

Strategizing financing of

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career that most faculty have a positive attitude towards libraries, yet libraries often have real power, I have seen faculty scramble to "protect" the library during a budget crisis: there is an implicit attitude that the library is unable to scramble for itself the way a school or college can. Like a fancy "kept" lady, the library must be protected and cared for. It seems not to occur to many faculty that the library could be aggressive in looking out for its own needs and could administer real pain if its needs are not met (Hendrick, 1986, pp. 129-30).

However, the pace of economic, social and, above all, technological change has affected higher education in a profound way. As higher education approaches maturity and change in its perception, and as it is increasingly treated as a tradable good/commodity, several questions are being asked to justify continued support through direct funding, grants and student aid. Definitely cost justifications call not only for planning, but for planning strategically in order to cope with new developments. But the illusion that libraries were considered very important and relatively adequate funding was given when financing of parent institutions was good kept the librarians unprepared when the situation changed drastically in the 1970s and 1980s due to decline in investments, as is the case in this era of IT domination. As could be inferred from Hendrick's (1986) observation above, libraries were inclined to administration rather than managing. Thus skills in planning remained rudimentary.

Historical development of libraries in East Africa

As observed by Kiondo (2002, p. 15):

.. the history of library development in most African countries can be divided into three distinct phases. Phase one was characterized by rapid development with assistance from donors in the 1960s and 1970s, while the second one was characterized by "a sharp decline in investment services in the 1980s" and the third one by "revival in the 1990s characterized by modern innovative information technology (IT) projects, new approaches in management and planning, and a new organizational dispensation".

Libraries' approach to these developments has, throughout the period, remained reactive.

Planning under phase one of library development

As mentioned earlier, phase one of library development in the post colonial era was characterized by rapid development with assistance

from donors in the 1960s and 1970s, a similar condition to that of the post Second World War in the USA and Europe where there was a great government support. In post-independence Africa there was a parallel interest of getting qualified human resource to replace the colonial masters. Thus libraries, as units of institutions of higher education which enjoyed support from both the government and donors, enjoyed relative stability in terms of funding. They were considered very important and public funding was not such a serious problem. East African universities also enjoyed sharing of resources up to 1977 when the East African community was dissolved. However, the higher education section did not suffer as much as other sectors of common services because the Inter-University Council of East Africa operated (amidst the difficult conditions) throughout until when the East African community was re-established in 2000. Thus the planning process was dominated more by administration rather than strategic planning.

Planning under phase two of library development

The sharp decline in investment services and political instability in some instances in the 1970s and 1980s led to economic hardships. This development found institutions of higher learning unprepared for developing strategies and, worse still, libraries' thinking dwelt on yesteryears. For instance, in Uganda the economic and social progress gained since 1962 were reversed when the Amin regime came to power in 1971. Makerere University faced serious financial problems (Mugasha, 2001). This dominated the scene until the 1990s when the university embarked on transformation. In Kenya libraries "were suffering from under-funding, being almost one hundred percent dependent on inadequate government grants" (Tanui, 2001) and in Tanzania the situation was no better (Nawe and Kiondo, 2001). The involvement in the war in Uganda hit the economy hard.

Planning under phase three of library development

Conceptualization of the above development and the process of looking for alternatives (for both individuals and institutions) took a long time. Some individuals left their respective countries and went out to look for greener pastures, bringing in the brain drain syndrome. Institutions were forced to look for alternatives to reverse the situation. Both as learning processes and a survival strategy, institutions started drawing strategic plans in order to cope with new developments and to shape their

future. This brought in the third phase of library development, that is, new approaches in management and modern innovative information technology as part of higher education development. The change in approach is reflected by adoption of strategic planning. It is worth noting that though cuts on funding have forced public institutions of higher learning to diversify sources of funding, these institutions are still heavily dependent on government subvention.

These developments found libraries in a worse positions

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 the 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.

Strategies for enhancing provision of services through external support

Strategies for enhancing provision of services through external support fall under two categories. The first category 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 on costs and meeting strategic needs of core users, although this element in this era of ICT may be irrelevant when the 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 publishing through the Web.

Second, 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.

Conclusions and recommendations

In order to live to the realities of time, libraries need to revisit the practices and attitudes towards costing provision of library and information services. As observed by Roberts (1998), libraries have not been good in keeping data that can guide costing of library budgeting in a systematic way as part of the management process. Libraries should build the habit of keeping data systematically as part of the management process in order to plan ahead and to be able to defend their budgets and proposals with hard facts. They should also invest commensurate efforts in marketing services in order to live to the expectations of their clients, and ultimately to get due share in their transactions.

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