

AN ASSESSMENT OF IFLA/DANIDA SPONSORED ILL/DD PROJECT IN GHANA - THE USERS POINT OF VIEW

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ABSTRACT

The need to assess DANIDA sponsored ILL/DD project in Ghana is justified by the important role it plays in the fulfillment of information provision in the University and Research Libraries in Ghana.

The availability of current materials and appropriate services offered by the ILL/DD offices in a congenial atmosphere motivate people to use the libraries for research purpose.

The aim of this study is therefore to find out to what extent the available materials and services provided by ILL/DD offices in Ghana are actually satisfying the needs of the users of those libraries and how effectively they are using those resources.

In doing this, the study evaluated the ILL/DD project in Ghana and analysed the impact of the project on the users to establish the current performance in terms of fulfilling the needs of the users.

In conclusion the study made some suggestions and recommendations for the development of the ILL/DD project in Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

Information is known to man to be an indispensable resource. It forms an

integral part of development.

The successful integration of the computer and telecommunications has led to the development of information accessibility. Librarians and other information managers have combined the information technology facilities in repackaging of information, desk top publication and catalogue creation.

The librarian also uses information technology in the acquisition process, storage and dissemination of pictorial, textual and numerical information. This development has promoted inter-library cooperation. No library, no matter how large and however well-endowed it may be can hope to operate entirely on its own. At different times and in different ways every library needs assistance in acquiring a document from some other source.

It might be rightly points out that even the largest libraries must engage in cooperative actions to augment their resources for today it is impossible for any library to be absolutely comprehensive in all fields.

Library cooperation is between librarians and libraries of all kinds

locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Library cooperation can therefore be seen as a symbol of goodwill on the part of librarians and libraries to share resources. At the same time, it implies at least a degree of reciprocity on the part of participating libraries. The list of activities that are involved in library cooperation are many. These include, inter-library lending, cooperative cataloguing and international cooperation.

Inter-library lending is concerned with satisfying readers with requirement outside the stock of the individual library or library system. The lending may be from local or national libraries or from libraries outside the country, and the kind of materials requested are, books, reports, theses, pamphlets, conference proceedings, periodical articles and many more.

After several years of discussion on the problems of inter-library lending in developing countries and activities supporting this, IFLA's section on Document Delivery and inter-library lending, decided at a meeting in Barcelona in 1993 to investigate the possibility of starting a trial project concerning document delivery in the third world. Consequently, a project group was established under the section with the chairman at that time, Niels Mark, as the Head. It was decided to make trial projects in two different areas of Africa. Two English speaking African University libraries were therefore selected for the trial project. These libraries were the Balme Library of the University of

Ghana and the Library of the University of Nairobi, Kenya.

With regard to funding, two institutions were contacted for financial assistance and these were, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Norwegian Ministry of Aid to Developing Countries (NORAD).

The Ghana project, the first of the two, is being funded by DANIDA and coordinated by a Danish Team.

The second part sited in Kenya is funded by NORAD and coordinated by a Norwegian group.

A formal ILL/DD service began in Ghana in April, 1998. The participating libraries search on line library catalogues and other databases on behalf of users. Photocopies of selected articles are then ordered from four Danish libraries; namely, the Danish Library of Science and Medicine, the Danish Veterinary and Agricultural Library, the Copenhagen Business School Library and the State University Library in Aarhus.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The aims of the project are:

1. to find methods for document delivery to developing countries
2. to establish electronic networks links with a regional and global approach to improve universal availability of publications and information.
3. to improve the competence of staff in handling inter-library

- loans and document delivery system (regional, national and global).
 4. to support negotiations with main document centers/libraries to attain favourable bulk treaties for the participating libraries
 5. to develop the project as a model for emulation by other African and third world Countries that do not have such a system already in place.
2. The library of the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
 3. The library of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.
 4. The library of the University for Development Studies, Tamale.
 5. The library of University College of Education of Winneba, Winneba.
 6. The Library of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), INSTI, Accra.

In sum, the main objective of the project is to enhance the capacities of libraries in developing countries particularly University and research libraries, through organized ILL/DD procedures, to maximize their limited resources at the national, regional and International levels.

The libraries are being assisted by the project to form a consortium with the aim of sharing resources both locally and internationally by electronic means. At the International level they will be assisted to access and acquire materials listed in some of the great catalogues, databases and document supply centers on the world wide web (www) such as (OCLC) online computer library center, the British Library Document supply centre (BLDSC), and the resources of some of the major libraries of Denmark.

Participating libraries

The participating libraries in Ghana are:

1. The Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra.

Methodology

Data was mainly collected through the use of a questionnaire. The population consisted of a cross section of users made up of Researchers/Lecturers and students. Four selected participating institutions namely; University of Ghana, the University of Cape Coast, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science Technology, and the Institute for Scientific and Technological Information (INSTI) of CSIR.

The targeted population made up of users, Researchers/Lecturers and Students were selected at random from their various institutions.

The questionnaire seeks to find out from the users, their level of satisfaction and the services that are provided by the ILL/DD Centres in the four selected libraries.

The study ascertained whether the users now easily find information from the outside libraries.

Other methods which were used to collect data was interviews and

discussions. These helped to clarify issues which were not well explained in the questionnaires.

The observation method was also used to observe activities in the library especially ILL/DD procedures, the interaction between library users and library staff in seeking information materials from within and outside the country.

The study also made extensive use of secondary sources, such as books, bibliographies, Journal articles and reports on the project.

Discussion

The study assesses the progress of the project in each of the institutions covered (i.e. University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, KNUST, and INSTI). It seeks to assess users' level of satisfaction with the project, problems associated with the project, level of patronage as well as users understanding of inter-library lending and their awareness about the project.

Lecturers And Researchers

University of Ghana produced the highest number of respondents as far as Lecturers/Researchers were concerned (28.1%) or 9 out of 32 respondents. KNUST and CSIR followed with (25%) or (18) respondents each, University of Cape Coast came up with (21.9%) or 7 respondents. This provides a fair ground on which to assess the average responses from the various Institutions.

Contribution of ILL/DD to Academic Work

When asked what other help respondents thought the ILL/DD could offer to make academic work easier (12.5%) or 4 respondents said all users should be trained to do their personal search. Another (12.5%) or 4 respondents said their libraries should be linked up with more libraries, (9.4%) or 3 respondents said their database should be broadened and another (9.4%) or 3 respondents said they needed more computers in their libraries, (6.3%) or 2 respondents gave other responses but (3.1%) or 1 respondent said students and Lecturers should be provided with all their information needs, whereas another one (1) person said they should increase the number of donor libraries. One (1) respondent said the libraries needed more funding from government. The response rate for this question was very high.

Problems with ILL/DD Service

When asked to enumerate their problems with the ILL/DD service, (25%) or 8 respondents mentioned delays in getting documents ordered. (12.5%) or 4 respondents, pointed to difficulties with internet connectivity, (9.4%) or 3 respondents. mentioned difficulties in getting requests satisfied, (6.3%) or 2 respondents mentioned lack of education, another (6.3%) or 2 respondents said lack of resources and qualified staff and another (6.3%) or 2 respondents said their problems lay with getting requests from other libraries, (3.1%) or 1 respondent gave other responses and a significant

(31.3%) or 10 respondents did not respond at all to this question.

Suggestions for Improving ILL/DD Service

The question asked for suggestions for improvement (28.1%) or 9 respondents said there was the need for more training of users and staff of the participating libraries.

Another (12.5%) or 4 respondents said there was the need for full internet connectivity (15.6%) or 5 respondents said the project should be expanded to satisfy the increasing number of requests and (18.8%) or 6 respondents, gave other responses such as the need for more education, more publicity and resources, etc, (9.4%) or 3 respondents said Faculty and Department libraries should be connected to the project, (3.1%) or 1 respondent said users should be made to pay for the services offered to them while (12.5%) or 4 respondents gave no response to this question.

Assessment of ILL/DD Services, (Researchers/Lecturers)

The survey asked respondents whether they were pleased with the IFLA/DANIDA sponsored ILL/DD project in Ghana. (53.1%) or 17 respondents said Yes, while (46.9%) or 15 respondents said No.

Level of Satisfaction (Researchers/Lecturers)

To determine the level of satisfaction, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction (28.1%) or 9 respondents said they were reasonably satisfied. (25.0%) or 8

respondents said they were very satisfied and (46.9%) or 15 respondents said they were not satisfied.

Students Response Institutions covered

In the case of Institutions covered with regards to students survey, only three institutions (University of Ghana, KNUST, and University of Cape Coast) were covered. INSTI-CSIR was not covered because they are strictly involved with researchers.

The study shows that majority of respondents (45.3%) or 34 respondents interviewed were from the University of Ghana, (28%) or 21 respondents were from KNUST and (26.7%) or 20 respondents also came from the University of Cape Coast.

Benefit of ILL/DD Service

On the question of which aspect of the ILL//DD services respondents have ever benefited from, (37.3%) or 28 respondents said they had benefited from Inter-library loans in the form of articles from books and periodicals, (18.7%) or 14 respondents said they had benefited from external literature search, (29.3%) or 22 respondents said they did not benefit from any of the areas mentioned above and only (4%) or 3 respondents claimed they had benefited from all the two (1.3%) or 1 respondent gave other responses and (9.3%) or 7 respondents gave No response at all.

Publicity of the ILL/DD Services

On whether they thought there was enough information about the services

(34.7%) or 26 respondents said Yes. The majority of respondents (44%) or 33 respondents said No, (1.3%) 1 respondent gave other response and (20%) or 15 respondents gave no response.

Level of Patronage

When asked whether they had ever made use of ILL/DD services, (60%) or 57 respondents said Yes. (32%) or 24 respondents said No, and (8%) or 6 respondents gave no response.

Impact of the ILL/DD Services on Research

On whether the introduction of ILL/DD had changed the nature of their research at the library, (50.7%) percent or 38 respondents said Yes and (45.3%) or 34 respondents said No (4%) or 3 respondents did not respond to this question.

Payment for the ILL/DD Services

When asked whether respondents agreed with the idea of monetary contribution (76%) or 57 respondents said Yes, (22.7%) or 17 respondents said No and (1.3%) or 1 respondent gave other response.

Assessment of the ILL/DD Project (Students Views)

The survey asked respondents whether they were pleased with the IFLA/DANIDA Sponsored ILL/DD Project in Ghana. (68%) or 51 respondents said Yes and (24%) or 18 respondents said No, whereas (8%) percent or 6 respondents gave no response at all.

Level of Satisfaction (Student View)

To further probe the question of whether they were pleased with the IFLA/DANIDA Sponsored ILL/DD Project in Ghana, respondents who had responded in the affirmative were further asked to indicate their level of satisfaction (50.7%) or 38 respondents of this proportion said they were reasonably satisfied, (17.3%) or 13 respondents said they were very satisfied and (6.7%) or 5 respondents said they were not satisfied. Unfortunately (25.3%) or 19 respondents gave no responses.

Problems of the ILL/DD Services (Students View)

Concerning the problems associated with the ILL/DD services provided in their various libraries (16%) or 12 respondents, said the main problem was delays in getting Internet connectivity (12%) or 9 respondents said facilities are not enough (5.3%) or 4 respondents said personnel needed more training and (8%) or 6 respondents said the problem was impossibility in getting some urgent and vital information. (4%) or 3 respondents felt lack of computer literacy hindered information search. (1.3%) or 1 respondent said the problem was inability to conduct searches on their own. (24%) or 18 respondents gave other responses and as much as (29.3%) or 22 respondents gave no responses at all on this question.

Suggestions for improvement (Students View)

When it came to suggestions, majority of respondents (29.3%) percent or 22

respondents said more funding was needed to expand the project. Another (12%) or 9 respondents said more training was needed on the Internet and searching. (5.3%) or 4 respondents said personnel should always be available to assist in using the systems. (2.7%) or 2 respondents said the project should urgently be expanded and networked. (1.3%) or 1 respondent said the Universities should support the project. Another (1.3%) or 1 respondent said users should contribute something little in the form of money and another (1.3%) or 1 respondent said books should be loaned alongside. (24%) or 18 respondents gave other responses and (22.7%) or 17 respondents gave no response.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out with the aim of finding out the present state of affairs with regards to the IFLA/DANIDA, ILL/DD Project in Ghana. More especially to determine the level of satisfaction from the user point of view.

The project vision is commendable. It is expected to help investigate the possibility and problems of using new information technology to make information and documents available to students and researchers, in Africa and other third world countries in areas where library collections are poor and inadequate; to encourage and promote the culture of networking among member libraries for the purpose.

The progress made so far is comm-

endable. However, the implementation problems highlighted by the users need immediate solutions. The project faces many problems such as, lack of full internet connectivity, low level of knowledge about the purpose of the project even among librarians. The effective ILL/DD system in operation suggests that immediate steps be taken towards the formalization and institution of a national ILL/DD system in order to maximize the scarce resources.

The constraints and hindrances are real enough and intractable in some cases, but they should not prevent libraries from striving to search for solutions since our society more than most, requires information to promote development and literacy. Librarians should therefore, start by interacting with one another, by being more user conscious making the most of existing resources and thereby enlisting user support in this struggle. Once this is done, they would get support from Government and the private sector. If librarians are able to do this successfully, those other important environmental constraints will fall in line. Ghana also needs to have a National Library to coordinate and set bibliographic and other standards to facilitate ILL/DD development.

It is therefore hoped that the participating libraries would share their experiences with other tertiary institutions about how a practical inter-library lending system is organized. This way, there would be ample proof that the project is a big success. This would provide the

justification for commencing similar projects in other countries.

Recommendations

In connection with the findings of the study, the following recommendations and suggestion are made:

1. There is the need for periodic evaluation of performance to be carried out.
2. There is the need for the creation of local databases by the participating libraries.
3. There is the need for the various libraries to step up their automation processes
4. The libraries should mount a deliberate policy of awareness creation among their own staff as well as their users.
5. There is the need for librarians of the various libraries to browse the Internet for current publication and provide content page of current journals for users.
6. It is also recommended that users should pay a percentage for ILL/DD services. The University and other authorities related to the project should be made to get their institutions to

support the project

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