service point was used by the rural population. However it was a short term pilot project based on very special conditions and services developed and provided by a university level researcher team. A library building was set up and provided with newspapers, magazines, a radio, cassette recordings, posters, information pamphlets and Nigerian fiction and comics. Most materials were provided in the local language (Yoruba) and literature concentrated in local Nigerian short stories, plays and poetry in Yoruba. Cassettes provided well known Yoruba plays and novels as well as informative radio talks on agriculture and health issues. The researchers worked in close cooperation with the population seeking actively to find out the information needs and interests of the population and respond to them. They worked from the capital on weekly visit basis and provided efficiently and fast the required information. Information service was based on their personal knowledge, contacts to specialist when back in the capital and interpretation of the pamphlets provided in the library. There were also regular reading sessions on both newspapers and Nigerian fiction including translations from English language materials.

The major findings concerning the usage were as follows (Aboyade 1984, 246; 250-253):

- Usage was much higher among men than women, 78 % of the users having been male.

- Literacy level of the population was very low: 88% of population was considered non-literate. In the library use there was however no difference between usage in relation to literacy. 72% of clients were recorded for having been non-literate. The combination of library clients shows that the pilot project succeeded in providing library service that provided as well for literate and non-literate people. The main aspect in this approach were that library users did not need reading skills as the information service was conveyed by researchers and the radio and reading sessions for the use of written materials
- Usage concentrated in the adult population, people of the age of 21-50 years formed 82 % of users. Usage by young people was very low 3.8% for ages 16-20 years, non younger than that. This was explained by the factor that the service was not planned for young people. The aim of the pilot project was to attract the adult population who was largely non-literate – and that is what was achieved. It was also indicated by the study that the population structure in that village like in general in rural areas in Nigeria lacked 11-30 year old population who had left the village to search for study opportunities and work. The village only had a primary school, and those who wished to go further had to go elsewhere.
- Services that proved to be needed and popular: Responding to information needs to solve some of the problems of the people – to the point referral service communicated orally. Reading sessions and cassettes created a wide interest to fictional materials stories, plays and novels listened in groups at the library. Communication channel between the village population and authorities on daily problems and development issues. The library also became a discussion and meeting place in the village.

In this pilot project the educational level was not a factor affecting library usage in opposition to results of library user studies in general. Most users were non-literates and even the educational level of most of the other users was not beyond primary school level.

There are many studies about rural information needs in African countries. This study provides an example of a practical model and clear success in responding to these needs as well as success in the library serving the information needs of non-literates. It also provides an example of a library as an information centre. However the key factor of success seemed to be the research project nature of the set-up: researchers had the knowledge and resources to provide for to the point information and adjust all services according to the user population's interests and daily life needs on a short term basis. The model needs rather high educational level of the library staff as

well as financial means to use outside information resources, which does not seem to be the situation in the library sector in African libraries. However it clearly has valuable ideas that could be taken into account in planning library services.

In general according to literature on African libraries the common role played by community libraries is not an information centre but a place to provide a quiet study and reading room for scholars and students. Users are students and school children who need places to study and do their homework. (Chijioke 1989, 175; Leach 1998, 13; Sturges & Neill 1998 146-148; Issak, 2000, 12; 112)

Historically most relevant references concerning Namibia come from South Africa. The public library system was developed during South-African occupation and under apartheid, the South African racial segregation policy. In South Africa during the apartheid regime until 1994 libraries basically belonged to the amenities reserved for the "Whites" in the racially segregated society. After access to public libraries started being allowed to the black population, students emerged as the quantitatively largest user group. (Hooper, 2000; Leach 1998, 13). Hooper (2000, 157) reports that when two large public libraries including the one in Johannesburg opened their use for the whole population in 1975, "the flood of users who responded – mainly school children and students – had to be accommodated initially on the floor, and later in specifically constructed study areas". The experience of these two libraries anticipated by twenty years what happened in the other public libraries after democratisation in 1994. According to the survey by Leach (1998, 3-19) on the situation of public libraries in South Africa in 1998 what was reported about users was that seven of the nine provincial library services affirmed that their user base had changed after 1994: User groups most frequently mentioned by respondents were "scholars", "students", "learners" "young African persons" and "black students". What also appeared was that user figures might have gone up with thousands – basically through students looking for study space. An interesting aspect from the point of view of this study is that the report mentions expressions of concerns from the library staff in relation to "maintain some balance between traditional and new clientele". The concern seems to refer to the concept or definition of the main aim of the public library, not as such to the aspect of accommodating increased number of users. Mostert (1999, 19-26) expresses the concern clearly based on the perception of the public library concept. As one of the recommendations for the development of the South African public and community library sector she states that "the perception persisting in developing communities that libraries are mainly study centres, must be changed through an active marketing campaign". The statement

delivered without further explanations seems to assume a LIS sector environment with a common correct perception of the public library to go back to from the incorrectly accepted study centre library.

The presence of large numbers of schoolchildren and college students doing their homework as the main library users has quite often been regarded as not actually fit to the concept or purpose of the public library by the LIS sector professionals from African countries. Chijioke (1989, 175) expressed the use of public libraries in Nigeria as follows: "The largest category of individuals visiting our libraries remains the private students seeking a quiet place to study their own textbooks with no interest in the stated purpose of the facilities." Sturges and Neill (1998, 148, 152-153) summarise the general observation of library users as well as attitude of the library professionals on this reality: "Public libraries simply find it hard to accept that in Africa they are and will be for some decades, institutions where the demand is from children, and where the response need to directed at children". Instances of responsive approaches can be found, but are extremely rare. Analysis of users of community libraries basically considered and set up for adults, show that overwhelming majority of actual patrons are school children: 70-90 per cent of users in such centres in countries as diverse as Botswana, Mali, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

3.2. COMMUNITY LIBRARY USERS IN NAMIBIA

In 1990 according to the baseline study reflecting the conditions of the Namibian public library network before independence, the then 26 public libraries were used by 4,5% percent of the population of the towns and villages where they existed. The figure of library users of the whole population was counted as 1,85%. At that time there was only one, church owned, public library outside the areas reserved for the white population, in northern part of Namibia, where 70% of population lived, because of the apartheid policy maintained by the South African administration. Libraries were used mainly for borrowing fiction and "hobby" type of informative literature like cooking, fishing and books on animals. The other usage area was primary and secondary school learners looking for materials to write school assignments. (Töttemeyer, 1991.)

The history of the public library institution as an institution basically built and maintained for the "white" population during the South African administration apartheid era from the point of view of this study provides an important factor for the consideration of public library use. In the

practical sense it means that the majority of the adult population of Namibia has never experienced libraries neither mostly used books except for books used in school and in church.

The problem of current library statistics is that they only provide for membership figures and circulation figures. Statistics on library members describe the number of people who pay the annual membership fee to be able to borrow books. A person does not need to be a member to use the library and its books in the premises. As can be seen in Table 3 both the community library membership and circulation figures have been declining during the last years.

Table 1: Namibian community library network: Annual membership and circulation statistics

Year	Number of community libraries	Registered members (Only for MoE/NLAS)	Change to previous year	Average per library	Circulation	Change to previous year	Average per library
2003/2004 ⁵	46 [+ 7 ⁶]	20 067		432	470 424		10 226
2004/2005	49 [+ 7]	19 602	- 465	400	388 356	- 82 068	7 926
2005/2006	50 [+ 7]	17 947	- 1 655	359	298 563	- 89 793	5 971

(Ministry of Education, Annual Report 2003-4, 2005-6)

Membership provides right to borrow books and is based on annual payment of the membership fee. It is not high but it is known, that not all library users are interested in lending and thus do not register as members. The 2005-6 annual report (Ministry of Education 2005-6, 33) stated, that in underprivileged areas, learners without any study space at home come to the library to study instead of taking books out. The falling numbers in membership and circulation indicate a shift in usage pattern rather than declining use of libraries. If this is the case, the aim of this study was to capture this type of library usage.

National Library collects daily statistics of its users. It is a very well resourced library in Windhoek and besides its traditional functions widely used by learners and students to study. As can be seen in Table 2 National Library statistics indicate relatively high usage.

⁵ Financial year, e.g., from March 2003 to April 2004

⁶ Seven libraries not administrated under NLAS and thus not part of the statistics: Walvis Bay Municipal Library, two Rössing Foundation public libraries in Windhoek and one in Swakopmund, and one in Arandis (one in WHK transferred to Ministry of Education/NLAS 2007), Oniipa Public Library administrated by the ELCIN church (transferred to Ministry of Education/NLAS 2007)

Table 2: National Library of Namibia: Number of annual library visits

Year	Users: Total number of visits per year	Change to previous year	Average number of users per day ⁷
2003/2004	32 247		130
2004/2005	37 133	+4886	150
2005/2006	44 543	+7410	180

(Ministry of Education, Annual Report 2003-4, 2005-6)

National Library daily usage figures can be used as an indication of the need and use of library services although of course in a large town. Table 2 also shows how the National Library user figures have increased year by year. Library has seating for 120 users, thus the usage has in fact grown over the original capacity. National Library does not lend out books, all this usage is in-house. It is possible that the same trend is in fact happening in the community libraries, only that statistics of in-house library use have not been collected.

⁷ Library open 8.00-17.00 Monday-Friday. 248 Working days (excluding 12 public holidays)

4. THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SETTING

4.1. RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the use of community libraries in Namibia. The study aims at finding hard data on the actual use of libraries, who needs them and what do they need them for.

One of the key aims of the present study is to clarify the question of actual usage patterns of the Namibian community libraries. The traditional concept is clearly a lending library associated very much with the idea of library as a reading institution for leisure reading. The emerging concept that can be observed in the libraries in the previously disadvantaged areas is the community library as a study institution and physical study place. The hypothesis based on observations in the community libraries and discussions with the staff in the formerly disadvantaged regions and areas of the country was that although the policies may not have changed in relation to planning of library buildings and acquisition still concentrating in the Anglo-American tradition of fiction and general non-fiction the reality in the libraries especially in the formerly disadvantaged communities might have changed towards the use of community libraries as a study institution. The study aims at investigating the real usage of libraries in relation to these perceptions.

To give background for the empirical survey, the study draws on literature on the public library institutions in African countries. There is large bulk of material written on the need and models of African community/public library emphasising that the public library should be different from the traditional European and American library concept and model. The analysis and assumptions on African public library sectors have been taken as background from the point of view relevant to usage and user needs. Another aspect that was taken into account in the planning of the study and the analysis of the data was the Namibian socio-economic reality and the challenges posed to the education sector.

The research problems were defined as follows:

- Who are the users of Namibian community libraries?
- For which purposes do people use the services provided by community libraries?
- In which ways do the users' demographic characteristics relate to the purposes of use?

- Which are the main usage patterns of the community libraries?
- What are the needs for the development of the services of community libraries based on the suggestions and problems experienced by library users?

The focus of this study is on the actual use of community libraries. The study will not collect information on potential users. It will however attempt to point out different types of needs of those who use the libraries and through that process also identify needs not yet or not well gathered for.

4.2. METHODOLOGY

Three libraries were chosen for case studies. The libraries were chosen from the “new” libraries established after independence or otherwise functioning in the regions and areas of formerly disadvantaged Namibians. This way the focus of the study is trying to reach the library user needs of the new library users and as such majority of the population. During the apartheid era 90% of the population was excluded from library services, thus the community library institution is in fact new for the majority of the population. The assumption is that focussing on libraries situated in the previously disadvantaged areas⁸ where there were no libraries before independence might bring up usage patterns and user needs which differ from the traditional European based public library concept. The result may as well be that the purposes to use an institution like a community library have remained the same. It is assumed that the usage in these three case libraries will present rather well present-day usage of Namibian community libraries, at least those in previously disadvantaged regions and areas.

The three case libraries were Eenhana and Outapi community libraries in the capitals of the Ohangwena and Omusati region respectively, and Okahao community library also in the Omusati region. According to the 2001 census the population of the four North-Central regions, Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana and Oshikoto sharing a very similar history and socio-economic conditions was 780 149, which represents 43% of the overall population of the country.

The second criterion in selecting the libraries for the survey was that they were part of the libraries supported with equipment and books by the NOLNet project during 2001-2003. The aim of the NOLNet project was to upgrade a regional network of libraries and resource centres to

⁸ Previously disadvantages regions, areas and suburbs: Areas and regions designated for black and other non-white population groups under the apartheid segregation policy. Areas were majority of the population lived.

support open and distance studies. Selecting libraries which had benefited from the NOLNet project provided a possibility to evaluate the usage of new services which had not been part of the community libraries before. The third criterion was simply my previous experiences and discussion with the staff of possible libraries that fulfilled the first two conditions. It was necessary to identify libraries in which staff was willing to contribute taking into account that they have heavy workload. It was also necessary to establish that they appreciate research in a way that would secure carrying out the survey in a thorough manner. The comprehensive return of questionnaires shows that this aim was achieved.

The first attempt of data collection for this study had been carried out in the previous year in six libraries. The problems found out at that time were taken into account in the planning of the present study. The main problem was that although there had been strong emphasis on the principle that everybody who comes to the library fills in the questionnaire during those days; the data collection method did not seem to work. In two libraries visited during the survey it could be seen that the questionnaires were available on the counter but the library staff did not interview users or present questionnaires to them. Some staff members explained that people were not used to filling in questionnaires and the library staff did not feel comfortable to persuade the clients to do so. Library assistants themselves did not have time to help in filling the questionnaires. The number of returned questionnaires at the end of the data collection showed undoubtedly that the data collection had not worked as planned and that the material was clearly not representative.

The actual data collection for the survey was then carried out in three libraries representing the previously disadvantaged regions, and also having staff motivated to contribute to carrying out the survey. More training was provided by the researcher in relation to the data collection technique. One staff member from each library was met personally, the objectives and methodology of the study were explained and all questions in the form discussed in detail. The problem of staff time was solved in two libraries by hiring data collection staff. In the third library the staff expressed clear willingness to carry out the detailed data collection and proved to have done so.

Based on the understanding that people were not used to filling in questionnaires the recommended data collection technique was to interview the users and fill in the questionnaire for them. Even that way, from the very beginning it was clear that the questionnaire had to be easy and relatively short, because the data collectors were motivated but not experienced and

community library users might not have much time to spend for an interview. The questionnaire had to be planned in a very condensed manner to collect the essential demographic information on users and how each of them used the library. It was decided to study library use by asking only what the client did, what services he or she used during that specific library visit with the assumption that the data would this way be very factual, a case study of a certain moment on what was actually happening in the library and this way capture a realistic picture of library use.

The final two-page questionnaire had on one side questions about library use, asking what the respondent did in the library that day, while the other side collected essential demographic data of the person. To make the questionnaire fast and easy to use multiple-choice questions were developed and tested to absolutely cover all possible options. A free text option that was however included in most of the questions was used very seldom in responses. Feedback concerning the questionnaire used in the first data collection attempt had indicated that the questions were understandable and functional. Test analysis of the pilot results demonstrated that the intended information would be covered.

The questionnaire was provided in English and in Oshiwambo, the local language of the regions where the libraries were situated (see annex 1a and 1b). The number of returned Oshiwambo questionnaires was 268, 28% of the responses, the rest were in English. Ms. Theopolina Shuumbili, librarian at Community Library Service, whose mother tongue and home language is Oshiwambo and who has also had it as academic subject at school translated the questionnaire to Oshiwambo and later the free text responses to English.

4.3. DATA COLLECTION

The instruction given to data collectors was that the questionnaires should be filled in by every person who entered the library during six days within the one month study period in October-November 2003. The returned questionnaires were all filled during six consequent days. Thus, although not required originally, the data collection period included all weekdays which in that way covered also possible differences in library use on different weekdays. Each day every user was considered as one respondent independently on whether they were new people or same people frequenting the library. The analysis investigated the characteristics of usage but did not study whether the same user came to the library several times during this period. However, in order to enhance the validity of the study, an individual library user was allowed to fill in the

questionnaire only once in one day. But if she or he came again next day she/he would fill in the questionnaire again. The aim was to get a comprehensive picture of what was happening in the libraries in each day and what services and resources were being used.

To facilitate writing analysis expression *number of users* is used when referring to frequencies of use of a certain resource or service. The figures are however based on number of usage of this service during the period of the survey. It may be that the number of usage is the same as number of people who used the service, or the same person may have used the service during different days. The data was collected this way to respond to the aim of providing a real picture and scale of services and resources used and the scale of daily library use.

Based on the number of filled questionnaires it can be estimated the response rate provided a fairly representative picture of the daily usage patterns of the case libraries. Although there are no statistics of the number of daily library users in the libraries, the average number of 38 - 70 questionnaires per library filled per day may represent the number of users in those libraries. Total number of filled questionnaires was 928, of them 233 from Eenhana, 280 from Outapi and 415 from Okahao.

The time of the data collection for the survey was during examination time. The preliminary information showed that the annual examination periods are the peak times when libraries are heavily used; in fact the demand is over the capacity for some of the libraries. The timing causes a limitation in generalising the results. It was however not possible to carry out the data collection twice due to financial and time constraints. Thus, choosing this time was done to capture the representative usage of the libraries. It was considered more probable to capture true sample of the community members who at any time of the year may use the library including the examination periods by using this peak usage period. It repeats three times a year in April-May, August and October-November. The purpose of the study was to capture the overall annual usage of the library thus this time was selected to capture the peak time users as well as the other user groups of the library. It was considered that this time would provide data for both the major demand for library services as well the usage during the rest of the year.

4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The number of filled questionnaires was 928. The problem with demographic information in part of the responses was random omissions in filling the questionnaires. One or some of the demographic questions were not filled in. A closer look at the questionnaires revealed that the share of the missing data is very low, insignificant in the Outapi and Eenhana data but rather high in the Okahao data. This is probably due to the fact that in Okahao the two staff members were responsible for the data collection without additional assistants to fill in the questionnaires on behalf of the users and thus the time pressure must have caused the problem of missing information in some of the forms. For instance in relation to gender, 12% of the Okahao questionnaires (n=415) lack these data. No questionnaires were, however, rejected for this reason. It was considered important to keep the partially filled questionnaires as part of the study because of the library usage questions on which the responses had been provided. In calculating the proportions of gender, age and socio-economic the number of forms in which the data was filled in was used as the valid total. For instance the result of gender proportions and analysis on the possible differences in usage patterns by gender is based on 864 questionnaires in which the gender data was recorded. Two forms did not have any content of the side describing what the person did in the library, however the demographic data was filled in and the free text question on suggestions provided a clear explanation why they in fact did not stay to use any of the services in the library. Thus these questionnaires were again actually very valid for the study. Therefore all returned questionnaires were included in the analysis.

Statistical software SPSS, with Excel in the initial state, was used as tool in the data analysis. As the first step the responses in the questionnaires were entered to Excel case-by-case, each respondent as one case. Each option of the questions was entered to Excel worksheets column per column. This method was used for initial data entry because it had to be done manually. This was relatively fast and easy to do, providing a reliable method of coding the data. A sample of the three narrative questions was read in advance and it became quite obvious that the answers repeated mostly same areas of needs and suggestions. Thus the three questions on what client did not find in the library, something really interesting that they found there and suggestion and needs for improving the library were sorted into main themes and recorded accordingly. Single cases which did not fit into any category were recorded to one column. The whole text of all free text

questions was also recorded in the Excel sheet to be used in the final analysis to support the quantitative analysis.

From Excel the data were coded into numerical format sets for each variable, including codes for missing data. Each variable represented one characteristic in the demographic data; in the description of the purpose of library visit each option formed its own variable recoding occurrence/non-occurrence. Coding was done with Excel and data then imported to SPSS and variables defined according to the assigned number sets. After data entry SPSS was used for quality checking and corrections, checking the division of frequencies in demographic categories and correcting the detected errors by checking the data from the original questionnaires before actual data analysis. During the analysing process new variables were created combining data from the basic variables for instance to extract all respondents who had either read or borrowed textbooks or extract those clients who come to the library for only one purpose.

As the study was an explorative by nature, the major emphasis was placed on the descriptive analysis of the frequencies and cross tabulation. Chi-square test was used together with cross tabulation to identify whether there were significant differences in the usage patterns between different user groups when needed. Because the data had been collected with the questionnaire describing very basic characteristics of the users the only segments of users that could be used were based on the demographic information on gender, age grouping, socio-economic status and educational level. These characteristics had been considered relevant from the point of view of this study, as well as clear enough to be attainable through the questionnaire method. Frequencies and cross tabulation provided the data on the distribution of users and what the library was mainly used for by different type of users.

To assist in interpretation of the results short interviews were conducted with one staff member from each of the case libraries, two other community libraries, Rundu and Katima Mulilo, the librarian for Omusati and Oshana region and one librarian and one library assistant from the Community Library Service. Interviews were not structured interviews but informative short contacts to provide background information in relation to the actual findings based on the results. It was agreed that views expressed and information provided will be used as general reference not as statement of individual staff members. They provided views based on their practical experiences on working in community libraries situated in the previously disadvantaged regions. My own observations on work visits to the case libraries and other community libraries while

working for the Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS) since 2001 provided additional background for analysis of the results.

5. RESERCH FINDINGS

5.1. WHO WERE THE LIBRARY USERS

One of the main research questions of the study was to find out who are actually using the libraries. In this regard the real life questions presented to NLAS are for instance the ratio between male and female clients. The enquiry whether girls and women are in fact using libraries emerges often. The other questions that have been presented in the discussion concerning the state and development of the Namibian community library sector have been about the type of library users especially concerning library use by learners and students. Young people are normally considered not to use the libraries because of lack of interest to reading. In general the perception often repeated in public speeches on libraries is that Namibian people do not read and thus also do not use the libraries.

The information on number of library users (library visits) and some basic characteristics like gender of library users will be part of the new statistics collection system piloted in 2006 and to be started in 2008. Until that there is no statistical information about library users. One aim of this survey was to collect comprehensive data and describe who the users were during the time of the survey in those three case libraries. It is assumed that it will also provide a fair picture of Namibian public library users at least for libraries situated in formally disadvantaged areas. Findings of the survey can be tested later with the new statistical information.

To respond to the first question, who are the people currently using the libraries, information on the characteristics of the library users was collected by focusing on:

- Gender
- Age (by drawing on the following subdivisions):
 - 0-10: Children
 - 11-20 Young people (21 in considered in Namibia to be age of adulthood)
 - 21-65 Adults
 - 65+ Senior citizens (senior citizens is the concept used in Namibia people about considered elderly). Official retirement age is in fact 60 years and thus this age category instead of 65 years should have been used in questionnaire. To correct this oversight the data was checked to group all retired people to senior citizens category. One retired person was identified in the category adults and changed to senior citizens for the

analysis. Questionnaire used concept senior citizens and the data collectors had been instructed that they do not need to ask the age of an elderly person but can simply record him/her as senior citizen.

- Occupation
- Formal educational qualification level (for those who did not study)
- Educational institution for those who studied
- Additional characteristics
- Mother tongue and other languages spoken /read
- Geographical distance to the library based on the distance from working place, school

5.1.1. THE DAILY NUMBER OF USERS

As mentioned earlier the Community Library Service collects monthly statistics on the community library membership and circulation numbers. Statistics on library members only describe the number of people who pay the annual membership fee to be able to borrow books. Thus it is not possible to have average user numbers of these libraries for the time of the survey. But the number of the returned questionnaires was confirmed by library staff to correspond to the estimated daily user numbers at that time of the year.

Based on the number of returned questionnaires the average daily number of users in Okahao was 69, Outapi 47 and Eenhana 39. Taking into account one of the main results analysed in chapter 5.2., that most of the users used the library as a study place the numbers were quite high in relation to the actual capacity of the libraries to accommodate people seated to study and read in the library. These libraries had chairs and tables for 15-35 seated persons, least in Eenhana, most in Okahao.

Daily user numbers in Okahao were clearly higher than in the other two libraries. Eenhana and Outapi libraries had same type and size of collections and resources including computer facilities. Okahao had a much smaller collection without tertiary level textbooks and no computer facilities. Eenhana and Outapi are capitals of the region. Okahao⁹ is a village but with large population when surrounding villages of the same constituency are included. All locations had schools near by including a secondary school. In the parameters of this study it is not possible to say why in

⁹ Okahao was a village in 2003 but has been since that proclaimed a town

the average daily user figure is higher in the Okahao library. It may be related to the location of the library, staffing situation or marketing and service level of the library. It must be mentioned that the Okahao library had very motivated staff. The library assistant kept contact with the school communities and local authorities and tried to really provide for user needs and a functional library. She had for instance managed to organise renovation of the roofing to reduce the heat in the building and was exceptionally active in requesting books, especially textbooks, needed by the users. Compared to the number of daily users of the National Library (Table 2, Chapter 3.3.), averaging 130 per day in 2003, the daily user figures in these libraries are lower but taking into account population between the capital and these emerging towns the figures seem quite comparable, however. Population figures according to the 2001 census were Windhoek 233 529, Eenhana constituency 18 690 (town: 3196), Outapi constituency 31 496 (town: 2640), Okahao constituency 17 751 (National Planning Commission 2003, 3; 2005a, 3; 2005b, 3).

Below are the figures describing these three libraries based on the statistics that were available through the Community Library Service.

Table 3: Annual membership and circulation statistics of case libraries

Year	Number of members			Circulation		
	Outapi	Okahao	Eenhana	Outapi	Okahao	Eenhana
2003/2004 ¹⁰	481	436	323	679	5643	3684
2004/2005	135	289	N/A	753	2289	546 ¹¹
2005/2006	171	323	N/A	872	3684	N/A
2006/2007	140	N/A	235	2165	2200 ¹²	562

Membership figures in 2003 seem to correspond to the national average as shown in Table 1 (Chapter 3.2), the average was 432 library members. Circulation figures on the other hand are much lower than average, which was 10 226 in 2003. As this can be observed in libraries which obviously have high user numbers this may be pointing to the usage going away from lending to other types of library usage functions corresponding to the overall declining circulation figures at the national level as can also be seen in Table 1 (Chapter 3.2). On the other hand circulation in at least in Outapi seems to be increasing slightly but data are not systematic in relation to other case libraries. Thus, a longer period and also follow up on data collection procedures would be needed

¹⁰ Financial year, e.g., from March 2003 to April 2004

¹¹ Estimate based on data from 2 months

¹² Estimate based on data from 5 months

to see the trend. How lending is reflected in relation to other functions of using the library according to the results of this study will be analysed in chapter 5.2.

5.1.2. GENDER OF THE LIBRARY USERS

In 7% of the questionnaires the gender information was not filled in, but the valid percentage figures were calculated based on the number of questionnaires in which this information was stated. Of the users, 58% were females and 42% males. The result of more or less equal proportion of female and male users is considered correct based on observation on the community library clientele. The results show however slightly higher usage of female users.

Closer look in differences between libraries showed that in Okahao a clear majority, 65% of the library users were female, in Outapi a slight majority were female (56%) but in Eenhana the proportions were practically equal (F:51%, M:49%). Taking into account that the error margin in the Okahao data was rather high (in 12% of questionnaires this information not available) the main result by giving higher emphasis on the data from the two other libraries is that the users were more or less equally male and female but in any case a slight proportion of more female users. Calculating the ratios for female and male users from only Outapi and Eenhana libraries brings the proportions as 54% female and 46% male.

It was later confirmed by the October 2006 monthly usage statistics¹³ collected in Okahao and Outapi libraries that there seems to be in general proportionally more female users in Okahao library than in the two others. Thus the higher proportion in Okahao was not caused by missing data, but seems to be reality in that library.

The slightly higher proportion of female is the result in any case. This could be from one angle explained with the feedback library staff had received from female library users on the importance of the library for women. Women had stated that library provides a space to concentrate on studies and homework for school, which is very difficult at home. At home girls and women are not supposed to stay idle. Women take care of the households. In the rural and suburban setting it involves time-consuming water fetching, pounding mahangu and cooking with fire. In general culturally young girls are obliged to take main responsibility of the household tasks. The results of this survey showing a larger proportion of female library users can be

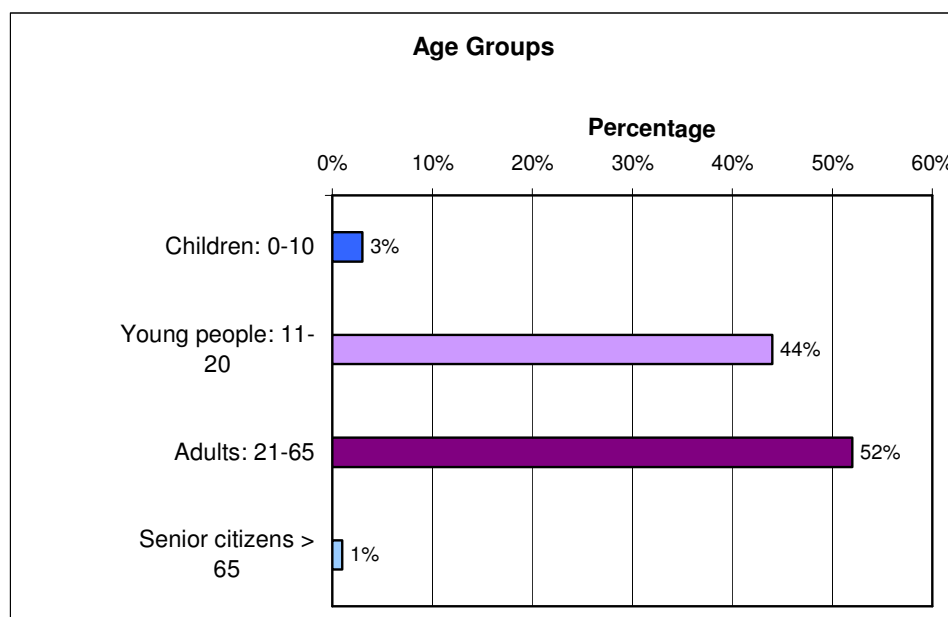
¹³ The 2006 monthly user statistics were part of the pilot phase of starting a system of collecting user statistics.

interpreted to indicate that libraries as institutions support studies by girls and women by providing a conducive place to read and study.

5.1.3. AGE OF THE LIBRARY USERS

Practically all library users were either young people, at the age of upper primary and secondary school learners, or adults. A surprising result was that children hardly featured among the library users. The other group clearly not using these community libraries were senior citizens, elderly people. Adults and young people were presented with about equal portions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Age groups of the library users (n=889, 0-10: 23, 11-20: 395, 21-65: 463, 65+: 8)



The explanation to the low, almost non-existent, presentation of children in these libraries was given by one library staff member from these libraries as the problem of space – these libraries consist of only one room. The space is mostly occupied by studying young people. Children make noise and also move around thus disturbing the learners who are studying in the library. In these conditions it was stated by two library staff members independently that it is not possible to encourage children to use the library.

The library staff interviewed in relation to the results after the study provided information that elderly people do visit the libraries but basically just to have photocopies of documents made for pension and other official purposes.

5.1.4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE LIBRARY USERS

The socio-economic status was only measured through a question on occupation. The occupational status implies significant assumptions on basic economic status in relation to whether the person has monetary income or not. That was considered an important factor in this study in relation to the fact that library service is basically free except for the possible cost required for reaching the library if the person does not live near by. Thus it should not make a difference whether the person has income or not. However the library user studies normally show that higher income groups use the library much more than lower income groups.

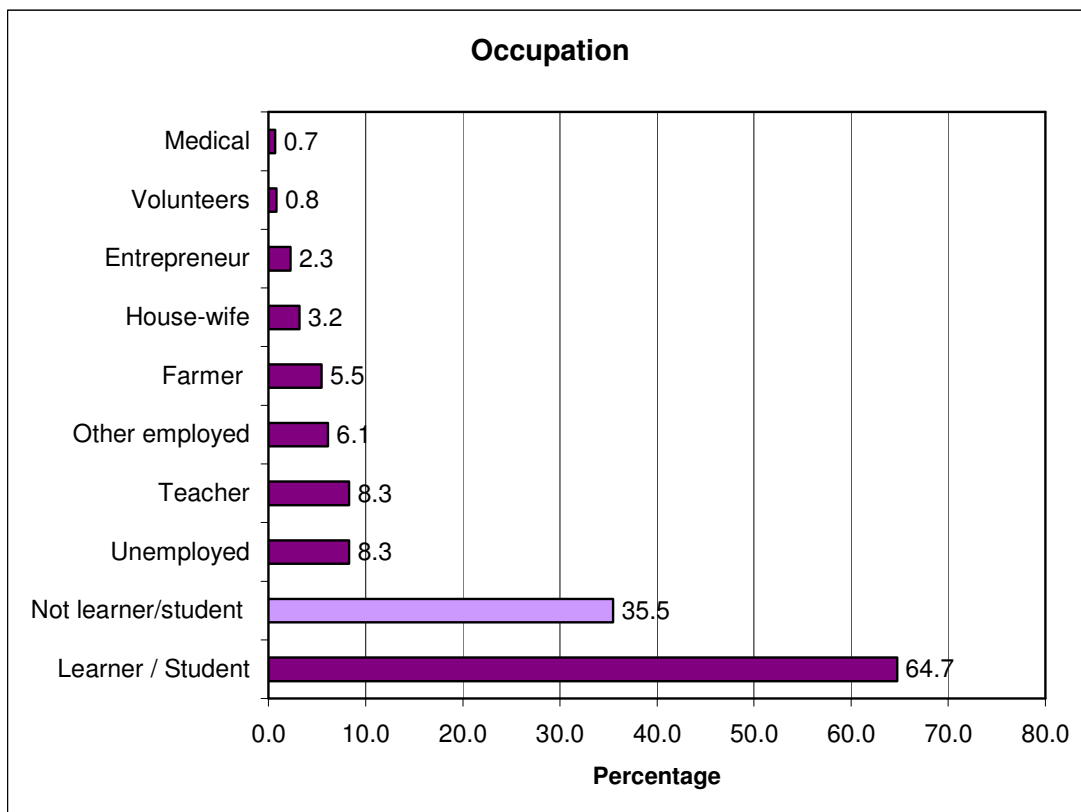
In relation to cost of library use in Namibian public libraries the right to borrow up to three books for two weeks requires payment of annual membership fee. The amount is not high N\$ 6.00 per year for adult N\$ 1.00 for children and young people under 16 years. Cost of photocopies varies somewhat between libraries from N\$ 0.20-1.00 per copy. In the target libraries it was N\$ 0.50/copy at the time of the study. Internet connection for public use was available in the two target libraries Oshakati and Outapi Community libraries with the fee of N\$ 10.00 per hour. That was a compensated cost recovery fee subsidised at that time by NOLNet – telecom charges that the library had to cover for the connectivity were N\$ 18.00 per hour.

The detailed results of the occupation and socio-economic status of the library users can be seen in Figure 2. The main result was that clear majority of the library users, almost 70%, were learners and students, mainly secondary school learners. Among the other library users, teachers and unemployed were the largest groups, about 8% of all users and 25% each of the non-learner users.

Considering the meaning of the figures on occupation and social-economic status one needs to take into account the socio-economic and demographic structure of the population in the area where these libraries were situated. Eenhana, Outapi and Okahao are situated in the formally disadvantaged part of Namibia and in the middle of communal subsistence farming area. According to the 2001 national census over 90 % of the population was rural and main socio-economic group is subsistence farmers farming for the family consumption with none or very little cash income. Cattle may be sometimes sold but farming is basically not monetary income generating. For 40-50% of households farming is the means of living. For over 20 % (census 2001) the main source of income for household is old age pension. Employment is mainly based

on the health and education sector, employment in administration, commerce and small business. Manufacturing and other income opportunities are only very slowly emerging. According to the 2001 census less than 20 % of households were living on income based on salaries. Unemployment is high, over 30%. Young people, grade 10 and grade 12 secondary education graduates are the largest unemployed group. Young people form large majority of population, over 40% of the population being under 15 years.

Figure 2: Occupation of library users (n=873)



In view of the demographic structure it can be observed that very few of the users were subsistence farmers, the largest socio-economic group of the population of the surrounding area. Libraries are very few and there are no other community libraries in the surrounding rural areas. Thus, if the adults from the farming population would have library services as part of their life they would use these community libraries. It can be concluded that library does not offer much to their life of survival based on subsistence farming. On the other hand, most of the learners who used the library were or could be children of the subsistence farmers.

The other group without cash income were unemployed people. Taking into account the large number of unemployment the user figure again is quite small. In further analysis of the usage it is interesting to see whether this usage was study related, or related to income generation.

A specific professional group of interest was teachers. Taking into account that so many learners use libraries it was interesting to see whether teachers also use libraries. 73 of the total number of 879 users indicating occupation were teachers, representing only 8% of the users. On the other hand teachers were 25% of the users who were not learners and were more than half (57 %) of the employed library users.

The portion of housewives and retired people in the user figures can be looked at from the point of view of the history of the public/community libraries in Namibia. Historically one of the main purposes if not main was to provide leisure reading especially for housewives and elderly people. One assumption is that in the libraries in towns in the former white areas the main users of the community library may still come from these groups. According to this study in these libraries these user groups are present but numbers are very low. The result through the age group category showed that there were hardly any elderly people among the library users. Housewives were represented with 3% or 9% of the non-learner users, which looks like a non-significant number in relation to major use groups, probably explained by personal interest in reading or again study related usage.

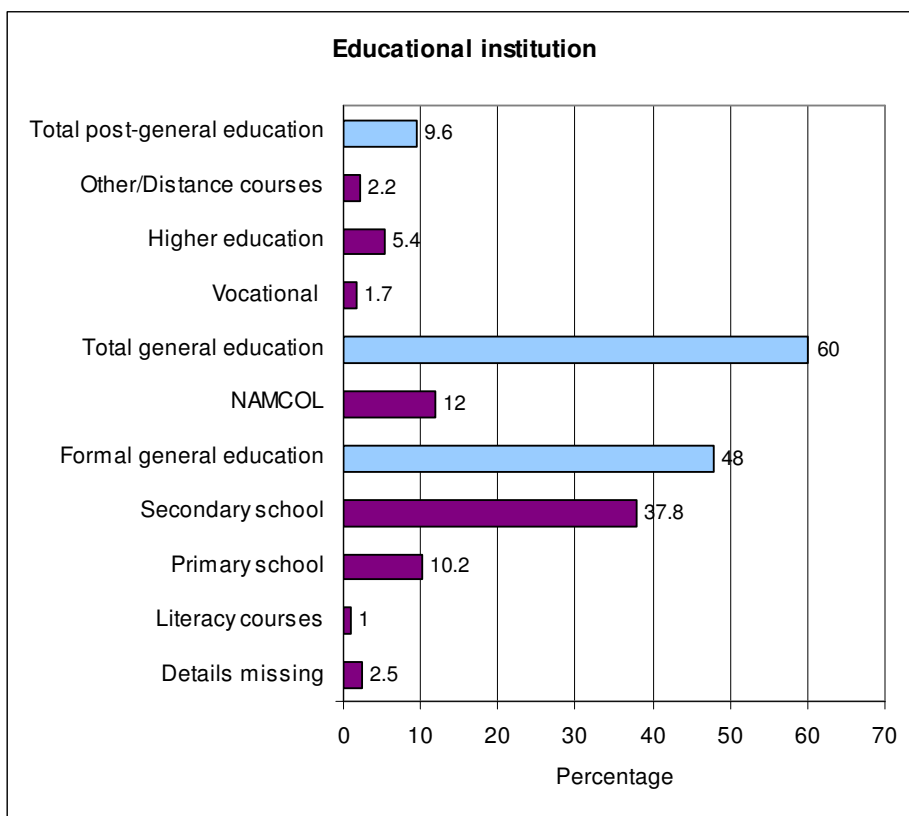
A special user group was identified in Eenhana: youth volunteers and community activists. That may be explained by the fact of the location of the library rather than library services based reasons. The library was at that time situated in a community centre which housed also a community radio and other functions run by community based committee, as well as an office related to youth employment projects.

The results related to the economical status of library users seem to correspond with Smith's (1999) results from Britain that libraries do not appear to come up as an institution that would be used by the poor or low income groups to improve their lives through information or support to study opportunities. This part of the population also in Namibia uses the library very little.

The main result that libraries are mainly used by learners and students corresponds to the literature on the use of public libraries in African countries. Although actual user studies could

not be found, the overall statement is that library users in African countries are mainly learners and students.

Figure 3: Proportions of library users who study per institution (n=891¹⁴). Proportions in relation to all library users.



From Figure 3 one can see that secondary school learners were in fact the largest group of all library clients representing close to 40% (37.8%) of all users. Calculating the proportion of secondary school learners from learners and students they formed more than a half (56.2%) of the studying users. NAMCOL learners were represented with 12% of all users. Post-general education students were a small group, about 10% of all the clients. On the other hand none of the locations where these libraries were situated has any higher educational institution, thus all post-secondary school student would be distance students or attending locally organised short courses. In relation to the idea that supply creates usage and demand, there is presently generally no provision to create usage for higher education learners in Namibian community libraries. According to information from the CLS it does not belong to the mandate of community libraries to provide books for post-secondary education needs. However two of the case libraries had as part of the NOLNet project been provided tertiary level textbooks during 2001-2003 for UNAM

¹⁴ Valid total: Those for whom occupation and/or educational institution was identifiable.

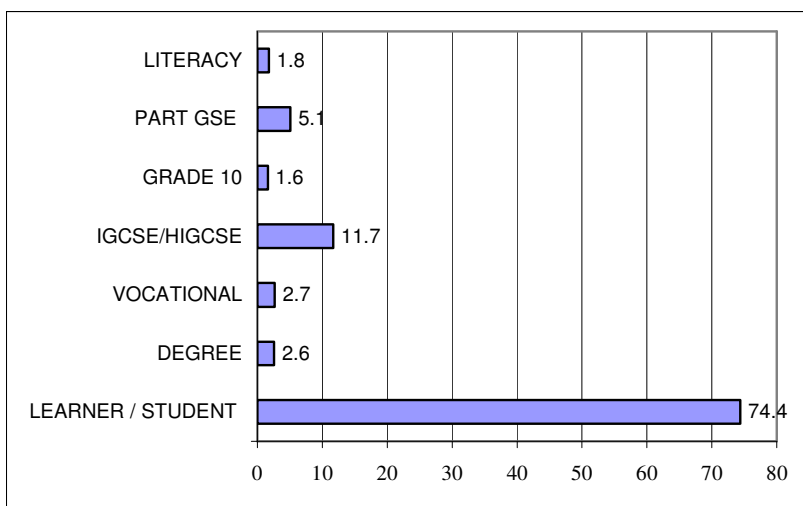
and Polytechnic of Namibia distance courses and the teacher education BETD distance programme. This might explain why this group in fact was part of the library users.

Of the learners and students 67% were primary and secondary school learners. NAMCOL is the out-of-school option for secondary school education to study for the grade 10 and 12 examinations. NAMCOL learners were represented with 15% when calculated from the studying users. Post-secondary school education students, who were almost all distance students were represented with about 13% of studying users. People attending literacy courses were represented by very few people, total of 15 visitors, 0.6% of all users, 1% of studying users.

5.1.5 THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF LIBRARY USERS

One general assumption that can be observed from the literature on public library users is that the users are mainly the well educated minority of population. As described in the previous chapter close to 40% of the users in these libraries were secondary school level students and about 10% vocational or university level students. In relation to overall academic level the Figure 4 below shows again the high portion of learners and students users and educational levels of those library clients who were not students, 74% of those of whom the educational level was identifiable, were learners and students (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Library clients by educational level (n=818)



The second division of clients based on educational level in Table 4 indicates separately the proportion of library users who had completed their education to allow comparing educational attainment levels among the library users with the corresponding structure of the in the Namibian society.

Table 4: Educational level of library users compared to population statistics

	Frequen cy	Percentage n=205	National census 2001 ¹⁵ Percentage	Cumulative Percentage library users	Cumulative Percentage Census
University Degree	21	10.0	2.0	10.0	2.0
Vocational	22	10.5	3.6 ¹⁶	20.6	5.6
Secondary school	96	45.9	15.5	66.4	21.1
Primary school and incomplete primary school ¹⁷	55	26.3	75.0 ¹⁸	72.7	62.6
Literacy courses	15	7.2	--	100.0	
Total	209	100.0			
Not stated			3.9		
TOTAL			100		100.0

The national figures for Table 4 for are from the population census 2001 (National Planning Commission 2001, 34). The 2001 census provides statistics on the educational attainment of population aged 15 years and above who had left school. The table shows clearly that people with higher educational qualifications were relatively more represented among the library users. The proportion of library users with post-secondary level education was 21% while only 6% of the population had this educational level. Close to half (45,6%) of library users had completed secondary school while only 16% of the overall population had this educational level. On the other hand the majority of population, 75%, with less than secondary school education was represented only with 34% among the library users. The result seems to clearly correspond to the literature indicating that most library users are relatively well educated.

According to 2001 census 15% of the population had never attended formal school (National Planning Commission 2001, 32). This was calculated from the total population aged 6 years. In

¹⁵ National Planning Commission 2003: 2001 Population and housing census, 34.

¹⁶ Census figures for vocational and teacher training (BETD) combined because the questionnaire did not have option for Teacher Training and BETD being a diploma was included in the vocational degree option.

¹⁷ Census used the level for primary school that is grade 7, uncompleted primary school education and secondary school. The survey used the IGSCE/HIGCSE, Junior Secondary certificate (grade) and uncompleted general education, thus any level under grade 10. The two lower categories from each data set have been combined to provide comparable figures

relation to the study it can be compared to the proportion of library users with literacy course level education (see Figure 3). Fifteen users, corresponding to 1.8% of the library clients indicated having no formal education, only literacy courses. All except for one of these users came to the library to make photocopies. The remaining person of this section was looking for information. The proportion of library users in this section was much lower than the proportion of this section in the population, as can be expected based on literature and general conception of the library as a written material based institution. Although the data are too small to make any kind of firm generalisations, the results seem to correspond to the literature stating that libraries do not meet the needs of non-literate or newly literate population in African countries. However it must also be noted that the users in this section found in the library one useful function, that is, the photocopy service. It was useful for them in modern society that requires copies of documents for all official procedures.

5.2. THE PURPOSES OF LIBRARY USE

Library usage was studied based on what the client did, and what services he or she used during the library visit. The focus was placed on the actual usage in order to capture a realistic picture of it. The overall aim was to identify the main purposes that the communities used the libraries for. In addition the aim was to clarify one of key questions on actual usage patterns of the Namibian community libraries in relation to the two perceptions observed in the discussion on the Namibian community library sector. One of them deals with a lending library associated very much on the idea of library as a reading institution for leisure reading, while the other approaches community library as an educational, learning institution.

Table 5 specifies the purposes of library use. The main purpose of library use was studying in the library. Almost 60% (n=524) of the library users used the library as a study place. This function indicated that the client was studying in the library by reading for the end of year examinations, preparing and writing an assignment or doing homework. As can be expected during October most of the studying clients were preparing for the final end of academic year examinations: 68% indicated studying for examinations, 25% working to write an assignment and 18% doing homework, including those who were reading for examinations and doing assignment or homework.

The other highly used service was photocopying actually at the same level as the study function. For 17% (158) of clients the sole purpose of coming to the library was photocopying. This service obviously responded to a clear demand. Although the purpose of photocopy service was not asked it is needed at least for official documents but also for study purposes: libraries are only open during office hours and reference materials used for assignments cannot be borrowed. The same type of function was making use of the fax machine, which at that time was only available in two libraries (Eenhana and Outapi). Indicating that both these services were considered as essential library services was the fact that they were both mentioned several times in the open ended questions on needs. Fax service was one of needs expressed in Okahao, where it was not available, but also in the other libraries where fax machine was available. Probably some days there were interruptions in both these services due to lack of toner or other technical problems, which had prompted people to express the need for regular service to be secured in the problems/suggestions question.

Table 5: The purposes of library use (n=928; for ICT use n=513)

Function / Service	Frequency	PERCENTAGE
Studying in the library	539	58
Photocopying	515	55
ICT	188	37
Lending	336	36
Read fiction	285	31
Study information	270	29
Newspapers	226	24
Information on specific issues	220	24
Borrow textbooks	196	21
ICT: Writing CVs, other official documents, study assignments	102	20
Magazines	179	19
Only photocopying	163	18
TV /Videos	160	17
Radio	155	17
Used internet	89	17
Language cassettes	148	16
Job Info	143	15
Learning computer skills	79	15
Borrow fiction	122	13
Looking around	116	13
Information searches through internet	53	10
Rest and have a chat	80	9
Borrow fact books	73	8
Administrative issues	59	6
Play computer games	28	5
Music cassettes	46	5
Email	24	5
Play children's games ¹⁹ (n=233)	10	4
Send/receive a fax	24	3
Borrow children's books	32	3
Use telephone	2	0.2

The traditional lending library function, borrowing books on the other hand, and the new function of library as ITC access point can be equally rated as the next popular functions as more than one third of clients used library for each of these purposes. Looking at the lending library function it appears to further emphasize the prominence of the study function in the library use: borrowing textbooks was most popular; 21% borrowed textbooks, 13% fiction and 8% other fact books. Reading fiction in the library was also at the level of almost one third of the users (31%), thus much higher than borrowing fiction. This can be interpreted to illustrate the importance of being

¹⁹ Children's games were only available in the Eenhana community library, not in the other two. Thus the valid total for this service is 233, the number of all library visits at Eenhana library during the time of the study

able to stay and read in the library as opposed to the traditional service of books been borrowed to read at home. The low circulation figures shown in statistics (table 3 in Chapter 5.1.1.) can also be understood from these findings that most users stayed in the library to study and read instead of borrowing books.

Computer and internet usage at the level of 37% was calculated based on the total of users in the two libraries, Eenhana and Outapi, which had public use computers (n=513). The highest proportions in using the possibilities of public use computers were writing CVs, other official documents and study assignments (20%), learning ICT skills (15%) and information searches mainly for study purposes (12%). Entertainment type of usage was recorded but very low: playing computer games at the level of 6% and music through net 3%. Proportion of using the computer to write study assignments was only 5% but is probably much higher in general. It was end of the academic year, time for examinations, thus study assignments would have been concluded already. Internet usage was quite low in relation to overall computer use, at the level of 17%. That can be explained by the purpose of usage, where writing and printing CVs, other official documents and study assignments was prominent but maybe even more with the technical problems with internet usage mainly in Eenhana as reported in chapter 5.3.2. and lack of skills both among staff and library users.

Clearly hampering wider computer use all in all was lack of basic skills indicated in the suggestion part of the responses not having used the computers because of lack of skills was frequently mentioned or even more stated as need for training and assistance to use the computer for information searches and other practical tasks. It is interesting to note that according to the indicated details of computer use it was very much employment and study oriented. It could be expected that with the improving availability of computers and computer skills training in schools through the education sector ICT programme practically implemented from 2008 onwards the demand for public use ICT facilities will increase considerably.

At the next level in relation to popularity of different services and resources, the service that about one fourth made use of was the information centre function of the library. Clients looked for information first of all on study related issues (registration, bursaries etc) (29%), but also coming to find information in general was at the level of almost one fourth of the clients (24%).

At the same level as information searchers was reading newspapers, which is also an integral part of the information centre function of the library. There were serious well funded complaints about the newspapers because the delivery happened in one-two week bundles by mail which again took taken 1-2 weeks – thus combating totally the function of the newspaper as an up-to-date information source. According to the staff interviews one of the main requests for newspapers concerned job advertisements – when newspapers were late many people stopped coming to the library because they could not get this crucial information in time. Newspapers were subscribed centrally and the staff could not influence the delivery system except for reporting the problem to the Community Library Service. The problem has in fact been addressed only since 2007 when it was decided that starting from the following year funds for newspaper subscriptions would be allocated to the regions so that the regional library sector could find a way of getting the papers in time. Newspapers are delivered in around the country to commercial selling places like supermarkets and petrol stations the same day or within a day or two of publishing, but library deliveries were sent by mail and in two to one week parcels. In this situation the usage figure for newspapers is surprisingly high and it can be assumed that this service would be used much more if the newspapers were delivered in time.

Services used by 10-20 % of users were reading magazines, watching TV/videos (libraries had a few educational type of videos), listening to the radio and language cassettes, information on employment (job advertisements etc), borrowing fiction and looking around. Headphones were available for both radio and TV usage. Language cassettes were again a study related activity as examinations include listening tests and these libraries had cassettes to practice for that.

The questionnaire included the following option: “Came to see what is available at the library, look around” to capture first time library users and other who simply came to look around. The figure was quite significant, 116 clients (13%). A very positive result from the point of view of the library services is that most of them found something to make use of the services as only seven people had this as only option marked.

Under 10% were the following functions: borrowing fact books and borrowing children’s books, listening to music cassettes, using the fax machine and telephone and playing puzzles and other children’s games. Libraries did not have music cassettes thus this must mean using the library equipment to listen to client’s own cassettes. A client could be observed to read or study with the headphones, but only one at the time, as the equipment was only one radio-CD-cassette player.

Telephone usage was mentioned but by only two clients. Using the telephones in the libraries is very restricted and normally not allowed for users. It was however an option in the questionnaire as at one point there had been discussion from the part of NOLNet of allowing especially studying clients to use the telephone and pay for it. Staff members explained that it is too complicated to organise public use of the library telephones as the telephone bills were paid by the Ministry's regional office.

This category also includes discussing administrative matters with staff and a pure social function of the library as a place to pass by, as indicated by the following option: "Came in to rest for a while or to have a chat with the staff or other people. The pure social function of visiting the library for having a chat was stated by 80 users (9%). This figure was highest in the Eenhana library probably based on location of the library as part of a community centre.

An interesting issue can be observed in relation to library use by children. The very low figure, 3% of borrowing children's books seems to support the earlier observation from the age of library users that libraries are not much used by children. Playing games on the other hand was very popular. Almost all children who visited the Eenhana library which had games available played (10 out of 13).

In interpretation of the significance of the quantitative usage data the limitation of the period of data collection has to be taken into account. However, based on the original view of this period bringing in both peak time and general usage patterns the character of the results is significant. Especially the clear indication of high usage of the library as a study place is a significant result even that the high need for this function can only be proved during examination times. It indicates a need for the library institution in these communities to provide this type of service. Information received from the staff members indicated that the study usage is lower during the rest of the year but in fact remains as the main usage pattern of these libraries. During other periods of the year primary and secondary school learners are fewer but do come daily to do homework and during certain times to look for material for school assignments. The other studying group seen daily these libraries during the academic year in are NAMCOL learners.

5.2.1. DIFFERENCES IN LIBRARY USAGE BASED ON GENDER

Mostly the purpose of library use did not differ on the basis of gender. Analysed through chi-square test ($p < 0.05$) however some services showed correlation to gender, in all these function in the way that the service was more popular among male users than female users, although used by both.

Library services which showed correlation to gender were the following (n=864; for ICT services n=500):

- ITC use: Computers and internet were used by less than one third of the female users (30%) but by almost half of men and boys (40%). Through SPSS cross tabulation function it could be clearly seen that expected count for female users was higher than actual number of ICT users while the situation was opposite for the male users. Female: expected number of users was 93 and actual 81, male expected was 80 while actual was 92. Pearson chi square test result providing significant evidence on difference based on gender was as follows: df=1; value: 4.888; $p=.027$.
- Other technology related services were also more popular among male users: Watching TV/videos: one fourth (23%) of male users – 13% of female users (df=1; value: 14.273; $p=.000$). Listening to the radio: one fifth (20%) of male users – 14% of female users (df=1; value: 6.309; $p=.012$). Listening to the language cassettes: again one fifth (19%) of male users but 12% of female users (df=1; value: 7.370; $p=.007$).
- Reading newspapers: almost one third (30%) of male users against one fifth (20%) of female users (df=1; value: 11.581; $p=.001$).
- Reading magazines: one fourth (25%) of male users against 15% of female users (df=1; value: 13.061; $p=.000$).
- Looking for specific information 28% of male users against 20% of female users (df=1; value: 6.931; $p=.008$).
- Looking around 16% of male users and 10% of female users (df=1; value: 6.627; $p=.010$).

Correlation was tested through SPSS using the cross tabulation function with expected count compared to actual count and the chi-square test. In all above functions the difference between the expected and actual numbers and chi-square value showed clear association with gender, in the other functions the clear result was that there was no difference based on gender.

5.2.2. DIFFERENCES IN LIBRARY USAGE BASED ON AGE

Four options were given for grouping the clients based on age: Children (0-10 years), young people (10-20 yrs), adults (21-65 yrs) and senior citizens (65+ yrs). As reported in chapter 5.1.3. children and senior citizens were a really small group, thus statistically not relevant to analyse the results, except for the actual finding that they were practically absent from library clientele. However what can be seen from these small groups is reported below but the detailed analysis concentrates on young people and adults who were the actual library users.

5.2.2.1. LIBRARY USAGE BY YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Young people and adults formed more or less equal proportions of the library users with 44% of users having been young people and 52% adults. Based on the general structure of library usage it can be expected that young people used library basically as a study place but whether that was also the purpose of usage for the adult population will be analysed/reported below.

Results showed that 79% of young people used the library as a study place. Studying was clearly the main purpose of library use. The other study related services, looking for study information (young: 40%, adult: 20%), listening to language cassettes (young: 23%, adult: 9%) and borrowing textbooks (young: 31%, adult: 14%) were also clearly more popular with young people.

For the adult users the main function was photocopies, 63% had photocopies made and for 27% photocopying was the only library service used. Using fax, although represented by very few cases, also concentrated in the adult population. There were also quite many among the adult clients who used the library as a study place, but the proportion was clearly lower with 37% of the adult clients.

The overall picture of the differences between age groups is shown in the Figures 5-a and b. In addition to differences between age groups in usage what can also be seen is that practically all services were used by both age groups.

Figure 5-a: Differences in purposes of library use between adults and young people: Functions more popular among adults (n=899)

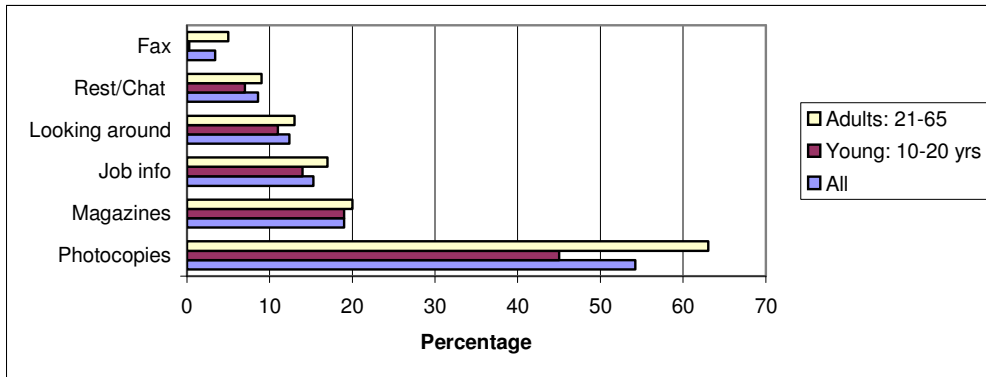
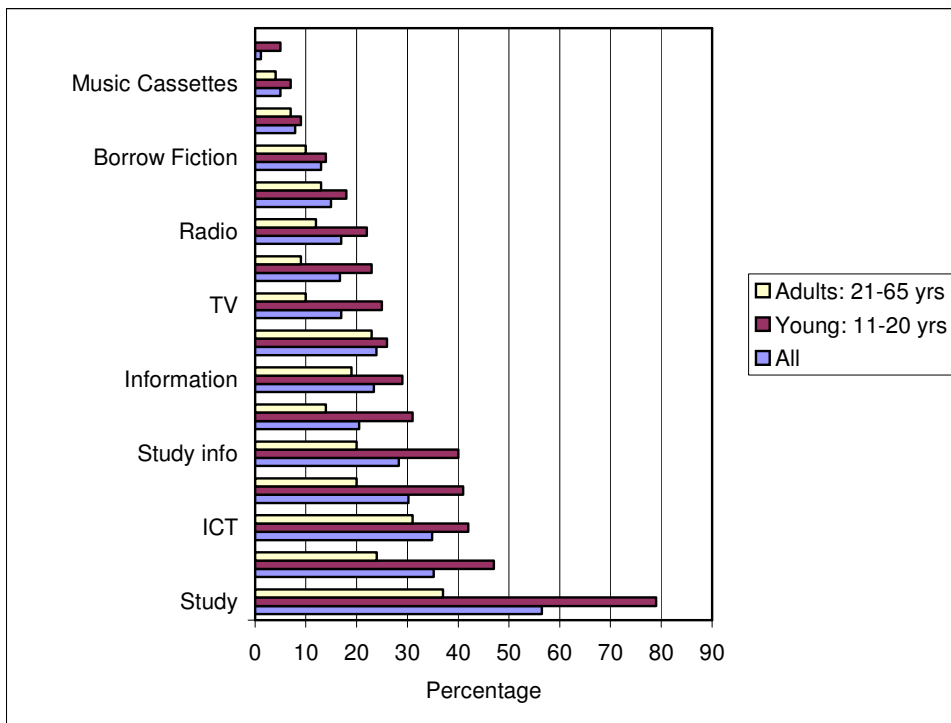


Figure 5-b: Differences in purposes of library use between adults and young people: Functions more popular among young people (n=899; for ICT n=496)



Photocopying and using fax machine were the only services in which the ratio by adult population was higher. In almost all the other services the proportion of usage by young people was more than adults. In addition to studying in the library, the difference was highest in lending (young: 47%, adult: 24%) and reading fiction in the library (young: 41%, adult: 20%). The available games were basically meant for children thus the only indications for usage also were in the group of young people and children.

The other services with considerable difference were overall ICT usage, looking for information in general (except for job information which was more popular with adults), watching TV/videos and listening to the radio and music cassettes, all more popular among the young people.

No significant difference could be seen in reading newspapers and magazines. Very few people indicated coming to the library to rest/have a chat and in that function the proportion as slightly higher with adults but the difference was very small. Those for whom this was the only function were all adults.

5.2.2.2. HOW CHILDREN USED THE LIBRARY

During the six days of the survey only 23 children aged under 11 were recorded to have used these three libraries. It is however interesting from the point of view of this study to analyse for what purpose these few children used the library.

The majority of usage was quite surprisingly again studying at the library: 16 children used the library to study, do homework that was 70% of that age group. The result concurs with the finding of the library as primarily a study institution. Even for children studying seemed to be the main idea of using the library.

The other services used in the order of popularity were

- Play puzzles and other games available in the library (8, while $n=13$: 62%)
- Lending (15)
- Read children's books in the library (13)
- Watching TV/videos; looking around-came to see what is available; rest/chat (5 each)
children made use of each of these functions
- Listen to the radio (4)
- Photocopies; computer use (2 each)
- Reading magazines; allowed to use the telephone (1 each)

Puzzles and games were at time only available at Eenhana library. Calculating the proportion from the Eenhana data only this service becomes the most popular service after studying, almost all children who visited the library having games available played games. Games are part of

standard on-site collection provided by the Community Library Service, but due to financial constraints provided gradually, and thus were later available at the other libraries too. Borrowing children's books and reading them in the library appear more or less equally popular.

The picture emerging from this very limited data seems to correspond with observations that children who come to the library can be seen spending long times eagerly playing games and reading children's books. After finishing with the very small children's book collection they switch to browse magazines. But again according to one of the staff members to be able to really promote children to use the libraries these libraries would need more space and more staff: Children tend to run around and play which disturbs other users in these libraries which only consist of one room and normally only have one or two staff members attending to all users.

5.2.2.3. HOW SENIOR CITIZENS USED THE LIBRARY

The assumption from pre-survey observations and information from library staff had been that old people would use the library primarily if not only as a photocopy place. In this study the portion of elderly people was too low, 7 persons, to actually use it as any indication for the usage patterns of old people, except for the fact that ratio can be observed to be very low as part of the library users. However the ratio might be considered as relatively normal if compared to the demographic age structure of the country and these regions. In these regions old people form about 9% the population, according to the results of this study 0.8 % of the library users. From the point of view of this study it is in any case interesting to describe the usage by elderly people as observed to provide some indications on what functions and services would be of useful or of interest to elderly people.

Two of the elderly people used the library only for having photocopies made, the expected main usage function. The assumption of photocopy service being the main function used and making libraries useful for the old people might be considered confirmed as all except one did take photocopies. It can be assumed that need for photocopies was the reason to come to the library – and then to use also other services. According to the library staff photocopies needed by elderly people are basically copies of ID documents for pension registration and other official purposes. The one person who did not make photocopies came to look for information and read newspapers. He stated having found what he was looking for. He lived near by while most of the other elderly people came from other villages and had used transport for coming to the library or

for coming to the administrative centre for other purposes, library visit having been combined to the other reason(s). Other services made use of were listening to the radio (3 persons), look around and discuss administrative issues (1 person), look for the local Oshiwambo newspaper published by the ELCIN church (1 person). The library did not have this local newspaper. There are two local newspapers published by churches in the local language of this area. Neither of them were available in these libraries. In general and especially from the point of view of elderly people there seems to be a problem if the very rare materials that are available in the indigenous languages are not part of library collections.

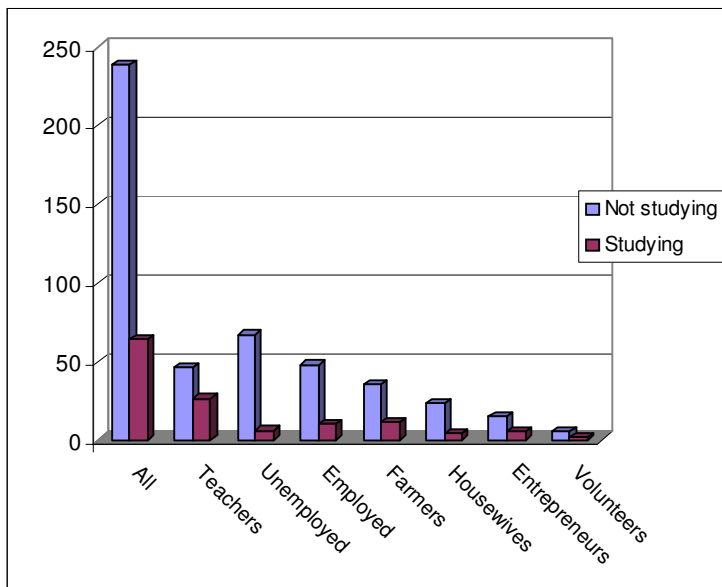
5.2.3. LIBRARY USAGE PATTERNS AMONG DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

In relation to library usage observed according to socio-economic status it can be expected that the usage of learners of student would concentrate on study functions but would also be multiple usage of all services. The importance of studying in the library was confirmed by taking the learners and students as one group: 85% of these library users used library as a study place, sitting and studying in the library. Analysis focussed on finding out whether any significant differences could be seen based on other socio-economic groups. Originally employed people were treated as one group but the teachers were separated as it become clear that there are differences in this group in relation other employed people. Retired people consisted of only one person and were part of the senior citizens in the previous chapter. The other groups were treated as they were in occupational categories.

It also seems relevant to analyse whether library usage otherwise also concentrated to people who were doing some type of studies. Taking into account that most adult NAMCOL students and tertiary level distance students who were not working, had identified themselves as learners or students as their occupation, the proportion of the other library clients who also attended some type of studies was considerably high. Figure 6 shows the proportions of studying persons in different occupational groups. One fifth of all adult clients, 64 persons, stated doing some type of studies, the largest this proportion was among teachers close to 40%. Among entrepreneurs and farmers who used the library that time one fourth were people who studied. The unemployed group was most clearly persons whose library use could not be connected to studies; only 8% of these library clients were involved in some type of studies. The same was situation among housewives and employed people of whom persons involved in distance studies or attending

short courses was only 15-17% Among the small group of volunteer who used the library that time 2 of 7 seven were studying.

Figure 6: Proportion of people studying – not studying among occupational groups (n=303²⁰)



Whether the purpose of library use was based on the fact that the person was studying cannot be interpreted from these data, except for those who actually studied in the library or stated having written assignments with the computer or borrowed textbooks. Altogether half (52%) of those adults who were not fulltime students but attended distance or short courses used library as a study place demonstrating again the importance of the library as a place to study. 30% of them borrowed textbooks. Those who used the library as a study place came basically from three groups: teachers, and employed and also unemployed, although so few of them were studying, all of those in this groups who were studied used the library as a study place.

It was stated earlier that taking into account the prominence of learners' and student in the library clientele it would be interesting to see whether teachers also use the library and for what purpose. Teachers were along with unemployed people the largest non-learner group among the users, 8% of all users and 25 % each of users who were not learners or students. According staff members from the libraries teachers mostly came to look for materials for the study assignments for the distance studies they are attending to achieve professional qualifications (BETD) or for further studies. Staff also stated helping teachers often to type the assignments, as many of them at least

²⁰ Respondents for whom occupation is recorded and who are not is not learners or students or retired

at the time of study had not acquired basic computer skills. The results of the study seem to support this type of image of teacher's library use. According to this sample one fourth (23%) of teachers who visited the library during this time used the library as a study place. The usage pattern as very much related to studies is also illustrated through responses to the question on needs: 24% of teachers expressed need for prescribed textbooks that were not available in the library. The ICT usage was the other highly used service: 41% of teachers used computer to write and print documents and browse internet. Half of the computer use was recorded as writing official documents – in this case probably work related documents and one third related to study assignments. Teacher's computer usage illustrates the importance of public use computers access in the library – at this point there must have been very few computers at schools, thus the library computers provided access to ICT for work and study related task. Otherwise almost all teachers made photocopies (73%), for one third (33%) this was the only purpose to come to the library. Only 10% used the library to as an information centre to look for other than study related information. In Eenhana the staff informed that a group of teachers from the near by primary school used the library frequently to prepare for lesson. Teachers who had looked for information included three teachers from Eenhana, probably indicating usage of the library to prepare for teaching.

Access to ICT was one of the main purposes of library use for learners and students (45%) teachers (41%), entrepreneurs (21%), employed (36%) and unemployed clients (26%). The usage concentrated on typing work and study related documents, browsing internet and practicing to use computer. Problems in computer use and suggestion to improve it by providing more computer to provided for access in all times and access to colour printer and assistance and training in using the computers was expressed by 26% to 45% of all occupational groups. The proportions of people expressing needs in relation to ICT use are higher than proportions of those that actually used computers indicating potential needs. The usage might grow with improved access and ICT skills training.

Lending was clearly the service used mainly by learners: 47 % of learners borrowed books while among the other occupational groups lending seemed to be the purpose indicated by very few, except by entrepreneurs, 38% borrowed of them borrowed books. Borrowing by entrepreneurs included all kinds of materials: fiction, textbooks, fact books and as the only group, except children themselves, also children's books. It was also the only category in which borrowing

fiction was higher than average (19%). Borrowing by learners focussed of course on textbooks (30%) but included all the other type of books also.

The usage of entrepreneurs seemed to combine information and recreation and was most multifunctional among the adult clients. In addition to making photocopies and using fax it included at the level of more than 20 percent lending, reading fiction and newspapers, looking for information and using computers and internet.

Employed people, excluding teachers, used mainly photocopy service (64%) and computers (36%). For 45% photocopies was the only service used. Only 17 % of these employed client borrowed books and that was mainly textbooks. Even less, 14% (6 people) of this group used the library as a study place, although 20% of them were studying. Again less was reading newspapers and magazines, 11% and 5% respectively. It would in fact be very difficult for this group to study and read in the library because libraries are open only on official working hours. To see whether they indicated need to use the library more the suggestions were checked. Only 17% had requested extended opening hours to have improved access to library services. Otherwise the suggestion from this group concentrated on two areas: ICT access (37%), including one fifth of this group requesting for public use computers and internet in Okahao and up-to-date newspapers (17%) It seems that for the employed people who visited the library during that time the library might not appear as a very important institution, except through the new services of photocopying and access to computers and internet

As can be expected based on the findings of the previous chapters, the main purpose of library use of most of the adult users, except students and entrepreneurs, was clearly photocopying: 70% -81% of these library clients made use of the photocopy service. Highest, over 80%, the proportion was among unemployed, the which cab be expected could because of the obvious need for copies of certificates for employment applications. The only exception was entrepreneurs: Photocopy service was used at the level of 48%, actually at the same level as among learners and students of whom 46% also made photocopies. Fax service was used mainly by entrepreneurs and unemployed people, which in this case may mean library providing an important service for self-employed or small entrepreneurs who cannot afford own office equipment.

In addition to photocopying the usage of the unemployed showed clear functionality of library for passing the time by reading: borrowing 17%, mainly borrowing fiction 11%, reading newspapers 24% and magazines 22%. They also used the computers both for writing documents and learning ICT skills, but also seemed to have identified the library as an information centre. The expected need for employment related information like job advertisements was recorded as the purpose of use for 27%, but also looking for study related information and general information at the level of 22% and 15%. If the newspapers would be up-to-date and cover all national newspapers the usage of this groups would most probably increase. Librarians from the libraries that have ICT have reported that one of the main uses of computers is writing CVs for job applications. In this data the six unemployed people were recorded to have used computers to writing CVs. The figure is not very high but may be explained by the many complaints expressed in the questionnaires of lack of ICT skills and too few staff members to assist in this regard. 12 unemployed users were recorded to have used computers for learning ICT skills.

For farmers and housewives photocopying was clearly the purpose of coming to the library. The only other service mentioned more than occasionally by farmers was having a chat and resting in the library. Many of them came from far, from the surrounding countryside, probably coming to the library to make photocopies as part of other business they had in the town or larger village. Besides the unemployed people they represent the library users who most probably belong to the part of the society without regular income. This obvious result of these two groups not using other library services except for photocopying, can be related to the cultural phenomena repeated in the literature that reading is not part of the people's past time activities in African cultures. Reading is connected to utilitarian reasons like studying or reading newspapers to be informed what is happening in the country. On the other hand economical reasons explain why it is very natural that reading is not a past time activity for majority of Namibians meaning lack of electricity, low income levels and overall lack of exposure to books and other reading materials. Books and newspapers are really not something that majority of the population can afford which also contributes to the fact that commercial books trade exists only in a few major towns.

E. Namhila (1993) when studying the information environment of people in these same regions in which this study is located, emphasised the tradition of dealing with problems through local oral communication networks. Problems are discussed and solution sought within the immediate family and community. Language is the other important factor and radio the most used modern channel of information – based on access and the fact that it broadcasts in local languages. In

today's Namibia the cell phone has become the other medium to in fact facilitate and extend the possibilities of interpersonal communication also in the sense of information seeking. She also describes the economic conditions of the rural areas, which in essence remain the same. Although the school and health centre network has been extended the practical conditions of living in relation to scarce water and firework resources and time needed for everyday chores remain essentially the same.

In relation to educational levels of the farmers and housewives who visited the library during the survey period 30% had no formal education and 29% had studied part of primary or secondary school. Taking into account the economic realities, language and cultural preference of oral communication is very understandable that majority of farmers and housewives did not have much to find from the library, except for the practical photocopy service.

Taking into account also the fact raised in Yilmaz's study (1998) that people who did not grow in the environment with books and access to libraries are not very likely to use the libraries the analysis of adult library users seem to also correspond with his observations. Adults who are not students or learners seem to use the library very little. However emerging user needs can be observed in relation to support to study efforts (life long learning), ICT services for work and employment related needs and information needs. The last aspect was not studied in detail – only that at least information on study and bursary opportunities and employment opportunities including newspapers were services used and needed. Based on the results of the local Katutura information needs study (Mchombu, 2007) the information needs of the adults population are very much related to practical information that does not exist in the printed format and would need a new service mode by actively collecting local information from government offices and different type of experts to respond fast and accurately to everyday information needs. This type of active service pattern could develop the library to a very relevant local community information centre.

5.2.4. DISTANCE STUDENTS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

NOLNet provided new resources to develop libraries during 2001-2003. The main aim was to support opportunities for distance studies. Thus it is quite relevant to analyse the usage of new services and overall usage of the library services by distance students. The number of tertiary level distance students was not high, all in all 74 visitors, but this user group is very significant

because of the importance of the distance study opportunities on the Namibian society. The other group who study through the distance mode are NAMCOL learners. They were represented by 107 library visits. Distance learning is the affordable way for professional and academic studies and above all it provides study opportunities outside the capital. In this regard however the ICT access through libraries is the critical resource. Registration and any other communication as well as access to educational resources is possible if the access to ICT is available. As those who need a more affordable channel to study in Namibia cannot in general afford private ICT access, the relevance of public access points is clear. NOLNet provided internet access and fax machines to facilitate communications and computers and audiovisual equipment and materials to be used in the libraries to support learning through open and distance learning (ODL) programmes.

It is not possible to study whether the new resources had an impact on the number of distance students using libraries, as there are no statistics of library users or earlier studies on the use of community libraries by distance students in Namibia. There were also no specific statistics available on how many distance students reside in the locations of these libraries. The analyses focuses on data collected through the survey: how did distance student use the open learning centre facilities. The usage was then also compared to the usage pattern of secondary school students to see whether the usage patterns seemed specific to distance students or general for those who use the library for study purposes. Secondary school learners had the same resources available for them as the distance students including textbooks which NOLNet provided for secondary school level and for specific tertiary level distance courses.

NOLNet used the concept open learning centre to describe a library or resource centre with required facilities to support learning and distance study opportunities. An open learning centre was required to have a conducive space to read and study in the library, ICT equipment, internet connectivity and fax for communication and access to electronic learning resources, photocopier, TV/VCR and radio/CD/cassette player for the use of supportive educational materials and prescribed textbooks. Textbook collection included secondary level textbooks, full sets and several copies for almost all grade 10-12 subjects and a collection of tertiary level prescribed textbooks for distance courses offered by Namibian institutions, UNAM, Polytechnic and NIED. To also gather for relevant self-study materials to support distance learning, book collection was supplemented with educational videos, examination preparation CD-ROMs for grade 10-12 subjects and English and Afrikaans languages cassettes to prepare for grade 10 and 12 examination's listening tests. In relation to study area NOLNet assisted financially in providing

tables and chairs especially to community libraries, which mostly did not have furniture for sitting and studying in the library. NOLNet supported centres were divided into category one and two – one being the main centre of the regions and receiving all resources, two receiving all except tertiary level textbooks and ICT equipment mainly because of financial limitations. (NOLNet 1999; 2002.)

In relation to the NOLNet resources of the case libraries Eenhana and Outapi community libraries belonged to category one as principal centres of the region thus receiving the full set of resources. Okahao was a category two centre receiving secondary school textbooks, audiovisual equipment, videos, cassettes, a fax machine and a photocopier. Both Eenhana and Okahao received tables and chairs. Only in Outapi the provision for study places in the library already existed. NOLNet project was one of the reasons for selecting these centres; they provided a possibility to include assessing the usage of the new resources in the study. Before this only the Windhoek Public library and Oshakati community library had provided photocopy services. None of the Namibian community libraries had public use ICT access before the NOLNet project.

Figure 7: Distance students and secondary school learners: Use of open learning centre facilities (NAMCOL learners n=107; Distance students n=74; Secondary school learners n=337)

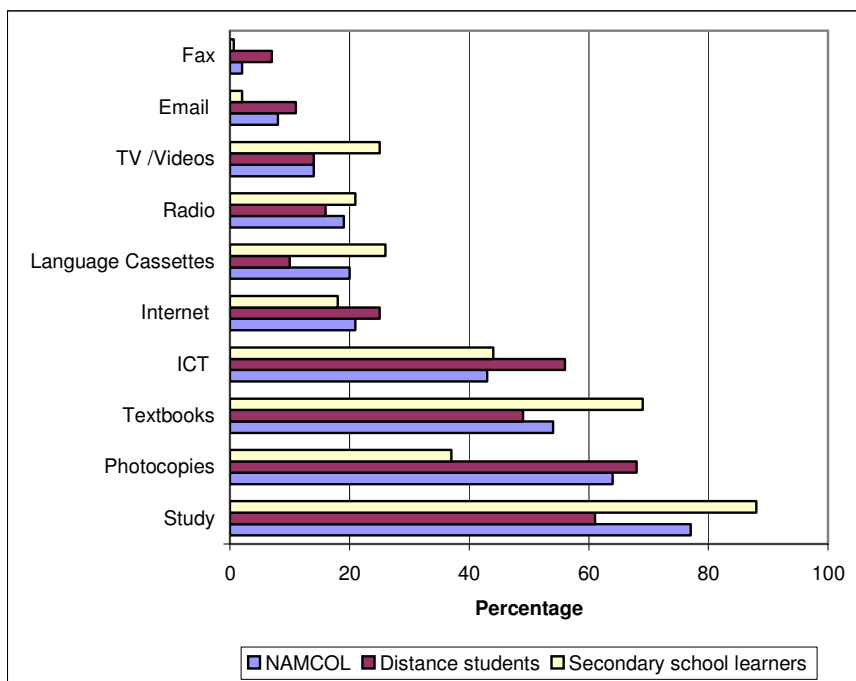


Figure seven illustrates the usage of the learning centre resources. The main finding is that the level of usage shows real relevance and need for the services especially study space, photocopying, textbooks and ICT facilities. All were used by more than half of the distance students. As can be seen in Table 7 all these resources were equally used by both open and distance learners and secondary school students. The importance of the library as a conducive study place can be clearly seen in these usage figures: Library was used as a study place by 88% of secondary school learners, 77% of NAMCOL learners and 61% of distance learners. Photocopy service was used by more than 60% of both NAMCOL learners and distance students. Textbooks usage was high among all studying groups, but most popular among secondary school learners (69%) probably as an indication of the serious lack of textbooks in schools. As expected internet was emerging as a very important resource for distance students, 25% of them having used the net. Most probably the skills to really make use of electronic resources were still very low – thus this usage can be expected to increase. Language cassettes were also well used especially by secondary school learners. Communication technologies fax and email were not used a lot, but that may be because of the problems in skills, as access to ICT was so new, or related to the time of the year - email for distance students would be mostly needed during registration and for receiving materials and submitting assignments. Main function in overall ICT usage was writing documents, but also searching for information (see Chapter 5.6.3). Based on the usage of these resources it can be assumed that libraries with the open learning centre resources do provide an important support system for learners and students.

5.2.5. TEXTBOOKS AS LIBRARY MATERIALS

Analysing the usage of learners of students brought about the surprising fact of really high usage of textbooks. It seemed relevant to analyse this more closely.

To measure textbook usage, the two variables, used textbooks to study in the library and borrowed textbook were combined to one variable indicating all users who had read books from the new textbook collection. The number was really significant, 407 clients, which is close to half of all library clients (44%) having needed and used these textbooks.

Considering the target groups that need the textbooks, 69% of secondary school learners (n=337) and 54% of NAMCOL learners (n=107) and 49% post-secondary school distance students

indicated having used textbooks. The results show really significant importance of provision of textbooks as a library collection.

5.2.6. NEAR OR FAR FROM THE LIBRARY

Normally it is assumed that people who use the library are those living near it. This assumption was tested concerning the users of these libraries by asking the respondents to indicate whether their home, working place and school are near or far from the library with three options:

- Near, walking distance from the library
- In another part of this town / village
- In another town or village

It was noticed afterwards that another part of the village or town can be very far – especially in Okahao the names of villages provided showed that another part of town or village can be more than ten kilometres from the library – however it is a village belonging to the Okahao constituency.

The questionnaire did not ask from where people at that moment came from – the analysis was based on the assumption that people normally come from near. Thus the three options of working place, school and home were filtered to provide a variable, which indicated near, if any of those places, was near, in another suburb if any was there and far only if none of the possible key places was near. The assumption that majority of people come to the library from nearby can be considered to be confirmed also in the case of these libraries. 71% came from near and only 18% from another part of the main location. There were however also those who came from far, 11% came from another town or village. The group that in fact came from far were farmers: only 37% came from near, and over 30% from really far, outside the constituency where the library was situated. They probably came to the centre of village or town for other business and at the same time used the library mostly for having photocopies made. Also 22% of teachers and 24% of entrepreneurs came from far, outside the constituency where the library was situated. Post-secondary distance students obviously would be expected to use the library even from far away. 29% of them in fact came from far and 19% from another part of town. NAMCOL learners also came to the library even from a distance: 39% from another part of town and 10% from far. Secondary and primary school learners came from nearby: 87% had home or school nearby. Still 10% also came from another part of town. If the library is to support disadvantaged learners

according to these results it needs to be near the poorer areas of town –or there needs to be branch libraries in the poorer suburbs.

Studying in the library concentrated on people who lived near the library: 77% of those who studied came from the area near the library, 15% from another suburb and only 8% from far.

As could be expected those who needed photocopies could really come from far – there are normally no photocopy services in the rural areas but copies of personal documents and certificates are needed for all official procedures. 12% of clients who used the photocopy service came from a long distance and 23% from another suburb.

Taking into account the distances to other villages or suburbs the question about the means of transport people used to come to the library does not reflect only the distance but also economic status of the people. 70% of the people walked to the library. Close to 50% from those who came from far or from other suburbs or villages also walked to the library.

5.2.7. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIBRARIES

When the usage was analysed to see whether there were differences between libraries, the main result was that Okahao and Outapi appeared more or less the same, while there were quite significant differences in relation to the Eenhana results.

Main difference in relation to users was that in Eenhana the proportions between age groups were different, adults formed much larger proportion of the users than in the other libraries. In Eenhana only 35% of clients were young people and 59% adults. Trying to find an explanation to this from the usage the areas where there were differences between these two groups were checked. However in the main usage area of adult users, photocopies Eenhana figures were again lower than the others, only 36% of user used the photocopy service, while in Outapi 54% and in Okahao 64% of clients made use of the photocopy service. One clear explanation could be that the highest function of young people, studying in the library, was lower in Eenhana than in other libraries, 37% of young people in Eenhana, 57% in Outapi and 67% in Okahao used the library as a study place. The social function, coming to the library for a chat and using fax were on the other hand clearly highest in Eenhana, but the frequencies are low and thus cannot explain the difference in age group ratios.

In fact the main difference between the libraries was that in Eenhana almost all functions had significantly lower frequencies than in the other two libraries, Okahao on the other hand had the highest usage proportions in almost all services. The only explanation seems to be that in Eenhana the purpose of usage was coming to the library for one purpose only, while in Outapi and especially in Okahao most users were multiple service users, using many services and thus data from these libraries produced higher figures in almost all functions. In Eenhana over 50% (52%) of clients in Eenhana came for one purpose only, while in other two libraries this figure is 18-20%, meaning that almost all users used the library services in multiple ways. Except for taking photocopies, borrowing, using the ICT facilities and just passing by the library to chat were the functions for which many people came to the Eenhana library as the only purpose of library use.

The proportions learners and students and overall all those who studied was practically constant, not depending on the library. Learners and students were 55% of library clients in Eenhana, 63% and 64% in Okahao and Outapi respectively. 70% of clients in all libraries were people who are studying, including learners, part-time and distance students. This seems to indicate that this finding of the library usage provides most indication for being generalised. People who study made a constant largest proportion of library clients in all libraries, only that in Eenhana it was not less common for them to use the library as a study place. In Eenhana close to 40% (38%) of all users studied in the library, while in Okahao and Outapi more than half of the users studied in the library, 62% and 67% respectively. In this regard the reason can be interpreted to the inferior conditions in Eenhana. The library had a limited number of study seats, it could accommodate only 15 seated persons at a time, while the others had 25-35 seats. Eenhana²¹ library was also functioning in temporary conditions in a room meant to be a community hall in a community centre. The space was also used to go to the other parts of the centre and books were just in one corner behind a metallic net.

In lending Eenhana was at the level of average usage: All libraries 35%, Eenhana 30%, Outapi 25% and Okahao 45%. In lending children's books, although the overall frequency of this service was very low, the Eenhana figure was the highest and above average. (All libraries 3%, Eenhana 6%, Outapi 0.4% and Okahao 4). In the ICT use the level of usage was more or less equal in Eenhana and Outapi 32 and 37% of users respectively. However the internet use was much higher in Outapi (20%) than in Eenhana (9%). That can be explained by more public use computers,

²¹ Eenhana community library moved to later to purposefully built library premises in the new Multipurpose Youth Centre

three in Outapi and two in Eenhana. The suggestions section from Eenhana also reported technical problems so that in fact only one of the two public use computers was connected to internet and printer, which obviously meant that the network was not functioning restricting usage.

Information service on employment was clearly highest in Outapi, having been mentioned by one fourth of the users (Outapi 25%, Eenhana 7.3%, Okahao 12%). The high figure was clearly related to type of service provided. The library assistant organised copies of current job advertisement on the notice board using up-to-date newspapers from private contacts. Taking into account the high unemployment level in Namibia this type of service could be one of the key services if the library service were genuinely community needs oriented, but this type of initiative could not be seen in other libraries. The other popular service in relation to employment was using computers to write CVs and employment applications. It was indicated as a purpose of library use by 16% of users.

5.3. HOW WELL DID THE LIBRARY SERVICE MEET THE NEEDS OF THE USERS

Satisfaction to the library services was one of the key issues to be studied, but not only from the point of view of personal satisfaction but it also tries to draw some conclusions from that to the relevance of the library to the community. What are the issues that people are looking for in the library? What can be found out about the resources and services that the library was not able to provide for? This aspect should bring about something of the specific needs of the communities as well as information for improving and making the library service more relevant.

It was anticipated that measuring satisfaction to the library resources and services would not be found out with a direct question of satisfaction. Library services are new in these areas where the study was conducted; they are also new to the majority of Namibian population because of the exclusive apartheid history. It does not seem realistic to ask satisfaction on something that the person can not be expected to know well. The objective of this part of the study was in any case to try to find out how well the libraries serve the needs of the library users.

The questions used were

- Did you find something useful/interesting?
- Did you find what you were looking for?

- Suggestions for necessary books, newspapers or other materials that the library should have to serve you better. Suggestions to develop the library (staffing, opening hours etc)

The overall positive result was that the majority of the users responded to these questions making it possible to analyse user needs and satisfaction to the library services.

5.3.1. RESULTS ON SATISFACTION TO LIBRARY SERVICES

The main question in seeking to find out the level of satisfaction to the materials and services that these libraries provided was whether the client found what he/she was looking for. 82% percent of clients answered to this question. 67% of all users reported having found what they were looking for and only 15% of all users did not find what they were looking for. The result would seem to show really high satisfaction: among those of the community who actually frequented the library a large majority also found what they were looking for. On the other hand it explains why these people in fact used the library.

The other question on satisfaction was “Did you find something useful / interesting?” 65% percent of the users answered to this question. 56% (520) of all users indicated that they found something useful or interesting indicating quite a high level of overall satisfaction. Only 9% (79) stated having found nothing interesting or useful.

Looking closer to those who found what they were looking for reveals that 75% (465) of them however also expressed needs in relation to better library services (needs expressed in question 16). 17% (155) found what they were looking for and did not express any needs. It can be said that 17% was shown to be very satisfied to the collection and service. On the other hand 57 clients, 6% of the users did not find what they were looking for neither anything else interesting in the library.

Those who were studying were slightly more inclined to express dissatisfaction. Of those who studied 21% said they did not find what they were looking for, while of those who were not studying 13% expressed not having found what they were looking for. This result was considered important because again shows the perception and usage of the library as a study institution, as the needs not gathered for focussed on textbooks. The other group at the same level were teachers, 20% of whom expressed not having found what they were looking for. Among

entrepreneurs the percentage was 18% and among unemployed 13 %. In relation to teachers information from staff members also confirmed that they do not have books which teachers are looking for their qualifying or further studies. They said that when they have tried to respond to this need by proposing these books to be purchased to the libraries, the response from CLS has been that it is not the mandate of community libraries to provide books for this type of studies, obviously reflecting different discourses on purpose and target groups of community libraries.

The overall critical question here is what did those who did not find what they were looking for need. They obviously had a specific purpose for using the library, but the library could not serve that purpose. At least 15 percent were clearly not satisfied with the library services because they indicated that they did not find what they were looking for. This is an interesting group to actually find out more about reasons not to use the library, needs that the library is expected to respond to and does not. 80% (113) of them responded to the follow up question explaining what they were looking for. Of course a questionnaire does not give in depth information about the needs of people not satisfied but it covers some rough area of needs and some specific needs in relation collection and services that the library did not provide. The list includes many issues mentioned by only one person, but it was considered that all suggestion reporting lack of resources or services provided valuable information from the point of view of this study and the library sector.

The main problem was related to studies: resources not found were specific textbooks for general education and tertiary level, indicated by 69 users. The other main problem was the need to use computers expressed by 31 users in the library which did not have public computer access. The other major materials and services not found were up-to-date newspapers or certain newspapers (7 users), sports magazines (4 users) and fax machine (5 users).

As the information describes documents or services needed and not provided for it seems relevant to provide a detailed list as follows:

1. Study materials: Mainly secondary and tertiary level textbooks

- Largest area textbooks: 69 clients mentioned certain textbooks or other study related material that was not available
- Secondary school textbooks on geography, agriculture, history, business studies
- No space in the library – to full to be used as a study place as the client had intended

- E-learning materials /self study materials on history and business studies to prepare for examinations. CDs/DVDs were available for self-study in some subjects provided by NOLNet. NAMCOL currently produces Namibian self-study materials for secondary school subjects available online and on CDs.
- Law and human resource tertiary level study materials, adult education study materials
- Video cassettes to see physics and chemistry /science experiments. Many schools do not have laboratories and this type of materials could really help to understand the processes.
- Equipment for school, assignment/home work: test the protein in food, compass, rulers and pens
- Past examination papers. Past examination papers would be easily available for institutions like libraries from NIED, teacher's resource centres and Ministry of Education regional offices – by organising to have copies made and delivered. Some “better off” schools use them to help students to prepare for examinations. Examination papers have not become library materials – but could in fact make an important contribution to learners from school that do not have capacity to offer this option. There does not seem to be a reason why libraries would not provide them – but they did not.

2. Services and equipment: Public ICT access as the main request

- Second largest item for disappointment in relation to library services: 31 persons had expected to be able to use computers and internet in the library. Also a request for a colour printer.
- Fax machine (5) and telephone for the community use
- Lamination machine

3. Collection: Main request was up-to-date national newspapers and certain popular magazines

- Most requests focussed on newspapers (7): Requests for availability of New Era and Republikein (the other national newspapers), and several complaints because the library did not have the current newspaper.
- Sport magazines mentioned 4 times (especially “Kick off”)
- Music cassettes on local and other African music
- Certain areas of information: gender issues, architecture (maybe also for study assignments)
- Local Church newspaper (in Oshiwambo), an Oshiwambo story book, and Children's books written in Oshiwambo

4. Everyday life information

- Employment related needs: Government job application forms; Job advertisements /Up-to-date newspapers to check job advertisements. Public service jobs have an official application form which was not available in libraries
- Driving licence book
- Carrier guidance book / advice materials

The main needs not satisfied were clearly related to educational usage of libraries: textbooks, prescribed books, and materials to prepare for examination. The other main need not satisfied was ICT equipment and internet connectivity. Based on the results of computer usage in the two libraries where it is available shows that even this need is related to educational usage of libraries. In Okahao library in which this was the most frequent need expressed by people not satisfied with the library, those who expressed this need were mostly students or learners.

Although the data was very limited it somehow gives material to an interpretation that the library services are not taking into consideration local every day information needs related to income generation, searching for jobs or educational opportunities. Most not-found textbook requests were for agricultural textbooks. There was a course on agriculture at the youth center in Okahao and library did not have the books the course needed. This type of specific needs on certain locations are difficult to respond to but on the other hand it is known that this area is communal farming area where rural poverty programmes include training population towards more productive and commercial farming practices to generate income.

5.3.2. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Reponses to the free text question on needs and suggestion provide views of the library users on elements of an improved well functioning library service that would respond to their needs. These reponses also provide a view to the perception that the users have on the roles of the community library. 65% of all the users made some suggestions of improvement. It can be interpreted that more than half of the users are clearly not quite happy with the services but interested in developing the library.

The suggestions could be divided into the following categories:

- I. Study function of the library: Textbooks and other study materials, space, study information
- II. Public ICT access (Also part of I. III)
- III. Current information / Newspapers (Also part of V)
- IV. Other popular materials
- V. Specific information: Survival and income generating information, Job applications (Also part of III)
- VI. Opening hours (Also part of I)
- VII. Staffing and capacity of assisting the users
- VIII. Physical facilities: Location, space (Also part of I)

The above areas have been constructed from the responses. How the needs were described in the responses is detailed below. They are naturally partly the same as matters raised in the list based on what clients did not find in the library, however all suggestions are included here. The earlier list was presented as very critical disappointments which caused people mostly to leave the library. These are suggestions can be considered to be important needs of the current users.

I. Study function of the library: Textbooks and other study materials, space and study information

Textbooks were the second largest area of requests after computer service related requests. 203 users, 31% of all who expressed needs, requested secondary or tertiary level prescribed textbooks and other study materials.

Until 2005 the Community Library service stated that its absolute policy was not to purchase textbooks to community libraries. Towards the end of the NOLNet project support to libraries NOLNet offered to continue financial support for textbook provision, but Community Library Service management declined the offer informing that textbooks are not part of its acquisition policy²². Since 2005 the issue has been under discussion and probably some textbooks have been approved to be purchased based on the requests from the regional library sector representatives. However there is no clear policy or any other written documentation which would clarify whether the policy in this regard has actually changed.

²² (Unofficial information from Ms. Penny Watson, then Chief Librarian of the CLS and E. Du Vivier, then Executive Secretary of NOLNet, 2003)

It is outside the scope of this study to analyse why the issue of textbooks, which according to CLS reports have been requested for years, is so controversial. The only interpretation can be based on the concept of community libraries or the perception of its target audiences. If like this survey shows the majority of users are learners and students who use library for study purposes – the response to the needs of the users would mean textbooks being a priority in the selection and acquisition of materials to community libraries.

Besides textbooks there were also requests for the library to support understanding science and mathematics with educational videos and DVDs. Suggestions were also made for libraries to provide equipment for simple laboratory tests and other practical exercises which are part of the school curriculum. Reasons stated were that all schools do not have science laboratories and that special equipment was also needed to do homework assignments. Examples mentioned were calculators, science equipment, special rulers and compass. Also in general support to homework requests for “instruments like rulers and pen for public use”. One user stated the need as follows: *“Request the library to add to its collection some of the science equipment and instruments, which can be used when we need to do science practicals” (E-O-10).*

Documentation concerning study bursaries and further studies would seem to be a naturally available resource in libraries, but however was not. Requests mentioned prospectus for higher education institutions, information on study bursaries and bursary application forms as well as a very basic and important forms to apply for the government study loan.

Past examination papers were also mentioned as a need which seems very relevant. As discussed in the chapter 5.2.2. concerning materials indicated as not found in the libraries this is a type of need that would not cost money to provide, just identifying it as a critical material to be provided by libraries. There are always left over papers after examinations in the regional offices. It would only need to be recognised the obvious need for the learners especially from the disadvantaged background and disadvantaged poorly resourced schools. Past examination papers currently do not seem to be identified as library materials – but could in fact make an important contribution to learners from school that do not have capacity to offer this option.

Dictionaries were a specific item requested by many library users. English being the official language and medium of instruction but not the mother tongue of majority of people, dictionaries are obviously an important tool. Dictionaries belong to the standard collections provided to the

community libraries but only as reference material. The number of dictionaries does not take into account the conditions of many learners studying at the library at the same time. It is a lending library reference concept with basically one dictionary for consultation. The requests were about having more copies of dictionaries and possibility of borrowing copies to use them at home. Request makes very much sense in relation to educational performance as well as a tool for every day skills in interpreting and writing any kind official documents.

Request on physical facilities were also related mainly to the study function, but will be reported in the Chapter VIII concerning space.

II. Public ICT access

ICT was the area in which most clients expressed needs and suggestions. 330 users, 50% of those who expressed needs requested ICT facilities or improved ICT facilities. Public ICT access is a very new service in Namibian community libraries, but according to the data of this survey is clearly responding to a demand. Outapi and Eenhana libraries were among the four of the 46 NLAS administrated community libraries, which had public use ICT access at the time of the survey. The equipment as well as the subsidy for the internet connectivity had been provided by the NOLNet project since 2002.

Based on the number of requests for improvement most problems appeared to in Eenhana, 54% of users expressed problems in relation ICT use, in Outapi the figure was 40%. In Okahao 23% requested ICT service, which was not and had never been available.

The needs in relation to reliable ICT service came as much from those who are studying, as those who were not. The main observation here is also the numerous requests for training in ICT skills. 23% of clients in those libraries that have ICT service requested training in the use of ICT. The statements included need to use ICT for information searchers or typing documents and there were numerous requests of staff that can assist. There were also specific requests for typing service in the libraries. The requests for training and assistance in using the computers were most common among adult library users: entrepreneurs 23%, unemployed 26 %, employed (other professional than teachers) 28% and housewives 39%. Other suggestions requested more computers to have better access to use them and technical assistance to keep computers working. There were also a few requests for a colour printer.

III. Current information/ Newspapers

Main issue in requests concerning newspaper was the problem of newspapers coming late. That was a prolonged problem only addressed finally in 2007-8. Regarding the perception of user needs the development leaves a question, how was the task of the community library defined and understood if this type of problem was not addressed immediately. Having read community library monthly reports I am aware that the situation had been reported to CLS at least since 2002. People use newspapers to read job advertisement and up-to-date information on what is happening and need to be known in the Namibian society. Taking into account the economic realities, majority of people does not have means to buy newspapers – so library would play an important role in this regard. Up-to-date good provision of newspapers would in fact also serve as a marketing tool for libraries as material that people are really interested in.

The other aspect of the request was subscriptions to other newspapers. CLS subscribed only to one newspaper, the Namibian. Until 2000 actually users had access only to the Friday issues of that newspaper. Requests for especially the other English language daily New Era were numerous. Both newspapers publish also material in Oshiwambo. The critical issue is that only New Era and the Afrikaans language daily Republikein publish government employment advertisements. Public sector being one of the main employers, those advertisements are quite important. New Era and Republikein were subscribed to the community libraries from 2005/2006 onwards.

IV. Other requested materials

The following list describes the other materials, which were indicated in the suggestions. In the scope of this study it is not possible to analyse deeper the significance of these requests. However they were issues important enough for library users to have expressed them.

- Magazines: Especially sport magazines, Kick off mentioned several times. Other magazines mentioned several times were Drum and Bona. Centralised acquisition with restricted budget has meant that the same journals have been subscribed to all libraries. As the study was only based on the survey questions it is not possible to know what the opinion of the user was to the subscribed titles; and whether the request actually would have been priority over the ones

currently subscribed to. All the above were however mentioned several times thus indicating that they must be popular.

- Children's games
- Factual information: Books on legislation; Namibian and African history; Business planning books, Music books, Materials on theology and Christian videos, Bibles to be borrowed out.
- Local information: Population and housing census
- Materials in the local language (Oshiwambo)
 - Oshiwambo newspapers: Onyika, Omukwetu
 - Children's books; proverbs; certain fiction books

Although legislation was not mentioned in the needs statements it seems relevant to mention it in this context. Legislation is published in the Government Gazette, which can be subscribed. Legislation would seem to be essential basic material if libraries function as information centres for the communities, but Government Gazette was not subscribed even to the two libraries in regional capitals, Outapi and Eenhana.

Traditional community library usage as reading and relaxation institution seem to be fairly well covered. There were no complaints about fiction or books on hobbies. The only requests were for magazines, specifically and most often mentioned sport magazines, and suggestion for more games for children.

V. Specific information: Survival and income generating information, Job applications

There were requests for up-to-date newspapers referring specifically to the need for employment advertisements, but not many. It can be assumed that because the problem of late newspaper delivery had continued for years, people already knew that the recent newspapers were not available. Another employment related request was government employment application forms. As a government institution it is very surprising that these forms did not form part of the materials provided by libraries.

Carrier guidance information was requested especially on how to become a pilot. Small planes are used a lot in Namibia, thus this seems like a very understandable and relevant carrier or skills request.

VI. Opening hours

As public institutions Namibian libraries are open within office hours: 8.00-17.00 from Monday to Friday. They normally also close during lunch hour between 13.00-14.00. In 2003 there were only two libraries which were open on Saturdays 9.00-13.00, Windhoek Public Library and Oshakati Community Library. Oshakati Community library was also open in the evenings until 18.00 or 19.00. Time changed according to the time of the year to ensure that the staff can get home before dark. In Oshakati the opening hours were based on the initiative of the librarian and voluntary agreement between staff members. Extra opening hours were compensated with free time. In the Windhoek public library the Saturday opening hours are an annual arrangement with staff being paid overtime. In Oshakati the system was later abandoned due to staff changes. New staff members did not agree to these voluntary arrangements. According to public service rules people working in the public service, except for specific occupation related to health and security, cannot be required to work outside office hours.

The opening hours situation in fact means that working people cannot use the libraries. This may also be one reason for the very small number of employed people using the libraries. The suggestions mainly proposed Saturday opening hours so that employed people could use the library. Also learners proposed this to be able to use part of the weekend to study. The problem must be quite significant for distance students who are working. Especially with the public use computer facilities libraries could provide real important support for this section of the society – but it will practically not work for employed people because the library computers will not be available outside working hours.

VII. Staffing and capacity of assisting the users

In both Eenhana and Outapi requests for more staff in the library were numerous. In both libraries like in many other libraries there was only one staff member. There were some volunteers to help in Outapi and in the Eenhana the ICT room. However the situation of using volunteers also caused problems, many statements requesting permanent staff members who really know their work instead of changing volunteers. One practical aspect of staff shortage referred to long waiting periods for photocopy service. That part could be easily solved with self-service photocopiers provided with coin-machines.

VIII. Physical facilities: Location, space

There were many requests for more space and more study tables and chairs. It may partly be explained by the time of the year. Libraries are normally overcrowded during examination times by students who do not have conditions at home to study or otherwise find the library a more conducive place to study. But as the concept of library buildings in Namibia is still based on the lending function thus the space allocation does not gather well for using the library as a study and reading place, the budget also does not have allocation for the furniture. In these libraries tables and chairs had been purchased with the NOLNet project funding, thus the situation was much better than it would normally have been. What is obvious from the usage patterns observed through this study is that planning of libraries need to take into account space and furniture requirements for the study function, as the primary function for which the communities in fact use the libraries for. Another complaint in relation to space was the problem of the library not being quiet. Here the problem is again structural and financial or based on the lending library perception of planning libraries. Except for a very few community libraries in major towns built before independence, libraries only have one room. Because of the other functions – accommodating and assisting people with information needs and being normally polite to the clients the library cannot be quiet. The only solution would be to have a separate large enough study room.

5.4. INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS

This chapter aims at summarising the results of the survey in relation to library use patterns and practical consequences in case we accept the results as showing significant user needs from the communities. The point of departure is that the survey results demonstrate clear needs from the community on what purposes the library is needed.

The following is a categorization of the main results as functions that the community library was used for and what according to needs statements would it need to be used for.

5.4.1. STUDY FUNCTION

The community library was shown to be used clearly as a support institution for studies. Main purpose was indicated for the library as a conducive space: a place to do homework, prepare study assignments and read for examinations. It must be taken into account that in the socio-economic reality of the Namibian society most people do not have conditions at home to study. In the rural areas and formally disadvantaged suburbs where in fact majority of the Namibian population live there is normally no electricity and no space neither tables nor chairs to study. The other aspect is the general education and tertiary distance study requirement of assignments in which case the users are looking for specific information and often specific prescribed books and computers to write the assignments. Need for textbooks was evident both from usage figures and requests.

The requirements for a community library as a study place can be described as follows:

- Conducive study space
- General education textbooks
- Prescribed textbooks for tertiary level studies
- Information for study assignments for various subjects and levels (Internet would be the most economical way of providing for this need)
- Public ICT access and internet connectivity
- Assistance in finding the required information

According to this study textbooks are a very popular and sought after material in the libraries, however at least until 2005 it was an absolute policy for the community libraries not to buy

textbooks. It is not that the demand was not known – it can be observed both from CLS reports and from statements by library staff from the case libraries of this study that request were made and the response had been that textbooks do not belong to the policy of community libraries. Community libraries were stated to be meant for the whole community not individuals who requested specific textbooks. Statements of the staff members of these libraries seem to indicate towards another discourse or concept about community libraries. They see the expressed user needs for study material as a critical need for the people and communities to improve their life and employment opportunities and thus a critical need for the library to respond to.

Based on the findings of this study that the study function and textbooks are popular and sought after functions of the library, it is difficult to understand on what basis would the library professionals, as often reported in the literature, regard the situation as a problem, rather one would think that the actual usage pattern provides a model that is relevant to the Namibian society, as well as many other African societies. Quality and opportunities for studies are a serious concern, poverty that prevents providing enough textbooks or purchasing textbooks by private students are recognised realities. In this socio-economic reality library can really be a relevant institution by concentrating its resources on the area in which demand for its services is high and recognised by the communities.

5.4.2. PLACE TO BE OR A LENDING LIBRARY

Related to the study function it became quite clear that the library is used as a place to sit and study, sit and read – as the place needed for these functions. When all the functions that meant client spending time in the library, studying, reading, using computers, watching videos, listening to the radio or cassettes or just chatting were extracted from the usage patterns 77% of users used the library as a place to be. Even if the technology based services ICT, video, radio and cassettes, which are not available in all libraries, were left out, 70% of users used the library as place to study and read. The main purpose was to study at the library, indicated by 58% of the respondents.

In relation to lending compared to Smith's (1999) results from British public libraries it can be observed that although lending was a way of using the library, the situation in these Namibian libraries was very different than in Britain. The main finding in this regard concerning the three

Namibian community libraries was that lending was not the major function of using the libraries. 64% of users did not borrow books and only 1.5% of clients used the library only for borrowing.

Only 14 people, constituting 1.5% of users, used the library just for borrowing. They were 13 learners and one entrepreneur, all at the Eenhana library. In other libraries there were no respondents who would have only borrowed or returned library books. Five of these users were children, eight young people and 1 was adult. They borrowed fiction, textbooks and children's books.

In relation to type of books preferred, as shown in Table 5 (chapter 5.2) the main type of lending was textbooks. 21% of users borrowed textbooks, 13% fiction and 8% fact books. This may indicate that in the libraries where textbooks are not part of the collection interest in borrowing is very low. It would correspond with the statistics showing decreasing lending figures. Although it is clear that some people use the library for borrowing purposes, the figures combined with socio-economic and cultural background of the majority of Namibians indicate to an interpretation that majority of library users do not have conditions at home or interest to spend time to reading at home, thus reducing the relevance and importance of lending.

As a response to the initial question of the role as a lending institution the results seem to show that the role of community library is not primarily a lending library but rather a place to study, seek information and read in the library. If this result can be generalised it has consequences in the library network planning suggesting that instead of mobile libraries and small lending stations the required library network structure would need to provide space for study and reading in the library.

5.4.3. PUBLIC ICT ACCESS POINT

Public ICT access with internet connectivity was a new service in community libraries, provided in five community libraries with NOLNet support since 2002. Two of the case libraries, Outapi and Eenhana, had public IT facilities with 2-3 public use computers and internet access. The proportions of ITC use were calculated as a ratio of users in those two libraries to have comparable results in relation to other functions.

The study did not collect qualitative information on purposes of ICT use. However the options listed in the questionnaire provide an overall picture of the purposes ICT was used for. Figure 7 demonstrates how ICT use was indicated in the questionnaires.

Figure 7: ICT use (n=513)

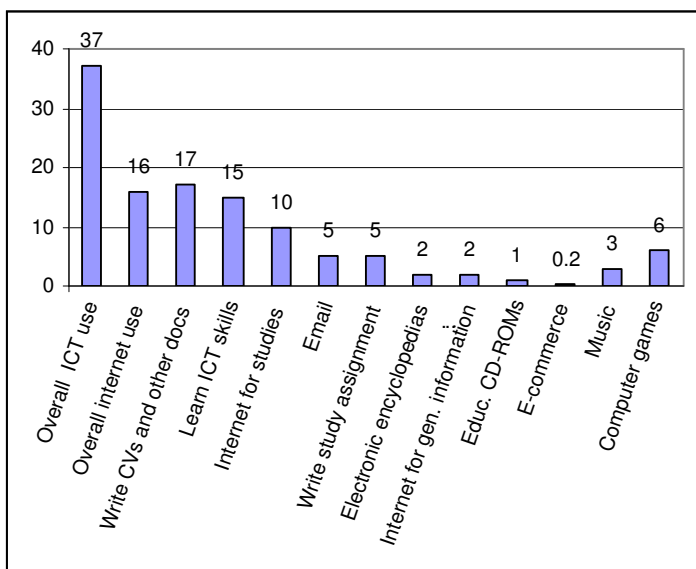


Figure 7 gives a detailed picture of ICT use at a very early stage of computer use in the Namibian community library sector. Typing CVs, study assignments and other documents was the main computer use at that time and probably continues as one of the main ways of using library computers. Using the equipment for learning ICT skills and overall internet use were the two other popular ways of using the computers. Email, which is normally a very popular way of using ICT, was used very little. It might be related to the problems of ICT skills and most probably has increased since that.

The data can also be used to summarise computer use into usage type categories of work related computer use, entertainment, learning and communication through email. To summarise ICT use in that manner Excel was used to determine actual occurrences for the summarised categories. Based on the combined data Table 6 shows how ICT use focussed on work, study and information related needs. 25% of library clients used ICT for this type of practical purposes. Entertainment was a very minor ICT function in the Namibian community libraries with 8% of users having used computers for games of music.

Table 6: Public ICT use (n=513)

Purpose of ICT use	Specific tasks ICT was used for	Frequency	Percentage of all library users n=513
Study, work, information related ICT use		130	25
	Writing documents	102	20
	Writing CVs and other docs	85	17
	Writing study assignments	24	5
	Information searchers	66	13
	Total internet searchers for specific information	59	12
	Internet searchers for studies	53	10
	Internet searchers for other specific information	10	2
	Electronic encyclopaedias	8	2
Learning	Educational CD-ROMs	7	1
	Learning ICT skills	79	15
Communication	Email	24	5
Business; purchasing	E-commerce	1	0.2
Entertainment		39	8
	Music	14	3
	Computer games	28	6
Other	Internet browsing (not specified)	6	1
TOTAL INTERNET USE		89	17
TOTAL ICT USE		188	37

It seemed relevant to provide these very detailed and combined figures as a baseline state of ICT use in libraries for reference to later ICT use monitoring. Within the education sector ICT programme Ministry of Education started in 2007-2008 to provide computers and internet connectivity to the library network. Continuation of the project will require monitoring and evaluation. In that process the data from a very early, kind of pilot phase, of public ICT use in libraries may be of interest and detailed data from the pioneer libraries could be used as a baseline data for further statistics.

In practical sense ICT access also seemed to have quite a lot of problems in the initial stage especially in relation to technical maintenance and overall lack of ICT skills. NOLNet provided

basic training to one staff member from each library but providing training to users and having enough staff to assist users was obviously a problem. It was obvious from the requests and suggestions that there were three main factors hampering computer use: fees, maintenance and lack of ICT skills and experience. 45 people (8%) stated that fees prevent or make it difficult to make use of internet facilities. Internet use was charged on a subsidised cost recovery basis, at N\$10.00²³ per hour, which is not cheap in Northern Namibia. 23% of respondents indicated lack of ICT skills and training as reasons for preventing or impeding ICT use. 15% indicated that computers are too few and thus it is difficult to get access. Related to that seem to have been technical problems. In Eenhana only one of the two public use computers was connected to internet and printer because the network did not work. Taking into account the initial state of computer access and the problems indicated by clients, 37% of library clients having used computers is a relatively high figure. In Okahao 20% of users requested public ICT access.

What can be concluded is that the usage figures regarding purposes of use and suggestions to improve the use of facilities show real relevance of this service to the communities. Obvious benefits may be achieved with improved ICT skills levels for instance in relation to distance studies and work and employment related ICT use. The emerging e-governance in Namibia will provide for additional benefits to communities if public use computers in libraries are available for affordable or free online connectivity.

5.4.4. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Library as an information institution did not feature very much in the usage patterns except for study related information and job advertisement requests. That may be explained by studies on information needs and information seeking patterns in African countries. Recently a study on information needs and channels was carried out in one of the poor suburban areas of Windhoek in the informal settlement area of Greenwell Matongo. It provides information on every day information needs as well as role of the libraries in this regard.

Professor Mchombu (2007) with the students from the Department of Library and Information Studies at University of Namibia (UNAM) conducted a wide study on information needs in Greenwell Matonga, informal settlement area in Windhoek's Katutura suburb in 2007. The study investigated information needs for poverty eradication using focussed group interviews as the

²³ About 1 euro

main methodology. Focus groups consisted of adults, young females and young males. Information needs identified through the discussions were related to very practical survival issues like income generating and employment opportunities, financial skills and information on loan opportunities, educational information on rights and procedures to keep children at school when parents cannot afford the fees, affordable alternative construction materials, career information to plan study subjects according to the required subjects for further studies, family planning, TB, HIV/AIDS and other health issues. (Mchombu 2007, 18-38).

Questions about the use of the Greenwell Matongo community library, situated in the community centre in the settlement, were also included as part of the interviews. Most of the adult respondents had used the library but only to make photocopies. Most of the young respondents had used the library for multiple purposes, studying, reading newspapers, using internet, photocopying, meeting friends and borrowing books. It was also reported that the one room library is too small for the large number of young people who rely solely on it for homework and class work after school hours. (Mchombu 39-40, 47). However, for the library to address the identified practical information needs it would need to actively collect information from experts from different fields. Most of the everyday problems people in poor settlements have are not something that can be responded to with existing printed materials.

5.4.5. PHOTOCOPY SERVICE

Photocopy service seems really relevant service with 55% of user having used this service. It seems to refer to the need of looking also at other practical services that would be needed like fax, public telephone, access to government applications and other documents for official purposes either in paper format or electronically. In a scarcely populated country library would be the institution to provide for multiple services needed by population and not feasibly through commercial enterprises of specific offices.

5.4.6. CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

According to the survey there were very few children in the libraries. In the interviews as well as observation it also seems evident that the staff is very concerned to fulfil the study needs of young people and adults, but children do not seem to be on focus. Libraries do have a small collection of children's books and puzzles and games for children in their collection but children seem to be a very minor user group. According to observations in 2006 in the case libraries the situation continues the same except that in Eenhana a group of 10-20 children now frequent the library to read children's books. In other libraries there may be 2-4 children in a day which seems a small figure taking into account the child population of the towns and villages. The reason may be either the concepts or values of the communities and library staff in relation to space and role of children in the society as well as priorities in library use or practical resource questions. It is quite clear that collections are too small to actually promote borrowing books and library building do not have space to actually promote children using the library to read and play games. Analysing the reasons was outside the scope of this study but the clear result was that children were not users of these Namibian community libraries.

Since 2005 based on the alarming SACMEQ²⁴ research project results of the lack of functional level reading skills of the pupils at grade 6 level of the Namibian primary schools (Makuwa, D. 2005.) the Namibia Library Service has engaged in initiating reading promotion activities through the school and community libraries targeting children age 5-10 years. Since then promoting reading skills for children has been considered as one of the actual functions of the community libraries mainly carried out through school-based programmes. Education Library Service (NLAS division for school library administration) together with the Community Library Service are engaged in capacity building workshops for reading skills promotion activities in primary schools. Whether reading skills promotion will also be interpreted to mean promoting children to use public libraries remains to be seen. The problems of space and staffing structures as well as overall small budget for acquisition may continue to pose problems in this regard.

²⁴ Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality - SACMEQ

6. CONCLUSIONS

The working hypothesis of the study was that Namibian community libraries have changed from the pre-independence reality of the traditional Anglo-American model of recreational and cultural institution mainly used for leisure reading and borrowing out fiction and hobby type of books, to a primarily educational institution. The hypothesis was clearly supported by the results on the users and usage patterns of the case libraries. Almost 70% of the users in the three case libraries were learners and students. The library was mainly used as learning place, to study and do school work in the library. In general library was used as a study and reading place.

The other major finding was that the community libraries were in fact well used. Results of this survey did not correspond to the general view that community libraries in developing countries in general, and in Namibia specifically, would not be used. The observation of declining library budgets might provide one explanation for the difference in observations about empty libraries in many African countries in comparison with well used libraries in Namibia. In Namibia community libraries have an annual acquisition budget (about 50 000 Euro for the whole community library network). The case libraries also had a very good new collection of textbooks. The usage figures of this collection demonstrated that it may have been one of the reasons to make the libraries so well used.

In relation to gender the users were more or less equally male and female, with slight majority of female users. In relation to age the questionnaire recorded users to four age groups: children under 10 years, young people (11-20 years), adults (21-65 yrs) and senior citizens (+65 yrs). Users were more or less equally young people and adults. Senior citizens were very few and used library basically for photocopying. The surprising result was that children were also very few. This finding seemed to be explained at least partly by the explanation provided by the library staff that they were not very inclined to promote usage by children because of the problems of space in one room libraries. However it also corresponds with Sturge's and Neill's (1998, 149-152) observations that younger children do not use libraries much in African countries, except later as a study place. In view of the alarming SAQMEC results of lack of functional literacy amongst grade six learners in Namibia, promoting children's books through libraries might be one the issues that need more attention. The other findings about the users demonstrated that adults used mainly the photocopy service or again library as a study place.

The principle usage pattern of community libraries was confirmed to be a place used as a conducive study and reading place, as expected in the working hypothesis. Almost 60% of users used the library as a study place. If all the functions that meant client spending time in the library, studying, reading, using computers, watching videos, listening to the radio or cassettes or just chatting were extracted from the usage patterns 77% of users used the library as a place to be. Even if the technology based services ICT, video, radio and cassettes, which are not available in all libraries, were left out, 70% of users used the library as place to study and read. The other preferred services were photocopy service and public ICT access. In relation to lending compared to Smith's (1999) results from British public libraries it can be observed that although lending was a way of using the library, the situation in these Namibian libraries differed clearly from Britain. Lending was not the major function of using the libraries. 64% of users did not borrow books and only 1.5% of clients used the library only for borrowing.

A surprising result was the high use of the new textbook collection. Close to half of learners and students used the library textbook collection either to read in the library or to borrow. Highest the figure was amongst secondary school learners, 57% of them used library textbooks. The need for textbooks must be based on the well known, prevailing problem of textbook provision in schools. How popular this collection was found to be, was still more surprising in view of the fact that textbooks do not belong to normal book collection provided by CLS, they were only provided by the three year NOLNet project. The popularity demonstrates real user need which would obviously need to influence the acquisition policy.

Library users were in fact very satisfied with the services. In this we need to take into account that these libraries belong to the group of community libraries, about one half of the network, which had received NOLNet support including photocopier, fax, tables and chairs and some of them air-conditioning to provide for conducive study place, textbooks, audiovisual equipment and materials and some of them public use computers and internet connectivity. However there were also critical expressions of needs not covered as well as suggestion of improving the service. Most of the requests concerned additional textbooks and public ICT service. Other problems were related to opening hours, too few staff members to assist clients, and lacking materials especially related to support materials to studies and employment searching. Requests and concerns in relation to other materials than textbooks focussed mainly of newspapers, popular magazines and materials in the local language. The structure of concerns expressed seems to confirm the impression that library was clearly perceived as a study institution and

expected to provide comprehensive resources in this regard. On the other hand the requests bring about the importance of photocopy service and emerging ICT service.

Sturges and Neill (1998), Mchombu (1991, 29) and other scholars who have studied the history and state of African library sector have come to the conclusion that the library services have basically deteriorated because they failed to respond to key economic and social needs of the African countries. The library professionals tend to stick to a concept, even outdated historical Anglo-American model of library functions and resources, instead of investigating and responding to actual needs of the communities of their own societies.

They argue that libraries should be re-structured to reflect the development processes in the country. The library strategies and priorities in resource allocation in relation to services and acquisition of materials should be based on strategies that have been developed based on what the country's current development plans are targeting to accomplish.

As described in chapter 2.2. Namibia experiences alarming problems in educational performance. For years only 12-24% of grade 12 students have achieved the minimum level of entrance to tertiary level. In the grade 10 examination results less than half of the learners qualify and continue their education at senior secondary level. Supporting educational performance is obviously a critical need to which the library sector can and needs to respond.

The Ministry of Education is combating a budget deficit every year mainly because of the increasing cost of teacher salaries in view of the also still expanding school network. In this environment the budget allocation for the library sector has remained the same at least for the last five years although number of community libraries has increased. It can be expected that the library sector may start declining heavily in view of the decline in real per library budget allocation. The only way to convince decision makers to improve resources is to be able to show significant usage and significant relevant usage of the libraries. This factor has been clearly demonstrated in the discussions on developing the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) (Ministry of Education 2007). It is a strategic plan with funding from the Government and development partners to improve Namibian education sector. The financial support is based on research and monitoring of impact of the programme to educational performance, improved labour force and economic outcomes. The strategic outcome requirements correspond with the analysis by Sturges and Neill (1998), Mchombu (1991) and

other researchers that in African countries the libraries need to be relevant to critical development needs and processes. Contemporary development programmes whether with outside financial contribution or Government funding include requirements that the impact has to be monitored and proved. In the library sector the required indicators may be number of users, type of users, especially number of learners and students, what libraries are used for, and the impact of library use on income generating processes and educational performance.

In the library sector one clear indicator to evaluate the significance of the institution is the number of library users and what they use the library for. In relation to this study the key aspects of library usage were library as a study place, textbooks, photocopy service and ICT service. Simply looking at the results one can assume that if these resources are in place libraries are heavily used. It is also assumed that the high usage is a clear indicator of what the communities need and in that regard library would be responding to key needs of the community. Mostly the usage was related to education. ICT and photocopier may also have been used for economic and work related needs as well as survival resource type of needs like producing copies of official documents and writing employment applications CVs, SME marketing brochures and reports – thus also supporting income generating activities in communities with limited resources. Indications that these are the important needs for the library use are clear. The potential needs would still need to be studied further and results on community information needs studies taken into account.

Based on the findings of this study the usage of libraries in fact is responding to at least one key socio-economic indicator, that is supporting educational performance. It can only be demonstrated due to the usage of the library and purpose it is used for. Scientific proof on whether library use actually improves educational performance would be another type of study. But the findings can be interpreted to show the relevance of the community library network to the education sector and user needs in Namibian communities. The findings also demonstrate through usage and suggestions, which are the key resources that need to be in place in the libraries to fulfil this role.

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APPENDICES



QUESTIONNAIRE Date:

Name of library/centre: _____

ALL LIBRARY / RESOURCE CENTRE USERS

Please take a brief moment and reply to this questionnaire by **NOLNet** (Namibian Open Learning Network). The questionnaire is confidential and you do not need to state your name. **Mark your answers with X in the boxes. PLEASE HELP US DEVELOP THIS LIBRARY TO SERVE YOU BETTER BY FILLING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TODAY.**

1. PLEASE MARK HERE (with X) WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE LIBRARY TODAY:

1.1. STUDIED

- To prepare an assignment
- Studied for an examination
- Did homework

WHEN YOU STUDIED DID YOU USE

- your own notes and books**
- textbooks** available at the library
- other library materials like encyclopaedias, dictionaries, journals**

1.2. CAME in TO SEE what is available at the library, LOOK AROUND

Did you find something **useful / interesting?**

- Yes
- Not really

1.3. Looked for **information about studies:** registration, bursaries etc.

1.4. Looked at **job advertisements**

1.5. Looked for **information on a specific issue**

1.6. Asked/Talked to the staff about **administrative matters**

1.7. READ NEWSPAPERS

1.8. READ MAGAZINES

1.9. READ novels, story books or children's **BOOKS**

1.10. Watched **VIDEOS / TV**

1.11. Listened to the **RADIO**

1.12. Listened to **language CASSETTES** or CDs **music CASSETTES** or CDs

1.13. Had **PHOTOCOPIES** made

Needed PHOTOCOPIES but the machine did not work



1.14. Sent a FAX 1.15. PHONED

Note: If you wanted to use the computer but they did not work or they were all occupied MARK WITH
THE REASON you wanted to use it for

1.16. Used the **COMPUTER** for:

- Email
- Study assignment
- Writing a CV, proposal or other official document
- Learning / practising to use computer
- Printing a document
- Playing games
- Used CD-ROMs
- Used Encarta, other encyclopaedia or dictionary installed in the computer
- Other: please specify:

Used **INTERNET** Please mark if you used Internet for the following purposes:

- For music
- For studies
- For buying something
- To find information (not related to studies)

.17. **BORROWED** (and/or returned)

- Novels, story books (FICTION)
- CHILDREN'S BOOKS
- TEXTBOOKS or other books for study purposes
- Books on practical information, FACTS (health, legal issues, construction, history, hobbies etc. - not for studies)

1.18. Came in to **REST** for a while or to have a **CHAT** with the staff or other people

Did something else in the library:
Please specify:

2. Did you find what you were looking for in the library? were you looking for:

Yes No If not, please tell what

3. Did you find something that you did not expect to find - something interesting or useful that you were not actually looking for? If you did, please tell what:

4. You are: Female Male

5. AGE 0-10 years 1-20 years 21-65 years Senior citizen

6. MOTHER TONGUE: _____ Other languages you speak / read: _____

7. OCCUPATION:

Farmer or a family member (livelihood based on own/family farm/cattle)

Teacher at preschool primary school secondary school other educational institution

Medical doctor, nurse or other medical occupation .

Employed: Any other occupation

Self-employed or owner of a enterprise (others than farmers)

House-wife

Unemployed or un-paid domestic worker

Learner / Student

Retired

Other (please use clear block letters) _____

8. If you work is your working place near by - walking distance from this library Yes No

9. In which town / village do you live: _____

10. If you ARE STUDYING CURRENTLY please mark here (with an X) the educational institution or type of school that you attend even if you only attend a course or study part-time:

Literacy course Primary school (or pre-primary) Secondary school NAMCOL

UNAM Polytechnic of Namibia NIED (BETD) College of Education

Vocational Training Centre Open Learning Group UNISA Technikon South-Africa

Other, please specify: _____

11. Studies are: 1. Full time 2. Part time 3. Through a distance course 4. A short course

12. Is your school / institution where you study located Near, walking distance from this library

In another part of this town/village In another town / village

13. IF YOU DO NOT STUDY any more / at the moment please mark the highest formal educational qualification you have completed

Literacy courses

Senior secondary certificate; IGCSE/HIGCSE (Grade 12)

Vocational training certificate or diploma

Part of primary/secondary school

University degree

Junior secondary certificate (grade 10)

Other: _____

14. How did you come to the library today: Walked

By bicycle By motorbike

By private car By taxi (or other public transport)

By horse/donkey

Other means. How? _____

15. Is the place where you live/stay Near, walking distance from this library

In another part of this town / village

In another town / village

16. SUGGESTIONS of necessary BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS or OTHER MATERIALS that the library should have to serve you better. Suggestions to develop the library (STAFFING, OPENING HOURS etc). Please use clear block letters.

KOVALONGIFI VEENGULUMAMBO ADISHE / NEENHELE DEEDJO DEHONGO

Liyamba u kufe okafimbo kaxupi u nyamukule omapulo taa landula mombapila ei. Oya yandywa ko **NOLNet**, (**Namibian Open Learning Network**). Okunyamukula omapulo aa osha fimana neenghono omolwokwoongela omauyeleele taa kwafele okuxumifa komesho nokuyambula po eenhele domambo (eebibilioteka). Dimbulukwa, ouyelele ou to yandje mombapila ei ou li oshiholekwa nonghee ino pumbwa u yandje edina loye.

1. DIDILIKA APA ESHI WA NINGA / LONGA MONGULUMAMBO NENA (X)

1.1. ONDE LI HONGA



- Onda ninga O ASSIGNMENT
- Onde li hongela EKONAKONO
- Onda ninga oshipewalonga shokeumbo shofikola

ESHI KWALI TO LIHONGO MONGULU - mambo owa longifa shike?

- Owa longifa oinyolwa yoye mwene nosho yo omalongifwambo oye mwene.
- Owa longifa omalongifwambo omongulumambo
- Owa longifa oinyolwa imwe yomongulumambo ngaashi: o encyclopaedia, omamboitya, nomambo oiningwanima imwe ilili yakeshefimbo

1.2. Onde ya ndi tale eshi shi li mOnduda yOmambo hai tale penya naapenya.

Eshi wa tala tala mongulumambo, owa mona mosha shina ongushu noshina oshilonga?

- Heeno
- Ahowe

1.3. Onda popya novanailonga vomOnduda yOmambo no nda lesa oinyolwa yopambeleva opo ndi mone ouyelele kombinga yelihongo: Okulishangifa, omakwafelo oshimaliwa shokulishangifa, nosho tuu.

1.4. Onda konga apa ta pa monika omashiivfwa oilonga

1.5. Onda konga ouyelele kombinga yoshinima shonhumba

1.6. Onda kundafana novanailonga vomOnduda yOmambo shi na sha noinima / oinakuwanifwa yopambeleva



1.7. Onda lesa Oifokundaneki

1.8. Onda lesa oifo i lili nokulili

1.9. Onda lesa omambo, omambohokololo ile omambo ounona

1.10. Onda tala **Oradio yOmudidimbe (TV) Oungalo (Video cassettes)**

1.11. Onda pwilikina **Oradio**

1.12. Onda pwilikina **oungalo (radio cassettes) moshiingilisha nomoilongwa ya yooloka fana**

Onda pwilikina **oungalo vomusika**

1.13. Onda longifa eshina lo kuringa **EEKOPI**

Okwali nda hala okuninga eekopi, ndele eshina ita lilongo.

1.14. Onda tuma etumwalaka lopambapila paunongononi (**ofaksa**)

1.15. Onda denga ongodi



Didilika: Ngeenge owali wa hala oku longifa okombiuta, ndee ita l longo, ile kapena omhito yo ku l longifa didilika no nhola **O** mokakololo omu .

1.16. Onda longifa **OKOMBIUTA** opo:

ndi Email

Ndi topaa tope (type) o assignment / oipewalonga yofikola

Ndi shange o CV yange ile omishangwa dimwe dopambeleva

Ndi lideule ngehee ndi na okulongifa okombiuta

Ndi nduluke omishangwa (print)

Ndi danauke omaudano

Ndi longife ouCD-ROM

Ndi longife oEncarta, o encyclopaedia ile o omamboitya oo a longelwa mokombiuta

Imwe: Ndjadjukununa /Yelifa:

Owa longifa **oInterneta**

OInterneta owe l longifa nelalakano lashike?

Oku pwilikina omusika Oku lihonga

Oku konga ouyelele Oku landa sha Imwe

1.17. Onda **ehela omambo omahokololo**
 Onda **ehela omambo ounona**
 Onda **ehela** omalongifwambo ile omambo
amwe e lili ena sha nelihongo
 Onda **ehela** omambo ena sha
nomauelele, oiningwanima yoshili (shina sha
noinima yoilonga ile yomeumbo, oiholike nima
nosho tuu, ihe na sha nelihongo)

1.18. Onda ya mOnduda yOmambo ndi fude po
kanini ile ndi popye novanailonga vomOnduda
yOmambo ile ovanhu velili nokulili

Imwe: Ndjadjukununa / Yelifa: _____

2. Owa mona eshi wa li to kongo monduda yOmambo? Heeno Ahowe
Ngee ino shi mona, yandja ouyelele kwaasho wa li to kongo:

3. Eshi wa lengaa lenga mongula-mambo owa hanga mo shimwe shina ongushu / oshilonga kwali ino
teelela oku shi hanga mo. Ngee owa hanga mosha, tu lombwela kutya oshi kwa shike.

4. Ove: Omukainhu Omulumenhu

5. Eedula doye: 0-10 11-20 21-65 66 ile di dulife po

6. Elaka eli wa nyama : _____ Omalaka amwe aa ho popi ile ho lesa: _____

7. **Oshilongaifano shoye** (didilika no X mokokololo aka ke li mondjila):

Omunamapya omunaimuna ile oshilyo sheumbo

Omulongifikola: Kindergarden/Oshikunino Ofikola yopedu Osekundofikola

Omulongi mo i putudilo imwe ilili

Ndoxotola, omuhakuli ile eifano li lili lopaunamiti

Omunashilonga

Onda likuta mwene, ondi munangeshefa (kakele kovanamapya /ovanaimuna)

Omukulukadi omuneumbo (ina kutwa moilonga)

Nghina oilonga / Ondimunashilonga womeumbo omuliyambi

Omulihongi / Omunafikola

Ondi li mopendjela

Imwe i lili. Yandja ouyelele. (Nyola neendada dakula da yela nawa): _____

8. Ngeenge oho longo, **onhele yoye yoilonga oili popepi nongulumambo?** Heeno Ahowe

9. Edina lodoolopa ile omukunda omo uli? _____

10. **Ngeenge ou li omulihongi paife didilika apa (no X) onhele apa to li hongele ile oludi lofikola ei ho i kuyo kutya nee oto lihongele edeulo lefimbo lixupi ile oto lihongo pakafimbo:**

- Okulihonga okulesha nokushanga Ofikola yopedu ile kindergarden/oshikunino Osekundofikola
 NAMCOL UNAM Polytechnic of Namibia NIED (BETD) College of Education
 Vocational Training Centre Open Learning Group UNISA Technikon South Africa

Pamwe pelili yandja ouyelele: _____

11. **Omalihongo ongaashi:** 1. Moipundi 2. Pakafimbo 3. Paumwene (distance)

4. Edeulo lefimbo lixupi

12. **Ofikola yeni / oshiputudilo-hongo sheni:** oshi li popepi nongulumambo
 Oshi li kombinga ikwao yodoolopa Oshi li koodoolopa / komukunda umwe ulili

13. **Ngeenge mopaife ngaha ito lihongo vali, ulika ondodo yopombada ei u na paife**

- Okulihonga okulesha nokushanga Odjapo yosekundofikola yOpombada;
 oshitopolwa shofikola yopedu ile osekundofikola IGCSE/HIGSCE (Ondodo 12)
 Odjapo yOsekundofikola yOpedu (Ondodo 10) Odjapo ile Odiploma yOungoba
 Onghatu yotete mouniversity (University degree) Imwe. Ndjadjukununa: _____

14. **Kongulumambo o weya ko ngahelipi nena?** Owa enda keemhadi Onombasikela

- Omota Ohauto yo paumwene Otaxi / oshi endifo shimwe shaa veshe
 Okandoongi / Onghambe Oshi endifo shilili: Ndjadjukununa:

15. **Onhele yoye apa uli / hokala** oili popepi nongulumambo

- oili kombinga i kwa o yodoolopa / yomukunda oili koodoolopa imwe ile komukunda u kwao

16. **Yandja omayele e na sha nomambo, oifokundaneki ile oinyolomwa imwe i lili ei u wete ya Pumbiwa okukala monduda yOmambo.**

Yandja yo omayele e na sha nexumifo komesho lOngulumambo (shi na sha novanailonga, efimbo lokuyeulula, nosho tuu). Nyola neendada dakula.

Otwa pandula unene kekwafo loye!