

LIS TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

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The slow start and difficult progress of training and education for librarianship in Zambia before and since independence is described. Problems identified include state control, lack of funds, shortage of qualified personnel, inadequate curriculum development and failure to provide training in information techniques. Spearheaded by the Department of Library Studies at the University of Zambia, the situation is being reviewed critically and new developments are envisaged.

Introduction

In Zambia, training and education of library workers and librarians has, for a long time, taken a traditional pattern and concentrated on basic library operations. Most of the courses have not changed much since they were introduced in 1966. This conservative development can be attributed to several historical factors: shortage of staff in the training institutions, limitations placed on curriculum development by the practice of state certification and lack of clarity about the boundaries between professional education and semi-professional training. However, revisions are under way and the Department of Library Studies at the University of Zambia will lead the process. The impetus will be hastened by the move to automate the University of Zambia library system in 1995, thus providing both the example and the need for persons who are equipped with appropriate technological expertise for new methods in information work.

Professional education and semi-professional training

In this paper, commonly accepted distinctions between the terms "training" and "education" are used to denote different aspects of Library and Information studies.

Training refers to the process which results in the acquisition of skills at the level of a semi-professional librarian:

The aim of training is to prepare students and to transform them into beings capable of getting jobs and equipped with skills necessary to be able to operate in future whose signs show lots of changes. (Mwacalimba 1976)

Education refers to the process of equipping a professional librarian:

A profession denotes occupations which demand highly specialised knowledge and skill acquired at least in part by courses of more or less theoretical nature and not practice alone, tested by some form of examination at either a university or some authorised institution and conveying to those persons who possess these courses considerable authority in relation to their clientele. (Elias 1964).

General education in Zambia

Education in Zambia, from elementary to tertiary, is either provided directly by the government or through private institutions but with the approval of government. The government, through the Ministry of Education, provides both the curricula and the certification. At the highest level, the University of Zambia and the Copperbelt University, which are state supported, offer the education and certification for qualification leading to diplomas and degrees.

In the context of this overall educational system, the education and training of librarians in Zambia is integrated into the general pattern of higher and vocational education, with the state often maintaining close control over admission requirements and quotas, standards, examinations and certification. A similar situation exists in a number of developing countries (Bramley, 1975).

These arrangements may not be in accordance with what professionals deem to be the training needs and some typical negative side-effects have emerged in Zambia. For example, the non-degree Diploma programme has been discontinued, despite the obvious need for technically trained library workers in the country.

Zambia would benefit from an alternative system of professional education. In some developed countries professional associations, such as the American Library Association (ALA), determine education programmes for librarians. The obvious advantage is that training and education

criteria are formulated with specific reference to the needs of the profession, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Zambia Library Association, although it has been in existence since 1968, has no direct influence on, or effective control of library training and education. In the 1960s and 1970s the Zambia Library Advisory Council, which was the overall professional watchdog, nominated a Professional Board of Library Studies to monitor library education. It had limited success in co-ordinating curriculum and its influence disappeared in the 1980s.

Historical development of library and education in Zambia

At the time of political independence there was a worrying shortage of trained people in Zambia. Librarianship faced the same problem as other professions and the need for training was evident. Until 1968 there were no trained librarians in Zambia. Shukla (1975), Mwacalimba (1981) and Kangulu (1987) provide very concise historical accounts of the efforts to provide training and education, dating back to the time of the Library Association of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in the period 1948-1950.

Training librarians abroad was not economically feasible. In 1966 a British librarian, Miss I Hill, who had come to Zambia as a regional librarian, was asked to run a pilot in-service course for junior staff in Lusaka (Shukla 1975). From her experience it was observed that "there is no alternative to local training, to local standards and qualifications" (Zambia Library Service 1966). In 1967 a UNESCO lecturer, Edward Brennan-Jones, started teaching a three-course minor in Library Studies (Mwacalimba, 1981).

A working party consisting of the Librarian of the Zambia Library Service, the University Librarian and two other librarians made detailed recommendations about equipping librarians (Shukla 1975). The entry requirements for the recommended training programme were below University norms and the Evelyn Hone College was identified to offer four non-professional part-time courses. Later it was upgraded to a three-year course consisting of thirteen subjects.

Training at colleges

Historically, semi-professional library workers have trained at colleges, most notably the Posts and Telecommunication College (PTC), Mindolo Ecumenical Centre in Ndola and Kitwe and the Evelyn Hone College, currently under the

Ministry of Science Vocational Training. The programme lead to a semi-professional certificate.

The Evelyn Hone College programme, which was the highest at the time, relied on expatriate librarians. After their contracts expired the programme had to be frozen. Furthermore, these librarians often worked full-time and taught part-time and were thus too busy to develop the programme. In addition there was no reliable professional board of Library Studies.

The Evelyn Hone and PTC programmes are now formalized, staffed by Zambians and continue to provide semi-professional training at Certificate level.

Semi-professional University courses

As a result of the manifest need for professional training at university level a programme of Library Studies was established by UNESCO in 1966 in the School of Education at the University of Zambia. In 1970 moves were made to unify all the semi-professional programmes under the University of Zambia and entry requirements were revised to suit the University's general requirements. The two-year full-time semi-professional Diploma was established at the University's Department of Library Studies. The first fifteen students enrolled from June 1972 to March 1974 and all were successful (Shukla 1975). Despite the demand for semi-professional Diploma holders, the programme was later discontinued in the context of a change in attitude to non-graduate diplomas by the University and government.

Graduate courses in Library Studies

Alongside these semi-professional courses UNESCO started a degree programme as an optional minor course to B.A. and B.Sc. in Education. In addition to three formal courses in basic librarianship, students completed two six-week periods of practical fieldwork at the end of the second and third years. Courses were revised and updated and Library Studies was offered as a major alongside majors from other faculties. In 1976 the Department of Library Studies started offering a five-course major and students began Library Studies after their first year of 'A' levels in the School of Education. Library practical training at the end of second and third years continued.

Since 1982/3, when the number of major courses was increased to six, "the aim of the Bachelor of Arts with Library Studies (B.A.L.S.), which is a four-year undergraduate degree, is to

provide academic and professional preparation for librarians capable of working in various types of library" (University of Zambia, Department of Library Studies, 1987).

A Masters degree programme was approved by Senate in 1984, but, because of staff shortages, it was not possible to implement it (Kangulu 1987).

Continuing education programme

The need for continuing education is paramount and has not been met because of insufficient funds and staff in the Department of Library Studies at the University of Zambia. However the Department has mounted some workshops in conjunction with the Zambia Library Association and some donor agencies. The Copperbelt University Library has also organized training workshops. Courses tend to be costly for trainers and potential trainees.

There is a need to sustain and co-ordinate such efforts in future. Kaniki (1991) proposes that workshops be extended to include specialized information providers like agricultural libraries. The importance of encouraging universities and other training institutions to make ongoing education a deliberate part of their training programme cannot be over-emphasised.

Curriculum development

Many of the courses offered at the Colleges and the University are in the classical disciplines of librarianship: cataloguing, classification, bibliography, collection development, library types, reference services. The overall approach to the curriculum has not changed since the inception of training and education for librarians in Zambia. Staff shortages at the teaching institution and the need to draw on practising librarians to sustain courses has limited the scope for development.

Current requirements for training and education of librarians in Zambia

There has always been a need for training and education of librarians and demand is growing. In 1994 the Department of Library Studies carried out a survey. The ratio of applicants to those actually accepted in 1987/88 was 262:16 and 598:18 in 1992/93. The number of applicants for the degree programme had risen since the Diploma was discontinued.

The tables below show personnel requirements in the country as an indicator of the current and potential demand for training.

Table 1 is based on the currently existing libraries as well as expressed need for new libraries. Table 2 shows the number of people employed in various types of libraries and the shortfall. It indicates that some institutions do not have personnel to manage their libraries. The figures also include the institutions which need to establish libraries and the personnel they would require.

TABLE 1: MINIMUM NATIONAL LIBRARY/INFORMATION PERSONNEL

| TYPE OF INSTITUTION | CURRENT REQUIREMENTS | REQUIRED QUALIFICATION | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------|--------|
| | | DIPLOMA | BA / BSc | P/GRAD |
| School (Primary & Secondary) | 4385 | 3738 | 647 | 0 |
| Colleges | 112 | 56 | 56 | 0 |
| Universities | 75 | 25 | 18 | 32 |
| Government libraries | 72 | 25 | 18 | 0 |
| Industries & institutions | 100 | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| Public libraries | 215 | 130 | 85 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 4959 | 4024 | 874 | 32 |

TABLE 2: CURRENT NATIONAL SHORTFALL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES PERSONNEL (ON BASIS OF MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS)

| TYPE OF INSTITUTION | IN PLACE | SHORTFALL |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| School (Primary & Secondary) | 15 | 4370 |
| Colleges | 12 | 100 |
| Universities | 32 | 43 |
| Government libraries (at HQ) | 1 | 35 |
| Industries & institutions | 50 | 50 |
| Public libraries | 12 | 24 |
| TOTAL | 122 | 4622 |

[Source: University of Zambia, Department of Library Studies: *Review of Library Studies programmes, 1994* <unpublished>]

Future training needs in Zambia

Librarians have expressed the need to bring training programmes in Africa into line with trends in international information services. It is time to include information technology as a deliberate part of training. The Department of Library Studies at the University of Zambia is in the process of revising its programme to make it information based. The review is considering the complexity of information sources and patterns of usage. Undergraduates will be equipped to serve complex information demands of users.

In keeping with international changes in curriculum, the anticipated changes include revising courses to include information development, information studies, information technology, indexing and abstracting, which will broadly include documentation. Problem-solving approaches will be incorporated and the compilation of bibliographies in fourth year will be replaced by research methods and projects.

To facilitate these developments the Department has embarked on the identification and collection of literature in the field. With assistance from the Finnish Development Agency (FINNIDA) a number of personal computers have been acquired. Depending on approval by the University of Zambia Senate it should be possible to introduce revised courses in the 1994/5 academic year. Post-graduate degrees in Information Science will be re-introduced.

Conclusion

After a long struggle to recognize and develop training and education programmes in Zambia initiatives for change are now being consolidated and implemented by the Department of Library Studies at the University of Zambia. By a process of curriculum development, technological training and education in information techniques, Zambian librarianship will match that of other African countries and compare favourably with the rest of the world.

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