

ZAMBIA COUNTRY REPORT

Hephas M. Hamakanda

Zambian Profile

Zambia is found in southern part of Africa, it has an estimated population of 12 million people. Zambia has 9 provinces and its people are predominantly Christians, with different 72 tribes. The country has many tourist attractions; wild animals, traditional ceremonies and has one of the greatest wonders of the world "Victoria Falls" which attracts tourists from all over the World.

Library Development in Zambia

The origins of libraries in Zambia can be traced to the colonial period. Early library services were mainly geared to cater for the minority settlers and expatriate white community who lived along the line of rail (from Livingstone in Southern Province to Kitwe in the Copperbelt). Over time, different types of libraries evolved including; public libraries, school libraries, academic and special libraries. Each type of library was designed to serve the needs of a particular clientele. At independence in 1964, the newly independent nation inherited a legacy of a public library service which was only serving an urban minority.

Libraries and Information Centres Setup in Zambia

The library setup in Zambia is comprised of the following:

- Public libraries and information centres
- School libraries
- Special libraries
- Academic libraries
- National libraries

Public Libraries and Information Centres

Public libraries and information centres in Zambia can be characterized as follows:

- Libraries under the Zambia Library Service
- Libraries administered by local authorities (councils)
- Libraries and information centres run by foreign missions and other organizations (American Centre, British Council, United Nations Information Centre etc)
- Libraries and information centres run by the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines

School Libraries

These are libraries run and organized by individual schools. In general, school library services are better organized in High schools and private schools.

Special Libraries

These are libraries attached to research, business, government and non-governmental organizations. They are funded by their respective parent organizations.

Academic ILibraries

These are libraries run by higher institutions of learning (e.g. University of Zambia, Copperbelt University, National Institute of Public Administration, Teacher training college libraries, Colleges under the Technical and Vocational Entrepreneurship Training Authority etc.)

National Library and Information Service

Currently in Zambia there is no designated national library institution. Functions of a national library service are being done (by default) by four main institutions as follows:

- The Zambia Library Service – To provide public library services on a national scale

Functions:

- To establish a public library network throughout Zambia
 - To ensure the establishment and co-ordination of libraries in schools, colleges, and
 - To assist other organizations providing library and information services.
- The University of Zambia Library – The designated National Reference Library in Zambia
 - The National Archives of Zambia – Is mandated as the legal depository of printed publications
 - The Information Services Unit of the National Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research – This serves as the National Library for Science and Technology literature

Out of the four institutions above, it is only the National Archives of Zambia that has legal backing under the Printed Publications Act of 1969. Other institutions are carrying

out national functions without any legal backing except as integral components of parent institutions.

Library Association

Zambia Library Association is the only association that coordinates and looks into the affairs of librarians and information scientists in Zambia. The association has more than 200 members drawn from all over the country. The association has an executive committee whose tenure of office is two years. The current executive committee was elected into office last year 2005. The executive committee comprises of the following:

- The Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Treasurer
- 3 Committee members
- Editor
- Membership Secretary
- Secretary

Library Education in Zambia

There are three institutions offering library education in Zambia ranging from certificate to BA in Library and Information Science. These are:

University of Zambia

- Bachelor of Arts with Library and Information Science (four years)

Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce

- Diploma in Library and Information Science (two years)
- Certificate in Library and Information Science (one year)

Zambia Telecommunications Staff College

- Diploma in Library and Information Science (two years)
- Certificate in Library and Information Science (six months)

Achievements

There have been some achievements in the delivery of library services in the country. Notable among these are:

- The development of effective academic libraries in two universities which support research and reference to both students, researchers and the general public,
- There are bibliographic control activities at the National Archives of Zambia
- A number of special and research libraries attached to governmental, non-governmental and research institutions are running fairly well
- The Zambia Library Service is providing a formidable public library network and is also serving as a centre for sourcing of library and information materials from donor agencies and distributing them to both public and private institutions.
- Opening of more library education training institutions.

Constraints to Library Services in Zambia

Zambia like any other developing country is faced by many challenges. The major ones are:

1. Limited Access to Information

Access to information is impeded by a number of factors such as limited and uneven distribution of libraries and information centres. These services are restricted to urban areas and because of these limitations, citizens are inhibited from effectively participating in national affairs.

2. Poor Resource Mobilisation

Library collections in most libraries are far below the expected standards due to various factors including low funding and high cost of library materials.

3. Lack of Appreciation of the Value of Information

There is a general lack of appreciation of the value of information at all levels of society. The causes of this may be found in the teacher-centred curriculum that has existed in schools from the earliest times, where pupils regard the teacher as the only source of information, and learning is by rote.

4. Poor Regional and International Co-operation

Library services in the country lack linkages with other libraries in the sub-region and the rest of the world. This isolation has invariably denied the country the benefits which accrue from such contacts as resource sharing and keeping abreast of trends in library and information services.