

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES TO SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Public Libraries, as defined in the glossary of library terms: “a library provided wholly or partly from public funds, and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but is freely available to all”

Their main goal is the delivery of efficient and satisfactory services to the public without discrimination in gender, age and social status, through these well-known functions;

a. **Information acquisition:**

Public Libraries strive to acquire Information/Knowledge in varied forms of representations for the ultimate use of the patrons.

b. **Information Processing**

They also prepare and process the acquired knowledge technically for easy access to the patrons, as well as effective identification and documentation of holdings.

c. **Information dissemination**

When information resources are acquired and processed, their intellectual contents are passed for utilization by the numerous patrons, through either lending out the information resources, allowing utilization to further the function of the libraries. Answering on-the-spot queries or giving out special individual services, (e.g SDI).

Public Library Services to Schools: Policy Guidelines

Provision of public library services particularly to schools, presently was informed and guided by the professionally agreed policy guidelines, as outlined in the IFLA/UNESCO manifesto of 2001. This Manifesto under the broad heading, “Meeting the needs of the Users”, and further sub-heading, “Services to Users” has outlined how public libraries should render services to schools under the following themes:

(a) serving children, and young adults for life-long learning. The Manifesto stated, and I quote, "Public library must provide services based on an analysis of the library and information needs of the local community", and further stated that, "..... services should be developed for identified target groups and only provided if such groups exist in the local community". Schools, being the habitat of the above-mentioned category of public library patrons must be served under the following provisions;

i Services to Children

By providing a wide range of materials and activities, public libraries provide an opportunity for children to experience the enjoyment of reading and the excitement of discovering knowledge and works of the imaginations. Children and their parents should be taught how to make the best use of a library and how to develop skills in the use of print and electronic media.

Public Libraries have a special responsibility to support the process of learning to read, and promote book and other media for children. The library must provide special events for children, such as story telling and activities related to the library's services and resources. Children should be encouraged to use the library from an early age, as this will make them more likely to remain users in future years. In multilingual countries, books and audio-visual materials for children should be available in their mother tongue.

ii Services for Young Adults.

Young people between childhood and adult hood develop as individual members of society, use 'as such' their own public libraries must understand their needs and provide services to meet them. Materials including access to electronic information, resources that reflects their interest and culture should be provided. In some cases this means acquiring materials that represent youth culture, in variety of media that are not traditionally part of a library's resources, for example, popular novels, book and television series, music, video tapes, teenage magazines, posters, computer games, graphic novels. It is important to enlist the help of young people in selecting these materials to ensure that they reflect their interests. In larger libraries these materials, with appropriate furniture, can form a special section of the library. This will help them to feel that the library is for them and help to overcome feelings of alienation

from the library, which is not unusual among this age group. Relevant programmes and talks to young adults should also be provided.

iii. Lifelong Learning

The public library supports lifelong learning, working with schools and other educational institutions to help students of all ages with their formal education. The challenge of providing educational support provides an opportunity for public libraries to interact and network with teachers and others involved in education. The public library should also provide a range of materials on a variety of topics, which will allow people to follow their interests and support their formal and informal education. It should also provide materials to support literacy and development of basic life skills. In addition, the library must provide study facilities for students who have inadequate or no access to these facilities in their homes.

iv. Services to Special User Groups

Potential users who, for whatever reason are unable to use the regular services of the library have a right to equal access. The library should, therefore, establish ways of making library materials and services accessible to these users. These will include:

- a. Acquisition of multi-media library collection as resource-base;
- b. Provision of library use-education to let children practise the skills they were taught;
- c. Availability of qualified personnel(s) (Librarians and/ or Teachers) to supervise library usage, either during school library hour or children independent use;
- d. Borrowing library books for classroom use;
- e. Ensuring strong library collection in order to meet users' present and potential needs

See Ogunsheye in her book on library use education: Syllabus. Enumerated among others, guides, if implemented can enhance effective service delivery to schools

Public Library Services to Schools: A Case Study of Kano State Library Services

The provision made by the Kano State Library Board edict on services to schools can be cited under part III functions, power of the Board section 6 subsection (102), it cited, and I quote.

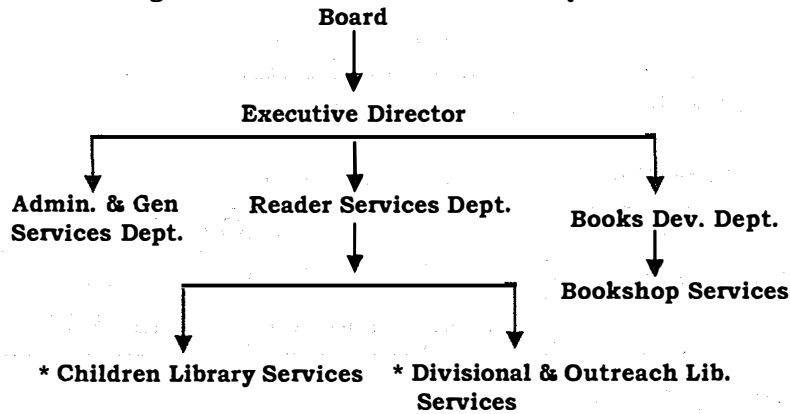
“Subject to the provisions of this law, the Board shall have power to establish, control and maintain in the State Public Library Services to schools”

And further stated that, “the Board shall supervise and help to organise library services in all primary and post-primary institutions in the State”

It is based on the above-mentioned empowerment that the management of the Kano State Library Board set to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) Provision of adequate and appropriate library collection (in a variety of information representations) for the use of children and young adults in the State;
- (ii) Inculcating and sustaining permanent literacy and numeracy skills in children and young adults;
- (iii) Developing permanent reading culture among children and young adults in the State;
- (iv) Producing a well-informed and enlightened citizenry for the State;
- (v) Supporting an overall educational development of the State;
In trying to realise the preceding objectives, the Board deems it necessary to execute the following functions:
 - a. Providing services under two sections, within the library administrative hierarchy,
 - i. Children’s Library Services Section
 - ii. Divisional and Outreach Library Services Section: School Libraries

Fig-1: KSLB Administrative Hierarchy



* Sections through which KSLB provides services to schools.

- b. Building of adequate and appropriate multi-media resources in the library for the use of children and young adults
- c. Provision of variety of services, such as
 - i. Schools' membership registrations and book-box loans
 - ii. Individual membership registrations and independent loans
 - iii. Conduct of school library hours with the following sessions
 - * Drawing sessions
 - * Story telling
 - * Television/Video viewings
 - * Radio Listening
 - * Reading lessons
 - * Recreational plays
 - * Computer appreciation
- d. Conduct of library use education for children and young adults
- e. Visiting and providing professional advise to "Librarians" and head teachers on how to effectively run school libraries.
- f. Organising or re-organizing collection and services of school libraries in the state on requests.
- g. Conducting, training, conferences, seminar and or workshops for teachers and or staff overseeing school libraries in the State.

The role played by Kano State Public Library Services to schools in service delivery can, critically be analysed from the following points of view:

Reader Services

Statistical data of years 2000 and 2001 on the types of services delivered to children and young adults can show how committed KSLB is in delivery effective services.

Fig. 2: KSLB “Children’s” User Statistics

<i>Service</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Loans</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Consultations/Resources</i>
2000	5,568	40,582	80,539	85,630
2001	6,829	58,602	100,101	120,900

Consultancy Services

KSLB’s consultancy services being rendered to schools in the state under school libraries section of the Board include, supervision, organization/re-organization of resources/services, trainings, sensitisation fora etc. The extent to which they are rendered could be viewed from the following tables:

Fig. 3: KSLB’s Consultancy Services to Schools

<i>Services</i>	<i>Supervision</i>	<i>Trainings</i>	<i>Organizing re-organizing</i>	<i>Conferences/ Workshops</i>	<i>Sensitisation</i>
2000	48	4	5	2	0
2001	48	8	8	2	1

Schools Library Hours

KSLB conducts co-operative services with schools in the neighbourhood of their libraries, and sessions are being conducted in the library with different classes participating (mostly senior classes) schools, and below is the statistical data for the years 2000 and 2001.

Fig- 4: KSLB’s Schools Library Hours

<i>Service</i>	<i>Prescribed Number</i>	<i>Sessions Conducted</i>
2000	192	180
2001	192	192

Public Library Services to Schools:

Problems and Prospects

Problems being confronted by public libraries in the effective delivery of services especially to schools in the country can be analysed from the following angles

(a) General funding of library services

Funding generally is the bane of effective service delivery in public libraries. Being service-oriented institutions, they always come last on the governments' propriety list as regards, government institutional funding. In view of this therefore, libraries could not execute effectively their formulated policies, however fantastic. Services to schools therefore, are implicatively the most affected.

(b) Problems of role capacities

For school libraries to run effectively, they should not be seen playing second fiddle but rather seen as focal points where all schools' function revolve around. The present position of these libraries left much to be desired, may be because public library boards do not directly control schools especially on:

- i. Staff employment, establishment and training
- ii Collection/resources building, development, and management
- iii Service delivery appraisal/evaluation.

Recommendations

Considering the above-enumerated problems, these suggestions on how to overcome them are preferred for possible consideration.

(a) Improved work relationship between SLB's and SPEBS & MOE

There should be well-articulated standing policies on how these institutions will co-operatively work to deliver efficient library services to schools in Nigeria. These policies should be on how:

- (i) State Library Boards should actively participate in the technical/professional activities of school libraries collection/ resources development and maintenance through these functions.
- (ii) Provision of selection tools to schools
- * Giving professional advise on how and what to acquire

- * Surrendering some relevant materials/resources to school libraries, occasionally, free of charge.
- * Giving helping hands on the continuous management and maintenance of the libraries so as to ensure physical and intellectual relevance of the resources.
- (iii) While the respective States Primary Education Boards (SPEB) and ministries of education should provide the necessary funds for the school libraries
- (iv) State Library Board should occasionally, conduct training, conferences and workshop sessions for school librarians and staff in order to ensure effective service delivery. These sessions can be:
 - * Orientation and/or refresher course trainings for library assistants at least twice a year,
 - * Seminars and/or conferences sessions to school librarians/teacher librarians at least four times a year,
 - * Varied technical workshop sessions for all categories of staff at least four times a year,
 - * While respective State Primary Education Boards and ministries of education should be responsible for the financial implications of the various sessions,
 - * State Library Boards can even be involved in the preparation of starting fresh school libraries, organizing their resources or reorganizing those of the existing libraries,
 - * While SPEBs and MOE provide the necessary working materials,
 - * State library boards should participate fully in the periodic school libraries service delivery appraisals and evaluation.
- (b) SLB's mandate over staff employment and deployment

The state government should consider giving their respective Library Boards the mandate of employing, and deploying at least the professional librarians to oversee the affairs of school libraries, for these could have the following benefits.

 - i Rendition of professionally-conscious services is assured
 - ii School Library Services could be wholly integrated into the States Public Library Services.
 - iii All staff of the school libraries could have a professional feeling of belonging.

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Kano State Library Board Services Statistical Records School Libraries Section.