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## The National Library Of Uganda: Challenges Faced In Performing Its Institutional Practices

Jane Kawalya  
jkawalya@gmail.com

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# **The National Library Of Uganda: Challenges Faced In Performing Its Institutional Practices**

**By**

**Jane Kawalya (PhD)**

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

The idea of establishing the NLU started in 1997. Kawalya (2009) identified several factors which led to the establishment of the NLU. Before the enactment of the National Library Act 2003, Uganda had a national library system composed of Makerere University Library (MULIB) and the Deposit Library and Documentation Center (DLDC), which were performing the functions of a national library. Meanwhile the Public Libraries Board (PLB) was performing the functions of a national library service. However, due to the decentralization of services, according to the Local Government Act 1997, the Public Libraries Act 1964 was repealed thus weakening the PLB. The public libraries were taken over by the districts which left the PLB with few functions. There was therefore a need for an institution to take over important functions which had been carried out by the PLB. It was also realized that the few responsibilities would lead to the retrenchment of the PLB staff at the headquarters. The MULIB and the DLDC had weak outdated and incomprehensive legal deposit acts which were easily ignored by the publishers. This led to the production of incomprehensive and irregular national bibliographies. Since both institutions are performing the dual functions of academic and national libraries, they concentrated more on the former than the later. They have inadequate staff, funds and space to carry out the national library functions efficiently and effectively. The MULIB, for example, is looked upon as a university library with its own registered members, namely the staff and students; it is therefore difficult for the general public to access the national imprint. There was no fully fledged national library which would carry out the traditional functions of a national library. The weaknesses of these three institutions namely DLDC, MULIB and PLB, therefore was the strength for the need of establishing the NLU. It should be recalled that the politicians had already planned to establish a national library way back in the 1960s but due to lack of funds, the idea stalled. So it was a matter of reactivating the process, thus establishing the NLU through the National Library Act 2003.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Several countries in sub Saharan Africa have established national libraries. However, as noted by Line (1988) national libraries in this region may take one of several positions, or settle for a diluted form of a national library by having a wide range of functions but not fulfilling any of them in a way that would be desirable. Additionally, national libraries receive less funding and get limited government support among others. However, a national library plays a big role in the development of a country and should be assisted to enable it carry out its appropriate functions. This paper therefore investigates the challenges faced by the NLU in fulfilling its institutional practices as stipulated by the National Library of Uganda Act, 2003 which requires it to perform 22 functions.

### **1.2 Aim**

This paper therefore to get a clear understanding of the challenges faced by the NLU in performing its institutional practices.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of this paper are to:

- Outline the institutional practices of the NLU.
- Investigate the challenges faced in performing the institutional practices by the NLU.
- Suggest means of improving the institutional practices of the NLU.

### **1.4 Scope**

The study focuses specifically on the challenges of the institutional practices of the NLU between 2008 and 2018.

### **1.5 Significance**

National libraries are not only of interest to librarians, but they are also of concern to politicians as a national symbol or institutions of national significance. There is a general view that no country is complete without one. It is therefore important that the NLU should take into account the tasks that it must accomplish both its own sake and with the aim of holding its observed place in the international network of cultural relationships.

This paper offers a clear understanding about the challenges faced by the NLU in fulfilling its institutional practices. The challenges revealed and the suggestions made will be relevant to the stakeholders. The library professionals would be able to lobby and show the government the importance of the NLU in the development of the country; the government to increase funding annually to the NLU in order to sustain its institutional practices, and the politicians to revise the inadequate National Library Act 2003 so that it improves its institutional practices efficiently and effectively.

## **2.0 THEORY**

### **2.1 National libraries as institutions**

Scott (2001) regards an institution as a social structure which is composed of cultural - cognitive, normative and regulative elements that together with associated activities and resources provide stability and meaning to social life. National libraries are institutions which are defined according to their functions, applied standards of work, practices, tasks and methods. The NLU was established by legislation and is affected by The National Library Act, 2003, which outlines its functions, and rules.

### **2.2 Deinstitutionalization**

Deinstitutionalization is the process by which the legitimacy of the established institutional practices discontinues, as a result of the challenges and failure of the institution to reproduce

previously legitimated or taken-for-granted institutional actions (Oliver, 1992). She identifies possible pressures that cause deinstitutionalization as functional, political and social which can be either internal or external. She describes *functional pressures* as those that arise from perceived problems in the performance levels associated with institutional practices. On the other hand, DiMaggio (1988a) and Zucker (1988) are of the view that deinstitutionalization in relation to functional pressure may occur due to the redistribution of power when the institutional structures are inadequate in their guidelines. They may also be environmental changes such as competition on resources or unexpected events in the environment that challenge the sustainability of the institutional practices, norms and routines.

Rowan (1982) believes that *social pressures* occur due to the presence of multiple competing and overlapping institutional frameworks which also weakens the institutions. *Coercive isomorphism* stems from the political influence and the problem of legitimacy. It is caused by either formal or informal pressures which may be executed either by force, persuasion, or invitation that are exerted on organization by other organizations, upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society, within which organizations functions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991p, 67).

### **3.0 RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **3.1 Institutional practices of national libraries in Africa**

National libraries perform different roles depending on the historical, social and economic background of the country. In his study, Al-Nahali (1987 p. 36-37) suggested three goals that can be achieved in terms of operational functions in the developing countries: The first goal is to *provide a comprehensive central collection of the country's literature*. These include legal depository; act as the central collection of foreign literature about the country and the country's authors living abroad; provide access to the national union catalogue; collection and preservation of the country's manuscripts; access to international databases and; provide books for the blind and handicapped.

The second goal is to act as *the national bibliographic center*. These activities are: the production of the national bibliography; development and maintenance of a bibliographic database relevant to the country; production of a national union catalogue; planning and coordination inter-library lending; administration of a program for generation of cataloguing as a part of a published book and information sources; formulation of national standards for information handling; provide indexing services to articles in the country's periodicals and newspapers and; acting as a center for the exchange of publications nationally and internationally.

The third goal is *leadership*. The functions include provision of leadership to other libraries; participation in the planning of library services in the country; provision of assistance in information handling techniques; provision of services to the government and; provision of professional training.

#### **3.2 Challenges faced in the performance of institutional practices by national libraries in Africa**

Since the opening of the National Library in Nigeria in 1964, Aguolo (1980) revealed that progress was very slow for 20 years as it was unable to fulfill adequately the several roles that it was empowered to perform. The main concern with the performance of national library functions is that they must be, or are best carried out at a national level (Line 1988).

Line, (1988) expressed concern that the national libraries are faced with the growing number of publications issued each year and the high cost of published materials. Additionally, there is a growth in the output of non-book materials – sound recording, video recording, computer software and publications that are made available only in electronic format.

In some countries, legal deposit covers non-print materials to varying degrees, while in others not at all (Pinion, 1986). Apart from the challenge of collecting such materials especially those not subjected to legal deposit, there is also a problem of making them available since they require some machinery in order to be used. Additionally, not only are there a wide variety of formats, but they keep changing, so that a number of items published in a particular form becomes outdated within a year or two when the machinery becomes obsolete, Line (1988). He noted that converting them to another format is costly and not easy and therefore the library has to maintain an ever-growing collection of machinery, some of which is obsolete and all of which has to be kept in working order.

Some of the challenges the National Library of Nigeria are the inadequate storage facilities of the non-book collection. This can cause the loss or damage of some rare non-book media relevant to historical, political, and educational growth of the country and yet they are the only available copies (Aje 2005).

Rosenberg (1994) identified sustainability of libraries in Africa, including national libraries as a big challenge. She noted that donors namely Book Aid International (BAI) and Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing (SAREC) donated books and journals to libraries in Africa over years. However none succeeded in treating sustainability because the parent bodies of libraries such as governments are not willing to allocate a portion of their expenditure for the purchase of library materials or equipment.

In order to make their donations more relevant, Rosenberg (1994) revealed that the donors gave money to the libraries to select the books and journals of their choice. Even so, all the donation programmes are based on the supply of Western material. Without these donations libraries in Africa would have died. At the same time she added, efforts are now being made to encourage local publishing such as the African Publishing Network (APNET) financed by a consortium of Western donors and the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA)

### **3.3 Suggestions of improving the performance of institutional practices of national libraries in Africa**

Regarding the National Library of Nigeria Act of 1964 and the National Library Decree, 1970, the professional librarians' opinion was that for the National Library of Nigeria to be really effective it should not be saddled with more functions than it has capacity to deal with (Adeyemi, 1972). Furthermore, in order to the national library to efficiently perform the functions characteristics of institutions of its type, attempts should not be made to give it other functions which can be more effectively performed by another body. Looking at such functions as legal deposit, bibliographic control of the nation's publications, conservation, and other alternative ways of carrying them out can explored and decide the best option (Line 1983).

Rosenberg (1994) advised that libraries based on the purchase of local publications would certainly be healthier institutions culturally and more viable economically. Line (1988) suggested the increase in funding the national libraries by the government each year. Although very few countries have been able to realize an "ideal" national library, he suggested three options: firstly, having a diluted form of national library with a wide range of functions but not fulfilling any of them in a desirable way; secondly, reducing the range of functions and trying to make one or two really well and thirdly; maintaining or extending the range of functions, supplementing government grants by earning money, or by joint arrangements with the private sector.

National libraries could choose to be regarded as a prestigious but a cultural luxury or as a vital element in the nation's information system, and therefore a vital contributor to the nation's future economic health. Although few countries may be willing to pay for expensive symbols of nationhood unless they are more than symbols, not all of them are aware of the threats and dangers that face them – or are they conscious of the opportunities that present them. It is not clear how well prepared they are to react to the threats and opportunities, or whether they can make the adjustment, perhaps a massive one, that may be required; size and dignity do not always go with adaptability. He suggested that we should ask ourselves not what national libraries should do but whether they are necessary, what they are for, and why they should do what everyone says it should do (Line, 1988 p. 27)

## **4.0 METHODS**

### **4.1 Research design**

The study employed qualitative approach since the objectives needed a rich deep description of the institutional practices, challenges faced in the performance of the institutional practices and suggestion for the improvement in the performance of the institutional practices of the NLU.

### **4.2 Selection of respondents**

The 3 respondents were purposively selected since they were directly involved in the carrying out the functions the NLU. These included the 3 heads of departments namely, Technical Services Department which is responsible for bibliographical services, ICT and preservation and conservation; the Inspectorate, Research and Extension Services Department responsible for

inspectorate, monitoring and training; and the Information and Referral Services Department in charge of national library, interlibrary and document supply. According to Patton (2002) the logic and power of selecting respondents with a purpose leads to the selection of information rich respondents from an in-depth study; he further defines them as those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry in this case the challenges of the institutional practices faced by the NLU.

### **4.3 Data collection methods**

Being a qualitative study, the methods employed to collect data included interviews and documents.

#### **4.3.1 Interviews**

The interviews were conducted in order to capture the respondents' views, experiences, activities and challenges of fulfilling the functions of the NLU. The interview guides with open-ended questions were used in order to probe and ask for clarification or elaboration of their responses.

#### **4.3.2 Document and content analysis**

Records, documents, artifacts and archives are referred as 'material culture' in anthropology, which constitute rich information sources about organizations (Hill, 1993). Neuman (2006) defines content analysis as a technique for gathering and analyzing data in the content of a text. The documents in this study included the National Library Act, 2003 specifically its functions, the National Bibliography of Uganda, NLU annual reports, Uganda national development plans and policies, and the NLU website.

#### **4.3.3 Data presentation**

Findings were presented using statements, quotations, tables and a figure.

## **5. 0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

The structure of this section is as follows: it lists of the functions of the NLU according to National Library Act 2003 (clause 4). In every function, the findings are revealed and indicate whether the particular function has been fulfilled, partially filled or not fulfilled. The challenges each function is then analyzed with the support of literature, the institutional change and institutional isomorphism theories; namely functional pressures, social pressures and coercive isomorphism. Finally, suggestions for improvement of the institutional practices are made for each function.

### **5.1 The challenges of the institutional practices of the NLU**

**a) Develop national policies on public libraries**

There is no policy to regulate the running of both public and school libraries (The National Development Plan, 2010/11-2014/15, 2010 p. 127). Respondent 1 stated that the draft of the Uganda National Policy for Libraries is in progress and is awaiting discussion by the cabinet. National policies on public libraries and the library sector in general have not yet been fulfilled. The library services are working in a policy vacuum, therefore thus functional pressures of inadequate guidelines.

**b) Provide to local governments standards, advice, norms, work manuals and guidelines in respect of public library buildings, staffing, stock and information processing, storage and retrieval**

In 2009 the NLU published the “Guidelines for establishing public libraries and community libraries”, distributed copies to only those public and community libraries it is affiliated to as shown in tables 1 and 2 below:

**Table 1: Public libraries affiliated to the NLU (NLU Annual Report 2014/2015 pp.15-20)**

No.	Public Library	District	No.	Public Library	District
1.	Apac Public Library	Apac	16.	Lira Public Library	Lira
2.	Arua Public Library	Arua	17.	Masaka Public Library	Masaka
3.	Busia Public Library	Busia	18.	Masindi Public Library	Masindi
4.	Entebbe Public Library	Entebbe	19.	Mbale Public Library	Mbale
5.	Gulu Public Library	Gulu	20.	Mbarara Public Library	Mbarara
6.	Hoima Public Library	Hoima	21.	Mityana Public Library	Mityana
7.	Ibanda Public Library	Ibanda	22.	Moroto Public Library	Moroto
8.	Jinja Public Library	Jinja	23.	Moyo Public Library	Moyo
9.	Kabale Public Library	Kabale	24.	Mubende Public Library	Mubende
10.	Kabarole Public Library	Kabarole	25.	Nebbi Public Library	Nebbi
11.	Kagadi Public Library	Kasese	26.	Paidha Municipal Library	Paidha
	Kalangala Public Library	Kalangala	27.	Pallisa Public Library	Pallisa
12.	Kampala Public Library	Kampala	28.	Teso Public Library	Soroti
13.	Kamuli Public Library	Kamuli	29.	Tororo Public Library	Tororo
14.	Kiboga Public Library	Kiboga			
15.	Kisoro Public Library	Kisoro			

**Table 2: Community Libraries affiliated to the NLU (NLU Annual Report 2014/2015 pp.20-21)**

No.	Community Library	District	No.	Community Library	District
1.	Adumi Community Library	Arua	14.	Kijura Community Center	Fort Portal

2.	Bileafe Community Library	Arua	15.	Kitengesa Community Library	Masaka
3.	Buhimba Community Library	Bushenyi	16.	Kitoba Community Library	Hoima
4.	Bukunja Rural Women's Association Community Library	Mukono	17.	Kwapa Cluster Library	Tororo
5.	Bulekei Community Library	Busia	18.	Kyabutaika Community Library	Nakasongola
6.	Bunyaruguru Community Library	Rubirizi	19.	Mpigi Under the Reading Tree community Library	Mpigi
7.	Bwindi Learning Education Center Community Library	Kisoro	20.	Nadiket Community Library	Moroto
8.	Caesarian Community Library	Lugazi	21.	Nakaseke Multipurpose Community Center	Luwero
9.	Inforall Community Library	Kampala	22.	Nambi Sseppuuya Community and Resources Center	Jinja
10.	Kaberaimaido Community Library	Kaberaimaido	23.	Pakwach Uganda Pioneers' Association Community Library	Pakwach
11.	Kabwoya Community Library	Mukono	24.	Rwenzori Resource Centre	Kasese
12.	Kasangati Resource Center	Wakiso	25.	Uganda Literacy and Adult Learners' Association Community Library	Kampala
13.	Katwe Kabatoro Community Library	Kasese	26.	Zigoti Community Library	Mityana

Currently Uganda has 47 public libraries; the NLU supports only 29 public libraries of which it is affiliated thus leaving out 18 libraries. On the other hand, there are 137 community libraries, although only 50 are active; the NLU is affiliated to only 26 community libraries leaving out 109 (Tables 1 and 2 above). This function is partially fulfilled.

*Giving standards and guidelines to library buildings and staffing in public libraries is the responsibility of the local governments; while the staffing of the community libraries is done by their founders. (Respondent 1)*

The Local Government Act, 1997, decentralized all the public services including the public libraries to the districts. Therefore the local authorities are in charged of establishing, equipping, managing, and maintaining the public libraries.

Therefore the NLU has not yet fulfilled this function in a desirable way, as there is social pressure of increasing fragmentation and overlapping institutional frameworks; and functional pressures of inadequate guidelines of the National Library Act 2003 and the Local Government Act 1997. It is suggested these functions of staffing and library buildings should be left to local governments for public libraries and founders for community libraries.

Regarding the stocking of libraries, the NLU received 30,000 volumes of book donations from Book Aid International (BAI), which is its main donor. The books are processed and distributed evenly among the public and community libraries. Books on demand such as textbooks and novels are allocated according to the specialized libraries guided by requests and feedback in reports submitted by staff of the different libraries. Additionally, public libraries also acquire other books through the initiative of their respective staff and local governments (NLU Annual report 2014/2015). Six regional Public libraries namely Mbale, Masaka, Hoima, Kabale, Soroti and Moroto, were selected to receive Uganda Gazettes. The alternative repository centre, Gulu University Library receives extra copies of the national collection received through legal deposit. The materials are easily accessed by the community in those areas (Annual report 2012/2013).

A total of 27,406 publications were acquire through legal deposit and donations of which, 26,406 have were processed and sent to public libraries. BAI donated a total of 23,648 books. 2,500 books were directly purchased from Moran Publishers using BAI funds. A total of 764 books and 494 periodicals were collected as Legal Deposit (NLU Annual report 20117/2018).

Donors namely BAI and Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing (SAREC) donated books and journals to libraries in Africa over years. However there was no sustainability because the parent bodies of libraries such as governments are not willing to allocate a portion of their expenditure for the purchase of library materials or equipment (Rosenberg, 1994).

The stocking of libraries have been partially fulfilled with the support of donors, the BAI. There is the functional pressure due to inadequate resources for the government to sustain the institutional practices. The coercive isomorphism exists due to NLU depends on the development partners for funding. The NLU should ensure that all the existing public and community libraries are issued with a copy of “the guidelines for establishing public and community libraries”. It is suggested that the government make efforts to increase funding to the NLU annually.

***c) Inspect and ensure that public libraries conform to national policies, guidelines and standards***

Inspections were done in 19 public libraries while during the distribution of books donated by BAI as indicated in table 3 below:

**Table 3: Libraries inspected during 2012/2013 (NLU annual report 2012/2013)**

No.	Library	District	No.	Library	District
1.	Arua Public Library	Arua	11.	Masaka Public Library	Masaka
2.	Gulu Public Library	Gulu	12.	Masindi Public Library	Masindi
3.	Hoima Public Library	Hoima	13.	Mbale Public Library	Mbale
4.	Jinja Public Library	Jinja	14.	Mbarara Public Library	Mbarara
5.	Kabale Public Library	Kabale	15.	Moroto Public Library	Moroto
6.	Kabarole Public Library	Kabarole	16.	Nakaseke Telecenter	Luwero
7.	Kigadi Public Library	Kagadi	17.	Nebbi Public Library	Nebbi
8.	Kijura Community Centre	Kasese	18.	Teso Public Library	Soroti
9.	Kyabutaika Community Library	Luwero	19.	Tororo Public Library	Tororo
10.	Lira Public Library	Lira			

During these visits, Respondent 1 revealed that NLU staffs were able to talk to district officials responsible for supervising library services and together discussed issues that affect the libraries, steps that could be taken to improve on the services and solutions to problems faced.

*“Both local authorities and the library staff appreciated our visits saying it gave them encouragement knowing there was an authority that cared for the service and requested that the visits be made more regular” (Respondent 1).*

During the year 2017/2018, the NLU managed to monitor and inspect 30 public and community libraries as indicated in Table 4 below:

**Table 4: Public and Community libraries inspected during 2017/2018 (annual report 2017/2018)**

No.	Library	District	No.	Library	District
1.	Arua Public Library	Arua	16.	Lira Public Library	Lira
2.	Bugiri Public Library	Bugiri	17.	Masaka Public Library	Masaka
3.	Entebbe Public Library	Entebbe	18.	Masindi Public Library	Masindi
4.	Gulu Public Library	Gulu	19.	Mbale Public Library	Mbale
5.	Hoima Public Library	Hoima	20.	Mbarara Public Library	Mbarara
6.	Ibanda Public Library	Ibanda	21.	Moroto Public Library	Moroto
7.	Iganga Public Library	Iganga	22.	Moyo Public Library	Moyo
8.	Jinja Public Library	Jinja	23.	Mubende Public Library	Mubende
9.	Kabale Public Library	Kabale	24.	Nakapiripirit Community Library	Nakapiripirit
10.	Kabarole Public Library	Kabarole	25.	Nakaseke Telecenter	Luwero
11.	Kabwoya Public Library	Kabwoya	26.	Nebbi Public Library	Nebbi
12.	Kagadi Public Library	Kagadi	27.	Pakwach Public Library	Pakwach
13.	Kamuli Public Library	Kamuli	28.	Teso Public Library	Soroti
14.	Kiboga Public Library	Kiboga	29.	Tororo	Tororo
15.			30.	Zigoti community Library	Mityana

This function is partially fulfilled with the support of BAI in that as they were distributing the books they used that opportunity to inspect these libraries, since Uganda has 47 public libraries; only 30 of them were inspected. Additionally if no donations were made, the NLU would not have been able inspect these public libraries. Thus the NLU depended on the support from BAI which assisted in the inspection of libraries. The government should fund the NLU to fulfill this institutional practice for all public and community libraries.

***d) Provide technical, professional and advisory services in the field of librarianship to government departments, local governments and the public sector***

NLU offered in-service training to 9 student interns from Makerere University, East African School of Library and Information Science, one library assistant from Mubende Public Library and 5 volunteers from the 6 Community Libraries (this is the name of the community library in Busia district). They were trained in library advocacy, reading promotions, extension services, report writing, book selection, accessioning and processing of library materials, classification, cataloguing, databases, organizing the library, registering of readers, loans, statistics, care of stock, stock taking, readers' advisory services and reference work (NLU 2012/2013 annual report). Internship training was offered to 22 interns from EASLIS, YMCA, Kyambogo University and Mutesa I Royal University. They were trained in advocacy, accountancy, secretarial, reading promotions, extension services, report writing, book selection, accessioning and processing of library materials, classification, cataloguing, databases, organizing the library, registering of readers, loans, statistics, care of stock, stock taking, readers, library incomes and expenditure and reference work. (Annual report 2017/2018).

It should be noted that only the government departments and public sector have not yet been trained. Therefore, this function was partially fulfilled due to functional pressure of inadequate resources to carry out these institutional practices. The government should fund this activity.

***e) Carry out research in the field of library and information provision and disseminate results to government, local governments and the public***

*Respondent 2* revealed that so far no research was done during 2008 and 2018 due to lack of funds. The NLU has failed to fulfill this function because of the functional pressure of inadequate guidelines and resources to perform its institutional practices. As Adeyemi, (1972) suggested that some functions by national libraries should be given to other institutions where they can be performed more efficiently and effectively. Therefore, it is suggested that this function could be more effectively and efficiently performed by Makerere University, College of Computing and Information Science, East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS). It has human resource capacity and experience to do so; they have the Masters and PhD programmes leading to research output. Additionally, Makerere University receives research funds directly from the Uganda Government which EASLIS can compete for. It can also solicit for research from the development partners who advertise funds for research namely Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD) and others.

*f) Design and carry out pilot projects in new areas of library and information provision and disseminate results to local governments and other organizations*

The NLU carries out projects from time to time to support different sectors of the economy. The projects carried are as follows:

➤ **The world Digital Library (WDL)**

The World Digital Library (WDL) is an Internet based information resource that is co-sponsored by the Library of Congress (LC) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 2005, the librarian of the LC approached UNESCO to create an online collection of unique materials that would enable people from all over the globe to access the documented heritage that existed in various cultural institutions around the world. The LC and UNESCO made an agreement to develop a prototype of the Digital Library. Google, the Internet Company provided a grant worth \$3million at the beginning of the project. The WDL web site features unique cultural materials from libraries and archives institutions all over the world. The website features manuscripts, maps, rare books, films, sound recordings, prints, photographs, etc. It provides unrestricted public access, free of charge, to these materials (World Digital Library, 2019)

The aim of the WDL (World Digital Library (2019) was to make available on the Internet, free of charge and in multilingual format, significant primary materials from countries and cultures around the world.

The objectives of WDL are to:

- Promote international and intercultural understanding
- Expand the volume and variety of cultural content on the Internet
- Provide resources for educators, scholars and the general audiences
- Build capacity in partner institutions to narrow the digital divide within and between countries.

**The World Digital Library, Uganda.**

In August 2009, the NLU and the LC signed participatory agreement in the WDL Project; and in 2010 it was officially inaugurated. The aim of the project was to trace and digitize the Uganda's political, economic, social and technological (PEST) history. It was guided by the theme "unity in diversity – the coming together as a nation through documentation, preservation and dissemination of Uganda cultural heritage home and abroad".

The objectives of the World Digital Library, Uganda was to:

- Promote Uganda's heritage worldwide
- Bring together Uganda national heritage in one space for use by both intellectuals and the general Uganda public
- Conserve and preserve Uganda's heritage - presently, documentation of Uganda's history and cultures is in a very bad state
- Contributing to the promotion of regional cooperation

Some of the materials digitized include:

- The Buganda Agreement 1900,
- The first stamps of Uganda as a protectorate,
- the first Ugandan money,
- The first translations of the Bible into various languages and the ‘Biscuit Tin Bible’,
- Maps by explorers and pictures of tribal rulers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries,
- Traditional dresses and royal regalia of various tribes.

Some of the contributors of the documents to the WDL (U) Project as shown in Table 5 below:

**Table 5: Some of the contributors of documents to the WDL, (U) Project**

No.	Institutions/individuals	No.	Institutions/individuals
	Bank of Uganda	7	Ndejje University
2	Mr Kasolo Serunyigo	8	Mr Drake Ssekeba
3	Kings College Budo	9	Tooro Kingdom
4	Kyambogo University	10	Uganda Christian University
5	Law Development Center	11	Uganda Management Institute
6	Prof. Lwanga Lunyigo	12	Uganda Society

*Respondent 1* stated that these contributors donated their documents free of charge and they were eager to have them digitized for preservation and access globally.

This project was disseminated at the XX<sup>th</sup> Standing Conference of Eastern and Central and Southern African Librarians (SCECSAL) Nairobi, Kenya (Kaddu, 2012, pp. 60-65).

#### ➤ **Changing libraries for children in Uganda**

In the financial year 2012/13, NLU and BAI signed a memorandum of understanding for the support public libraries in Uganda. The support towards children section development was in phases. The first phase included: Soroti, Kabale, Kampala, Hoima, Paidha and Jinja public libraries. They were stocked with books, furniture, games, chairs, mats, shelves, tables and paintings on the wall. The second phase included: Moroto, Gulu, Masaka, Kabarole, Nakaseke and Mbale public libraries. The projects which run for 2 years were aimed at providing effective children’s services and create child-friendly areas in the 12 public libraries. By the end of this project, it was hoped to have reached out over 7,200 children (NLU annual report 2012/2013).

#### ➤ **Information delivery through ICT for pregnant teenagers**

This project was funded by International Research Exchange (IREX) from United States of America. It trained 54 pregnant teenagers both at NLU and Kawempe Youth Centre in computer applications and how to search for information on internet. The training of trainers’ workshop was held so that public librarians can acquire skills and spread the project in other districts (NLU annual report 2012/2013).

#### ➤ **Electronic Information for Youth Employment (EIYE)**

Over 300 unemployed youths between 19 and 25 years were trained in computer skills. The training was hosted at the NLU, Lira and Masindi Public Libraries. (NLU annual report 2012/2013).

➤ **Inspiring Readers School Library Programme Project**

The objectives of the Inspiring Readers School Library Programme project were: to increase access to reading and learning materials and receive increased support from teachers who are in a better position to promote reading; to enable children grow in their love of reading and confidence in learning and; to foster collaboration between teachers and librarians to support children's learning. The project was implemented in Jinja, Kabale, Masaka, Mbale, and Moroto public libraries. In this project, each of the 5 primary schools in the 5 districts received 1,250 books including locally published titles. Teachers from each school were trained at their respective public libraries on how to manage these books (NLU Annual report 2017/2018).

➤ **Information Communication Technology (ICT) in public libraries**

The NLU in collaboration with Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) together with the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) implemented a project of ICT and internet accessibility to local communities through public libraries. The project was implemented in phases. The first beneficiaries of the project included; Hoima Public library, Pallisa Public Library and Nakaseke Multipurpose Community Telecenter. They received 10 computers each and other equipment. (NLU annual report 2017/2018).

➤ **The Local Content for African Libraries (LOCAL) Project**

The Local Content for African Libraries (LOCAL) Project is a collaborative programme between the NLU, Worldreader, the African Library and Information Association and Institutions (AfLIA) and the library services of Uganda. The project enabled Ugandan children access locally created e-books in their local languages. The LOCAL project was funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Through LOCAL, the Worldreader paired with digital technology and locally-created e-books with extensive training, capacity building, and support to help library systems develop the resources and knowledge they need to improve their ability to help children access and read content in their mother tongue. Worldreader worked with 10 libraries in acquiring 60 local language e-books split into two languages. In the Central Region (Luganda language) the libraries included: Kawempe Youth Center Community Library, Masaka Public Library, Nakaseke Public Library, the NLU and Zigoti Community Library. In the Western Region (Runyoro-Rutoro language), the libraries were: Buseruka Community Library, Hoima, Kabwoya and Masindi Public Libraries. The NLU also trained public librarians in a training of trainers in digital features. (NLU annual report 2017/2018).

➤ **Child in Africa the Gift of Reading**

The Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) provided a grant to purchase children's books for Moyo Public Library. The NLU purchased 394 fiction books and 43 nonfiction books (NLU annual report 2017/2018).

➤ **Book Aid International book distribution/support to public and community libraries**

With the support BAI, the NLU donated a total of 31,622 books to public and community libraries. (NLU annual report 2017/2018).

The NLU has been able to carry out pilot projects. It can be observed that the results of digital library project were disseminated at the international level and not at the local government and other organizations. All the others were not disseminated at any level. The projects were reported in the annual reports but these reports are unpublished. It is noted that all projects are carried out with the support of the development partners, thus the coercive isomorphism. The government should fund the NLU projects.

***g) Carry out and coordinate staff development programmes for people working in libraries and information services***

This has not been fulfilled due to functional pressure of the inadequate guidelines of the National Library Act 2003 and inadequate resources. It is therefore suggested that this function can be more efficiently and effectively performed by EASLIS as it has the capacity to mount workshops, seminars and short courses.

***h) Support and promote adult literacy and education through the identification and stocking post-literacy reading materials***

The country still faces high levels of illiteracy as 6.9 million Ugandans (5.5 women and 1.4 million men) aged 15 years and above are non-literate – unable to read, write and numerate with understanding. There is a regional disparity in illiteracy levels: northern 36%, eastern region 32% and western region 29%. The central region has the lowest at 17%. Library and information facilities that provide and promote relevant information knowledge and services to communities for individual and national development are few in the country and are mainly urban based. (UNHS 2009/2010).

The Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programme emphasizes the integration of basic literacy and numeracy, with functional skills and empowers the non-literates and neo-literates to use the skills for improving their livelihoods and well-being. Since 1992 through FAL, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) has extended an adult literacy service to over 1.2 million learners in 20,000 learning centres countrywide. Capacity building efforts were enhanced and these included: training 20,000 literacy instructors and supervisors; development of manuals for literacy instructors and supervisors; development of FAL primers and follow-up readers in 21 local languages; and, conduction learning needs assessment in different regions of the country. In order to address the low levels of literacy in the country, the National Adult Literacy Policy of 2014 and Action Plan 2011/12-2015/16 have been put in place to guide the provision and coordination of adult literacy services (Second National Development Plan 2015/16-2019/10, pp.71-72).

It was revealed by *Respondent 1* that although this function is supposed to be performed by the NLU, it is carried out by the MGLSD. This is an indication of the functional pressure due

inadequate guidelines of the National Library Act 2003 and inadequate resources. It is suggested that the MGLSD should continue to promote and support adult education as it is effectively performed according to the action plans, development plans and policies.

***i) Supporting the setting up of rural community libraries***

Respondent 1 said that individuals and Non-government Organizations (NGOs) set up the rural community libraries. This function is not fulfilled due to the functional pressure whereby the inadequate guidelines of the National Library Act 2003. The function should be left to the individuals and NGOs.

***j) Promote the habit and culture of reading through reading campaigns and book exhibitions***

➤ **National Book week Festival and Community Reading Tents**

The NLU organized and funded a community reading tent in Igombe village, Jinja district from the 18th- 19th October 2012 as one of the activities to celebrate the National Book Week Festival and to officially open the Kirabo Giibwa's Children's Library at the Nambi Sseppuuya Community Resource Centre. The reading tent was attended by 10 primary schools. The children were engaged in a number of activities that included reading aloud, essay writing, story writing, book making, drawing and colouring, spelling and word games. They were then graded and those who excelled in the different activities were given prizes. The NLU handed over 2,900 books that were donated by the NLU to the 10 primary schools. (Annual report, 2012/2013)

➤ **Community Reading Tents**

The NLU celebrated the World Book and Copyright day, which is an international day celebrated annually on 24<sup>th</sup> April of every year to recognize the role of books and authors. NLU in partnership with Bugiri District Local Government organized a Community Reading Tent (CRT) at Bugiri Public Library on April 11th, 2018. It attracted seven (7) schools which included Shalom junior school, York nursery and primary school, Hindocha primary school, Bugiri modern primary school, Istiquaam primary school, Waluwere primary school, Victoria primary school, Ali Juma primary school. From Jinja district, the schools included Emmanuel primary school, Ark of hope primary school, Bujjagali primary school, Victoria bright primary school, Light primary school. Each school brought ten (10) pupils making a total of seventy pupils. (Annual report 2017/2018)

➤ **World Book and Copyright Day**

On the World Book and Copyright day 2012, the NLU organized a half day activities with children of Buganda Road Primary school (which is opposite the NLU) at the premises. Children were taken through games like word search, spelling, debates, storytelling and reading aloud (Annual report 2012/2013)

NLU celebrated World Copyright Day at the NLU premises in 2014. The activities included a roadside exhibition was mounted along Buganda Road. There was also a public author reading whereby the NLU best author of the year was awarded a trophy (Annual report 2014/2015).

In 2017, NLU organized and celebrated the World Book Day and Copyright Day, whose activities included roadside exhibition, public debate, author reading and NLU annual award. The theme for the day was “the role of books in advocating for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) (Annual report 2017/2018). NLU participated book exhibition at Bulange Gardens and at Family day exhibition at National Theatre (Annual report 2017/2018).

### ➤ **Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)**

The aim of DEAR day is to promote reading culture and instill a love of reading on a national scale. It aligns with literacy activities happening in the community and this is conducted in annually from 11:00 am to 11:20 am. On 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016 Busolwe Community Library participated in the DEAR day. It was organized in various locations in Busolwe District and more than 1000 students, teachers and the community attended. The library brought various reading materials which included newspapers, magazines, novels and storybooks in Lunyole language. These materials were distributed to everybody to read during the allocated time (Kawalya, 2018).

The NLU promote the reading culture, through reading campaigns and book exhibitions annually at its premises and is funded by the government. Other public and community libraries perform this function occasionally when funds are available. This function is partially fulfilled since most public and community libraries don't participate in these activities due to inadequate resources. Therefore local governments should strive to fund the public libraries to promote reading culture through reading campaigns and book exhibitions.

### **k) Carry out advocacy at the local and international level in matters relating to libraries**

The NLU together with Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA) hosted the 23<sup>rd</sup> Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Librarians (SCECSAL) 23-27 April 2018, Entebbe, Uganda. The theme was positioning library and information services to achieve sustainable development innovations and partnerships. The conference drew up strategies for advocating and advancing library and information development in the region to facilitate Library and Information Science, to play their cultural, educational roles and support innovations. Seven (7) NLU members of staff attended the conference. In preparation for SCECSAL conference NLU Staff went for talk shows at Record TV, Star TV, UBC TV and CBS Radio Buganda. In preparation to celebrate World book and copyright day NLU advertised on Radio One and Akabizi Ku Bbiri Radio Station. NLU also published a write up in the Daily Monitor newspaper and produced banners and fliers. The publicity brought marketed NLU to the community (NLU annual report, 2017/2018). This function was fulfilled.

***l) Acquire and organize for use a comprehensive collection of library materials published in Uganda, by Ugandans and on Uganda***

All the books acquired by the NLU are listed in the accessions register and published in the National Bibliography of Uganda (NBU) annually. A total of 764 books and 494 periodicals were collected as legal deposit. Books acquired were 27,406 out of which 26,406 were processed and sent to public libraries and other beneficiaries, the majority of which were acquired through donations and legal deposit. The major donor is BAI who donated a total of 23,648 books. A total of 2500 books were directly purchased from Moran Publishers using BAI funds (NLU annual report 2017/2018) Respondent 2 said that NLU staff endeavors to encourage the authors and publishers to deposit their books to the NLU, it is also supported by BAI. This function is fulfilled with support of BAI upon which NLU depends on for funds. There is also a challenge of acquiring non-print materials such as audio-visual materials and electronic resources. Respondent said pointed out that NLU is unable to collect non-print materials due to the lack of storage facilities, equipment and preservation.

***m) A depository for national and foreign governments' publications as well as the United Nations and other international organizations for purposes of promoting research and scholarship and for the preservation of published national culture and intellectual output***

Between July 2012 and June 2013, the NLU had additions of 1,015 legal deposit books, 463 donations and 371 periodicals (NLU annual report, 2012/2013). The Library continues to receive newspapers namely the *Observer*, *The daily Monitor*, *Red paper*, *Entatsi*, *The New vision*, *Rupiny*, *Etop*, *Kamunye*, *Orumuri*, *Hallo*, *the Sun* and *Business week*. All these are bound in volumes per month in order to ease the handling, storage, reference, and conservation purposes. There are also international magazines subscribed to, such as *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, *Spore*, and others. Respondent 3 stated that newspapers such as *Edoboozi*, *Enyanda* and magazines like *Entanda ya Buganda* are not yet deposited. The NLU subscribes to e-journals namely Research for Life journal that has information on Agriculture, Health, and Environment. The library also has 19 titles of E-books (NLU annual report, 2012/2013). Respondent 3 revealed that the NLU has not yet received any foreign governments and United Nations publications.

According to Makerere University College (Deposit Library) Act 1964, Makerere University Library is a depository of national documents. It is also a depository of documents from foreign governments, United Nations and other international organizations for promoting research and scholarship. This is a *functional pressure* of inadequate guidelines of the National Library Act 2003 and social pressure of overlapping institutional frameworks and increasing social fragmentation.

This function is therefore partially fulfilled as the NLU collects only the national imprints. Therefore the depository of foreign governments, the United Nations and other international

organizations documents should continue to be deposited at Makerere University Library since it is also a center of research and scholarship.

***n) Compile and publish a national bibliography of books published in Uganda as a means of promoting awareness of the availability of these books and encouraging the sale of these books in the country and abroad***

Most authors and publishers are aware of their requirement to deposit their publications at the NLU and the National Bibliography of Uganda (NBU) is published annually in a book form (Respondent 2). It is observed that the number of national imprint deposited at the NLU has increased tremendously as indicated in table 6 below:

**Table 6: Number of titles published in the National Bibliography of Uganda**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Vol. No.</b>	<b>No. of titles</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Vol, No.</b>	<b>No.of titles</b>
<b>2008</b>	3	495	<b>2012</b>	7	463
<b>2009</b>	4	668	<b>2013</b>	8	348
<b>2010</b>	5	535	<b>2014</b>	9	271
<b>2011</b>	6	401			

The NLU annual report 2017/2018 revealed that the volumes 8 and 9 of the NBU were published in 50 copies each. They were then distributed to the development partners including publishers and authors who comply with the legal deposit law by depositing their books with the NLU. Public and community libraries affiliated to the NLU (table 1 and 2) government ministries and individuals are also provided with copies. (NLU annual report, 2017/2018).

As noted in Table 6 above, the NBU has been regular and published annually. However, Respondent 2 said

*“There is a delay in publishing Volumes 10, 2014 and vol. 11, 2015 and vol. 12, 2016 are not yet published pending funding as the money allocated for this task was diverted to other activities. Volumes 12, 2017 and vol. 13, 2018 are in the process of being compiled.”*

NLU has fulfilled the publishing of the NBU annually although it is not published on time due to the functional pressure of inadequate resources to sustain its institutional practices. The government should ensure that the budget for publishing the NLU is provided on time and not diverted to other activities.

***o) In collaboration with publishers in Uganda to carry out the cataloguing of books before they are published so as to ease the processing of these books by various libraries***

Respondent 2 stated that Cataloguing in publication (CIP) has been fulfilled.

*p) Establish and maintain a National Union Catalogue of holdings of major libraries in the country and to provide information and referral services, including specialized information services, at the national and international level.*

Uganda has no National Union Catalogue for major libraries namely NLU, MULIB and DLDC. They have their own databases which are not networked as was revealed by *respondent 3*. This function has therefore not been fulfilled. This is *a social pressure* due to increasing fragmentation and lack of collaboration between the three institutions. All the three institutions should endeavor to establish one.

**q) Allocate International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) and International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSNs) to publishers in Uganda**

Respondent 2 revealed that:

*“The relationship between the publishers and NLU has improved; and as more and more publishers and authors deposit their books at the NLU they also apply for the ISBNs.”*

This came about after a workshop which was held during the National Book Week festival that took place from 11 to 13 April 2018 under the theme “the role of books in advocating for UN Sustainable Development Goals”. The publishers and authors were sensitized about the need and importance of depositing their publications at the NLU leading to a total of 382 ISBNs being issued (NLU annual report 2017/2018). The ISSN has not yet been issued leading this function to be partially fulfilled. Efforts should be made by the NLU to ensure that all the serials published in Uganda are allocated the ISSN.

**r) Act as the agency for national and international lending and exchange of library materials**

There is no national and international lending of library materials. However, *respondent 3* said that there is an exchange of national bibliographies between the NLU and Singapore National Library, South Korea. The Library of Congress buys the NBU. This function has not been fulfilled in a way that is desirable.

**s) Act as the national agency for national, regional and international information system**

This has not been fulfilled.

**t) Create electronic databases in the area of interest**

Koha Library Management System, *Respondent 3* said, was successfully installed and is the database system now used for recording all collections received, reported that the databases created include: Legal deposit database, Database for donations, Database for periodicals, journals and newspapers. This function has therefore been fulfilled.

**u) Acquire at a fee, from any person or institutions, any manuscript or literature that may be considered to be of interest to the country**

Respondent 1 said that no document considered to be of interest has been acquired at a fee from any person or institutions, any manuscript or literature, due to lack of funds. This function has not

yet been fulfilled because of the functional pressure of inadequate resources to sustain its institutional practices.

### 5. Conclusions

The NLU is facing many challenges that hinder the performance of its institutional practices. These challenges are analyzed basing on the theory of deinstitutionalization. These include the functional pressures related to the inadequate guidelines of the National Library Act 2003, and inadequate resources to sustain the institutional practices; the social pressures of overlapping institutional frameworks, increasing social fragmentation and lack of collaboration between the NLU, MULIB and DLDC; and the coercive isomorphism of overdependence on the development partners for funding as shown in fig 1 below:

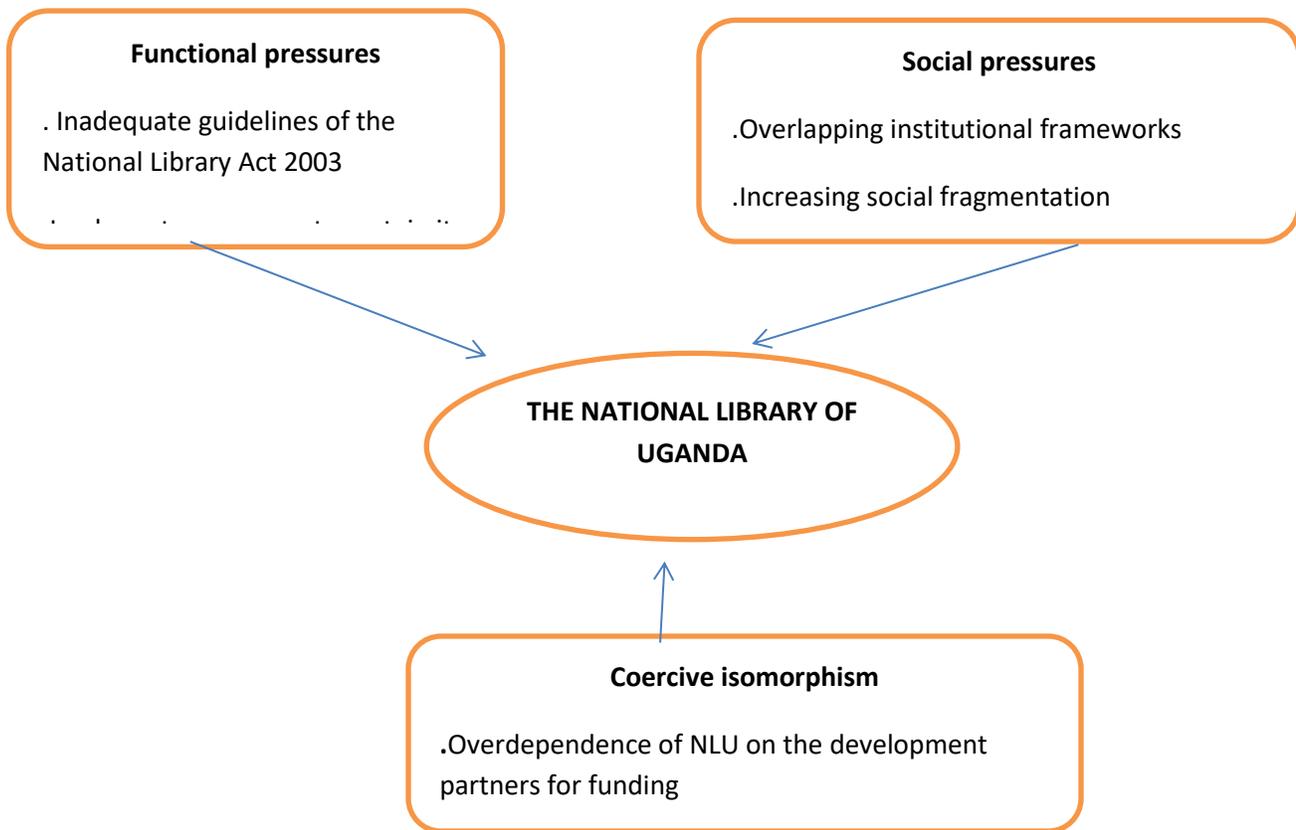


Fig 1: Challenges faced by the NLU in performing its institutional practices

### 6. Challenges

The challenges faced by the NLU due to functional pressures of the inadequate guidelines of the institutional framework, namely the National Library Act 2003 and also due to inadequate

resources. The NLU is mandated to do some functions but has failed to fulfill them, and yet they could be done by other institutions. EASLIS could carry out research in the field of Library and Information Science, and carry out and coordinate staff development programmes for people working in libraries and information services. Supporting and promoting adult literacy and education is already being carried out by the MGLSD; and setting up rural community libraries is already done by individuals and NGOs. Makerere University Library is already a depository for national and foreign governments' publications as well as United Nations and other organizations for purposes of promoting research and scholarship and for preservation of published national culture and intellectual output. NLU has failed to fulfill to act as an agency for international, regional and international information systems. Due inadequate resources, the NLU has failed to acquire at a fee, from any person or institutions, any manuscript or literature that may be considered of interest to the country; inspection and stocking of some public libraries,

The social pressure of overlapping institutional frameworks, increasing social fragmentation and lack of collaboration between the NLU, MULIB and DLDC renders the NLU to fail to fulfill its institutional practices. NLU has no National Union Catalogue of holdings of MULIB and DLDC neither does it act as the agency for national and international lending and exchange of library materials.

The coercive isomorphism, which is the overdependence of the development partners, is also a challenge. The funding of the development partners is appreciated, but it is a challenge to sustain these projects due to lack of funds, namely the World Digital Library, ICTs in public libraries, local book purchase for primary schools to promote reading culture, and others.

Despite the challenges faced by the NLU, it has fulfilled the following functions: Promote the habit and culture of reading through reading campaigns and book exhibitions. Carry out advocacy at the local and international level in matters relating to libraries. Acquire and organize for use a comprehensive collection of library materials published in Uganda, by Ugandans and on Uganda. Create electronic databases in the areas of interest.

The functions partially fulfilled are: Provide to local governments standards, advice, norms, work manuals and guidelines in respect of public library buildings, staffing, stock and information processing, storage and retrieval. Inspect and ensure that public libraries conform to national policies, guidelines and standards. Provide technical, professional and advisory services in the field of librarianship to government departments, local governments and the public sector. Design and carry out pilot projects in new areas of library and information provision and disseminate results to local governments and other organizations. A depository for national and foreign government publications, as well as the United Nations and other international organizations for purposes of promoting research and scholarship, and for the preservation of published national culture and intellectual output. Compile and publish a national bibliography of books published in Uganda as a means of promoting awareness of the availability of these books and encouraging the sale of these books in the country and abroad. Allocate International Standard Book Numbers

(ISBNs) and International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSNs) to publishers in Uganda. Act as the agency for national and international lending and exchange of library materials.

The NLU has failed to fulfill the following: Develop national policies on public libraries. Carry out research in the field of library and information provision and disseminate results to government, local governments and the public. Carry out and coordinate staff development programs for people working in libraries and information services. Support and promote adult literacy and education through the identification and stocking post-literacy reading materials. Supporting the setting up of rural community libraries. In collaboration with publishers in Uganda, carry out the cataloguing of books before they are published so as to ease the processing of these books by various libraries. Establish and maintain a National Union Catalogue of holdings of major libraries in the country and to provide information and referral services, including specialized information services, at the national and international level. Act as a national agency for national, regional and international information systems. Acquire at a fee, from any person or institutions, any manuscript or literature that may be considered to be interest to the country.

In order to mitigate the challenges faced by the NLU, it should not be loaded with more functions than it can perform, and the government should fund the NLU and increase its budget annually.

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