BUILDING A STRONG LIBRARY ASSOCIATION: A CASE OF THE GHANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Abstract

The author explores ways of building a strong library association with specific reference to the Ghana Library Association. The paper states that library associations represent librarians and libraries that provide valuable services to them and their communities. The different types of library associations are discussed. The author provides a historical antecedent to the establishment of the Ghana Library Association in 1962 and looks at the mission, vision and aims. The author then critiques the activities of the Association and identifies factors that should be put in place to build a strong library association. The paper concludes that membership of such a strong library association stands to derive a host of benefits.

KEYWORDS: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS, LIBRARIES

Introduction

Associations exist to provide for people working in similar areas of activity and facing similar challenges to meet to exchange views and learn from one another. They exist to offer a range of services to members and a focus of expertise to be placed at the disposal of their communities. The long-term benefactors of such associations are the end-users of the services that their members provide. They lay down standards for performance, protect the continuing existence of services and monitor the levels of provision of services as well as look after the interests of their own members.

An association has a life of its own. It has to be organized, its activities must be directed and its assets administered. For this reason, it requires finances and that these have to be managed. It needs objectives and these require the involvement of individuals to identify them, implement programmes of activities and provide a range of services to achieve them.

Professional associations comprise groups of people with a common set of values or professional interests. As people with the same professional interests, they maximize opportunities around their common interests. Professional associations have been around for more than one hundred years but it is only in the last century that they have been established in a wide range of professional areas and attracted sufficient members to make a difference in the representation of members' interests (IFLA, 2010).

Many professional associations also have a role as learned societies that engage in research and publications, facilitating conferences and partnerships based on goals and missions of the association. Most professional associations have goals and missions around the following five thematic areas:
Standards of practice for the key areas of professional work,
Services to members in support of their professional practices,
Advocacy for the profession,
Development of the professional discipline through research and publications,
Managing relationship between an association and communities as well as external strategic partners.

According to Russell (1989) the integrated planning of library and information services was recognized relatively early in UNESCO by C.V. Penna, as a prerequisite to the provision of services of an acceptable standard and wide-ranging not only in geographical coverage but also in the types of services to be provided. He noted that Penna's interest in library and information and archive planning could be traced back to the early sixties, although his interest in planning as a methodology pre-dates that.

Library associations represent librarians, libraries and other information professionals to provide valuable services for them and their communities. Library and information associations play a vital role in the development of the Library and Information Science profession and socio-economic transformation of communities by ensuring that librarians provide quality information services. Library associations create a forum for meeting, exchange of ideas and learning

from one another. All associations including library associations are appropriate bodies to regulate the profession through accreditation of education programmes and control of librarians through a professional register and professional code of conduct. Essentially, library associations are supposed to perform the following functions:

- To provide leadership, expertise and innovation in facilitating knowledge creation, information management and access as well as facilitating knowledge transfer,
- To help safeguard civil rights and intellectual freedom,
- To build capacity and provide support and training for effective use of digital and other information resources,
- To contribute to the protection of intellectual property and copyright of print and electronic information,
- To facilitate access to information for all,
- To preserve the cultural heritage,
- To enrich society through the provision of a range of information and related activities,
- Facilitate education and research (including literacy).

Types of Library Association

Library associations can take many forms depicting the range of needs for people to collaborate. Basically, there are three types of library associations and these are international, regional and national. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is a handy example of an international library association. The West African Library Association (WALA) and the Standing Committee for Eastern, Central and Southern African Library Association (SCECSAL) represent models of regional library associations, while the Ghana Library Association represents a national library association.

It is also instructive to note that associations can also exist to represent a particular interest, library sector or subject area. There are different types of libraries. The basic function of academic libraries is to support teaching, learning and research. The public libraries also play a critical role in the area of information literacy, education and culture. Special libraries exist to serve the information needs of individuals in a particular organization while school libraries also cater for the information needs of students. For example, there can be an association with membership of a specific professional grouping or type of library (Special libraries, Public libraries, etc. There are some associations that focus on a specific subject area, such as medicine, library, law or architecture, which might be national, regional or international in character.

The Ghana Library Association (GLA)

The Ghana Library Association (GLA) is the umbrella association of all libraries in Ghana. It is a professional and learned association of librarians and institutions. At a UNESCO seminar on "*The Development of Public Libraries in Africa*" in Ibadan from 27th July to 21st August, 1953, the idea for the formation of the West African Library Association (WALA) was mooted (Sidney, 1953). Following from the Ibadan seminar, in 1954 WALA was formed to stimulate and assist library development in Africa in order to achieve adequate recognition for the library profession. It is important to note that WALA at that time comprised of Anglophone countries of West Africa namely Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone. According to Kisiedu (1996), two main factors precipitated the breakup of WALA after it had been in existence for only eight years. These were the distance between the two main member nations, Nigeria and Ghana, and the tension engendered by the proposed establishment of a library school at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. This did not go down well with the Ghana Division which wanted a separate library school to be established in Ghana. Mainly as a result of these, in 1961 at the WALA conference in Lagos, where only a few Ghanaians attended, the delegates decided that WALA should be dissolved as an inter-territorial organization and that, every country should form its own national association. The Ghanaian members of WALA at a conference in Accra in June 1962 resolved to establish the Ghana Library Association (GLA).

The inaugural conference was held in the University of Ghana, Legon, at the Volta Hall on 29th June, 1962 where the GLA was born. A total number of seventy two (72) members attended that historic conference. On August 2, 1986 GLA was registered under the Professional Bodies Decree NRCD 143 of 1973 with Registration Number PB 21 in accordance with the laws of Ghana. Currently, it is made up of 200 paid up members. The GLA has had seventeen Presidents since its establishment fifty years ago. The GLA has its Secretariat located at the Institute for Scientific and Technological Information building in Accra.

Vision and Mission

According to the GLA Constitution (2006), the Association is the voice of libraries and librarians in Ghana ensuring the maintenance of a high standard of professional practice and conduct and projecting the profession in the national domain for the benefit of members and their clientele. It also states that its mission is to serve the professional development and educational needs of its members and provide leadership and direction in developing and improving library and information services in Ghana. In order to realize the vision and mission of the

association, the GLA established the *Ghana Library Journal* which publishes scholarly articles and best practices as well as providing training needs for members in the form of seminars, workshops and conferences. The GLA also has in place an Accreditation Board for purposes of certification and professional practice in Ghana.

Governance

The Association has a-twelve member Governing Council that provides leadership and direction. The members come from all types of libraries and it is composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and eight other representatives. It is important to note that all the twelve Council members are elected by paid up members at an Annual General Meeting for a two-year term and their mandate can be renewed for another term. The Governing Council is responsible for organizing Annual General Meetings every year and Biennial Congresses every two years. The Association has a constitution that regulates its activities including the professional conduct of its members.

GLA Activities

The Ghana Library Association engages in four main activities namely Annual General Meetings, Biennial Congresses, Continuing Professional Education and Professional Accreditation. As part of its contribution to the continuing education for its members, the Association organizes conferences, seminars and workshops. Furthermore, to sustain professional interest, the Association publishes the *Ghana Library Journal* at least once a year. Members of the Association also provide advisory and consultancy services towards the development of library services in the country. As part of efforts to streamline the library service in the country, the GLA has submitted a draft National Library Service bill to the Minister of Education for the attention of Cabinet and possible enactment by Parliament.

The Interregnum

During the period 1977 to 1983, the Association relapsed into virtual dormancy and according to Entsua-Mensah (2001), "This period could well be described as the "dark age" of GLA since it marked a period of inactivity and virtual extinction". He also noted that the Association was plagued with a lot of problems including lack of funds to organize activities as well as lack of commitment on the part of the leadership and members. The author interacted with some past Presidents to get an insight into that unfortunate situation. According to them, a host of reasons precipitated the relapse. One school of thought has it that during this period in Ghana, almost everything was on a low key with many institutions and

organizations crumbling. Another school of thought also has it that the young professionals were highly critical of the way senior colleagues handled affairs of the Association at the time. The young professionals wanted issues dealt with quickly while their senior colleagues also accused them of not exploring issues properly before putting them on the table and so did not take kindly to their boisterous attitude thereby leaving the Association to relapse. A third and most plausible reason has to do with the mass exodus of Ghanaian professionals including librarians to Nigeria and Botswana for greener pastures.

The Revival

The GLA which had become moribund in the years immediately before 1983 was revived following IFLA's Roundtable on Management of Library Associations in developing countries including Ghana. IFLA's Roundtable on Management of Library Associations (RTMLA) was set up in 1983 to address management challenges faced by library associations particularly those in developing countries (IFLA, 2001). According to Russell (1989) the objectives of the round table at its inception were:

- To assist library associations to effectively contribute to the formulation and execution of IFLA policies and activities;
- To monitor and collect information on the structures, management, organization and activities of library associations;
- To assist library associations to implement UNESCO NATIS/UNISIST – programmes and IFLA's UBC Program and UAP;

Fortunately, in December 1983, Mr. A. N. de Heer (then a Deputy Director of the Ghana Library Authority) organized a revival congress-with the support of the Ghana Library Authority, the British Council and the Ghana Book Development Council. At a general meeting that followed, the members present elected an eleven member Council with the late Mr. J. A. Villars as the President to run the affairs of the Association. The new Council came out with a strategic plan that sought to address issues like professional development, Association's finances, professional standards, ethics and best practices. The Council also reactivated the Association's journal and the newsletter, which had suffered the same fate. However, in 1989, a few years after its revival, the *Ghana Library Journal* went into coma for almost a decade (Addo, 1996). It was revived in 1996.

Critique of the Ghana Library Association (GLA)

Attitude of Some Practising Librarians

The lukewarm attitude of some practising librarians towards the Association smacks of unprofessionalism. These librarians have demonstrated considerable apathy by their lack of payment of annual dues and lack of interest in the activities of the Association. This is further exacerbated by the cold relationship between the association and the Ghana Library Authority (GhLA). This development has seriously truncated very laudable GLA initiatives notably, the establishment of both the National Library and the National Commission on Libraries and Information (NCLI). Attempts by the GLA to lobby government to establish the National Commission on Libraries and Information and the National Library were hotly contested by the Ghana Library Authority (GhLA) and even though members of the Committee of Experts took turns to explain the raison d'être for their establishment, these ideas were not wholly bought. Paradoxically, when staff of Ghana Library Authority (GhLA) were asked to submit an alternative proposal to Council for onward transmission to the Ministry of Education, they did not. Russell (1989) observes how few associations are able to provide a unified voice, agree upon objectives, identify strategies to achieve them and embark on activities to fulfill these targets.

Many attempts by Council to dialogue with the GhLA on matters affecting librarianship did not also see the light of day. In the recent past, a letter written to the Acting Chief Executive by Council to pay a courtesy call was not answered and eventually when Council was given the green light, it was postponed several times. According to Ellsworth (1961) the relationship between practising librarians and their national associations is not always easy to comprehend because of the consequences of the impact of personality clashes and disagreements on specific events.

The inability of some government officials to distinguish between an association (GLA) and a public library system (Ghana Library Authority) has also contributed in no small measure to the inability of Council from meeting with the relevant government authorities for fruitful deliberations on the development of library services in Ghana. This is so because some proposals that were submitted to these authorities by Council were rather referred to the Ghana Library Authority (GhLA). In addition, some committees and regional branches of the Association are inactive and dormant. Currently, it is only the Committee on Education, Training and Research that is somehow active. As for the regional branches, the only seemingly active ones are those of Ashanti and Central.

Non-payment and Late payment of Annual Dues

The non-payment and late payment of annual dues by members does not allow for proper planning and budgeting. At the beginning of every year, the Secretary sends out reminders to the general membership for the prompt payment of dues. However, my experience as a Council member has shown that some members pay their dues on the day of the Annual General Meeting while others do not pay at all. When this happens, it deprives the Association of the much needed oxygen to function properly.

Lack of Permanent Staff

The Association still suffers from lack of permanent staff. The GLA leadership is therefore mostly involved in the routine functions of the association but because they are full time employees of their mother institutions, their overall performance is diluted. This is not to suggest that the GLA leadership over the years has not been effective. The management skills and ability to evolve and initiate a plan of action determines how much is accomplished during a term of office. The availability of permanent staff at the Secretariat can relieve executive members of Council of primary duties and focus more on the core and important functions.

Lack of Understanding of the Role of Council Members

Some members put themselves up to be elected without knowing and appreciating fully well the responsibilities of Council. This is especially true when such persons are assigned responsibilities and they fail to deliver citing flimsy excuses. Even though, the work of Council is sacrificial, I think that it is a learning ground for one to acquire the much needed skills and exposure to be able to handle bigger and greater assignments in future.

Lack of GLA Voice on National Issues

The GLA has been silent on many national issues. According to Ellsworth and Clift (1961), national membership organizations have a responsibility to speak out on national issues, bearing in mind that it is best to speak on those issues in which the association has a recognized capacity for judgment. It should be possible to conduct research into the state of all types of libraries in Ghana and disseminate the results at press conferences. It will also not be out of place, if the political, religious, economic and social interest groups within the Association are formed to conduct research and initiate discourse on some national issues.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the GLA can boast of seventeen Presidents from various types of libraries with varying interests. It is interesting to note that no one type of library has monopolized the presidency. In addition, through the

activities of the Association, some members have received international recognition and are heading various regional and international library bodies. The library profession has become a profession of choice and not a profession by accident in Ghana as it was some years ago. The interest in and demand for a qualification in librarianship has therefore grown exponentially. The Ghana Library Journal is now vibrant with a lot of members and even outsiders submitting articles for publication. What needs to be done though is to beef it up with local and international information-related news items.

Building Strong Library Associations

According to IFLA (2010) building a strong library association requires a comprehensive programme that offers a strategic and coordinated approach for capacity building and sustainability. Some of the factors that account for building a strong library association with specific reference to GLA are therefore discussed below:

Sound governance and organisational structure

A sound governance and organizational structure will no doubt make for a strong library association. For now, the Ghana Library Association does not have a very elaborate governance structure. However, if GLA is to be strong, then it is proposed that one such elaborate governance structures be put in place. The proposed governance structure is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Proposed Governance Structure for GLA by the Author
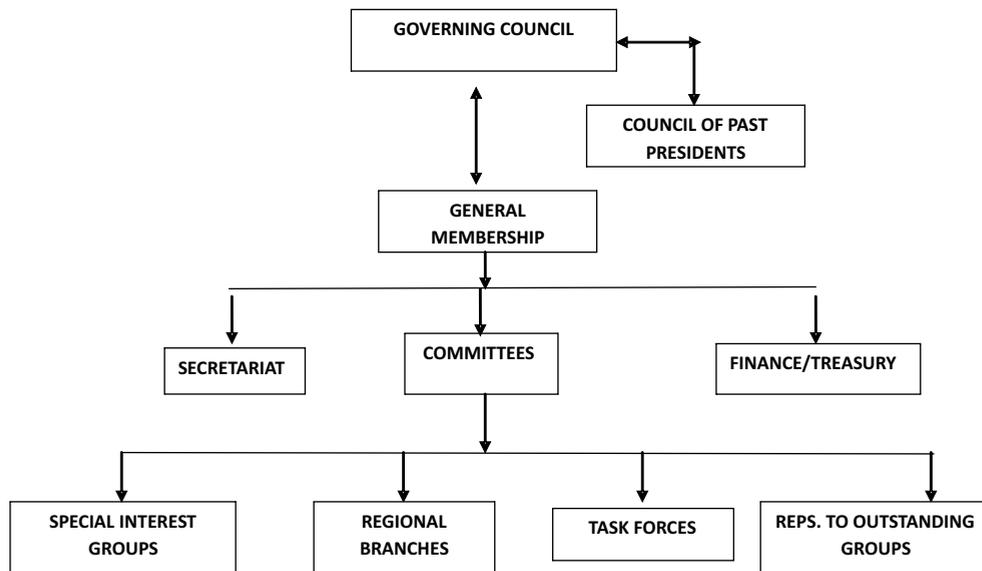
At the apex of the organogram is the Governing Council with the Council of Past Presidents (CPPs) to play an advisory role. The (CPPs) constitute a repertoire of knowledge and experience and therefore, it is imperative that these are placed at the disposal of the Governing Council (GC). The GC should be elected by the general membership as is the practice now and they in turn appoint self- motivated members from the members to serve on the various committees and task forces to undertake or implement the Association's projects. It is also proposed that in the interim, the Secretariat should be manned by national service personnel on annual basis. There should also be a separate section for the Treasury to be responsible for the Association's finances.

The GLA is composed of librarians who work in different types of libraries and therefore have different challenges and needs hence the need for outstanding groups such as Associations of Academic Librarians, Public Librarians, Special Librarians and School Librarians. Even within the different types of libraries, there are special interest groups namely Cataloguing, Law, Medicine, Reference, Acquisitions, among others. Task forces are also necessary when projects are to be implemented and Council has to fall on members with the requisite expertise to deliver. All these should be accommodated within GLA. This way, they could operate better and work more effectively together. Perhaps what is needed is an informal association made up of elected officers from outstanding and interest groups to ensure that all interest groups are duly catered for under the auspices of the GLA. The issue of Regional branches is a good thing and therefore has space in the proposed governance structure since they serve as mobilizing points for the GLA.

Visionary and Effective Leadership
It must be quickly added that a sound governance and organizational structure alone will not be enough to build a strong library association; it must be backed by visionary and effective leadership. Being effective and powerful refers to inner strength and power over oneself. No one can manage, lead or influence someone else if he, himself, is out-of-control. Developing emotional intelligence is the single best thing one can do if one is to develop strong leadership skills.

Though frequently described as the most discussed, it is also the least understood aspect of management. Strong leadership skills are essential to motivate and adapt a team when changes come about. An effective leader should provide inspiration in the face of high-pressure situations and disagreements. Recent surveys have shown that over 80% of employees feel that a strong leader gives them confidence

(Edoff, 2011). One of the essential components of a good team is that they trust in the leader, rather than just believing the leader, and strong leadership skills are essential for gaining this trust. Team members will look up to their leader to see whether his/her behaviour indicates that he/she will deliver on goals and promises. For some, there is little to distinguish between 'manager' and 'leader', but as Professor John Adair (Chair of Leadership to the United Nations and Adair International to accredit trainers on an exclusive basis across the Middle East and India) states, "the position of a manager is confirmed by the organization, while that of a leader is ratified in the hearts and minds of those whom he leads."

In recent years, effective leadership means ethical leadership. For many years, conventional wisdom stated that in business, an effective leader will teach and guide his/her team members. However, developments in psychology have indicated that a strong leader is willing to learn as well as teach, keeping an open mind to his or her team members' ideas while challenging the status quo in order to move ahead (Edoff, 2011). It is no wonder therefore that strong and effective leaders are visionaries.

It is also important to note that, members who put themselves up for elective positions to Council and those who may be appointed to perform certain functions on behalf of the association must be persons who are highly motivated. Furthermore, such people should be supported by their heads of library and the Association and also given the necessary resources in order to perform creditably.

Above all, mentoring should also be encouraged. Senior colleagues should be prepared and willing to share their own personal insights and experiences with willing and ready junior colleagues in order to help them develop and grow. This way, junior colleagues will be ready and matured to take over the mantle of leadership in future.

Responsiveness to Changes in the Association's Environment
Libraries and corporate information centres are facing many new challenges as technology changes and the need for electronic resources increases. With the emergence of interactive social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs and Wikis and new trends in mobile technology, it has become vital for members to remain up-to-date not only in their theoretical and practical fields but also in new technologies to provide services in the most effective and accessible way. Moreover, with the growth in the use of the Internet, there is an ever growing need for library professionals to be proactive in order to add value to

information and promote their services among current and potential clients. This means that any leadership that wants to deliver must factor the new trends into its activities and make members aware of the changing role of the librarian. When the general membership understand and appreciate the new trends, they will feel they are a part of the activities designed for them and therefore ensure that they are successful.

Membership Drive

Membership drive should start from the Department of Information Studies. This is where the need to belong to the GLA must begin and its enforcement should be carried out by employers. It is true that a lot of the products from the Department of Information Studies do not belong to the GLA. When questioned why they are not members, they retort that they do not gain anything from the Association. But I know for a fact that, librarians who are not members and members who do not pay their annual dues are not supported by their heads to attend activities organized by the Association. But even in instances where they do not attend, colleagues who attend such events share the knowledge acquired with them. It is also true that there are lots of persons working in various libraries without the requisite qualifications and therefore are not members of the Association. It is suggested that these persons could be admitted as Affiliate Members and trained by the Committee on Education, Training and Research in the professional practice while steps are put in place to establish more library institutions to cater for them.

There may be the need to effect a change in the name of the Association to reflect the all-inclusive nature of librarians and other information professionals. This is to attract information professionals who work in archives and museums to be part of the Association. What can be done now is to find out if they are willing to join the Association and if they are, then the issue can be opened up for discussion. I therefore suggest names like the Ghana Library and Information Professionals Association (GLIPA), and Ghana Information Professionals Association (GIPA) among others for consideration. It must, however, be borne in mind that any acronym that is likely to develop should be acceptable and not impinge on the boundaries of taste and politeness.

Libraries on the Agenda

One way to build a strong library association is to put libraries on the agenda. The GLA should focus on its role in the broader society with specific reference to advocacy, education and campaigns in order to increase the importance of libraries in Ghana. According to IFLA (2010) library associations need to look beyond their

activities to confirm the outstanding value they provide by collecting and presenting reliable and consistent data in order to show the positive outcomes on their users. It should be possible to draw on several tools for advocacy and different types of evidence in the form of facts and figures, personal stories, case studies and surveys about the value of the library service.

The combined deployment of advocacy, lobbying and marketing is required to make significant impact in the Association's broader role in society. Advocacy is action for change in attitudes, policies, and practices by members of the association. Lobbying can also be employed and it is usually directed at government and its leaders, with the aim of swaying policy makers to address particular issues, preferably, to have a new legislation introduced. Marketing is another tool and it is about identifying stakeholder needs and developing services to meet these needs as well as promoting them. According to Fried, Kochanowicz & Chiranov (2009), six key areas where library associations can make a difference are education, health and culture and leisure. The others are economic development, communication and e-government. The GLA can therefore look at these areas and begin to make immediate impact in Ghana. The six key areas and the impact that GLA can make on their users are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Global Libraries Initiative Impact Areas

AREAS OF IMPACT	EXAMPLES OF IMPACT ON LIBRARIES AND USERS
Education	Libraries offer on-line reading programs Users acquire skills in the library
Health	Libraries refer people to relevant online information Users have improved health choices
Culture and Leisure	Libraries become social centres of the community Events and activities lead to community re-vitalization
Economic Development	Libraries direct business people to relevant information Small businesses become more productive
Communication	Librarians teach people to use the Internet (e-mail and social networks, media) Isolation of marginalized communities decreases
E-government	Librarians teach people to access e-government services Improved citizen involvement in government services.

Library Statistics and Research

Another contributory factor to building a strong library association is to generate and use statistics. Statistics are important and the GLA can use statistical data to influence political processes. There is therefore the need for quantitative evidence to make an argument whenever the association interacts with politicians, funding bodies or stakeholders, and whenever libraries are to put on the agenda. In fact, advocacy and lobbying are not possible without the relevant data.

From the viewpoint of 'production', statistical data can be divided into four main parts namely input, process, output and outcome.
1. Statistics about **input**
   - E.g. the number of staff/books/seats, and the total budget, etc.
2. Statistics that reflect the production **process**
   - E.g. the number of registered users, opening hours, time spent on cataloguing, etc.
3. Statistics that show the **output**, or the services delivered
   - E.g. the number of visits/loans/computer sessions, etc.
4. Statistics that may reflect the **outcome** of the services
   - E.g. changes in reading patterns, school results, community activities, among others.

Statistical data are indispensible for the management of library associations and according to IFLA (2010), when presented to policy makers, they can significantly influence the strategic planning and policy development processes thereby creating and maintaining confidence in library associations and librarians. It is therefore imperative to know which aspects of library work to focus on, and how to collect relevant data, process and interpret data as well as how to present data. (http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-library-statistics-manifesto).

The GLA can therefore encourage and support the collection, processing and publishing of library statistics. The GLA needs to work with government to encourage the collection of relevant and valid data on libraries. In fact, stakeholders are increasingly demanding evidence about the impact of service provision. Therefore, the systematic collection of data and statistics on libraries can reveal activity, achievement and development. Indeed, statistical data can provide a better picture and information about librarians and library services and can be used to make libary activities important and visible to all stakeholders. It is significant to point out, however that, to highlight outcomes, statistics about

libraries need to be supported by statistics from other fields such as population, literacy, education, health infrastructure and culture.

The Establishment of National Commission on Libraries and Information (NCLI)
The GLA has to lobby government to establish a statutory body to link government and the professional body to enhance good working relations between the two. The proposal by the Committee of Experts presented to the Ministry of Education (2010) on the establishment of NCLI that will serve as an umbrella coordinating body for all library and information service providers in Ghana is a sine qua non if the association is to make a significant impact in Ghana. Even though this proposal suffered an initial setback, the GLA should not relent in its efforts to see the proposal through. This is possible when the GLA and GhLA begin to speak with one voice. As proposed, it will be the leader and focal point, regulating and guiding activities within the context of the National Information Policy (NIP). In carrying out these responsibilities, the Committee of Experts proposed that the NCLI shall perform the following functions:

- Advise governments on policy formulation and implementation,
- Develop plans for meeting national library and information needs,
- Promote research and development activities which will extend and improve the nation's library and information-handling capability as essential links in the national communications network,
- Promote and develop the use of ICT in library and information provision,
- Formulate and enforce the policy on standards and professional training and practice,
- Coordinate and regulate library and information resources in Ghana,
- Establish a National Library Service as an Implementing Agency of NCLI.

Alignment of Functions and Activities with Mission and Vision
The vision of an association should be to enrich the society by assisting members to increase their potential to improve service delivery to library users, provide equal access to information and develop the library and information profession. This should be done through a series of training workshops. The GLA should make potential members to understand what its vision and mission are so that they will be in the position to impact positively on their users. Currently, the number of training workshops organized for members are not enough and where they are organized, the association has to rely on donor agencies. This is not good enough! Training workshops that are organized are also tilted in favour of the needs of academic libraries and librarians. There should be a balance taking into account the various outstanding groups within the larger association. Consequently, when

such training workshops are organized, it is also important that evaluations of the outcomes of such activities are carried out for purposes of impact. It is also instructive to note that such training should be according to the needs and interests of members. For now, that is currently not the case!

The Establishment of More Library Training Institutions
The demand for library education in Ghana has grown exponentially with time, and the Department of Information Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon can no longer provide it alone. This is true because of the large number of potential applicants who apply to enroll on the programme, only one-third of that number gain admission. The decoupling of the Diploma programme from the Department of Information Studies to the Accra City Campus (ACC) has made it extremely difficult for potential applicants from other regions in Ghana to pursue the Diploma program because they have to contend with acute accommodation challenges in Accra. In the interim, a suggested solution to this challenge will be to increase number of lecturers at the Department to cater for the teeming applicants. It should also be possible to co-opt willing and experienced professional librarians in the supervision of graduate theses. In the long-run however, there should be the need for some other Universities in Ghana to train more librarians for the job market. The greater the number of members, the stronger the association would be.

Positive Collaboration and Effective Relationships
It should be possible for the GLA to collaborate with other national library associations to share knowledge on successfully implemented projects for the benefit of their members. This collaboration can be in many fronts. GLA can collaborate with vibrant ones like those of Nigeria and South Africa. The positive collaboration can also be extended to some notable organizations like IFLA, UNESCO, Goethe Institut, the US Embassy in Accra, and Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH) among others, to provide support for the Association to undertake some projects. The Association should also be able to set up task forces to write good proposals to raise funds for some projects. This is one sure way of getting funds for the Association so that it is able to carry out its core activities. The other way is to employ professional fundraisers to raise funds for the association for some specific projects. In fact, GLA should also forge a strong partnership with the media so as to give wide publicity to its programmes and activities.

Code of conduct

Until relatively recently, code of ethics was not considered as important, but now the need for, and benefits of, having codes of conduct are highly appreciated. In the eyes of the public the possession of such a code indicates the existence of a responsible professional body. I am aware that Council has crafted one but this is yet to be circulated among members and adopted eventually.

Prudent Financial Management

The prudent management of the association's finances should be in accordance with approved policies and planning procedures. I will therefore examine financial management functions under five headings: planning and budgeting, accounts maintenance, financial reports, internal controls,
Independent audits, financial investments and sources of income.

Planning and Budgeting

Financial planning gives assurance that the association's resources will be available and will be used to meet intended objectives. Such planning also provides a sound foundation for cost allocation and control. This planning is most often accomplished through the preparation of an annual budget. Experience has, however, shown that Council does not budget for its annual activities; what rather has become the norm is to budget for items when the need arises. It should be possible for Council to engage in strategic planning by outlining programmes and activities at the beginning of the year and costing them.

Maintaining Accounts

Maintaining accounts means keeping track of income and expenditures to observe and monitor how this relates to achieving activity targets and agreed upon budget totals. It is perhaps the most important part of the implementation of any policy. Even without the position of a Financial Secretary on Council, the Treasurer and or the Secretary can document monies received and expended in Council's minutes so that it becomes easier to keep track of monies received and disbursed.

Annual Financial Reports

The annual financial reports assist the monitoring processes to ensure that annual plans and activities are being acted upon and are being undertaken within the previously agreed upon budgets. The second function of financial reports is to confirm to the membership that their finances are in trusted and safe hands and that the association's finances are being managed prudently. The fact that in the past years Council had not been able to submit audited accounts to members is not

palatable enough. This may be due to the lack of deeper knowledge of accounting processes and procedures on the part of the Treasurer or could be due to sabotage. It is therefore unethical when people who are not dedicated to extension services put themselves up for such positions. The annual financial reports are a necessary part of the management processes of the association's activities and must be seen as such.

Internal Controls

Internal controls are required to protect assets and validate the accuracy and reliability of accounting data. The key method for effective internal control is to avoid giving complete responsibility for handling all phases of a transaction to one person. The current arrangement allows one person to collect and pay in monies received. The danger here is the decision of the person not to pay all such monies into the association's accounts. It is therefore recommended that a member of Council other than the Treasurer pay in such monies and bring the receipt to him/her.

Independent Audits

Independent audits are the examination of financial records and internal controls by an audit firm. An audit usually does not examine every transaction, but conducts a series of 'tests,' designed to provide a basis for judging how accurate the accounting records are. The audit is a formal expression of opinion about the financial records and internal controls. Although an audit does not guarantee complete accuracy of financial records, it does express an opinion on the fairness of financial statements. An audit should be performed annually and if lapses are identified, suggestions are made in order to correct them in future.

Financial Investments

It is prudent for GLA to make financial investment of part of its income in order to withstand fluctuations in subscriptions or dues. Some money should be invested so as to be readily available when needed. I am aware that GLA has made such an investment with UT Financial Services. The rule of thumb that some associations use is that investment should equal 25% of budgetary expenditures for any given year. (Russell, 1989).

Sources of Income

For most associations, the payment of annual dues by members constitutes a major source of revenue, representing about 50% of their income. The fundamental function of a professional association is to provide services to its members and

therefore subscription income should be set aside to support the association's core services. Those activities outside the core services, especially if they are available to only members, should be self-supporting or subsidized as little as possible from subscriptions. Perhaps the fairest means of levying subscriptions is to relate them to salaries.

Exploring Other Sources of Revenue

The GLA can also exploit other sources of income. The first relates to services that the association may already be providing, but from which no additional monies are being charged because the services were originally conceived solely as a free service provided in return for members' subscriptions, for example the sale of Ghana Library Journal. The GLA should begin to charge for services which hitherto were provided free of charge. Fees for activities like organizing courses, seminars and workshops could be charged to users, and extended to even members. Member fees for a service can be less than non-member fees, thereby ensuring member discounts for association services. The same discounting methods can also apply to the provision of short courses or continuing professional education programs. In many cases the employer will benefit from the results as much as the individual professional and therefore fees can be set at a slightly higher level than that for an individual member who has to pay from his or her own pocket and can then obtain a members' discount.

The other additional revenue-earning sources that the GLA can exploit is where services or activities are likely to be more attractive to special groups of the membership or that they will be of more use to institutions rather than to personal members. Such services can range from new library systems, library software and equipment among others. Products can include posters for special campaigns as well as pens, pencils, note pads, mugs, T-shirts or other clothing accessories. In addition, GLA should consider as a matter of importance writing of proposals to bring in funds for the Association to support some of its activities. Indeed, proposal writing can also be used to bring some revenue to the Association to enable it carry out some of its activities.

Grant aid, foundations and government support

In some countries, governments provide associations with financial support. However, this usually happens when the government works in collaboration with the association and if it sees it as a source of expertise and advice in formulating government policies. For example, the Ministry of Education can provide funds to GLA to organize periodic training for staff of school libraries in Ghana.

Sustainability of Library Associations
The GLA's ability to develop strategies for growth and development will enable it to function efficiently and effectively into the future. It is therefore necessary to develop strategies for the long-term operation and sustainability of the library association. This is possible when there is continuous improvement and achievement in all areas of the association's activities, notably succession planning, change management, cross fertilization of ideas and full participation by members as well as evaluation of outcomes and processes among others.

Benefits of GLA Membership
When a library association is strong members derive a host of professional advantages including credentials recognized by employers as well as support for career, professional development opportunities, information to keep up to date, resources for finding jobs, employment and industrial relations advice, networking opportunities, and many other benefits.

Educational and Professional Development Opportunities
The rates members pay for its organized conferences, seminars and workshops are lower than those paid by non-members and IFLA Conference registration is also lower. In addition, members receive an accredited certificate.

Advocacy
- GLA Members have a voice in GLA's national and international advocacy
- GLA monitors and takes positions on issues such as copyright and funding for libraries.
- Resources to assist members' own advocacy efforts

Networking Opportunities
- GLA National Conferences- AGM and Biennial Congress
- GLA Listserv, an electronic national network for the GLA community where members work on common issues, share opinions, and inform and influence GLA policy and programme.
- Opportunity to join members having a common interest in some aspect of the library and information community to meet and correspond on subjects such as literacy, distance learning and library technicians.

Information and Research Services
- The GLA website keeps you aware of current issues
- GLA Newsletter delivers current events, news briefs, and other relevant information quarterly via email to members
- Research initiatives supported by GLA.

Publications
- The Ghana Library Journal which is published two times annually should be the first choice of information for library and information professionals in Ghana
- Every Member should get a discount on Ghana Library Journal publications
- Access to Ghana Library Association Annual Reports

Awards and Grants
- Eligibility to be appointed Fellow of the Ghana Library Association.
- It should be possible for new Governing Council members to benefit from training packages that will empower them to deliver upon assumption of office.

Conclusion

Building a strong library association requires a comprehensive programme that offers a strategic and concerted approach for capacity building and sustainability. Like a human being born fifty years ago, the GLA at twenty-five fell into a coma but was revived in 1983 and is still kicking. Building a strong library association in Ghana should engage the attention of all librarians. The time has come for GLA and GhLA to speak with one voice so as to provide a united front towards the growth and development of the library profession and by extension the GLA. The Association should take a second look at the proper integration of other information professionals into the Association if they so wish. I think that GLA has the capacity and propensity to become very strong when all the recommendations that have been advanced by the author are meticulously implemented: strategic thinking and planning on the part of leadership, institutional capacity building, positive partnerships, effective communication as well as prudent financial management among others. Information has become a very critical resource for survival in the 21st century and as information professionals, we cannot afford to stay divided to the detriment of our profession, association and for our own benefit. This is because fifty years on, the GLA has the men and women who are capable of running the affairs of their own association successfully. There are also a lot of advantages to be derived from building a strong library association.

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