

Book Donation and Exchange as Sources of collection development in Nigerian University Libraries: University of Lagos Library Experience

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ABSTRACT:

It is generally acknowledged that access to appropriate reading and information is essential for political, educational, social and economic development. Libraries in Nigeria, however, do not have the books and materials they require due to financial constraints.

This paper discusses some critical issues for collection development through book donations and exchange contribution of books to Nigerian University Libraries with special reference to University of Lagos Library. It also makes recommendation for the development of selected existing book donation schemes.

KEYWORDS

collection development, book donations, exchange, donors, University of Lagos library.

INTRODUCTION

Priestly (1) has asserted that access to books and learning materials is vital to educational and social development, and lack of these resources is a major handicap to students, teachers and researchers at all levels. The World Bank (2) in its recent report on Education in sub-Saharan Africa indicates that "the safest investment in educational quality is to secure adequate books".

Building strong academic institutions cannot be accomplished without strengthening library services, and once available, books and other materials need to be stored and disseminated in appropriate ways.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Collection development is asserted by Evans (3) as

the Universal process in the library world whereby the library staff brings together a variety of materials to meet patron demands. This consists of six definable elements namely, community analysis, policies, selection, acquisition, weeding and evaluation. Given the sequential relationship of the elements of the collection development process, then it is possible to begin to describe the cycle at any point. However, the library's examination of its own community is an appropriate starting point for an overview, as community analysis is the way in which those needs can be ascertained.

Community in this sense is used to cover the group of persons that the library has been established to serve. It does not mean only the active users, it means everyone within the community's defined limits. Thus a community might be an entire political unit like the nation, region, town or a more specialized grouping or association like the University, College and Government Agency. Also, the number of patrons that the library is to serve may range from the tens to the millions.

For collection development personnel it provides data on which information the patron community needs; it also establishes a valuable mechanism for patron input into the process of collection development.

One use the library can make of data collected in a community survey is in preparing a collection development policy. Clearly delineated policies on both collection development and selection provide librarians involved in collection development with guideline for choosing items for inclusion in the collection. For example, selection policies normally only provide information useful in deciding which items to purchase, while collection policies will cover topics and related issues such as gifts, weeding and co-operation.

GIFTS

The receipt and handling of gifts and their management are seen as one of the major acquisitions operations in most libraries. It is usually combined with exchange work to make a gift and exchange unit, though accounting for gifts is normally done as part of the total acquisitions operation.

Gifts are excellent means of developing a collection when and if the library has complete freedom for their use and is not restricted by the donor.

TYPE OF GIFTS

Basically two kinds of materials are given to libraries; those solicited as specific titles and those offered as unsolicited items or collections.

Work on the former is similar to work done for purchased acquisitions after selection(4). Searching is done to prevent unwanted duplication and to gather enough information to do the soliciting. The skills of gift solicitation are highly developed in many larger libraries and special libraries in developed countries. In these cases, knowledgeable staff work continually to discover and acquire valuable collections and to maintain contact with prospective donors. Frequently, also, there is an interest in acquiring individual private collections.

A large percentage of most gifts received in libraries are, however not used because they duplicate items already installed, are inappropriate to the library collection or are in poor condition. In larger libraries, gifts are rejected if they are already in the collection. Libraries that do not reject them dispose of them through an exchange programme.

In this paper an attempt is being made to look at the essence of book gifts received by libraries in Nigeria, particularly the University of Lagos, from various charitable organisations all over the world, especially during the economic recession.

Book donations to Nigerian libraries, unlike those of the developed countries, are generally unsolicited. It is during acknowledgement by the recipient libraries that a form of solicitation for the donors' continuous assistance is usually made. Most of the materials donated are those considered by donor organisations as useful to libraries after considering their needs while the recipient libraries also regard these donations as some form of relief because they reduce vainless efforts employed by them to acquire books and other materials.

DONATIONS TO NIGERIAN LIBRARIES

Book donation has generally become one of the major means of book acquisition in Nigeria. Its essence has been much felt in libraries by the scarcity that followed the economic recession which came to a head in 1983. This period has been characterised by acute shortage of books due to lack of foreign exchange to import them. The effect of this shortage began to manifest itself by the close of 1983 when libraries in Nigeria, especially academic ones, started experiencing a drastic fall in their total yearly acquisition. This was due to the introduction

of stringent measures on importation of books. The promulgation of the 1982 Economic Stabilisation Act introduced the pre-shipment inspection of books, the use of "Form M", and the general scarcity of foreign exchange for importation of books.

BOOK DONATIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS LIBRARY

The acquisition section of the University of Lagos Library was equally affected. Books previously purchased on credit could not be paid for and as such the library could not make fresh orders because overseas dealers repeatedly sent notices of non-payment bills. The result was that the staff involved had to rely on books encountered during book selection trips, book fairs and exhibitions.

This practice naturally affected acquisitions policy in a number of ways; for example, the normal practice of titles selection by lecturers and other members of the University could no longer be encouraged. Selection of newly published books whose announcements were sent to the acquisitions section also became fruitless since those books could not be acquired. Thus book gifts during the period were hailed since they constituted a major source of additions to the library collection.

Book donations in the University of Lagos Library is basically part of the acquisitions procedure handled by the staff of the Acquisitions Department. Donations usually arrive in the library through normal mails and are processed in the same manner as purchased books. The department has a register for donations in which the name and address of the donor is recorded. The information also includes the number of titles, volumes and date of receipt. A file is also usually opened for correspondence to and from various donors such as acknowledgement letters and letters accompanying the donations. Slips bearing the names of donors are usually pasted in the donations. The purpose is to differentiate purchased books from donations.

Table 1 below shows the declining rate of purchases between 1983 - 1989 by the Acquisitions Section of the University of Lagos Library, while Table 2 shows the total donations received during the same period.

TABLE 1

Purchases

Year	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Titles	5,716	5,362	3,609	2,447	805	570	907
Volumes	6,449	5,512	4,032	3,043	836	582	1,118

TABLE 2

Donations

Year	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Titles	251	1,045	243	357	92	186	1,341
Volumes	412	1,425	381	426	99	191	1,503

Most of the books acquired as shown in Table 1 were made possible through local purchases. The table also shows the declining rate in acquisitions between 1983 and 1989. In Table 2 donations received in 1984 were made substantial by the bulk donations received from the Ford Foundation, through the Whitney M. Young Centre in Lagos, and the collections of deceased members of the University Community. The donation in 1989 also includes that from the Ranfurly Library Service. Donations, however minimal, made a meaningful impact on the library collection helping to fill the vacuum created by the scarcity of books.

PROCEDURE

The Library does not have a clear-cut policy for acceptance of donations. Donations are accepted wholeheartedly while further solicitations are made during acknowledgements. The idea is to encourage donors to donate more titles to the library, not to discourage them by specifying titles which might not be available.

The Library usually donates unwanted gifts to institutions to which they will be useful, or exchanges them with partners. Unwanted gifts received over the years are however insignificant.

Organisation and handling of donations does not go without limitations. Foremost is the problem of space created by unwanted donations in the Acquisitions Department. There is always a time-lapse between their arrival and their disposal to other libraries. This is usually caused by delays in correspondence as well as means of transporting them.

DONORS

Many organisation and individuals from other parts of the world have contributed a great deal to the development of the University Library. Prominent among them is the Ranfurly Library Service in the United Kingdom - notable for collecting books for consumption in developing countries. The organisation has over the years collected thousands of titles from all over the world for distribution to mainly third world countries through their

representatives in those countries. The Ranfurly Library Services currently receives about 10,000 titles in a year for distribution to 114 nations of which Nigeria is one (5). The University of Lagos

Library has recently benefited from its charity through the Whitney M. Young Centre.

The Overseas Development Administration Books Presentation Programme has recently also been of immense help to the University Library through the British Council. The usual practice of the organisation is the distribution of lists of titles to the library, with prices attached, requesting that the library chooses titles from the lists up to a stated amount.

The Ford Foundation, mentioned earlier, is another philanthropic organisation which sends books to third world countries through its agencies. The British Council Library has also contributed immensely towards the development of the Library collection. It receives books from various organisations for distribution to libraries of which the University of Lagos Library is a beneficiary.

Books donated by embassies are mainly material of general knowledge about the donor countries.

The United Nations and its agencies and the World Bank also participate in this philanthropic gesture. Most of them include current reports of their research findings in their donations.

A close examinations of most of the titles donated through the Whitney M. Young Centre in 1987, showed that they were earlier editions, which have had one or two later editions. However, neither the earlier editions nor the later ones had been acquired by the Library. With such additions, a library's collection obviously takes a step ahead and thus makes a useful contribution to its development.

Davidson (6) has asserted that it is morally wrong to accept donations of a collection of books simply as an embellishment without any particular purpose - there should be academic justification sufficient to ensure that the collection will be well used.

There are many other book donation schemes in operation. Recent evidence shows that many of them are for one reason or another less effective than they ought to be. The most obvious reason is that over 90 per cent of such schemes are currently operating as a down-led basis only. In its crudest form this constitutes indiscriminate dumping of unwanted material in developing country libraries.

However, in a situation like that of Nigeria where books and other educational materials are just not coming into the country, and where the government has not yet specified the procedure for free-flow of

books, it is better not to turn down such offers. It is better to accept such books and donate them to libraries where such titles will be relevant to their collection, bearing in mind the objectives of those libraries. This was achieved once by the Acquisitions Section of the University of Lagos when books donated by the British Council which were not useful to the Library were distributed to various interested secondary schools around Lagos.

The responsibility for the exchange of library material is usually assigned to the acquisitions department as part of the same unit that handles gifts. In libraries where acquisitions and serials are in separate departments, exchanges may be a part of the serials department because most items of exchange received in larger libraries are serials. An exchange unit solicits exchange with other institutions, obtains material to offer on exchange, and maintains appropriate records of exchanges, including claiming. Books withdrawn from the library are sometimes of value to other libraries in the country or overseas.

EXCHANGES

Usually, after evaluation and establishing that materials in a library are no longer relevant to the needs of patrons or are in duplicates, these are listed for either exchange or gift.

Members of staff usually participate in the selection of items that the library wishes to receive on exchange; they do the bibliographic searching necessary for the identification of exchange materials, plan and organize the work of exchange. International exchanges dominate the literature of librarianship and comprise the bulk of the work in exchanges in large libraries. Domestic exchanges of scientific, technical, economic and social publications and duplicates are, however, important.

TYPES OF EXCHANGES

There are two basic types of exchange activities: there is the exchange of unwanted and duplicate materials, and the exchange of new materials between libraries. Exchange of new materials is usually confined to large University or research libraries. In essence, cooperating institutions trade publications. This system is also employed to acquire materials from countries in which commercial trade operations are limited or restricted in some manner. In such cases, exchanges are established through formal agreements between the operating organisations.

The method used for disposing of unwanted items is to prepare a list of them. This list is then sent to exchange units in other libraries and when selection is made by them the materials are sent by the

donating library. In most cases the receiving library pays for the cost of delivery.

ESTABLISHING EXCHANGES

Ford (7) advises that the management of exchanges in most libraries must proceed from the needs of the institution rather than from an altruistic desire to support the distribution of scholarly materials. It is therefore pertinent that only titles that are appropriate to the collection should be obtained.

The first step after selection in establishing exchanges is the identification of potential exchange partners. The UNESCO Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications is an important source. It is supplemented by the UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries, The World of Learning, and the Yearbook of International Organisations, are also important sources for identification of issuing bodies and their addresses. The UNESCO Handbook also contains extensive explanations and discussions on International Exchanges. The usual procedure is to send an exploratory letter with a proposal and sample copies of items offered. The Committee on the exchange of Publications of the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) has developed a standard multiple-copy request form for exchange publications. It provides space for response and copies for both the requesting and responding agencies. Most University Libraries join in Exchange Union - a practice whereby books collected by the Union are listed and sent to the libraries where they are needed.

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS LIBRARY EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The University of Lagos Library started an exchange programme in 1979 and the total exchange partners now numbers over three hundred, a quarter of a century after the institution was established [8]. The local exchange partners account for over one hundred libraries while the overseas exchange partners account for over two-thirds of all the exchange partners [9].

The Exchange Unit was originally part of the Serials Department of the Library. Exchange materials have separate records and files and are different from records of serials under subscription. Exchanged periodicals are processed in the same way as purchased ones, while books are sent to Acquisitions Department for processing in the same way as donations.

EXCHANGE POLICY

The Exchange Unit collects publications from all over the country, mainly by subscription, for the

programme. Materials exchanged include duplicate copies of books, periodicals, University Calendars, University Press Publications reports from institutes attached to the University Library, Library Publications and books especially purchased for exchange purposes. Materials to be exchanged have to fall within the above category of publications to qualify for exchange.

PROBLEMS

During the period under review, the University Library faced some setbacks in the Exchange programme. Most of the Library's partners stopped sending their contributions. This was because the Library did not have funds to keep the exchange agreement with partners. As a result the number of Exchange partners diminished drastically with very few active partners.

TABLE 3

Year	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Received (In Volumes)	806	536	510	140	292	170	178
Sent out (In Volumes)	-	108	-	60	-	50	-

Table 3 shows a drop from 806 volumes received from partners in 1983 to 178 in 1989. It also shows how the department contributed only 218 volumes between 1983 and 1989 with no contribution in 1983, 1985, 1987 and 1989.

More recently, the University of Lagos Library established what is now popularly known as: Commonwealth University Libraries Exchanges Programme (CULEP). Reputable libraries abroad were contacted and exchange agreement was formulated. From March 1990 the Donations and Exchanges units were merged and became Gift and Exchanges Unit under CULEP. The unit was established in order to streamline the organisation and handling of donations and Exchanges in the Library. The Division (i.e. CULEP and Gifts and Exchange Units) is mainly meant for keeping records of these publications while processing them is done in either Acquisitions or Serials Sections. The University of Lagos Library now gets a few current books in science and technology through this method. For some of the titles already received through this medium, if the library had to pay in local currency at the current rate, some books would cost over three hundred Naira each.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Book Donations and Exchanges are regarded as major means of collection development in

University Libraries. This assertion is drawn from the fact that University Libraries which embrace these two procedures in their acquisitions policy have accumulated very rich collections. This is because of the varied sources from where they are drawn which other libraries would normally not acknowledge or even know about.

In many Third World countries the status of the libraries is very low, and this has obvious implications for the development of library services. Until the mid-1970s many Third World institutions had sufficient or nearly sufficient resources - often supplemented by International donors - to stock their libraries. From the 1980s however, the picture has been gloomy, despite the recognition that, in the words of Priestley (10) "something must be done." Libraries which were once well resourced have struggled to keep pace but have fallen behind.

Since books are needed to develop the economic and social lives of the people, donors should be greatly encouraged and donations welcomed, however minimal they are.

However, a critical examination and evaluation of donation schemes which are clearly inappropriate would enable donors to redirect their energies and resources in ways which will be acceptable to recipient institutions.

It is therefore suggested that libraries should have written policies regarding gifts that will provide a framework within which the library will make its decisions, bearing in mind that the printed word is more convincing. Libraries should, however, be wary of unwanted materials.

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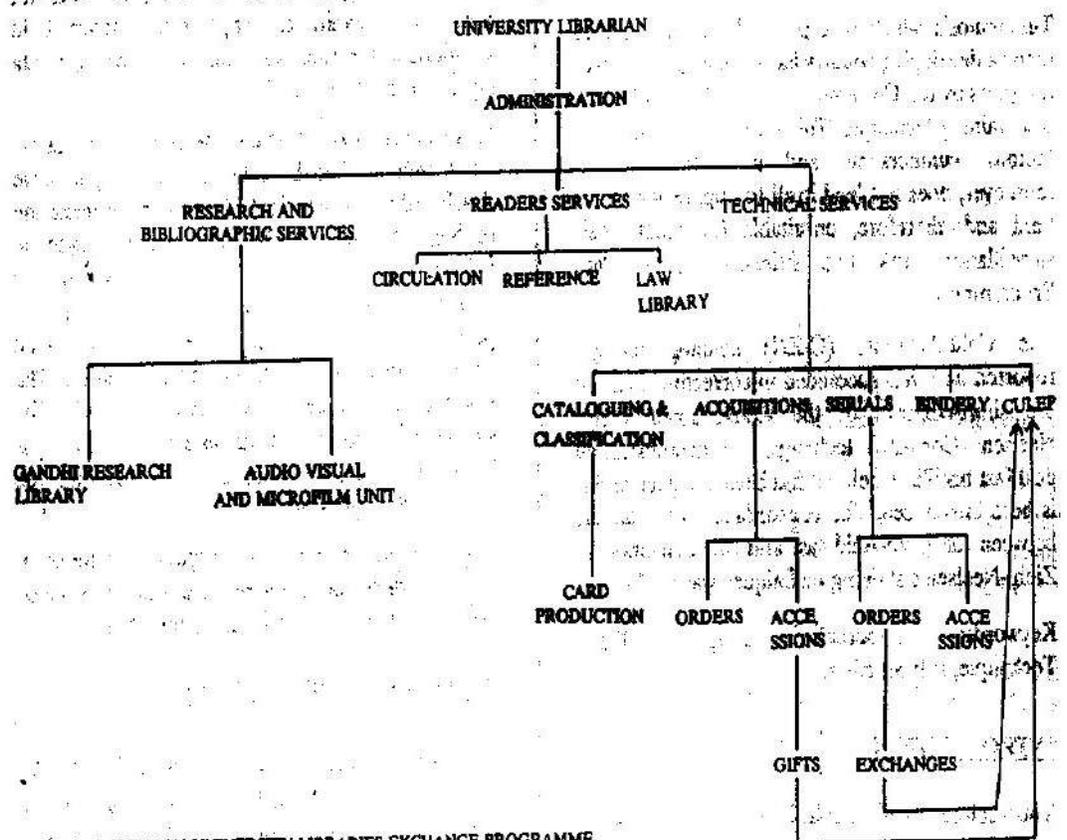
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ORGANISATIONAL CHART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS LIBRARY



CULEP: COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES EXCHANGE PROGRAMME