CHAPTER SIX

Library Setbacks

--

Eguavoen, O. E. L.
Law Librarian, Faculty of Law

&

Akande, S. O. (Ph.D)
Faculty of Education Librarian

Preamble

The aim of any organization is to develop and move with the trend of time in order to remain relevant and productive for enhanced effective service delivery. These lofty ideals are often characterized by certain factors which culminate in setbacks thereby jeopardizing progressive tendencies of the system. Library setbacks are challenges, problems as well as failures of attempts aimed at bringing about drastic development in library and information services in Nigeria in particular and the world at large. Recent years have witnessed considerable progress in the area of globalization of library and information services. Although there has been a considerable increase in the infrastructure of the education sector, the goal of providing basic education to all still remains a distant dream. In the changing scenario, there is a growing need to realize the importance of libraries in fulfilling the mission of "Education For All by A.D. 2020." Hence, our policy planners need to deliberate on this issue of utmost importance. This paper will examine library setbacks in the areas of automation, funding and crime as it relates to Kenneth Dike Library.

Automation

The existence of libraries is basically to provide information services and information-bearing resources to users in the fastest possible time. Libraries create access by providing descriptors that serve as pointers to the vast universe of knowledge. It is a known fact that knowledge is not static since it grows in leaps and bounds. so also the devices for managing the vast growing knowledge. Librarians and information scientists strive to keep pace with the technology for creating access to knowledge and providing easy gateway to needed information. The global trend now is the use of information communications

technology for delivering library services. Kenneth Dike Library is not left behind in this regard (Ola, 2010).

The accelerated adoption and use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) according to Chisenga (2004) has resulted in the globalization of information and knowledge resources. Bibliographic databases, full-text documents, and digital library collections are always available to users in automated libraries. The introduction of automation in libraries implies that all the activities and acquisition prior to the use of computers have to be converted in order to make library services faster, efficient and effective for the benefit of the clientele. Library automation does not imply a situation where computer programs substitute for the intellectually demanding tasks that are traditionally carried out by skilled professionals. These tasks include selection, cataloguing and indexing, seeking for information, reference services, and so on. (Salton and McGill, 1983; Manjunath, 2007)

The process of searching or locating a title is made easier as a result of library automation. Arms (2000) stated that the introduction of automated digital libraries is a continual process, much of it happening outside conventional libraries. He further explained that quality of service in automated digital libraries will not come from replicating the procedures of classical librarianship.

In Kenneth Dike Library, the catalogue or index to the collection forms the base for most of the library activities such as acquisition, reference, bibliographic service, inter-library loan and so on. The users of library card catalogue will appreciate how fast the retrieval, search and printing in automated environment is. If the same system is available in network environment, users can have simultaneous access to the same database.

A very handy technology available for KDL is the CD-ROM products which can be considered as the third level. The development of CD-ROM collection not only conserves space but also provides multi-user access in a network environment. There are many self-tutorial CD-ROMs available with multi-media effect. The incidence of mutilation of library materials will reduce drastically with availability of CD-ROM. Hence libraries with high incidence of mutilation of materials will benefit from such electronic products. Also people embarking on empirical research can download data and directly take them to other software platforms for analysis and graphic presentation.

Automated libraries will provide users with equivalent services that are fundamentally different in the way that they are delivered. For example, within the foreseeable future, computer programs are unlikely

to be much good at applying the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules to monographs. But cataloguing rules are a means to an end, not the end itself. They exist to provide services to users, notably information discovery. Automatic methods for information discovery may not need traditional cataloguing rules. The criterion for evaluating the new methods is whether the users find the information that they require.

As an information provider, KDL is acquiescent to recent developments and changes in its approach to information service delivery (Ola, 2010). Since change represents a strategy to the achievement of goals, and not an end in itself, the library believes that targeted goals should represent the shared value of the institution and product of change which should be pursued with all sincerity. In pursuance of meaningful change, the need to improve the research capacity of the individual academics and the professional credibility of the faculty, and being aware of the fact that as users develop their information literacy skills and increase their reliance on the internet as a research tool, it must constantly evolve and employ new technologies for information and dissemination so as to remain relevant and attractive, the library has integrated the virtual dimensions to library and information services.

Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) started its automation in the 1970s experimenting with the serials. In 1993, KDL adopted CDS/ISIS software that was developed and distributed freely by UNESCO. Although the software has a dynamic feature that makes it flexible and customizable which could be tailored to specific needs, according to Ola (2010) in *KDL News*, the enormity of KDL records made it necessary to migrate to a software with modules and integrated features.

Retrospective Conversion in KDL

The need to reconvert old records in the library became imperative in order to make On – line Public Access Catalogue meaningful and robust. It is in the recognition of this fact that The Kenneth Dike Library management decided to set up retrospective conversion team to facilitate the conversion of manual catalogues to electronic form. However, lofty as these ideas sound, it was faced with certain constraints which brought about setbacks in the project. According to Faniran, Eguavoen and Adeyemi (2002), some of the difficulties that militated against timely completion of the first phase of the re-conversion project were inadequate staffing, lack of adequate finance, technical problems as well as erratic power supply. Eguavoen (1999) also noted political problems and lack of procedural plan in addition to the above mentioned problems encountered during the re-conversion exercise in KDL.

Faniran and oyemakinde (2000) reported various efforts made by KDL in the past to facilitate automation. According to them, the library prepared the serials catalogue using the main frame computer that was available in the university at that time, and this exercise was completed in 1978. However, the library at that time had no computers and could therefore not carry out meaningful conversion of library materials hence BNA was invited to assist in:

- creating on magnetic tapes, a machine readable database of both bliss collections also referred to as "re-class" and LC collections called "current cataloguing",
- maintaining an up to date record for the library,
- providing one card each for the shelf-lists as well as one card each for revision purposes on Bliss and LC records and,
- preparing cards for the library record and the National Union Catalogue (NUC)

The BNA crew of two arrived Ibadan in 1975 with their equipment and started work by microfilming the shelf list catalogues with the assistance of KDL staff. At the end of this exercise, they went back to United States where they continued the reconversion exercise. In order to standardize the records being reconverted by BNA, a list of modifications to LC classification in class H (Social Sciences) and class L (Education) was compiled and sent to BNA to update their records. This project eventually stopped at the microfilming stage and according to Oyemakinde (1979), only 2,412 records on microfiche catalogue were received from BNA as at March 1978 out of over 500,000 records microfilmed. The failure of this attempt made the KDL Management to consider other options and made further efforts to ensure the success of the reconversion project.

Networking in Libraries

Networking is the linkage of working procedures for the exchange of information resources. Presently, the term "computer network" is used in place of "resource sharing" or cooperative systems. Resource sharing or networking is defined as a mode of operation, whereby information resources are shared by a number of participants having the same objectives in mind. Thus, the user of one library can have his requirements fulfilled by another library if the local library fails to serve his needs. Some of the essential prerequisites for effective resource sharing include:

- possession of shareable resources by the participating libraries;
- willingness to share the resources;
- a planned mechanism of sharing;
- precise understanding of the use and information potential of their respective collections; and,

4

- common bibliographic access to the collections of the participating libraries.

KDL, with good budgets or collections cannot have enough resources to be self sufficient. In fact, interdependence has now become a way of life. In recent years we have witnessed the establishment of a great number of networks around the globe through which technology is utilized to facilitate a vast flow of information. This ultimately will enable and support applications which influence people's daily lives. The major factors which have created the need for networking include the rise in the cost of publications, a lack of funds and adequate manpower, and the geographical dislocations of libraries, *i.e.*, the fact that libraries are now located in remote and far flung areas.

The ultimate aim of networking is to achieve maximum results with minimum input. This is clearly consonant with the nature of our economy, in which capital is scarce. Networking is inevitable in all types of libraries, for it enables users to have access to the resources of many other libraries, in addition to their own. The benefits which accrue from resource sharing are the following:

- preparation of union catalogues;
- preparation of the cataloguing data/catalogue cards for publications available in network libraries;
- provision of bibliographies;
- optimum utilization of rare collections;
- cooperative exchange and distribution and storage of documents;
- savings - of both technical work and collections;
- reduction in the cost of library services, in the long run; and,
- above all, the provision of more materials at low cost and in less time.

Against all odds, Nigeria has made rapid strides in recent decades in the field of telecommunications via satellite and microwave links. Networking systems have been developing fast at local, state, national, regional, and international levels all over the world since the 1990s. In order to keep pace with the world, the Nigerian government has developed its own networking systems via NIGER-SAT-COM-1. Surprisingly, the government does not consider libraries for a high priority. Thus, libraries have to plan their acquisitions keeping in mind the resources available in other libraries in the area, so that they can get the maximum number of books and publications which are not available in their vicinity. In the past few years, considerable progress has taken place in the planning and building of library and information networks.

Constraints of Networking

There are several constraints in networking Kenneth Dike Library and its affiliated libraries. Very obvious among them are those imposed by improper project planning, lack of stable technical staff, finance and negative attitude of some leaders towards automation of the library. The resultant effect of these problems is the slow pace in accomplishing the full automation project of the library. Part of the automation problems encountered in the library was as a result of the improper network topology adopted for the network design of its Local Area Network (LAN). The library started with a Bus topology of its LAN but later migrated to STAR topology when it was obvious that the network design was not appropriate for use in the library as evident in the myriads of problems associated with its use. Fatoki (2004) identified incessant disconnections as one of the numerous problems that made BUS topology to be grossly inefficient.

Lack of stable technical staff was another major setback in the automation endeavour of the library. The library had serious problem in retaining its system analysts who after working for sometime disengaged from the university service in search for greener pastures. This category of the library staff felt that they were being underpaid when compared with their colleagues in other sectors of the economy like Banks, Oil Companies, Telecommunication Companies etc. who received salary and allowances far better than they were paid in the university. Staffing problem in Kenneth Dike Library is directly linked to lack of funds. The inability of the library to satisfy the technical staff in remuneration made the library to lose them. A serious setback was experienced in the library whenever these technical staff left with their expertise. The passive role played by some library heads due to their negative attitude towards the library automation project is another significant setback suffered by the library. These set of staff were so used to the manual operations that they felt changing to comply with the new technological global order was both humanly impossible and technically infeasible. Their actions were direct consequences of their value judgment and beliefs. Perhaps, it could be said at this juncture that automation and networking of libraries are still in their formative stages in KDL. Their full impact on libraries and library resources would be known in the course of time.

Generally speaking, University libraries in Nigeria still have a dilemma as to whether or not resource sharing is possible through networking. Below are some of the problems faced by the libraries:

- information infrastructure is not up to date and there is a lack of trained manpower;
- lack of effective networking and communication technology;

- tardy implementation of proposed networks;
- lack of uninterrupted power supply;
- lack of foreign exchange for importing proper hardware; and,
- technological backwardness, with a wide gap between Nigeria and developed countries.

Funding

The downturn in the economy has taken its toll on libraries. Even in the best of times, most libraries have to work with budgets that are barely adequate to support their essential activities. In these recent months, the recession has subtracted significant funds from the parent organizations of many libraries: city, county, and state governments; public and private colleges and universities; schools; and corporations. In the sphere of libraries, some have faced drastic budget cuts, including givebacks in their current fiscal cycle; others have been more lightly touched, facing only a year or so of zero-growth budgets.

Kenneth Dike Library, long supported by government and various organizations like other university libraries have seen a decline in monetary support for several decades, due to various influences. The faltering national economy has devastated library funding in recent years as a result of fallen tax collections and a legislated reduction in education funding. The library has to find new sources of income in order to keep them operational.

The problem of funding experienced in Kenneth Dike Library over the years has significant cumulative effect on the library resources and service delivery. It is therefore necessary to mention some of the negative effects of drastic cut in the budgetary allocations to the library. The microform and microfilm readers kept in the microfilm room in the library were destroyed in 1997 due to poor cooling condition under which they were kept. This actually resulted from poor funding in the 1980's. Similarly, the library also experienced a massive deterioration of manuscripts and other rare materials acquired in the 1950s through 1970s because the materials were kept in very unfriendly environment. To salvage the printed materials of research and historical value from further deterioration, the library is making frantic effort to digitize its resources like Manuscripts, Theses, and Africana Collections. The first step towards this direction is the recent acquisition of digitization machines and the scanning of the manuscripts in the digitization chamber recently created in the library. A successful execution of the digitization project in the library would prolong the lifespan of the materials and at the same time provide a platform for online access of the library collections.

The problem of funding is also manifested in the area of staffing. The university finds it difficult to replace the staff that had disengaged or retired from the university service. Consequent upon this, some

7

units in the library are understaffed and unable to function maximally and satisfactorily. This accounts for disorganized shelves and general tardiness in the library. The sections mostly affected in this regard are the photography, reprography and bindery where activities are almost paralyzed due to lack of staff. In fact, photography is no longer in existence in the library while reprography and bindery are at the verge of extinction.

The inadequate seating space in the main library is another critical issue to look at in the context of library setbacks. The library has not grown for several decades in terms of physical structure. The increase in the number of users is not commensurate with the available facilities. This has brought about a lot of pressure on the existing facilities and infrastructure to the point of disintegration and collapse. Students' enrolment for the past five years in the university excluding those on Distance Learning Programme is 187,006. These students and those on part-time programmes, usually struggle to make use of the available resources in the library which are grossly inadequate.

The cost of creating, maintaining and upgrading electronic hardware, networks and resources has put a strain on KDL budgets while the cost of printed matter, such as books and magazines has risen over time, yet funding has remained either on the decline or, at best static. UNESCO's recommendation that 26% of the annual national budget be allocated to education, has never been complied with as government has always budgeted paltry sum to the sector, which is hardly sufficient for meaningful development to take place in the sector or to adequately equip libraries in institutions.

Sources of Funding

The statutory allocation to library is 10% of the total over-head cost. This allocation is far from being adequate in meeting the needs of the library. MacArthur Foundation fund over the past few years (which has however ended) contributed immensely to the growth of Kenneth Dike Library. Another main source of funding is through Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) even though it is usually small. The truth is that the library is grossly under-funded.

Most libraries routinely find ways to execute any given project with the lowest cost and the greatest impact possible. KDL is a frugal organization used to making every kobo count. Today's environment requires responses that go beyond even the strictest frugality, prompting a strategic reassessment of how a library allocates its resources. In this context, technology and automation may well be wise investments that help maintain the library's mission in times of diminishing resources.

8

The economy may drive a shift in the dynamics between the library's physical and virtual presence. Unfortunately, many libraries have been forced to close facilities and reduce hours open to the public. The decrease in the physical accessibility of the library should spark interest to improve the quality of the library's website and to ensure that it delivers more content and services. In an environment where the library must make large savings in operations and personnel resulting in less availability of the physical facilities, a modest investment in electronic content and the technology to deliver it efficiently can help offset the loss.

Hard times can fuel innovation. In spite of the gross inadequacy of funds, KDL still finds means of forging ahead by prudent management of the available resources. While it is important for KDL to maintain current hardware and software infrastructure, acquiring and installing off-the-shelf software applications doesn't extend the state of the art or posit new methodologies that might be of use to other libraries. Faced with diminishing financial resources, an organization may find itself more able to look beyond the standard tried-and-true technology tools and practices to produce creative solutions that it otherwise would not have considered. This aptly describes the situation in Kenneth Dike Library over the years.

Crime and anti-social behaviors in the library

Library crimes are acts or omissions which are contrary to the rules and regulations guiding the use of library by the users. These rules and regulations are usually contained in a pamphlet called the library guide. The rules are set up to ensure orderliness as well as meticulous and efficient use of library resources and services. There are usually penalties set down for the defaulters of library guidelines and because of the light nature of the punishments, the crimes have been on the increase. This has posed a lot of challenges to Kenneth Dike Library and it has been a major setback to the growth and development of the library.

Some examples of library crime or anti-social behaviours as contained in the library guide are book theft, book or material mutilation and defacing, late return of library materials on loan, avoidance of library registration, use of handsets, noise making, hoarding of library materials, violation of copyright rules through unapproved photocopying and so on. The penalties vary from paying a token as fine to suspension from library depending on the nature and magnitude of the offence.

The negative effects of these on the growth and development of the library cannot be under estimated. For instance, if a library user fails to register in the library, it will be pretty difficult to get accurate

information on users which provide vital statistics for planning. This hampers development as the areas of needs would not easily be identified.

Conclusion

It is obvious from the foregoing that a lot of constraints are responsible for setbacks in Kenneth Dike Library right from its inception to date. It could be seen that dynamic efforts and policies were made at one point or the other to promote and enhance library services in spite of various constraints in funding, staffing, automation and library crimes. It is in spite of all these odds that Kenneth Dike Library has been turning challenges to opportunities which now yield astonishing results as the library has greatly improved in its automation efforts with state of the art ICT facilities.

Reference:

Arms, Wlliam Y (2000). Automated Digital Libraries: How Effectively Can Computers Be Used for the Skilled Tasks of Professional Librarianship? *D-LIB Magazine*. July/August vol. 6 number 7/8

Eguavoen. O.E.L. (1999). Retrospective Conversion in Academic Libraries: the case of Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. *African Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology and Sport Facilitation* 1(1)

Eguavoen. O.E.L and Adeyemi, B.M. (2003), Automation in Libraries Retrospective Conversion Exercise. In: *E.C. Madu (Ed) Technology for Information Management and Services. Ibadan: Evi-Coleman publications. pp 31-40.*

Faniran,A. Eguavoen,O.E.L and Adeyemi,B.M. (2002) The OPAC: Kenneth Dike Library Reconversion Project. *Nigerian Libraries: Journal of the Nigerian Library Association*, 36(2)

Faniran A. and Oyemakinde, A. (2000) Retrospective Conversion of Card Catalogue to Machine Readable Form: The Ibadan University Library Experience. *NLISR* 18(1&2)

Fatoki. O.C.   (2000). Library Automation in Nigeria: The Kenneth Dike Library Experience. *Lagos Journal of Library & Information Science*. 2(2):111 – 118

Herbert Van de Sompel and Hotchstenbach, P (1999). Reference linking in a hybrid library environment, part1: frameworks for linking; *D-Lib Magazine.* <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april99/van_de_sompel/04van_de_sompelpt1.html>http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april99/van_de_sompel/04van_de_sompel-pt2.html (Accessed 2010, December 31)

Ola, C.O. (2010). The development of virtual integrated library system software for managing library resources in University of Ibadan. *KDL News: a biannual publication of the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan,* Nigeria, 1(1)

Oyemakinde, A. (1979) Automation at Ibadan University Library. *Program* 13(3).