

STRATEGIES FOR FINANCING PUBLIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN TANZANIA

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to identify feasible strategies for financing public university libraries in Tanzania in response to the growing criticism of public universities in relation to government funding as competition becomes stiffer in the face of other equally demanding government responsibilities. The research design involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Primary data for this study were collected through survey method. The findings of the study indicate that all categories of respondents appreciate the costs involved in funding libraries. This is reflected by acknowledgement of paying for the services directly through charging user fees or indirectly through paying library fees and using part of the fees for library development. The study has also noted that resourcing of libraries is dependent on various sources and involves various stakeholders. It is recommended that diversification of funding sources should be taken seriously in financing library services and that this requires concerted efforts by stakeholders.

Introduction

Financing of public academic libraries is increasingly a concern of librarians all over the world because of dwindling resources due to other equally demanding government responsibilities. The objective of this study was to identify feasible strategies for financing public university libraries in Tanzania where greater justification and accountability are the norms of the day in getting access to funding under stiff competitive environment. It specifically looked at: various strategies currently used for financing public university libraries, the strengths of these strategies, the shortfalls of these strategies, and areas of emphasis in developing appropriate strategies.

Funding crisis for libraries is a worldwide phenomenon as universities increasingly become under funded. Public universities are heavily dependent on government funding. Recently there has been growing criticism of public universities in relation to government funding as competition becomes stiffer in the face of other equally demanding government responsibilities (Nwamuo, 2000:vii). African universities have to deal with these developments. Cuts in university budgets have to be reflected in library budgets.

Rosenberg (1997) in her review of the current state of university libraries in Africa highlighted the appalling situation of these libraries (at varying levels) in terms of collections and other resources. This review was discussed at the Standing Conference of African National and University Libraries in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (SCANUL-ECS) conference held in Maseru, Lesotho in 1996. This situation was again discussed in greater details, with particular attention to inadequate and decreasing funding to libraries, in 2000 at a SCANUL-ECS conference held in Windhoek, Namibia.

Strategizing financing of libraries is not a new thing to library professionals all over the world, including Africa. For instance, as observed by Willemse (2002), the Standing Conference of African National and University Libraries in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa since the early 1990s have, at their conferences and workshops deliberated on the declining state of university libraries in Africa. Efforts made included various studies and sharing of experiences at the workshops and conferences on the way forward. These efforts culminated into reaching a decision on development, formalization and finalization of common guidelines, norms and standards, suitable for practical application in and by university libraries/librarians in the SCANUL-ECS region.

Public university libraries in Tanzania have made various efforts both as a team and as individual institutions to address issues that were/are within their reach at varying levels depending on available resources (including human resource). These include sensitization of stakeholders, seeking donor funding, sharing resources, and engaging in income generating activities including consultancies.

Literature Review

Currently there is "a growing concern in the higher education world of Africa, over who should fund higher education in the new millennium as the state can no longer be the purveyor of higher education in the face of her other responsibilities" (Nwamuo, 2000:vii). In addition, there is a question of the increased phenomenon of internationalization of higher education. This brings in a multidimensional element of linking higher education to the world of work in terms of content of the programmes offered and flexibility in how these programmes are to be offered in order to meet the varied needs of students.

In Tanzania the government has been responsible for financing higher education since its inception. But recently a cost sharing element has been introduced into the financing of higher education in public institutions. The costs are shared by the government, respective institutions and the students. Besides students who get loans from the government, universities also admit privately sponsored students for both financial reasons and as a coping mechanism to meet the increased demand for higher education. As libraries are costly to run, this development has implications on funding of libraries.

Financing libraries in higher education institutions

The growing concern over who should finance higher education has a strong bearing on financing libraries as components of higher education institutions. This is more so because investments in libraries are very expensive and returns are not directly visible. Consequently we find that while libraries are considered as hearts of universities, the attention they get when it comes to funding is normally not commensurate with the status accorded to them. Apart from this, libraries also suffer from factors associated with their historical development. Although the professional efficiency and effectiveness of information provision element provided by libraries and information centers cannot be replaced by other sources of information, in this era of rapid developments in information and communication technologies, the inherent librarians' assumption over the indispensability of libraries needs to be revisited. This is because information can be obtained through various sources. If financing/resourcing of the libraries is to be maintained and improved, public university libraries need to revisit various issues pertinent to management of libraries, with financing being one of the key areas.

The library budget

At the Standing Conference for African National and University Libraries in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa held in Maseru, Lesotho, the participants recommended that the library budget should fall between 5-8% of total university budget. Another recommendation was about 30% of tuition fees. This estimate was arbitrarily based on faculty/teaching requirements guided by collection development policy. However, recommendations are silent about other inherent costs related to service provision. Libraries are central to academic and research work of universities. As such they should try to work out their budgets within the framework of unit

cost of services they provide. It is easier and more logical to defend budget based on this approach than on any other approach.

Costing of library services

Roberts (1998:146) observed that "in many library and information services the amount of cost data collection is inadequate to maintain managerial influence in economic decisions at the highest level". There is no systematic way of gauging information that is essential for budgeting purposes and in some cases it is also possible that the required information is not crystal clear. According to Roberts, it is rare to find a system where budgeting, accounting and performance measurement systems are related and integrated.

At the University of Dar es Salaam, the Five Year Corporate Strategic Plan was drawn in 1994 in response to a critical decline in financial resources in the 1980s through early 1990s. Since then every unit at the University works with its Five-Year Strategic Plan, this is rolled over every year to reflect new developments and to adjust to shortfalls, with reporting on the progress done every six months.

Although the Library has been working with its plan for all these years, it has yet a long way to go to have in place a total managerial structure which would relate, as recommended by Roberts (1998) "library goals in a programmatic sense, through the apparatus of economic management, to the type of management information systems and information handling which many commercial enterprises regard as essential." (This also applies to other libraries).

Costing the provision of library services

Provision of efficient and effective library services depends on both materials and human resources. Costing elements should thus be based on thorough analysis of what is provided, what should be provided, how it should be provided and by who, with clear indication of quality (qualitative and quantitative) assessment indicators and the cost involved in each case. As library capacity building is a continuous process, an element of this continuity should also be built in and clearly reflected in the costing exercise by allocating a certain percent in the budget for capacity building. Thus, in order to be comprehensive, costing should be divided into themes, related to major components of a library: staff and staff development, collections and buildings, general operational costs, or along any budget lines that cover all activities undertaken by a particular library,

both capital and operation based. Budgeting should be guided by clear objectives derived from the mission. Comprehensiveness can best be attained through adequate representation of staff views at various levels: from mission statement, goal setting, and implementation, to evaluation processes.

Financing public university libraries

As public universities are going through a period of serious financial constraints due to demands for rationalization for funding, libraries face more financial constraints because they need heavy investments. In order to cope with this development, universities are diversifying financing sources. Some libraries have tried in various ways to supplement the grants they received but efforts have not yielded expected results. Most of the libraries depend on donor funding for the purchase of computers and ICT related services as well as to subscriptions to journals and even buying books. Notable donors in the case of Tanzania include Sida/SAREC, NORAD, DANIDA and Carnegie Corporation of New York. Sustenance of such services is a big challenge because securing donor funding is not guaranteed. Library matters are either given low priority or at times institutional budgetary plans are not fully funded, thus having the impact felt across the board, bearing in mind that libraries need heavy investments.

Under-funding is still a critical problem. For instance, Rosenberg (1997), in her review on the current state of university libraries in Africa, observed that the situation is critical. Similar observation was made by the Secretary General of the Association of African Universities (AAU), Narciso Matos (1999:13):

In most cases, budget allocations to Universities are not adequate enough to pay salaries and meet other minimum requirements of the institutions such as the provision of funds for libraries, renewal and replacement and maintenance of the physical infrastructures

What does this mean to libraries? The message is clear. Libraries need to look for alternatives. They need to revisit the conduction of their affairs with respect to both internal and external factors, particularly in the area of balancing the right to access information and costing services they provide.

Strategies for financing public university libraries

As observed by Willemse (2002:4) the question of the way in which library finances should best be dealt with is a complex one, because decisions rest with funding agencies or the respective institutions. As public universities are going through a period of serious financial constraints due to demands for rationalization for funding, libraries face more financial constraints because they need heavy investments. In order to cope with this development, universities are diversifying financing sources.

Strategies for resource mobilization

Common alternative sources of income to libraries are mainly from their non-core activities like photocopying, binding and printing (Rosenberg, 2001). However, although not done directly, the move towards charging fees for various activities and services such as annual subscription, registration, training etc, as introduced by some libraries (Rosenberg, 2001), is heading libraries towards the right direction. Nonetheless, libraries still need to cost every aspect of the service they provide to their core users (students and staff) in order to work with accurate data in the course of preparing realistic budgets. Out of the eight universities involved in the study coordinated by Rosenberg (2001), only Makerere University had introduced student tuition fee and library fee. In fact, income from this constituted a very significant portion of the income generated. It is also logical to cost for core business of the library because students are the main beneficiaries of the services provided. In as much as it is important to diversify sources of income, stakeholders should know the cost of services they get and this should be incorporated in the general fee structure. Income from other sources should be supplementary. A lot of energy and time spent on traditional sources of resource mobilization should be spent on improvement of the quality of services provided. Otherwise libraries will not be accorded their deserved status.

Influencing university decisions on library financing

Libraries need to be more proactive in dealing with university wide policy issues that affect library funding. In the case of UDSM the mission of the university library is to provide information services to support the teaching, research, and community service which are core missions of the university. The achievement of the mission requires setting of goals and standard targets against which evaluation exercise will be conducted. This process is very expensive and needs concerted

efforts by the clients of the library and the library. The interdependence between the two in achievements of objectives is clear. The library should, therefore, work hard to make sure that centrality of libraries to teaching, learning and research is clearly reflected in the university operations.

People want to get value for money. Libraries have got to provide attractive services that offer value for money. However, provision of quality services is not the end of the story. Services need to be known. Libraries need to market their services strategically. They must convince relevant decision makers that what is being offered is central to the achievements of the university.

Inasmuch as some services and resources could be outsourced in order to cut down on costs, it is important for libraries to work very closely with stakeholders in attuning services to university's strategic directions. This approach will ease relative financing issues in as far as allocation of government funding is concerned and also in dealing with internally generated funds.

Resource sharing between libraries

Library consortia have been in existence since the 1960s. The Illinois Library and Information Network (ILLINET), which was established in 1965 (Weech, 2002) paved the way for others. However, though predominant in USA, Canada, the UK and other developed countries, consortia are a 1990s phenomenon in Africa. For instance, within the East, Central and Southern African regions, it is only South Africa which has at least five Consortia with the oldest one established in 1992 (Sekabembe, 2002). Consortia is one of the ways devised by librarians to carry out their businesses more efficiently in terms of cost and labour in order to cope with the ever growing demand for library services and rising costs for library service provision on the one hand and the continuous budget cuts by government on the other hand. Library consortia are commonly established to negotiate joint purchases of equipment, software, books, journals, licensing of electronic databases and resources and to share other library resources (Dorner, 2001), including sharing some professional services such as organization of knowledge (sharing catalogue records), developing online training manuals and the like.

Resource sharing between libraries in Tanzania

Consortium of Tanzania University Libraries (COTUL) whose current members are Sokoine University of Agriculture, University of Dar es Salaam, The Open University of Tanzania, Zanzibar University, Mzumbe University, Hurbert Kairuki Memorial University, Ardhi University (formerly University College of Lands and Architectural Studies, Iringa University College, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (formely Muhimbili University College of Health and Allied Sciences) and the Institute of Finance Management, is about to take off. The aims and objectives of COTUL are:

- To initiate and promote resource sharing among consortium members in all aspects of resources including human, material and infrastructure facilities,
- To initiate and organize various information on professional activities such as conferences, seminars, workshops, courses, etc. that may contribute to promote effective and efficient information management and dissemination,
- To promote co-operative information resources acquisition, processing, storage, preservation and dissemination,
- To promote and develop the application of information and communication technologies (ICT),
- To raise funds for development and work out strategies for sustaining the activities of the consortium,
- To engage in activities geared towards promoting and sustaining the consortium members, and
- To develop standards for service evaluation and performance indicators.

It is expected that once in full swing, the Consortium will assist significantly in addressing some pertinent issues of university libraries in Tanzania.

External support to enhance services

Strategies for enhancing provision of services through external support fall under two categories. The first category of support is that of colleagues elsewhere in the library profession. Libraries all over the world depend on each other as no single library can meet all the needs of its users at any given time. Through forming links, consortia and other forms of cooperative relationships, libraries can cut a lot on individual spending through sharing of resources. However, a

precaution is needed when considering cutting costs on and meeting strategic needs of core users, although this element in this era of ICT may be irrelevant when connectivity problem is resolved. Nonetheless copyright issues will need reconciliation.

Apart from building capacity in the area of information provision, cooperation can also contribute significantly in human capacity building through exchange of staff or exchanging experiences and publications through the Web.

Secondly, university libraries need to network with both actual and potential external beneficiaries of their services. In Africa, university libraries tend to be the largest libraries, with more comprehensive materials likely to be needed by policy makers. A good working relationship with them may pay good returns in both material goods and goodwill.

Research Design and Methodology

The research design involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Primary data for this study was collected through survey method. The instruments used are: questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions, interview schedules and focused group discussion guidelines. The researcher and research assistants distributed/administered all questionnaires and interviews and focus group discussions were conducted by the researcher and a research assistant. Both published and unpublished sources were consulted for gathering secondary data.

Sample of students and staff was drawn from four public universities: University of Dar es Salaam, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Open University of Tanzania and Mzumbe University. Parents sample was drawn from a wider community but mainly from the University of Dar es Salaam and its constituent colleges (now full fledged universities – Ardhi University and Muhimbili University of Health Sciences), Ministry of Education, Tanzania Library Services headquarters and secondary schools in Dar es Salaam, with qualifications ranging from certificates to a PhD. The majority (47%) of the parents fall in the age category of 36-45 years. Most of the parents (63%) had 1-3 children and 31% of them had 4-6 while only 1% had over 6 children.

Study Findings

Sample socio-demographic characteristics

Respondents for this study were mainly selected from three groups: library staff (22), postgraduate students (50) and parents (100) (The details are given in table 1 below).

Table 1: Breakdown of Respondents by Type and Gender

Gender	Library staff N=22		Parents N=100		Students N=50	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Male	14	63.6	59	59	27	54
Female	8	36.4	41	41	23	46
Total	22	100	100	100	50	100

Library staff

Out of the 22 library staff 14 (63.6%) were males and 8 (36.4) were females. Out of the 22 respondents 11 were from the University of Dar es Salaam Main Campus, five from Sokoine University of Agriculture, two from University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ardhi University, one from the Open University of Tanzania and one from Mzumbe University. Eleven (50%) of the respondents were librarians and senior librarians. See Table 2 for details.

Table 2: Respondents According to Position/Title Held N=22

Name of Institution	Frequency	Percentage
Director	1	4.5
Senior librarian	5	22.7
Librarian	5	22.7
Assistant Librarian	6	27.3
Assistant Librarian Trainee	2	9.1
No response	3	13.6
Total	22	100

11 (50%) of the respondents had a working experience of over 16 years while 8 (36.4) had a working experience of only up to five years. Most of them had a professional training and had either a masters or a doctorate, implying that they are knowledgeable and familiar with intricacies of library management, and in particular of resourcing libraries.

Library collections and materials used

Respondents were aware of the range of materials held by the library and it could be inferred from the frequency of library use and from their responses to type of materials they use, that these materials were also used. Their knowledge of the composition of library collections, documents they consult and the varied services they get from the library was intended to assist them in making an informed guess as to what it takes to provide library services or at least to appreciate that provision of such services is costly and needs a wider support.

Balance between print and electronic resources

The majority of the students' respondents (72%) were of the opinion that the appropriate balance between print and electronic resources falls in the category of 40%-60% with more inclination for print resources while staff respondents seem to prefer a 50%-50% balance between printed and e-resources. Reasons for this could be attributed to recent move towards application of ICT in learning, teaching, research and service to community.

Library budgeting process

About 32% of the respondents indicated that they were involved in budgeting exercises. This percentage is very small considering that library activities are varied and need to be captured in the budget. Items often mentioned for inclusion in the budget are books, journals, and fairly often training. It is glaring that library professionals need sensitization on budgeting before they can think of the best way to resource their libraries. One needs to know not only what one needs, but also how much of what one needs costs and the costing process.

Marketing services

Most of the respondents (95.5%) said that their services were marketed through various avenues. Avenues mostly used were library notice boards (86.4%), websites (81.8), newsletter (77.3%), current awareness services (68.2%) and brochures. Ironically while 95.5% of the respondents said that their services were marketed, only 4.5% said that marketing was one of the items included in library budget. This implies that marketing is not given its due attention.

ICT literacy of library staff and students

72.7% for staff and 88% for students considered themselves as ICT literate. All staff had various ICT skills. This could be attributed to the fact that the University of Dar es Salaam Library has, since 1998, been

conducting a number of ICT and information literacy sessions for its staff and staff from other universities and institutions as a strategy for coping with new developments and managing libraries under electronic environment through the Programme for Enhancement of Research Information. This indicates that judgment on resources provided or required in both electronic and print format would fairly be based on informed decisions. This is particularly so for the staff with experience of handling both formats in the course of information provision and those who have had training (both professional and short courses) in handling information resources in both electronic and print formats.

Student-Computer ratio

Thirty four percent of respondents did not respond to the question on what they considered as an appropriate student-computer ratio. Responses of those who answered were spread out, making it difficult to generalize the trend. The responses for the advantage of having an appropriate student-computer ratio were based on easing access to computer and ultimately to making efficient use of them: increase students' access to computers; eliminate time limit on computer use; enough time to use computers; to save time and to use computers more efficiently.

Parents with children in secondary schools

Parents were asked whether they had children in secondary schools and whether the children were in public or private secondary schools. It was expected that parents with children in secondary schools, especially private secondary schools would be more concerned with availability of libraries in respective schools and thus more concerned with the status of libraries. Forty four percent of the parents had children in secondary schools. Eighteen had children in government secondary schools and 23 in private secondary schools, indicating that some parents had children in both government and private secondary schools.

Reasons for sending children to private secondary schools

Two main reasons for sending children to private secondary school were quality of teaching (52.27%) and children not qualifying/not selected to join government secondary schools (50%). Another reason given was good library facilities (9.09%). Three (6.82) did not respond and two did not say what the other reasons were.

Comparisons of the importance of libraries and health facilities

Most of the respondents (76%) said that a library and a health facility were equally important. Nine percent reported a health facility (students pay a specified amount in the fee structure as contribution to medical/health services) was more important than a library while two percent considered a library as being more important than a health facility. Thirteen percent did not respond to the question.

Willingness to contribute toward library funding

Fifty nine percent of the parents said that they were willing to contribute annually towards library funding, 25% were unwilling while 16% percent did not respond to the question. Three major reasons given for their willingness to contribute were: books are expensive, so parents' contribution is necessary (57.63%); they want their children to go to a university with a good library (45.76%); and that it is a worthwhile contribution to education (32.2%). One did not state reason for willingness to contribute to library funding. Over one third (36%) were willing to contribute Tz. Shillings 75,000/=. More details are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Amount willing to Contribute in Tz. Shs (N=59)

Amount	Frequency	Percentage	
155,000	3	5.08	
100,000	11	18.64	
75,000	36	60.01	
Other	55,000	1	1.69
	50,000	2	3.39
	30,000	2	3.39
	25,000	1	1.69
	20,000	1	1.69
	10,000	2	3.39
Total	59	100	

Reasons advanced for unwillingness to contribute were: part of the fees could be used for library development (60%); after graduation students will have no access to those books (4%) and that is solely the responsibility of the university (36%).

Mechanisms for funding libraries

Respondents recommended various mechanisms of funding public university libraries, the majority of the library staff suggested

allocation of a fixed amount from students' fees (81.8%) and set aside specific amount by the relevant ministry (81.8%) and members' annual subscription (40.9%)(For details see Table 4).

Table 4: Library Staff's Responses to Mechanisms of Funding Libraries N=22

		Frequency	Percentage
A fixed amount from students fees to cover library operations		18	81.8
Charging user fees		6	27.3
Charging registration fees		3	13.6
Other	Government support	2	9.1
	Donor support	1	4.5
	Members annual subscription	9	40.9
	Specific amount be set aside by the relevant ministry	18	81.8
	Finding projects	1	4.5

According to students the three most viable mechanisms were: a fixed amount from students' fees (50%); charging registration fees (24%); and charging user fees (10%) (For details see Table 5).

Table 5: Students' Responses to Viable Ways of Funding Libraries N=50

		Frequency	Percentage
A fixed amount from students fees to cover library operations		25	50
Charging user fees		5	10
Charging registration fees		12	24
Other	Government support	4	8
	Donor support	4	8
	All stakeholders should contribute	1	2
	Finding projects	1	2
	Libraries should find alternative sources of funds	2	4

The most viable mechanism of funding public university libraries for parents were: organizing fund raising projects (34%); parents with students at universities should contribute (34%); and increased government budget for universities (22%) (For details see Table 6).

Table 6: Parents' responses to Viable Mechanisms of Funding Libraries

Way	Frequency	Percentage
Organizing fund raising projects	34	34
The Govt should increase budget for universities	22	22
Parents with students at universities should contribute	34	34
Seek assistance from donors	18	18
Organize charity walk to raise funds	4	4
Libraries should market their services	2	2
University libraries should introduce membership fees	18	18
Libraries should devise ways of getting funds	4	4
Students should also contribute to library development	4	4
Students' sponsors should contribute to library as well	2	2

From the responses it is clear that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the most feasible funding mechanisms are through allocation of the students' fees to the library or getting the relevant ministry to set aside a specific amount for this purpose. Students and parents had similar response patterns but with differing areas of emphasis. Both library staff and students had a fixed amount from students' fees to cover library operations but staff's percentage (81.8%) was higher than that of the students (50%). The experience of

Makerere University Library seems to support the notion of student fees as one of the reliable way of sustaining library services.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that both professional library staff and students have observed gaps in the services provided and desired because of issues related to working environment. Issues reported include information on what services were available and who to consult. Thus it is important to take a proactive approach in both service provision and looking for sources of funds with an input from key stakeholders, that is, the users of services and those who pay for it. These include revisiting library performance indicators; establishing and using standards and norms to influence authorities in order to get an agreed upon formula to be used for financing libraries.

Library staff were generally involved in various activities but lacked experience of costing library services. In addition, fund raising done mainly through project write ups as also reflected by donor support to these libraries is not assimilated in library operations/routines. This could also be inferred from inconsistency in the list of activities involved in, and suggested viable mechanisms of funding libraries. In the list of activities proposal writing does not appear at all. All categories of respondents appreciate the costs involved in funding libraries. This is reflected by acknowledgement of paying for the services directly through charging user fees or indirectly through paying library fees and using part of the fees for library development. The study has also noted that resourcing of libraries is dependent on various sources and involves various stakeholders. Although it is generally argued that donor dependency is not a health syndrome, it seems to have been assimilated as one of the players in library funding. Donor funding, in fact, if well coordinated can be one of the major sources of funding libraries.

Recommendations

As argued by Manda (2002), donor support should be part and parcel of the overall library strategic plans. This argument is supported by the findings of this study. All three categories of respondents have donor support as one of the ways of funding library activities. Experiences have shown that resourcing libraries require concerted efforts of stakeholders, including donors, for mutual benefit in terms of both tangible and intangible goods. In the process of sharing all stakeholders benefit albeit at different levels. It has also shown that

diversification of funding sources is one of the key alternatives to address adverse conditions that may surface as a result of heavy dependence on donor funding. However, it is important to have all forms of support coordinated at both individual and cooperative levels in the form of consortia or other arrangements in order to enhance efficiency and cost effectiveness with an ultimate aim of getting the desired impact.

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