

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UBE PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews the development of school libraries world-wide and its development in Nigeria. Previous national initiatives aimed at universalizing access to education as well as the launching of the UBE are mentioned. Federal Government's efforts to sustain UBE are articulated. Strategies that can be employed to keep secondary school libraries vibrant for the UBE programme are delineated. There is a conclusion. Recommendations are made.

INTRODUCTION:

School libraries are libraries in primary and secondary schools. School librarianship is a new and evolving profession changing in relation to the educational system and the society which it serves. Gilman (1987) stated that "it is the existing curriculum within a school which determines the nature of the school library provision required and therefore capable of being usefully employed within the school". Libraries were superfluous to the traditional classroom set-up of the early twentieth century, characterized as it was by a class of 40-50 pupils, taught as a group by the teacher with the aid of the blackboard and textbook. It was only in the 1960's with the advent of resource-based learning and focus on the individual learner that school libraries came into their own (Dike, 1993)

A study by Carroll, 1981 on development in school libraries in the 60's and 70's, from an international perspective identified three significant advances:

- i. The tremendous development of school librarianship during the period, both in terms of the growth of school libraries and recognition of their role.
- ii. The trend toward involvement of school libraries in co-operation and networking and
- iii. A role change for school librarians, with increasing attention to the educational role of the librarian while the study by (Lowrie, 1989)

included among other development;

Legislation implementing school library, development through generous funding, advances in library education, setting of standards and guidelines, expansion of collections to include audio-visual media and the concept of a resource centre, and the acceptance of the library as an integral part of the total school curriculum and educational programme. The development of new technology, especially computers has had a profound impact on libraries in many parts of the world.

Recent School Library Developments in Nigeria:

The economic vicissitudes vis-à-vis, the oil "boom" of the 70's, followed by the hard times in the 80's with the attendant cutbacks in staff and funding slowed down school library development. In the 1970's, available funds went into a rapid expansion of education at all levels, most dramatically, the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) at primary school level in 1976. Funds were expended on crash programmes to provide classrooms and teachers for the burgeoning primary school population to the neglect of building school libraries. The reason being that either there was insufficient demand for school libraries or that there was lack of library awareness or that the educational system in practice rendered them (school libraries) superfluous (Dike, 1993). The UPE was followed by the launching of the National Mass Literacy Campaign on 8th September 1982 (Okpoko, 2004). The later did not fulfill expectations for eradication of illiteracy from the masses. As a result, the Nigerian government under the leadership of President Obasanjo, launched the UBE on the 30th of Sept. 1999.

UBE

What is it all about?

What are the goals and objectives?

How can Libraries assist in these?

By 1981, school libraries gained recognition and legislation from government. The National Policy on Education (1981) makes reference to school libraries as "one of the most important educational services" and acknowledges the need to 'supply materials and train staff for school libraries.' Government has participated in studies and organized workshops to further the development of school library services".

Innovative Strategies for Secondary School Libraries Services Development:

Location:

The library is a noiseless zone. It should therefore be sited at the centre of the school classrooms, on the first floor of the school building. If only bungalows exist in the school, it should also be so sited at the centre of the school classrooms. It should measure at least twenty (20ft) feet wide by thirty feet (30ft) in length. Apart from the librarian's table and two other tables for the assistants, there should be enough reading tables and chairs to accommodate at least twenty (20) students at a time. Wooden or steel shelves should be arranged within the library for the display of print and non-print materials.

Strategies for Services:

It is expected that students should have a purpose for using the library. This purpose was investigated by (Elaturoti, 1993), on the usage pattern of library resources among secondary students in Abadina Media Resource Center, Ibadan. He discovered that 69.2% made use of library centre to read for examinations, 34.3% used the centre to read for pleasure (recreational reading) while 7% went there to complete class assignments. It was also observed that more students used the centre during the school hours between 8.00am and 1.00pm. than after school hours.

On learning resources used at the centre, he reported that the most popular materials used by students at the centre were fiction books closely followed by textbooks, and new non-book materials. It was also shown that more students experienced difficulty in locating textbooks than other types of books.

The situation above, calls for provision of school textbooks, recreational and reference reading materials to enable students complete their class assignment. Non-print materials like computers etc. should also be provided. The stock should be organized on the shelves using standard rules. Worthy of note is that peak period for library services in secondary schools is within the school hours, and efforts should be made to render hitch-free services during that period.

Liaison with External Agencies.

The librarian of each UBE school should, through his/her principal get in touch with the state library boards. The state library boards organize workshops and induction courses for library personnel especially library assistants who often times than not, are mere high school graduates with no prior library experience. The boards also distribute books in various subjects

free to schools; sometimes, they give books out on loan for specific periods, and occasionally operate mobile library services. Similar visits and cooperation with institutions such as government parastatals, publishing houses, newspaper houses, broadcasting stations houses and international organizations/associations have their dividends. A lot of posters, charts and pamphlets from government parastatals can be useful study aids in the classroom. It is possible for the librarian to arrange with newspaper publishers, (The Guardian, The Times, and Vanguard etc.) for the purchase of past issues of their newspapers at nominal prices. After they have been read, they can be bound according to monthly accumulation. Their contents can be indexed. These indexes and the accumulated bound volumes can be used for reference services. Alternatively, after they have been read, cuttings can be made and various files of these cuttings kept to assist students in projects and other assignments.

School Library Resources for UBE

These include human and material resources. Human resources include the school librarian and his/her assistants. The author/writer is advocating that the UBE school libraries should be managed by a person who has a degree certificate in education which combines with a teaching subject. It makes the person a teacher/librarian. The International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) study edited by (Hannisdottir, 1986) defined the school librarian as someone needing competencies in librarianship, management and education. In this wise, the librarian should be a teacher, teaching in the classroom as well as running the library. He should be a senior member of the teaching staff. The Library Association list the following areas where a librarian's professional skills can make a valuable contribution as, - course planning and organisation, resource provision, reading development, course work and liaison with external agencies (Graham, 1988). There should be library assistants to help in running the library services.

Material resources are the stock available in the country. Variations (print and non-print) in stock formats reflect variations in student learning skills and student learning styles. Some students excel in visual learning, others in literary graphic symbols learning, some in tangible, self involved stimulation learning, still others in discovery and problems solving methods. Education per say, requires variety of sources of knowledge, variety of presentation – media as well as a variety of formats, to acquire the necessary information (Ogunseye, 1993). The library stock should include all subject fields, syllabuses inter-disciplinary work, new technology, journals, illustration, a range of other materials like: transparencies, films, tapes, slides, recordings, other audio-visual materials as well as their supportive machines. It is essential that these are kept up to date. There should be

subject displays and exhibitions of current materials in all fields. Information technology should include, not only computers but internet connectivity, which searching should be seen as information sourcing and retrieval skills which students are supposed to acquire. Information skills using I.T should be seen as a working partnership taking due account of the expertise of both the teacher librarian and the other tutors.

The library materials should be carefully selected to:

- a. enhance the overall instructional programme of the school as specified in the syllabus
- b. provide opportunity and scope for additional exploration and discovery
- c. promote extra-curricular interest and activities.

There could also be cooperation between two or more school libraries geared towards advancement of information, economic consideration and resource sharing. Tapes of folktales and materials for social studies could be produced from resource people in the community if rapport is established between the school and its community. The materials are then made accessible and available to students in an organized form.

Organisation of Materials:

The books should be stamped, accessioned, catalogued, classified and processed for students. Accessioning can be continuous, in which case the number of the first accessioned material could be 0001 and would keep accumulating therefrom, as shown on the chart below. Accessioning could be on a yearly cumulation only. For instance for 2005, one could begin with the number 05-0001 at the beginning of 2005 academic year and end at 05-0970 at the end of 2005 academic year. The next academic year 2006 would begin with 06-0001, etc. The accessions register should include such headings as shown below.

Date	Accession no	Author	Title	Source	Price	Remarks
12/12/05	Acct. No 12463	Aluko One wife	Oneman Bookshop	CSS	N1.80	

Cataloguing of Materials

The first level of description of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, as in the second edition (AACR2) should be used (Ene, 1984)

The title/first statement responsibility, if different from main entry heading in form or number or if there is no main heading. Edition statement materials (or type of publication). Specific details i.e first publisher; date of publication etc., extent of item note(s) standard number. An example is

given below:

CORBETH, Edmomund Victor
Fundamentals of Library organisation and
administration/Victor Edmund Corbett,
London: The Library Association, 1978
x, 291 P ISBN 85365-840-4 96-005186.

White cardboard sheets should be cut into 3 inches by 5 inches pieces, (3x5). Each piece should be used to describe one material. Entries for non-book materials follow the same Principle of authorship for books. However, the physical description area and general material designation area emphasize the format.

Classification of Materials

Dewey Decimal Classification for schools or the Abridged version of Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme is suitable for classifying the books in the school libraries.

Storage of Books and Non-book Materials:

Books are usually stood upright on the shelves in classified sequence, so that the information on their spines could be read. Non-book materials should be shelved differently especially the audio-visual software materials which are delicate and need to be protected. Some of these softwares need air conditioning to maintain their quality and durability. They are also shelved in classified sequence. Video tapes could be displayed on special shelves; cassettes are stored in racks according to accession numbers with labels of contents on each container while cartridges have racks. Large maps, charts and posters are stored in horizontal map chests. Each cabinet, drawer, folder or tin is properly labeled and the contents catalogued in detail.

Strategy for Funding School Libraries for UBE

Earlier in this paper it was observed that the National Policy on Education (1981) showed that school libraries had gained Federal Government's recognition, legislation and commitment to maintain and develop the libraries. Recently, a new pep has been added by the Federal Government with regard to funding. To assert Federal Government's seriousness about UBE programme, the Executive Secretary of the National Universal Basic Education Commission, Professor Gidado Tahir said that:

"With an act of the National Assembly mandating the Federal Government to channel two percent of its

consolidated revenue coupled with ₦2.9 billion direct grant to correct education imbalance in 25 states and Abuja, the prospect of the millennium goal of education for all is not doubtful (Tahir, 2005: 07)"

States are also required to enact laws backing the programme, pay their counterpart funds and set up State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). It is in this milieu, that revitalized school libraries are envisioned.

Principals and school administrators should endeavour to pay more attention and allocate more funds to the library. There should be prudent management of the available finance. The Parents Teachers Association should be invited to assist in the financing of the library. Federal Government Agencies, International philanthropic organisations are always willing to help if assistance is requested. The school librarian should be involved in the preparation of the annual school budget proposal, so as to sufficiently highlight the library's financial needs. When fund is made available to the library, sufficient care must be taken to ensure that selection and acquisition of library materials and equipment reflect not only the demands of library users but also the overall objectives of the school. Financial provision for the school library should be made annually in respect of recurrent expenditure to cater for materials. New school libraries should be given capital grants for their initial collection including furniture and equipment and thereafter receive annual grants for recurrent expenditure.

Financial needsoftheschool library consist of:

- A. Staff salary and/or allowances
- b. Purchase of new books, periodicals and non-book materials
- c. Replacement of lost materials including obsolete edition or worn out materials due to use;
- d. Purchase of new furniture/equipment including replacements
- e. Repairs of equipment
- f. Purchase of stationery
- g. Others.

The school library's income and expenditure could be conveniently placed under two heads; Capital or Initial and Annual or Recurring (Ezenwa, 1993)

- i. Initial expenditure: The main items of expenditure are: furniture and equipment, books, periodicals and non-book materials.
- ii. Recurring expenditure: The main regular expenses (apart from salaries and wages, and the cost of lighting and cleaning, which may be

regarded as general school expenses) are as follows:

- Books (50%)
- Audio-visual materials (25%)
- Periodicals (10%)
- Repairs (10%)
- Others (5%)

The percentage (%) distribution may vary from year to year (Ezenwa, 1993)

Income: These may be from direct grant (from either government, organisations etc), supplementary sources (say sources from school concerts, dramatic performances etc) and gifts.

Physical Environmental Control as a Strategy for Library Services Development for the UBE Programme

The physical environment to be considered in this segment of the articles are those of thermal, visual and aural characteristics.

Thermal environment:

The thermal environment determines thermal comfort. Thermal comfort exists when the subject is thermally unaware of his surroundings. There are established indices for measuring thermal comfort. They are temperature, relative humidity and air motion, while the normal temperature is 98.6° F or 37° C, the comfort zone for the human body is generally set at 72° F to 80° F at 45% relative humidity (Dimento, 1993), when the rate of heat loss is too little the body feels uncomfortable (as on similarly, when the rate is too high on a hot sunny day) and the rate of air movement is directed proportional to the rate of heat loss (Dimento, 1993). Changes in thermal environment do sometimes have discernible effect on the learning process in school library.

To achieve a desirable thermal environment in the school library, the first consideration is to ensure that the environmental temperature and the relative humidity agree with comfort standard stipulated earlier. These parameters could be read off relevant equipment (thermometer and hygrometer), which could be hung on the wall surface. Air-conditioning is the best solution to thermal discomfort as both temperature and humidity can be regulated simultaneously from the equipment. Where this is not practicable, fans may be employed, if the air is not too hot. Under such circumstances, the condition of the air could be improved by the use of potted plants with water drains which should always contain water. If table or standing fans are used where the air temperature is very high, then pans of water could be provided in front of the fans so that the air blows over the water. In hot and humid environments, maximum cross ventilation should be

allowed. Maximum air speed should also be allowed. Library walls should not be exposed to the western sun. If they must, trees or shrubs should be planted along such walls. Windows to the library should be able to admit prevailing winds, and cross ventilation must be ensured.

The visual environment:

Very low level of illumination and excessive illumination cause discomfort glare. There are many variables that affect the issue of visual comfort and each situation will have to be assessed independently.

- It is desirable that the illumination of the library should be uniform
- Fluorescent luminaries tend to enhance uniform illumination, and produce less heat. Although owning cost may be higher, operating costs are much lower than with incandescent lamps and luminaries.
- Room surfaces must not be painted in dull or dark colours, they should be bright to elicit enthusiasm and improve reflectance. If ceilings are low, they should be painted in very light colours preferably white.
- It should be noted that natural light admittance below the level of the working place does not enhance task visibility.
- It is cheaper to admit the greatest amount of natural light as this reduces the amount of artificial light supplement.
- If shelves are tall, lamps should be located between them to avoid shadow formation on books below.
- Extra bright sources of light should be avoided (sun rise and sun set directions should be noted).
- However, it is better to have higher than lower level of illumination.

The aural environment

The aural environment is sometimes referred to as the acoustic environment. When the mind is focused or is concentrating on a particular task, the task may be considered as a central stimulus and is thus an attention sphere. All unwanted sound (sounds not associated with the central stimulus) usually of random nature in time and intensity tend to cause distraction, depending on the arousal level of the person performing the task. This may even cause annoyance. The attention on the central stimulus breaks down and the environment is no longer comfortable. The unwanted sound in the environment most often constitute what is tagged "noise". The noise may be internal (within the library) or external (outside the library).

For external sources of noise, locational strategies are most effective, as screening external noise sources may not be easy. Noise reduction in school libraries could be carried out as follows:

- Ensure that the library is located in the most quiet place relative to other

activities. In this regard, upper floor locations (as mentioned earlier) are better than ground floors.

- Where traffic noise is involved, trees help to dampen the noise.
- The floor of the library should be finished in soft materials (where practicable, bare concrete should be avoided.) A thin layer of carpet has very high noise reduction qualities over concrete.
- Busy corridors are not the best neighbours of a school library.
- Short notices should be written and pasted on the reading tables. A few of such notices could read:
 - a. No conversations/discussions within the library
 - b. Put off your handsets as you enter the library
 - c. No whistling within the library
 - d. No shuffling of feet within the library

This list is however not exhaustive.

Conclusion:

The Federal Government has shown commitment to the development of UBE programme. It is also a truism that the quality of an educational programme of a school is determined to a very great extent by the quality of its library. It is therefore re-assuring and optimistic that if the UBE school libraries are well funded and equipped with human and material resources, the Federal Government's prospect of the millennium goal of education for all is achievable.

Recommendations:

In view of the afore-mentioned, the following recommendations are made:

- To provide for career development in school librarianship, there should be an enhanced scale so as to make librarians remain in the school sector. There should also be a proviso and the need for equal opportunities for staff development and secondment.
- A teacher librarian should be a teaching staff of the school, and should perform all tutorial roles and functions. There is the need to set a minimum allowance of library assistants, based on library access hours and the potential stock of the library. The school librarian should be given free-hand in the selection of reference materials.
- There should be two library assistants to help in running the library services.
- The school librarian should work in tandem with curriculum planners, so that the school library collection would reflect all teaching subjects.

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