ABADINA MEDIA RESOURCE CENTRE (AMRC)
(A case study in Library Service to Primary Schools)

By

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INTRODUCTION:

Abadina is the name of a village that existed on the campus of the University of Ibadan campus when it was acquired twenty-nine years ago by the government for the then University College of Ibadan. The name Abadina was adopted for the settlement which the University subsequently provided for members of its junior and intermediate staff. These are artisans and unskilled workers who provide labour of all categories for the University It is estimated that modern Abadina contains over 10,000 inhabitants, To meet the educational needs of their children of age 7 — 12 the government provided a free primary school on the campus within the settlement at its inception. The population of children has grown so rapidly that there are now four schools on two physical plant for a morning and an afternoon school serving Abadina. They are all referred to as Abadina School, I, II, III and IV respectively. Although two schools share one set of facilities, each school has its own headmaster/headmistress, its own teachers and its own pupils.

They are governed by the same board and are all subsidised by funds from the University although they are government Public schools.

The Abadina Schools system consist of 3,174 children, 92 teachers including 4 headmasters/mistresses as at April, 1977. (See Table I)

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		. No. of Classes	. No. of Children	. No. of Teachers.
Abadina	I	22	881	24
	II	22	819	24
	III	20	760	22
	IV	20	714	22
Grand Total:		84	3,174	92

TABLE I: -— Population of Abadina Schools — April, 1977

Besides the Abadina Primary Schools, which are free, there is a fee paying staff school about 0.5 km away within the same campus. This is the school where most of the senior staff of the University and foreigners who can afford it send their chidlren for Primary education. The school consist of 25 classes, 883 children, 27 teachers under a headmistress. The school has a nursery and reception section for children age 4 - 6 and a primary section for children age 6 - 12. The staff school is better staffed and better equiped than the Abadina Schools. Early in its founding, the selection of its teachers was influenced by the possession of certification and training in the Montessori method of education. It is needless to add that the school had a library room with a collection of books but no librarian.

The Abadina Media Resource Centre was conceived of as early as 1965. It fills the vacuum that existed, with the absence of any school or children's library that could meet the reading and information needs of children, Staff School notwithstanding, and serve as a model for the training of school librarians.

The Philosophy behind the programme:

The planners of the project was influenced by the philosophy that every child has the right to a good education. The quality of education a child gets is however influenced by a number of variables - the quality of the programme, the quality of the teachers, the availability of books and teaching aids, the physical facilities but above all on the socio-economic back-

ground and the cultural environment of the child. This last variable cannot be controlled by the education authorities. But we believe that other things being equal, it is possible to reduce or ameliorate the differences and reduce the gap by intervention at school. If programmes aimed at making up for what the children from disadvantaged background might be missing are introduced through informal learning programmes that a school library or media resource centre might offer.

Secondly, we are strongly of the opinion that every child need to learn the skills of 'acquiry' — how to find information, where to find information and how to use such information, how to handle the formats in which they occur and how to be discerning and critical of knowledge and information emanating from various sources. We believe, this skill is essential to the education process and the inculcating of the spirit of inquiry, which is central to education.

Thirdly. that every child has the right to knowledge and information especially, that which concerns his cultural heritage. It is therefore imperative that in cultures that are essentially of oral tradition and not of written tradition, knowledge and information transfer must be effected by using modern technology to record and transmit the original message to the next generation. Therefore the african child must be exposed to the use of audio-visual media as the only available means now, of transmitting his cultural heritage to him.

Finally, the designers of the AMRC programme believe that school libraries or media resource centre are no longer just "fringe" services to the education programme. They offer through their informal methods an opportunity for the child to learn "how to find out, how to discover and how to be discriminating in the messages graphic and otherwise that it receives". The librarian then becomes not the passive provider of books and resources but the teacher helping the child to acquire the skills of 'acquiry'. Therefore library education should be an integral part of the schools curriculum. The library hour should not be used for teaching the child how to process books or just for aimless reading. A structured programme should be designed such that will ensure that a child learns those skills of exploiting resources of a library as part of education in itself. This library education will prepare the individual for continuing life long education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE AMRC.

The objectives of the Centre as stated in its Foundation Report are as follows:—

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SHORT TERM:

(a) To provide facilities for conducting research into children's literature, school library needs and the training of teacher/librarians for Nigerian Schools and in particular the U.P.E. programme;

(b) To provide library service and a variety of materials to support the curriculum in Abadina Schools and for recreational reading;

(c) To inculcate into the pupils in Abadina Schools and other children in the surrounding a love and desire for books;

(d) To develop listening, reading and finding skills among children using graphic, audio records and other media and to develope care in their handling as well.

LONG TERM:

(e) To establish a model resource centre experimenting on standards through its services with a view to estbalishing realistic standards for all schools in Nigeria.

(f) To encourage the writing and publishing of relevant and suitable books for Nigerian children;

(g) To encourage the establishment of media resource centres as an integral part of the education system in Nigeria.

PROFILE OF THE AMRC.

The AMRC scheme was fisrt given an impetus in 1971 by the receipt of an offer of a donation of 1,000 Books from the British Council to the Department of Library Studies for a children's model library. This gift, however, had a condition attached to it, namely ".... that there is guarantee of (continuing) local support". The University on the recommendation and approval of a proposal of the Department of Library Studies accepted the donation and the condition that went with it. The Development Committee was persuaded to approve the birth of AMRC and to make provision for the physical plant and the recurrent expenditure in the University's annual estimate.

PHYSICAL PLANT:

The initial grant of =N6,000 that was made available for the physical plant of the AMRC was limited. As an interim measure we acquired the abandoned buildings of an old dispensary, sited next floor to the Abadina Schools. These buildings were knocked down and a more modern and acceptable physical plant was planned to emerge in three phases. The first phase, which was completed in 1973 consisted of the book collection and reading room, the cataloguing/processing room and two offices and toilet facilities.

The second phase - the audio-visual unit was built in 1976, when additional funds were made available. It consisted of a hall, an audio/viewing room, an audio-visual resources room. The third phase - the production unit is planned for the last phase of this quinquennium 1979/80. The execution of this last phase is now doubtful, as Universities are now facing drastical reduction in their capital and recurrent expenditure.

The existing facilities are adequate for another two years. The reading room is capable of seating 53 children and the hall has been recorded to hold 173 children. There are however, signs that we may outgrow existing facilities before 1979.

RESOURCES:

At its inauguration in 1973, the AMRC had 1,104 volumes purchased from the British Council grant. Today its resources consist of the following:

6,500 volumes of books

28 titles of journals/magazines

500 non-book media materials - films, slides, tapes, etc.

250 items - Educational teaching aids and play materials ·

12 – 15 equipment consisting film projectors, slides projectors, video tape player recorder, hi-fi and cassette recorders, camera and a television set.

40 boxes of pamphlets and picture illustrative material.

Other donors to existing resources are the USIS, Harper Row Publishers and Audio-Visual Centre, Seederville, Western Australia.

STAFF:

This collection is managed by a staff of 15 consisting of a Director (on loan from Department of Library Studies), a media librarian, 3 library officers, a media technician, 3 library assistants and 6 secretarial staff. A joint committee of teachers from the Library School and Librarian and library officer meet regularly to plan and monitor the programmes of the Centre. The staff of the library school take responsibility for execution of specific tasks and projects and lead student practical assignments in performing important useful operations in the Centre.

CLIENTELE ::

The AMRC's clientele in the Abadina Schools and Staff School has increased from 3,445 in 1974/75 to 4,293 in 1976/77 session. Besides the pupils in the schools, it has 2,032 registered readers on its books. Its clientele are drawn not only from the 5 schools on the campus but from 38 other schools in and around Ibadan. Children come from outside the campus to use its facilities and especially to participate in the story hour session which has become a very popular Saturday event.

The activities of the (AMRC) can be divided into two categories - the

I: SERVICES:

    (a)   Normal library and information service to School and Primary Schools in particular;

    (b)   Consultancy service to schools wishing to set up their own service.

    (c)   Workshop and training for teacher/librarians.

II: RESEARCH:

    (a)   Design testing and development of meaningful standards of service;

    (b)   Design and specifications for local produced furniture using local materials and costing;

    (c)   D evelopment, design and testing of curriculum for Use of books and and libraries for primary schools;

    (d)   Research experiment, to establish or identify the behavioural differences arising from acquisition of library education skills;

(e)   Study of childrens' literature and the reading habit of the primary school child in Nigeria.

(f)   Development of resources (study kits) in support of curriculum for science and cultural subjects in the U.P.E. programme.

SERVICES:

The Abadina Media Resource Centre is a public service to primary schools and children in the neighbourhood. It serves in particular the four Abadina Schools and the Staff School. Besides offering the normal services of a library -- reference and lending, it runs library education programmes for teachers and pupils of the two schools. AMRC runs regular orientation courses for teachers of the two schools and plans and organises the programmes for library hour for select group of classes. These programmes are used for administering testing and modifying the syllabus that has been designed on the Syllabus for effective Use of Books and libraries for Primary Schools.

The Consultancy service offered has been requested by both primary and secondary schools in Ibadan. Although the service has been free, we may have to charge fees to cover of personnel time in future, owing to the cut in our budget.

The workshop for teacher librarians is an annual event. We have recently upgraded this into a teacher/librarian certification sandwich course lasting twelve weeks over a three year period.

The AMRC also offers training and practical experience facilities for the students of the Department of Library Studies. It also undertakes on request from other libraries short term internship programme for training of staff.

RESEARCH:

The establishment of meaningful and relevant standards and specifications for school libraries in Nigeria has been of paramount interest to the Centre. The first two years of the Centre's establishment has been used to investigate, test, and establish such meaningful standards as is now being published in the Manual for Nigerian School Libraries. Local materials and local skills have been used in the design and production of suitable equipment so that meaningful and realistic costing can be recommended for school libraries operations and their establishment.

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THE EXPERIMENT:

The Centre has also obtained University Senate research grant to conduct an empirical experimental research on the effect of its programmes on the primary school child. The research project titled Effects of Teaching Library Use Skills on the behaviour, academic and social attainments of the Primary School Child, is in its third year of operation. The experiment is designed to test the following hypotheses.

1. That a programme of library education is essential to the education of the primary school child.

2. That such programme of library education, if administered, will transmit learning skills that will affect positively the academic peformance of the primary school child.

3. That the acquisition of such library education skills will reduce the learning disability or handicap of children from diadvantaged homes.

4. That the acquisition of such skills will improve social and moral attitudes and work behaviour.

5. That the acquisition of such skills is the only effective way to develop capability for continuing self education.

Library education is defined for the purpose of this study to mean activities designed to transmit knowledge and skills about the following:--

(a) How knowledge and information are recorded in various formats.

(b) Nature and use of books and other resources.

(c) H ow books and resources are oragnised for use in resource centres.

(d) S ources of knowledge and information

(e) How to exploit the resources of a library or resource centre.

(f) How to critically asses the validity of knowledge and information obtained.

As preliminary to the research a curriculum and syllabus has been developed on the Use of Books and libraries and is being administered and modified as the research progresses. The provision of a good library service and audio visual aids resources are also considered essential parts of the library education programme package.

The experiment is designed to enable observations to be collected on parallel sets of experimental and control groups of classes respectively.

In 1974/75 session the first year of the research project, there were over 300 children in the experiment.

T   The classes were divided into 3 groups:--

I.   Abadina experiment classes which had both use of the library and administered syllabus instruction.

II.   Abadina experiment classes that only had the use of the library and no instructional programme.

III.   Abadina experiment classes that only had the use of the library and no instructional programme.

III.   Bodija control class that had neither the administered programme nor access to a library.

All the children in the research experiment were in their first year of formal school, average age 6. Most of them could neither read nor write. A test administered to obtain information on picture recognition showed that most of them did not know how to look at pictures in a book. Only those who had attended nursery schools or were from priviledged homes passed the test. In the 1st year of the research 1974/75, we were unable to administer a test to establish that all the children in both experiment and control groups were of the same developmental level. In the second year of the programme we were able to administer the "Good-enough" test of Drawing a person. The analysis of the results showed that the children in that year 1975/76 were homogeneous. This could not be inferred for the 1st year group as the 3rd year test 1976/77 showed variation that indicated that the control group at Bodija Irepodun were more mature or better developed than the experiment group at Abadina   The school having moved to new and better facilities and neighbourhood recently seemed to have attracted children from better socio-economic parental background.

The experiment classes came once a week to the Media Resource Centre for 40 minutes. Group I had administered to them a programme designed to introduce them to identifying information in different formats and the world of books through films, folk tales and picture book reading sessions. Group II only had free unguided use of the picture books in the Book troughs. The Centre was insulated from the Bodija group until some of them discovered our Saturday Story hour in the second year ·

INTERIM RESULTS:

Three tests were administered at various stages during the first year. The first test designed to match works and picture was administered at the end of the 2nd term and observations were analysed.

Table II shows analysis of the first recorded test.

TABLE II
Picture/Word Recognition Test

Group	No. of observation	Means	Std. dev.	St. error	t—value	f—Ratio
Control	168	21.929	7.157	0.552	0.877	1.840
Experiment	168	23.006	7.355	0.567		

This table seems to show that there is no major significant difference between the two groups. The group means are rather close. The standard deviation show that the variations with the groups are similar.

The t-value of 0.877 as against tabulated t-test pf 1.98 as well as the f-ratio of 1.840 as against 1.00 both at 5% level of significance show that there is no major significant difference between the two groups.

The school test at the end of the year also demonstrated the homogeniety within the groups.

TABLE III
End of year school test—Arithmetic, English

Group	No. of observation	Means	Std. dev.	Std. error	t—value	f—Radio
Control	165	72.252	15.871	1.236	0.949	0.902
Experiment	168	73.787	13.527	1.041		

The sample means as well as the variability within the groups are rather close. The t-value of 0.949 as against 1.980 as well as f-ratio of 0.092 as against 1,000 both at 5% level of significance.

It is however significant that the experiment group had a slight edge over the control group in both sample means and has less variability.

The situation was however different when we administered and analysed reading tests scores for both groups at the end of the session. Two reading tests — Yoruba and English were given. For the purpose of comparative analysis 3 classes were selected as follows:—

(a) One class at Abadina School randomly selected henceforth referred to as IG EXPERIMENT consisting of 34 children.

(b) A group which consisted of 34 children selected from all the Abadina Schools I & II including class IG henceforth referred to as EXPERIMENT.

(c) One group of 34 children randomly selected from Bodija School henceforth referred to as Bodija CONTROL group.

The tables below show English and Yoruba reading test scores analysis.

TABLE IV

English Reading Test

Group	No. of observation	Mean	Std. dev.	Std. error	f—Ratio
Bodija CONTROL group	33	10.152	9.808	1.707	4.175
Abadina EXPERIMENT	34	15.147	4.285	0.735	
Abadina IG EXPERIMENT	34	12.794	5.713	0.988	

T-value for Bodija vs. IG Experiment = 1.528

T-value for Experiment vs. IG Experiment = 1.371

T-value for Experiment vs. Bodija = 2.889

each against tabulated T value of 2.030 at 5% significance level.

The table clearly demonstrated a higher performance by the Abadina experiment group with sample means 15.147 as against 10.152 of the control, group. The other IG Experiment group with sample means 12.794 is much closer to the Experiment group results. The wide variability in standard deviation 9.808 for Bodija and 0.980 of the Experiment and 0.735 dard deviation 9.808 for Bodija and 0.735 and 0.980 of the Experiment group is significant demonstrating a generally high performance by the Abadina experiment groups.

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TABLE V
YORUBA READING TEST

Group	No. of observation	Means	Std. dev.	Std error	t-value	f-ratio
Bodija	32	9.219	6.387	1.129	4.383	19.219
Experiment	34	15.147	4.285	0.735		

As was reflected in the English reading test the performance of the Bodija group is remarkably poorer than the EXPERIMENT group. There is a wide gap between the means, the variation within the EXPERIMENT group is less than within the Bodija CONTROL group.

The T-value 4.387 as against 2.03 at 5% significance level shows a high significance between the groups and this is further confirmed by the F-ratio of 19.219 as against 1.840 also at 5% level of significance.

It is rather early for us to postulate at this stage that the better performance is wholly due to our experiment. We are monitoring the performance of the EXPERIMENT classes vs. the CONTROL group right through the primary school administering more relevant tests and using school results. In the third year of the experiment the EXPERIMENT group continues to show better performance than the CONTROL group. We are conducting further investigation of the high achievers and low achievers and their socio economic background.

There is need for further research data analysis to prove conclusively that our hypotheses are correct.

The influence of the programme is not limited to the Centre and its clienteles. Like the Knapp Project, 'we expect it to affect' the community. When we moderated the test for picture awareness and recognition for the new entrants in the 2nd year of the programme, we found they all passed the test to our chagrin. The candidates in the second year were more sophisticated than their older brothers and sisters because they had accompanied them to the regular Saturday Story hour sessions the previous year. They had learnt the art of listening, of looking at graphic and pictorial projections and had browse through our picture books. They were already familiar with non graphic media.

The Media Resource Centre and its Saturday story hour now offer a new avenue for use of leisure for chlidren in Abadina Village. The Centre is crowded during the holidays. Saturday Story hour has developed into a two group programme, a play group for the pre-school child and a story hour group for the children six and over. There is freedom of choice in joining

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each group. Some older children have been known to prefer the play group where children have free use of educational play materials, challenging and inciting their creativity. Similarly some younger ones have preferred the active participation and film show of the story hour group.

Some of the parents have regularly accompanied their children to the story hour session or dropped them there on their way to shopping or elsewhere knowing they are going to have a session of fun and education. We do now have a group of parents who have volunteered their services and therefore spend Saturday morning in the centre with their children and have borrowed books for reading to them at home.

The Centre has received request that we should extend the service to the adults at Abadina village. This would entail establishing a separate adult section and extension. The present physical plant and staff are inadequate for such a programme. It is clear that the Centre has made the adult community aware of their need for library services.

The A.M.R.C. has become a social Centre for parents, teachers, librarian and children. We would like to bring writers of children's books to complete the picture. It is hoped that the centre will be a catalyst in bringing about an awareness of the truism that it is the society that educates and the need for teachers and parents to collaborate over their children's education and involve the school child in community projects. This is a process that will constitute meaningful and effective education for the child. In Nigeria today, education tends to alienate the child from the society. This happens in most developing countries where the content of education, the norms and values have been borrowed from another culture. It is questionable whether this situation should be allowed to continue. The Centre hopes to employ the aid of modern technology to bring our local culture (not in graphic form) to the classroom. We hope our youths will be so conscious of the contribution that they can make to the economy, that the "Flower people culture" will bypass them.

Finally, the A.M.R.C.'s greatest achievement outside the precinct of the Centre is the propagation of the idea of Media Resource Centres for primary schools and the final adoption of a National Policy Paper that recognised media resource centre as an essential service to the U.P.E. programme. This was a great step forward from the position in the previous policy papers, where they were not even mentioned. It is now being slowly recognised that far from being luxury, media resource centres, will ensure that our heavy investments in education yield more profitable result and programmes of education have more lasting and enriching effect on the individual and the society.

FUTURE AND CONCLUSION:

The A.M.R.C. is expected to continue to grow as a research centre and a model for school librarianship. At the moment it is only engaged in a small area of its service and research objectives. The next major area of developmental research envisaged is in the production and testing of resource materials — study kits in support of science and cultural subjects syllabus of U.P.E. We also hope these resource materials will offer the basis for the production of science and social science books containing fromation about the local environment that our children can recognise and identify with. We plan that such materials can be relevant to children in other parts of Africa.

Another area of development that has been forced on us is in expansion of services to rural areas. We are often being challenged to test that AMRC can be replicated in a rural area, that the rural child will respond as encouraging as the urban child, that our services can be made relevant to the rural child. The Centre will like to experiment with such a service if funds were available. An offer of mobile library has been received by a voluntary organisation, but we need funds to administer and sustain such a service. The drastic cuts in University funding restricts us to the current programme until the situation changes.

In conclusion the Abadina Media Resource Centre seems a success story. Besides its effect on the public, it has affected the quality of teaching in the area of school libraries in the Department. We have a model which can be used as example for our student. We are also actively engaged in education. As a Department we are beginning to identify those information skills component of the formal education programme. We are also increasingly becoming aware of that residue in our programme that are strictly professional skills. If the syllabus that we have drawn for all level is carried out up to the graduate level, we can begin to decongest existing programmes. We can then concentrate on advanced professional skills, when we get an intake of new recruits with Library Education skills as part of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd levels of education.

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