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Ismail Abdullahi, A. Y. Asundi, C. R. Karisddappa (Eds)

LIS EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

THE ROAD AHEAD

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LIS EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Road Ahead

Edited on behalf of IFLA by
Ismail Abdullahi, A. Y. Asundi and C. R. Karisiddappa

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Abiola Abioye

9. Enhancing Library and Information Science Education through Cross-border Collaboration

The Experience of University of Ibadan, Nigeria and University of Ghana

Abstract: Collaboration has been widely acknowledged as a potent tool for meeting the challenges of library and information science (LIS) education. Collaboration is forged not only among LIS institutions within national boundaries but also across borders. While collaboration is known to have been well developed in the developed countries of Europe and North America and is,indeed, advancing the cause of LIS education, not much seems to have been done in developing countries, particularly those in the West African region. Nigeria and Ghana are two West African countries with strong historical ties. They share, among others, a common colonial experience which culminated in the establishment of the University of Ibadan,Nigeria and the University of Ghana in the same year (1948) as affiliate colleges of University of London. The University of Ibadan's Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies and the University of Ghana's Department of Information Studies are notable centres of LIS education in West Africa. While the Ibadan LIS department started as the Institute of Librarianship in 1959 and admitted its first batch of six students in 1960, the Ghana LIS department evolved from the Ghana Library School established in 1961 under the auspices of Ghana Library Board. The two LIS departments have since been in the forefront in the development and sustenance of LIS education in West Africa. In view of their unique position and the long-standing relationship, what is the level of collaboration between them? This is what this study investigated. A survey research design was adopted with questionnaire and semi-structured interview with faculty in the two LIS institutions as instruments for data collection. Based on the findings and in the light of experiences in other parts of the world, recommendations are made towards improving collaboration in LIS education in theregion.

Keywords: Collaboration, West Africa, LIS Schools, West African Library Association

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Introduction

Library and information science (LIS) education plays a significant role in the production of high-quality LIS professionals who occupy a unique position in national development. LIS professionals are gatekeepers and brokers of information which is essential for knowledge acquisition, decision-making and national development. The success of libraries, archives and information centres in effectively meeting their obligation of information provision hinges, in part, on the development of skilled manpower. Trained personnel, according to Korsah (1996) are a key requirement in library and information work. In this respect, LIS education plays a vital role (Edegbo, 2011). Although early LIS professionals, particularly librarians, did not undergo any formal training (Wikipedia 2013), the modern-day challenges of library and information work require that personnel should be well trained and educated to make for effectiveness. Melvil Dewey, the famous proponent of the Dewey Decimal Classification system, was said to have established the first library school in the United States in 1887 at Columbia University (Wikipedia 2013). In Europe, the library school established in Barcelona in 1915 is reputed to be the oldest library school in that continent. Many other library schools were said to have been established during the Second World War. In Africa, however, South Africa is credited with the longest history of LIS in the continent dating from 1938 (Ocholla 2008, 467). In West Africa, the earliest formal training in librarianship consisted of short courses organised by practising librarians and these were aimed solely at preparing the participants for the British Library Association examinations (Ojo-Igbinoba 1995, 218) which then constituted the only gateway for aspiring librarians (Ahmed 2012, 4, citing Aguolu and Aguolu 2002). One such course took place in Achimota College, Gold Coast (now Ghana) in 1944 (Ahmed 2012, 4) and it drew participants from various West African countries including Nigeria. This appears to be the earliest evidence of the strong historical link between Ghana and Nigeria in the education and training of LIS professionals. In the same vein, when the Centre for Archival Education in English-speaking Africa was established in Ghana in 1976, Nigerians involved in archival work were trained at the Centre (Abioye 2008).

The West African Library Association (WALA) played a major role in the establishment of the first LIS School in Nigeria. In 1956, WALA solicited the support of Carnegie Corporation of New York to develop its headquarters. In reaction to this request, Harold Lancour was commissioned to study the library situation in West Africa and advised on intervention strategy for its development. The report of the study, popularly known as The Lancour Report, established training needs and recommended the establishment of a library school at the then University College, Ibadan (Ojo-Igbinoba 1995, 218). Thus, Ibadan LIS School was estab-

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lished in October 1959 with a grant from Carnegie Corporation. It, however, took off in1960 with its first batch of six students in the University Library where it was housed until 1965 when it moved to the Faculty of Education due to space constraint occasioned by increased numbers of staff and students. The evolution of the School over the years is highlighted in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Evolution of Ibadan LIS School (Source: Departmental Prospectus and Fieldwork)

Name of Department	Period	Available Programme
Institute of Librarianship	1960–1970	Diploma in Librarianship
Dept of Library Studies	1971–1985	Master in Library Studies
Dept of Library, Archival and Information Studies	1986 to date	Diploma in Library Studies (Distance Learning Programme) Bachelor of Library (now Bachelor of Library and Information Studies) Master in Library Studies (now Master in Library and Information Studies) Master in Archival Studies (now Master in Archives and Records Management) Master in Health Information Management Programme Master in Publishing and Copyright Studies PhD in Library and Information Studies, Records Management, Publishing

The University of Ghana LIS School started as Ghana Library School in 1961 under the auspices of the Ghana Library Board. It moved to the University of Ghana in 1965 and became the Department of Library Studies. Its evolution over the years is presented in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Evolution of Ghana (Legon) LIS School (Source: Department's website)[1]

Name of Department	Period	Available Programme
Ghana Library School	1961–1964	Associateship-level programme of the British Library Association
Dept of Library Studies	1965–1975	Sub-degree programme in librarianship

1 http://www.ng.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=1183 and http://www.ng.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=629 (Accessed on 29 March 2013).

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Name of Department	Period	Available Programme
Dept of Library and Archival Studies	1976–2000	Two sub-degree programmes in librarianship and archives administration Two graduate diploma programmes in librarianship and archives administration An MA library studies programme
Dept of Information Studies	2001 to date	Diploma programmes in librarianship and archives administration Bachelor of Arts in Information Studies programme MA/MPhil in information studies PhD in information studies

While Ibadan LIS School is the oldest and perhaps remains the best LIS School in Nigeria, the Ghana LIS School remains the first and the only LIS School in Ghana. The ever increasing need for formally trained LIS professionals to cope with the rapid expansion in library and information services and the continuing yearning for LIS education have led to exponential growth in LIS Schools in Nigeria. Table 9.3 presents the list of accredited LIS Schools in Nigeria as at the time of this study. All the schools have Library and Information Science Approved Programmes, except numbers 3, 22 and 23 whose programmes are Library Science. Accreditation of academic programmes in Nigerian universities is undertaken from time to time by the National Universities Commission which is the regulatory body for university education in Nigeria.

Table 9.3: List of Accredited LIS Schools in Nigeria (Source: Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria)[2]

Serial No	Universities
1	Abia State University, Uturu
2	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi
3	Adeleke University, Ede
4	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
5	Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma
6	Bayero University, Kano
7	Baze University, Abuja

2 http://www.lrcn.gov.ng/LIST%20OF%20ACCREDITED%20LIBRARY%20INSTITUTIONS.pdf (Accessed on 29 March 2013).

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Serial No	Universities
8	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City
9	Benue State University, Markurdi
10	Delta State University, Abraka
11	Federal University of Technology, Minna
12	Federal University of Technology, Yola
13	Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University, Lapai
14	Imo State University, Owerri
15	Kwara State University, Ilorin
16	Madonna University, Okija
17	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa
18	Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode
19	Umaru Musa Ya'adua University, Kastina
20	University of Calabar, Calabar
21	University of Ibadan, Ibadan
22	University of Ilorin, Ilorin
23	University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri
24	University of Nigeria, Nsukka
25	University of Uyo, Uyo

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Challenges of LIS Education

The challenges of LIS education are enormous. These have been identified in the literature to include poor funding (Ocholla 2008), resource limitations (Al-Suqri, Al Saleem and Gharieb 2012), technological change and lack of adequate LIS educators (Okello-Obura and Kigongo-Bukenya 2011), constantly changing landscape of information (Malhan 2011) and the challenges of globalization which require strengthening the LIS curricula and courses to prepare students for the needs of the global employment market (Virkus, 2008).

The challenges of LIS education are particularly acute in Africa where most LIS schools – especially those funded by the government – are faced with the problem of funding, which makes it difficult for them to meet their need for infrastructural facilities. There is also the problem of a weak ICT base, which makes LIS education in some of these LIS schools less responsive to the needs of the society. Ocholla (2008) for instance observed disparities in the nature and level of ICT access and use at different levels and attributed the disparities to both economic and political reasons. The issue of changing student enrolment has also been identified as a critical challenge facing LIS education in Africa (Okello-Obura & Kigongo-Bukenya, 2011). Okello-Obura and Kigongo-Bukenya (2011, 4, citing

Ocholla and Bothma 2007) observed increasing or stable enrolment for LIS with qualification programmes at the expense of library science. This problem may, however, be country- or LIS school-specific, as the reverse seems to be the case for Ibadan LIS School which, over the years, has witnessed increasing student enrolment in library and information studies at the expense of specialized information programmes like records management, publishing and health information management. Equally important is the challenge of continuing education for LIS faculty, as the quality of the products of LIS schools, to a large extent, depends on the quality of LIS educators. In view of the fact that challenges are better addressed through concerted efforts, collaboration among LIS schools has become a potent strategy for overcoming some of the problems associated with LIS education.

Statement of the Problem

Availability of well trained manpower to provide quality library and information services that are required for national development hinges on the quality of LIS education. Provision of quality LIS education, in turn, is dependent on the ability of LIS schools to keep up with and adapt to the changes in the field of LIS education. In doing so, LIS schools are faced with severalchallenges which are better tackled through collaboration. While collaboration is known to be well developed in the developed countries of Europe and North America and is, indeed advancing the cause of LIS education, not much seems to have been done in developing countries, particularly those in West Africa. Nigeria and Ghana have the two oldest LIS schools in the region – the University of Ibadan's Department of Library, Archival andInformation Studies and the University of Ghana's Department of Information Studies. In view of their unique position as notable centres of LIS education in the region, coupled with the long historical ties between Nigeria and Ghana, the two LIS schools are expected to be models in collaboration for the sustenance and advancement of LIS education in the region.However, little seems to be known about collaborative initiatives between them. What then is the nature and extent of collaboration in LIS education between the two LIS schools? This is the focus of this study.

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Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to investigate collaborative activities between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana (Legon) LIS School in the promotion and development of LIS education. Specifically, the study set out to:

1. determine the existence of collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School in LIS education;
2. ascertain the areas or nature and extent of collaboration between the two LIS schools;
3. find out the barriers to collaboration in LIS education between the two LIS schools; and
4. determine the existence of collaboration in LIS education between either of the two LIS schools and other LIS schools outside their respective country.

Literature Review

In view of its strategic importance not only for meeting the challenges but also in promoting LIS education, collaboration has received prominent attention in the literature. It is, therefore,"not a new phenomenon in education for librarianship and information work" (Johnson 2009, 258). The term "collaboration" has been defined in the literature in relation to other terms like cooperation, partnership, networking and alliance (Ocholla 2008; Al-Suqri 2010; Sacchananand 2012). Al-Suqri (2010, 48), for instance, rated as accurate description of the term collaboration the definition of the term 'cooperation' given by Lin (2004). As a matter of fact, Lin (2004, 2) defined cooperation to include network, collaboration and consortium. In the same vein, Ocholla (2008, 469), citing the definition of the Commonwealth of Australia viewed collaboration as "partnership, alliance or network aimed at mutually beneficial clearly defined outcome". In addition Chisita and Abdullahi (2012, 4) cited Dakers (2003) as describing collaboration as a form of cooperation. The tendency, therefore, is for collaboration to be equated with these other terms and used interchangeably (Omotosho and Igiamoh 2012; Osuigwe, Jiagbogu and Osuchukwu 2012).The essence of collaboration among LIS schools is to jointly tackle the problems and challenges of LIS education that are common to them so as to achieve mutually beneficial results. These problems and challenges include shortcomings in resources, expertise and facilities (Al-Suqri 2010), changes in LIS environment (Okello-Obura and Kigongo-Bukenya 2011; Al-Suqri, Al-Saleem and Gharieb 2012), funding which is short of the modern-day

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requirements of LIS schools (Ocholla 2008) and shortage of manpower with requisite skills and competencies (Malhan 2011).

The requirements of the global LIS market demand that products of LIS schools be adequately equipped with desired skills and knowledge that will enable them operate in a new LIS environment. The tremendous potentials of LIS education also require that LIS schools have strong infrastructural base and this is lacking in some of the LIS schools in Africa. Collaboration is, therefore, a strategic means of tackling some of these problems. The dawn of the digital age and the constantly changing global outlook make collaboration inevitable (Kajberg 2009). Collaboration in LIS education may be local, regional or international. Local collaboration is the one existing among LIS schools within defined national boundaries while regional collaboration can exist among LIS schools in a particular region of the world. International collaboration exists among LIS schools across national boundaries and it has been described by Johnson (2009, 258) (citing Jefferson's 1977 book *Library Cooperation*) as "a natural extension of national cooperation". Cross-border collaboration, therefore, exists among LIS schools located in different countries. It can be regional or international. Collaboration among LIS schools thrives in the presence of certain critical success factors.These have been identified in the literature to include formal commitment among partners (Ngulube and Sibanda 2006), quality, credit, awareness, legitimate authorization, academic culture and funding (Chisita and Abdullahi 2012). Sacchanand (2012, 11) rolled up successful collaboration factors into "3PC" strategies which are Policy, People, Process and Communication, Commitment, Credibility. Johnson (2009, 261–262) particularly enumerated the success actions to include the following:

- evaluating the potential for collaboration before entering into a commitment;
- understanding the prospective partner's capacity, motivation for the collaboration and the sense of shared purpose;
- recognizing political and other realities;
- creating an enabling environment with incentives and resources to collaborate;
- creating trust in the partnership and developing mutual respect and a shared culture; and
- identifying the key individuals to "champion" the collaboration – both students and staff.

It is by taking cognizance of these success factors and building them into the planning process that collaboration can achieve some measure of success. Collaboration among LIS schools can be in several areas of LIS education. These include teaching, research, curriculum development, research supervision and

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publications (Ocholla 2008). Other areas of collaboration identified in the literature include LIS faculty and student exchange, conferences and workshops, shared online resources, quality control initiatives (Al-Suqri, Al Saleem and Gharieb 2012) and academic exchanges such as academic meetings, exchange visits and research papers (Fan 2006). Whether at the institutional or individual faculty level, collaboration can also exist in oral examination of research students, knowledge sharing and industrial training supervision.

Methodology

Taking a cue from Al-Suqri, Al Saleem and Gharieb (2012), a qualitative research method was adopted for the study since the essence is to investigate the experiences of the targeted LIS schools in collaboration in LIS education. A questionnaire was designed, copies (eight in number) of which were administered to LIS faculty in each of the two LIS schools. This step was taken to enable the researcher to capture the views of a cross-section of LIS faculty, particularly the senior and experienced faculty who might not necessarily be the heads of the LIS schools. The researcher had face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the head of Ibadan LIS School and two other senior faculty members and personally administered the questionnaire in Ibadan where he was based. Contact was made with the head of Ghana LIS School by email and copies of the questionnaire were administered to the faculty there by the same means. Discussions with the heads of the LIS schools were noted and their content analysis undertaken. Of the sixteen copies of the questionnaire administered, nine were completed and returned. Data collected with the questionnaire were analysed based on the research questions, using SPSS. Relevant records were also consulted online and offline.

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Findings and Discussion

The findings of the survey are presented and discussed under the following headings:

1 Staffing Level of the LIS Schools

The staffing level of the LIS schools is presented in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4: Staffing Level of the LIS Schools

Cadre	Ibadan LIS School	Ghana LIS School
Professors	3	3
Associate Professors/Readers	1	0
Senior Lecturers	3	5
Lecturer I	1	1
Lecturer II	4	Not Applicable
Assistant Lecturers	0	3
Graduate Assistants	0	1
Total	**12**	**13**

The finding as shown in Table 9.4 indicated a low level of staffing for academic positions in the two LIS schools. The staffing situation becomes more serious and worrisome in view of the number of academic programmes run by the schools as indicated in Tables 9.1 Table 9.2.

The major findings of the survey are presented in Table 9.5.

Table 9.5: Simple percentages showing responses from the respondents on collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School

S. No.	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)
	Existence of collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School		
1	There is collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School	5(55.6)	4(44.4)
	Areas of collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School		
2	Collaboration exists in the area of :		
	a) Research	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)
	b) Student exchange	0 (0)	9 (100)
	c) Staff exchange	0 (0)	9 (100)
	d) Staff development	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)
	e) Teaching visitation(sabbatical/visiting lecturership)	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)
	f) Student visit	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)
	g) Industrial training (IT) supervision	0 (0)	9 (100)
	h) Post-doctoral fellowship	0 (0)	9 (100)

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S. No.	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)
	i) Joint conferences, seminars and workshops	0 (0)	9 (100)
	j) Joint publication of books	0 (0)	9 (100)
	k) Joint publication of journal articles	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)
	l) Research supervision	0 (0)	9 (100)
	m) Research examination (orals)	5 (55.6)	4 (44.4)
	n) Distance teaching	0 (0)	9 (100)
	o) Quality management in research and teaching	0 (0)	9 (100)
	p) Accreditation of courses	0 (0)	9 (100)
	q) Curriculum development	0 (0)	9 (100)
	r) Knowledge sharing	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)
	Collaboration with other LIS School outside the country		
3	There is collaboration with other LIS schools outside the country	**3 (33.3)**	**6 (66.7)**
	Barriers to collaboration		
4	Barriers to collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School are:		
	a) Absence of a formal policy	8 (88.9)	1 (11.1)
	b) Lack of/inadequate funding	6 (66.7)	3 (33.3)
	c) Bureaucracy	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)
	d) Distance	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)
	e) Lack of commitment on the part of collaborating partners	6 (66.7)	3 (33.3)
	f) Lack of motivation		
	g) Weak information and communication technology	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)
	infrastructure	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)
	h) Lack of relevant professional skills		
	i) Shortage of manpower	0 (0)	9 (100)
	j) Absence of requisite government support	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)
		4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)

Existence of Collaboration between Ibadan and Ghana LIS Schools

The majority of the respondents (5 or 55.6%) claimed that collaboration existed between the two LIS schools in LIS education while the remaining respondents (4 or 44.4%) denied the existence of any such collaboration. Interviews conducted, however, revealed that the existing collaboration between the two LIS schools was at the informal and individual faculty level.This finding is similar to that of Al-Suqri Al-Saleem and Gharieb (2012) in the Gulf region.

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1 Areas of Collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School

The main areas of collaboration in LIS education between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School identified by the majority of the respondents (5 or 55.6) were oral examination of research students and knowledge sharing (identified by 4 or 44.4% of the respondents). Other less visible areas of collaboration in which the respondents (3 or 33.3% and 2 or 22.2%respectively) claimed that collaboration existed between the two LIS schools were student visits and teaching visitation, particularly sabbatical. Interviews conducted, however, revealed that collaboration in student visits and sabbatical had been one-sided, the movement being from Ibadan to Ghana and not vice versa. A negligible percentage of the respondents (11.1%) claimed that collaboration also existed between the two LIS schools in research, staff development and joint publication of journal articles. Interviews conducted also indicated academic assessment of faculty members for the purpose of promotion as another area of collaboration between the two LIS schools.

2 Collaboration with other LIS Schools outside the Country

The majority of the respondents (6 or 66.7%) claimed that no collaboration existed in LIS education between their LIS schools and other LIS schools outside Nigeria and Ghana while the rest of the respondents (3 or 33.3%) agreed that such collaboration existed. The respondents in the latter category cited the examples of the exchange visit between Nigeria LIS School and the School of Oriental and African Studies, University College London and the collaboration between Ghana LIS School and the Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana on external examination. They also claimed that collaboration existed between Ghana LIS School and School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University College,London in research, curriculum development and review of teaching methods.

3 Barriers to Collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School

The respondents identified as the major barriers to collaboration between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School absence of a formal policy (8 or 88.9%), lack of or inadequate funding (6 or 66.7%) and lack of commitment on the part of

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collaborating partners (6 or 66.7%). Other barriers that the respondents claimed confronted collaboration between the two LIS schools were lack of motivation (4 or 44.4%), shortage of manpower (4 or 44.4%), absence of requisite government support (4 or 44.4%), bureaucracy (3 or 3.33%), weak ICT infrastructure (2 or 2.22%) and distance (1 or 11.1%). The finding in respect of this research question is consistent with those of Ocholla (2008), Al-Suqri (2010), Al-Suqri, Al-Saleem and Gharieb (2012) and Sacchanand (2012).

Conclusion

Although collaboration has been widely acknowledged as a potent means for meeting the challenges of LIS education, Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School which have existed for about fifty years as the leading LIS schools in West Africa have not been shining examples in cross-border collaboration in the region. Not much, at the moment, is being done to foster collaboration between the two LIS schools in LIS education despite the high level of awareness of the potentials of collaboration among faculty members in the two LIS schools. The barriers to collaboration between the two LIS schools are legion but not insurmountable, particularly with the absolute commitment of the two partnering institutions at both the formal and informal levels.

Recommendations

Since collaboration presents immense opportunities for growth in LIS education, efforts must be made to promote it. In view of the barriers to collaboration in LIS education between Ibadan LIS School and Ghana LIS School established in this study, the following recommendations are being made toward solving the problems and consequently enhancing collaborative initiatives:

- the heads of the two LIS schools should, as a matter of urgency, meet to work out modalities for collaboration between their institutions;
- a formal policy guiding the relationship is an essential ingredient for a successful collaborative initiative – this should be formulated and implemented;
- collaboration can only thrive in an environment where collaborating partners are committed to the cause; it is, therefore, important for the two LIS schools to show strong commitment rather than pay lip service to the initiative;
- the problem of funding which seems to be the bane of collaboration between the institutions should be addressed. Modalities for funding collaborative

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programmes should be worked out. International organizations and agencies like UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Macarthur Foundation can be approached with good proposals for funding of exchange programmes. The parent institutions of the LIS schools as well as the governments also have an important role to play in funding some of the collaborative programmes of the LIS schools. The schools on their part must also justify the need for funding;

- faculty should be motivated to appreciate and show commitment to collaboration with colleagues across the borders for their career growth and professional development;
- the problem of shortage of manpower in the LIS schools should be addressed by appointing qualified LIS educators to improve the staffing level in the LIS schools.

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