Author(s):	Namhila, Ellen Ndwshi; Sinikara, Kaisa; Iivonen, Mirja
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Ellen Ndeshi Namhila, Kaisa Sinikara & Mirja Iivonen

IMPROVING HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY: INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

1. Introduction

The chapter describes a joint project of Namibian and Finnish university libraries which aims at developing the knowledge, skills and competence of the staff at the University of Namibia Libraries (http://library.unam.na). Britz, Lor and Bothma (2007) have stated that libraries and other information services play a crucial role in the social and economic development of all countries on the African continent as they have played in developed countries. They also argue that it is very important to invest in the people in Africa – not only in primary education, but more specifically in higher education and the R & D (research and development) sector. We share their vision. Further, we believe that it is essential to invest in the staff working in the university libraries because the capacity of human resources of the library can make a difference to the capacity of human resources and the output of the university. As Iivonen and Huotari (2007) have stated, the competence, capabilities, and brainpower of the library staff are an essential part of the human capital of the whole university.

Staff training and development plays a crucial role in improving human resource capacity and the enhancement of job performance in the libraries, too. Mbagwu and Nwachukwu (2010) examined the training and development programmes and their effect on the staff at the Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri, Nigeria. They concluded that the training had a positive effect on job performance.

Namibia is a small developing country, which has recently emerged from an apartheid system where access to education, libraries and knowledge was provided to citizens on the basis of their skin colour. The Namibian education system has undergone a major transformation since the country's independence in 1990 – from several decades of a racially segregated apartheid education system to equal education for all. Earlier there was no training institution for librarians, although the Academy offered among others courses in school librarianship. The fully-fledged librarianship training started with the establishment of the University of Namibia in 1992, when the demand for librarians increased.

Apart from the libraries of tertiary institutions, such as the University of Namibia, with its several campus libraries and the Polytechnic of Namibia Library, the Namibian library sector is largely maintained by the Ministry of Education. In 2000, the Namibia Library and Information Service Act (Act no.4 of 2000) was passed. This act established the Namibia Library and Information Service (NLIS), which ensure that the country has a functional library network consisting of the National Library, public/community libraries (currently numbering 64), school libraries (supporting 1,760 schools, of which only 400 have functioning libraries), and 22 specialized ministerial libraries. All these types of libraries and the National Archives of Namibia are administered together within one single directorate under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.

We agree with Gross and Riyaz (2004) that libraries in small and developing countries tend to be disadvantaged because there is

often no critical mass of other professionals to share knowledge and provide advice and informal collegial support. Instead of struggling alone to implement fast changing library practices, the University of Namibia Library (UNAM Library) sought partnership with university libraries from more developed countries. The **UNAM Library wanted** to learn from the experiences of developed university libraries in Finland because the success of any organisation rests on the ability of its workforce to deliver. **A partnership programme with the Helsinki** University Library (HULib) and Tampere University Library (UTA Library) was initiated and resources for its implementation secured (Iivonen & Sinikara 2011). There are similar projects between Finnish and African libraries. The University of Eastern Finland Library is collaborating with universities in Egypt, Tanzania and Kenya. The other ongoing projects between Finnish and African libraries are mostly connected with the city libraries.

In this chapter we discuss the need to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and competence of the UNAM Library staff needed to bring about improved efficiency in performance outcomes and services rendered to the UNAM academic community. We describe the initiatives taken by the UNAM Library jointly with the HULib and UTA Library in Finland to plan and implement a tailor-made capacity building programme for the UNAM Library staff. Further, we analyse the collaboration between three university libraries in the framework of the partnership (Ståhle & Laento 2000). We note the added value achieved during the project, the integration of different intellectual capital, and the building of trust.

2. Namibia's road to a knowledge-based economy and society

There are several documents which blaze a trail for the future of Namibia. Namibia Vision 2030 (Office of the President 2004) is Namibia's long-term development strategy to transform the country from an economy based on raw material resources and agriculture to an economy based on value addition and knowledge, and to leave behind poverty and development country status by the year 2030. It is an articulation of national strategic development goals stating that, by the year 2030, Namibia will join the ranks of high-income countries, and afford all its citizens a quality of life that is comparable to that of the developed world. The Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP, see Namibia. Ministry of Education 2007) is a comprehensive sector-wide response to the call of Namibia Vision 2030 and National Development Plan (NDP3) (Office of the President 2008). Its key purpose is to substantially enhance the education and training sector's contribution to the attainment of strategic national development goals and facilitate the transition to a knowledge-based economy. The strategic objectives of ETSIP are equality, quality, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, economic growth and a pro-poor approach.

A knowledge-based economy and society is a national vision to which the whole country aspires. It is believed that an effective education and training system will ensure the availability of the relevant skills to propel the economy into value added products, services and innovation, leading to economic growth and ultimately to an improved quality of life for all Namibians. Both Namibia Vision 2030, NDP3 and ETSIP acknowledge a skills shortage in critical areas of Namibia's socio-economic development. Also, several studies have highlighted Namibia's inability to meet the demands of the economic sector for a skilled labour force (Hansohm & Vendetto & Ashipala 1999; Godana & Ogawa 2003; Westergaard-Nielsen & Hansohm & Motinga 2003;

Marope 2005). **Hence, Namibia Vision 2030, NDP3 and ETSIP urge** tertiary institutions in Namibia, particularly UNAM, to produce a competent labour force to tackle the developmental challenges facing the country. Shortage of skills has been identified as a critical element in transforming the Namibian economy into a value added economy and a knowledge-based society. A competent labour force is further considered as a prerequisite to promote economic growth and increase employment.

Since independence, Namibia had been characterized by heavy financial investment (Namibia. Ministry of Finance 2011) in its education system. This is because education is believed to have a greater multiplier effect on the entire economy of the country. As one such investment, the University of Namibia was established in 1992 with a mandate to provide qualified and competent labour force for the country. However, despite these high investments, Namibia is still confronted by a predicament of critical shortages of skills (Marope 2005; Office of the President 2010) and continues to rely on imported labour in its productive and reproductive sectors of the economy.

3. The University of Namibia and its library

The University of Namibia (UNAM) came into being on 31 August 1992, following the promulgation of the UNAM Act, Act No.18 of 1992. The University of Namibia has now grown into a multi-campus university with over 800 staff members and more than 17,000 students. It comprises eight academic faculties (Law, Education, Agriculture, Science, Medicine, Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences, Economics and Management Sciences) and nine campuses (Windhoek Main Campus, Khomasdal, Neudamm, School of Medicine, Katima Mulilo, Rundu, Ongwediva, Ogongo, Oshakati). **This** rapid expansion of the University has added to the already existing

shortage of qualified librarians in Namibia as each campus has a fully-fledged library structure with a minimum six staff members (Hifikepunye Pohamba, Oshakati and Ogongo Campuses) and eight regional centres located across the various regions of Namibia.

The UNAM Library network consists of the main library in Windhoek and nine fully-fledged campus libraries located in various parts of the country. The main library supports and supervises the network of nine campus libraries and ten resource centres of the regional centres. The challenges for the management and leadership over the network are the distances between Windhoek and each of the campuses (Katima Mulilo 1211km, Rundu 700km, Oshakati 708km) and the shortage of qualified staff, as well as lack of experience in the leadership and management of campus library services and staff.

The mission of the UNAM Library is to link faculties, departments and students with information enabling the University to achieve excellence in teaching and learning, research and study, and to preserve the institutional memory for posterity. Thus, the library exists primarily to support the curriculum and research programmes of the University. Moreover, the UNAM Library has been entrusted with the national mandate to make its resources available to the wider community in Namibia. (Namhila & Ndinoshiho 2012). The facilities, services and resources at the UNAM Library are therefore also used by members of the public irrespective of whether a user is affiliated to UNAM or not. In this way, the library is making meaningful contributions towards the attainment of the national development goals.

While carrying out these responsibilities with a sense commitment and dedication, the critical shortage of skilled staff in critical areas of modern librarianship limits the library's ability to make meaningful contributions to quality teaching, research and study. The majority of the library staff comes from backgrounds where the library tradition has not been part of their daily lives, as they lived in communities with no libraries and attended schools that did not have books and library

services. The user perception study (Matengu 2000) and a performance review process (Office of the University Librarian 2010) found gaps and mismatches between library staff performance expectations and their skills and competence.

The need for this project has its roots in a self-review process at the UNAM Library in 2008, after several attempts to improve internal processes and services to users. A team was appointed to formulate a document matching the services which the library was expected to provide with the existing skills in the library. The gap between performance expectations and skills and competence required was huge. Several steps were taken and this project is one of them.

The UNAM Library is facing several challenges. These challenges are well-articulated in the enclosed UNAM Library Annual Management Action Plan for 2011 and also in the University's five-year Strategic Plan (University of Namibia 2011). The UNAM Library has a staff of 47, but there are no PhD holders. There are only four holders of Master's degrees and three holders of Honors degrees. Eleven staff members hold Bachelor's degrees, and the remaining seven are Diploma holders. Twenty-one staff members (45 %) have no formal qualifications. This situation led the UNAM Library to identify training and staff development as a major issue. Attention was paid to developing the library's personnel resources into a force that would cope with the modern challenging library environment. The development of human resource capacity at UNAM Library is therefore a critical area for this institutional cooperation. The UNAM Library attaches great importance to human resource development as it affords staff an opportunity to upgrade their skills to enable them to cope with ever-changing practices and methods of providing information services in an academic environment.

4. The partners in enhancing human resource capacity

An expression of interest was presented by the UNAM Library to the HULib and the UTA Library in 2008. These two libraries in Finland are characterized by long traditions of highly developed library services, whereas the 20-year-old UNAM Library is still developing. The UNAM Library sought professional support from renowned and experienced libraries and aspired to benchmark its services and facilities against these highly developed libraries in Finland. In Finland, close collaboration between university libraries has been of benefit to all libraries. The main targets for the year 2020 have been published in the report of the Ministry of Education and Culture. (Opetuksen ja tutkimuksen toimintaympäristö 2020, 2009)

The HULib (http://www.helsinki.fi/library/) is the largest multidisciplinary university library in Finland. The University of Helsinki and UNAM signed a collaboration agreement in 1999. The HULib is open to all and offers unrestricted access to the sources of scholarly knowledge on site, but remote access to many services is restricted to members of the university. The HULib offers not only excellent collections in digital and printed format but also premises for studying and working. It operates on the four campuses according to disciplines, and its digital library is available on the university network. The HULib with 250 staff members of whom 50% have Master's degrees, and about 30% library education at the polytechnic level serve actively as experts and hold positions in national and international organizations. Cooperation with other university libraries in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area as well as research institutes operating under ministries and located on the University campuses is under constant development. The library is involved in European development projects. Cooperation is particularly active with universities belonging to the League of European Research Universities (LERU) as well as the Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER). The library has long-term

experiences to assist the UNAM Library to develop its human resource capacity through this cooperation.

The UTA Library (http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/kirjasto/english/index.php) is an integral part of an international research university. The library supports the whole university community and its goals by providing information, content and publishing services for researchers, teachers and students. The library offers a learning environment for study and research with IT facilities, rooms for group work, and teaching labs. The library develops its services as a member of the national and international library networks. It is active in IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) and in coordinating the Council of Finnish University Libraries 2011–2012. The UTA Library participates in teaching by providing students with the study skills and information literacy skills they need. It also has various guides on the net for students. The library has 70 employees of whom 55% have Master's degrees. The UTA Library possesses the capacity in modern librarianship to address the objective of this cooperation.

5. Joint project

In 2008, the UNAM Library submitted a letter of intent expressing interest in soliciting support for staff training, capacity building, exchange of experiences and sharing best practices with the HULib and the UTA Library. Meetings were held with the management of both libraries and mutual cooperation was jointly initiated. Funding was secured through the Embassy of Finland in Windhoek to define, plan and carry out project documentation during 2009.

This session was kick-started by a visit of the University Librarian of HULib and her delegation in November 2009 (Pirttiniemi 2009).

The programme of this visit included a tour of UNAM Libraries, and also in satellite campuses in Oshakati and Ogongo. These visits were meant to familiarize the Finnish colleagues with the physical infrastructure, facilities, status of collections, staffing levels, conditions of development and capacity and the distance between the main campus library and satellite campuses libraries. The UNAM Library appointed a core project team of six staff members to work on this project. The project documentation is an articulation of what these three libraries intend to do and why; specific areas of cooperation and how they would be carried out; and which outcomes and or impact each area is expected to deliver.

The joint project planning and documentation team collected and analysed empirical evidence from the UNAM Library work-flow processes and practice in Windhoek. This was supported by observations at Neudanm and Oshakati campus libraries. Following an analysis of the empirical data and observation and the mismatch between the expected performance and the skills available at UNAM libraries, eight focal areas of cooperation were identified:

a) Process analysis and policy development;
b) Research and academic writing, publications;
c) Content development for Information Literacy (IL) instruction;
d) Pedagogical skills to impart IL skills to students and academic staff;
e) Collection development and management;
f) Access to electronic information resources;
g) Marketing of library products and services;
h) Quality assurance and benchmarking.

These focal areas were further elaborated into project documentation with key activities, measures and targets. The project documentation was submitted as a proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland for funding. The top management of the partner universities

supported the proposal, but the initiative also received public support both in Finland and Namibia.

The Ministry is funding the development-cooperation of the universities by the HEI ICI (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument) programme. The project falls under the mandate of the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). CIMO is an organization for international mobility and cooperation, providing expertise and services to clients at home and abroad. Established in 1991, CIMO is an independent agency under the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The funding for this cooperation was approved for a period of two years June 2011–December 2012.

6. Key activities to produce the expected results

The wide-ranging activities support long-affecting change and different ways of learning. The breakthrough especially of digital culture and the rapid changes in the information environment require new competences of the staff.

Seminars

The more profound seminars have been carried out in Windhoek. The launching seminar in October 2011 and the follow-up seminar in April 2012 have been intensive training periods of about a week. The trainers were Finnish (four from Helsinki and four from Tampere) and Namibian experts. Forty Namibians participated in the seminars. The seminars have included many kinds of learning, discussion, teamwork and reporting of the results. (**Iivonen & Toivonen & Nurminen** 2011; Helminen 2012.)

Staff exchange

Standards and responsibilities for staff exchange were created. The staff members of the UNAM Library prepared an application including areas of interest, knowledge gaps, learning outcomes and a commitment statement to share skills and report outcomes. The selection for staff exchange was made in the UNAM. The UNAM librarians usually worked two weeks at the HULib and two weeks at the UTA Library.

The exchange weeks made it possible to review and benchmark procedures in user education, collection development and management and leadership issues. Discussions with specialists and detailed analyses of different topics proved useful. (Helminen 2011; Iivonen et al. 2011.)

Research and publications

Training workshops on academic writing and publishing have been a part of the collaboration. Evidence-based librarianship has been taught through presentations and surveys. This publication is the outcome of co-authoring during the project.

7. Project implementation

The implementation of this cooperation began in June 2011 and will end in December 2012. Therefore concrete outcomes from this cooperation are still anticipated. This chapter reflects only the progress made towards the realization of the expected outcomes. Despite the very ambitious expected results, the cooperation is being implemented in a relatively short period of time, a problem acknowledged by the cooperating partners and the funding agency. However, the partners have made headway in some areas as described below.

Research and academic writing

Research and writing skills take time to develop, especially in academia, where a set of certain standards and conventions have to be mastered. However, there are some positive indicators that can be attributed to the implementation of this cooperation. The most notable are the research papers presented by UNAM librarians at the seminar held in April 2012, following a successful seminar on this topic in October 2011 and the book chapters included in this book. Engaging in actual research will contribute towards achieving the desired outcome. Through this cooperation UNAM Library staff acquired writing skills. Hopefully they will continue writing to sustain the skills acquired.

Development of information literacy instruction programme

This objective was one of the critical areas tackled at the seminar in April 2012. Finnish librarians shared different strategies and approaches on how to develop information literacy (IL) content and assessments. Many ideas around the format of an IL programme were evinced. Several ideas were presented to enable UNAM librarians to address an IL programme. It can be assumed that UNAM librarians now have an in-depth understanding of the factors to be taken into account in developing an IL programme. The most challenging part appears to be the next step to set the process of developing the IL content in motion.

Pedagogical skills

Pedagogical skills were considered in the seminar in April. So far little progress has been made toward developing pedagogical skills among UNAM librarians, partly because of the lack of IL content as well as a

form/method of evaluation. Ideas were shared at the seminar and the main conclusions were that practical training on presentation skills and instructional skills is still needed. It can be assumed that UNAM librarians have learnt how the Finns teach IL skills to students. Some UNAM librarians are teaching at the LIS Department at UNAM and have gained pedagogical skills in this process. These librarians should also share their teaching skills with colleagues and be at the forefront of teaching library users.

Collection development and management

Collection development and management was an issue in the seminar in October. Although much good has been done to update the collection development policy, it is still in draft format. It needs to be enriched further in order to accommodate the needs of new campuses as well as the emerging sources of information, i.e., e-Books. With regard to collection management and evaluation UNAM librarians need to harmonize collection development and management tools to ensure that the core materials to support the curriculum are always available. Such tools will also be useful to new librarians in the sense that they will serve to reveal the gaps and areas that need to be further strengthened.

Marketing of library services

In the seminar in April UNAM librarians learnt different strategies by which to market library services. A structure with the main features of the UNAM Library marketing strategy was formulated. Various UNAM Library stakeholders were identified through group work. However, the marketing strategy itself is still needed.

Quality assurance and benchmarking

This objective is based on the UNAM Library's strategic objectives formulated following an environmental analysis of users' needs, of their satisfaction and perception of various library services and collections. An assessment tool was acquired and it is expected to gauge the level of satisfaction with the library's services and collections. Nevertheless, it will only be after this tool has been administered to users that the library will be in a position to benchmark its services against those of other libraries using similar tools. The attachment of UNAM Library staff to the HULib and UTA Library has been a critical learning and benchmarking experience.

Process analysis and policy development

Some progress has been made with regard to library operating policy, which is currently in draft format and needing more work. Fortunately the process has been started and a draft policy is available.

8. A partnership of three libraries

The joint project of the UNAM Library, HULib and UTA Library offers a good example of partnership between university libraries in different countries. The partnership includes the achievement of added value, the integration of intellectual capital, and the building of trust (Ståhle & Laento 2007, see also Huotari & Iivonen 2005; Iivonen & Huotari 2007).

The origin of the project was in the search for added value. There was a call to enhance human resource capacity at the UNAM Library. It was clearly recognized that for this the Finnish partners

were needed. As we have described earlier, the added value has already been produced and both cognitive and affective results achieved. It is worth noting that the Finnish partners have also been able to learn about international collaboration and as affective results took great delight in the collaboration.

The partnership means the integration of intellectual capital which includes human, structural and relational capital. The main content of the project has been the sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences. In addition to knowledge of people, work processes and organizational learning and innovation methods have been covered.

The partnership is based on trust. In inter-organizational trust the pillars of trust are the multiplicity and **open-endedness of rela-**tionships, **frequency and openness of communication, and the right** balance of autonomy and dependence (Lane & Bachmann 1998). Because three university libraries and their many staff members have participated in this project, it has offered a good opportunity to learn trust. It has been particularly crucial that the communication and interaction have taken place at various levels of the libraries, not only at the top level.

9. Conclusion

In a knowledge-based economy and society the knowledge, skills and competence of the people are the key factors for success. Namibia has a very ambitious vision for the year 2030 but a relatively short history of independence and an equal education system. The rapid education of the people at all levels in society is a demanding task because the country has to **catch up with more developed countries in a very** short time period. **However, through the development of human** resource capacity the country can make the leap of the tiger. In this

endeavour, improving the level of higher education is important and the contribution of the university library significant.

In this chapter we described the joint project of one Namibian and two Finnish university libraries focusing on the development of the knowledge, skills and competence of the staff at the UNAM Library. Although the scope of the project was very wide, covering many important and essential topics, in some areas, e.g. information literacy, it was possible to proceed to in-depth examination. The main activities during the project were seminars, staff exchange programmes for Namibians in Finland, and co-authoring, which produced this book. All key activities overlapped with each other: the topics of the chapters were discussed in the seminars and during the Namibians' visits to Finland. Considering the time frame of this project, it is not yet easy to measure the impact which the project has had on the knowledge, skills and competence of the staff of the UNAM Library, but the future looks promising.

The joint project was a learning process for all parties. We firmly believe that at a certain level, UNAM librarians gained a basic understanding of the approaches used by their Finnish colleagues. However, the topics covered in the seminars are the topics which need continuous training and learning, also among Finnish librarians. The global information environment is changing so rapidly that everyone has to update her/his skills and knowledge. The seminars offered a good opportunity to share our professional knowledge, which benefited all participants, as did the programmes for staff exchange.

Further, the joint project offered a platform for learning academic writing and co-authoring. As described elsewhere in this book (Lehto & Matangira & Shatona & Kahengua 2012), although many Namibian and Finnish librarians followed and read library and information research literature regularly or occasionally, only some of them had published a scholarly publication. The situation was very similar both in the UNAM Library, HULib and UTA Library.

The valuable learning outcome from the project for all participants was the learning of international collaboration. Collaboration is always challenging because the participants bring to it their own experiences, working styles, attitudes and worldviews. International collaboration is challenging in numerous ways because of the different historical, geographical and social-economic situations of various countries. Commitment to the project and trust building was needed from all parties. It was also valuable to take international collaboration into the daily routines. Although both HULib and UTA Library are active in international library organizations, the staff exchange programmes offered a more concrete perspective on international partnership.

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