Chapter 13

Building the Capacity of Librarians through Collaboration:

The Experience of the University of Bergen and Makerere University Libraries with their New Partners in the North and South

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ABSTRACT

This chapter details the collaboration scenario of the University libraries of Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Bergen in Norway for over a decade. This chapter highlights the multiplier effect of the collaboration leading to new partners at the University of Juba in South Sudan, the East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS) at Makerere and the Norwegian School of Librarianship. The new partners implemented the Juba University Library Automation Project (JULAP) funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. JULAP aimed to rebuild the Juba University Library closed due to 1985 war. The project includes library automation, training and sponsoring young Sudanese for a Bachelor's degree in Librarianship at EASLIS. Staff training is conducted by EASLIS, while the practical component was handled by previously trained Makerere University Library staff. Activities, challenges faced and addressed, achievements and future plans of the project are outlined.

INTRODUCTION

Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda and the University of Bergen in Norway have been collaborating for a long time. In 2009, the two universities celebrated ten years of the on-going agreement - a Frame Agreement on research collaboration, scientific competence building, student and staff exchange, and institutional development. The agreement time frame was fifteen years, and is an important element in the strategic work between scientists from the University of Bergen and Makerere University. Collaboration between the two universities would be established in any field of mutual interest and relevance to the objectives of the two universities.

Projects complying with the conditions of the Frame Agreement, are regarded as part of the collaboration, irrespective of financial backing. The collaboration involved the libraries in the two Universities, which is the focus of this chapter.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE INITIAL COLLABORATION

The collaboration between the two libraries included support from the University of Bergen Library (UoBL) to various professional activities of Makerere University Library (MakLib), for example: Capacity building of library staff, interlibrary loans, professional support for the retrospective catalogue conversion, and Makerere University's institutional repository - the Uganda Scholarly Digital Library.

Capacity building of MakLib staff included visits to the UoBL for attachments ranging from two weeks to three months to get hands-on training and observe best practices. Between 2001, when the Maklib-UoBL partnership was formalised, and April 2012, fifteen Maklib librarians had visited the UoBL, while five UoBL staff had visited Maklib to conduct training in various aspects of the state-of-the-art academic librarianship.

Document Delivery Service (DDS) between the two university libraries was one of the first activities started after Maklib and the UoBL signed a memorandum of understanding in which both libraries identified areas of collaboration as already indicated. One of the objectives of the collaboration was to facilitate Inter Library Lending (ILL) and/or DDS between UoB Science library and Maklib following a framework of International guidelines of ILL. This facilitated access to the UoBL through the online database "BIBSYS". Maklib then got registered as an official user of UoBL and was given an account to freely access the library holdings through BIBSYS. Since January 2002, there were information literacy sessions focusing on e-resources, and Maklib users got introduced to the BIBSYS database. This was specifically for academic staff in the science-based departments. On average, forty requests for DDS were received from one science department between 2002 and 2004. The documents were delivered from the UoBL by fax. On the other hand, Maklib received, on average, five requests for Maklib's local collection materials, which were scanned and sent as e-mail attachments to UoBL (Musoke, 2008). In addition to imparting skills, the service provided access to current literature and greatly reduced Maklib's budget for international commercial DDS. The situation has, however, greatly improved as Maklib subscribes to over 20,000 full text journal titles since 2009.

In 2003, Maklib procured a Virtua-Integrated Library System (ILS) including an Oracle server, and started the long process of converting the manual records. In 2005, a team from the UoBL provided the very needed professional support to Maklib to handle the retrospective records conversion. This included a well spelt out workplan mutually agreed upon by Maklib and UoBL. For example, using the shelf-list (had over 100,000 cards) in the Main library, control the cards against the shelf, define a catalogue status "conv" in Virtua Integrated Library system, entering the records in "MARC-light", revise the proof-reading rou-

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