Guest editorial

Libraries and Librarianship in Africa are slowly growing and their development contains many paradoxes. While some of the oldest libraries were found in Africa, the development and growth of most current libraries began after African countries became politically independent from colonists whose role in the development of present libraries is significant and still influences library collections, many of which are in non-African Languages such as English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

African libraries, particularly public libraries, were and still are part of what Adolphe Amadi called "barefoot librarianship", in his book *African libraries: Western tradition and colonial brainwashing* published by Scarecrow Press in 1981 and what Kingo Mchombu's widely read article "On the librarianship of poverty" published in LIBRI in 1982 and many such studies in the 1980s or Paul Sturges and Peter Neil described in their book *The Quiet Struggle. Libraries and Information for Africa* and Diana Rosenberg's "University libraries in Africa: a review of their current state and future potential" in the 1990s or Isaac Aissa's "Public libraries in Africa: a report and annotated bibliography" in the last decade. Much of this literature paints a bleak picture on African libraries and librarianship pointing out marginalisation, poor infrastructure and services, unsuitable library collections largely in non-African languages, poor readership and lack of information access and unequal development of libraries.

Recent studies focusing on Africa which I edited – as reported in "Global Library and Information Science" in 2009 and 2017 edited by Ismail Abdullahi from the Northern Carolina Central University – reflect on the status, development and challenges of libraries and librarianship in the world by continents that include Africa. The study notes the status quo of underdevelopment reported in the last four decades but also represents new initiatives and developments largely in LIS education, research and academic/university libraries that are admirable. Some positive country developments can be found in an edited book by Theo Bothma, Peter Underwood and Patrick Ngulube in 2007 – Libraries for the Future: Progress and Development of South African Libraries.

In this special LM issue, I represent papers from Public Libraries (3), Academic libraries (4), LIS education (2), Special Librarianship (1) and LIS Research (1). On LIS research, Bosire Onyancha from South Africa writes on "Mapping collaboration and impact of library and information science research in sub-Saharan Africa, from 1995 to 2016" to map and visualise collaboration patterns and citation impact of the library and information science research in sub-Saharan Africa in that period. He notes growth in publications and dominance of international collaboration yielding better citations with South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya at the helm of productivity in sub-Saharan African countries and recommends the promotion of research partnership and collaboration.

Public libraries have received insignificant growth in Africa and the problems mentioned by Isaac Aissa still dominate. The next three articles focus on public libraries. Karla Strand and Johannes Britz's article (from USA) entitled "The evolving role of public libraries in South Africa in addressing information poverty: a historical context" provides an overview of the historical development of libraries in South Africa against a backdrop of poverty and social inequality. The context for the understanding of how the development of libraries throughout turbulent times of the South African political period is provided and encourages better understanding of the value and purpose of libraries in combating information poverty in the country despite better public library development in South Africa when compared to other African countries.

Following this is an article written by Salome Mathangani and Japheth Otike from Kenya focusing on Copyright and information services provision in public university libraries in Kenya. The article acknowledges the role of copyright law in information provision and the awareness of the law by the public university libraries, however, it raises concern on the implementation of the law in the libraries. This article is likely to bridge an existing gap in the knowledge on copyright law and application in the public university libraries.

The last paper on public libraries "The governance and management of public library services in Nigeria" is written by Abdulsalam Salman (Nigeria), Janneke Mostert (South Africa) and Tinashe Mugwisi (Zimbabwe). The three authors reiterate managerial problems affecting public libraries raised in previous studies such as mismanagement, dependence and policy and recommend measures to be taken to improve public library management in Nigeria.

Academic libraries, particularly university libraries, in Africa are better resourced and managed than other types of libraries largely due to mandatory requirements for their establishment and development in most countries, yet they still face most of the challenges written about by Diana Rosenberg in the 1990s. The next four articles focus on academic libraries. The first article in this category written by Tom Kwanya (Kenya) and Christine Stilwell (South Africa) focuses on "The effectiveness of leadership styles among academic and research librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa: a comparative study". Tom and Christine's findings reveal that most academic and research library leaders in South Africa and Kenya embrace either autocratic or bureaucratic leadership styles which they consider to be more effective, while most academic and research librarians in the same countries prefer a participatory leadership style. This article acknowledges the importance of leadership styles in academic libraries management and recommends how to enhance leadership effectiveness by libraries and library schools in curricula development.

The following article on "Restructuring for relevance: a paradigm shift for academic libraries" is co-authored by Reggie Raju *et al.* (South Africa) with the purpose of "reporting on the development of a flexible and robust academic library structure that meets the demands of an ever changing user community and remains relevant and fit for purpose in a technology-driven age". The authors share the advantages of moving from subject librarianship to functional librarianship that enables offering of new and/or radically expanded services. The new developments as suggested in the article would benefit change managers and staff with "future driven" mind set in academic libraries as well as library and information science academics who may want to re-examine their curricula for the incorporation of new trends.

The third article in this category written by Shana Ponelis (USA) and Philliam Adoma (Uganda) addresses "Diffusion of open source integrated library systems among academic libraries in Africa: the case of Uganda". Shana and Philliam found that Ugandan academic libraries are adopting OS ILS for more flexibility to meet changing needs at what is perceived as an affordable cost but not all are fully satisfied. Also, they note, Koha is the most-adopted OS ILS and is also being considered by all libraries without any ILS or a proprietary ILS but achievements are faced with infrastructural, resource and managerial challenges which should be considered when embarking upon library automation. This study addresses this less researched domain which is quite important for current academic library development, automation and services in Africa.

The fourth article on academic libraries is written by Quagraine Tuhufo "In Vogue: demand for scholarly publications among academic librarians" recognises the need for academic librarians to publish in order to support research more effectively. This Ghanaian case study article builds on recent studies by Ocholla, Ocholla and Onyancha focusing on Research Publication Output of Academic Librarians in Southern African Public Universities (2013) and Eastern Africa (2012) published in SAJLIS and Aslib proceedings, respectively.

The article on special libraries is a literature review focusing on "Access to electronic and print information resources by people with visual impairments in university libraries: A Review of Related Literature" and is written by Rebecca Majinge and Stephen Mutula. The two authors represent and analyse current studies on the less researched domain.

The fifth article on LIS education entitled "A comparison of the cataloguing and classification curriculum and job requirements" is written by Philangani Sibiya and Mzwandile Shongwe from South Africa. They compared the cataloguing and classification curriculum offered in South African LIS schools and the job market requirement for cataloguers in South Africa due to the recent outcry of lack of specialists in the field in the country and also due to the changes occurring in the LIS field over the past decade. The study shows what is taught, why and how and the job requirements. This article informs curricula relevance and creates awareness to the potential employers of the cataloguing and classification education and its relevance to the job market. It is widely known that not all learning ends with formal education and therefore professional development is important for enabling filling knowledge and skills gaps on the job. In the last paper, Patience Dzandza (Ghana) writes on "Professional development in private university libraries in Ghana" which is important and yet receives limited research attention in Africa. Patience recommends that Library Schools should be actively engaged in continuous education programmes to provide short courses for library professionals to keep them abreast with current trends.

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