

DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Every school library in the community is unique and different in one way or the other; by the user's needs and services required by those it services, and so, it should be reflected in distribution of its collection. The fundamental roles of the school libraries will be achieved through diversifying and prioritizing collection and services according to the users and the unique community served by the school library. The national education policy, planning and implementation by the government towards development of school libraries in services and resources should be reflected through its general achievement of the education system and national literacy level. Kenya Government policy of 2003 of free primary and secondary education has impacted expansion and usage of school libraries in Kenya.

Currently there are over 15,565 schools both primary and secondary in Kenya of which over 97% are public schools; funded and managed by the government of Kenya. School libraries serve and focus on users who are basically students of the parent institutions through inculcating library culture, accessing and using not only book-based services but also access information on websites through the practical application of ICT in information search, hence laying a firm foundation of national reading culture in the youth. Further, the role of school libraries within the information age context is changing from that of book-based information provider to that of internet service provider and so is the roles of librarians; changing its old-age manual operations of print to print service to that of library networking to facilitate information sharing services and activities fundamentally requires the new dimension of trained manpower in ICT in school libraries. In this paper, Introduction of education system in Kenya development of school libraries in Kenya, number of schools in Kenya, library system in Kenya, the role of school libraries in Kenya and the role of public libraries in Kenya has been discussed.

Keywords: Introduction Of Education System In Kenya, ICT, Universal Basic Education (UBE), Library System In Kenya, Development Of School Libraries In Kenya And The Role Of School Libraries In Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserted that everyone has the right to education. Over 40 years later, it is clear that many people are still being denied this basic human right in most developing countries including Kenya. Indeed, the 1980s saw more backward than forward movement in most countries of the world in both educational and economic sector. It was at that point that a World Conference on Education for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand, for the purpose of forging a global consensus and commitment to

provide basic education for all. Universal Basic Education (UBE) is the program which developed out of that Conference (Dike, 2000).

Before the coming of Europeans, Kenyan societies had their own systems of education. There were no classrooms and no special class of people called teachers. All members of the community were involved in the education of the children. Children learnt cultural traditions and customs of their ancestors from the community as well as specific skills from their families and other specialized individuals through apprenticeship programs. Localized, relevant indigenous knowledge was, therefore, very important in the organization and transmission of knowledge.

The foundation of modern education was laid by missionaries who introduced reading to spread Christianity. They also taught practical subjects like carpentry and gardening which were useful around the missions. The Frazer report of 1909 recommended the establishment of separate educational systems for Europeans, Asians and Africans. This system was maintained until independence in 1963.

President Mwai Kibaki formally launched the free primary and secondary education program in Kenya in 2003; the program is intended to be national, free, and compulsory. Since the introduction of this program international organization, the national, county and local government in Kenya has shown a keen interest in education sector. This can be witnessed from the support of both funding and technical support. Other developments include the publication of a National Policy on Education in 2008, launching Free Primary and secondary Education in Kenya. The goal of this entire program is providing national functional and quality education for all Kenyans irrespective of age, sex, race, religion, occupation, or location.

UBE stresses on providing educational opportunity to all children and the inclusion of girls and women and a number of underserved groups; the poor, street and working children, rural and remote populations, nomads, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, minorities, refugees, and the disabled. The formal educational system is only one of six components included in basic education in the implementation guidelines of the Kenya Government. Others relate to early childhood, literacy and life skills for adults, nomadic population, and non-formal education or apprenticeship training for youth outside the formal education system. In 2000, Kenya's literacy rate was 68.6 percent. The Free primary and secondary education was born from these startling statistics, to promote education among all citizens (Kenya, 2009).

Efforts by governments to promote education and literacy in Kenya have not been very impressive because there was no provision for school libraries in the implementation of these programs. The successful implementation of the UBE has far reaching implications for school libraries. It indicates an expanded vision for school libraries to include not only libraries in primary and secondary schools, but also libraries for early childhood education (in homes, communities, daycare centers and nursery schools), in skills centers for out-of-school youth, in adult education centers, in schools for nomadic peoples. Some of these may take very different forms from traditional school libraries. We must learn to think of school libraries in new ways through integrating the library with the curriculum. In the words of Dike (2003):

The children of Kenya, and all citizens to acquire literacy, must provide impressive cultural development demands that is supported by legislation, policy, and funding. Further, enable the students' accessibility reading materials the abundant and pleasurable reading materials

found in libraries. For Kenya learners to develop skills for lifelong learning, they must be given the opportunities to enquire, to search, to explore, to practice, to solve problems - that are found in libraries and other resource centers. Further, Kenya to introduce students to the world of knowledge and teaching them to handle information in many forms needs the resources of a well-equipped library system. School libraries are basic to the successful implementation of UBE in Kenya.

Education System

School and higher learning institutions in Kenya 2007-2011

Schools in Kenya	2007	2012	Percentage increase
Pre-Primary schools	38,523	39,002	2.5%
Primary schools	27,489	27,567	3.9%
Secondary schools	7,268	7297	0.39%
Teacher training colleges	234	237	1.3%
Technical, industrial and vocational education training	626	629	0.47%
Private universities	25	27	8%
Constituent university colleges	15	23	53.3%
Public universities	7	7	00%
Total	74,172	76,264	2.8%

Kenya's current education system is based on an 8:4:4 structures which provide 8 years in primary education, 4 years of secondary and a minimum of 4 years of university education. Such professional university courses like medicine and architecture take longer than four years. The formal education system is the most widespread in the country, both in terms of resources devoted to it and the proportion of Kenyans involved.

The current enrolment in the entire formal education programs is over 7 million, which is about a quarter of the total population. The primary school is the first level of formal education in Kenya. However, for some children, mainly those in the large urban centers, the primary schooling is preceded by pre-primary education, which though not compulsory, serves as a useful preparatory stage to children from 3 to 5 years. Primary education starts at six years of age and at the end of the eight years of schooling the children sit for the highly competitive national Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination (KCPE). Secondary education constitutes a consolidation and transition between primary education and higher education and training, and world of work. The four years of secondary education are an important stage of physical, intellectual and psychological development when the youth mature into readiness for adult roles. At the end of the four years the students sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and proceed to the university (Kenet, 2008).

University education is the apex of Kenya's formal education and training. Apart from preparing high-level manpower for national development, the universities are also charged with undertaking research, development, storage and dissemination of knowledge. There are over 23 universities in Kenya both public and private offering various courses. Other than the universities, post-secondary education and training is also provided by middle colleges such as the national polytechnics, teacher training colleges, institutes of technology and the

more specialized institutions run by some technical ministries. There are four national polytechnics, which offer certificate, diploma and higher diploma courses in various fields of technical training. Among the middle level colleges there are 17 institutes of technology, which offer mainly diploma and certificate programs. There are also 20 technical training institutes (TTIs), which also offer training in both craft and diploma level. These were formerly secondary technical schools before being upgraded to institute level in 1986 with the advent of the 8:4:4 system of education.

Several government departments through extension services and the literacy programs provide non-formal education for adults. Notable among the government agencies are the Board of Adult Education and the Department of Adult Education in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services which co-ordinate non-formal education activities. There are also non-governmental agencies, which collaborate with the government agencies in the provision of non-formal education. Their educational programs are aimed at enhancing the participation of target communities in projects for the income generating activities, among others.

Education is seen as a fundamental right to every Kenyan and therefore there is a major concern to provide education on the basis of political equality, national unity, social justice and human dignity, equal opportunity for all citizens, irrespective of race, sex religion, or colors; and for equitable distribution of national income and promotion and preservation of the cultural heritage. On the basis of that stated the general goal; it can be established that it prepare and equip citizens to function effectively in their environment and be useful members of the society. Education is therefore expected to foster national unity based on adaptation of the diverse cultural heritage of the people of the country, serve the needs of national development through production of skilled manpower, dissemination of knowledge and inculcation of the right attitudes and relating what is learned to the real problems of the society. FPSE prepares and equips the youth with the knowledge; skills and expertise necessary to enable them play a useful role in national life by engaging in activities that enhance the quality of their lives. Promote social justice and morality by instilling the right attitudes necessary for training in social obligations and responsibilities. Finally to foster, develop and communicate the rich and varied cultures of the country and foster positive attitude and consciousness towards other nations (Kenya, 2007).

School Library Services in Kenya

The school library situation in Kenya is on the whole unimpressive. Only very few schools can be able to employ professional librarians of both certificate and diploma. Out of a total of slightly over three thousand five secondary schools in Kenya, less than 5% have positions for trained Para-professionals. Teacher cum librarians are assigned the responsibility of librarian, however, they do not receive any allowance for their additional responsibilities and the majority has never had formal training in librarianship. In primary school the situation is worse with over 11,756 primary schools in Kenya less than 2% have libraries and to be specific private schools. The running of these libraries is assigned to clerical staff and pupil assistants who manage the affairs of many school libraries. The lack of recognition of the importance of school libraries on the part of the authorities adds to the staffing problem and collection in these institutions. Despite these problems, attempts are being made to mend the situation through implementation of free primary and secondary education policy and in line with national vision 2030. The Ministry of Education through free primary and secondary education policy is gradually realizing the value of school libraries and new library education and training programs are being developed by increasing the per student allocation annually

and development funds to schools; particularly for building libraries and information centers. In the long run, however, the main solution will be to produce teacher-librarians with dual qualifications responsible for management of primary and secondary schools libraries and information sources.

Library Development in Kenya under Free Primary and Secondary Education and UBE

Free primary and secondary education and UBE has four sponsoring bodies: the World Bank, the Department for International Development (DFID), the government of Kenya, county governments, and local governments. Local governments have had less ongoing interest and are not currently contributing to the program. The World Bank provides the Infrastructure; the DFID provides training and capacity building; while the government and the county governments provide matching funds. In 2011, each participating county receives a yearly allocation for program implementation. Each county submits work plans for approval by the World Bank. Funding for library development depends on project priorities of individual participating county. No fixed percentage of funding is allocated to library development. While some county have library development in their project priority list, others, do not.

Effective school library services for the successful implementation of free primary and secondary education and UBE in Kenya hinges on the facilities that support library services for example materials, personnel, and space. UBE implementation guidelines (Kenya, 2003) call facilities (including classrooms, libraries, etc.), "the physical and spatial enablers of teaching and learning." For school libraries to provide an environment for teaching and learning, we must first consider our educational objectives. According to the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1992), basic learning include both tools and content. Tools include literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving, while content includes knowledge and values. The tools and content are needed for lifelong learning and development and quality of life. In Kenya free primary and secondary education; objectives include the acquisition of the basic tools of learning and development of life skills and work aptitude. According to the guidelines, stronger emphasis should be placed on "communication skills, the spirit of enquiry, team-work, information literacy, and computer literacy." These are familiar themes from the education literature and education policy documents. The philosophy that education should be learner-centered, self-directed, active, resource-based, skills-oriented, functional, etc., which brought the school library from the margin to the center of education (Dike, 1993).

The school library is a learning workroom where users interact directly with resources and develop research skills for lifelong learning. School libraries encourage active and participatory lifelong learning. The library environment facilitates teamwork and cooperation, its role in voluntary reading and personal development through literature is well-known.

FPSE and UBE cover learning in school and in other institutions which offer formal education. For this reason, the vision of school library service and facilities must expand. Nursery schools can have libraries, but if government is concerned with the programs for early childhood, it should be concerned with nursery libraries, home libraries and services they offer to community and daycare facilities. School library service for nomadic populations will necessarily be mobile, and serving the basic education needs of out-of-

school adults and youth will require co-operation with public libraries, with school libraries as access points or providing shared facilities.

Functions of Public Libraries

Public libraries occur in variety of societies, in different culture, historical background, technological and at different stages of economic development. However, their service delivery has common characteristics although in a varied contexts in which they operate. They primarily provide resources in a variety of media to meet the both diverse users and their needs. Public libraries represent an indispensable link in the scientific system chain, a vital role link in the development and maintenance of wide range of knowledge innovation and ideas in society and individual level.

The public library is the local center of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavor and imagination. Collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor commercial pressures.

Being an organization established, supported, and funded by the community, public library provides the following functions (UNESCO 1994; Das, 2006):

The public library as the name implies is one that caters to the information needs of the public at large, which means variety individuals with requirement- raging from the supply of simple recreate reading (in the form of newspapers and popular magazines and fiction) to others who have more complex needs of different nature and altogether.

1. **Provide education:** the need for an agency available to all, which provides access to knowledge in printed and other formats to support formal and non- formal education is the reason for the foundation and maintenance of public libraries and remains the fundamental purpose of these institutions. Learning does not end with the completion of formal education but is, for most people, a life-long activity, so public library compliments this provision. This is part of the active support literacy campaigns manifested through public library.
2. **Provide information:** it is a basic human right to be able to access an understanding of information. Being the age of information than ever before in the history of the world, public library has the key role in collecting, organizing and exploiting of information for its users to access it. The wide range of information sources in the present age, public libraries have the particular responsibility to provide access and make them readily available for users. As part of providing information they act as memory of the past by collecting, conserving and providing access to materials relating to the history of the community and of individuals. The vital role of the

public library is to bridge the gap between the information rich and information poor which continues to widen steadily and in every second.

3. **Provide opportunities for personal development:** the vital function of the public library is providing access to major collections of the world's literature and knowledge, including the community's own literature to users for their personal development. This creates an opportunity to develop creativity and pursue new interests on accessing the works of imagination and knowledge. In communities with high illiteracy rates the public library provides the users with information needs on daily survival, social and economic development on basic life skills, adult basic education, and AIDS awareness programs.
4. **Provide by creating and strengthening reading habits in children and young people from early age:** the special responsibility to meet the needs of children and young people, by inspiring through excitement of knowledge. Public library provides works of imagination at early age of users to enrich and enhance their contribution to the society this inculcates the strength and habit of reading.
5. **Cultural development:** Public libraries by working in partnership with appropriate local and regional organizations provides spaces for cultural activity, organizing cultural programs, and ensure that cultural interests are always represented in the library's materials. It should be with variety reflection of cultures represented in the community both in language spoken and read in the local community, support cultural traditions. This will function well on focusing on cultural and artistic development in the community served by the public library.
6. **Social development:** public library as a public space and meeting place functions in particular to the communities its serving, more so where there are few places people to meet, it draws people together. The public library provides information on leisure topics, brings people into informal contact with other members of the community hence a positive social experience.
7. **Function as an agency for change:** Public library acts as an agency for social and personal development and so it is a positive agency for change in the community. The public library impacts economic, social, and political life of individual and the community by providing a wide range of materials to support education and by making information accessible to all. Public library creates a well-informed and democratic society by empowering the people in development and their social lives, by the fact that public library is aware and close to the people issues it serves and provide information to them.
8. **Function as a place for freedom of information:** Public library is able to represent all ranges of human experience and opinion, free from the risk of censorship mostly in a democratic society. Their collection and services are not subjected to any form of ideology, political, or religious censorship, nor commercial pressure. This is basically a human right which is to be upheld by all information managers.
9. **Access to all:** the fundamental function of public library is that its services are made available to all, not directed to one group or community in a given society. Services in their provision are equally available to the minority who for some reason may not be able to use the mainstream services. Both from funding development of services,

design of libraries for (physically challenged) and opening time, are all planned with the concept of universal access as a basic principle. Collections development is also based on this concept of access for all

10. **Provision for local needs:** Public libraries are locally based services for the benefit of the local community by providing information needs and operating within the context of that community. From both services and collection development the focus is on the local needs, which are normally assessed regularly to avoid getting out of touch with those it serves. The library managers should be aware from time to time of the changes in the society arising from social, economic development, demographic changes, and variations in age structure, education and employment.
11. **Local culture:** public library is the local agency of the community, from the collection, preservation and promotion of the local culture in all its diversity. All local historical collections, storytelling, oral tradition and exhibitions are maintained. It's the key agency of local culture to the community it is serving, for the users of that community a priority is information provision.

The emphasis given to any of the above functions will vary greatly according to the place and time of the stated public library. However, with the spread and the dramatic developments in information and communication technology (ICT) together with changing social priorities have led some to question the future of public libraries. During the last few years this rapid and very exciting developments have posed great challenges to public libraries in the ways of information collection, display and access. Many public libraries have responded to the challenge of electronic revolution and taken an exciting opportunity to help bring users to the global conversation. Opportunities and dangers seem to be there, but the service will survive and thrive, so long as it meets the fundamentals requirements of the societies and individuals by keeping the quality that differentiate it from much of the mass, and some of the electronic information providers.

The Fundamental Concept of School Libraries

School libraries are found in both primary and secondary schools, but achieving UBE requires looking more broadly at the concept. The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to successful operational in society and gives students lifelong learning skills develops the imagination, citizenship, critical thinking skills, and the ability to use information in different media (IFLA, 2000). School library collections enrich textbooks and teaching materials. When librarians and teachers work together, students achieve more. School library services serve everyone in the community, including physically challenged individuals, who need special materials and services. Censorship should not be tolerated. The importance of school libraries in literacy, social, and cultural development demands that they be supported by legislation, policy, and funding. School libraries must be free of charge and, if they must share facilities with another library type, the school library's unique needs must be considered (IFLA, 2003).

The school library helps children learn to enjoy reading, learning, and using library resources as lifelong habits, recreation and gives them the opportunity to assess and use information. It exposes them to a variety of thoughts, views, and ideas, and gives them awareness of other cultures. While the following fundamental concepts are taken in to account; Building, information services, recreation, class-room libraries and resources sharing.

Building

Library buildings must house the collection as well as staff and users. A library is more than a building, but appropriate building structures are necessary, because it is difficult to develop a library without appropriate a location. A school library is an important part of a school. The environment is very important: light, ventilation, humidity-control, and relative quiet are essential. Obviously, there must be shelves for books and journals, display racks for magazines, filing cabinets for pamphlets and clipping files, storage for graphic media, audio-visuals equipment, as well as space for viewing and listening to media, and large tables for maps, computer workstations, etc. It should have space for the collection, and should not share space with other non-reading collections.

Information sources

According to Correa (1997) the library is "the place where teachers and pupils come into contact with 'the world', that is, where they acquire the general knowledge which forms the basis for all further learning". Users come to the library in search of information and materials for various purposes. The information sources should include both book and non-book materials. Since learners are more likely to retain and recall with ease a greater percentage of what they hear, see, and manipulate at the same time, emphasis should be placed on media, which enhance such activities. Non-book media in school libraries as audio player/cassettes, video cassettes/player, film projectors, slides, overhead projectors, computers, transparencies, disks, ink, and video compact disc player should be stocked too.

Recreation

Paterson (Elaturoti, 2000) calls the school library a refuge, "a port of call for readers in search of adventure, a tree for children who climb high on the process of discovering life." As such, the school library should be a comfortable, pleasant environment with informal seating (mats, cushions, soft chairs), a quiet atmosphere for pleasure reading and socializing. Dike (2005) describes the school library as "an oasis of informality." Social activities include story hours, play lets, drama, film, music, and debates. It's a river which the young learners swim before joining the big ocean of knowledge.

Classroom Libraries

The classroom library is an alternative to the central school library. Especially as an addition to the resources of a central school library, classroom libraries should encourage voluntary reading and transform teaching and learning. They consist of a book corner or library shelf with resources for use in the classroom. Classroom libraries bring books and reading very close to the children, especially younger children in nursery and primary schools, and so encourage reading. Having resources in the classroom can also make it easier to integrate the library with the curriculum. Where security is a problem, small classroom collections can be stored in a safe place overnight. The main disadvantage is in the duplication of materials. Also, when primary school classes are held in large halls, the environment is not conducive to the learner-centered methods advocated by educational reformers and the UBE program (Dike, 2000).

Resource sharing

Resource-sharing offers another approach to the problem of expanding school library services in support of free primary and secondary education and UBE. In this case, the

school library and public library share resources or facilities. In countries without an extensive network of public libraries, as is the case in Kenya, schools often offer the most viable facility for community information services. This kind of resource-sharing is promising for the successful implementation of free primary and secondary education and UBE in Kenya for adult learners as well as out-of-school youths. The concept of resource sharing has been practiced successfully in Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Cote d'Ivoire (IFLA - ALP, 1995).

CONCLUSION

Free primary and secondary education and UBE in Kenya borrows heavily from the internationally accepted concept of Basic Education, which sees education as more than just schooling, as a broader concept with a systematic relationship between in-school and out-of-school learning for long-life learning process. Kenya to achieve its Vision 2030 it should implement the recommendation of Kenya National Education policy on 'ONE SCHOOL, ONE LIBRARY AND ONE LIBRARIAN'. Free primary and secondary education policy stresses access for both in school and out of school as cardinal principle of setting a primary and secondary schools. The ideal school premises are an integrated space of classrooms, laboratories, farms, play fields, and a library. To accomplish this, school remodeling and construction must include space for libraries. Kenya Library Association (KLA) says that the use of the library is a culture that needs to be developed in our youths through a well-planned library education program and curriculum. To ensure that library use becomes a lifelong habit, it is necessary that the national curricula for primary and secondary schools include library use education modules on mandatory basis (Elaturoti, 2001). All schools must also have a qualified school librarian. The school renovation and construction project of the free primary and secondary education program did not envisage and include provision of space for libraries. Failing to provide this indispensable facility will work against the realizing objectives, goals and achievement of free primary and secondary education in Kenya.

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