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Hello to Helsinki!

Stephen Parker

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The World Library and Information Congress 2012, 78th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, will take place at the Helsinki Exhibition & Convention Centre in Helsinki, Finland. In preparation for the Congress, and to give those unable to attend a taste of what they are missing, we open this issue with a well-illustrated article, 'The Finnish library system - open collaboration for an open society', by Kimmo Tuominen, Director, Jyväskylä University Library, and Jarmo Saarti, Library Director of the University of Eastern Finland. The article presents a short history of Finnish libraries and librarianship, starting with the development of a written culture in Finland in the 15th century AD and continuing to the evolution of the public library network from the 17th century onward. From the beginning of the independence in 1917, libraries have played an important part in the development of an open and democratic society in Finland, and there are now public libraries in all municipalities in addition to higher education and special libraries, all of which constitute a modern library network open to all citizens that utilizes modern library technologies.

The second paper in this issue takes different approach to a completely different topic. 'The information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers: A review of research', by Md. Shariful Islam of the University of Rajshahi and S.M. Zabeed Ahmed of the University of Dhaka, both in Bangladesh, reviews research studies on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in both developed and developing countries. Their analysis suggests that the information needs of rural communities from all countries are very similar, although rural communities they do vary from region to region and from country to country depending on socio-economic conditions. These needs are mostly related to the daily life of rural dwellers.

The next paper is a revised version of a paper presented at the WLIC in San Juan in 2011. In 'Public libraries in Africa - agents for development and innovation? Current perceptions of local stakeholders',

Monika Elbert, David Fuegi and Ugne Lipeikaite, all from EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries), present a methodology and the preliminary results of a study of the perceptions of stakeholders and the general public towards public libraries in six African countries. The goal was to understand the perceptions of national and local stakeholders (municipalities, ministries, public agencies, media, etc.) and the public (including non-users) in public libraries in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe about the potential of public libraries, and to understand how these stakeholders could be positively influenced to create, fund, support or to use public libraries. The study found that a majority of respondents in all groups surveyed, including non-users of public libraries, had very positive sentiments about libraries, which were seen as an extension of the educational process, despite their limitations in technology-related services due to a lack of facilities. Libraries were seen as essential, both to the individual as well as to the community, but need to do more to demonstrate their value to the community, going beyond the lending of books and providing study facilities.

We remain in Africa, but again with a change of topic, with the next paper. In 'Internationalization of information science education in Nigeria: A review of attempts by the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science', Wole Michael Olatokun of the University of Ibadan and Samuel C. Avemaria Utulu of Redeemer's University, both in Nigeria, examine the issue of internationalization of information science education in Nigeria with practical examples reported from experiences at the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science (ARCIS). ARCIS was established in 1990 through the joint efforts of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and UNESCO. One of its primary objectives, as a regional centre, was, to internationalize its processes, functions and curriculum. This paper highlights achievements ARCIS has recorded in this respect and the challenges it faces due to political experiences in

Nigeria and competing needs of units and departments at the University of Ibadan. The authors conclude that the internationalization future for ARCIS is bright.

The original version of the final paper in this issue was also presented at the WLIC in San Juan, where it was awarded the IFLA LIS Student Paper Award for 2011. This revised and expanded version of 'Access to information legislation as a means to achieve transparency in Ghanaian governance: Lessons from the Jamaican experience', by Cletus D. Kuunifaa of Long Island University in the USA reviews the anticipated

implementation challenges of the freedom-of-information (FOI) law in Jamaica, and the lessons Ghana stands to learn to improve on its FOI bill, currently at a deliberative stage. The paper considers the lack of transparency in government or the public sector as a result of lack of access to governmental or public information, makes a comparative analysis, and provides recommendations, especially for Ghana.

If you can make it to Helsinki in August, we'll look forward to seeing you there. If not, then maybe next year in Singapore!



The Finnish library system – open collaboration for an open society

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Abstract

The article presents a short history of Finnish libraries and librarianship. The written culture in Finland started in the 15th century AD. The Reformation meant the eventual outbreak of the Finnish culture, both from the point of view of the religious and academic cultures. The Academy of Turku was established in 1640. The public library network started to evolve from the 17th century onward. From the beginning of the independence, i.e. 1917, libraries have played an important part in the development of an open and democratic society. At present there are public libraries in all the municipalities as defined by the Public Library Act, in addition to the Finnish higher education and special libraries that constitute a modern library network open to all citizens that utilizes modern library technologies.

Keywords

libraries, history, Finland, library network, Finland, cultural history, Finland

Finland, with a population of 5.2 million, is a parliamentary democratic republic in Northern Europe, situated between Sweden and Russia. The population is largely homogenous, official languages being Finnish (91.2 percent) and Swedish (5.5 percent). Finland's geopolitical position has strongly influenced its culture. In the 12th Century the Swedes converted the Finns to the Roman Catholicism and the country was a Swedish province until the 19th Century. In 1809, as a result of Russo-Swedish War, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia. In 1917, Finland won its complete independence: it became a Western Democracy with a President and a unicameral Diet with 200 members. During World War II, Finland defended its freedom and resisted Soviet invasions. Finland was able to remain a sovereign state but lost some territory in the east. After the war, Finland transformed itself from a farm/forest economy into a diversified modern industrial economy; per capita income is now on par with the rest of Western Europe. In 1995 Finland joined the European Union and in 1999 Finland was the only Nordic state to join the euro system at its initiation.

Introduction

The primary aim of the Finnish library system is to provide information freely for everyone, irrespective of social status, age or place of residence. In this respect, Finnish public libraries are real vanguards of freedom of information. In addition, all Finnish university libraries, and even the Library of Finnish Parliament, are open to everyone. "Openness" is not just a word but a philosophy and a real practical way of life in Finnish libraries. This guiding principle can be seen both in library architecture and in library policy. For example, one does not need to be a Member of Parliament to use the parliamentary library or an academic to use the services of Finnish research libraries.

Culturally, the Finns hold reading and literacy in high esteem. Faith in the power of information and knowledge is especially strong. Section 12 of the Constitution of Finland (731/1999) states that everyone has

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Figure 1. A spread from the Missale Aboense (1488) © The Jyväskylä University Library.

freedom of expression. This freedom contains “the right to express, disseminate and receive information, opinions and other communications without prior prevention by anyone”. In addition, “everyone has the right of access to public documents and recordings.” Finns are pragmatic and egalitarian and they want to put the acquired information resources into maximum use for the benefit of all.

Finland is an example of a Nordic welfare state providing high quality education opportunities, equality promotion, and a national social security system. Finland has been a success story in many respects. *Newsweek* magazine chose Finland as the best country in the world in 2010. According to a Gallup World Poll survey, Finland and Denmark are the happiest nations in the world. Transparency International assessed Finland as one of the least corrupt nations (fourth after Denmark, New Zealand and Singapore). In the World Economic Forum’s recent index, Finland was the fourth most competitive country. According to studies by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Finnish pupils have been among the best learners in the world (best in reading literacy, fourth in mathematical literacy and third in scientific literacy).

The Finnish library system, in its integrated entirety, is a prominent feature of the country’s

welfare state model. Together with free education, the libraries are seen as an important way and means to give equal opportunities for all through democratic access to information and knowledge. Providing development possibilities to all citizens has been considered as a way to reduce social tensions that previously existed in Finnish history – for example, during 1918, when there was a bloody civil war between the Reds and the Whites. If there are large groups of desperate people within a society with nothing to lose, the stability of the nation could be at stake. Thus, libraries have been one means to stabilize the social situation. Together with other social institutions, libraries have been successful in fulfilling this function in Finnish society. One example of the success of the Finnish welfare state model is that in the PISA reading literacy studies, the number of pupils performing poorly was lower than in the other OECD countries. The gap between rich and poor has not been too wide in Finland, although it has grown in the past two decades.

In the 21st century, the Finnish welfare state model is facing two primary challenges: an aging population (combined with a low birth rate) and the fluctuations of an export-driven globalized economy. Both of these factors are responsible for the on-going renovation of the public sector and related legislation in Finland. The public sector has to be adjusted to the



Figure 2. The NLF's main building is designed by architect C.L. Engel in 1836 and was built in 1840–45. The building is one of the best known examples of the late 19th century Empire style in Finland and an important example of the European official library buildings of its time. Tiina Tuukkanen © The National Library of Finland.

economic realities and to the fact that the proportion of the workforce in the population will decline in the very imminent future.

All the library sectors are facing the challenges confronting the present welfare state model. The government has set as one of its goals a reduction in the number of municipalities. For the public libraries this has meant both mergers and regional libraries, i.e. libraries that are jointly managed by several municipalities. Furthermore, the restructuring of higher education is affecting the situation of research libraries and libraries in polytechnics (also called 'universities of applied sciences'). The next challenge will be a possible radical downshifting in the numbers of students. With smaller age groups, the number of young people wishing to attend university will obviously decline. This will very probably affect the funding and structure of higher-education libraries. (c.f. Muhonen, Nygrén and Saarti 2011.)

The typical answer to economic and other challenges in Finnish libraries has been collaboration and networking. For example, interlibrary lending has traditionally enabled resource sharing between different libraries and thus promoted effective use of the collections. Collaboration has been essential because distances are long and library collections are concentrated in the biggest cities and universities. It remains to be seen how libraries and the welfare state model on which they are based will be able to cope with the

above-mentioned difficult challenges. The present article aims to provide a historical background and assesses the current state of the Finnish library system in 2012.

History and evolution of libraries in Finland

Brief history

The history of libraries in Finland can be roughly divided into three phases:

- pre 19th century
- nationalistic movement in the 19th century
- independence and the growth of the modern library network.

The Finnish reading culture started to evolve during the 17th century, although the culture of writing really only evolved from the late 19th century when primary school education was initiated. This also meant that Finnish is quite young as a literary language.

The libraries of the Middle Ages in Finland (from the 12th century to the 16th) were established by the two cultures predominant in Finland: the Catholic Church and Swedish aristocracy. These cultures were heavily dependent on handwritten documents and this created also the need for libraries and archives. Very few of these books and manuscript have survived –

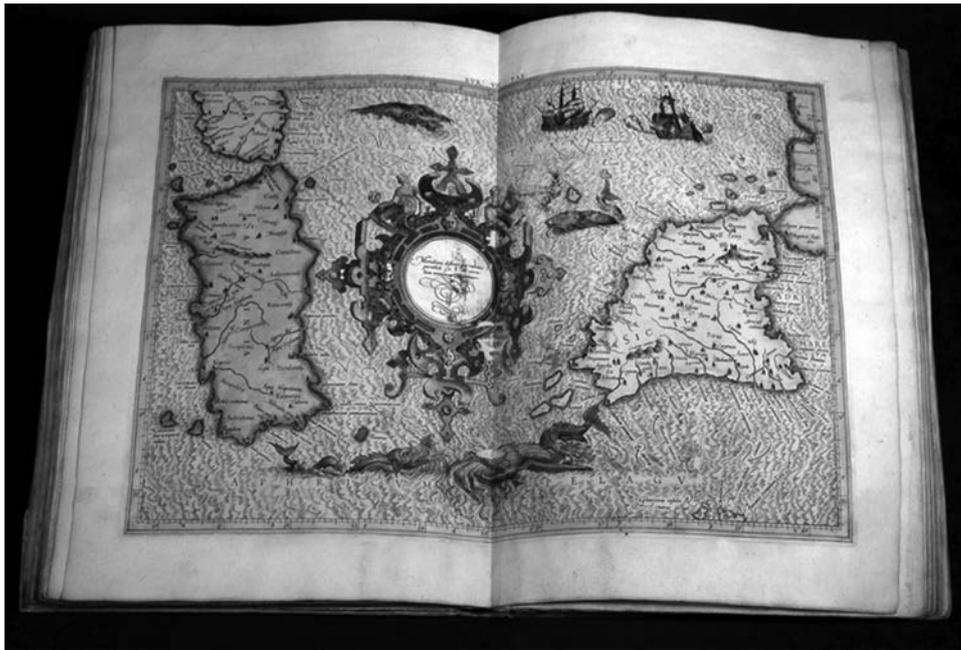


Figure 3. Copper-engraved maps by the great cartographer Gerhardus Mercator (1512–1594). The second and comprehensive edition of Ptolemy's maps was acquired by A.I. Nordenskiöld in 1885. Maps are part of the Nordenskiöld Library at the NLF. Kari Timonen © The National Library of Finland.

this is due to the fact that few copies were made, while because of its geographical location, Finland was under constant attack. The first Finnish book, *Missaele Aboensea*, was printed in 1488 in Lübeck. (Mäkinen 2009a: 16–18.) As the name of the book suggests, *Missaele Aboensea* was a prayer book used in the Mass in Åbo, the Swedish name for the city of Turku.

The Reformation had an enormous impact on the birth of the Finnish written language and helped promote literary culture. Many Finnish clergymen travelled to Europe to study, e.g. Bishop Mikael Agricola, who translated the New Testament into Finnish in 1548. The first Finnish university, the Academy of Turku, was established in 1640. Both the church and the new Academy started to build their own libraries. (Mäkinen 2009a: 27–28.)

From the 17th century onward, the reading culture and public libraries started to evolve. Especially from the 18th century onwards the church libraries were also opened to the general public. In addition, private reading clubs started to evolve in the late 18th century, which meant that, besides sacred texts, also the reading of the non-religious books started. The first Finnish public library was opened in Vaasa in 1794. (Mäkinen 2009a: 31–46.)

The 19th century represented a paradigm shift in the evolution of libraries and literary culture. Finland was now governed by Russia, not Sweden, but in fact this meant that Finland became more independent.

National romanticism started to influence the culture and especially promoted the concept that Finnish should be an official language. Thus, in 1863 it was decreed that within the next 20 years Finnish would have the status of an official language along with Swedish.

The evolution of public libraries partly grew out of the concept of reading clubs. Some commercial public libraries were also founded (Mäkinen 2009a: 68.) However, the most important institution affecting the development of public libraries was the popular education movement, which stressed the importance of a nationwide system of public libraries. The first public library was founded in 1803. (Mäkinen 2009b: 82.) Between 1836 and 1870, a total of 426 libraries was established in Finland. (Mäkinen 2009c: 146.)

Even though the foundation of the modern Finnish library system were laid during the time of relative autonomy in the 19th century, the growth of an extensive library system happened during the 20th century, mostly after Independence. This project had started at the very beginning of the 20th century when Finnish library activists actually adopted the idea of an American type of public library. This meant that most cities started to open their own public libraries. (Vatanen 2009: 251–253.) The process was greatly accelerated when the state started to fund the libraries and library legislation started to appear. In 1928, there were already about 1700 libraries in Finland (Eskola 2009: 291).



Figure 4. The Entresse library is situated in a shopping mall in Espoo. (Photo Kimmo Brand).

The eventual growth of modern Finnish libraries, and especially their increased use, started after the Second World War. The most important impetus was the Library Act passed in the year 1961, which categorized high quality public libraries as one of the main services to be provided by the growing welfare state. (Mäkinen 1990d: 385.) The number of Finnish universities started to expand and universities were established throughout the country. This meant that by the end of the 1970s both the academic and public library network could be used by all the citizens and was free of charge. The 1990s and beginning of the new millennium saw the birth of automation and the digitalization of the Finnish libraries (Saarti 2006).

Legislation and strategies

From the European perspective, Finland is a country with a long tradition of Public Library Acts. The first Library Act came into force in 1928 and it already laid down some basic principles that are followed today. For example, since the first Library Act, the use and lending of library collections have been free of charge.

The Act was amended in 1961 and 1986. The currently valid versions of the Library Act (904/1998) and Library Decree (1078/1998) came into force in 1999. The Act defines the basic mission of public libraries as follows:

“The objective of the library and information services provided by public libraries is to promote equal

opportunities among citizens for personal cultivation, for literary and cultural pursuits, for continuous development of knowledge, personal skills and civic skills, for internationalisation, and for lifelong learning. Library activities also aim at promoting the development of virtual and interactive network services and their educational and cultural contents.” (Library Act 904/1998, 2 §.)

In recent decades, Finland has been striving to build a strong, knowledge-based economy and the current Library Act reflects those goals. It aims to support and encourage free access to information and culture and to ensure the availability of high-quality information for all citizens regardless of their place of residence or financial standing. According to the Act, the library is a basic municipal service. Therefore, it is the duty of local authorities to arrange library and information services for their inhabitants. The Act states that the Ministry of Education and Culture “shall be the national administrative authority for library and information services” (7 §). The six Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment are the regional administrative library authorities. The Centres manage the regional implementation and development tasks of the state administration, and their general goal is to promote regional competitiveness, well-being and sustainable development. The basic functions of the centres concerning public libraries are stipulated in the Library Decree (1078/1998). For example, the Centres monitor and promote library and information services, and

evaluate both accessibility and quality of these services.

The new Universities Act (558/2009), which came into force in 2010, changed the status of universities, transforming them from institutions directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education into independent institutions; i.e. they became corporations or foundations, under public law. According to the Act, the universities “shall have autonomy with a view to securing the freedom of higher academic and art education”. This autonomy means that they have responsibility in decision-making in matters relating to internal administration. As library issues are seen to be a part of the administration, university libraries in Finland are run and financed by the institutions, i.e. the respective universities, that they primarily serve. This is also the case for polytechnic libraries. Thus, all productive cooperation between higher education libraries is based on mutual consensus.

The Act on Collecting and Preserving Cultural Materials (1433/2007) came into force in 2008 and broadened the scope of materials of which a legal deposit copy is required. In addition to printed products and sound recordings, the Act covers online materials and radio and television recordings. The Act obliges the National Library of Finland to retrieve and record public online materials located on Finnish Internet servers as well as online materials that are located on foreign servers but are particularly intended for the Finnish public. The task of the National Audiovisual Archive is to archive radio and television programs (Jansson 2009.) Access to digital legal deposit copies is extended also to other legal deposit libraries in Finland, i.e. the university libraries of Jyväskylä, Oulu and Turku, Åbo Akademi University Library (library of the Swedish language university) and the University of Eastern Finland Library. At these libraries and at the Library of Finnish Parliament one is able to access digital legal deposit copy materials through dedicated terminals.

In addition to legislation, there is a need for national policies and strategies that ensure adequate library funding and purposeful development of libraries. The public library sector has been extremely active in developing national strategies. ‘Library Strategy 2010, Policy for Access to Knowledge and Culture’ (2003) was one of the first European public library strategies. It presented a vision of libraries as one way in which public authorities could guarantee the prerequisites for citizenship in the information society. According to this strategy, libraries have an extensive role to play in learning, teaching and active citizenship. The strategy stressed the necessity of

coordinated work in production of local, regional and national web services.

‘Library Development Program 2006–2010’ (2006) emphasized the importance of libraries in rural and provincial areas. It stated that modern, robust and diverse library services have “a decisive role in the vitality and allure of provincial areas and in the prevention of marginalization and polarization of the population”. ‘Finnish Public Library Policy 2015’ (2009) responds to new types of learning and seeking information as well as to the new ways of using the library. Libraries, both collaborating and competing with other actors in the information field, have to be able to react swiftly to change. Future success cannot be taken for granted but must be earned; libraries can respond to upcoming challenges only by focusing on expertise and emphasizing quality. They must be able to provide the kind of added-value services that are not available from potential or actual competitors. (Wigell-Ryynänen 2010.)

‘Teaching and research environment 2020’ (2009) concentrates on the development of the libraries of universities and polytechnics as a part of the reformed higher education system. The strategy sees university and polytechnic libraries as key infrastructural components in teaching, learning and research. The vision states that international cooperation is a significant part of library work and in 2020 “Finnish higher education students, teachers and researchers will have access to an international digital operating environment and skills in its use”. Library services will be customer-driven and produced in a network in which the Finnish higher education libraries, the National Library (as a producer of centralized services) and international cooperation partners are active operators (Vestala and Halvari 2010; Hormia-Poutanen et al. 2011.) The fulfilment of this vision is well under way in today’s Finnish higher-education library network.

Libraries and library actors in Finland

Libraries with special national responsibilities

The mission and status of the National Library of Finland (the NLF) is regulated by the Universities Act (558/2009). Administratively, the NLF is an independent institute within the University of Helsinki. However, the Ministry of Education and Culture allocates discretionary state subsidies for the NLF through the contract for the National Library and for special long-term projects such as the National Digital Library. According to the Act, the mission of the NLF is to be responsible for the storage, maintenance and



Figure 5. A librarian and two students at the Jyväskylä University Library. (Photo Petteri Kivimäki).

accessibility of the national cultural heritage. Furthermore, the NLF develops and offers national services for research libraries, public libraries, polytechnic libraries and special libraries as well as promoting national and international cooperation in the library field.

The NLF is over 470 years old; it can trace its origins to the establishment of the Academy of Turku in 1640. The NLF's further development was closely connected to the destiny of the Finnish nation, as a part first of the Kingdom of Sweden and later of the Russian empire. There is a letter from the Royal Chancellery in 1707 which ordered all printing houses in the Swedish realm to hand over one copy of each publication to the country's universities. During the years 1809–1917, Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian empire. Therefore, the University received all publications printed in Russia between 1820 and 1917 as legal deposits. Due to these legal requirements, the NLF nowadays holds the world's largest Slavonic collection outside Russia. The comprehensiveness of this collection has expanded in recent decades because of an agreement between Russia and Finland on paying Soviet debt to Finland with valuable research material. (International Evaluation of the National Library of Finland 2011: 13–14.)

The Academy of Turku was destroyed in 1827 in a disastrous fire that razed the historical downtown part of the city. The Library of the Academy had collected over 40,000 volumes, and these were all lost in the fire, except for 800 items that were on loan at that time. Thus, the Library had to rebuild its collection

from scratch. The Library, which was moved to Helsinki in 1828, received major donations from Russia and elsewhere. It became a part of the Imperial Alexander University of Finland. Almost two years after Finland's independence, in 1919, this higher education institution was renamed the University of Helsinki and the library became the Helsinki University Library. The Act on the Freedom of the Press came into force in the same year. That Act contained the obligation to assign legal deposits and it established the network of legal deposit libraries in Finland (*ibid.*: 14)

Over the past four decades, the NLF's status and mission have been redefined through new regulations. From 1997, the Library was designated as the National Library and in 2006 the name was officially changed from Helsinki University Library to National Library of Finland. Furthermore, the Library's role as service provider for the whole Finnish library network was extended by Amendment 556/2006 to the Universities Act. At the beginning of 2008, the Act on Collecting and Preserving Cultural Materials (1433/2007) expanded the duties of the NLF as recipient of legal deposits to include the retrieval and storage of online materials. (*ibid.*: 14)

The NLF is nowadays a central part of the Finnish information infrastructure. The current collections of the Library consist of more than 6 million publications and other items as well as millions of files. The collections comprise significant numbers of valuable rare books, manuscripts and treasures that are internationally unique. Examples include the collection of mediaeval parchment fragments, the Hebraica



Figure 6. The public library of Kauhajoki. (Photo Pirjo Pieski).

Collection, the Slavonic Library, the Manuscript Collection and the Monrepos Library. The A. E. Nordenskiöld Collection is included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register as a reference resource in the history of cartography.

The National Collection is the most comprehensive archive repository of the national imprint in Finland. A large part of the material has been obtained as legal deposit copies. In addition to domestic printed products and sound recordings, the National Collection also contains foreign materials in the Finnish language as well as materials published by Finns or which concern Finland. (Collection Development Policy 2008: 5–7.) The National Collection is catalogued in the Fennica and Viola databases. On 1 August 2011, Fennica contained 893,999 records, i.e. metadata on books and serial publications, maps, audiovisual materials, and electronic publications¹. The Viola is a national discography containing metadata on Finnish sheet music and music recordings.

On 25 March 2010, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture assigned an international evaluation panel to assess the NLF's services, quality of operations, governance, financial arrangements and management. The panel's report stressed the importance of the NLF's task of building, developing and coordinating a variety of consortia, centralized services and networks on behalf of different stakeholders (libraries, archives, museums and other actors). At the

same time, the panel saw that the NLF's area of responsibility, as well as its institutional setting, could inherently cause tensions and conflicts. Therefore, a number of the panel's recommendations concentrated on improving both transparency and dialogue with other actors and institutions. The panel recommended the strengthening of the autonomy of the NLF within the University of Helsinki and questioned whether the current institutional position of the NLF would be compatible with its future role requiring a large degree of freedom to make strategically appropriate moves, to act timely and to develop the Library's own profile. In addition, the panel stressed that the task of providing access to cultural heritage materials, especially the task of digitizing and preserving the cultural heritage in digital format, has become crucial to the work of the NLF as the importance of digital information has expanded. (International Evaluation of the National Library of Finland 2011: 8–11.)

The National Repository Library (the NRL), located in Kuopio in Eastern Central Finland and founded in 1989, is another institution in the Finnish library system providing centralized services. The NRL operates directly under the Ministry of Education and Culture with the mission of storing material received as transfers from research and public libraries and to make it available for use through inter-library loans (Laki Varastokirjastosta 1078/1988 [Act on the National Repository Library 1078/1988]). The



Figure 7. The public library of Pyhtää. (Photo Päivi Karppi).

function of the NRL in the national information infrastructure is to be an economical storehouse of older and less-used library materials as well as an efficient interlibrary-lending operator. From the perspective of the individual higher education or public library, the NRL can be considered as an extension of its own premises for library collections. The existence of the NRL's facilities and services makes it easier to decide on disposals in libraries and thus to develop the contents and usability of printed collections. Since the services of the NRL are centrally funded by the state, it is possible to provide its services free of charge to other libraries.

The working group on the structural development of higher education libraries has envisioned that, by 2020, there would be a service unit composed of the National Library and the Repository Library that would be responsible for providing all the centralized services needed by libraries (Teaching and Research Environment 2020, 2009). According to the NLF's international evaluation, the merging of the NRL and the NLF "should be considered positively." However, the panel saw that any merger would require careful planning, taking into account the staff and service needs of many different stakeholders. (International Evaluation of the National Library of Finland 2011.) In December 2011, a working group examining the potential merger of the NLF and the NRL was set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Celia is the third Finnish state-owned library funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Celia produces and provides literature in accessible formats for people who are unable to read standard printed books, due to illness or disability (Laki näkövammaisten kirjastosta 638/1996 / [Act on the Library for Visually Impaired 638/1996]). Celia's users include the visually impaired and persons suffering from dyslexia and learning disabilities, developmental disabilities and muscular diseases. In addition to individuals, Celia has also institutional customers (libraries and other public institutions like retirement homes and day-care centres) whose users include persons with problems reading printed texts. Celia produces around 25 percent of all the fiction and non-fiction published annually in Finland in accessible formats and provides over one million loans. In addition, Celia produces and lends textbooks in accessible formats to a range of educational establishments. In 2007, the distribution method of audio books and Braille books was changed – when an audio-book or a book in Braille is requested, a personal lending copy is produced as a compact disc, which the patron discards or recycles after use. Thus, there is no need to return the borrowed material.²

The aim of Celia is to work towards equality for the visually impaired and those with other reading disabilities, in terms of access to literature and information. Celia has served the blind and partially sighted in



Figure 8. The public library of Rauma. (Photo Voitto Niemelä).

Finland since 1890. The library service was set up by a society called Books for the Blind at the turn of the last century. Celia has been state-owned since 1978, although recently the role of the state as Celia's owner has been discussed.

According to an Act (Laki Eduskunnan kirjastosta 983/1984), the Library of Parliament is a part of the Parliamentary Office providing internal services as well as functioning as Parliament's central archives. In addition, the Library of Parliament is "a public central library disseminating legal information, social and political information, and parliamentary information". The library has been open to the general public since 1913 and most of its materials are available for loan. The library's information specialists provide regular courses for the general public, researchers and students as well as for other libraries on issues such as how to search legal information and using databases of parliamentary documents. They also conduct information searches from official information sources, mostly free of charge. However, they do not provide legal counselling.³ The Parliament of Finland (Eduskunta) is the sole funder of its library.

Public libraries

Public libraries are maintained by the municipalities. However, state subsidies cover about 40 percent of the

total public library expenditure (over €298 million in 2010). The state finances the establishment of new libraries and the purchase of bookmobiles. State grants are allocated annually for reading promotion and for developing contents and user-friendly services on the web. (Wigell-Ryynänen 2011.) As the funding system shows, the Finnish public library network can be considered as being both centralized and decentralized.

The Library Decree (1078/1998) defines the functions of the Central Library of Public Libraries and those of Provincial Libraries. The Helsinki City Library (HCL) is the Central Library for other public libraries, acting as the national interlibrary lending centre. The HCL promotes cooperation between public libraries as well as between public libraries and research libraries, and coordinates "regional, national, and international development projects in the field of library and information services." In addition, the HCL develops common methods and instruments necessary for organizing library and information services. One example of the services provided by the HCL is Libraries.fi, the web-portal for library users and librarians. The HCL also has the Multilingual Library, which acquires information materials in so-called rare languages for nationwide use. The funding for performing HCL's central library tasks comes from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The task of Provincial Libraries is to support the information and interlibrary lending services of the public libraries within their regions and to provide regional professional training in new forms of library work. Thus, the 19 Finnish Provincial Libraries (which are all city libraries) complement the library services available in their region. Provincial Libraries also organize regular meetings and seminars and have developed web-based regional information services. One example of a Provincial Library with specific functions is the Rovaniemi City Library (the RCL), which serves Lapland, the largest and northernmost region of Finland. The Lapponica Collection of the RCL includes publications on Lapland, the North Calotte and Arctic regions. It includes the Sámi library collection as well as the Greenland and Inuit collection. In addition, the information specialists working in RCL provide information services on regional issues. The Ministry of Education and Culture allocates the municipalities with statutory state aid to guarantee the work of the Provincial Library service.

The Finns are avid readers and library users. As shown in Table 1, in 2010 the total annual lending was almost 100 million items (18 per capita), the annual number of library visits was 53 million (10 per capita) and the Internet services of the libraries were used 57 million times. The total material stock was 40 million items, of which 4 million were items other than books and printed music (2.2 million music recordings, over half a million DVDs and Blu-ray discs, etc.) There is a public library in every municipality (312) even though some of the libraries are organized as joint or regional libraries. Most of public libraries in Finland have branch libraries (486) and bookmobiles (154).

Compared to Finnish research libraries, public libraries seem to lack uniformity in library technologies and practices. For example, many different integrated library systems are in use in Finnish public libraries today. In recent decades, however, there has been a trend towards larger institutions, organizations and services. Most of the public libraries in Finland take part in cooperative library networks, sharing library systems and services. One example of this kind of network is the HelMet Library serving the Metropolitan area of Finland. The sharing of the library system has resulted in a harmonization of service roles and collection policies in libraries in the four cities (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kaunianen) involved in HelMet. According to a study performed by Taloustutkimus, a market research company, HelMet was the most appreciated online brand in Finland in 2010⁴.

In Lapland, library cooperation has a long tradition and takes international forms. One concrete example is

Table 1. Statistical data on Finnish public libraries from the year 2010 (source Public Library Statistics Database²⁹).

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Total costs | € 298,470,959 |
| Number of main libraries (branch libraries) | 312 (486) |
| Number of staff | 4,193 |
| Printed monographs | 34,740,021 |
| Loans (total) | 96,228,025 |
| Active borrowers | 2,089,096 |
| Library visits (Web visits) | 52,647,256 (57,078,288) |

the mobile library: the Muonio mobile library runs in four municipalities in Finland, Sweden and Norway and the Karasjoki mobile library in three municipalities in Finland and Norway. According to one observer (Ihanamäki 2010), the mobile libraries of Muonio and Karasjoki “support and strengthen a regional identity that is artificially fractured by state borders”. Joint mobile libraries in Lapland use resources more effectively and in fact the existence of this type of service is the only way to provide library services for this huge and sparsely populated area (Sulin 2011). The Ministry of Education and Culture supports collaboration projects and the joint mobile services with state aid.

In addition to cooperative library networks, there is the possibility for a deeper level of voluntary collaboration between municipalities. Joint or regional libraries have become more common in Finland in recent years. The first version of this kind of cooperation was developed in Northern Karelia. The Joensuu Regional Library has one centralized administration and one director of libraries and is responsible for all library services being provided for the 110,000 inhabitants of Eno, Joensuu, Kontiolahti, Liperi, Outokumpu, Polvijärvi and Pyhäselkä. A similar kind of regional library exists on a smaller scale in north-eastern Finland: the Sompio Library serves the municipalities of Pelkosenniemi, Savukoski and Sodankylä. In recent years, the merger of municipalities into larger entities has become a political and administrative goal. On many occasions, the libraries have been a forerunner in this trend.

School libraries

Perhaps because of the extensive network of public libraries in Finland, the school library system has not been very well developed. In fact, there are very few professionally run school libraries. However, in many municipalities, branch libraries and even the main libraries can be located within school buildings. The tradition of public libraries serving schools is quite



Figure 9. Chess players at the Sello Library. (Photo Leena Malm).

strong. For example, most public libraries offer regular training for school classes in information searching and sources. (Haavisto 2009.) The changing conceptions in pedagogy have created the vision of the school library as a modern and technologically well developed learning support centre. Some examples of this kind of school library can be found in private schools and large schools in major cities.

As compared to public libraries, the position of school libraries is very different. They do not have a similar kind of legal status nor do they receive state support. There are many examples where school libraries are simply stores for dusty old books. In the Espoo region, which is part of the Metropolitan area, there has been a project of training school teachers to act also as information specialists, and they have been encouraged to build better facilities for school libraries and to develop their collections and library systems (Frantsi 2011). Separate school library projects with varying goals can be found in Kuopio and Oulu. These kinds of projects have achieved quite positive results and have strengthened the collaboration between school libraries and public libraries (c.f. Kurttila-Matero 2011).

Higher education libraries in Finland

The history of Finnish university libraries can be traced back to the year 1640 when the first Finnish university, the Academy of Turku, was established. The university library network started to evolve during the 19th century in response to the modernization

of the teacher education system. This meant that about 10 seminaries, i.e. teacher education institutions, were founded throughout the country. These seminaries can be considered as forming the basis for the nationwide university systems, a building process which lasted until the 20th century. At the same time, the libraries started to evolve in these institutions. Nowadays, there are 17 university libraries in Finland. The libraries are open to all and there is a great deal of cooperation between them.

One of the most important changes in higher education in Finland in recent decades has been the birth of a network of polytechnics. The creation of this network started at the beginning of the 1990s and proceeded for over 10 years. From the library perspective, the most important feature of this process was that the Ministry of Education and Culture ensured that adequate funding of the libraries was one of the criteria according to which the status of the polytechnics as education institutes was assessed. At the present, there are 27 polytechnics that have fairly well-developed library services. The key figures of the higher education libraries can be found in Table 2.

The Finnish higher education is going through a transitional phase. As mentioned, the new Universities Act has been in force from the beginning of the year 2010. The aim of the renovation is that the number of universities shall be reduced by the end of the year 2012. At present there have been three university mergers and planning of the merger of art universities has started. At the same time, the size of the units will

Table 2. The key figures of Finnish HE-libraries from the year 2010 (source Research Library Statistics Database)³⁰.

| | Universities | Universities of Applied Sciences (Polytechnics) |
|--|------------------------|---|
| Total costs | €108,753,700,- | €28,855,000 |
| Number of libraries (branch libraries) | 19 (140) | 23 (137) |
| Number of staff (number of staff in the libraries) | 32,525 (1217) | 14,250 (417) |
| Printed monographs | 12,134,956 | 2,297,804 |
| Active borrowers | 150,005 | 122,732 |
| Home loans (renewals) | 1,886,444 | 1,373,014 |
| | (9,589,142) | (3,578,192) |
| Viewed e-documents | 9,653,985 | 1,260,954 |
| User training participants | 53,101 | 72,915 |
| Library visits (Web visits) | 6,432,275 (23,055,807) | 4,633,130(4,058,205) |

Table 3. Milestones in information technology between 1970 and 2000 (updated from Saarti 2006).

| First off-line loaning systems | Online loaning systems | Integrated library systems and database searching | Birth of the national library database services | Internet and the development of the digital library | Outsourcing, open access, open source, joint systems |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| The end of the 1970s | The beginning of the 1980s | The end of the 1980s | The beginning of the 1990s | The end of the 1990s | The beginning of the 2000s |

become larger and the profiling of each institution is becoming more focused on its own strengths. The government has decided that the restructuring of the universities of applied sciences shall proceed till the end of the year 2020. The aims of this process seem to be similar to that being conducted in the universities.

The libraries have also been active players in the restructuring process. Perhaps this can be seen most clearly in the University of Helsinki. There the National Library has redefined its role as a central national actor and the other libraries of the University have been grouped together under the name of the Helsinki University Library. Helsinki University Library has reorganized itself into four campus libraries – each of which serves distinct sciences and arts fields – and centralized services for these units.

Another trend within the higher education libraries has been the creation of joint libraries between different higher education institutions. For example, the Tritonia Library in Vaasa and Lapland University Consortium Library situated in Rovaniemi, Kemi and Tornio both serve several higher education institutions.

The most recent trends in the development of the higher education library services have been an increased emphasis in information literacy teaching and the provision of tailored services for researchers. It is evident that these trends stem from the digitization of scientific document dissemination which has taken place during the past two decades. From the

point of view of the researchers and research administration, bibliometric and knowledge management services produced by libraries and other actors have become more and more important (Iivonen et al. 2009).

In 2004 the council of the Finnish university libraries recommended that universities include information literacy competence in their new degree structures. The guiding concept was to undertake a three-level (new students, bachelor and master level) approach to the teaching of IL skills. This has been implemented successfully by the libraries and universities. (Juntunen et al. 2008.) A similar kind of approach is being used in the polytechnics and their libraries.

Special libraries

The oldest special libraries were the libraries of scientific societies founded in the early and mid-19th century. Nowadays, the collections of these libraries have been incorporated into many university libraries. There are still some special libraries in private companies but most of them no longer carry the name 'library'. The history of these libraries dates back to industrial libraries in the 1940s. In the 1940s and 1950s, terms like 'information service' and 'documentation' first came into use. The founding members of the profession of 'documentalists' had an engineering background (Sievänen-Allén 1993.) Currently,



Figure 10. The public library of Ylöjärvi. (Photo Antero Tenhunen).

information professionals in private organizations deal with issues like business intelligence, data analysis and knowledge management.

Most of the special libraries can be found in public administration, government, private and state supported research institutes, foundations and other organizations. The function of these libraries is to maintain collections as well as to manage and disseminate information in their fields of speciality. Many special libraries are quite small, functioning as an integral part of their parent organization. Due to the Finnish tradition of library openness, quite a few of these libraries are open to the general public. Even the Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is open to all⁵.

The Library of Statistics is one of the largest special libraries. The Library is a unit of Statistics Finland, and specializes in the acquisition of statistical data as well as the provision of services based on this data. The Library functions as a special, public statistical library in Finland – as a kind of a centre for the provision of statistical information – and as a data archive for Statistics Finland. Founded in 1865, Statistics Finland is the only Finnish public authority specifically established for statistics, responsible for producing the vast majority of official statistics. As might be expected, the Library of Statistics has Finland's largest collection of national and international statistics in both printed and electronic formats⁶. Every year, the library's information specialists provide personal assistance in the use of

statistics and perform a significant number of information retrieval assignments (11,745 assignments in 2010⁷).

The Information Service of the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) is a public scientific library concentrating on environmental information. It compiles, maintains and distributes extensive information on environmental issues⁸. The Library of the Finnish Literature Society (SKS) is a research library specializing in Finnish literature, literary studies and cultural research. The Library's collections and services are open to researchers, university students and the general public⁹. The National Board of Antiquities Library is the largest scientific museum library in Finland. It has special sections for archaeology, art history, applied arts, ethnology, museology, architectural heritage, etc. As with the above libraries, the National Board of Antiquities Library serves anyone with an information need in its area of speciality¹⁰. The Library of the National Board of Patents and Registration in Finland is an open library specializing in industrial property rights and containing all kinds of information on patents, trademarks, protection of designs, etc¹¹. The Library of the Service Centre for Development Co-operation (KEPA) specializes in information related to global development, environmental issues, global issues and civic society¹². In addition to the above-mentioned examples, there are over 200 more or less publicly funded special libraries in Finland (Saarikko 2010).



Figure 11. Ilona bookmobile in Kotka. (Photo Evan Seppä).

Other library affiliated actors

Finland has sometimes been called the land of associations. This characterisation aptly describes the situation in the Finnish library system. All the library sectors have organized themselves as councils:

- AMKIT Consortium (Polytechnic libraries)¹³
- Council for Finnish University Libraries¹⁴
- Council for Public Libraries¹⁵
- Council for the Special Libraries¹⁶

The primary aim of each council is to act as a focal point for the libraries in a specific sector, to lobby on library issues from the point of view of that sector and to represent the sector officially. The councils designate their representatives in various working groups and consortia. The councils also hold joint meetings and issue statements on national issues concerning Finnish libraries and library services. There is cooperation within and between the library sectors. In addition, the councils have also been active in implementing various library projects, e.g. in service development and sector-wide acquisition of integrated library systems.

The largest library association is the Finnish Library Association (FLA)¹⁷, which considers itself as an organization to promote the ideology of the library, a lobbyist for libraries and a developer of the library field. Most of the FLA's 2000 members come

from the public library sector, and the FLA receives a significant part of its funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Journal published by the FLA is *Kirjastolehti*¹⁸ [Library Journal]. Bi-annually, the FLA organizes a large library meeting called *Kirjastopäivät* [Library days].

The Finnish Research Library Association (FRLA)¹⁹ promotes the role of libraries in research and education. The FRLA was founded in 1929 and was the first institutional IFLA member in Finland; it has about 700 members. The FRLA's open access journal, *Signum*²⁰, is mostly written in Finnish, but also publishes an international issue in English once a year. The role of the association is especially prominent in the further education of library staff. The FRLA has 11 working groups that plan and organize many seminars on a yearly basis.

The Finland Swedish Library Association²¹ (FSLA) provides activities and services for the Swedish-speaking part of the nation, and also publishes a journal in Swedish called *Bibban*²².

In addition to these library-oriented associations, there is also the Society for Finnish Information Specialists²³ (SFIS), "a non-profit professional organisation for those working in the field of retrieving, analysing, recording and disseminating information in various forms". The SFIS was founded in 1947 and has about 700 members. The Society publishes a journal called *Tietoasiantuntija* [Information Specialist]²⁴.



Figure 12. Customer service area of the University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio campus library. (Photo Raija Törrönen).

The Finnish Association for Information Studies is an association specializing in research in the library and information field. It publishes an open access refereed journal called *Informaatiotutkimus*²⁵ [Information Studies].

The above mentioned associations are active both nationally and internationally, e.g. in IFLA. They lobby and promote their interests and try to ensure that library and information issues are not overlooked in policy decisions.

A proposed merger of the FLA, the FRLA, the FSLA and the SFIS enjoyed the support of the members of all the associations in a survey conducted in 2006. For administrative and political reasons, the merger did not take place. (Ruhanen 2010.) In 2004, these associations formed a national Council for Library Associations, which meets regularly, issues statements and undertakes other kinds of common projects. Recently, the Council for Library Associations has been active in the e-book and copyright debate in Finland.

LIS education and research

Compared to other Scandinavian countries, Finland has a strong and relatively old tradition of university-based LIS education and research. The first LIS chair was established in the University of Tampere in 1971. Nowadays, LIS education is also provided at the University of Oulu and Åbo Akademi University, although in terms of numbers of master and doctoral degrees as well as research output, Tampere still

dominates. However, researchers in Oulu and Åbo Akademi have managed to profile and strategically concentrate their efforts so that they have achieved prominence both nationally and internationally.

From the early days, the university affiliation encouraged LIS researchers and educators to establish LIS as a distinct research discipline. This meant that LIS in Finland followed the Anglo-American tradition, i.e. moving from a practical discipline to a more theoretical approach in which the main area of interest was not the library institution per se, but aspects of information retrieval and seeking. The integration of LIS within the academic culture meant that researchers started to identify with the norms of the research community and distanced themselves from the routine work of the library profession. This was seen as the only way to legitimize LIS as a discipline within academia in Finland (Rochester and Vakkari 2003).

From the present-day perspective, one can say that this more or less explicit strategic decision was mainly a success and led to heightened international visibility. As noted by Audunson (2005), for example, Finnish LIS institutions have many fewer staff than the LIS departments or schools in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. However, “compared to research output and citations, the Finnish LIS community must be one of the world’s most efficient”. The international evaluation panel of the level of research at University of Tampere (2005) stated that “the [LIS] department demonstrates international excellence in the area of Information Retrieval, and strong international

presence in the area of Information Seeking”. The research culture within the department was seen as well-developed and soundly established. However, the panel saw also that the legitimization project of LIS within academia had not been entirely successful. The LIS department in Tampere had been unable to convince its mother university of its merits and strengths and was still perceived mainly as a professional school.

Due to the structural changes ongoing in the university sector, LIS education and research is no longer being taught in individual departments. In Tampere, the LIS department and hypermedia have merged and together created a subject called Information Studies and Interactive Media. The main themes of the new curriculum are information retrieval, information seeking, knowledge and records management and interactive and digital media. The subject is a part of a larger entity, the School of Information Sciences (SIS), which also houses computer science, mathematics and statistics. The organizational changes at the University of Tampere meant that there are no longer any departments or faculties²⁶. Within Åbo Akademi University, Information Studies is one subject offered by the School of Business and Economics²⁷. In the University of Oulu, Information Studies is a degree programme in the Faculty of Humanities²⁸.

In addition to universities, LIS education is also taught in the polytechnics of Oulu, Seinäjoki and Turku. Polytechnics in Finland are multidisciplinary, regional institutions, carrying out R&D relevant to their teaching, business and working life contacts. Polytechnics are being developed as part of the national and international higher education community, with a special emphasis on more practical areas of applied sciences. The polytechnics award professionally oriented higher education degrees (mostly bachelor's), which take 3.5 or 4 years to complete. The LIS education provided in polytechnics is more practically oriented but not without ambitious goals. For example, the degree programme in Library and Information Services at Turku Polytechnic aims to tackle all of the essential professional skills in library and information services in its curriculum and to train professionals who are capable of developing and revitalizing the field. (Rantanen et al. 2002.)

In addition to universities and polytechnics, it is also possible to undertake lower-level, more practically oriented library study programs, lasting 2–3 years. For example, a student can study these topics at business schools in Borgå (Porvoo), Helsinki, Kerava, Lahti, Seinäjoki and Valkeakoski.

Library infrastructure

Library architecture and library premises

It is envisaged that Helsinki City centre will act as a good showcase of the history and future of Finnish library architecture. The historical side of this equation is the main building of the National Library, which is situated in the classical centre of the Helsinki around the Senate Square. The building was planned by Carl Engel and was finished in 1832. The library is a fine example of neoclassical empire style and it is still in use.

The libraries of the future in the centre of Helsinki will be the new main building of the Helsinki University Library: Kaisa Building, which will be opened to the public during 2012, and the new Helsinki Central Library, to be opened in 2017. It is intended that these new buildings will reflect development in library architecture and library premises. The classical, book-collection oriented ideology is changing towards a more modern (or post-modern) view of the library as a meeting and working place for people collaborating, entertaining themselves and accessing different types of media.

Libraries as buildings have inspired many famous Finnish architects. Alvar Aalto designed several world renowned architectural masterpieces, e.g. the Viipuri Library (1935), Helsinki University of Technology's main library (1969) and Rovaniemi City Library (1965). A post-modern example of the Finnish library architecture is Reima and Raili Pietilä's Metso, the main building of the Tampere City Library. An example of modern cultural premises is the Maritime Centre Vellamo in Kotka, which houses two museums and an information centre. (Mehtonen 2011.)

Vellamo is a good example of modern library planning: new premises are planned for multi-purpose use and often are shared by several institutions. In contrast, the idea of recycling has been emerging in architecture with new library premises being designed within existing premises, e.g., old factories. One trend which has attracted attention in recent years has been the concept of libraries as living laboratories. Thus the need to integrate the needs of library users to the library space planning has become an important consideration.

One very important aspect in public library architecture has been the fact that the state has funded the construction of almost all of the main libraries built in Finland. This is also the case in funding mobile libraries (bookmobiles), that have been in use in Finland from the 1950s. At the present, there are almost 200 mobile libraries in Finland that provide basic library services, especially for the sparsely populated rural areas.

Library technology

Finnish libraries have been active in implementing modern library technologies (Saarti 2006). The modern era of library automation started in the 1970s when some of the largest public libraries started to implement library automation in order to manage lending of library materials. At the same time, university and some special libraries started to utilize digital technologies, especially in information searching.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the birth of online services. Libraries started to utilize Internet technologies both in disseminating their resources and in providing Internet access to the general public. During the 1990s, some of the most important Finnish centralized services were inaugurated. For the higher education libraries, perhaps the most important of these was the creation of the FinELib (Finnish Electronic Library) consortium. This helped libraries in their acquisition of e-resources, especially scientific journals, and also led to the birth of Nelli (National Electronic Library Interface) cooperation, which is the present-day joint portal of e-resources. FinELib services are utilized at present in all library sectors. During the same period the Helsinki City Library started to implement Internet services for libraries with the Libraries. fi-concept.

The most recent trend in Finnish library automation is the joint library system. These have been most extensively developed within the higher education libraries that have a joint integrated library system. At the present, the planning of the acquisition of a new library system has started; the concept is to try to establish a joint system with common databases for all the libraries in all sectors willing to collaborate in this effort.

The other main on-going project is the National Digital Library (the NDL), which aims to ensure that electronic materials of Finnish culture and science are well managed, are easily accessed and will be securely preserved for the foreseeable future. The NDL is sub-divided into two projects: the national public interface and the digitization and long-time preservation of the Finnish cultural heritage and research materials. The building of the NDL is a common project involving libraries, museums and archives. The project is being funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Conclusions

Libraries in Finland are in a transitional phase. The universal challenge facing all libraries is digitization of information: each year the number of born-digital

documents increases dramatically. The situation is aptly described in Martin Hilbert's and Priscila López's (2011) recent assessment of the world's capacity to store and disseminate information:

The total amount of information grew from 2.6 optimally compressed exabytes in 1986 to 15.8 in 1993, over 54.5 in 2000, and to 295 optimally compressed exabytes in 2007. This is equivalent to less than one 730 MB CD-ROM per person in 1986 (539 MB per person), roughly 4 CD-ROM per person of 1993, 12 CD-ROM per person in the year 2000, and almost 61 CD-ROM per person in 2007. Piling up the imagined 404 billion CD-ROM from 2007 would create a stack from the earth to the moon and a quarter of this distance beyond (with 1.2 mm thickness per CD).

What is the role of libraries in a world in which "computer games and movies represent 99.2 percent of the data consumed", "general-purpose computing capacity grows at an annual rate of 58 percent" and "the majority of our technological memory has been in digital format since the early 2000s"? (ibid.) How can libraries compete with other information providers both quantitatively as well as qualitatively and be able to demonstrate the added-value they create? There are some futurists claiming that librarianship is one of those professions facing extinction in the near future. The pressing question for libraries in Finland and elsewhere is the need to answer convincingly the question: "why we do still need libraries in the age of Amazon and Google?"

The digitalization of the working environment of researchers, teachers and students is an undeniable fact of life in higher education libraries. Over 70 percent of the purchasing budget of university libraries is nowadays used for e-journals and e-books. IP-TV systems, tablets, game consoles and e-readers are transforming the everyday entertainment and information resources of many people into a completely digital world. At the same, there are still those who prefer analog books, magazines and newspapers to their digital counterparts.

One challenge especially facing public libraries is the increase in the number of e-books: how and on what terms will libraries be able to provide or 'loan' e-books for their users? There are some on-going projects in Finland trying to increase the availability of e-books and to make publishers' e-book collections more accessible for the purposes of public libraries and their customers. However, the almost hysterical fear of e-book piracy has hindered real progress. Locked books with strict Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems do not seem to be what the library users want; watermarking systems could perhaps be

better from the users' point of view. Users, especially the so-called digital natives, demand smooth and seamless access with different devices in their information environments. They are not willing to use crippled e-books with DRM if they can find the same file freely in peer-to-peer networks. Thus, contrary to the publishers' intentions, DRMs seem to increase piracy instead of lessening it. In a recent e-book manifesto, the Council of Finnish Library Associations took a stand against strict DRMs in e-books.

The changing information environment affecting libraries and their planning strategies as well as the new ways in which library users want to access and use information is another important factor. Tightening budgets and the ideologically and economically endangered position of the welfare state are other factors posing a real dilemma for libraries: how to provide more and better services with fewer resources? What seems to be clear is that libraries cannot compete with the marketing and engineering power of companies like Amazon or Google. Instead, libraries must find other ways to prove their worth in a fast-changing world. In the worlds of research and public libraries, one has witnessed an increased emphasis being placed on libraries as physical places, which at first seems paradoxical in the digitalized world. However, users still need meeting places for generating innovations and exchanging ideas as well as fulfilling their social needs. Recently, greatest emphasis is being placed on the role of libraries and especially librarians as community builders capable of functioning in both digital and physical environments.

In essence, Finnish libraries seem to be having to redefine their role so that the required structural and technological changes can be achieved. However, even if "all that is solid melts into air", perhaps there is no need for a complete revolution. One could argue that the basic mission of librarians has remained the same throughout the turbulent times of recent decades. At a sufficiently abstract level, the librarian's mission is and has been the facilitation and promotion of knowledge creation in their communities (Lankes 2011) and surely there will always remain a need for this kind of activity.

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Notes

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The information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers: A review of research

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Abstract

Reviews research studies on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in developed and developing countries. The analysis suggests that the information needs of rural communities from all countries are very similar, although rural communities they do vary from region to region and from country to country depending on socio-economic conditions. These needs are mostly related to the daily life of rural dwellers.

Keywords

information needs, information-seeking behaviours, rural dwellers, literature reviews

Introduction

Information is conceived as an important resource that contributes immensely towards the development of a nation. Ideally, information brings about knowledge, and a knowledgeable community is also an informed community. This signifies that a community can not develop without knowledge, and a community can only become knowledgeable if they recognize and use information as their tool for development (Kamba 2009). Access to the right information by rural communities can help them to acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence to participate fully in community affairs. Moore (2007: 6) mentioned that

“Information is a key contributor to the development of individuals and communities. People need information to develop their potential through education and training, to succeed in business, to enrich their cultural experience, and to take control of their daily lives.”

He further stated that access to information is not equal throughout society. People living in affluent urban centres can choose from abundant sources of

information. In contrast, people living in poor communities are frequently denied access to information which could improve their lives. This situation is particularly severe in many rural areas of the developing countries.

In many countries, particularly in Africa and Asia, the majority of the people live in rural areas and they have different information needs from urban dwellers. Cheunwattana (1998: 2) mentioned that

“Not much empirical data about rural information needs and gathering habits of the rural community, information support through information services is available, and we know very little about how information has been provided to this disadvantaged segment of the population through existing library and information services, or whether the library and information services offered are relevant and appropriate

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to the local needs and context. Obviously these fundamental questions still remain unanswered, and empirical research in this area is needed to illuminate our understanding of the current pattern of rural information services, and help devise better approaches to service delivery. The new approaches may help narrow the widening information gap and, consequently, diminish the socio-economic gap between the urban and rural populations in developing countries.”

Sharma and Fatima (2004) noted that access to quality information will obviously help rural dwellers to fight against superstitious beliefs and to aid them in becoming better citizens. A number of studies (see, for example, Zijp 1994; Correa 1995), however, stated that rural dwellers have difficulty in locating and having access to the needed information in a timely fashion. Besides, rural communities do not always know what their information needs are, how can they meet their needs and from where they can get their required information.

Scope and methods

This paper reviews selected research studies on information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in several developed and developing countries with an aim to identify some of the key issues and future research directions in this field. Interested readers should consult other recent reviews in this area (see, for example, Dutta 2009; Zhang and Yu 2009). Although this paper focuses mainly on the studies conducted on overall information needs of rural residents, the need for information by a particular rural group has also been considered. The studies reviewed were primarily identified through Google Scholar and through journals devoted to issues associated with the role of information in development such as *Information Development*, *Libri*, *Rural Libraries*, and *International Information and Library Review*. The World Bank Group (2011) definition was used as a source for classifying the countries covered in this study. The World Bank defines countries with low-income economies as those with a gross national income (GNI) per capita of under US\$1005, lower-middle income economies as those with a GNI per capita of US\$1,006 to US\$3,975, and upper-middle-income economies as those with a GNI per capita of US\$3,976 to US\$12,275. The countries that fall under these income groups are considered to be in a state of economic development and thus can be described as “developing countries.” In contrast, “developed countries” are those in the high-income group with a GNI per capita of US\$12,276 or more and are Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

(OECD) member countries. Thus, the literature reviewed under the category of developed countries includes countries such as Australia, France, the UK and the USA. The developing countries reviewed in this study, on the other hand, include Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand and Zambia.

Rural information needs and seeking behaviour studies in developed countries

There have been some studies on rural information needs and information-seeking behaviours in America. In an early study, Barron and Curran (1979) assessed the general information needs of residents in the rural South and produced guidelines for rural library personnel so that the planning of library services could meet the information needs of the users. They identified 24 need categories and listed them by subject. In another study in Lincolnshire, Illinois, Clark and Unwin (1980) distinguished between realized and latent information needs. This study identified 14 different fields of information needs in rural areas, such as transport, entertainment, education, utility services, health, legal matters, jobs, social security, taxes, rent rates, shopping, town and country planning, housing, and pensions. In a later study, Wilde (1981) cited six major information needs by rural residents of western United States, i.e. community planning, small business management, family health and nutrition, legal information regarding federal laws, information on energy and conservation, and information on agriculture and agricultural practices. In another study in the United States, Chen and Herson (1982) found that the most commonly mentioned needs were for information on consumer issues, getting and changing jobs, housing and household maintenance, education and schooling.

Mears (1989) stated that rural America has poverty, isolation, inadequate services, and inequality. Due to this, the need for information becomes even greater. She noted that rural Americans need information about parenting, nutrition, water quality, family living, family economics, environment issues, health care, services available, job skills, money management, communication techniques, housing standards, and processes for making changes in government regulations. Examining the information needs of rural Americans, Vavrek (1990, 1993) commented that their needs are very comprehensive and systematic, and discovered that both users and non-users of public libraries indicated in their daily information needs knowledge of current decisions of local government,

health and medical services, and local news. Patterson (1995) stated that Native Americans identified their important information needs as those dealing with employment, vocational training, legal and civil rights and health. Bishop et al. (1999) carried out a study in low-income communities in Illinois and identified the following topics on which information was required: community services and activities such as legal and city services, leisure and local activities, resources for children, healthcare, education, employment, crime and safety, and general reference tools.

In several early studies in the UK, the most common information needs identified related to housing, consumer matters, income maintenance, family and personal matters and employment (see, Richards 1975; Clarke and Unwin 1980; Borrie 1982). Beer, Marcella and Baxter (1998) examined the information needs of the rural population indirectly by means of interviews with 50 key people from various occupations within the community. They identified information needs in Shetland, the northernmost county in the UK, as health and safety, community care, education, employment, housing, consumer issues, legal problems, news and current affairs, local events and activities, etc. Talbot (1998) found that the information needs of residents in a small village in the North of England revolved primarily around their day-to-day living, i.e. benefits, council services and resolving problems that were affecting them such as flooding, industrial emissions, etc. In a nation-wide survey in the UK, Marcella and Baxter (1999) found that rural residents are less likely to use computers and libraries to obtain official information than their urban counterparts. In a more recent report (Thomas et al 2008), it was found that the main barriers to access information in rural areas in Wales are lack of transport and low income.

A study of French rural areas identified the need for information relating to training in agricultural affairs and craft work, local history, topography and culture, useful everyday advice, and local cultural activities (Giraud, as cited in Anwar and Suppat 1998).

There have been some studies on the information needs of rural Australians. Rochester (1998) stated that although Australia is an isolated country, most people live in large cities in the east and southeast coastal fringe. Rochester and Willard (1996/97, as cited in Rochester 1998) also investigated information needs, information gathering strategies and usage of information by 10 urban and 9 rural community groups in New South Wales. The results revealed a wide variety of information needs by these groups, and they used a variety of strategies and sources. Little difference was recorded between urban and

rural groups. Rural community groups had the same breadth and intensity of information needs as their urban counterparts.

Patridge (1991) studied the communication behaviour of farmers in a rural area of Western Australia to assess the role of the local public library in meeting their informational, educational, inspirational, and recreational needs. She mentioned that rural people were aware of the need for relevant and timely information and they had begun to demand equity in the quality of services provided to them. Patridge further indicated that farmers received information passively through a variety of sources and channels. Farmers also actively sought information and preferred contact with people, either face-to-face or by telephone. The 'need to know' concept was the most dominant factor in their acquisition of knowledge. The local public library was also used by a portion of farming families to satisfy their recreational and some educational needs.

Studies on information needs and seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in developing countries

Cheunwattana (1998) noted that the majority of the rural population in developing countries are poor and illiterate and are economically and socially disadvantaged and their information needs have not been receiving much attention. Still, a number of research studies have been carried out on the information needs of rural communities in these countries. In Africa, the first research attempt was made in 1982 when an experimental library project was set up in a village near Ibadan, Nigeria, for the non-literate community to gain insight into their perceived information needs and those of which they were unaware (Aboyade 1984). This research attempted to establish the information needs of neo-literates and how such needs could be satisfied by a modified formal information service. Aboyade identified the following categories of information needs, i.e. health and sanitation, agricultural production, government policies and programmes, occupation, recreation and leisure, literacy primers, Islamic religious literature, childcare and care of pregnant women, problems of daily existence such as water supply, electricity and roads, employment problems and work opportunities.

In a later study, Aboyade (1987) argued that it is not enough merely to aim at enhancing the quality of life, but efforts should be made to mobilize people in any rural development programme. The study further noted that the provision of information, therefore, should also be aimed at encouraging local people to

become actively involved in creating their own well-being. In this regard, information could guide them to open up avenues in occupations, health, housing, education, employment, as well as to institutional resources, facilities and services. Aboyade (1987) provided a useful categorization of information needs of the rural population:

- Information for increased productivity and income growth, e.g. when, where, and how to obtain seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, mechanical equipment, and other farm inputs; price quotations, suppliers; credit facilities, clear information about the procedures to follow for application, the amount that can be borrowed, the nearest offices for processing application, information about how to voice a complaint, legal advice; current prices of farm products and the marketing situation.
- Information on rural non-farm economic activities, e.g. food processing and baking; textiles, services such as barbing, hair-dressing, shoe-making and repair; woodwork; metalwork; repair services for radio, television, vehicles; masonry, plumbing, painting and fittings; art and crafts; miscellaneous activities such as soap making and herb processing. This also included information about the requirements for engaging in these activities, e.g. capital, equipment, training systems, processes involved, including new and improved techniques, standards and designs, and availability of appropriate technology.
- Information for social amenities, e.g. sources of safe drinking water, the prevention of common diseases, nutrition, health, pre- and post-natal care; education facilities, adult literacy programmes, schools and examinations.
- Information for social participation and political involvement, e.g. public institutions which have a bearing on their lives, political processes and systems of government, good governance, their political rights and the advocacy of such rights, social organizations like farmer cooperatives and unions.

Temu (1984) carried out a similar study in Papua New Guinea, where he attempted to establish the information needs of the rural dwellers through the 'eyes' of central government officials, extension workers, and villagers. The main needs identified were related to small scale economic development and community welfare.

Aina (1985) focused on the agricultural information needs of farmers in south-western Nigeria. In a later study, Aina (1991) identified that the agricultural

information needs of scientists and researchers in Africa included control of major pests, books and journals related to agricultural research, credits and co-operatives, proper handling of insecticides and marketing of agricultural products. Similarly, Ojiambo (1989) examined how agricultural scientists and extension workers communicate information with each other and the extent to which libraries act as major source of getting agricultural information in Kenya. Kaniki (1991) attempted to establish the agricultural information needs of farmers in rural areas surrounding Zambia's urban centres and the needs of workers at agricultural research stations. September (1993) indicated that community information needs in South Africa included basic needs involving health, occupations, problems of daily existence such as water and energy supply, employment opportunities, education, small scale economic development, social welfare, housing, and political and social rights. Kaniki (1995) also conducted an exploratory study of two rural communities in South Africa and assessed their information needs using the 'critical incident' approach.

Mchombu (1992, 1995) carried out two most notable studies on information needs for rural development in Malawi, Botswana, and Tanzania. These needs included information on income generation, community leadership, literacy support, basic economics, government policies on rural development, soil conservation, fertility restoration, and soil erosion. In another study, Momodu (2002) studied the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in Nigeria. He identified several information needs, i.e. agricultural information such as where to purchase fertilizer and how to use it; information on pesticides, processing of farm produce; health information as where one could obtain the best treatment and medicine for tuberculosis, cancer, etc.; how to devise a good delivery system for their villages. The women particularly need information about pre- and post-natal care and current immunization facilities for their children and themselves. Political information needs included the need to know what the various types of governments mean and how they operate, what parliamentary and presidential governments are and how they affect their lives, how to vote, the danger of selling their votes, the advantages of opposition parties, etc. School children need information on examinations and syllabuses, scholarships, career prospects and counselling. Parents need information on the best schools to which they could send their children, opportunities for supplementary or evening classes for their children. Other educational needs included information on higher

education, for neo-literates and other types of literates who required information on adult education, continuing education, information on training and introduction for new job opportunities.

Mooko (2005) investigated information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural, uneducated women and their families in three villages in Botswana. She found that most information needs are health-related, such as information regarding certain diseases, how they are contracted, and how they are treated. Participants also expressed a need for information relating to job opportunities and training, agriculture, family violence, and basic information needs for the family, as well as financial information such as government-aided funds. Most participants turn to medical practitioners such as village nurses and traditional doctors for their needs, and depend upon their prior experience. Women utilize informal networks, such as information from friends, neighbours, and relatives, for what they believe to be reliable information. Radios were also mentioned as a standard source of information, as were the village chiefs, agricultural demonstrators and community welfare officers.

There were some published works on information needs and seeking patterns of the rural population in Asia. Anwar and Suppat (1998) examined the information needs of rural Malaysians. The needs were broadly categorized as religious information, family bonding, current affairs, health information, education, bringing up children, dietary information, agriculture, where to shop and what to expect, politics and businesses. They further identified the purposes for seeking information. These were fulfilment of the need to know, problem solving, self-development, establishing a better family, work purposes, entertainment, bringing up children, improving crops and products. They also identified the sources of information rural Malaysians used, such as TV and radio, friends and neighbours, printed materials, relative from the city, school (library), and consulting the mosque's imam and the village head. Bakar (2011) identified that the information needs of rural women in Malaysia are related to food and child education and they use family and/or friends and popular magazines as the main sources of information about these topics.

In her doctoral study, Cheunwattana (1998) analyzed and identified the information needs of five rural Thai communities in such distinct areas as agriculture, occupations, employment, land holdings, citizenship, education, health, local politics, current news and events, and recreation. She further mentioned that from the information provider's perspective there are many types of information that rural dwellers are not

aware of, such as health education, drug prevention, sex education, parenting information, and environmental conservation. The overall use patterns in the five rural communities showed that most users are literate or newly literate groups, and that children are many of the most active users. In another study, Cheunwattana (1999) focused on the extent of rural library services in Thailand in relation to the information policies, information infrastructure, and the needs and use of information. She raised questions about the effectiveness of government-run traditional public library services to rural communities in Thailand.

Butdisuwan (1999) identified the information needs of disadvantaged persons in Thailand. She mentioned that they, like ordinary people, also want to have access to information which responded to their interests and their daily lives, such as information about careers, health and hygiene, inspiration, social welfare, and their current situation. In a more recent study, Ahmed (2009) investigated the information needs of a small ethnic minority community in Thailand. He indicated that most of the respondents felt a need for information on health, education and current issues. Ahmed further identified the sources of information used in the community, indicating that television was the most important source, followed by acquired experience, friends and family, newspapers and radio. Only a few in the community considered the library as one of their chief sources of information.

Seneviaratne, Gunawardene and Siddhisena (2006) surveyed the information needs of rural communities in Sri Lanka. Fifteen main categories of information needs were identified, i.e. agriculture, education, employment/labour, finance, government information, health and nutrition, industrial, infrastructure related information, legal information, local government, market information, political, recreational/religious, self-employment/training information, weather, and information regarding dealing with natural disasters. In another paper, Zhang and Cheng (1996) investigated information provision to the rural communities in China. They reported that the information needs of different community groups varied in terms of types, quantity, timeliness and medium of information, channels of communication and methods of information dissemination. They also noted that technical personnel who were directly engaged in agricultural production require reliable, accurate, practical, technical and detailed information in order to solve technical problems. According to Lu, Wang and Xu (1996), the development of the rural economy in China has resulted in additional knowledge and information needs of rural people. They need scientific and technological information to help develop new agricultural products, promote industry, and manage

marketing and trade. Rural Chinese also need information to improve their cultural affairs. In a recent review, Zhang and Yu (2009) discussed the major research studies conducted on rural information needs and acquisition in China. This review concluded that rural dwellers in China have an extensive range of information needs, with agricultural technology, market information, income generation and policy information being the most needed types, and that they rely on interpersonal relationships for acquiring both general information and information for agriculture production.

In India, several research studies have been conducted on the need for information. Most of these studies, however, focused on privileged groups such as technologists, doctors, social scientists and academics. Some studies have also been conducted on rural and community information needs. For example, Musib (1989a) conducted a survey on the information needs and sources of information of rural agriculturists. He tried to identify sources of information on day-to-day problems such as education and school, health and childcare, rent and tax, personal relations, politics, recreation, employment for family members, availability of consumer goods and so on. The main sources of information were personal experience, friends, neighbours, relatives, family members, fellow professionals, agricultural offices, school teachers, shopkeepers for marketing purposes and finding price level, etc. In another study, Musib (1989b) examined the information needs of rural India and he identified that rural dwellers required information on problems regarding consumer, educational, employment, and medical issues. Musib (1991) also focussed on the information needs of individuals engaged in wooden, bamboo and earthenware cottage industries of rural India. In another study, Das and Khan (2004) identified several information needs of rural people. These included agriculture and agricultural related issues, small-scale industries and related issues, employment, education, health and family welfare issues, credit and insurance facilities, food and availability of cheap nutritional diet, self-employment, animal husbandry, public policy information, legal aid and personal security. They mentioned that rural people also need information on social welfare, village and cottage industries, housing, horticulture, local and political news, etc.

Sahu (2004) analyzed the information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in West Bengal, India. She investigated the principal areas of information requirements and the sources of information used. The study found that rural peoples need information pertaining to the specific needs of their occupation and general information for their day-to-day survival,

like various government programmes for rural development, healthcare, sanitation, housing, transport facilities, employment opportunities, self-employment schemes, legal aid, banking rules and regulations, land reform, tax laws, civil and political rights, etc. Basu and Dasgupta (2004) conducted a study on users and non-users of information in rural areas in India. In this study, they identified the information needs of the rural communities. The needs identified included income generation, community leadership, environmental issues like pollution, climatic change, disasters, etc., community health, literacy support, educational opportunities, employment, bank loans, government policies, transportation, communication and sanitation.

In her study on rural libraries in India, Dasgupta (2000) identified that the main information needs of the rural environment are on survival, i.e. people living below the poverty line, food, nutrition and health care, law and order, economic activities, education, culture, recreation. She also suggested that in the changing environment of society in India, the information needs of the rural population differ mainly due to reasons such as level of education, economic activities, social status, which includes caste levels, family status, inclusive of women's status, and rural policy. Sarada (1986) examined the rural library services in India. She identified that the information needs of a community have two parts. First, the common needs of the community which centred around the daily life problems of people, namely, housing, employment, health and hygiene, food and nutrition, child care and family welfare, credit and market facilities, etc. Secondly, the special information needs of groups of people like farmers, women, etc., related to their occupational interests and the welfare legislation and programmes of the government.

Chakrabarti (2001) investigated the information-seeking behaviour of the Totos, a tribal community in Totopara in Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, India. The study also identified the different information needs of this tribal community. About 73 percent of the Totos population expressed a need for information on non-traditional housing, some 5 percent sought information for their personal knowledge, 42 percent required information on pure drinking water and 40 percent, information on pure bathing water. Only 7 percent of the population required information on sanitary measures. It was revealed from the study that about 10 percent of the male population and 12 percent of the female population required information on cooking recipes. Of those surveyed, 35 percent were interested in information about modern agricultural systems, 19 percent required information on cattle keeping, poultry and dairy activities, and

45 percent required information on various categories of government and non-government grants on offer. Only 18 percent of men and 2 percent of women expressed an information need about educational institutions in their village. It was also found that 20 percent of the population required information about political parties, while 14 percent needed information about the village administration election at Totopara, and 5 percent required information about the political situation in West Bengal and the rest of India. Chakrabarti found that Totos mainly obtained information from non-traditional sources; they depended mainly on the headman of the community, the priest or religious leader, mythological stories provided by community elders, ritual places, common gossiping areas, festival places and market places. They also used more traditional sources, such as village administrations, health centres, administrative offices, banks, post offices, non-government organizations, missionary establishments, markets, schools, library, media such as radio, TV and newspapers, literate and non-literate members of their own community, and people from other communities for information.

Vijayakumar et al. (2004) identified the information needs of rural library users in India. They found that the majority of users required information on current affairs (68 percent), followed by politics (60 percent), social life (55 percent), employment (51 percent), agriculture (46 percent), self-employment (38 percent), education (37 percent), forest and industry (26 percent), medical education (24 percent), loan facilities (18 percent), and transport (16 percent). Devi and Meitei (2007) identified information needs of rural people from the villages of Valley district of Manipur state in India. The study found that 78 percent of respondents require information on agriculture, including seeds, pesticides, irrigation and weather conditions, etc., 74 percent needed information on education and training and related areas, and 72 percent needed information on health, sanitation, HIV/AIDS, etc. Moreover, 62 percent of respondents required information on business and 63 percent needed information on technology. A few respondents indicated that they required information about environmental protection, food and nutrition, government policies and plans, games and sports including cultural activities, and rural infrastructure development.

There have been several studies of the information needs of the rural dwellers in Bangladesh. Ahmed, Munshi and Ahmed (1997) analyzed the information needs of the rural community and noted that most rural dwellers who work in the agricultural sector are small, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers.

These farmers and labourers need information regarding matters that contribute to increasing agricultural productivity and other related outputs. This would include grants, subsidies, provision of credit, supply of fertilizers and agricultural implements. Ahmed et al. further noted that rural information needs are largely centred around problems of daily life and the earning of livelihoods. In another study, Khan (1997) stated that rural communities need information to improve their socio-economic conditions, including better health, water supply and sanitation, finding out about a particular service or government policy, information on producing better crops, prevention and control of environmental pollution, textbooks and teaching aids, sports facilities, and prevention and control of social problems.

Iqbal (2003) carried out a study on the information needs and information problems in rural areas and urban settlements in Bangladesh. He collected data by interviewing 60 respondents (30 male and 30 female) in four remote villages and two poor urban slums. Iqbal mentioned that both rural and urban slum residents considered farming, family planning information, financial or loan assistance, flood control or natural disaster management, health related issues, knowledge about the world, and entertainment as their major areas of information need. Most of them felt a need for information on flood control/natural disaster management, health related issues and knowledge about the world. Surprisingly, 42 percent of informants did not consider agriculture to be a major area of information need. Two-thirds of the respondents chose financial or loan assistance as one of their major areas of information need. There were slight differences between the information needs of rural and urban slum dwellers. These tended to focus on family planning information, flood control and natural disaster management, health related information, general knowledge, and financial or loan assistance. In the case of rural dwellers, the need for entertainment was 20 percent higher than for their urban counterparts. In rural areas 10 percent of informants also expressed an interest in educational information. The need for agricultural information in the urban slum areas was comparatively low, which is quite reasonable. Rural dwellers considered education as one of their areas of unmet need.

Islam (2010), in his doctoral study, identified the information needs of rural dwellers in Bangladesh. This research was conducted in ten rural communities in the northern part of Bangladesh. He indicated that rural library users required information about education (73 percent), health (57 percent), religion (56 percent), entertainment (47 percent), current

affairs (43 percent), agriculture (32 percent), politics (28 percent) and family planning (21 percent). It is interesting that 68 percent of participants did not consider agriculture as an area of information need, although the research was conducted in predominantly rural farming areas. The need for information on business, bringing-up children, financial and loan assistance was also comparatively low. Based on these findings, Islam concluded that the information needs of rural communities may vary from region to region depending on the socio-economic conditions of their residents.

Discussion and future research directions

This literature review confirms with the earlier studies that rural information needs are mainly focused on the day-to-day life of the rural dwellers. While many of the studies reviewed in this paper are library-based (see Aboyade 1987; Sarada 1986; Patridge 1991; Vijayakumar et al. 2004), others focused on a particular rural group, e.g. farmers (Aina 1985; Kaniki 1991) or women (Nwagha 1992; Mooko 2005; Bakar 2011). A few studies have also been concentrated on the needs of the entire rural community (Temu 1984; Mchombu 1993; Ahmed 2009). Moreover, there is a large body of literature described the general information needs of rural residents in developing countries (Aina 1991; Mchombu 1995; Lu, Wang and Xu 1996). All these studies, however, conclusively stated that rural dwellers do have needs and that they need information for their day-to-day living, such as health, occupation and income generation, self-governance, agriculture, education, religion, recreation and current affairs. At the same time, some information needs have distinct location-specific content, as is evident from studies in both developed and developing countries. It seems that rural residents in developed countries, in addition to everyday information, also tend to require information on legal and civil rights, consumer issues, environment, etc. This is perhaps because of the fact that these rural dwellers, regardless of their level of employment or economic status, share many of the complex challenges of everyday life experienced by their urban counterparts.

The findings reported in this literature review indicate the need for further research into several areas of rural information needs and information-seeking behaviour in both developed and developing countries. Although the studies reviewed in this paper identified the information needs of rural dwellers, overall, they paid less attention to how rural dwellers use various sources, services and systems to satisfy their information needs. There is also a general lack

of attention given to how various services could be organized to provide better information to these users. Besides, the studies conducted in developed countries are few in number, are dated and are less comprehensive than those conducted in developing countries. More research is therefore needed to understand the information needs of rural dwellers in developed countries. Moreover, few studies have reported the information needs and seeking behaviour of ethnic minority groups (see Patterson 1995; Chakrabarti 2001; Ahmed 2009); there is a need for more research on how they approach and use information. Additionally, more studies are needed on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of illiterate rural dwellers, particularly in the developing countries. Children and young adult comprise a large portion of the rural population in developing countries, and it is important to understand the information needs and information-seeking habits of this group. Furthermore, as mobile phones and wireless Internet become widely available in rural areas, more research needs to be carried out to explore their effectiveness and to assess how these newer information resources are improving the lives of rural residents.

In rural areas, the local public library could be an important source for information. Studies have indicated time and time again that government-run public library services are largely inadequate and ineffective in rural areas as their collection and services do not always meet the needs of the local residents. Alternative channels for providing information services to rural areas thus need to be considered. The local information needs must be understood to be able to develop libraries that will meet those needs. The libraries must also provide useful information to illiterate members of the community through non-traditional channels such as picture books and audio-video recordings. Indigenous low-cost innovative technologies for providing Internet access to rural areas must be seriously considered. The public libraries in rural areas must be better equipped and the librarians must work with the local population to better understand their needs. The librarians should also actively help the rural communities in adopting new technologies. It is true that well-trained librarians are not attracted to jobs in rural areas where resources are scarce and basic human comforts are usually lacking. To overcome this problem, local volunteers can be recruited and trained to work in rural library projects.

In many rural communities, oral tradition and traditional knowledge is an important part of their cultural identities. They still play a vital role in the daily lives of the vast majority of people in the developing world.

There is a need to preserve and promote the future use of traditional knowledge and rural libraries can play a significant role in this regard.

Studies have indicated that non-government organizations (NGOs) can also play a crucial role in delivering information to rural dwellers. In many developing countries, they are the main providers of information in rural areas (see Islam 2009). It is important to streamline and integrate their services to cope with the needs of the rural dwellers. Also, the activities and needs of local authorities, extension workers and government information networks must be examined regularly, since these are the primary tools used by governments in many developing countries in getting information out to rural residents.

Conclusion

This literature review analyzed research studies on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in both developed and developing countries. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this review is that the information needs of rural dwellers from all countries are largely on the same parameter. The common information needs are related to the daily life of the rural dwellers. A nationwide coordinated effort by government agencies, local authorities and NGOs is therefore needed to bring day-to-day information to the rural dwellers in a way that is more cost-productive and efficient. It is also important that attempts be made to develop and strengthen rural information provision, not only from the top down, but also from the community level (see Ahmed 2010). These efforts must be made by working with the administrative structures of a country. A cultural and social change must take place in the perception of how crucial it is to meet the information needs of rural dwellers and in how to go about meeting those needs in a comprehensive and integrated way.

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Public libraries in Africa – agents for development and innovation? Current perceptions of local stakeholders

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EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries)

Abstract

This paper presents a methodology and preliminary results of a study to research perceptions of stakeholders and the public towards public libraries in six African countries. The study is closely linked with the EIFL Public Library Innovation Program, which awards grants to public libraries globally to address a range of socio-economic issues facing their communities, including projects in Kenya, Ghana and Zambia. The goal of the study is to understand the perceptions of national and local stakeholders (municipalities, ministries, public agencies, media, etc.) and the public (including non-users) in public libraries in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe about the potential of public libraries and to understand how these stakeholders could best be positively influenced to create, fund, support or to use public libraries. As far as it is known, surveys of this kind have not been done in African countries so the paper acquaints the audience with the field, which has not been explored, and provides background for increased library advocacy in Africa.

Keywords

public libraries, innovation, Africa

Introduction

American professor William Edwards Deming once said: “It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.” It is obvious that libraries globally operate in a more changing environment than ever before. One of the key characteristics of this environment is constant questioning of their need and relevance, which can be argued only with targeted systematic and evidence-based advocacy. However, effective demonstration of library value to stakeholders is impossible without understanding the baseline of their attitudes to and perceptions of libraries.

For these reasons many perception studies were launched in recent years, providing a strong basis of data for advocacy campaigns, mainly aiming to argue against library budget cuts and closures. However, most of these studies focus on libraries in highly developed countries like the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), while the study of perceptions of stakeholders in developing or transitional countries was relatively neglected.

Enabling access to knowledge through libraries in developing and transition countries is a key focus of EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries), an international not-for-profit organization which recently launched a Public Library Innovation Program (PLIP) and awarded a first round of grants to libraries from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. These local public library projects aim to help transform lives through innovative services. In relation to this activity EIFL has identified a big gap in research into perceptions of public libraries in developing or transitional countries and a strong need for related advocacy actions, and therefore initiated this survey of the perceptions of multiple stakeholder audiences.

The goal of the study is to understand the perceptions of certain stakeholders (national and local officials like municipalities, ministries, public agencies,

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media, etc.) and the public (including non-users) in public libraries in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe about the potential of public libraries, and to understand how these stakeholders could best be positively influenced to create, fund, support or to use public libraries. As regards the public (users and non-users), it also investigates library usage behavior and frequency of use, sources of information about libraries, satisfaction levels with the library and librarian, barriers to library use and willingness to use them in future. In the case of national and local level officials, the study aims to identify their priorities for libraries and how they perceive the importance of libraries as potential players in local and national development.

The paper introduces a field which yet has not been explored and provides background for evidence-based advocacy for public libraries in Africa. Also it aims to contribute to the methodology and effectiveness of practical research on public perceptions of public libraries.

Research into perceptions of libraries

Investigating the perceptions of various stakeholder audiences has always been a focus of library research. However, when heavy budget cuts were threatened, affecting, for example, the book fund, staffing, outreach, or reader development work, studies to provide evidence on perceived library value became increasingly important.

One of the solid studies to be mentioned is ‘Long Overdue: a Fresh Look at Public and Leadership Attitudes About Libraries in the 21st Century’, initiated by Public Agenda in 2006 in the USA. The study revealed that the public believes in the importance of public libraries in future and a strong majority says that if their public library were to shut down, they would feel that something essential and important has been lost, affecting the whole community. The study pointed out that people believe their communities must have well-functioning public libraries in order to be healthy and strong. Moreover, 71 percent of respondents said that libraries spend public money well and half of them stated that they would agree with increased taxes in order to support their local library. In addition to the valuable data on libraries, the study identified some areas of library work where public expectations were not fully met and uncovered areas of opportunity (Public Agenda 2006).

Another significant contribution to the body of knowledge was the study ‘From Awareness to Funding’, issued by OCLC in 2008. The study investigated the willingness of residents of US communities and

elected officials to support public libraries, and explored the reasons why people do or don’t support libraries. The study found that most people claim they would support the library, but fewer are firmly committed to it. It also highlighted a great lack of awareness regarding library funding challenges. Data showed that library support is only marginally related to visiting the library and therefore advocacy campaigns have to be focused on other groups than library users. The researches proved that perceptions of the librarian are highly related to support. An additional strong motivator directly related to the level of funding support is the belief that the library is a transformational force in people’s lives. The survey of elected officials indicated that they are supportive of the library – but not fully committed to increasing funding (OCLC 2008).

Interesting data on library-related perceptions of the largest minority group in the US – Latinos – was collected in the study ‘Latinos and Public Perceptions’ performed by The Thomas Rivera Policy Institute in 2008. The study helped to understand patterns of Latino library use, perceptions of the library among Latinos and the factors that drive Latino library use. This study found that Latinos hold positive perceptions of libraries, determined the social and demographical factors influencing library use, revealed the high importance of staff service and offered policy recommendations to attract more Latinos into public libraries (Flores and Pachon 2008).

In 2010 OCLC initiated another extensive study, ‘Perceptions of Libraries’. The study report provides insights into information consumers and their online habits, preferences, and perceptions. Particular attention was paid to how the economic downturn has affected the perception of libraries. The study revealed that huge numbers of people were affected by the recession and 81 percent of those economically impacted are users of libraries. It was noted that respondents perceive increased value in the library, for both themselves and their communities. The value of the librarian grew even stronger and the study proved a high correlation between funding support for public libraries and positive librarian perceptions (OCLC 2008).

One of the latest looks into public perceptions towards public libraries in the UK was the study ‘What do the public want from libraries?’ initiated by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2010. The research showed that the English public widely value public libraries as a force for good and one that should be provided free. A significant proportion (74 percent) of current users surveyed described libraries as “essential” or “very important”

in their lives. Fifty-nine per cent of non-users also think libraries play an “important” or “essential” role in the community. But it also suggests that the notion of library users and non-users is an artificial divide and that instead that people’s reliance on libraries tends to vary as their life circumstances change, for example through taking up study, becoming unemployed, having children or retiring.

Book choice, good customer service, staff expertise and convenience are seen as key to user satisfaction. Both users and non-users often expressed concern about books being “squeezed out” for other services and although they accepted greater automation, they do not think this should be at the expense of maintaining a knowledgeable and helpful staff base (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council 2010).

Research context

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) is an international not-for-profit organization with a base in Europe and a global network of partners. The organization works with library consortia in developing and transition countries to enable sustainable access to high quality digital information for library users.

EIFL was founded in 1999, with a mission of enabling access to knowledge through libraries in developing and transition countries to contribute to sustainable economic and social development. It began by advocating for affordable access to commercial e-journals for academic and research libraries in Central and Eastern Europe. EIFL now partners with libraries and library consortia in more than 60 developing and transition countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. Today its work includes a range of programs and initiatives as part of two core initiatives:

- Access to Knowledge for Education, Learning and Research – ensuring well-resourced libraries, modern Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and skilled staff to provide essential support to students and scholars.
- Access to Knowledge for Sustainable Community Development – helping to transform lives through innovative services in public libraries.

At the end of 2009, EIFL launched the Public Library Innovation Program, recognizing that the use of technology offers new opportunities to increase access to knowledge, helping to improve standards of living and to transform lives. For many people in developing and transition countries, the public library is the only place to access computers and the Internet, together with quality-assured information resources. Through technology, public libraries are also well

positioned to extend access to previously underserved communities. Yet in many countries where the need is greatest, public libraries are under-resourced.

The Public Library Innovation Program aims to spark innovative services in public libraries to improve lives. Under this program, EIFL encourages public libraries to reach out to their communities through pilot projects. In April 2010, EIFL funded 12 such projects in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

In connection with this activity, EIFL identified a gap in knowledge about the perceptions of public libraries by their stakeholders, which is important information in order to be able to advocate effectively for increased and sustainable funding of public libraries.

Initiating this study, EIFL aims to understand the perceptions of different stakeholders of public libraries in Africa – and in particular in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Uganda – about the potential of public libraries, so as to understand how these stakeholders could best be positively influenced to create/fund/support or use public libraries. This study has the potential for further communication campaigns aimed at raising public awareness of the potential contribution of public libraries to sustain livelihoods. The changes in perceptions would then lead to increased awareness of innovative ways that libraries can serve public needs and of funding for public libraries.

Research methodology

The main objective of the study is to understand the perceptions of different stakeholders of public libraries. Specific objectives of the study include:

- to understand the current awareness, perceptions, attitudes and actions towards public libraries of both funders and public
- to understand the perceptions of library staff of their role in local development and to identify the barriers they face
- to identify trusted information channels for funders and public to enable effective awareness raising campaigns.

Research took place in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Uganda from January to June, 2011. Research partner for this study was TNS Research International, which in the recent past successfully conducted numerous quantitative and qualitative surveys in Africa across a wide range of social research sectors. As a result of many years of research experience, they have developed highly accurate and

Table 1. Research samples.

| | Total number of libraries sampled | Users | Non-users | Librarians | Local officials | In depth interviews with national officials |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|---|
| Kenya | 20 | 500 | 300 | 63 | 51 | 18 |
| Uganda | 22 | 500 | 300 | 50 | 50 | 20 |
| Tanzania | 17 | 500 | 301 | 48 | 38 | 14 |
| Ghana | 15 | 500 | 300 | 67 | 40 | 20 |
| Ethiopia | – | – | – | 35 | 49 | 20 |
| Zimbabwe | – | – | – | 20 | 50 | 20 |
| Total | 74 | 2000 | 1201 | 283 | 278 | 112 |

efficient methods of conducting both qualitative and quantitative research.

The study covered five broad sample groupings:

- a survey of users of public libraries (a user was defined as anyone who has used a library open to the public in the last 12 months)
- a survey of non-users of public libraries (a non-user was defined as anyone who has NOT used a public library in the past year)
- a survey of public librarians and library officials (library directors/managers, deputy directors/managers, professional librarians, assistant librarians and support staff)
- a survey of local officials (the representatives of local authorities/municipalities, who fund or do not fund local libraries)
- qualitative research in the form of in-depth interviews (IDIs) carried out with the officials from the ministries, national agencies and national media.

As information on public libraries in these countries is almost non-existing, prior to the study a landscape survey was done for each of the countries. A questionnaire on basic library data (number of libraries, hierarchical structure, geographical distribution, user profiles) was distributed to EIFL coordinators in the respective countries. As library statistics on public libraries in African countries are very weak, in many cases data was incomplete and built on the coordinators' knowledge in the field. In all cases they were able to provide a list of government funded libraries and in some cases also community-run libraries. This information was enough to identify locations and conduct the sampling. We include information from the landscape study, under the heading 'Library context in the six countries', below.

The surveys were carried out nationwide in each country, focusing on the public libraries, urban and rural structural units, including community-run libraries. Sampling of respondents was conducted on

the basis of the geographical distribution. The research applied random and target sampling. Random sampling was applied in surveys of the public libraries' users and non-users, public librarians and library officials, representatives of local stakeholders' institutions. Target sampling was used when performing surveys of representatives of national stakeholders' sub-groups such as ministries, national agencies and media.

For the library users, the respondents were selected at the sampled libraries. Interviews were done using both entry and exit interviews.

For the library non-users, respondents were selected from within a catchment area of approximately 20 km radius from the sampled library used for the survey of library users. Households were selected using the random route technique and a screener question used at the house to select the respondent and verify eligibility as a non-user.

For the target group of librarians, a sample of libraries was drawn from the universe and assigned librarian samples. More than one librarian could be interviewed in a library depending on library size and location. All libraries selected for the users sample automatically included a librarian sample. In most of the countries, the librarian sample was distributed between public libraries and community libraries.

For the local officials, the sample was distributed among local and municipal authorities that were funding and managing libraries and those who were not running libraries. The national level officials were identified with the help of EIFL coordinators in the respective countries.

Samples varied by target groups and are summarized in Table 1. Base sizes are quite small at country level so the data is interpreted at the combined level.

All research instruments were developed by EIFL with the input of TNS Research International, based on their knowledge and experience. As these instruments were based on international experiences that had never been tested in Africa, the instruments had

to be adapted to the local context and piloted prior to the survey. Ten pilot interviews per country were done to pre-test each of the quantitative questionnaires. The interviewers checked the clarity of the questions, ability of respondents to answer all questions both in terms of relevance and questionnaire design, the flow of the questionnaire, relevance of translation to local languages and all other issues helping to improve the questionnaire.

Thorough quality control mechanisms were used during both fieldwork and data processing stages. In the fieldwork stage this included training of interviewers as well as debriefing sessions with their teams during the process of data collection, performed by team leaders. The team leaders accompanied 5 percent of all interviews conducted; another 10 percent of all interviews conducted by each interviewer were back-checked by supervisors who got in touch with the respondents and re-asked a few relevant questions to ascertain that the interview was in fact done. All questionnaires were checked by the team leader going through completed questionnaires before data processing.

Library context in the six countries

Accurate baseline information about public libraries – including numbers and kinds of libraries (public, community, rural, etc.), governing structures, demographic profile of users, annual budgets and funding sources – proved harder to find in some of the six countries than others. Information presented here is not comprehensive. It has been compiled from a combination of desk research, websites of national library systems (where available); the IFLA World Report 2010,¹ and reports provided by EIFL Country Coordinators.² General information about each country is drawn from a variety of international aid agencies like the World Bank, and other sources. With the exception of Ghana, which is rated a ‘lower middle income’ country by the World Bank, all the countries were ranked low income.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia has a population of about 83 million (17 percent living in urban areas), a GDP of about US\$30 billion, and 77 percent of Ethiopians live on less than US\$2.00 a day.³ Adult literacy is estimated at about 36 percent⁴ and Internet usage is 0.75 percent of total population.⁵

Ethiopia has a National Library and many small libraries.⁶ EIFL’s country coordinator in Ethiopia estimated that there are more than 237 public libraries, distributed across the country. Over 25

percent of these appear to be in the capital city, Addis Ababa. The City Administration provided the coordinator with a list of 66 large and small public and community libraries in and around Addis Ababa. National statistics about library use and demographic profile of users were not available, but according to the EIFL coordinator, national government prioritizes women and youth and primary and secondary school students with respect to library use.

Ghana

Ghana has a population of about 24 million (51 percent living in urban areas), a GDP of over US\$31 billion (2010) and 53 percent of people living on less than US\$2.00 a day.⁷ Adult literacy is estimated at about 65 percent⁸ and Internet usage is about 9.5 percent of the total population.⁹

Created in the 1950s and 1960s, Ghana’s public library service flourished until the 1980s, after which it went into decline as a result of economic recession and diminishing budgets.¹⁰ The public library service currently comprises 10 regional libraries and 52 branch libraries. It is governed by the Ghana Library Board (GLB), a statutory body created by the Public Library Act of 1950. The GLB’s mandate is to establish and maintain public libraries throughout the country.¹¹ The GLB falls under the Ministry of Education, which funds library services. Recently, the GLB has received additional funds to boost services. An Act of Parliament in 2000 established the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND). The GLB is a beneficiary of the fund, and has used it primarily to increase stocks of books. In 2006, the GLB acquired 10 mobile library vans, one per region, each with 4,000 books, for extension services to rural communities.

According to the GLB, there are also 195 community libraries in Ghana. Other libraries include rural libraries, created and funded by NGOs and a widely respected privately owned public library service for children, Kathy Knowles library, in Accra.¹² Community and rural libraries do not receive government funds, although the GLB provides advice and technical support. Ghana does not have a national library.¹³ Functions of a national library (for example, legal deposit and preservation of the national heritage) are shared among public university libraries and the George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs.¹⁴

Challenges faced by public and community libraries in Ghana include low budgets, poor salaries for librarians, lack of variety of services and limited Internet connectivity.¹⁵ Membership of public libraries is open to all citizens, on the basis of

registration, and fees are uniform across the country. Fees for children are 50Gp (about 3.50 US cents) per annum; enabling the child to borrow one book at a time. Adult membership fees are GHC1.00 (about 7.00 US cents) per annum, allowing borrowing of three books at a time.¹⁶

Kenya

The Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) serves a country of 40.5 million people (22 percent living in urban areas). Kenya has a GDP of US\$31.4 billion and just under 40 percent of people living on less than US\$2.00 a day.¹⁷ Adult literacy is estimated at about 74 percent¹⁸ and Internet access is about 26 percent of total population.¹⁹

Public libraries are run by the KNLS Board, created by the KNLS Board Act (CAP 225: 1965) which tasks the KNLS Board to promote, establish, equip and maintain libraries, to advise government on library matters and to run public libraries. The KNLS Board falls under the Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture. The public library network run by KNLS currently consists of 58 urban and rural libraries,²⁰ including eight provincial libraries, seven district libraries and 43 community libraries. Membership of these libraries is open to all. Fees are uniform across the country, at Kshs. 300 per year (about US\$3.50) for adults and Kshs. 20 per year (US\$0.24) for children.

In addition to the KNLS network, Nairobi City Council of Nairobi also operates a network of five libraries, including the well known Macmillan Library in Nairobi and four suburban and peri-urban libraries.

Funding of public libraries is mainly by government. Funding of community libraries is a joint effort of the community and the government (through the KNLS budget).

Tanzania

Tanzania's population is estimated at almost 45 million (51 percent living in urban areas); GDP is US\$23 billion and almost 88 percent of people live on less than US\$2 a day.²¹ Literacy stands at 73 percent and Internet access is estimated at 11 percent.²²

According to the IFLA World Report, there are 37 public libraries in Tanzania. This figure is borne out by the Tanzania Library Services Board website, which includes a list of about 19 Regional, Divisional and 13 District libraries.²³ Most public libraries are run by the Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) which is a national institution under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training established by the 1963 Act of Parliament, later repealed by the 1975 Act. The Act tasks the Board to promote, establish,

equip and develop libraries, information centres, and documentation centres, and to ensure provision of information to all groups including children, youth, adults, and disadvantaged groups.²⁴ Other libraries open to the general public include NGO libraries and resource centres, which are governed by their own institutional policies.

The system is managed by the TLSB with local government structures, more or less following local government subdivisions. The central library is in Dar es Salaam; management of regional libraries (for example, in centres like Arusha) is shared with local government; smaller libraries are managed at ward level, and community libraries are run by villages and local communities.²⁵ TLSB libraries are open to all. Membership fees range from US\$1–US\$4 for citizens; foreigners pay up to US\$25 per year.

Uganda

Uganda has a population of 33.4 million (about 13 percent living in urban areas). GDP stands at US\$17 billion and almost 65 percent of Ugandans live on less than US\$2 a day.²⁶ Adult literacy is estimated at 73 percent and Internet use at 12.5 percent.²⁷

Uganda has a national library – the National Library of Uganda (NLU)²⁸ – a public library system and a vibrant community library sector. The NLU's operations are governed by the National Library Act of 2003. Under the Act, the NLU plays a leading role in supporting and developing public and community libraries. Public libraries in Uganda are libraries that are initiated or started and funded by government. Community libraries are libraries that are started and funded by the communities where they are located. Public and community libraries are run and overseen by local urban and district government councils, under the terms of the Local Governments Act, 1997. The National Library Act charges the NLU to develop policies, provide technical support, and inspect public and community libraries to ensure they adhere to national standards. The NLU also helps public and community libraries by providing books sourced through charitable organizations.

The NLU website lists 25 public libraries and 16 community libraries. The Uganda Community Libraries Association however, lists 81 community libraries as members.²⁹ Library membership is generally free of charge, however, some local councils have instituted library fees.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a population of some 12.6 million people (about 51 percent in urban areas) a GDP of about

US\$7.5 billion and per capita income of US\$460. Literacy levels are high, at over 90 percent.³⁰ Internet access is estimated at about 7.5 percent.³¹

Zimbabwe's current political and financial crisis has had a profound impact on library services, whose budgets have shrunk considerably over the past decade. Library services in Zimbabwe are currently run and managed by the National Library and Documentation Service (NLDS), which was established in 1985 by the NLDLS Act. The aims of the NLDS are to promote and disseminate publications of educational, scientific, and recreational value; to establish and maintain a high standard of library services; to train librarians and maintain a high standard of professional practice; libraries; and to operate services such as inter-library loans and document delivery for all needs. There are currently about 49 public libraries in Zimbabwe.³²

Libraries in Zimbabwe fall under the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, and the NLDS Council, which heads the service, has its headquarters in the ministry's offices. The ministry appoints councillors.

Individual libraries keep their own user statistics, and these are not compiled nationally. Some libraries charge membership fees, but these are not standard throughout the country, and amounts vary by library and the applicant's income.

In addition, Zimbabwe has a national library³³, a few libraries run by municipal councils and offering limited resources, and some rural libraries based primary and secondary schools that serve rural areas.

Perception research findings

Library users and non-users

The research revealed that a typical user of a public library is likely to be a young single male from a middle class background, aged between 16 and 30, currently in school or having just completed school and has started working. Non-users are not demographically different from users except on gender, where almost equal numbers of male and female are seen and the fact that a slightly higher proportion of non-users fall above the age of 30 years. Non-users have relatively lower levels of education and a greater share of them have families (Table 2).

Seventy-four percent of library users talked about their library use experience, mainly with friends or adult family members (Figure 1).

Maybe partly for this reason, the awareness of library presence in the area is quite high across all countries. The majority of non-users across all countries claim that being busy is a key barrier to usage of libraries.

Table 2. Library users and non-users: demographics.

| | Library users | Library non-users |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Base | 1990 | 1201 |
| Gender | % | % |
| Male | 70 | 48 |
| Female | 30 | 52 |
| Age | % | % |
| 16–20 years | 39 | 17 |
| 21–30 years | 48 | 54 |
| Above 31–40 years | 14 | 29 |
| Years of formal education | % | % |
| 0–5 years | 2 | 7 |
| 6–12 years | 39 | 55 |
| 13–16 years | 44 | 30 |
| 17+ years | 14 | 8 |
| Marital status | % | % |
| Single | 80 | 51 |
| Married | 16 | 39 |
| Widow/widower | - | 2 |
| Divorced/separated | 2 | 6 |
| Don't know/refused | 1 | 2 |
| Occupation status | % | % |
| Work part time | 8 | 11 |
| Work full time | 14 | 23 |
| Self employed | 6 | 26 |
| Unemployed not looking for a job | 6 | 13 |
| Retired | - | 1 |
| Student | 64 | 17 |
| Housewife | 1 | 7 |
| Don't know/refused | 1 | 1 |

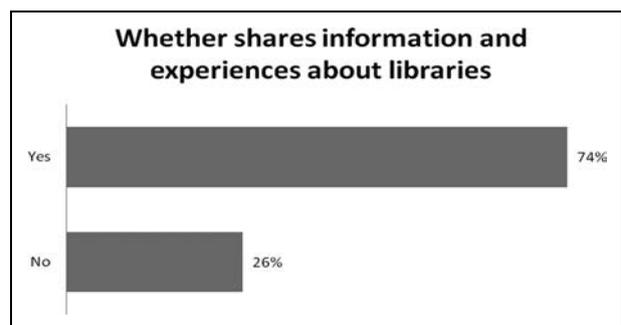


Figure 1. Base: Library users, $N = 1990$.

Data indicates that relevant books would be the key motivator to likely future usage as almost half (45 percent) of non-users cite this as a key element that would get them into libraries. Other important influencers would be more convenient locations and longer opening hours (Figure 2).

However, libraries are valued and are seen as important both by library users and non-users. Users appreciate the value of libraries to both the individual

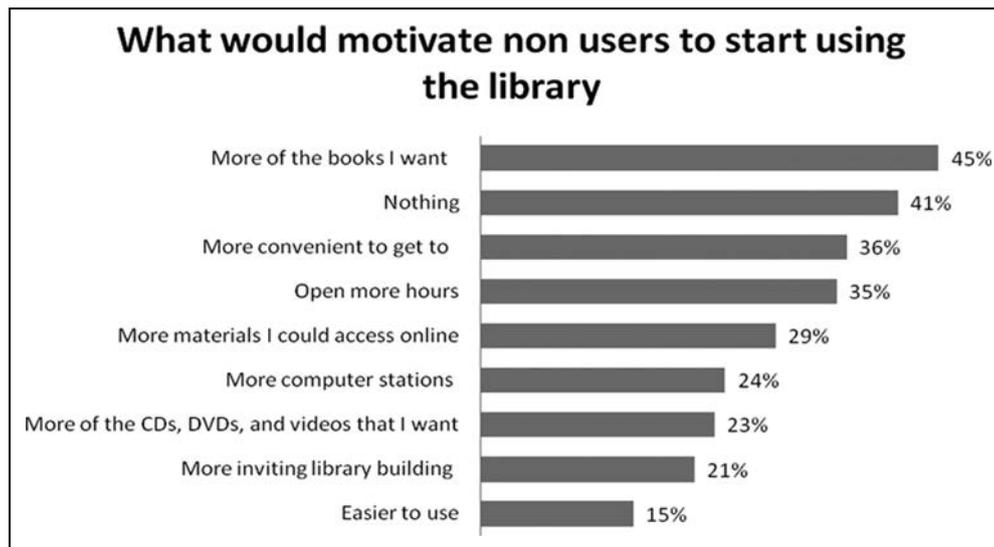


Figure 2. Base: Library users, N = 1201.

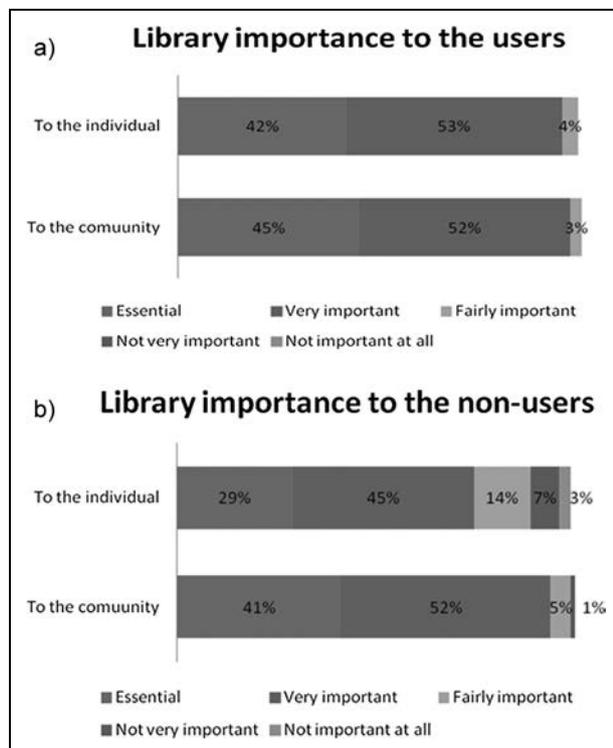


Figure 3 a. Base: Library users, N = 1990. b. Base: Library users, N = 1201.

and the community, while non-users tend to see libraries as essential to the community but not necessarily to themselves (Figure 3).

As regards the associations with libraries, for both users and non-users libraries are mainly related with information and knowledge storage as well as with books and a quiet place to study. Only a small percent of people associate libraries with computers or librarians (Figure 4).

Overall, most library services are related to the traditional services of issuing books and reference services, much of which is done for classroom work for pupils. They also provide forums where people meet to socialize. Librarians are also an important aspect of libraries and consulting them for help is one of the key activities users have done in the past 12 months (Figure 5).

The key reason for using libraries is education, with about 90 percent in all countries using the libraries for this purpose, while 20 percent say they use libraries for health issues and 10 percent in relation to business (Figure 6).

Besides educational purposes, which are mentioned by equally large proportions of users and non-users, there are some interesting differences between users and non-users for other purposes which could be an indication of the difference between reality and expectation, i.e. for any given purpose there are more non-users who think it should be served by libraries compared to users who say that it is actually being done by libraries. For example, a high percentages of non users would expect libraries to be able to provide health and agriculture information (Figure 7).

The highest rated aspects of library work by users are the competence of librarians, library facilities and opening hours. Computing and digital resources in libraries are rated lowest and this is further emphasized by the poor rating of librarians' skills on the same topic (Table 3).

The key driver for dissatisfaction with libraries is range and relevance of materials available as well as space constraints and a lack of computers (Figure 8).

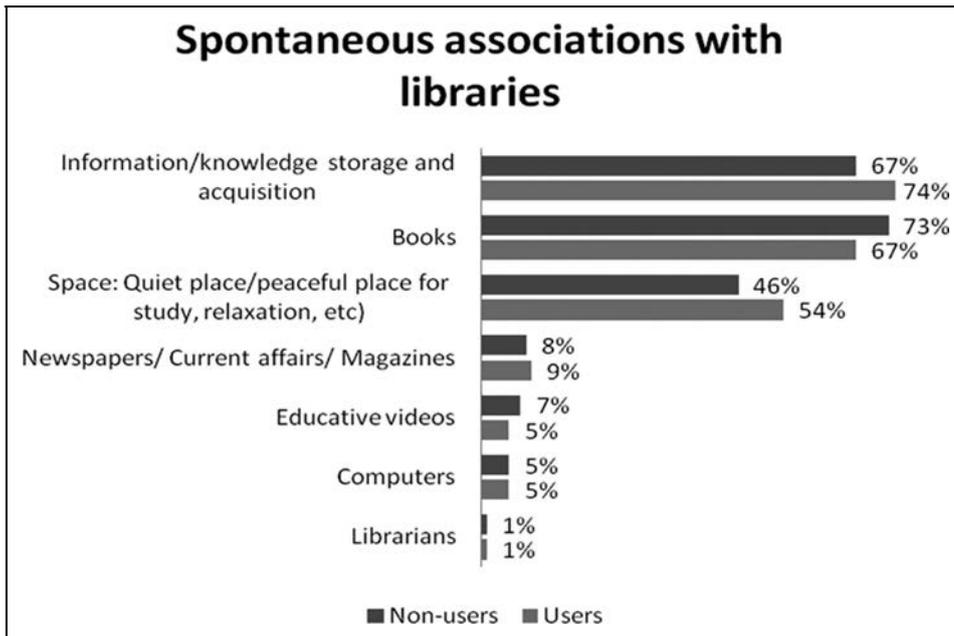


Figure 4. Base: Library users, N = 1990, library non-users, N = 1201.

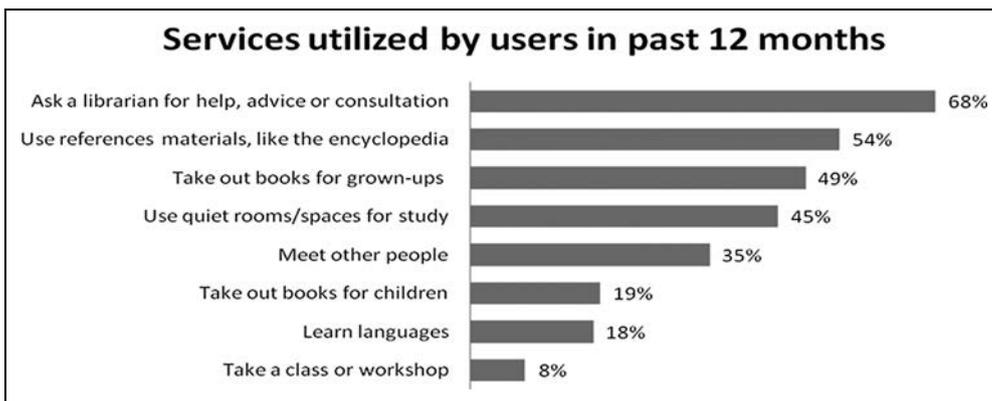


Figure 5. Base: Library users, N = 1990.

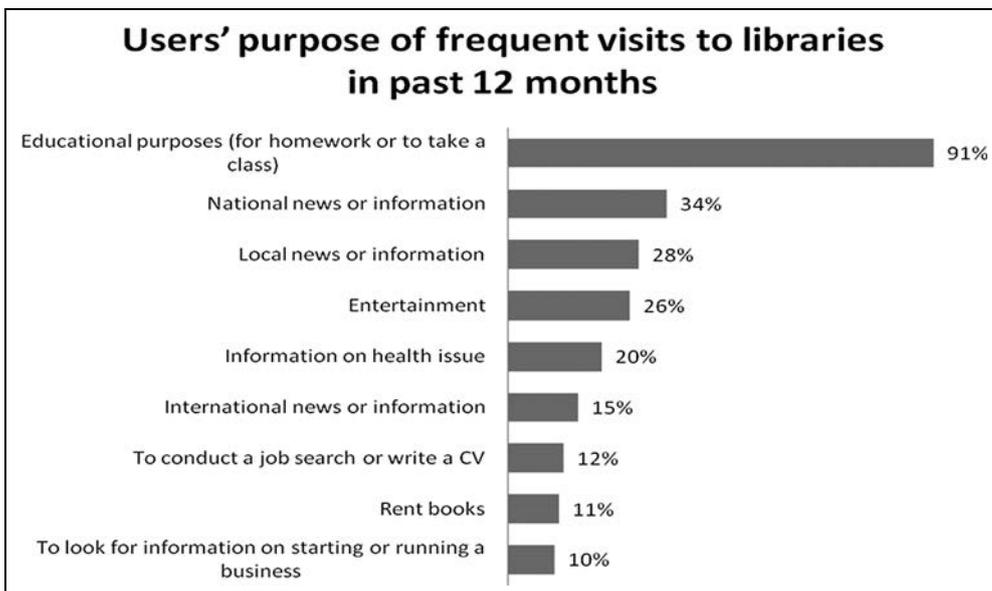


Figure 6. Base: Library users, N = 1990.

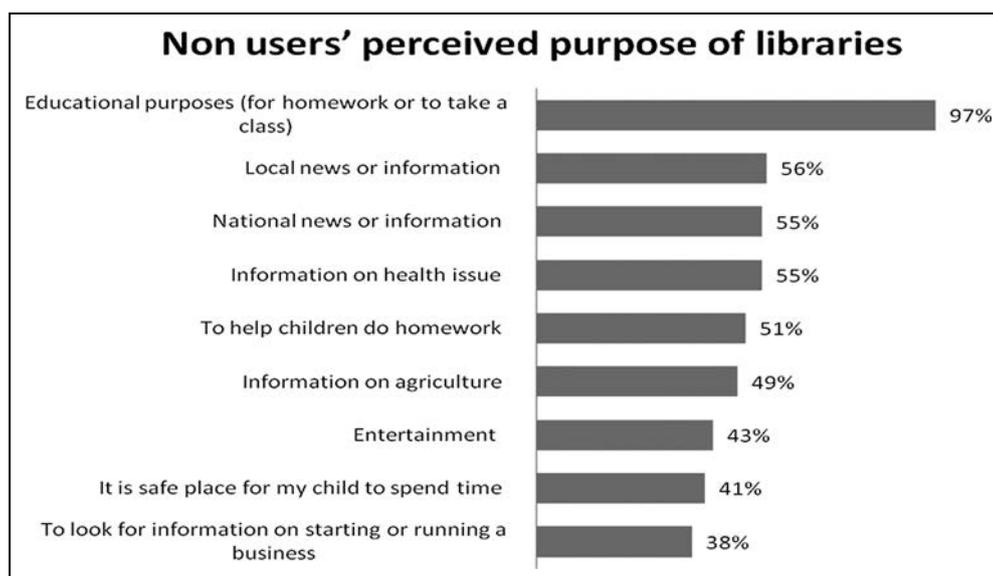


Figure 7. Base: Library non-users, $N = 1201$.

Table 3. User ratings of different aspects of library work.

| Rating of different library aspects | Excellent | Good | Bad | Very bad | Don't know/NA |
|--|-----------|------|-----|----------|---------------|
| Library facilities, space | 14% | 63% | 15% | 7% | 1% |
| Library opening hours | 25% | 60% | 11% | 4% | 1% |
| Librarians competence | 21% | 64% | 8% | 2% | 4% |
| Books | 17% | 50% | 22% | 8% | 3% |
| Periodicals | 12% | 43% | 18% | 7% | 19% |
| Other collections (CD, DVD) | 4% | 12% | 19% | 22% | 43% |
| Range of databases | 6% | 26% | 18% | 15% | 35% |
| Events | 6% | 26% | 21% | 17% | 31% |
| Computers and other equipment | 5% | 19% | 16% | 22% | 37% |
| Computer software | 4% | 17% | 17% | 20% | 42% |
| Librarian expertise in working with computer | 8% | 25% | 10% | 10% | 46% |
| Librarians responsiveness when they requested the assistance of the computer | 10% | 24% | 10% | 9% | 46% |

Base: Library users, $N = 1990$.

Librarians

The survey of librarians shows that the traditional definition and role of libraries for lending of books is still a key element of services offered by libraries in all the countries. However, the high proportion (68 percent) of users seeking advice and consultation suggests that the presence and competence of the librarian is vital. Digital services such as CDs, videos and computer and Internet services are not readily available across all countries.

The overall atmosphere of the library is rated 'good' and librarians also rate themselves highly on competence. Despite the claim by librarians about their expertise in working with computers, computer related aspects are rated the poorest (Table 4).

In the view of librarians, libraries are generally considered friendly, but they are lacking in technology and modernity, both of which receive a rather low rating across all countries. The main challenges faced by libraries are minimal reading space, limited number of books, few computers, lack of funding, inadequate staff, lack of current information and outdated books (Figure 9).

If more funding was provided the great majority (86 percent) of librarians would give top priority to equipment. They would also like to improve conditions of their buildings and stock. Quite the same attention would be allocated to staff development (Figure 10).

However, not only the technologies, but also a training program for librarians on skills to provide

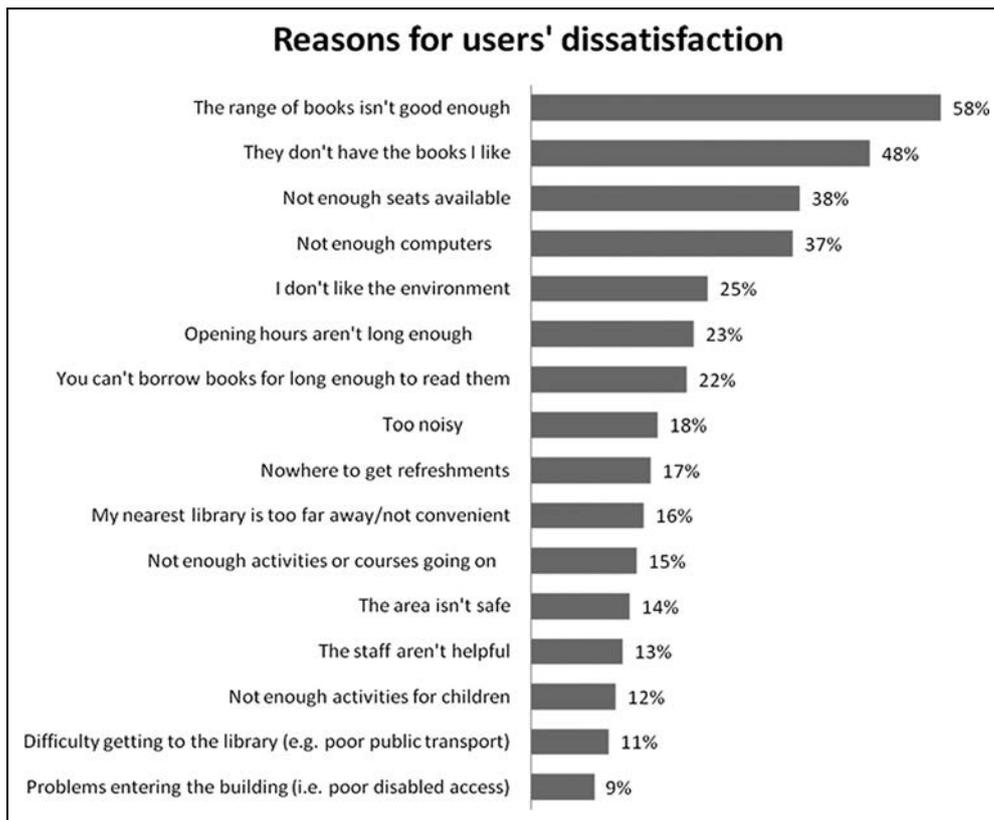


Figure 8. Base: Library users, $N = 1990$.

Table 4. Librarians' ratings of different aspects of library work.

| Rating of different library aspects | Excellent | Good | Bad | Very bad | Don't know/NA |
|---|-----------|------|-----|----------|---------------|
| Library facilities, space | 11% | 54% | 28% | 7% | 0% |
| Library opening hours | 34% | 55% | 7% | 3% | 0% |
| Librarians competence | 39% | 53% | 4% | 2% | 0% |
| Books | 14% | 48% | 26% | 11% | 0% |
| Periodicals | 11% | 43% | 25% | 17% | 0% |
| Other collections (CD, DVD) | 3% | 29% | 23% | 29% | 0% |
| Range of databases | 7% | 31% | 24% | 25% | 0% |
| Events | 8% | 43% | 25% | 12% | 0% |
| Computers and other equipment | 6% | 27% | 28% | 25% | 0% |
| Computer software | 6% | 25% | 23% | 30% | 0% |
| Librarian computer expertise | 22% | 45% | 17% | 8% | 0% |
| Librarians assistance with the computer | 22% | 33% | 15% | 12% | 0% |

Base: Librarians, $N = 283$.

technology related library services would be necessary to better equip them in this technology evolving world. Currently 38 percent of librarians feel unable to provide technology related services (Figure 11).

Librarians see libraries to be mainly addressing education-oriented needs and similarly see users as benefiting most in acquisition of new skills as well as learning new things. In addition, according to the librarians, libraries address the need for general

information, such as national and international news and more specialized information for business. Health and agriculture also rank highly. Only a few librarians see libraries to be addressing the need to communicate and interact with others (Figure 12).

Although librarians consider that they have impact in many areas, there seems to be a lack of proactiveness in terms of building partnerships with institutions that could help to maximize these impacts.

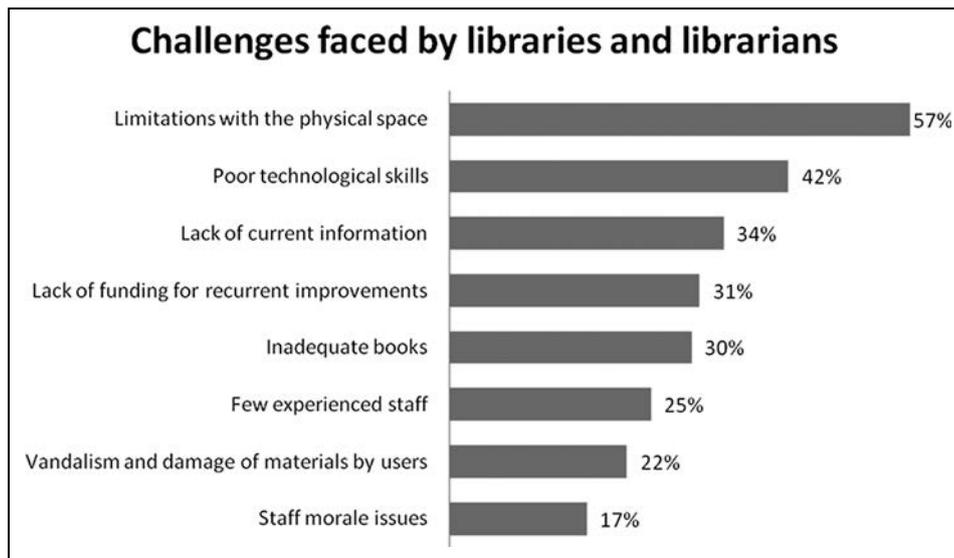


Figure 9. Base: Librarians, N = 283.

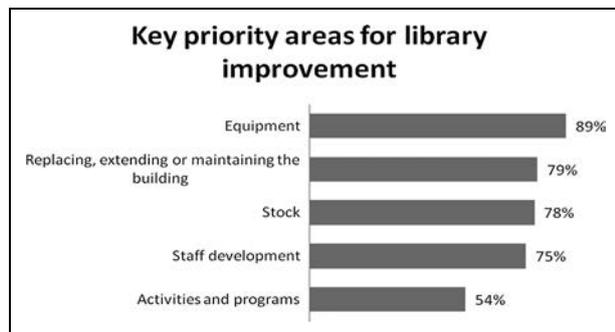


Figure 10. Base: Librarians, N = 283.

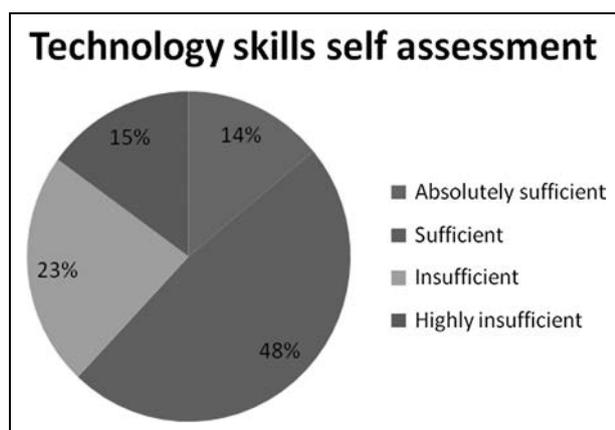


Figure 11. Base: Librarians, N = 283.

Also there is a need for librarians to develop advocacy skills that would help them promote their visibility in communities through the mass media and Internet (Figure 13).

Local and national officials

The survey of local officials who currently fund the local library revealed that libraries are considered essential both in the individual and in the community level (Figure 14).

However, satisfaction with the current library services is not very high, with only 55 percent overall saying they are satisfied (Figure 15).

The main reasons for satisfaction with library services concern the physical library environment, i.e. ambience and convenience. Staff is also an important driver of satisfaction. The highest rated aspects are library opening hours (77 percent rating as good and excellent) and librarians' competence (69 percent rating either good or excellent). The poorest rated are computer-related aspects and librarians skills to provider computer-related services, as well as limited space (Table 5).

It is quite clear that libraries are associated with the very traditional roles of lending books and providing a study environment for educational purposes. Eighty-seven percent of the municipalities who fund local libraries mention education, suggesting that libraries are mainly seen as extensions of institutions for formal education. There is also recognition that libraries serve as a source for local or national news and information as well as information on health (Figure 16).

There is agreement among many officials in local authorities which operate libraries as well as those which don't run libraries that libraries deserve more funding, stating at the same time that funding should come from outside sources. Interestingly, some among officials in authorities which operate

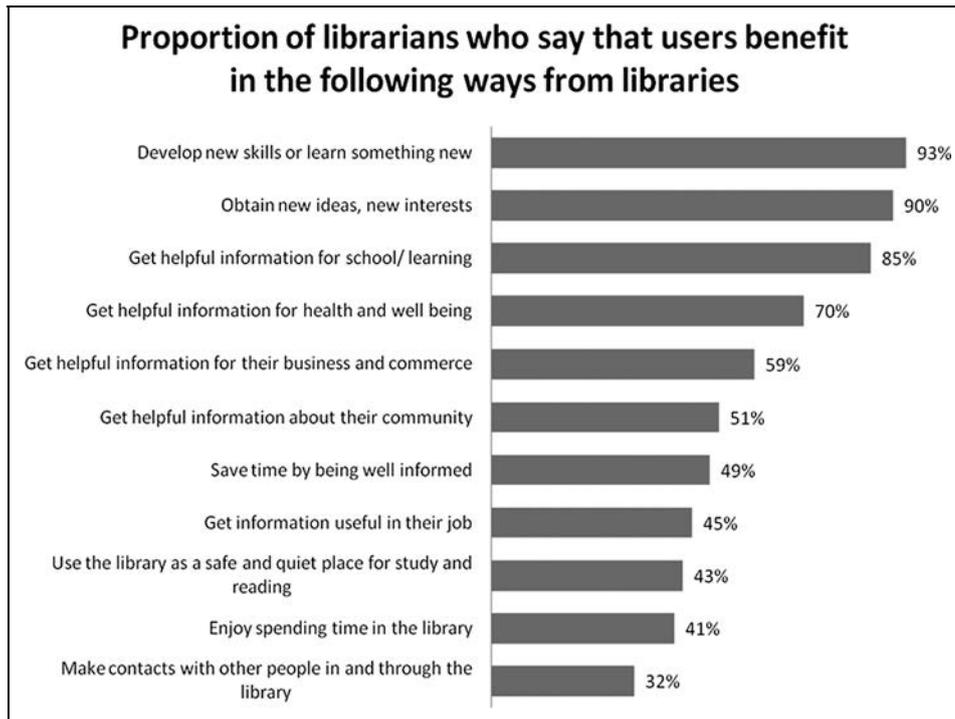


Figure 12. Base: Librarians, $N = 283$.

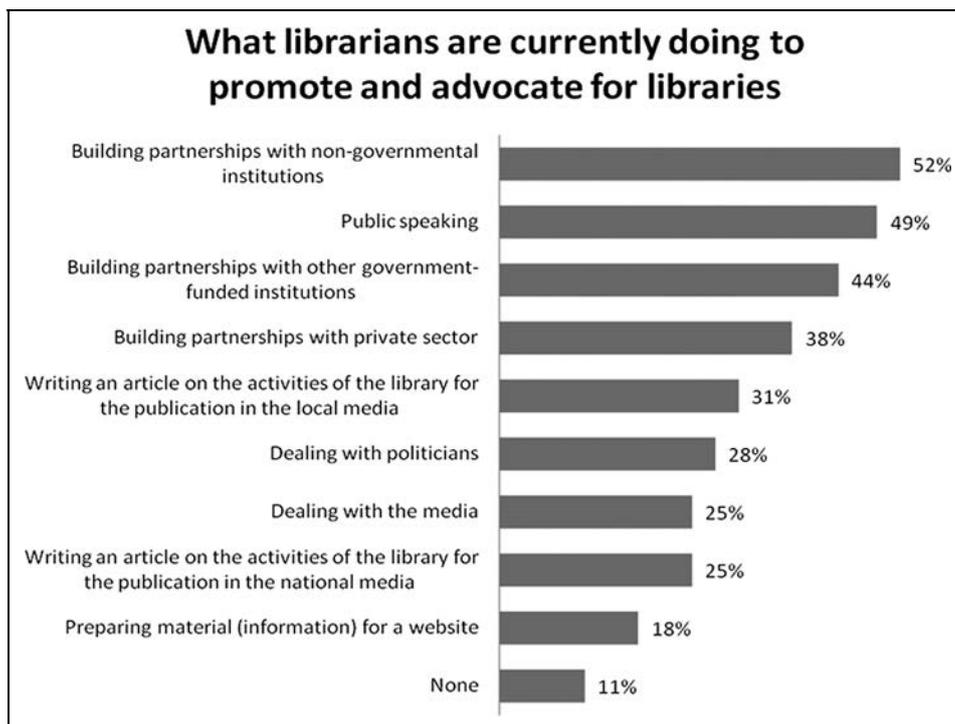


Figure 13. Base: Librarians, $N = 283$.

libraries feel that libraries deserve less funding (Figure 17).

As regards library impact, stakeholders claim that in the field of education libraries are mainly contributing to normal school learning for children and general improvement of literacy (Figure 18).

In terms of health, it seems that information on health is available in the libraries. However, they could do more to promote health issues through facilitating health-related events (Figure 19).

Local officials claim that libraries provide a forum for meeting and building relationships. However,

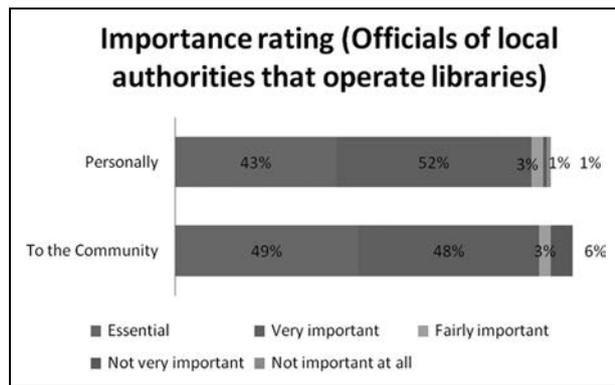


Figure 14. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, N = 202.

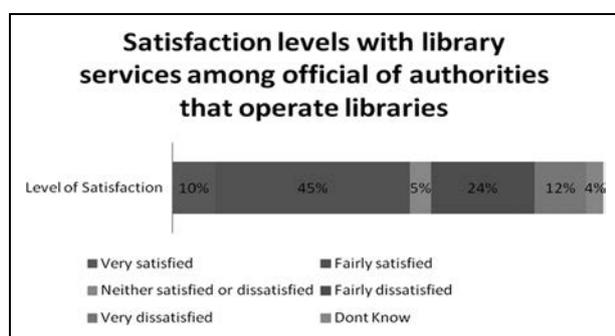


Figure 15. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, N = 202.

opportunities to further strengthen this role through electronic communication to reach distant friends and family seem to be untapped (Figure 20).

In the opinion of local stakeholders, libraries could do more to ensure citizen empowerment. In future this role could be strengthened through providing access to and promotion of e-government information and services (Figure 21).

Another potential area for impact is agriculture, where libraries could impact communities through providing access to weather information, pricing in the market, developing, scheduling, planting and maintaining crops etc. (Figure 22).

From the interviews with national officials libraries are strongly seen as aiding children’s learning and contributing to the improvement of literacy. Another widely acknowledged aspect is cost saving; however, actual business-related information seems to be insufficient. National officials agree that libraries have information related to health but at the same time they think that libraries are not holding events related to health. As regards communication, libraries enable linkages through communication one-on-one but rarely online. Also, a more proactive approach is expected from them to promote events related to culture.

There are not very strong positive sentiments regarding impact on social and community development and especially on serving the disadvantaged. Also, national officials claim that libraries could do more to link citizens with governments. The deficiency in digital resources is seen as a strong barrier to the provision of e-government services. Another area of opportunity seems to be agriculture, where there is a significant amount of disagreement on the libraries’ input.

Conclusions

Public libraries are available in most countries, offering the traditional service of lending of books and a good environment for studying. Most of them are small with limited space and are resource constrained. It is evident that most lack technology-related facilities and in some cases relevant books to meet the needs of users.

Table 5. Local officials’ ratings of different aspects of library work.

| Rating of different library aspects | Excellent | Good | Bad | Very bad | Don’t know/NA |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------|-----|----------|---------------|
| Library facilities, space | 5% | 48% | 35% | 9% | 3% |
| Library opening hours | 14% | 64% | 14% | 3% | 4% |
| Librarians competence | 15% | 55% | 15% | 5% | 9% |
| Books | 11% | 41% | 34% | 10% | 4% |
| Periodicals | 7% | 36% | 31% | 13% | 12% |
| Other collections (CD, DVD) | 4% | 12% | 33% | 28% | 22% |
| Range of databases | 5% | 26% | 26% | 21% | 22% |
| Events | 6% | 33% | 32% | 14% | 15% |
| Computers and other equipment | 3% | 19% | 40% | 21% | 17% |
| Computer software | 3% | 15% | 34% | 25% | 22% |
| Librarians computer expertise | 8% | 33% | 17% | 15% | 27% |
| Librarians assistance with computer | 8% | 31% | 17% | 15% | 28% |

Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, N = 202.

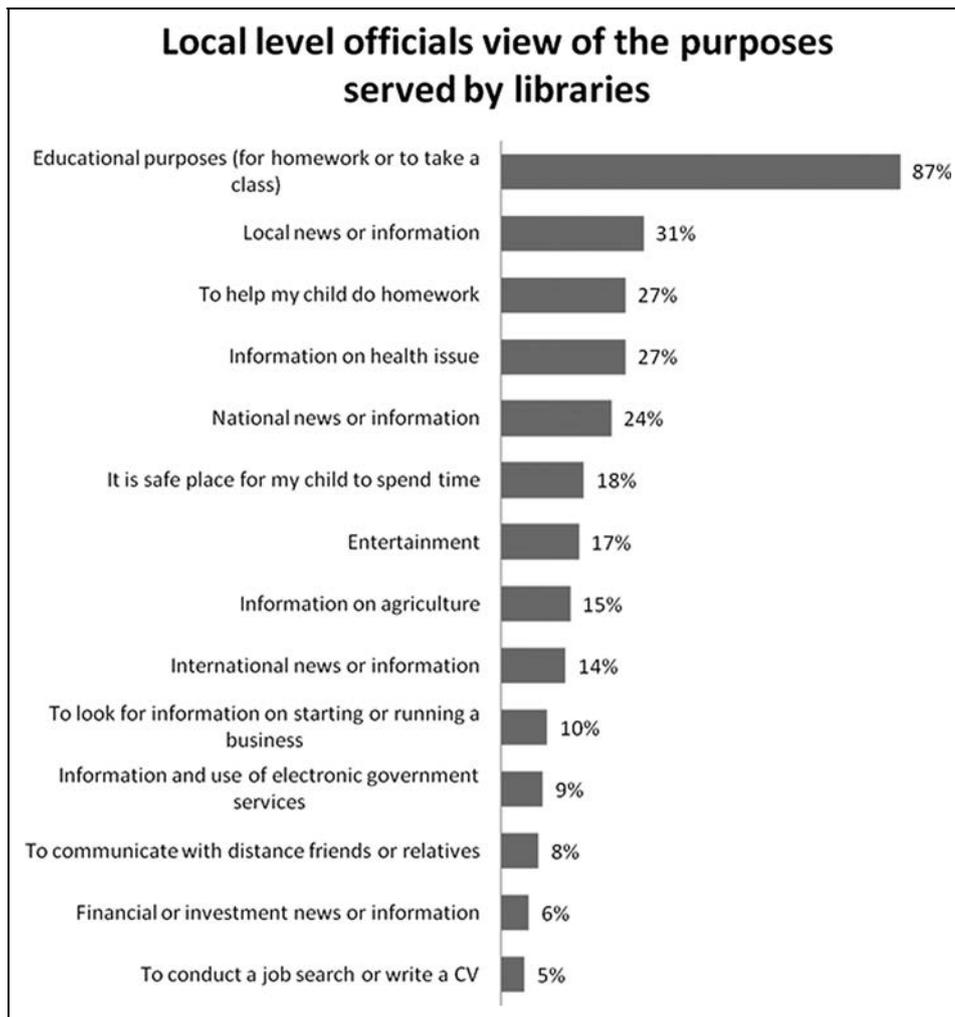


Figure 16. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, $N = 202$.

Across all groups surveyed, i.e. from policy level all the way to users, including non-users, a significant majority have very positive sentiments about libraries. However, libraries are perceived as offering study-related information and therefore as an extension of the educational process.

Librarians are seen as competent to perform their traditional roles but have limitations in technology-related services. Low skills levels in respect of technology services are a result of lack of the facilities that would enable them to improve their competency.

Libraries are seen as essential to the individual as well as communities in general. However, they need to engage with the community at a more tangible level that goes beyond providing information only e.g. facilitating community interaction with service providers of health, agriculture, culture and entrepreneurship. Going digital, which is a clear deficiency currently, would perhaps provide a new avenue where libraries would be seen as being more dynamic and innovative in reaching out to communities.

However, the need is not only for more pro-activeness in creating and maintaining innovative services that would meet the needs of local communities; it is also important for libraries to create and demonstrate their value to the community, going beyond lending of books and facilitating study. This is quite challenging, since a significant number of librarians admit to lacking the necessary skills for advocating for greater visibility and stronger support.

One of the useful outcomes of the research was the locally adapted research methodology into library perceptions. The methodology developed combines quantitative and qualitative research methods and research instruments, adapted to local conditions. The empirical study helped to test it and confirmed its validity in the local context.

The study provides a rich body of knowledge to start discussions with stakeholders about the role that libraries play in the community and their potential for ensuring the development and sustainability of library services. Perhaps even more important, it starts to

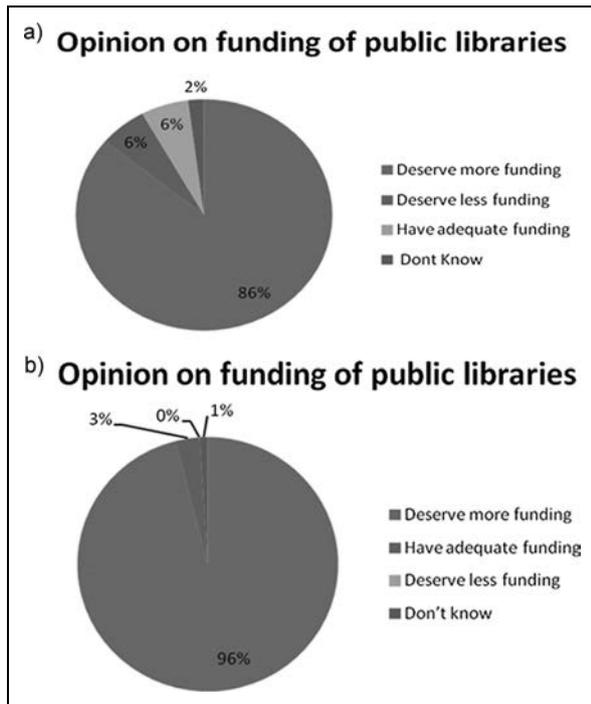


Figure 17 a. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, $N = 202$. **b.** Base: Local officials of authorities that don't operate libraries, $N = 76$.

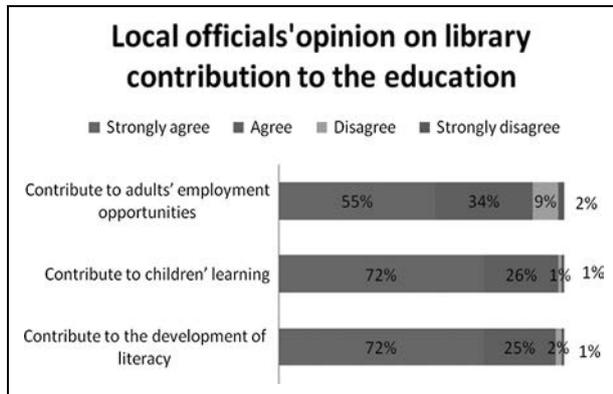


Figure 18. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, $N = 202$.

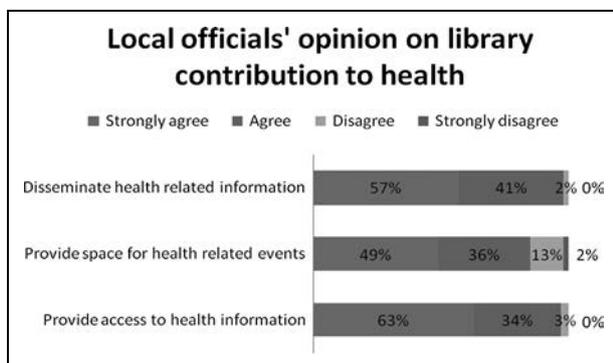


Figure 19. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, $N = 202$.

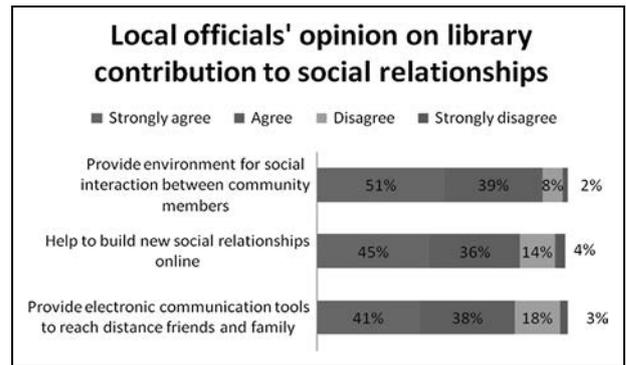


Figure 20. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, $N = 202$.

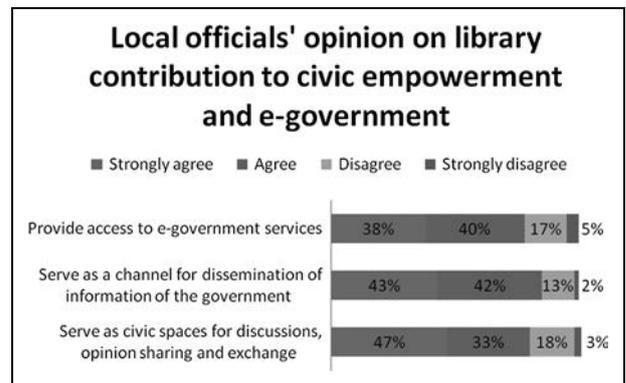


Figure 21. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, $N = 202$.

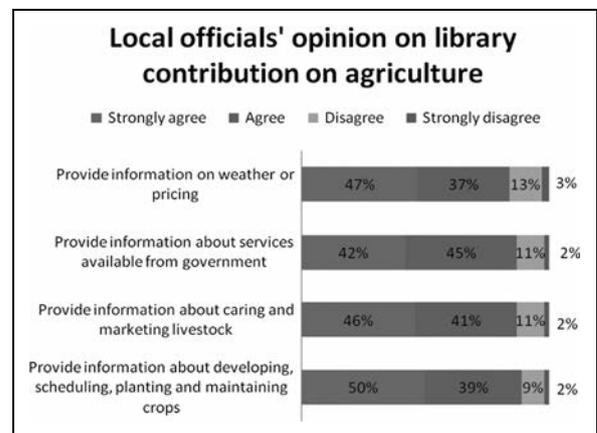


Figure 22. Base: Local officials of authorities that operate libraries, $N = 202$.

signpost the way to exploring the potential of the public library to support individuals, communities and decision makers in their pursuit of improving lives and livelihoods through access to information and knowledge. The findings of the study, once validated by the library community, will constitute a substantial body of evidence that can be used to inform library management and advocacy campaigns.

More information on the study can be found at the EIFL website: <http://www.eifl.net/perception-study>

Notes

1. The IFLA World report http://ifla-world-report.org/cgi-bin/static.ifla_wr.cgi?dynamic=1&d=user_home.
2. EIFL works with library consortia in 55 developing and transition countries. EIFL Country Coordinators are appointed to coordinate the work of the consortia. Before launching the Perception Study, EIFL sent a short questionnaire to coordinators in each of the six countries, requesting information about numbers, kinds, and distribution of public libraries, laws governing libraries, governance structures, government policy and priorities, library use and profile of users (age, gender, rural/urban, income etc.). Lists of libraries, their addresses and contact details of stakeholders were also requested. The six Country Coordinators were: Ethiopia [Derib Erget]; Ghana [Helena R. Asamoah-Hasan]; Kenya [Jacinta Were]; Tanzania [Africa J Bwamkuu]; Uganda [Gertrude Mulindwa]; Zimbabwe [Kathy Matsika].
3. The World Bank: Data, Ethiopia <http://data.worldbank.org/country/ethiopia>
4. The World Bank: Data, Ethiopia <http://data.worldbank.org/country/ethiopia>
5. UN – International Telecommunication Union Indicators 2010 <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/icteye/Indicators/Indicators.aspx#>
6. IFLA World Report 2010.
7. The World Bank: Data, Ghana <http://data.worldbank.org/country/ghana>
8. UNICEF. State of the World's Children 2009 <http://www.unicef.org/sowc09/> cited by Global Finance <http://www.gfnag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/267-ghana-gdp-country-report.html#axzz1lnDoYojY>
9. UN – International Telecommunication Union Indicators 2010 <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/icteye/Indicators/Indicators.aspx#>
10. Goethe Institut Ghana – History of Libraries <http://www.goethe.de/ins/gh/prj/bpg/his/enindex.htm>
11. The Ghana Library Board has an official website. However, information is not fully up to date, and there are blank pages. <http://www.ghanalibraryboard.com/>
12. Interview with EIFL Coordinator, 2010.
13. IFLA World Report 2010.
14. Interview with EIFL Country Coordinator.
15. Ghana Library Association website, <http://www.gla-net.org> and Eifl Country Coordinator.
16. Interview, EIFL Country Coordinator.
17. The World Bank Data, Kenya <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kenya>
18. UNICEF State of the World's Children 2009 <http://www.unicef.org/sowc09/>
19. UN – International Telecommunication Union Indicators 2010 <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/icteye/Indicators/Indicators.aspx#>
20. Kenya National Library Service website http://www.knls.ac.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=59&Itemid=134
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26. World Bank Data, Uganda <http://data.worldbank.org/country/uganda>
27. UN – International Telecommunication Union Indicators 2010 <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/icteye/Indicators/Indicators.aspx#>
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30. World Bank Data, Zimbabwe <http://data.worldbank.org/country/zimbabwe>
31. UN – International Telecommunication Union Indicators 2010 <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/icteye/Indicators/Indicators.aspx#>
32. IFLA World Report 2010, citing Local Authority Annual reports, and EIFL Country Coordinator.
33. The National Library website: <http://www.nat.archives.gov.zw>

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- Revised version of a paper presented at the World Library and Information Congress: 77th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, 13–18 August 2011, San Juan, Puerto Rico, in session 183—Africa libraries, not just place but interface—Africa Section. Thanks also to Jean Fairbairn, EIFL-PLIP Communication Coordinator for her contribution to the paper.*

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Internationalization of information science education in Nigeria: A review of attempts by the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science

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Abstract

Information and knowledge management have become very crucial to the growth and development of countries around the world, including African countries. This is also true about the importance of information science education. This truth has already been accepted in Africa, including Nigeria, where the joint effort of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) led to the establishment of the Africa Regional Center for Information Science (ARCIS) in 1990. The primary objective set for ARCIS was for it, as a regional Center, to internationalize its processes, functions and curriculum. This paper, relying on both primary and secondary data, examines the issue of internationalization of information science education in Nigeria with practical examples reported from experiences at ARCIS. It highlights current achievements ARCIS has recorded in its internationalization efforts, challenges it faces due to the political experiences in Nigeria and competing needs of units and departments at the University of Ibadan, as well as the prospects of ARCIS internationalization efforts. In the end, it is concluded that the internationalization future for ARCIS is bright.

Keywords

information science education, internationalization, Africa Regional Center for Information Science (ARCIS), Nigeria

Introduction

According to Teferra and Knight (2008) the basic components of internationalization of higher education are when students travel to study abroad, when faculty are engaged in collaborative research and publishing, or when a university signs a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with foreign institutional or development partners. Gul et al. (2010) see internationalization from the perspective of increases in the enrolment and employment of international students and staff. Knight (2008), on the other hand, sees internationalization of higher education as the process of integrating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the purpose, functions and the delivery of higher education.

Internationalization of information science education may therefore connote: designing and mounting courses that are globally accepted as core to learning information science principles and practices; engaging in collaborative research and publishing; signing MOU with foreign universities and partners; integrating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the information science curriculum; and enrolling

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and employing international students and staff. Development stakeholders have agreed that internationalization of universities is a core requirement for achieving effective education and training, for funding and coordination of relevant research and knowledge creation, for the creation of marketable innovation and for initiating creative responses that can aid social, political and economic development.

Contemporary society's expectation of information science education has thus been increasingly affected by global standards. Changes in the global knowledge society have placed pressure on universities to perform well in terms of their purposes, input, processes and output (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley 2009). Internationalizing academic programs such as information science has become fundamental to education and training of scholars and practitioners that can operate productively in the evolving socially integrated ICT environment.

The objective of this article is to carry out an assessment of the internationalization efforts of the Africa Regional Center for Information Science (ARCIS) at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. There have been various studies that evaluated the pressures universities face without making adequate attempts to consider how internationalization creates contemporary pressures on universities. This lapse is more obvious when it comes to studies on the internationalization of universities in Africa. Using practical examples reported in experiences at ARCIS, this article presents a description of concepts and practices at ARCIS that could be useful in bridging the existing gap in the literature regarding the internationalization of university programs in Africa.

University internationalization perspectives

There are various perspectives from which university internationalization has been discussed both in the literature and in meetings involving university stakeholders. Five of them are presented below.

IT procurement and deployment

A basic but popular perspective from which university internationalization is assessed is from the point of view of the adoption of new information technology (IT). IT in this context describes the ways, not necessarily using machines, by which information is created, gathered, organized, stored, published and used. IT in universities therefore, means the ways information is gathered, organized, stored, published and used, especially as it relates with research, teaching, learning, administration, and community

development. It is evident that IT has impacted on university internationalization by leading to the establishment of global networks of universities that have adopted IT in ways considered globally appropriate, efficient and effective for handling information. This is the reason why the provision of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has become central to contemporary university education planning and delivery. The literature shows that the extent to which universities procure and use ICT is linked with the quality of education they provide (Adeogun 2003; Odufuwa 2006; Siskos et al. 2007).

Adoption of contemporary ICT initiatives

The second perspective of university internationalization can be deduced from the extent to which they have used ICT to make stakeholders aware of their activities and programs. It is an internationally evolving norm for universities to create awareness across international boundaries using tools like websites, blogs and wikis. Universities that are lagging behind in adopting new ICT initiatives are being described as universities that are not adopting internationally acceptable best practices (Adeogun 2003) It is in this spirit that the webometric ranking, an internationally acclaimed global ranking of world universities, emerged with the objectives of promoting web publication, open access initiatives, creating access to scientific output and visibility of universities on the web. The popularity of these objectives is growing by the day among stakeholders that are interested in developing indicators to measure the extent to which universities are adopting web technologies based on global initiatives. Agencies that carry out university quality ranking also pay strong attention to issues such as foreign students and staff mix, adoption of web technologies that support open access initiatives, and trends in web-based research collaboration among universities. These are therefore fast becoming parameters for judging those universities that are operating based on international best practices.

Development of university mandates driven by globalization

The third perspective of university internationalization is the expansion of university mandates driven by globalization initiatives, especially as regards making knowledge, human resources and development available to governments, businesses and other universities. Due to globalization, market opportunities have become global in nature, and many contemporary socio-political and economic policies enacted by governments and businesses rely on universities

for their attainment (Autor, Levy and Murnane 2001; European Commission 2005). Universities improve their teaching, learning and research programs through internationalization in order for them to be able to support development programs that are flourishing due to globalization. Government and private sector support to universities has empowered them to develop new knowledge creation and management programs that can be used to tackle emerging socio-political and economic challenges that arise because of cross-border socio-cultural initiatives and economic integration of countries across international boundaries (European Commission 2005; Spitz 2003). Kedia and Englis (2011) posited that globalization and internationalization strategies are employed to emphasize the increasing integration of, and interdependence among, diverse countries. Universities establish research, teaching and learning, and community development missions that are put in place to support globalization and also use this to justify the extent to which they have internationalized their purpose, processes, functions and curriculum.

Accreditation requirements

The fourth perspective from which internationalization of universities is viewed is the changing requirements of accreditation criteria used across the globe. Since accreditation is based on assessing universities from the point of view of local and international criteria, accreditation agencies are allowing the quality and performance indicators they use to be influenced by how universities incorporate ICT, develop and implement cross-border research, and initiate teaching and learning strategies that are compatible with those adopted internationally. Accreditation exercises emphasize the extent to which universities are able to develop curricula that can take care of the effects that globalization, ICT and socio-political and economic integration of countries have on research, learning and skills acquisition. Strong emphasis is also laid on the extent to which universities are able to inculcate critical thinking skills that will help produce graduates who can serve as change agents anywhere in the world by critically using available data, information and knowledge (Soludo 2006; Okebukola 2005; Mensah 2003). Gul et al. (2010) have earlier pointed out that changes and developments in the 21st century have resulted in new expectations for quality assessment of universities and as a result have led to the unification of accreditation criteria adopted across various regions of the world. This development pushes universities either consciously or unconsciously to adopt internationalization and cross-cultural strategies.

Institutional involvement

Another perspective of internationalization of universities that has been popularly accepted is institutional involvement. This describes the extent to which stakeholder institutions, mainly governments and universities, are involved in initiating and implementing internationalization programs. In a society with a federal constitution such as Nigeria, three institutions are involved in the delivery of university education: the university itself, the regional or state government and the national or central government. Internationalization has become a collaborative effort between these institutional stakeholders. Usually, each university spells out its internationalization program and tries to match it with the socio-economic and educational policies of the political entity where it is located. In most cases, the central or federal government, through the recommendations of local academic agencies, brings up policies required to support internationalization. Institutional policies and programs available in a country have been used to determine the extent to which universities within such countries have internationalized.

Altbach et al. (2009) considered internationalization at home and internationalization abroad, that rely strongly on institutional collaboration between universities and their home or foreign governments. Internationalization at home describes actions taken by an academic institution regarding its curriculum, admission, staff recruitment, and developing an international presence through conferences, workshops, exhibitions, marketing, awareness creation and website deployment. Internationalization abroad describes every action put in place by an academic institution to sell itself to the world. Normally, such actions are not carried out within the campus, but involve activities deliberately promoted by a university to announce its existence, programs, mission, values and objectives abroad. These may include setting up study centers abroad and participating in or organizing research, cultural and achievement exhibitions and academic, career and admissions seminars for prospects abroad. The internationalization efforts of universities are being measured by the extent to which they have initiated institutional collaborations with home and foreign governments with regards to programs set up both locally and abroad. It has been argued that universities make these efforts, in collaboration with home or foreign governments, due to needs such as “income generation, educational, political, and cultural motivations . . . [and to pursue] foreign policy agendas focused on capacity building . . . corporative activities within the higher

education sector, particularly in the developing world and frequently in partnership that include countries with which there are former colonial ties (notably in Africa and Latin America)” (Altbach et al. 2009).

Background to ARCIS

The Africa Regional Centre for Information Science (ARCIS) began operations in November 1990 at the University of Ibadan, as the first tertiary-level educational institution in West Africa mandated to undertake research and consultancy services and offer higher degree and continuing education in information science. Its vision is to be a global frontline centre of excellence for human resource development, research, and service delivery in information science and technology. ARCIS addresses, simultaneously, a series of African development problems that have demonstrable information services components, with a view to providing both short- and long-term solutions to them. More specifically, ARCIS:

- Trains and retrains high-level personnel for African organizations and countries in information science, essentially through seminars, workshops and higher degree programs. The graduates from the programs are expected to become leaders in the practice of information science, as well as trainers of information services personnel at lower-levels.
- Engages in problem-resolution research into all aspects of information services in African countries.
- Serves as a reservoir of consultants in the information sciences to African governments and institutions in the public and private sectors.
- Provides expertise in the establishment, updating and application of appropriate standards for the construction, maintenance and effective utilization of digital content and databanks in Africa as a whole, and ECOWAS (Economic Community Of West African States) Member States in particular.
- Inculcates the spirit of innovation, quality and service in all its staff in regard to the development of information services components of Research and Development (R&D) programmes in Africa (Africa Regional Center for Information Science Handbook 2010).

The programs of ARCIS comprise four complementary components as follows:

1. **Higher degrees:** Master of Information Science (MInfSc), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree programs. ARCIS provides training up to the doctorate level to meet

Africa’s developmental initiatives that depend on information technology and efficient management of information. The Master of Information Science programme imparts skills in organization and management of information, development of information systems, information technologies, communication and utilization of information, as well as quantitative and research capabilities.

2. **Research:** Members of staff of ARCIS engage in individual and multi-disciplinary research efforts, aimed at advancing the frontiers of knowledge in information science and providing solutions to practical problems of information management and services in Africa. Current areas of research focus include information and knowledge use, information technology, systems development, information resource management, scholarly communication and infometrics, information economy and policy issues, etc. These areas of research provide the foundation for the consultancy and related public services of the Centre.
3. **Workshops, Lectures and Seminars:** ARCIS organizes regular staff and doctoral student seminars to which participants are invited from within and outside the university. ARCIS also organizes training workshops at local, national and international levels. It also holds Guest Lectures biennially.
4. **Consultancy and Related Public Service:** ARCIS provides, through its various collaborative links with expertise in different fields, a strategic reservoir of consultants in the information sciences to African public and private sectors. ARCIS is thus able to undertake or coordinate information, research and management consultancy services in diverse information science and technology domains, including organisational and public information policy research, corporate information and knowledge audits, e-government, information industry surveys, databank development, information systems development and deployment, statistical and economic data analyses, web applications, and software development. Consultancy services are available in all the areas of research of members of staff, particularly information technology, systems development, information resource management, scholarly communication and infometrics, information security, etc.

ARCIS ongoing/new initiatives and projects

ARCIS is currently participating in the following collaborative understandings and agreements:

- MOU for research collaboration between ARCIS (University of Ibadan) and the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS), University of Western Ontario, Canada. (2010–2013).
- MOU for the joint delivery of professional information industry and professional certification training between ARCIS, University of Ibadan and New Horizons Limited (2007–2012).
- Agreement on the joint-implementation of the MacArthur-funded project for the Institutional Strengthening of ARCIS (2010–2012).
- ARCIS is also soliciting an MOU with ECOWAS for the high-level training of information professionals in West African countries in support of the ECOWAS mandate.

ARCIS attempts towards internationalization: Challenges and prospects

Attempts made by ARCIS so far

The primary mandate of ARCIS is to serve as a regional center for English speaking West Africans and Africans from other regions who may need post-graduate training in the field of information science, and through this address Africa's development problems that have demonstrable information management and services components. As a regional center of higher learning, ARCIS is expected to recruit and develop staff and student body that have international characteristics and composition. Consequently, the first group of academic staff in ARCIS was trained in Canada for both their masters' and doctoral degrees in information science for them to be able to take up teaching positions and carry out the administrative responsibilities that go along with their positions in ARCIS.

ARCIS internationalization at home has not been particularly strong because of its inability to recruit foreign staff, even within the African continent. This can be seen from the nationalities of the professors that have served as director of ARCIS and of its staff – they are all Nigerians. However, the MOU which ARCIS signed recently with the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS) at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) on staff and student development programs resulted from the need to ameliorate the effect of the nationality of ARCIS staff on its internationalization drive. FIMS has been promoting the internationalization agenda of the University of Western Ontario through admission of international students, hosting exchange students and visiting faculty from various countries, arranging for faculty

members and students to visit institutions and organizations in other countries, and having some faculty members engaging in international collaborative research.

Cooperation between the universities of Western Ontario and Ibadan dates back to 1984, when Professor Jean Tague-Sutcliffe, then Dean of the UWO School of Library and Information Science, led a group of experts to develop the curriculum of ARCIS. Two pioneer staff of ARCIS were sent to UWO for doctoral training, and both returned with their doctorates in time for the launching of the centre in 1990 (University of Ibadan and University of Western Ontario 2009). One of them, who was a faculty member at ARCIS for 9 years, but is now a full-time faculty member at UWO, continues to provide informal mentorship to junior faculty at ARCIS. In this role, he secured the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) grant in 2008 and 2009 for graduate student exchange programs for two junior faculty and doctoral students at ARCIS. Consequent upon the grants secured from the DFAIT, the universities of Western Ontario and Ibadan signed a 3-year collaboration agreement with the possibility of renewal for a second 5-year term. The agreement is at the university level and therefore represents a first step to further UWO-Ibadan collaboration on a larger scale. The agreement includes the upgrading of ICT and library resources at ARCIS, exchange of researchers (faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students), exchange of scholarly and pedagogical materials, and coordination of collaborative research programs (University of Ibadan and University of Western Ontario 2009).

The visits to UWO by ARCIS faculty members would no doubt broaden their horizons and make them more effective researchers and lecturers, while the upgrading of information technologies and library resources at ARCIS would be of direct benefit to its students and faculty. However, these resources would also be benefit the University of Ibadan community in general, as graduate students and faculty from other units would be allowed to use the ARCIS library to access the electronic resources of the UWO libraries, and other units would also be allowed to make use of ARCIS teleconferencing facilities. These benefits are in line with the MacArthur Foundation's program strategy of strengthening Nigerian universities through rebuilding and upgrading of facilities, curricula, and faculty. The objectives of the four components of this project are also in line with three of the objectives of the University of Ibadan's strategic plan in the next 5 years, namely:

- building strong postgraduate programs and research training capacity;
- internationalizing program offerings with graduates acquiring requisite knowledge and skill-set to thrive in the local and global economies;
- building a strong international profile through linkages with other institutions.

In the past 20 years of its existence, ARCIS has successfully educated students at three levels of higher degrees in information science, namely, Master of Information Science (MInfSci), Master of Philosophy in Information Science (MPhil, Information Science) and Doctor of Philosophy in Information Science (PhD, Information Science). At the end of the 2010/2011 session, ARCIS had already turned out a total of 632 graduates from its Master of Information Science program. Although the percentage of foreign students among these graduates is small, ARCIS boasts of about 15 foreign students who have graduated from its masters' program. ARCIS had also produced a total of 10 PhD graduates by the end of the 2008/2009 academic session – an average of one doctoral degree holder every 2 years in the 20 years of existence of ARCIS. Three of them are full time academic staff in ARCIS, three are in the private sector and four are enlisted as part of the adjunct teaching staff in ARCIS. While none of the PhD graduates is in a foreign university as academic staff, cross-border collaborative supervision has recently been encouraged through the collaboration with UWO. This allows the director of the collaborative project from UWO to be a member of the Thesis Committee constituted for three ARCIS doctoral candidates. In addition, among the 18 doctoral students currently registered at ARCIS, one is an international student from Chad.

Challenges facing ARCIS

There is no doubt that the socio-cultural, economic and political problems that plague Africa affect the internationalization programs put up in places like ARCIS. Weeks (2008) described the effects of colonialism on the international circle to which a country belongs and looked at its influence on a country's ability to influence other countries in terms of its eventual effects on university internationalization drives. Nigeria's political system and her international influence and relations have no doubt taken their toll on internationalization drives put in place by ARCIS. The circle of countries to which Nigeria belongs and her political influence around the world dwindled because of the prolonged period of military

rule that led to the mismanagement of the country's resources. As a result, issues regarding internationalization at home – those that had to do with funding to support the ARCIS curriculum, acquisition of facilities, staff recruitment across international boundaries, admission of foreign students and organization of international conferences and workshops – were dramatically derailed by Nigeria's loss of friendship and respect among other countries.

Although ARCIS seems to have developed a working policy to drive its internationalization program that reflects the loftiness of its founding objectives, the acquisition of the economic and human resources required to implement its internationalization strategies has been, and continues to be, a challenge. The University of Ibadan, Nigeria's premier university, is a big one with four Institutes, one College of Medicine with five large departments, nine faculties and five academic centers that compete for the resources required to internationalize their academic programs. The fact that ARCIS requires the full support of the Office of the International Programs, University of Ibadan to implement its internationalization programs means that it has to compete with these other units of the university. It is evident that politics, both internal (within a university) and external (dealing with governments) and internationalization go hand-in-hand. Political experiences in Nigeria between 1983 and 1999, when the country was under military rule, impacted negatively on the ARCIS internationalization drive. Apart from this, incessant strike action embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) also dampened morale and dramatically reduced the number of international students willing to enroll or re-enroll in Nigerian universities, including those that were interested in ARCIS programs.

Between 1990 and 1999, when military rule was at its peak in Nigeria, government support for the Nigerian university system was appalling. Efforts such as those made by countries like Botswana, Egypt and Mauritius (Molutsi and Kobedi 2008; Said and Mourad 2008; Mohamedbhai 2008) were absent in Nigeria. Obanya (2009) presented an example of efforts made by the Australian government to ensure the internationalization of its university system, which ARCIS, due to the socio-political and economic challenges in Nigeria, could not enjoy. These efforts include: management of a competitive grants scheme for innovation in learning and teaching; liaison with the sector about options for articulating and monitoring academic standards; improvement of assessment practices throughout the sector, including investigating the possibility of a national portfolio

assessment scheme; facilitating or benchmarking of effective teaching and learning processes at national and international levels; development of mechanisms for the dissemination of good practices and professional development in learning and teaching; and management of a programme for international experts in learning and teaching to visit Australian institutions with reciprocal relations with international jurisdictions.

If institutional involvement, which may be defined by the Nigerian government's role toward internationalization and the role University of Ibadan is expected to play, is assessed, one will begin to see how the Nigerian government, the University of Ibadan, and academic collaboration for internationalization practically affected the extent to which ARCIS has internationalized to date. Internationalization strategies such as student exchange, visiting academic staff, scholarly links, community partnership, cross-border partnership, students' clubs and associations have not been properly developed and managed in Nigeria due to the prevailing political situations and negligence. This may have affected the willingness of countries such as Canada, the UK, the USA and other Western countries, which have mastered the parameters used to evaluate universities' readiness to internationalize, to collaborate with ARCIS.

ARCIS internationalization prospects

Various kinds of initiatives have been put in place by all levels of government in Nigeria since the return of democratic governance in 1999. These include ex-Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), Musa Yaradua's 7-Points Agenda, and the recent Vision 20:2020 put in place by the current President, Goodluck Jonathan. The Nigerian government now has dependable blueprints that model the country's economic plans for the future such as the 10-year Plan to Increase GDP Spent on Education and the Economy Transformation Strategy.

The development initiatives being implemented through these plans are yielding dividends, a good example being the education sector support program implemented in partnership between the Nigerian Federal Government and the UK Department of International Development. On the local scene, various levels of government in Nigeria increased the funds for running universities between 1999 and 2011.

By 2010, the Nigerian budget had increased its allocation for education to NGN 249.08 billion, which is second only to the allocation for works and infrastructure development (NGN 249.4 billion) (Source:

Nigerian Budget Office of the Federation: http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/2010_budget_workshop.html). The increase in the budget for education has helped to dramatically improve teaching and learning resources and facilities, the Internet and the deployment of ICT in Nigerian universities. Due to increased funding for universities in Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) (2006a) revealed that the government has initiated reforms to revamp the Nigerian university in areas such as system accountability and good governance, financial management, transparency and efficient service delivery, effective teaching, relevant research and community service, resource and cost sharing, biometric identification, and overall quality control of programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. With regard to the deployment of ICT, the NUC (2006b) indicated that government is ready to support the development of the dynamic and robust infrastructure required to utilize ICT, web technologies and e-learning resources, and to develop and sustain statistical information generation and utilization.

The political stability in Nigeria in the past 12 years has helped Nigerian universities to solidify policies and initiatives developed for the purpose of implementing their internationalization plans. It has become the platform for improved opportunities for ARCIS to fully implement its internationalization plans, as exemplified by the MOU arrangements with the University of Western Ontario and the MacArthur Foundation referred to above (see <http://arcis.ui.edu.ng/home/?p=collaboration> for more details).

The evolving information society has resulted in increased awareness of the need for information science education in Nigeria. This is revealed through the expanding ICT environment exemplified by global Internet penetration, growth in the number of mobile technology users and increases in the number of organizations adopting electronic and other e-business initiatives. International Internet statistics show that 44 million Nigerians – about 30 percent of the population, which includes a wide variety of organizations – now use the Internet¹. These organizations will undoubtedly need the services of information science professionals the more they adopt initiatives that depend on ICT and the Internet. This in turn will lead to increases in the numbers of those seeking to be trained in information science at ARCIS.

In addition, the fact that 540 million Africans, a large proportion of whom are in Nigeria, are mobile technology subscribers also points to the growing prospects of information science education in Nigeria. By 2010 Africa had experienced 54 percent mobile

technology penetration. These figures¹ indicate that IT, information management and information use activities in Africa are growing significantly. The implication of this is that the number of organizations dealing with ICT is increasing in Africa. It also means that there are growing prospects of obtaining sponsorship from such organizations, that are aware of the importance of information science education, for the kinds of cross-border activities that form the nucleus of some of the internationalization programs embarked upon by ARCIS. Finally, as noted above, ARCIS is soliciting an MOU with ECOWAS for the high-level training of information professionals in West African countries in support of the ECOWAS mandate. This, it is hoped, will further boost the internalization efforts of ARCIS in no distant future.

Conclusion

Information science education in Nigeria is relatively young when compared with other countries, especially those in Europe and America. Despite this, achievements recorded by ARCIS over the years show that information science education has strong prospects of doing well. If the extent to which ARCIS has internationalized is weighed against expectations, especially considering the volatile political environment in Nigeria, one may conclude that ARCIS has not fared badly. With the growing democratic dispensation and the improving ICT infrastructure and environment, the ARCIS internationalization program is bound to grow. The staff exchange program agreed between ARCIS and the University of Western Ontario also means that the coast is getting clearer for foreign academics to join the existing academic staff in ARCIS. This would constitute a very positive step in the internationalization efforts of ARCIS.

Note

1. Source: BuddeComm based on ITU data: <https://www.budde.com.au/Research/Africa-Convergence-of-Telecommunications-and-Digital-Media.html> Accessed on November 4, 2011

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Access to information legislation as a means to achieve transparency in Ghanaian governance: Lessons from the Jamaican experience

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Abstract

Access to information and transparency are considered a vaccine for ensuring good governance and countries must gear up for this vaccine to ensure accountability and prevent corruption. This paper probes the anticipated implementation challenges of the freedom-of-information (FOI) law in Jamaica, and the lessons Ghana stands to learn to improve on its FOI bill, currently at a deliberative stage. The lack of transparency in government or the public sector as a result of lack of access to governmental or public information will be tackled in this study. After describing the background, context, framework and methodology of the study, the paper presents findings, makes a comparative analysis, and provides recommendations especially for Ghana, which is still in the process of passing similar legislation.

Keywords

access to information legislation, freedom of information legislation, transparency, governance, Ghana, Jamaica

Purpose of the study

This study aims to examine the views of Ghanaians and Jamaicans on how access to government information could be or has been a means to transparency for governance in both countries. This will be done through examination of the operation of the Access to Information Act (ATIA) in Jamaica as well as probing the anticipated implementation challenges of ATIA. The paper seeks to compare the Jamaican experience to the expectation of Ghanaians, who stand to learn to improve on a bill currently at a deliberative stage in the country. The paper describes the case study in which the researcher conducted interviews and relied on secondary data from documentation review for analysis.

Background

Democracy has held a place in human history for centuries, providing principles and procedures for governing. The concept is highly desirable and recommended, not only by virtue of its principles, but also for the ideas emanating for peaceful co-existence. Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation,

a tenet of democracy, works by conferring on the public the legal right to ask for and receive information held by public bodies. However, enforceability of FOI laws is what sets it apart from general pledges of access to information made by governments (Holsen 2007).

In Ghana, the Right to Information (RTI) first reared its head in public discourse in 1999. By 2003, the government had already drafted the first RTI bill to operationalize the constitutional right to information under Article 21(1)f of the 1992 constitution. This provision would suggest that Ghana has accepted, as a constitutional matter, the right to information enshrined in the constitutional document, and to all intents and purposes, the bill, when passed, will consolidate the rights of journalists and the public to access information from government officials and

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public institutions without hindrance. The bill is still at a deliberative stage, yet to become law.

Jamaica, on the other hand, passed the Access to Information Act (ATIA) in 2002, which came into effect in 2004. ATIA is a powerful tool, and an avenue to exercise that right which all Jamaicans can use to effect change. The purpose of the Act has been to reinforce and give further effect to certain fundamental principles underlying the system of constitutional democracy which includes governmental accountability, transparency, and public participation in decision making by granting to the public a general right of access to official documents held by public authorities (Access to Information Act 2002). Just as every Jamaican citizen has a right to participate in the decision making process of the country, so they have the right to seek and receive information related to operations in the government. Access to information serves to hold government accountable for decisions made, and to help uncover corruption and inefficiencies in government. The Act contains the following features:

1. The objects of the Act, which are to promote transparency, accountability, and increased public participation in national decision making by granting to the public a general right of access to official documents held by public authorities.
2. A public authority must publish, within 12 months of the commencement of the Act, of its establishment or the date of the Order bringing it under the Act, information on its organization and functions.
3. Every person shall have the right of access to an official document; no reason is required to be given and applications may be made in writing or transmitted by telephone or other electronic means.
4. The Act is made to apply to all public authorities and official documents which are up to 30 years old.
5. Government related documents includes all types of information including copies of documents, computerized records, emails, maps, audio-visuals etc.
6. The Act does not apply to the Governor General, judicial functions of a court, the holder of a judicial office or other office connected with a court, the security or intelligence services in relation to their strategic or operational intelligence gathering activities.
7. Deferral of access may only be done under stipulated conditions and the deletion of exempt matter is subject to conditions.
8. Fees are payable only for the reproduction of documents.

9. ATIA provides for nine categories of exemptions including cabinet documents, security, defence or international relations, documents relating to law enforcement, all documents subject to legal privilege, all documents affecting national economy, all documents revealing government deliberative processes, documents revealing trade secrets, heritage sites and documents affecting personal privacy.
10. The Act provides for two avenue of redress, internal review and appeal to appeal to tribunal.
11. It is an offence to do acts to prevent disclosure.
12. The non-application of Official Secrets Act to disclosure of information is provided for under ATIA.
13. The Minister must report to parliament on the operation of the act at the end of each year.
14. Review of the Act must take place not later than 2 years after appointed day (Access to Information Act 2002).

Passing ATIA came on the heels of a lot of agitation for government to open up, and much of the influence arguably came from the international system, particularly the United Kingdom (UK). Since Jamaica is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, and a number of developed Commonwealth countries had some form of access to information law, pressure would have been borne on Jamaica policy makers to pass ATIA.

Ghana and Jamaica are favorite candidates for this study because of their shared heritage, in spite of their geographical contrasts. Located in different hemispheres, the two nations are former British colonies. The two nations have had stable democracy and need to be encouraged to improve upon their democratic credentials. Being Commonwealth nations, it will be argued that the two countries, including other developing Commonwealth nations, would have come under some form of pressure to commit to passing access to information laws to adhere to international standards as proof of their commitment to transparency and accountability. Coincidentally, the two countries started discussion of the bill in 1999, and Jamaica went ahead of Ghana to pass ATIA in 2002.

The study has been conducted within a human rights framework to keep it of manageable scope and size. It is an assumption of this paper that the information society should be located within a human rights framework in order to advocate for unrestricted access to information, especially public information held by government. The value of information as a human right is unquestionable, and is the reason why information is guaranteed as a human right, which is

spelled out in many international treaties and in national constitutions. Freedom of information plays an important role, first, in the aspect of human dignity, secondly, as the best means of ascertaining the truth, and thirdly, as a fundamental underpinning of democracy. The aspect of democracy is perhaps most crucial (Mendel 2003) because at a more principled level, democracy is quintessentially about ensuring that governments perform in accordance with the will of the people.

Literature review

The following literature review supported this study. The research article of Callamard (2005) mentioned that freedom of expression is not limited to the right to express oneself, but also includes the right to seek and to receive information from others, including the right to obtain and read newspapers, to listen to broadcasts, to surf the Internet, and, of course, to participate in discussions in public and private as a listener. But the most revealing observation of Callamard related to this study is the right to access information held by public and private authorities. It places a duty on these bodies both to disseminate information of key public importance and to respond to requests for access to publicly held information. These views reinforce international as well as national provisions in advocating for free expression and the right to public information held by government.

In another research article, Holsen (2007) compared and contrasted federal FOI laws in Canada and in the United States as well as national laws in the UK. She examined the costs of compliance, as well as the response rates in each country and discussed the importance of recordkeeping to FOI laws. Holsen posited that exemptions are the key section of any FOI legislation because their breadth and depth determine how much information is actually disclosed. Holsen presented areas of FOI implementation worth examination to understand the complexity of dealing with the legislation. These range from response process system to cost of compliance, from time spent processing requests to FOI training; they serve as a model for other jurisdictions. This is of relevance to this study because countries stand to draw on the many years of experience of these three developed countries when writing and implementing their FOI laws.

A previous paper by Kirkwood provided thought provoking questions, which fleshed out the purpose of this current study. In his conference presentation in Addis Ababa that led to the foundation of Access to Information Network – Africa, Kirkwood (2006)

posed the following questions: Does the government have the right to hide information from citizens on grounds of national security or business confidentiality? Should African parliaments play a role in training citizens for democracy through proactive distribution of public information and invitation of public criticism? What is the economic impact of free public access to information on national development? Should governments be fired or lose office for violating public disclosure requirements? The current study seeks to complement the efforts of Kirkwood in addressing these questions.

The research article of Lipinski and Britz (2000) discussed access to information as a critical need in an information age. They observed that where all rights were fixed by law, access to information must be a critical need and should be guaranteed for every citizen. They suggested that any right of control over information, adopted as an incentive to encourage creation and distribution of intellectual property, should be subservient to an overriding need to ensure access to the information (Lipinski and Britz 2000). Their proposition embodied the intent of any legislation underlying FOI regimes. Their observation that the access principle has not always been paramount in judicial or legislative applications provided a thrust to this study.

A research article by Sturges (2007) discusses the concept of transparency by juxtaposing it with accountability. He relates transparency as a concept to be applied in a social context to the revelation of human activity in which there is a valid public interest. The article expresses how the lack of transparency could lead to corruption. Sturges postulates various ways in which citizens could make use of transparency to scrutinize the activity of others, including freedom of information laws, accounting and audit systems, and the protection of public interest disclosure actions. This article provides a foundation for a new insight that this study contributes. The findings in Sturges' article suggest that the introduction of transparency into governance is almost universally offered as a key to eliminating corruption, usually along with enforcement measures and relevant practical changes in modes of governance. This observation needs to be explored further through research, because some countries have enacted legislation, yet their governments appear to be corrupt and not transparent. This has significance when looking at how to track accountability in Ghana and Jamaica through the research problem under examination.

Another research article by Lord (2006) argues, in contrast, that predictions that transparency will lead inevitably to peace, understanding, and democracy are

wrong. Lord investigates the case of the government of Singapore's successful control of information, and explores the complex implications of growing transparency, paying particular attention to the circumstances under which transparency's effects are negative. The author provides a good survey of an important subject and a critical perspective that is very much needed in a climate where transparency is seen as an obvious good for governance. The case of Singapore illustrates how a government can control information successfully by using soft methods, and by weakening the link between information flows and political change; and yet Singapore's government is neither incompetent nor corrupt, two all too common pitfalls of secretive governments. Lord's finding is contrary to the universal view that people hold about transparency. Singapore's open but non-liberal society offers a cautionary tale for those who equate openness with democracy.

The book of Darch and Underwood (2010) provided illumination to the present study. They make assumptions that citizens really do deliberate, that the press is neutral and informs, that deliberative citizens make better choices, and that liberal democracies are a just and efficient system. They question how far rights to information have progressed in Africa and other parts of the world. The two authors indicate that the conditions that make information access rights both important and hard to implement are seen in their most extreme forms in Africa, from Angola, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. They contend that only a handful of African countries have passed laws enabling access to information, and in the event that some did, they made no pretence that these laws were intended to encourage a new kind of relationship between the state and citizen. Darch and Underwood cite countries that implemented access to information law but missed out on the intended purpose of the legislation. Their observation suggests that conditions for implementation have been absent in the cited countries. The authors' observation provides justification that freedom of information, as a piece of national or local legislation guaranteeing individual citizens and others access to government information, has not really caught on in Africa and other countries. This current study will specifically focus on Ghana and Jamaica to explore to what extent rights to information have progressed within the Ghanaian and Jamaican context.

Taken together, the results, the findings, and observations in this literature review provide a solid foundation for this case study. This literature review related the study to the larger ongoing dialogue in the field. So far, the literature review emphasizes the need for transparency in governance, and how its lack leads to corruption.

Ostensibly, what has been construed from this review is the idea that accountability is the reason why transparency is introduced into systems of public governance. This is because the concept of transparency allows examination of public authorities, who are regarded as the custodians of public information. Hence transparency in government will be a key focus of this study. The study will specifically explore implementation challenges in Jamaica and the legal vacuum in Ghana which makes it difficult for people to access information and government services.

Research problem and questions

While Jamaica passed ATIA in 2002 (in force in 2004), Ghana, to date, lacks a legal framework to facilitate access and utilization of public information. The problem of interest in this study is two-pronged; the anticipated implementation challenges of the law and the lack of transparency in government or the public sector as a result of the lack of access to government or public information. The lack of access to public information is of dire concern to Ghanaians, given the legal vacuum which makes it very difficult for them to access government information. As such, this study will focus not only on Ghana's lack of access to information law and transparency, but will explore Jamaica's experience in the implementation process of ATIA which offers useful lessons for Ghana.

In this context, five questions will be explored within this study. Sub questions were constructed to augment these central questions:

1. Can an information law enable citizens to have access to government information?
2. How can the perceived right of access to information bring about transparency in governance?
3. How can the exercise of access to information encourage public participation in governance?
4. How does the exercise of right to information enable citizens to keep their government and public officials accountable?
5. Are there any anticipated implementation challenges?

The case study methodology

The choice of a case study for this research is unambiguous. The intent is to bring an understanding of the issue under examination to add strength to what is already known through previous research. This methodology has been preferred because it emphasizes detailed contextual analysis of a number of issues and their relationship. A case study is the ideal choice because what has been examined is a contemporary

Table 1. Research objectives, research techniques, data sources.

| Research objective | Research techniques | Data sources |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Can information law enable citizens to have access to government information? | Interviews | Respondents |
| Find out how access to information brings about transparency in governance? | Interviews/documentation review | Respondents |
| Find out how access to information can encourage public participation in governance? | Interviews | Respondents |
| Find out how the exercise of right to information enables citizens to keep their government and public officials accountable? | Interviews | Respondents |
| Identify anticipated implementation challenges | Interviews/documentation review | Reports, memoranda, submissions from eminent scholars. |

real life issue: the lack of transparency in government or the public sector as a result of the lack of access to government or public information, as well as the implementation challenges of an FOI Act.

Methods of data gathering

Data were gathered through interviews and through documentation review. The use of documentation review allowed the researcher a complementary view of the phenomenon studied, and the process helped to converge findings to ensure validity. Table 1 shows the research techniques used in the data collection procedure.

Study participants and environment

Interview questions were in an open ended format, while documentation review relied on secondary data from memoranda, reports, and comments from authoritative sites. Interviews were set up through email correspondence. Upon reply from participants, questionnaires were emailed. A total of 20 consent forms were sent out. Out of this number, 12 responded. 7 respondents were Ghanaians and 5 Jamaicans. It took more than two months for some to return responses. Some respondents were notified by follow-up email reminders. A total number of 12 questions were used to get relevant responses from respondents. One Jamaican respondent’s interview was conducted via Skype, hence the need to record and transcribe responses. All in all, interviews through email were suitable, as respondents did not feel intimidated, that could have had a negative impact on the interviews. Profile of respondents included university professors, graduate students, lawyers, librarians, and researchers.

Participants in this study were carefully chosen to be individuals who have knowledge about access to information perspectives. The research objectives and the characteristics of the study population determined which people were selected, and how many. A purposeful sampling approach is ideal for this case study in order to have a group of people who are able to inform about the research problem under examination. Against this background, participants were selected based on age, level of education, and experience so that they could purposefully inform their understanding of the research problem. Their ages ranged between 30 and 60 years, and included both males and females. It took approximately 6 months from March to August to complete this study.

Ghanaian respondents. Some Ghanaian respondents were pursuing graduate studies, while others worked in high level positions in international organizations. The setting was chosen based on the fact that it is a pilot study, and findings could serve as the basis for further exploration of the issue using a phenomenological approach in the near future. After the research proposal was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, consent was received from participants indicating their acceptance to participate in this study.

Participant A is a lawyer by profession, and a correctional advisor in one of the recognized and renowned international organizations in Italy. As a former Director of the Ghana Prisons Service, the participant’s counselling role called for learning and mastering democratic principles. Participant B was born in northern Ghana, and is 46 years old. She received a PhD degree in health sciences from a mid-western university in the United States, and is currently a lecturer in a university in Ghana. She has

Table 2. Ghanaian participants' demographic data.

| Name | Above 18 yrs | Gender | Education | Profession |
|---------------|--------------|--------|---------------|--------------------|
| Participant A | Yes | Male | LLB | Lawyer |
| Participant B | Yes | Female | PhD | Lecturer |
| Participant C | Yes | Male | PhD | Lawyer |
| Participant D | Yes | Female | Master | Development worker |
| Participant E | Yes | Male | PhD candidate | Researcher |
| Participant F | Yes | Male | MBA | Outreach officer |
| Participant G | Yes | Male | PhD candidate | Teacher |

Table 3. Jamaican respondents' demographic data.

| Name | Above 18 yrs | Gender | Profession |
|-----------------|--------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Participant I | Yes | Female | Professor |
| Participant II | Yes | Male | Professor |
| Participant III | Yes | Female | Professor |
| Participant IV | Yes | Female | Senior Director of an Institution |
| Participant V | Yes | Male | Director Jamaica Library service |

been an advocate for women rights, providing information on health-related issues in deprived communities in northern Ghana. Participant C is a lawyer in practice, and a lecturer in one of the universities in Ghana. This participant worked as a principal investigator at the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice in Ghana. Participant D works as a project officer with a non-governmental organization in Ghana. As a development worker, she facilitated workshops on socio-political issues. She recently received a master's degree in public policy from one of the renowned universities in Hungary. Participant E is a research fellow at one of the universities in Ghana. He conducted research on information-related issues, especially access to health in rural communities. He is currently pursuing a PhD degree in public health at a university in the United States. Participant F has an MBA degree from a midwestern university in the United States, is committed to issues of democracy, and has been a political activist for one of the major political parties in Ghana. Participant G is a PhD student in a midwestern university. He has a good knowledge of democracy, and is committed to improving education in Ghana. These participants understand how access to information can impact people's daily life.

Jamaican respondents. Participant I is a professor in one of the renowned institutions in Jamaica, and currently teaches library and information science courses. This participant is an expert in access to information issues in the Caribbean region. The participant is credited with a lot of presentations at international conferences on access to information as a prime research area.

The participant has also written a book chapter on e-government and the Internet in the Caribbean. The participant has wide knowledge of knowledge management and telecommunication, openness, and access to government information. Participant II is a professor, and teaches courses in information policy in one of the best institutions in the Caribbean. This participant has published extensively, and served on numerous projects on issues related to corruption and transparency in the Caribbean region. The participant is a consultant on access to information legislation in the region and has published a book on access to information and corruption. Participant III is a human rights activist in Jamaica. This participant has received numerous awards in recognition of advocacy for human rights, and has been the chairperson of the Access to Information (ATI) Advisory Stakeholders Committee, who worked to strengthen the provisions of ATIA by recommending an Access to Information Unit to monitor the performance of government agencies in complying with provisions of the Act. Participant IV has in-depth knowledge of democratic procedures and principles, and is a director of information and access services in one of the highly recognized institutions in Jamaica. Participant V has worked in a field dealing with access to information and providing information to patrons. This participant understands how an information literate society can impact on national development.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed by transcribing responses and reading through answers to identify the main themes.

Responses were coded and categorized under the following themes:

- access to public information
- transparency in governance
- public participation in governance
- implementation challenges.

A strategy called triangulation was used by combining the answers from interviews and evidences from the documentation review to confirm the results of this study. The strategy provided validity and consistency for the study.

Findings

Access to public information

Ghanaian respondents. The first issue raised was about access to information and the operation of an information law. Respondents indicated that although access to information was growing, particularly with the proliferation of FM radio stations, the print media, and the Internet, some reservations still remain about government information. A glance at the responses shows that people do not have information about government because information is simply not available to them. For example, participant E said, “It is very difficult to get public information.” Respondents indicated that information was treated as confidential and government officials wield so much power that it was difficult to have access to the information they held. Some respondents contended that there is some information available through institution-based websites, while others said that people do not get detailed information because there is little information on the Internet. Respondents revealed that information documentation in Ghana is a very big conundrum and that where there is information, retrieval becomes a daunting task. The difficulty in obtaining public information has more to do with the rather low level of ICT development, as some respondents indicated.

Jamaican respondents. Respondents indicated that ATIA has helped people access government information and has been a very useful tool for enabling every Jamaican to realize the right to information. ATIA provides an avenue to use information to strengthen access to all other rights. For instance, Participant III reported that “persons have been using ATIA to find out about matters important to them on issues of education, road building, provision of water, relocation of a dump, expenditure of funds by government, the care of children by the government and a number of other issues that they consider important.” Responses

indicated that ATIA enabled the public to obtain data and information related to the activities of governments. While some respondents specifically revealed that the Act has helped citizens to access information about contracts, ministers’ travel expenses, and details of the examination records of their children, others revealed that access to information has become expensive, given the fees charged for the preparation of the needed data. Participant II reported: “from my analysis, from the information got through journalistic sources, some of the agencies for example, the registrar’s general department has not been as efficient in the release of information especially if it is a three day service, it ends up being a week or 2 and requesters would have paid fees for expedited services.” Responses also indicate that there are a number of exceptions, which may reduce the scope of the information that can be requested.

Transparency in governance

Ghanaian respondents. Questions # 2 and # 4 were answered by examining the responses from interviews. Ghanaian respondents believe that access to information will enable everybody to know what is going on in government. Responses indicate that if there is no access to information, everything seems to be done under cover, irrespective of whether government is transparent or not. On the other hand, when people have access to information, public officials will have it at the back of their minds that they are being checked and this will make them become accountable. Analysis of responses indicates that vibrant mass communication media can help people keep government officials accountable by allowing for critique of government policies and exposing corrupt practices and underhanded dealings in public administration. As regards the current state of government transparency in Ghana, responses were mixed. In spite of the fact that some government policies are made public through parliament, the information ministry, public and private TV, respondents indicated that it was difficult to assess the state of government transparency because Ghanaians get to know about government issues through private media, which are sometimes biased. Some respondents mentioned government officials that have difficulty in giving out information to the public.

Jamaican respondents. Answers to questions #2 and #4 were determined by responses from participants. Respondents indicated the general public has access to reports of ministries, agencies, and projects, which are increasingly posted on the government websites.

Parliamentary debates are televised, as well as the proceedings of commissions of enquiry. Respondents believed that the Act contributed to transparency in government, but there is not yet 100 percent coverage as some public institutions have not appointed access officers or begun to participate. Respondents indicated that access to most of the features outlined in the Act has been made possible. For instance, Participant I said, "the Act has encouraged greater access to government information, but it is difficult to say how much participation there has been in governance because of the Act." Focusing on whether ATIA enabled Jamaicans to keep their government and public officials accountable, respondents indicated that the process was not yet finished and that there was the need to go beyond access to information to further participation in government. Respondents indicated that ATIA has increased awareness even though not everyone was aware that they can have access to certain types of information. Transparency, as reported, has been enhanced in some sense, through contemporaneous development in the telecommunication sector, and the police have been able to stop some corrupt activities thanks to the Act, according to Participant II. Participant III also mentioned that residents of a particular community were able to get sufficient information to mount a successful legal challenge to the failure of a state agency (the National Water Commission) to fix a malfunctioning sewage treatment plant through using ATIA to get the information. This challenge resulted in the agency being ordered to fix the plant and given specific timelines by which to do so.

On the flip side, there have been some negative developments about government transparency where, for example, the police withhold statistical data until they wish to release it, and with regard to the cumbersome procedures involved in obtaining information. Participant II mentioned also that there has been only a slight attitudinal change with the passage of the law and there could still be a lot of resistance to releasing information.

Public participation in governance

Ghanaian respondents. Question #3 was answered by examining responses from interviews. Respondents revealed that public participation in governance was vital in any democratic dispensation. They indicated that when information is available and rendered accessible, it encourages public participation in governance. They also stated that people needed to be educated about governance and what it means to be in government. Since public participation in

governance hinges on education there will be the need for the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) to re-double its efforts in information dissemination. Participant A reiterated the need for a vibrant, unbiased media in the dissemination of information.

Jamaican respondents. In response to question #3 respondents revealed that the Act encouraged greater access to government information, but it was difficult to say how much participation there has been in governance because of it. Respondents indicated there has been some publicity on the radio, TV, and in some newspapers as part of making the general public understand the meaning and scope of the Act. Respondent III said, "Jamaica has a very free media and the information provided by the media has informed people and allowed for them to make more effective participation in Government and governance on their own behalf and that of others." Some respondents indicated that TV programs examined public policy and public administration, which actually allowed citizens to participate in the process of governance. Local radio talk shows dissect the work of government and citizens phone in to voice their disapproval or praise government for certain things done. The Access to Information Unit and some public authorities have used the World Wide Web to provide information on the Act and to enable the public to make use of the information offered by the agency as evidence of proactive disclosure of government information.

Implementation challenges

Jamaica. Regarding implementation challenges, answers were determined by examining data from documentation review and interviews. The Carter Center (2006) hinted at implementation challenges which ranged from scope to follow-through issues and from public interest tests to enforcement. Excell (2009), in her submissions to the Joint Select Committee on reform of the Jamaican Access to Information Act, reported two areas of concern regarding challenges. The first deals with the release of records by all public authorities under the Act and the second concerns compliance and enforcement of the right to information. Attention was drawn to the lengthy delays on the part of the Appeal Tribunal in handing down decisions following hearings. Respondents were also concerned about the procedure for requesting documents via the telephone, which was neither simple nor straightforward, and the need for trained personnel. Additionally, the disclosure by the Office of the Contractor General of a corrupt network involving a senior employee of its office, sham contractors,

and possibly employees of the National Housing Trust, has raised concerns about the level of corruption in Jamaica according to a *Gleaner* newspaper report (Web of deceit 2010). The paper reports that Jamaica's slide down the international corruption index is continuing and reiterates the argument of Transparency International (TI) which shows that stemming corruption requires strong oversight by parliaments, a well-performing judiciary, independent and properly resourced audit and anti-corruption agencies, vigorous law enforcement, transparency in public budgets, revenue and aid flows, as well as space for independent media and a vibrant civil society (Web of deceit 2010). Unfortunately, with many of these factors not in place in Jamaica, corruption remains one of the major problems facing the country, according to the paper.

Ghana. Information from the Ghana government URL (Record Keeping 2010) indicates recordkeeping as being a huge challenge facing the country. It is clear that Ghana lacks in this regard and needs her archival system in the public sector to be in good shape in readiness for the law. Technology may or may not be the most urgent issue, but the possible lack of systems for records management and registries within government departments as well as the lack of personnel to help implement the letter of the law are serious concerns.

Conclusions

Overall the results of the research revealed some interesting issues concerning access to public information, transparency in governance, public participation in governance, and some implementation challenges in the two countries.

First, it was found that Ghanaians are concerned about the lack of operation of their constitutional right under article 21 (1)f of the 1992 Constitution. Respondents mentioned a certain degree of optimism about how the bill, when passed into law, will make government information accessible to the public. This finding raises concern about information documentation in Ghana, which has been a big conundrum. Much as findings indicate that Ghanaians have high expectations of the bill, if information is not properly documented and kept, retrieval will be a daunting task which will threaten democracy in general and the operation of a Right to Information (RTI) law in particular.

Findings on the accessibility of government information in Jamaica were mixed. While results show that ATIA has been a very useful tool for

enabling every Jamaican to obtain information related to the activities of government, the current study shows the operation of ATIA to be somewhat bureaucratic. Access to information has become expensive given the fees for the preparation of the data needed. The number of exceptions reduces the scope of the information requested and the procedures involved in retrieving the needed information make it cumbersome for the public.

There have been great expectations about how an access to information law will enhance transparency in governance in Ghana. But such expectations need to be matched with a change in attitude on the part of Ghanaians, given the Jamaican experience.

The findings portray a not too good picture for Jamaica. In spite of the general public's access to reports of ministries, agencies, and projects which are increasingly posted on the government websites, and irrespective of the parliamentary debates being televised as well as the proceedings of commissions of enquiry, the results of this study indicate a low level of transparency in Jamaican governance. Transparency in governance in Jamaica seems to be on a downward slide, as corroborated by reports in the *Gleaner* newspaper (Web of deceit 2010).

Some respondents indicated that executive agencies in Jamaica are not operating at their maximum level. These agencies have been allowed to charge fees for their services, rendering government public administration a lot more expensive for the citizens. Responses show that the Registrar General's department has not been as efficient as it should and has not produced information in a timely enough fashion. A nominally 3-day service ends up taking a week or two, despite requesters having paid fees for expedited services.

The low transparency score in governance in Jamaica is corroborated by results from Table 4 showing the current and previous scores on transparency of the two countries from 2002 to 2010, according to Transparency International (TI). The index ranked participating countries according to the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians.

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) drew on different polls and a survey to portray these results. The numbers from Tables 4 and 5 provide interesting results to contextualize the law in Jamaica and the not-yet-passed bill in Ghana. The results indicate a major decline in Jamaica's corruption ranking from 64th in 2005, 96th in 2008 to 99th in 2009 as compared to a slight improvement in Ghana's ranking from 65th in 2005, 67th in 2008, and 69th in 2009 to 62nd in 2010. These results show that Jamaica's

Table 4. CPI: Ghana.

| Country | Score | Year | Rank |
|---------|-------|------|------|
| Ghana | 4.1 | 2010 | 62 |
| | 3.9 | 2009 | 69 |
| | 3.9 | 2008 | 67 |
| | 3.7 | 2007 | 69 |
| | 3.3 | 2006 | 70 |
| | 3.5 | 2005 | 65 |
| | 3.6 | 2004 | 64 |
| | 3.3 | 2003 | 70 |
| | 3.9 | 2002 | 50 |

Source: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

Table 5. CPI: Jamaica.

| Country | Score | Year | Rank |
|---------|-------|------|------|
| Jamaica | 3.3 | 2010 | 87 |
| | 3.0 | 2009 | 99 |
| | 3.1 | 2008 | 96 |
| | 3.3 | 2007 | 84 |
| | 3.7 | 2006 | 61 |
| | 3.6 | 2005 | 64 |
| | 3.3 | 2004 | 74 |
| | 3.8 | 2003 | 57 |
| | 4.0 | 2002 | 45 |

Source: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

slide down the international corruption perception index is continuing while Ghana's rise is slightly progressive.

The Corruption Perception results also confirm the skepticism of informants about transparency in governance in the two countries. For instance, in Jamaica, there has been a slight attitudinal change among citizens with the passage of the law but there could still be a lot of resistance in the release of information, as Participant II indicated. Some negative developments about the police withholding statistical data until they wish to release it feed into the skepticism that people hold about government transparency. Yet Ghanaian respondents are basking in the hope that once the Right to Information law is passed, transparency in government will automatically improve. Ghana has to be cautious about counting her chicks before they are even hatched.

More essentially, the comparative results in Tables 4 and 5 are shocking because Jamaica has had a fairly advanced ICT policy environment which supports online access since the liberalization of the telecommunication sector in 2001(Jamaica Country Report

2009). The country also has a fairly high literacy rate as compared to Ghana. Given these strengths, one would have expected the country to continue to show very good CPI scores from 2002 onwards, when Jamaica's score of 4.0 coincided with the passing of the ATIA law. But that is not the case. The question to be asked, therefore, is whether the Jamaican Act is making a difference? Based on the results of this study, the response would have to be negative.

The reasons for the downward trend in the Corruption Perception Index (which relates directly or indirectly to transparency) for Jamaica raise questions about the implementation challenges for freedom of information legislation. Simply put, these challenges include a host of factors such as lack of resources, resistance, illiteracy, low levels of education, and difficult IT access, which may all combine to result in delays and failure to comply with or use the laws effectively. This leads to the problem statement of this study, which concerns the lack of transparency in government or the public sector as a result of lack of access to government or public information. Much remains to be done to improve the operation of Jamaica's legislation, and the implementation challenges hinted at by the Carter Centre and the submissions made by Excell to the Joint Select Committee will provide input for amendments to the ATIA.

What are the lessons for Ghana? Ghana will have to focus on the implementation challenges in making sure that when its own FOI law comes into force, there will be an adequate education campaign, considerable IT accessibility, and frequent publication and disclosure of public information. When these challenges are taken care of and information released fully, promptly and proactively, then there is hope for more transparent decision making, which will ultimately reduce corruption and improve Ghana's CPI scores.

Limitation

Since this has been a small-scale research project undertaken by a single investigator, some limitations of the study must be noted. The results of the research are strictly related to the moment in which the case study was carried out from March to August 2011. As the situation of transparency improves and progresses as a result of a combination of factors including ICT, frequent publication and release of information, and e-governance, the same research undertaken in 3 years' time may give different outcomes.

Recommendation for further research

The analysis of the results revealed interesting new issues to be studied. Future research should delve into

international standards for FOI laws and the effectiveness of e-governance in combating corruption. Future research could focus solely on the implementation challenges of information legislation. New investigations could be based on FOI laws as tools for literacy promotion. The inability to generalize the findings of this research is recognized, even though it would have served as a baseline for further exploration of the issue. A phenomenological study is recommended in order to explore participants' views and perceptions on the issue under investigation. In this sense, the study would take place in a natural setting, and the process would be inductive and would benefit from a larger sample size.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent Form

Consent Form. Dear participant,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the current study. Please be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me.

The purpose of the study is to understand how access to information could be a means for transparency in governance in Ghana, taking a cue from the Jamaican experience. The procedure is a qualitative design based on a case study approach. At this stage in the research, perceptions and opinions of participants are very critical in determining the purpose of this study. Data will be collected from two points; telephone interviews and documents in journals, newsprint related to the issue under examination.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during the time that you are participating. I will be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed. However, your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way and your identity as a participant will only be known to me. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study.

The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information about your experience on the issue under examination, your learning about qualitative research, the opportunity to participate in a qualitative study and your opinions in shaping this study.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Signature Date

Cletus D. Kuunifaa, School of Information Studies, UW-Milwaukee, Principal Investigator.

Appendix 2: Questionnaires for Ghanaian respondents

Hi Professor/Doctor/ Mr..... My name is Cletus Kuunifaa, a student of SOIS, UW-Milwaukee. I'm conducting a study of opinions of Ghanaians 18 years of age or older. This study is to establish a base line opinion about how access to information could be a means to achieve transparency in governance in Ghana. Your opinions and responses about the issues would help in order to provide evidence for policy and law makers given that a right to information bill (RTI) is yet to pass as law in Ghana. Would you mind answering these questions? All your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Tell me about your familiarity with issues of democracy?
2. Will you say if Ghana is moving in the right or wrong direction?
3. Do Ghanaians have access to government information and services? Tell me.
4. Assuming they have access to government information, do they believe the right of access to information allows them to participate in government?
5. Tell me your opinions on whether citizens should have access to government information?
6. Do you think that access to TV, radio and newspapers make people participate in government?
7. What, in your opinion can be done to encourage public participation in governance?
8. Tell me about the current state of government transparency in Ghana?
9. Do you think the right of access to information can bring about transparency in governance? (How)
10. How can lack of access to information influence government transparency?
11. What do you think about the exercise of right to information as enabling citizens to keep their government and public officials accountable?
12. Can that bring about transparency in governance?

Appendix 3: Questionnaires for Jamaican respondent

Questions for interview. Hi Professor/Doctor/Mr./Mrs.-..... I'm conducting a case study of opinions of Jamaicans 18 years of age or older. This study is to establish a base line opinion about whether access to information has been a means to achieve transparency in governance in Jamaica. Your responses would help in order to provide a comparison with Ghanaian governance where a right to information bill (RTI) is yet to pass as law.

Would you mind answering these questions? All your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Tell me about your familiarity with issues of democracy?
2. What are your opinions about access to information act in Jamaica?
3. ATIA became law in Jamaica in 2002. Will you say if Jamaica has moved in the right or wrong direction since this legislation? Why?
4. Tell me your opinions about whether ATIA has helped citizens have access to government information?
5. How has the access to TV, radio and newspapers made Jamaicans participate in government?
6. Has ATIA encouraged public participation in governance? How?
7. Do Jamaicans in both urban and rural dwellings believe that ATIA allows them to be involved in governance?
8. What, in your opinion can be done to encourage public participation in governance? Is the legislation of ATIA enough?
9. Tell me about the current state of government transparency in Jamaica?
10. Do you think ATIA has brought about transparency in governance in Jamaica? (How?)
11. Has ATIA enabled Jamaicans to keep their government and public officials accountable?
12. Are there evidence of transparency which have impacted governance in Jamaica? Tell me.

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About the author

Cletus D. Kuunifaa is pursuing a PhD in information studies at the Palmer School of Library and Information Studies, CW Post Campus, Long Island University, New York. He is currently a research assistant to the committee on strategic program development plan of Palmer School. Prior to this, he studied translation, library and information science at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. He also obtained an MA in French from Purdue University, West Lafayette. He is the author of a recent book about the lack of transparency in government or public sector, especially Ghana. His research interest focuses on access to information legislation, copyright laws, mobile libraries and quite recently knowledge management. His intent has always been to bring to visibility information related issues, especially the underrepresented perspective of issues to the scholarly and professional discourse through research and publication. Contact: Palmer School of Library and Information Science, CW Post Campus, Long Island University, 720 Northern Boulevard, Brookville, NY11548-1300, USA. Tel. +1 516-244-4185. Email: dipnibe@yahoo.com, cletus.kuunifaa@my.liu.edu



News

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IFLA policies and programmes

Beyond Access: Libraries Powering Development

Beyond Access is a coalition of organizations, including IFLA, who support the idea that libraries power development. The starting point of the Beyond Access Campaign (<http://www.beyondaccess.net/>) is that development efforts deliver greater results when they are anchored in sustainable local institutions. However, valuable resources are often spent creating something new rather than building on what already exists – which ignores the fact that the developing world already has trusted community hubs that can serve as platforms for development. These institutions are public libraries, over 230,000 of which – 73 percent of the world's total – are located in developing and transitioning countries.

The Beyond Access Campaign is seeking to draw attention to this fact and encourage policy makers to better utilize public libraries in their development policies. To do this, Beyond Access is seeking applications from teams of representatives from libraries, community-based organizations, and governments to demonstrate how libraries are powering development. Beyond Access Members will use their experience to emphasize innovative ways libraries are addressing diverse development challenges.

Beyond Access Members will receive travel scholarships to attend a major Beyond Access Conference in Washington, DC in October 2012, receive support in expanding partnerships with governments and other stakeholders, and be eligible for additional grant funding at and after the Beyond Access Conference.

Beyond Access is an initiative of IREX, EIFL, IFLA, Makaia, Civic Regeneration, TASCHA, the

Riecken Foundation, and READ Global, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Further information: Stuart Hamilton, Director of Policy and Advocacy, IFLA. PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, Netherlands. Tel. + 31 70 314 0884. Email: Stuart.Hamilton@ifla.org

Dynamic Coalition on Public Access in Libraries

IFLA is pleased to report that a new Dynamic Coalition on Public Access in Libraries has been approved by the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). IGF Dynamic Coalitions are informal, issue-specific groups consisting of stakeholders that are interested in particular issues. They gather academics, representatives of governments, and members of civil society interested in collaborating, participating in debates, and engaging in the coalition's work. IFLA) and Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) are the organizers of this coalition and are now seeking more members who are interested in the topic and wish to be kept informed of the DC's activities, discussions and progress.

Objectives.

1. To place public access to the Internet through public libraries on the agenda of the IGF as a cross-cutting issue on a number of IGF key themes e.g. Internet Governance and Development; Access and Diversity; Security, Openness and Privacy; Youth.
2. To ensure that representatives of libraries and their users are consulted on issues of Internet Governance within, and outside of, the context of the IGF.
3. To create a dialogue between library representatives and policy makers on the potential of public libraries in major policy areas such as social cohesion, education, employment, community development, health and agriculture, in pursuit of sustainable funding and favourable policies towards libraries.

4. To feed in IGF-related activities to existing EIFL and IFLA work programmes for ICTD in 2012 and beyond, such as the Beyond Access Campaign on libraries and development, European Union activities on e-Inclusion and the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Helsinki in August 2012.

Interested Members? The first phase of building an effective dynamic coalition is to gather supporters. We are therefore seeking interested organizations and individuals from all stakeholder groups to contribute to the work of the Dynamic Coalition. As with other IGF coalitions, collaboration can range from following and participating in discussions on the DC mailing list, to active participation in workshops and events at the main IGF and related regional/national IGFs. IFLA and EIFL already plan to participate at the EuroDIG, and those interested in this topic may also be interested in the forthcoming Beyond Access Campaign, which works to promote the role of public libraries in delivering development goals.

Further information: Stuart Hamilton, Director of Policy and Advocacy, IFLA. PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, Netherlands. Tel. + 31 70 314 0884. Email: Stuart.Hamilton@ifla.org

ALP small projects 2012 announced

At its December meeting, the ALP (Action for Development through Libraries Programme) committee approved four small projects to be funded in 2012, following applications from IFLA's regions. ALP supports training and development projects in developing countries and emerging economies, with an emphasis on capacity building, and train-the-trainer or cascading delivery. The projects are:

Africa: 'Support for the promotion of access to information, and the library profession in Madagascar': Comité pour la Sauvegarde de L'intégrité (CSI).

IFLA, in association with CSI, will: promote transparency and access to information, promote documentation centres to advance the library profession in Madagascar, and form a new National Library Association in Madagascar.

Asia and Oceania: 'Leadership Development for Executive Board Members and Aspiring Leaders of Vietnamese Library Association': Vietnamese Library Association.

IFLA, in association with VLA will: strengthen the VLA's strategic capacity by providing its executive

members and promising mid-career librarians with leadership skills, prepare 25 trainers in leadership through Train of the Trainers (ToT) workshop, and improve understanding of IFLA, its roles, programs and activities.

Latin America and Caribbean: 'Train the Trainer workshop on Information Literacy for Public Librarians': Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano (ICPNA), Peru.

IFLA, in association with ICPNA, will: provide participants with information literacy skills to be agents of change and in turn transmit them to the community in which they operate, train participants to access information effectively and efficiently, and develop participants' abilities to evaluate information resources.

Emerging and Developing: 'Regional Cooperation: challenge and opportunity': Croatian Library Association.

IFLA, in association with CLA, will provide professional development of librarians especially in leadership advocacy for libraries and library associations in South Eastern Europe, and collaborate with other associations to develop joint projects on continuing professional development for librarians.

Updates and reports will be added to the IFLA website as each of the projects are implemented.

Further information: Fiona Bradley, ALP Coordinator, IFLA Headquarters, PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, The Netherlands. Tel. +31 70 314 0884. Fax: +31 70 383 4827. Email: alp@ifla.org; fiona.bradley@ifla.org

Membership matters

New members

We bid a warm welcome to the 27 members who have joined the Federation between 15 December and 5 March 2012, including the following:

Other associations

Collegi Oficial de Bibliotecaris-Documentalistes de Catalunya, Spain

Association affiliates

Zimbabwe Library Association (ZimLA), Zimbabwe

Institutional members

Univerza na Primorskem / Università del Litorale, Slovenia

The Library, University of Malta, Malta
 Ayesha Abed Library, BRAC University,
 Bangladesh
 Tampere University of Technology, Library,
 Finland
 Information and Documentation Centre,
 ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Car-
 ibbean, Trinidad and Tobago
 National Science Library (NISCAIR), India

One-person libraries

Centres European Centre for Minority Issues,
 Germany

Personal affiliates

Abida Khatoun, India
 John Kurtenbach, Peru
 Corin Michael Haines, New Zealand
 Akiko Murakami, Japan
 Mary Kandiuk, Canada
 Maja Wojciechowska, Poland
 Naana Otaa-Gyamfi, United States
 Jennifer Groff, United States

Student affiliates

Jeffrey Fisher, United States
 Jessica Lake, United States
 Reed Apostol, United States
 Timothy Thompson, United States
 Whitney Spencer, Canada
 Jacqueline Rodriguez, United States
 Vanessa Jones, United States

Future IFLA conferences and meetings

Helsinki 2012

The World Library and Information Congress: 78th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, will take place in Helsinki, Finland from 11–16 August 2012. *Theme:* Libraries Now!—Inspiring, Surprising, Empowering.

Further information: <http://conference.ifla.org/ifla78>

Final announcement: <http://conference.ifla.org/sites/default/files/files/wlic2012/final-announcement.pdf>

Conference Secretariat

K.I.T. Group GmbH Association & Conference Management has been appointed as the Congress Secretariat for the IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2012.

Contact: IFLA Congress Secretariat, c/o K.I.T. Group GmbH – Association & Conference Management, Kurfürstendamm 71, DE-10709 Berlin, Germany.

Tel.: +49 30 24 60 3-329. Fax: +49 30 24 60 3-200.
 Email: wlic2012@kit-group.org

Helsinki satellite meetings

The following satellite meetings were approved by IFLA's Professional Committee at its 2011 meeting

Libraries in Networks: creating, participating and co-operating

Dates: 2 days prior to Congress
 Location: Klaipeda, Lithuania
 Sponsor: IFLA Public Library Section
 Contact: Dzeinara Kaunaite, dzeinara.kaunaite@cb.ku.lt

The Future of Health Information

Date: 10 August 2012
 Location: University of Helsinki, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Health and Biosciences Section
 Contact: Terhi Sandgren, terhi.sandgren@helsinki.fi

Art now! Contemporary Art Resources in Library Context

Dates: 9–11 August 2012
 Location: Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and Aalto University, School of Art and Design, Helsinki, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Art Libraries Section
 Contact: Jan Simane, simane@khi.fi.it

Let's Read Reading and Print Disabilities in Young People

Dates: 2 days prior to Congress
 Location: Tallinn, Estonia
 Sponsor: IFLA Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section
 Contact: Minna von Zansen, minna.vonzansen@celia.fi

Global policies, Imperatives and Solutions for the Efficient Library Collection Management and Access to Less Used Documents

Dates: 9–10 August 2012
 Location: Kuopio Academy of Design, Savonia University of Applied Sciences Piispankatu 8, FI-70101 Kuopio, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Acquisition and Collection Development Section with Serials and Other Continuing Resources Section

Contact: Pentti Vattulainen, pentti.vattulainen@nrl.fi
 Website: <http://www.nrl.fi/ifla2012/kuopiosatellite>

The Electronic Re-Evolution . . . News Media in the Digital Age

Dates: 7–9 August 2012
 Location: Mikkeli, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Newspapers Section, Preservation and Conservation Section, Core Activity on Preservation and Conservation (PAC), Genealogy and Local History Section
 Contact: Frederick Zarndt, frederick@zarndt.net

Libraries for Young People: Breaking through Boundaries

Dates: 9–10 August 2012
 Location: Joensuu Main library and other premises in the city center, Joensuu, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section
 Contact: Viviana Quiñones, viviana.quinones@bnf.fr

Beyond libraries – subject metadata in the digital environment and semantic web

Dates: 17–18 August 2012
 Location: National Library of Estonia, Tallinn
 Sponsor: IFLA Classification and Indexing Section
 Contact: Jo-Anne Belair, jo-anne.belair@bibl.ulaval.ca
 Website: <http://www.nlib.ee/tallinnsatellite>

Knowledge Management Theory in Action: how to plan, apply, and assess knowledge management in libraries

Date: 10 August 2012
 Location: Goethe-Institut, Helsinki, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Knowledge Management Section
 Contact: Leda Bultrini, leda.bultrini@arpalazio.it

Bibliography in the Digital Age

Date: 9 August 2012
 Location: Biblioteka Narodowa, Warsaw, Poland
 Sponsors: IFLA Bibliography Section and IFLA Cataloguing Section
 Contact: Carsten Andersen, cha@dbc.dk

The Homeless and the Libraries – the Right to Information and Knowledge For All

Dates: 10 August 2012
 Location: Tallinn Central Library, Tallinn, Estonia
 Sponsor: IFLA Library Services for People with Special Needs Section
 Contact: Veronica L C Stevenson-Moudamane, vlcsmoudamane@gmail.com

The Road to Information Literacy: Librarians as facilitators of learning

Dates: 8–10 August 2012
 Location: Tampere, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section and IFLA Information Literacy Section
 Contacts: Susan Schnuer, schnuer@illinois.edu; Leena Toivonen, leena.t.toivonen@uta.fi

Library's Efficiency, Impact and Outcomes: Statistical Evaluation and Other Methods as Tools for Management and Decision-making

Dates: 8–9 August 2012
 Location: University of Turku, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Statistics and Evaluation Section, Management and Marketing Section, Academic and Research Libraries Section
 Contact: Markku Laitinen, markku.laitinen@helsinki.fi
 Website: <http://kirjasto.utu.fi/ifla2012>

IFLAcamp: New Professionals Now!

Dates: 9–10 August 2012
 Location: Hämeenlinna City Library, Hämeenlinna, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA New Professionals Special Interest Group
 Contact: Sebastian Wilke, sebastian.wilke@ibi.huberlin.de
 Website: <http://npsig.wordpress.com/iflacamp>

How can libraries and information centres improve access to women's information and preserve women's cultural heritage?

Dates: 8–10 August 2012
 Location: University of Tampere, Finland
 Sponsor: IFLA Women, Information and Libraries Special Interest Group
 Co-sponsor: Women Information Network Europe (WINE)
 Contact: Maria Cotera, wilsig@googlemail.com

Website: <http://www.minna.fi/web/guest/ifla-pre-conference-2012>

Information for Civic Literacy

Dates: 8–10 August 2012

Location: Riga, Latvia

Sponsor: IFLA Access to Information Network – Africa (ATINA) Special Interest Group, IFLA Information Literacy Section, IFLA Africa Section

Contact: Frank Kirkwood, kirkwood.professional@sympatico.ca

Website: <http://www.lnb.lv/iflariga2012> (will be available on 15 January 2012)

Transcending Boundaries to Increase Cultural Understanding Between Countries

Dates: 8–9 August 2012

Location: Lappeenranta, Finland

Sponsor: IFLA Library Services to Multicultural Populations

Contact: Tess Tobin, TTobin@CityTech.Cuny.Edu

Parliamentary libraries – empowering parliaments and citizens

Dates: 8–10 August 2012

Location: Helsinki, Finland

Sponsor: IFLA Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section

Contact: Sari Pajula, iflaparl2012@parliament.fi

Website: <http://lib.eduskunta.fi/Resource.php/library/conference/index.htm>

The Future of Information and Library Associations

Dates: 7–9 August 2012

Location: The Hague, Netherlands

Sponsor: IFLA Management of Library Associations Section (MLAS) & Building Strong Library Associations Programme (BSLA)

Contact: Sjoerd Koopman, sjoerdkoopman1@gmail.com

Last update: 21 December 2011

Singapore 2013

The World Library and Information Congress: 78th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, will take place in Singapore from 17–23 August 2013. *Theme: Future Libraries: Infinite Possibilities*

More information regarding the 79th IFLA General Conference and Assembly will be available on this website. Please check back at a later date.

<http://conference.ifla.org/ifla79>



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Abstracts

Editorial note

The Arabic and Chinese abstracts have been held over to the next issue, Volume 38, No. 3, owing to technical problems.

Sommaires

The Finnish library system – open collaboration for an open society

Le système bibliothécaire finlandais : une collaboration ouverte pour une société ouverte

Kimmo Tuominen and Jarmo Saarti

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 115–136

L'article présente un bref historique des bibliothèques et de la bibliothéconomie en Finlande. En Finlande, la culture sous forme écrite est apparue au 15^e siècle. La Réforme permet la percée de la culture finnoise aussi bien sur le plan religieux qu'académique. L'Académie de Turku est fondée en 1640. Le réseau de bibliothèques publiques commence à prendre son essor à partir du 17^e siècle. Dès le début de l'Indépendance, c'est-à-dire en 1917, les bibliothèques jouent un rôle important dans le développement d'une société ouverte et démocratique. À l'heure actuelle, il y a des bibliothèques publiques dans toutes les communes comme le prescrit la Loi sur les bibliothèques publiques, en plus des bibliothèques universitaires et spécialisées finnoises qui constituent un réseau moderne de bibliothèques ouvert à tous les citoyens utilisant les technologies bibliothécaires actuelles.

The information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers: A review of research **Les besoins en informations et le comportement des populations rurales en quête d'informations : vue d'ensemble de la recherche**

Md. Shariful Islam and S.M. Zabed Ahmed

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 137–147

L'article passe en revue les travaux de recherche sur les besoins en informations et le comportement des populations rurales en quête d'informations dans les

pays développés et en développement. L'analyse suggère que les besoins en informations des communautés rurales de tous les pays sont très similaires, bien que ces communautés varient de région en région et de pays en pays en fonction des conditions socio-économiques. Ces besoins sont principalement en rapport avec la vie quotidienne des populations rurales.

Public libraries in Africa – agents for development and innovation? Current perceptions of local stakeholders

Les bibliothèques publiques en Afrique : agents du développement et de l'innovation ? Perception actuelle des parties prenantes locales

Monika Elbert, David Fuegi and Ugne Lipeikaite

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 148–165

Cet article présente une méthodologie et les résultats préliminaires d'une étude sur la façon dont les parties prenantes et le public perçoivent les bibliothèques publiques dans six pays africains. L'étude est en rapport étroit avec le programme EIFL (Programme d'innovation pour les bibliothèques publiques), qui décerne des bourses aux bibliothèques publiques dans le monde pour leur permettre de prendre en compte divers problèmes socio-économiques auxquels leurs communautés sont confrontées, avec notamment des projets au Kenya, au Ghana et en Zambie. Cette étude vise à comprendre l'image du potentiel des bibliothèques publiques qu'ont les parties prenantes locales et nationales (municipalités, ministères, organismes publics, médias, etc.) et le public (y compris les non-usagers) dans les bibliothèques publiques en Éthiopie, au Ghana, au Kenya, en Tanzanie, en Ouganda et au Zimbabwe, et à comprendre comment ces parties prenantes pourraient être encouragées à créer, financer, aider ou utiliser les bibliothèques publiques. Pour

autant que l'on sache, aucune étude de ce genre n'a encore été menée dans des pays africains, de sorte que cet article va permettre à ses lecteurs de se familiariser avec un domaine encore inexploré et fournir des arguments en faveur des bibliothèques en Afrique.

Internationalization of information science education in Nigeria: A review of attempts by the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science

Internationalisation de l'enseignement de la bibliothéconomie au Nigéria : un examen des tentatives du Centre régional africain de bibliothéconomie

Wole Michael Olatokun and Samuel C. Avemaria Utulu

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 166–174

La gestion des informations et des connaissances est devenue particulièrement cruciale pour la croissance et le développement des pays à travers le monde, y compris les pays africains. C'est également vrai en ce qui concerne l'importance de l'enseignement de la bibliothéconomie. Cette vérité a déjà été acceptée en Afrique, y compris au Nigéria, où les efforts communs du Centre de recherche pour le développement international (CRDI) et l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, les sciences et la culture (UNESCO) ont entraîné la fondation du Centre régional africain pour les Sciences de l'information (Africa Regional Center for Information Science ou ARCIS) en 1990. L'objectif fondamental défini pour l'ARCIS en tant que centre régional était d'internationaliser ses processus, ses fonctions et son programme éducatif. Se basant sur des données primaires et secondaires, cet article, étudie la question de l'internationalisation de l'enseignement de la bibliothéconomie au Nigéria à l'aide d'exemples pratiques tirés d'expériences au sein d'ARCIS. Il met l'accent sur les résultats obtenus

actuellement par ARCIS dans le cadre de ses efforts d'internationalisation, des défis auquel le Centre est confronté en raison de la situation politique au Nigéria et des besoins concurrents des unités et des départements de l'Université d'Ibadan, ainsi que les perspectives des efforts d'internationalisation d'ARCIS. Il conclut en prévoyant un avenir florissant pour ARCIS en matière d'internationalisation.

Access to information legislation as a means to achieve transparency in Ghanaian governance: lessons from the Jamaican experience

Législation sur l'accès à l'information comme moyen pour parvenir à la transparence dans la gouvernance ghanéenne : leçons tirées de l'expérience jamaïcaine

Cletus D. Kuunifaa

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 175–186

L'accès à l'information et la transparence sont considérés comme un vaccin pour assurer une bonne gouvernance et les pays doivent faire des efforts pour se procurer ce vaccin afin de prendre leurs responsabilités et d'éviter la corruption. Cet article explore les défis que devrait rencontrer l'application de la loi sur la liberté de l'information en Jamaïque, et les leçons que le Ghana doit en tirer pour améliorer sa propre législation sur la liberté de l'information, qui fait actuellement l'objet de délibérations. Cette étude prend en compte le manque de transparence au sein du gouvernement ou du secteur public suite au manque d'accès aux informations gouvernementales ou publiques. Après avoir décrit l'arrière-plan, le contexte, le cadre et la méthodologie de l'étude, cet article en présente les conclusions, établissant une analyse comparative et donnant des recommandations tout particulièrement destinées au Ghana, où une législation similaire n'a pas encore été ratifiée.

Zusammenfassungen

The Finnish library system – open collaboration for an open society

Das finnische Bibliothekssystem – eine offene Zusammenarbeit für eine offene Gesellschaft

Kimmo Tuominen, Jarmo Saarti

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 115–136

Dieser Artikel enthält einen kurzen Abriss der Geschichte der finnischen Bibliotheken und des Bibliothekswesens. Die Schriftkultur in Finnland begann im 15. Jahrhundert. Die Reformation verhalf letzten Endes der finnischen Kultur zum Durchbruch, und zwar

sowohl in religiöser wie auch in akademischer Hinsicht. Im Jahr 1640 wurde die Akademie zu Turku gegründet. Seit dem 17. Jahrhundert hat sich der öffentliche Bibliothekenverbund entwickelt. Seit Beginn der Unabhängigkeit, d.h. seit 1917 haben die Bibliotheken eine wichtige Rolle bei der Entstehung einer offenen und demokratischen Gesellschaft gespielt. Heute gibt es öffentliche Bibliotheken in allen Kommunen gemäß der Definition des Public Library Act. Hinzu kommen die Unibibliotheken und Fachbibliotheken in Finnland, die sich zu einem modernen Bibliothekenverbund zusammengeschlossen haben, der allen Bürgern offensteht und moderne Bibliothekstechnologien nutzt.

The information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers: A review of research
Der Informationsbedarf und das Verhalten der ländlichen Bevölkerung bei der Informationssuche: Ein Überblick über den Stand der Forschung

Md. Shariful Islam and S.M. Zayed Ahmed
 IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 137–147

Hierbei handelt es sich um eine Besprechung wissenschaftlicher Studien über den Informationsbedarf und das Verhalten der ländlichen Bevölkerung in Industriestaaten sowie Entwicklungsländern bei der Informationssuche. Die Analyse zeigt, dass der Informationsbedarf der Landgemeinden in allen Ländern recht ähnlich ist, obwohl die einzelnen ländlichen Gemeinschaften - in Abhängigkeit von den jeweiligen sozioökonomischen Bedingungen - von Region zu Region und von Land zu Land unterschiedlich sind. Der fragliche Bedarf bezieht sich in erster Linie auf das tägliche Leben der ländlichen Bevölkerung.

Public libraries in Africa – agents for development and innovation? Current perceptions of local stakeholders

Öffentliche Bibliotheken in Afrika als Antriebskräfte für die Entwicklung und Innovation? Die aktuellen Vorstellungen der lokalen Interessengruppen
 Monika Elbert, David Fuegi and Ugne Lipeikaite
 IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 148–165

Dieser Artikel präsentiert eine Forschungsmethodik sowie die vorläufigen Ergebnisse einer Studie, die sich mit den Vorstellungen der einzelnen Interessengruppen sowie auch der Öffentlichkeit in Bezug auf die öffentlichen Bibliotheken in sechs afrikanischen Ländern befasst. Diese Studie ist eng mit dem EIFL Public Library Innovation Program verbunden, dessen Hauptaugenmerk auf Zuwendungen für öffentliche Bibliotheken in der ganzen Welt liegt, um eine Reihe von sozio-ökonomischen Problemen in den einzelnen Gemeinden zu beheben. Dazu zählen auch Projekte in Kenia, Ghana und Sambia. Das Ziel der Studie besteht darin, die Vorstellungen der nationalen und lokalen Interessengruppen (Kommunen, Ministerien, Behörden, Medien usw.) zu klären und die Öffentlichkeit (einschließlich der Nichtnutzer) in öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Äthiopien, Ghana, Kenia, Tansania, Uganda und Simbabwe auf das Potenzial öffentlicher Bibliotheken hinzuweisen. Dabei soll auch geklärt werden, wie sich diese Interessengruppen am besten positiv beeinflussen und dazu motivieren lassen, öffentliche Bibliotheken zu

schaffen, mit Geldmitteln zu versehen, zu unterstützen beziehungsweise zu nutzen. Nach dem Stand unserer heutigen Kenntnisse sind Erhebungen dieser Art in den Ländern Afrikas bisher noch nicht durchgeführt worden. Daher enthält dieser Beitrag auch eine Einführung in dieses bisher unerforschte Fachgebiet und liefert den Hintergrund für eine verstärkte Interessenvertretung der Bibliotheken in Afrika.

Internationalization of information science education in Nigeria: A review of attempts by the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science
Die Internationalisierung der Informatikausbildung in Nigeria: Ein Überblick über entsprechende Bemühungen des Africa Regional Centre for Information Science

Wole Michael Olatokun and Samuel C. Avemaria Utulu
 IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 166–174

Informations- und Wissensmanagement sind inzwischen zu maßgeblichen Faktoren für das Wachstum und die Entwicklung von Ländern in der ganzen Welt geworden, auch in Afrika. Das gilt auch für die Bedeutung der Informatikausbildung. Die Wahrheit dieser Feststellung ist in Afrika bereits akzeptiert worden, auch in Nigeria, wo im Jahr 1990 dank der gemeinsamen Bemühungen des International Development Research Centre (IDRC) und der Organisation der Vereinten Nationen für Erziehung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO) das Africa Regional Center for Information Science (ARCIS) gegründet wurde. Im Wesentlichen sollte das ARCIS in seiner Rolle als Regionalzentrum die eigenen Prozesse, Funktionen und das Curriculum internationalisieren. Der vorliegende Beitrag, der sich auf Primär- und Sekundärdaten stützt, untersucht das Thema der Internationalisierung der Informatikausbildung in Nigeria und zieht dabei auch praktische Beispiele aus ARCIS-Erfahrungen heran. Dabei weist er nachdrücklich auf die aktuellen Erfolge hin, die das ARCIS bei seinen Bemühungen um die Internationalisierung dokumentiert hat, sowie auf die Herausforderungen, die sich aufgrund der politischen Erfahrungen in Nigeria und der konkurrierenden Anforderungen der einzelnen Fachbereiche und Institute an der Universität Ibadan stellen. Zudem streicht er die Perspektiven der Internationalisierungsbemühungen des ARCIS heraus. Am Ende weist er im Rahmen seiner Schlussfolgerungen auf die guten Zukunftsaussichten des ARCIS in Bezug auf die Internationalisierung hin.

Access to information legislation as a means to achieve transparency in Ghanaian governance: lessons from the Jamaican experience

Zugang zu den Informationsgesetzen als Mittel zur Durchsetzung von Transparenz bei der Staatsführung in Ghana: Lehren aus den Erfahrungen in Jamaika

Cletus D. Kuunifaa

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Die Zugänglichkeit der Informationen und die Transparenz gelten als Voraussetzung zur Gewährleistung einer verantwortungsbewussten Regierungsführung. Die Länder müssen sich anstrengen, um diese Voraussetzung zu erfüllen, Verantwortung zu zeigen und die Korruption zu verhindern. Der vorliegende Beitrag

untersucht die voraussichtlich auftretenden Herausforderungen bei der Implementierung des Informationsfreiheitsgesetzes (Freedom-of-Information Act, FOI) in Jamaika und analysiert die Lehren, die Ghana ziehen muss, um das eigene - zurzeit in der Beratungsphase befindliche - Informationsfreiheitsgesetz zu verbessern. Diese Studie befasst sich mit der mangelnden Transparenz im staatlichen beziehungsweise öffentlichen Sektor infolge des fehlenden Zugangs zu staatlichen und öffentlichen Informationen. Der Beitrag beschreibt zunächst den Hintergrund, den Kontext, das Rahmenkonzept und die Forschungsmethodik der Studie und präsentiert dann die entsprechenden Forschungsergebnisse. Zudem führt er eine Vergleichsanalyse durch und gibt einige Empfehlungen, insbesondere für Ghana, das immer noch dabei ist, ähnliche Gesetze zu verabschieden.

Рефераты статей

The Finnish library system – open collaboration for an open society

Финская библиотечная система – открытое сотрудничество для открытого общества

Киммо Туоминен, Ярмо Саарти

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 115–136

В данной статье представлена краткая история библиотек и библиотечного дела в Финляндии. Письменная культура Финляндии берет начало в 15 веке нашей эры. В эпоху Реформации сложились благоприятные условия для бурного развития финской культуры, как с религиозной, так и с академической точек зрения. В 1640 году была основана Академия Турку. С 17-го века началось активное развитие сети общественных библиотек. После обретения независимости, т.е. с 1917 года, библиотеки играют важную роль в развитии открытого и демократического общества. В настоящее время общественные библиотеки существуют во всех единицах муниципального управления, что определено Актом о публичных библиотеках, и дополняют собой библиотеки высших учебных заведений Финляндии, а также специализированные библиотеки, которые составляют современную библиотечную сеть, которая открыта для всех граждан, и в которой применяются все прогрессивные технологии библиотечного дела.

The information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers: A review of research
Информационные потребности и модели поведения сельских жителей при поиске информации: Обзор исследования

Мд. Шарифул Ислам, С.М. Забед Ахмед

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 137–147

Обзор исследования в области информационных потребностей и модели поведения сельских жителей при поиске информации, как в развитых, так и в развивающихся странах. Анализ показывает, что информационные потребности сельских общин схожи во всех странах, притом, что сами сельские общины различаются, что определяется особенностями конкретного региона, а также конкретной страны, и зависит от социально-экономических условий. Эти потребности в большинстве своем относятся к вопросам повседневной сельской жизни.

Public libraries in Africa – agents for development and innovation? Current perceptions of local stakeholders

Общественные библиотеки в Африке – пособники развития и инноваций? Современное восприятие местными заинтересованными сторонами

Моника Элберт, Дэвид Фуэджи, Унэ Липейкаите

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 148–165

В данной статье представлены методология и предварительные результаты исследования восприятия заинтересованными сторонами и общественностью публичных библиотек в шести странах Африки. Исследование тесно связано с Программой обновления общественных библиотек некоммерческого проекта "Электронная информация для библиотек" (EIFL), в рамках которой общественным библиотекам по всему миру вручаются гранты на реализацию ряда социально-экономических проектов, необходимых соответствующим сообществам, включая проекты в Кении, Гане и Замбии. Цель исследования - понять восприятие потенциала общественных библиотек заинтересованными сторонами на государственном и местном уровнях (муниципалитеты, министерства, государственные органы, средства информации и пр.), а также общественностью (включая тех, кто не пользуется библиотеками) в публичных библиотеках Эфиопии, Ганы, Кении, Танзании, Уганды и Зимбабве, а также понять, каким образом необходимо воздействовать на эти заинтересованные стороны, чтобы способствовать созданию, финансированию, поддержке или использованию общественных библиотек. Насколько нам известно, такие исследования не проводились в странах Африки, и статья знакомит читателя с еще не изученной областью, и служит основанием для широкой популяризации библиотек в Африке.

Internationalization of information science education in Nigeria: A review of attempts by the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science

Интернационализация образования в области информатики в Нигерии: Обзор деятельности Африканского регионального центра информатики

Воле Михаэль Олатокун, Сэмюэль С. Авемариа Утулу

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Управление информацией и знаниями стало играть ключевую роль в росте и развитии государств во всем мире, включая страны Африки. Не менее важную роль играет и образование в области информатики. Эта истина уже признана Африканскими странами, включая Нигерию, где, благодаря совместным усилиям Международного исследовательского центра по проблемам развития (IDRC) и Организации Объединенных Наций по вопросам образования, науки и культуры (UNESCO), в

1990 г. был создан Африканский региональный центр информатики (ARCIS). Главной задачей ARCIS как регионального центра являлась интернационализация своих процессов, функций и учебных программ. В данной статье, основанной как первичных, так и на вторичных данных, рассматривается вопрос интернационализации образования в области информатики в Нигерии, и приводятся практические примеры из опыта работы ARCIS. В ней указаны успехи, которых достиг центр ARCIS в области интернационализации, описаны вопросы и проблемы, с которыми он сталкивается в связи с политическими процессами, происходящими в Нигерии, а также потребности конкурирующих друг с другом отделов и управлений Университета г. Ибадан, описаны дальнейшие планы центра ARCIS в области интернационализации. Итоговое утверждение гласит, что планы центра ARCIS в области интернационализации ждет светлое будущее.

Access to information legislation as a means to achieve transparency in Ghanaian governance: lessons from the Jamaican experience

Доступ к законодательству в области информации как способ достижения прозрачности в управлении Ганой: уроки из опыта Ямайки

Клетус Д. Куунифаа

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Доступ к информации и прозрачность процессов считаются своеобразной вакциной, позволяющей улучшить процессы управления, и государствам необходимо использовать эту вакцину для увеличения уровня ответственности и предотвращения коррупции. В статье рассматриваются грядущие проблемы, связанные с принятием закона о свободе информации в Ямайке, а также уроки, которые необходимо учесть в Гане, чтобы улучшить собственный закон о свободе информации, который в настоящее время находится на стадии обсуждения. В исследовании рассматривается проблема недостаточной прозрачности в правительстве или государственном секторе как следствие отсутствия доступа к правительственной или общественной информации. За описанием истории, контекста, структуры и методологии работы следует описание полученных результатов, сравнительный анализ и специфические рекомендации для Ганы, где подобный законодательный акт еще находится на стадии принятия.

Resúmenes

The Finnish library system – open collaboration for an open society

El sistema de bibliotecas de Finlandia: colaboración abierta para una sociedad abierta

Kimmo Tuominen y Jarmo Saarti

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 115–136

El artículo presenta una breve historia de las bibliotecas y la bibliotecología de Finlandia. La cultura escrita en Finlandia se inició en el siglo XV dC. La Reforma significó el brote definitivo de la cultura finlandesa, tanto desde el punto de vista de la cultura religiosa como académica. La Academia de Turku se fundó en 1640. La red de bibliotecas públicas empezó a evolucionar a partir del siglo XVII. Desde el principio de la independencia, es decir, 1917, las bibliotecas han desempeñado un papel importante en el desarrollo de una sociedad abierta y democrática. En la actualidad hay bibliotecas públicas en todos los municipios según lo dispuesto por la Ley de Bibliotecas Públicas, además de la educación superior finlandesa y las bibliotecas especiales que constituyen una red de bibliotecas moderna y abierta para todos los ciudadanos que utiliza las tecnologías modernas de las bibliotecas.

The information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers: A review of research

Las necesidades de información y el comportamiento de búsqueda de información de la población rural: una revisión de la investigación

Md. Shariful Islam y S.M. Zabed Ahmed

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 137–147

Revisa los estudios de investigación sobre las necesidades de información y el comportamiento de búsqueda de información de la población rural en los países desarrollados y en desarrollo. El análisis sugiere que las necesidades de información de las comunidades rurales de todos los países son muy similares, aunque las comunidades rurales varían de una región a otra y de un país a otro dependiendo de las condiciones socio-económicas. Estas necesidades están en su mayoría relacionadas con la vida cotidiana de la población rural.

Public libraries in Africa – agents for development and innovation? Current perceptions of local stakeholders

Las bibliotecas públicas en África: ¿agentes para el desarrollo y la innovación? Percepciones actuales de las partes interesadas locales

Monika Elbert, David Fuegi y Ugne Lipeikaite

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 148–165

Este documento presenta la metodología y los resultados preliminares de un estudio de investigación sobre las percepciones de las partes interesadas y el público en general con respecto a las bibliotecas públicas en seis países africanos. El estudio está estrechamente vinculado con el Programa de Innovación de las Bibliotecas Públicas de EIFL, que otorga subsidios a las bibliotecas públicas a escala mundial para hacer frente a una amplia gama de temas socio-económicos a los que se enfrentan sus comunidades, incluidos proyectos en Kenia, Ghana y Zambia. El objetivo del estudio es conocer las percepciones de las partes interesadas nacionales y locales (municipios, consejerías, organismos públicos, medios de comunicación, etc.) y el público en general (incluidos los no usuarios) de las bibliotecas públicas de Etiopía, Ghana, Kenia, Tanzania, Uganda y Zimbabue sobre el potencial de las bibliotecas públicas y comprender cómo se podría influir de manera más positiva sobre estas partes interesadas para que creen, financien, apoyen o utilicen las bibliotecas públicas. Por lo que se sabe, no se han realizado encuestas de este tipo en los países africanos, de modo que el documento pone a los lectores al corriente del ámbito que no se ha explorado y brinda un marco para una mayor promoción de las bibliotecas en África.

Internationalization of information science education in Nigeria: A review of attempts by the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science

La internacionalización de la educación en ciencias de la información en Nigeria: una revisión de los intentos del Centro Regional de África para las Ciencias de la Información

Wole Michael Olatokun y Samuel C. Avemaria Utulu

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 166–174

La información y la gestión del conocimiento se han convertido en factores muy importantes para el crecimiento y el desarrollo de los países de todo el mundo, incluidos los países africanos. Lo mismo ocurre con la importancia de la educación en ciencias de la información. Esta realidad ya se ha aceptado en África, incluyendo en Nigeria, donde el esfuerzo conjunto del Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo (IDRC) y la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO) dio lugar al establecimiento del Centro Regional de África para las Ciencias de la Información (ARCIS) en 1990. El objetivo principal fijado para el ARCIS, como centro regional, era la internacionalización de sus procesos, funciones y planes de estudios. Este documento, basándose en datos tanto primarios como secundarios, examina la cuestión de la internacionalización de la educación en

ciencias de la información en Nigeria con ejemplos prácticos extraídos de las experiencias en el ARCIS. En él se destacan los logros actuales que ha registrado el ARCIS en sus esfuerzos de internacionalización, los retos a los que se enfrenta debido a las experiencias políticas en Nigeria y las necesidades competitivas de las unidades y los departamentos de la Universidad de Ibadán, así como las perspectivas de los esfuerzos de internacionalización del ARCIS. Al final, se concluye que el futuro de la internacionalización del ARCIS es brillante.

Access to information legislation as a means to achieve transparency in Ghanaian governance: lessons from the Jamaican experience

El acceso a la legislación de la información como medio para lograr la transparencia en el Gobierno de Ghana: lecciones de la experiencia de Jamaica

Cletus D. Kuunifaa

IFLA Journal 38 (2012) No. 2 pp. 175–186

El acceso a la información y la transparencia se consideran una vacuna para garantizar la buena gobernanza, y los países deben prepararse para esta vacuna a fin de garantizar la rendición de cuentas y prevenir la corrupción. En este trabajo se investigan los desafíos previstos para la aplicación de la legislación en materia de libertad de la información en Jamaica y las lecciones de Ghana para aprender a mejorar su proyecto de ley sobre libertad de la información, en la actualidad en una fase de deliberación. En este estudio se aborda la falta de transparencia en el gobierno o el sector público como consecuencia de la falta de acceso a la información gubernamental o pública. Después de describir los antecedentes, el contexto, el marco y la metodología del estudio, el documento presenta los resultados, hace un análisis comparativo y proporciona recomendaciones especialmente para Ghana, que se encuentra todavía en el proceso de aprobación de una legislación similar.