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## Libraries and Information In Developing Countries

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LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION  
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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To talk about information work and libraries in developing countries is perhaps presumptuous. Conditions are so different in different countries of the world. One talks of 'Africa', but it is difficult to generalise - is one thinking of West Africa or East Africa? Even within regions, there are considerable differences: compare Francophone and Anglophone West Africa, for instance. Even within countries, of course there are differences: in Nigeria, there are nineteen states, created because of local distinctions and differences. Division by religion is another factor but then a religion can be different in different ways: Christianity differs from place to place, as does Mohammedism or Buddhism.

Yet there are certain general characteristics. If one looks at United Nations publications like the Statistical Yearbook and the Demographic Yearbook there are certain generalisations one can make. A low Gross National Product, limited educational and training facilities, high illiteracy, limited communication facilities and technology generally, though of course still with considerable variation.

There are about 100 developing or transitional countries. In describing them perhaps one should first deal with the semantics of nomenclature. Countries in this category started with the epithet 'backward'; this in due course became 'underdeveloped', 'underdeveloped' was easily changed to 'developing' and was accompanied by 'emergent'. Currently, 'emerging', 'transitional' 'developing' and 'the Third World' are all in use, with one or other term favoured by different investigators on various ideological (though, in my opinion, not very significant) grounds.

There are twenty-four countries distributed over Latin America (where many of the advanced developing countries or ADC's are found) ranging from Brazil

and Argentina to Ecuador and Uruguay. North Africa and the Middle East account for another nine countries ranging from Algeria to Afghanistan, almost all of them Muslim in character (not of course Israel or Malta). In the Sub-Saharan region of Africa, there are thirty-three countries from Chad in the north to Botswana and Lesotho in the South, including English, French and Portuguese speaking countries in varying states of development. Lastly, in Asia there are another fourteen countries ranging from mainland China to the Maldives, from the organised state of Singapore to the catastrophes of Indo China (itself rather an old fashioned name).

If we start from the worst situation, we find no public library, poor quality university libraries hardly needed because teaching at university level, as at schools, is by repetition, and the regurgitation of lecture-notes. Special libraries are likely to be better, though limited in scope, and out-of-touch with other special libraries both inside and outside the country. The staff, though may be qualified, will be demoralised and struggling to maintain a service, or alternatively will have given up the struggle. Services such as water, electricity, telephones, will be erratic, and roads sometimes impassable. Such however is the human spirit that communication somehow gets through - though slowly. A telegram or telex will often take as long time as a letter. It is important to bear in mind that the information or library service takes on the character of the country and can be, in a general sense, no better and no worse than other activities within the country. On the other hand, there are countries where certainly the information services are comparable with services in industrialised countries. In Korea, for instance, the services offered by library and information services at the Korean Institute of Science and Technology are of a high level. They have computerised services, printed bulletins and a library stock of a very good standard. And one must pay tribute to the work of the former director of KORSTIC (Mr. Kim) as well as the librarian of KIST (Mr. Park Ke Hong). Indeed all the government sponsored research institutes both in Seoul and elsewhere in Korea are trying to build up information services and libraries, which would be acceptable to any professional, whatever their origin. Brazil, too, has significant special libraries which contribute to the development of scientific work in the institutes and foundations of which they are part. These two brief descriptions represent one extreme - the other is left to the imagination!

On what does development depend? In my view it depends on one or two strong personalities of ability, who are drawn into library and information work

often by accident, and who are able to achieve some influence outside their institution either through the civil service, or through politics, or through hereditary position, or through their scientific or scholarly standing - or through a combination of these. Activity in the international field helps but it is not anything like as important as the factors mentioned above. Indeed, it is quite often true that a reputation internationally does not correspond with a national reputation, and it can happen that people successful internationally are relatively unknown in their own country.

Over the past ten to fifteen years we have seen the development of a small profession, and a relatively minor activity, in a variety of developing countries. Library and information work has developed from isolated activities, such as John Harris's work in West Africa at Ibadan in the twenty years from 1947, the beginnings of the various university and college libraries in the Commonwealth countries, together with the establishment of public library systems (now relatively well developed, in Jamaica and Nigeria, for example). Within the last ten years, the activities in various parts of the world have become more coordinated thanks partly to the efforts of Unesco over the years through the work of the division of documentation, libraries and archives, partly to the influence and support of bodies such as the British Council, also to the Russian initiative of calling together a seminar for developing country problems in the field in 1970 through the agency of the International Federation of Library Associations, which itself in alternation with the Federation Internationale de Documentation has organised regular seminars for librarians and information workers in developing countries, and has tried to organise a continuing programme through its division for developing countries. A further major influence on developing countries was Unesco's organisation of regional conferences in South America, Asia and the Arab countries and the Inter-Governmental Conference on National Information Systems in Paris in 1974: this gave a considerable impetus to activity in developing countries all over the world, and has had its effect on Unesco's own activity by bringing into harmony the Unisist programme (a world scheme for information in science and technology) and the 'Natis' programme (the promotion of national information systems).

What most people working in developing countries are concerned about, in making any kind of structure work, is the infra-structure. It is all very well planning at the centre - of the country, of the region, at Unesco or



Unido or FAO - but how are you going to get the job actually done on the ground? In Commonwealth countries in particular, there has been the initial expatriate, the training of local professionals in Britain, Canada, Australia or New Zealand, and the gradual increase of resources through local initiative. There have been British government grants, through agencies like the British Council and the Interuniversity Council for Higher Education Overseas. The other major national influence is American, which is not so successfully transplanted, largely because of the enormous difference in scale of resources. The scale of the United States in terms of geographical size too has made it sometimes difficult to search out the best qualified and most appropriate 'expert' for work in other countries. And there have been the contributions from the Scandinavian countries, France, Germany and Switzerland, among others.

But why should we be concerned about the build up of a library and information infra-structure? Any infra-structure of this kind is not quickly achieved. It has taken a hundred years to get to the point where the profession is taken really seriously by the government, to the point where its professional advice is actively and regularly sought in the formulation of national policy. It has taken roughly one hundred years, too, for librarians in universities and other institutions of higher education to win acceptance as equivalent members of the teaching staff - a process not completed in the schools. And yet it is important that developing countries should short-circuit these long periods of time, because library provision is a relatively economical service in any country, capitalising on the benefits of a much more expensive educational system and research programme. It costs 3%-5% of the cost - of both together, or even of the educational programme alone. Think of the principle of the supermarket - this is based, depending on your point of view, on self-help, or on making the customer do as much of the work as possible. A library is a kind of educational supermarket in which the customers help themselves with a minimum of instruction. Libraries, with an active service, well organised for the exploitation of stock and oriented towards the service of users can help towards the quicker spread of education and training for the population as a whole, as well as helping to stimulate the thought of those who will be the leaders of the nation. The encouragement of professionalism among librarians will go towards the establishment of a service which allows for individual reading and individual development which can counter-balance the all too ready imposition of ideas in the teaching in the classroom. The positive development of stock and services will give an added dimension to educational and other programmes.

Why then do libraries not flourish in the developing countries. Not least because they are not spectacular: libraries, information services, and archive depositories for their success depend on a series of small operations meticulously carried out and depend on attention to detail and accuracy. This does not attract the most able, except at a relatively sophisticated level. A second-rate personnel means that the case made for library and information provision is second-rate, and with so many needs to consider in a developing society, a service which is not forcefully presented goes downhill rather than develops. The able members of the service especially those who are trained overseas not infrequently have used and still use, the training as a stepping-stone to some other more lucrative post in the country, or, less often, a more lucrative post in another country, or an international organisation. Of course the whole tradition of many societies in developing countries runs against the grain of book-reading. The oral traditions of Africa, of the Arab countries (in spite of their devotion to the Koran) the importance of 'tradition' (in itself) in the Far East, the desire of the Brazilian above all to get to the beach, all these militate against the development of the public library or the school library. Moreover, the whole tradition of teaching tends, in different ways and for different reasons, to make libraries superfluous because lecture notes are dictated, and are expected to reappear in more or less the same form in examinations. (In New Zealand, in the last century, professors were asked why did they need books? Their services had been purchased because they were supposed to know everything in their subject.) Students whose living conditions do not usually allow for conditions of study do not therefore need to use libraries as collections, but as study rooms. Even less likely to be encouraged to use libraries are students who have graduated because they are concerned primarily to get a degree, and once the degree is achieved any motivation for further study is grossly diminished. Hence, one finds that university or college collections are limited in scope, poor in quality and unlikely to encourage students to further study. The impetus of initial standards, concepts of education, government attitudes to higher education and external aid all seem to have a bearing on the quality of collections. Hence one finds in countries of the Commonwealth that standards in higher education are generally higher than elsewhere because standards were set earlier on, higher education was considered prestigious by the indigenous governments, and aid has continued over a reasonable period. One has only to compare the collections of a library like that of Ibadan or Lagos University to see what a difference there is between them and, those in the Far East. Many of the libraries are filled with fifth-rate American college texts.

Indeed, it is true to say that in all developing countries there is in broad outline a hierarchy of library provision. At a minimum (or nothing at all) school libraries, then not far above (with rare exceptions) public libraries, then university libraries, and lastly, usually at a level of provision reasonably comparable with that in industrialised countries, there are special or industrial libraries. Because of economical considerations, these libraries are often indistinguishable from their corresponding numbers in other more industrially advanced countries. Even in Ghana, suffering as a whole for a number of years now from book starvation, the library of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research is recognisable as the library of a research institute, and the Council's information services have equally been developed over the past five or ten years to a point where they would be reasonably satisfactory to the ordinary working scientist anywhere.

So far we have tried to set the scene as it is now. Very inadequately one has tried to indicate a general level of provision with some examples but it is difficult to give a world picture. There are of course regional - continental - differences. In Anglophone Africa, libraries are relatively well developed; in Francophone Africa, there is very little. In South America, the library profession tends to be divorced from the information workers; librarians are very poorly paid and frequently hold two jobs to make ends meet. In the Arab countries, public libraries are almost non-existent, and so is any kind of bibliographical organisation, though there is a concern for scientific documentation because it is necessary for industrial development. China has, of course, been an unknown quantity for many years, but as in the case of other activities, progress is being made in developing relations with countries outside China, and we have had a Chinese delegation to visit us, and enquiries about receiving Chinese students in our department.

If there is a variety of provision of library and information services, there is equally a variety of education and training programmes. There are, however, certain general patterns. There is a variety, equally, among industrialised countries. In Britain, there is a masters degree, or a post-graduate diploma, after an initial degree in another subject, a bachelor's degree in library studies, or a two-year professional diploma (now fading away). In France, there is a similar situation, but without the bachelor's (or licence) degree. In Scandinavian countries, and in Germany, library and information education is on the whole provided outside universities. In the USA, there is the master's degree after a liberal arts



BA. In Latin America, the usual pattern is that of a bachelor's degree, though there is a postgraduate programme in Medellin, one or two postgraduate programmes in Mexico, and several are now established in Brazil, (where I had a hand in planning them in 1975). In Korea and in the Middle East there is a somewhat similar pattern. In African Anglophone countries, the pattern varies, but it more or less follows British practice. In Francophone Africa, there is a regional school for archive, library and information studies at Dakar this is at the level of the British two-year diploma, and schools for information studies ('documentation') in Tunisia and Morocco. In India there are numerous library schools offering bachelor's and masters' degrees in library science. In general, while there are of course exceptions, standards are more likely to be maintained in courses of postgraduate studies.

This gives, it is to be hoped, an adequate background for some conception of the status quo. In what state is the status quo to face the documentary information and communication problems of the '80's? The gap between reality and even practical ideal is wide, and as in other fields is probably growing wider, for reasons both similar and dissimilar from those in other fields of activity. Fundamentally, of course, there is relative poverty. But the difficulties widen particularly in the information field because of the considerable development of information technology. The difficulty is that not only the hardware, but the software and the overall conception of information services has multiplied and developed over the past decade. Moreover, the central importance of information is being recognised on a global scale. Machlup has estimated that up to 40% of the United States' GNP is being spent on information, and other countries, such as Japan, are foreseeing large expenditure on the development of information programmes. The Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development stated ten years ago-

The Second United Nations Development Decade should ... provide for a systematic and adequately supported effort to improve the facilities and arrangements for the transfer of existing knowledge and technology from developed countries to less developed ones. Developing countries require scientific and technical information systems of their own, suited to the type, capacities and location of the producers and users of such information, and giving emphasis to the type of knowledge most needed for economic and social development. Such internal systems must effectively be connected with the information network of highly developed countries.<sup>1</sup>



The preoccupations of the last ten years, which will influence developments in the next ten years, are represented in fact by the Unisist programme of Unesco, for which the initial conference was held in 1971, and the Natis programme for which the principal conference was held in 1974. To some degree both were consolidated by a further Unisist conference held in 1979. The Unisist programme is concerned with a worldwide information service for science and technology. Inspired mainly through the International Council of Scientific Unions, the programme has been focused on the organisation and availability of information for scientists, the compatibility of systems, both in terms of computer hardware and software, and in bibliographical terms, e.g. the problems of the standardisation of references, patent formats, etc. Unisist is a worldsystem primarily devoted to science and technology and largely, though not exclusively, devoted to materials at a relatively advanced level. For reasons both of subject matter and of organisation the Unisist programme shades off to the Natis programme. This is concerned with the development of national information systems, and with the whole field of knowledge. 'Information' in this context covers principally documentary information to be found in information centres, libraries, and archive depositories. Included is not only information for the traditional humanities subjects, the social sciences, but also the provision for instance of community information, information for government and administration, and information from archive and modern record collections. For reasons not hard to fathom, Unisist has been seen as a programme for the developed countries, where world organisation or regional organisation can be based on already strong national services. Natis has been seen as a programme for developing countries since it is seen as a 'grass-roots' programme which makes sense in the context of separate national development of countries often widely separated in the stages of 'advancement' in which they find themselves. The formulation of the General Information Programme which brings together the Unisist and Natis programme is a real step forward, provided that adequate funding is allowed for developments over a broad front.

One of the difficulties of present work in this field is that it is difficult to see it whole. There is no doubt that different levels of development call for very different information systems. Political differences, too, have a major bearing on both organisation and technical developments. In the Communist countries, it is relatively easy to have a central policy, though not always so easy to have a uniform practice, because of the difficulties of professional communication. Indeed, there is an inherent difficulty of talking about 'systems' of information, because no country has a 'system' in the technical sense.<sup>2</sup>

What then are the professionals in the field looking for? In the first instance they are looking to global development of information systems. These now exist at the international level through bodies like the Lockheed Corporation, Systems Development Industries, Euronet, and other electronic networks which have available among them well over 200 data bases which can be accessed in one way or another all over the world. There is of course the problem of compatibility both between hardware and software, but whatever the difficulties created by the manufacturers many, probably a majority, may be even most, scientists (especially) and technologists have access to modern information systems if they need them. The information provided so far is mostly to bibliographical references, or sometimes abstracts are given. There is little information of a primary character. To make full use of a sophisticated system there is a corollary, vis. one must also have access to the references, i.e. the text, which you have culled from your consultation with an on-line system. A document delivery service is a complementary and essential service in any modern national information system. In this connection, the British Library Lending Division makes a significant contribution to the availability internationally of documentary materials.

It was to look at information provision in advanced developing countries, that Professor Choi Sung Jin of Sung Kyun Kwan University, Seoul and a PhD student in the department, undertook his investigation in 1978. One of the primary problems is the problem of acquiring information in the first place. One of Professor Choi's contributions was to acquire a great deal of data about the organisation of information upon which he could base a thorough-going study for fifteen of the developing countries. Benzi Boadi currently working on a PhD on similar problems in Anglophone West Africa, will shortly be able to provide a directory of library and information resources for the region.

What is indicated in Professor Choi's dissertation is that in all the countries<sup>3</sup> there are governmental organisations for some part of the library and information services, which are usually in the science sector for information, and in education and/or culture for public libraries. In many countries, there appears to be no specific government body for the organisation of information services, while almost all the library organisation was undertaken by ministries of education. There are, on the other hand, national coordinating committees for information, (except Hong Kong and Malta) and these are composed of a variety of members from government, higher education, research and development institutes, libraries, industrial, and publishing

organisations. The committees' membership are not always absolutely defined, members tend to be appointed on merit, while a balanced sectoral representation was usually ensured. These bodies are responsible for the following functions - development of national information networks (10), coordination of their performance (10), national focus for international cooperation (8), long-range planning (7), development of national information policies (7), organisation of specialist training (5), promotion of research and development in information work (5), operational involvement in information services (5), organising user training (4), assisting establishment of new services (3), promotion of standardisation (one only). Broadly it is possible to distinguish between three types of organisation (a) those with a broad mandate, including policy, advisory work, planning and operational activities; (b) as above, but without concern for day-to-day operational activities; (c) advisory bodies. Of these, (b) appears to be the most satisfactory.

Information centres and services, the operational units, are found in almost all the countries investigated, the evolution appears to be from a general to specialised information centres in any service; translation services, and local information units are all to be found in the great majority of these countries. Where there are general information centres these are usually attached to major research organisations or university faculties. Of the specialised information centres, it was surprising perhaps to find the distribution as follows:

natural sciences	found in	8 countries	(57%)
technology	found in	8 countries	(57%)
agriculture	found in	7 countries	(47%)
social sciences	found in	7 countries	(47%)

Translation services are essential, especially if the language of the country is not one of the world languages. Yet the services are rudimentary, and lack the commissioning function fundamental to any ad hoc translating service. In only two countries are there indexes of translators. Translations are accessible only to limited groups, e.g. researchers and in science and technology.

Dr. Choi also analysed the number of researchers in the various fields



Total researchers in engineering		25%
agriculture		25%
natural sciences	80%	16%
medicine		14%
social sciences		20%
and humanities		—
Total		100%

Distribution of researchers in each sector:

Production	40%
Higher Education	30%
General service	30%
	—
	100%

Data on information institutions indicate that most countries have national information institutions, i.e. national libraries (11), information centres (11), or archives (10) - only one country (Hong Kong) has not one of the three. Yugoslavia has a national information centre but six national libraries (one each in each of the Republics). In just over half the countries surveyed, the three institutions are independent of each other. All the national libraries have a general collection acquired by national legal deposit, most have exchange programmes, and give assistance to other libraries. A large number (80%) publish national bibliographies and operate a national bibliographical centre. The planned acquisition of foreign material is however a low priority.

National archive depositories have the task of acquiring, organising and making available archival and other manuscript materials to users. Ten countries have national archives, but the comprehensiveness of the collection, their organisation and therefore the availability of documents to users is on the whole limited. Kenya, Korea, among others, have more adequate facilities than others.

National Information Centres are concerned with monitoring domestic research and development results, providing reprographic services, processing world, information material, publication of indexes, referral services, translation services, literature searches, and cooperation. The mechanisation of information work is still in its infancy but a basic level is likely to be

attained in many of these countries through the introduction of modern computerised methods. We are far away from the global use of information services.

Professor Choi has looked at levels of cooperative development and proposed five levels -

1. one large information centre, working with workers and libraries nationally
2. a large national centre, with uncoordinated specialised centres
3. local cooperation, without a national commitment
4. closely coordinated network to collect and disseminate information on a national basis
5. the coordination of national networks, to maintain close links with similar networks in other countries.

What are the principal difficulties in the way of development of information services? His enquiry elicited the following:

1. Shortage of qualified staff;
2. Lack of a national policy;
3. Insufficient funding;
4. Lack of coordination
5. Lack of user education.

In many countries, basic problems have to be solved to achieve a reasonable quality of life for the majority of the population. What priority should one give to education, information and libraries? Realistically, one has to agree that drains come before books, that industrial development is essential to greater prosperity. On the other hand, if modern technologies are to be developed one must have an educated population. If education is to be exploited economically, then information and libraries are essential. But at what level? Could one arrive at a percentage of the GNP? It would be difficult to arrive at a cost-benefit analysis, for how do you assess the benefit or even the cost of a child reading Alice in Wonderland, The Hobbit or Enid Blyton? - or a third year undergraduate reading an advanced text as against a professor reading a journal article? All attempts to do this appear to me to have failed, and this is not for want of trying for the members of the management unit at Loughborough (the Centre for Library and Information Management) have been discussing and investigating these problems for some

years without making too much progress. Indeed, the further one gets from provision of libraries for industry, for government, for (higher) education, the more difficult it becomes to make any rational justification for libraries in terms which will make an appeal to politicians or civil servants, and hence the difficulty in making a case for, and the resulting poor state, of public libraries.

The case to be made then must depend on the profession itself. And how can one build a vital and viable profession? Fundamentally one needs to look to professional education in its widest sense as the factor which will be the key to the development of archive, library and information networks. Librarian and information workers start off in every country by being clerks, 'failed' teachers or researchers, who may be unsuccessful in their own calling, and who are found an appropriate 'easy' job looking after a library. (Among many principals of grammar schools and high schools in the United Kingdom the developing country syndrome with regard to librarians remains!) It is only gradually that leaders who are both professionally competent and professionally motivated, arise. And it takes a long time for them to make their mark in making a case for their service. Moreover, with the almost instantaneous spread of ideas on a worldwide scale, the possibility of concepts, movements, and ideas appropriate to industrialised countries being inappropriately applied to developing countries is all too easy. A few years ago, the International Federation of Library Associations organised a seminar on 'resource sharing' in developing countries: resource sharing in many countries is in fact sheer nonsense since how can one share what one has not got? The tag of 'resource sharing' indeed makes life more difficult for many librarians and information workers since it appeals so strongly to administrators and managers as an excuse for economy. 'Services for the disadvantaged' - a very fashionable objective in Anglo-American librarianship - how valid is it in developing countries where in this field virtually all are disadvantaged? The need is therefore for imaginative leaders of the profession who will see the development of services in the light of the needs of their own country, and who will be concerned not only with the development of libraries, information centres and archive depositories, but broadly with the communication field and with the book trade as a whole.

How, then, are we to accelerate the slow progress we have been making for this is surely the purpose of the exercise? First, we need more programmes for overseas students, which are not only courses in the academic sense (though high academic standards are essential) but courses which will provide



the ambiance of vital professional commitment and an international content. All expansion of this kind needs to be planned systematically, because one cannot suddenly expand educational programmes without the knowledge that there are appropriate jobs for the people one is educating. Moreover, ideally one needs placements in a developed country to place such students so that they not only receive an advanced professional education, but they see the resulting practice - which for the indigenous population is the norm but which will not be approached for some years in their own country. We are providing courses in Loughborough for overseas students who we hope will be leaders of their profession in their own country. They are drawn in general from middle-management, and probably educate themselves as much as we educate them, since they are sufficient in number and come from a wide variety of countries. But overseas education can only be for the few. We have followed the policy of accepting (with rare exceptions) only postgraduate students, since we expect our students to have received their undergraduate education in their own country. It is no service to developing countries to provide undergraduate courses in this or other industrialised countries.

This of course assumes all librarians will be educated to a postgraduate level. One of the problems that has bedevilled library education in particular - archives and information studies are different - is the lack of appreciation of different levels of education. In the case of archives, it is recognised that there will be a graduate corps of archivists, and a group of archive assistants, for whom a different education is necessary. There has been a tendency in libraries to regard one level of training as the only one. This has been true in the United States, where masters' degrees have been the standard, and in Great Britain where a non-graduate course was for many years standard. The fact that in two of the 'advanced' library training countries an oversimplified view of professional education and training has been held over many years has, in my view, distorted, even negated, such manpower planning as has been done. In a study undertaken for the 1974 Inter-Governmental Conference, Dr. Franz and myself tried to lay down guidelines<sup>4</sup> for different levels of training, in order inter alia to clarify issues on manpower planning in the archive, library and information domaine. And those guidelines have been followed more or less by the British Library Association's most recent Working Party on Professional Qualifications.

However, one should not attempt to impose a British or even a Unesco solution on developing countries. It seems there are three elements in any professional formation: (1) general education; (2) professional education;

(3) professional training. The levels to which these are carried, their relationship and development are important. The tendency in most developing countries is to require a degree or postgraduate qualification and then (as has happened in developed countries) get the newly qualified to undertake relatively menial tasks. This is in line with the general tendency all over the world to seek graduate qualifications. This tendency has been strengthened globally by librarians talking of the need for a 'graduate profession', i.e. a profession in which all qualified librarians are graduates, and I have already mentioned the problem of ideas spreading on a worldwide basis.

What is needed is some clear thought by the professionals in each country to determine what is appropriate in their situation. The determination of objectives of a library and information service must to some degree determine objectives for library education. There are plenty of examples in the literature for guidance, though they are interpreted appropriately only with the knowledge of different contexts. For instance, the educational role of public libraries is much more important in developing countries than in industrialised countries because in the latter the educational system is better established and more pervasive, and hence public libraries can turn their attention to other needs. What we need to train at the graduate level are good library managers with an adequate academic background and as Dr. Anna Maria Athayde-Polke pointed out so forcefully in her thesis<sup>5</sup> a concern for the political and social development of the country. Just what this might mean needs further definition, but one of the problems of library education and archive education has been the tendency to concentrate on stock organisation and management to the exclusion of user oriented service and management of personnel. Hence a concern with full-stops and commas rather than the objectives of service. Good library managers need to have some knowledge of management, information storage and retrieval, bibliography, and the basic knowledge of one or more subjects. What developing countries should be aiming for is the equivalent of a joint honours in library and information studies, or library and archive studies, together with another subject. It is something like this that Zambia has, and this is a realistic objective for a limited cadre of librarian/information officers/archivists, which can fill initial professional positions, and from whom the leaders of the profession are likely to come. There are then needed paraprofessional staff who will undertake routine professional tasks - the handling of material acquired, cataloguing, routine organisation of loan services. For these, in general terms, a secondary education is necessary, with a further two years with some

further general education and a more limited training in bibliography, cataloguing and reader services organisation. Training of this kind is being undertaken sporadically in Kenya, at the Nairobi Polytechnic, and at the University of Ghana, among other countries. The difficulty that arises in differentiating between these levels comes partly from the lack of clear thought about different levels of tasks and therefore of the preparatory education required, partly from a deliberate smudging of the differences in the interests of recruitment. The difficulties are compounded also because of the difficulties in judging abilities in rapidly evolving societies so that frequently able students take lower level courses and then are frustrated, being unable to rise to higher positions and more responsible work. It is therefore essential to provide a ladder for the more able of those qualified at a lower level to undertake studies at degree level (or other appropriate level) to allow for the best candidates to make their contribution to the service at the professional level. In time, I have no doubt that there will be further differentiation of professional qualifications. The Library Association's Working Party on Professional Qualifications saw three levels of para-professional qualification (corresponding to, though not the same as, the three levels of the BEC Scheme). For the professional in practice, there is the possibility of a higher degree of a professional qualification. This is much more important in developing than in industrialised countries because conditions for promotion are frequently more rigidly tied to a fixed amount of experience and to specific levels of qualification.<sup>6</sup>

All this may seem to be a domestic matter for library and information personnel, but it does have further consequences. It is impossible to undertake any serious manpower planning when thought is so confused about the objectives of information services themselves, the differentiation of tasks and the objectives of library/information/archive education. And the serious consequences of a lack of manpower planning can be seen for instance in India, where library studies departments have been allowed to proliferate without the requisite increase of job opportunities, and where the library and information profession has a high level of unemployment, or of librarians and information workers employed in relatively menial capacities. Of course this is not unusual in India, but nevertheless one does not wish this situation to be multiplied. There is a danger that it may well be. A doctoral dissertation presented at Pittsburgh by Mrs. Dorothy Obi proposed that 'every university should have its library school'. For a small profession like librarianship, even including information work and archives, this is not sensible. It has happened to some degree in Australia and Canada, and to



some degree in Great Britain; the results is that there is an overproduction of professional librarians. What is happening at the para-professional level is less clear - not least because the professionals are too pre-occupied with their own problems.

The problem about the library, archive and information field is that it attracts a high proportion of those happy to mess about with catalogue drawers, semi-colons, and book-lists, but less disposed to face the client. The less developed the service the more this is likely to be so. It is only in the last decade that, in Great Britain, more healthy extroverts have been attracted. The introvert, in what is still in many parts of the world an inferior profession, is not likely even in the mass to make an impression on the active body politic. In an overseas consultancy the development of courses for children's librarianship was strongly recommended. Librarian colleagues thought it was quite mad and utopian, but the government department concerned was planning such a development unknown to them. The lack of professional 'push' is seen, too, in the approach to computerised services, both in terms of practice and of library education. The necessary 'push' will in practice usually depend on the effectiveness of the relevant professional association, and in developing countries there is a good case for a combined library, information and archive association, (the three branches of the profession are effective in that order). However, it has to be said that the concept of professionalism (like the practice of good welding, for instance) takes a long time to perfect. Even in the organisation of professional associations there are difficulties. In Ghana, for instance, a professional association must consist only of actual professional members - whereas in other countries - with a profession as small as that in the information field - aspirants, unqualified members, and frequently representatives of governing bodies are included. Also it has to be admitted that professional work is difficult where professional jealousies are upmost in people's minds, rather than the common good. It is the devoted professionalism of Kalu Okorie, a John Harris, an Eve Evans, or a Towun Ogunshaye to name only a few which has made librarianship and information work influential in West Africa.

Well, what can one learn from looking at the development of a small profession in developing countries? On the whole its problems are those of the country in which it exists. It is a profession with a basic ground knowledge, but which is dependent on its professionals also having a solid grounding in one or more academic subjects. Its studies have to be related to practical work, and its theoretical and historical bases all of which need to be clearly

distinguished in working out the objectives of professional courses. The profession needs to be firmly bedded in the political and social life of the country in which it exists, and for political and professional effectiveness needs to be organised in a strong professional association, which needs to take cognisance of practice, and principles, both inside the country and outside in international activity. This is particularly and immediately important in the information sector where so many international services exist. Moreover, where these are not used, existing manual systems need to be compatible with international computerised services if much waste is to be avoided in the future. Manpower planning (of whose limits I am well aware) is required urgently. Its effectiveness must depend in part on much clearer concepts of professional service and of professional education. For many of these studies to be undertaken, a great deal more information is required and this is being patiently acquired at Loughborough and in other similar departments in this country. If one believes in raising the quality of life in terms of education, information culture and recreation, a great deal more patient work is needing to be done, and the contribution to the economic life of developing countries is not to be ignored. In the last resort, however, the most effective work must be done by the nationals of the countries themselves.

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