

Co-operation and Resource Sharing Among Nigerian Libraries

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With the expansion of educational facilities at all levels, more demands are being made on libraries of all categories. Library services therefore have to take into consideration the needs of users engaged in improving their education or career or using the library for leisure.

There is, however, the problems of the exponential growth of literature and availability of limited financial resources to contend with. No library can completely be self-sufficient. Without a measure of co-operation among libraries, the usefulness and availability of publications and other materials as media of information will be much limited.

There is therefore the need for libraries to co-operate. The ultimate aim of co-operation among libraries is to deepen, enrich, broaden and maximize the total resource available for the benefit of users.

Definition

Resource sharing among libraries denotes the mode of operation whereby functions are shared in common by a number of libraries to achieve the following objectives:

1. On the library user in terms of access to more materials or services, and/or
2. On the library budget in terms of providing a level of service at less cost, or much more service at less cost than if undertaken individually.¹

Obstacles to Successful Co-operation

Resource sharing programmes are not easy to accomplish. The American Library Association² in 1968, identified forty-six obstacles to successful co-operation. These included:

- (1) insufficient funds
- (2) fear of large libraries of being overburdened
- (3) inability of libraries to meet their own basic needs.
- (4) distance between libraries
- (5) lack of qualified staff.

In spite of these obstacles, libraries need to co-operate to be able to operate more efficiently with regards to satisfying their numerous clientele.

Examples of Past Co-Operative Practices:

The Standing Conference on Library Materials on Africa, SCOLMA.

SCOLMA³ was established in Britain in the 1950's. This scheme enabled a group of libraries to collect materials on particular areas/regions of Africa. The libraries co-operated among themselves to make available materials acquired to other libraries that need them.

Under the scheme, Manchester University Library specialises in the collection of materials on Nigeria.

Library Co-operation in West Africa

The first major co-operative venture among libraries in West Africa was set in motion by a resolution which was adopted at the 1953 UNESCO Regional Seminar on Public Library Development in Africa, which was held in Ibadan, Nigeria. The resolution read as follows:— 'Libraries working in various regions of Africa should take practical steps to form dynamic professional library associations as soon as possible. When formed such associations should draw up carefully planned programmes of action aimed at stimulating and assisting library development in Africa, and achieving adequate recognition for the library profession⁴. Consequently, the West African Library Association was founded in 1954 and it embraced libraries from English speaking West African countries. The Association published a journal, *West African Libraries* with effect from 1954. The Association was dissolved in 1961.

In 1945, the British Council⁵ in conjunction with the governments of Nigeria, Gold Coast now (Ghana) and Sierra Leone, established a library school at Achimota College, Accra. The aim of the school was to train Librarians for the countries named, but it folded up in 1946.

Library Co-operation in Nigeria

The standing Joint Committee on Library Co-operation in Lagos was formally launched on 4th November, 1964⁶. The major aim of this committee was to examine the ways and means of co-operation between libraries in the Lagos metropolis with the aim of improving library services and eliminating unnecessary duplication.

Nine libraries including the University of Lagos Library, National Library of Nigeria, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs Library were represented at its inaugural meeting.

A suggestion that the committee should affiliate with the Nigerian Library Association was rejected on the ground that the committee was formed to perform executive functions which an Association would find it difficult to perform.

The committee folded up on 3rd February 1966. During its period of existence, it succeeded in compiling a Union Catalogue of Bibliographies in the Lagos area and helped to produce the Directory of Lagos Libraries compiled by E.M. Moys and C.C. Nomah. Other areas which the Committee was looking into before its demise included the compilation of a Union Catalogue of Periodicals, photocopying facilities, inter-library loans, subject specialization and binding.

Before the formation of the Standing Committee on Library Co-operation in Lagos, there was a form of loose co-operative scheme existing between the University of Lagos Library and the National Library of Nigeria. Under this scheme the University of Lagos Library voluntarily stored materials for the National Library⁷.

Co-operative Acquisition Scheme in Nigeria

At the end of the 1972, Nigerian Library Association Annual Conference, a resolution was passed by members to the effect that "the Council Commission of the Committee on Library Resources will examine the feasibility of a co-operative acquisition scheme embracing the National Library and University Libraries; and if found possible to draw up a scheme for the country."⁸

The National Library of Nigeria which functions as the National Bibliographic Centre in accordance with a recommendation of the Working Group on Inter-Library Lending sponsored a Conference on Co-operative Acquisitions in Nigeria in Kaduna in May 1980.⁹

Participants accepted the idea that it was necessary to have a planned co-operative acquisitions scheme among libraries in Nigeria, especially in the area of Nigeriana, Africana, rare and expensive materials.

Co-operative acquisition is a system whereby participating libraries undertake to share the cost of acquiring materials either geographically or by subject descriptions in depth and extent, greater than a single library could achieve.

The major advantages for co-operative acquisition are as follows:

1. No individual library is self-sufficient and as such it cannot rely on its own resources to satisfy the demands of its clientele.

2. Financial resources of libraries are limited while the output of literature is overwhelming.
3. In depth and systematic coverage of subjects can be covered to promote effective resources.
4. Resources of participating libraries can be harnessed to aid national planning and development.
5. Duplication of materials may be eliminated or at least reduced.

The Kaduna Conference formulated modalities for implementing the scheme as follows:

1. A committee should be set up to implement the scheme
2. A Secretariat for the scheme should be set up at the National Library of Nigeria.
3. A combination of options should be adopted i.e. co-operation between types of libraries and within the same geographical location.
4. The country should be divided into zones with a library appointed in each zone to serve as the zonal headquarters.
5. Each zone should list materials that are available in its region.
6. The National Union Catalogue (NUC) should be published and made available within the next two years.
7. Shared storage should be divided within the zones.¹⁰

National Implementation Committee on Co operative Acquisition

In accordance with the recommendation of the Conference on Co-operative Acquisition, the National Implementation Committee on Co-operative Acquisition¹¹ was set up under the umbrella of the National Library of Nigeria. The Secretariat of this Committee is housed and financed by the National Library of Nigeria.

The composition of this committee is as follows:

Zonal Co-ordinators

Director, National Library of Nigeria or his nominee

President, Nigerian Library Association

A representative of the Ministry of Science and Technology Libraries and a representative of the National Archives.

The Committee was charged with the following functions:

1. Launching of the co-operative scheme.

2. Subject allocation to Zones.
3. Monitoring progress of the scheme as well as publicising the scheme.
4. Planning action to make the scheme successful.

Implementation

The National Committee divided the country into eight zones as indicated below :

Zones	State Composition	Zonal Headquarters
A	Lagos	University of Lagos Library
B	Bendel, Ondo	Bendel State Library
C	Anambra, Cross River Imo, Rivers	Imo State Library, Owerri
D	Bauchi, Benue, Plateau	University of Jos Library
E	Borno, Gongola	University of Maiduguri Library
F	Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto	Kaduna State Library
G	F.C.T. (Abuja), Kwara, Niger.	University of Ilorin Library
H	Ogun, Oyo	University of Ibadan Library

The Zonal co-ordinators are the heads of libraries or their representatives chosen as Zonal Headquarters. Their role is to initiate and organise activities in their respective zones by involving all libraries so as to ensure the success of the scheme. The zones are to acquire the subjects that have been allocated to them.

Requirements of Libraries Participating in the Scheme :

The National Implementation Committee on Co-operative Acquisition Scheme has prescribed the following guidelines which participating libraries in the scheme are to follow.

These are :

1. To collect in depth in the subject that has been allocated.
2. The books that have been acquired are to be made available to other libraries through inter-library lending.
3. Due to limited financial resources, libraries are expected to purchase only one copy of books within their allocated subject area, although more than one copy would be advantageous.
4. Libraries are to send one author/title card of all its acquisitions to the National Library of Nigeria for the National Union Catalogue and another card for each

acquisition under the scheme to their Zonal Headquarters. They are also to send one card for each expensive material (over 500.00), they acquire to the Zonal Headquarters.

5. Libraries are also to send a complete list of their serial holdings to the National Library of Nigeria to effect the up-dating of the National Serials List.¹²

Launching

The Co-operative Acquisition Scheme in Nigeria was formally launched by the Federal Minister of Education during the 20th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Library Association which was held at Badagry in December, 1982.

The effective date of the take off of the scheme was 1st January 1983.

Attendance at Zonal meetings is very poor. Zone D comprises at least 43 libraries, yet the average attendance at meetings was about 5 last year.

Reports from other zones also indicated that attendance at the meetings was very discouraging.

The Director of the National Library of Nigeria, in a letter dated in December 1982, has appealed to heads of establishments to allow their libraries to participate in the scheme. He also explained the objectives of the scheme and the benefits which it will yield in the letter.

Perhaps this letter may encourage many libraries to play their role with regards to the success of the scheme.

Inter-Library Lending

Resource sharing is more than mere collection and organization of materials. It also involves the process of interchanging the materials and using them in common by those who need them.

Inter-Library Lending in Nigeria has been practised by libraries for more than two decades. An example is the mutual exchange of materials between the University College, Ibadan and the Central Medical Library.¹³

A nation-wide inter-lending programme in Nigeria was initiated by the National Library of Nigeria in April, 1974. The meeting of the Working Group on Inter-Library Lending was held at the University of Ife on April, 24 and 25, 1974 and it was held under the auspices of the National Library of Nigeria.

The meeting examined the viability and implications of a nation-wide inter-library lending programme, with the purpose

of enabling libraries in Nigeria to reach necessary agreement on clearly defined operational guidelines, procedures, finance and others related to the adoption and implementation of the programme.

The meeting made several recommendations which included the following :

1. All libraries should establish inter-library lending units to be responsible for inter-library lending operations.
2. The National Library of Nigeria should establish a National Bibliographic and Lending Centre.
3. The National Library of Nigeria should work on and produce a National Union Catalogue of books and periodicals.
4. A committee should be set up to liaise regularly with the National Bibliographic and Lending Centre and report to all participating libraries.
5. A network of courier services should be set up to supplement the postal system.¹⁴

The National Library of Nigeria acted on the recommendations. It set up the Bibliographic and Lending Centre and appointed an Advisory Committee on Inter-Library Lending which commenced work in 1974. A loan form which may be used by participating libraries was designed and produced in carbonised paper. The national Union Catalogue (NUC) which has been facing problems since 1964, was reactivated.

The objectives of the NUC have been given as follows :

- (1) "To provide information on library holdings and location in order to promote better sharing of resources.
- (2) To assist in limiting duplication to essential materials.
- (3) To produce a printed National Union Catalogue or a Union list which will be useful for inter-library lending".¹⁵

The number of participating libraries in the NUC project is now fifty-eight. There is need for the remaining libraries to embrace it to enable a comprehensive record of publication held by various libraries to be known.

So far the National Library of Nigeria has not been able to produce a printed NUC. In the absence of this, libraries should circulate their accessions lists promptly to other libraries which in one way can advertise the existence of such materials and thereby promoting their being used.

The communication system plays a vital role in inter-lending. Our postal system is however, not at all efficient. It takes weeks for letters to reach their respective destinations. One way of hastening the communication process is by making use of a courier service to link libraries.

The University of Benin in conjunction with the Bendel State library has since 1971, evolved a courier service to Ibadan chiefly to link the two libraries to the book resources at Ibadan, namely the University of Ibadan library and the bookshop of the University of Ife, Ibadan office.¹⁶ There is also a courier service linking the University of Jos library with libraries of Federal University of Technology, Bauchi and Makurdi respectively.

A courier service as an aid to inter-lending has both advantages and disadvantages. A major advantage is speed while a major disadvantage is the cost involved.

Exchange of Materials

One way in which a library can enrich its resources is by exchange of materials or redistribution of materials. Through exchange of publications, materials which are not for sale or not distributed in the usual book-trade channels may be obtained. A library can also use to its advantage its duplicates, as well as its own publications or those of the parent organization, by offering them in return for publications not available in its collection. This to some extent solves the problems of book disposal and the cost of storage to the libraries concerned.

There are various exchange programmes practised by Nigerian libraries both at the local and international levels. Some libraries for example circulate their accessions lists among themselves.

Book Processing Centres

Book processing centres can concentrate on various functions ranging from the time a library selects the materials till the time the materials can be used by the clientele. These activities like ordering, accessioning, cataloguing, classification, lettering etc., can be performed by such centres.

The National Library of Nigeria and the State Libraries presently acquire and process materials for their branch libraries respectively. Also some University libraries in the country do process books centrally for other departmental libraries in the respective universities. It would be an ambitious project to have book centres in the country to be responsible for processing books from the first to last stages for use by the various libraries. Nevertheless a book processing centre in the country which

limits itself to cataloguing and classifying materials may be useful. Perhaps, the National Library of Nigeria may provide the needed leadership here also.

The National library of Nigeria produces the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN) from the publications it receives from publishers on legal deposit. The effectiveness of the NBN is reduced since it is not published on schedule.

This defect may be overcome by the introduction of cataloguing in Publication (CIP) programmes, provided local publishers will co-operate. It is noteworthy to mention that the National Library of Nigeria has started CIP with its own publications.

A major advantage of centralized processing of library materials is that it enables participating libraries to harness their human resources, thereby preventing duplication of efforts. They also free librarians from cataloguing and classification and time saved may be used for public services. Book processing centres enhance the quality of work in technical services and also promote standardization.

A main disadvantage of processing centres is the delay in despatching materials to the participating libraries.

Personnel Development

One major area of resource sharing is in the area of personnel development. We need competent and qualified staff to run library programmes. Staff development programmes may take several forms. Workshops and seminars enable librarians to share their experiences and update their knowledge. For example the seminar on Problems of Cataloguing and Classification in Nigerian Libraries¹⁷ was held at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, from 15th to 20th August 1982.

This seminar afforded the participants the opportunity to learn more about the AACR II among others.

Another example of library co operation and resource sharing among Nigerian Libraries is the Introduction to Librarianship courses for library assistants which are organised by various University libraries in the country. These courses are attended by library assistants from the University libraries and other interested libraries in the area. One of the objectives of this course is "to facilitate mobility of library assistants, with minimum need of retraining, within a library system, or among libraries."¹⁸

Libraries can also improve upon the skills of their staff through attachment programmes. The National Library of Nigeria, Bauchi branch recently attached three of its library assistants to the University Library Federal University of Technology, Bauchi, from 1st to 14th February 1983 to acquire more practical skills.

There are four library schools in Nigeria at the moment. Some of these are the library schools of University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University. These schools have been offering professional and sub-professional courses since their establishment. The schools can help in the continuing education of members of the profession by way of organising workshops, seminars and conference. It should be mentioned that some staff of the library schools have been presenting papers at conferences organised by the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and also participate in the activities of the NLA in general.

Various libraries in the country also recruit staff by involving librarians of other libraries. This is a healthy sign and should continue.

The Nigerian Library Association

The Nigerian Library Association was formally inaugurated in December 1962 in Ibadan. The objectives of the NLA are as follows:

- (1) To foster unity within the profession through meetings and publications.
- (2) To safeguard and promote the establishment of libraries as well as the interests of the profession and its members.
- (3) To promote and encourage library legislations, library co-operation and bibliographical study and research.
- (4) To work for the establishment of standards.¹⁹

The NLA has two publications—the *Newsletter* and the *Nigerian Libraries*. The former is a house journal which is chiefly for internal use by its members while the latter is a learned journal.

The NLA has been organising series of activities like annual conferences, library weeks, workshops and seminars. Such activities afford members of the association the opportunities to interact to share experiences and work out programmes to improve upon library services in the country in particular and that of the international scene in general.

The NLA Annual Conference theme in 1972 was "Library Resources in Nigeria". The theme for December 1982 Annual Conference was "Nigerian Libraries and Technological Develop-

of enabling libraries in Nigeria to reach necessary agreement on clearly defined operational guidelines, procedures, finance and others related to the adoption and implementation of the programme.

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ment" and one of the papers presented was on "Resource Sharing Among Libraries in Nigeria".

Through the Cataloguing and Classification section of the NLA,²⁰ the DT of Library of Congress Classification Schedule has been revised. The revised schedule has been renamed DTA and it is ready for the press. The DTA when it is finally published will help catalogues in Nigeria and outside the country with reference to books on African history.

The NLA has divisions at the state level. Some of the divisions like Lagos and Bendel States divisions are quite active. Lagos division for example, publishes a journal by name **Lagos Libraries**.

Library Statistics

Effective planning, monitoring and evaluation to a large extent depends on reliable and accurate statistical records. There is therefore the need for libraries in Nigeria to keep statistics of various programmes and activities they undertake.

The National Digest of Library Statistics, 1972 was published by the National Library of Nigeria in 1974. It covered the period 1971/72. Not all the libraries in the country surveyed provided detailed answers to questions asked.

The digest revealed that there were 183 professional librarians in the country while the seating capacity of the libraries was 7,272. The libraries held among themselves 1,266,534 volumes of books, 22,612 unbound volumes, 45,395 bound volumes and 6,461 titles of periodicals respectively. The libraries loaned 744,314 books, and 31,008 periodicals to 44,800 registered users. Inter-library lending to other libraries was 4,391 volumes of books, while from other libraries was 2,431 volumes of books.²¹

From the above figures we can for example infer that inter-library lending was not satisfactory. It was therefore not by accident that the National Library of Nigeria sponsored a Working Meeting on Inter-Library Lending at life in 1974 which has been referred to earlier.

The Federal Government accepted UNESCO's Recommendations passed at its 17th General Conference by designating the National Library of Nigeria as a centre to collect, collate, analyze and disseminate library statistics in Nigeria.²²

The National Library of Nigeria sponsored a National Conference on Library Statistics from July 31 to August 3, 1973. Some of the recommendations of the Conference were as follows :

1. An agency should be designated as a collection centre of library statistics.
2. There should be adequate legal provision to enable the agency (The National Library of Nigeria) carry out this function effectively.
3. A National Advisory Committee on Library Statistics be set up.
4. The National Library should collect, analyse, interpret and widely publish library statistics of the country.²³

It is to be noted that most of the recommendations (e. g.) numbers 1, 3 and 4) have been implemented. The Annual General Meetings of the Advisory Committee took place during the Annual Conference of the NLA.

The National Library of Nigeria can only publish the Statistics or Libraries when individual libraries co-operate by keeping accurate records and responding promptly to questionnaire, sent to them by the National Library of Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted on ways in which libraries in Nigeria can pull their resources together through co-operation to provide effective services to their users. The success of such a venture will to a large extent depend on the leadership role of the National Library of Nigeria and the Nigerian Library Association on one hand and the individual and collective contributions of librarians especially head librarians on the other hand.

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Knowledge : Expansion, Explosion & Exploration

—B. Sreepathy Naidu

Origin of Knowledge

In the beginning of the world there was no system of learning and teaching, nor was there any book to read. As such it was not possible for any body to acquire knowledge without receiving instruction from God who was the primary source of all the true knowledge and of all that was known. So God gave His own knowledge for the benefit of all men. God revealed it to the consciousness of four rishis, (inspired seers), namely, Agni, Vayu, Aditya and Angiras in the shape of four Vedas—The Rig Veda, the Yajurveda, the Sama Veda and the Adharva Veda. The word 'Veda' is derived from the root 'Vida', to know, and, therefore, Vedas are the sources of knowledge. The great semetic religions also refer to God as the first Teacher, Man when they say that he taught Adam the names of things.

The Vedas—The Source of True Knowledge

In the Vedas subjects as widely varied as Theology, Sociology, Ethics, Metaphysics, Architecture, Mathematics, Astronomy, Aeronautics, etc., are incorporated. According to Prof. Max-Mueller, the great German scholar, the Vedas will take and maintain for ever the position as the most ancient of books in the library of mankind. In the Vedic age the people worshipped at the shrine of the 'word' with reverence for it contained the germ of Divinity. The ancient sages and even modern Indian scholars maintain that the Vedas contain the seeds of all true knowledge. According to Yagnavalkya there are fourteen vidyas (branches of knowledge) which are included in the Vedas. Besides these, there are four additional subjects, namely Ayurveda or science of life including medicine, Dhanurveda or military science, Gandharva Veda or science of music and Atharva Veda or science and practice of mechanical arts, also called Shilpa Vidya. The chief aim of the Vedas is to teach the mankind.

Division of Vedas

In India recording of knowledge started much earlier than in any other countries. The history of India in the story of the ancient civilization of the world. Humanity like individual started classifying knowledge even in its very infancy. This is