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Alternative Funding Models for Nigerian Academic Libraries.

Chuma Opara Nnadozie
Federal Polytechnic Library, Owerri, cnnadozie2000@yahoo.com

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By

Chuma Opara NNADOZIE,

Reference Services Librarian,

Federal Polytechnic Library,

Nekede-Owerri, Nigeria.

e-mail: cnnadozie2000@yahoo.com

Abstract

This desk research involved review of available literature on funding of Nigerian Academic Libraries (NALs). The aim was to ascertain the existing sources of funds for these libraries, re-appraise the available funding strategies and provide practicable alternatives. Findings show that the surfeit of ideas, captured in literature, has not positively changed the sorry financial state of academic libraries in Nigeria. As a result, these libraries still rely on sporadic but insufficient financial allocations from their parent institutions and periodic disbursements from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET-Fund). Whereas receipts from these traditional sources have remained inadequate, the policy-makers and managers of these libraries are yet to seriously explore alternative funding mechanisms. These funding problems are exacerbated by a noticeable absence of the discipline required for sustained implementation of revenue-generating ventures. This paper presents additional but workable strategies intended to increase the income of Nigerian Academic Libraries (NALs) in the light of contemporary realities. The recommended strategies include, among others, introduction of a special Library Development Fee (LDF), creation of an Emergency Educational Infrastructure Intervention (EEII) Fund and amendment of the Public Procurement Act. A novel fund management regime that places the burden of accountability on library administrators was recommended.

INTRODUCTION

The tertiary education sector in Nigeria is made up of three categories of institutions (JAMB, 2012). These are Universities, Polytechnics/Colleges of Technology and Colleges of Education (CoE). Various legislative enactments have established distinct roles for each of these higher institutions. The Universities produce highly-skilled manpower in diverse disciplines at the undergraduate and graduate levels while Colleges of Education specifically train teachers for pre-primary, primary and junior secondary schools. On the other hand, Polytechnics were originally established to provide middle-level manpower to drive the economy and further the country's technological-cum-scientific aspirations. Liberalization of Nigeria's tertiary education sector has brought about an unprecedented increase in the number of post-secondary educational institutions arising from the involvement of Federal and State Governments, as well as, private organizations. Presently, Nigeria has 108 Universities, 81 Polytechnics, and 109 Colleges of Education approved by various regulatory agencies (JAMB, 2012).

As with other climes, tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria are involved in several degrees of teaching, research, dissemination of knowledge and community development. These tasks are accomplished, largely, through various institutional libraries (popularly called academic libraries), lecture halls, laboratories and workshops. Fafunwa (1994) sees libraries in tertiary institutions as crucial centres in the educational development of man and his environment. This, perhaps, explains why the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), which supervise the three arms of the tertiary education sector in Nigeria, insist on the provision of purpose-built, well-equipped, information resource-rich and adequately staffed libraries, as a pre-condition for approval of these institutions and accreditation of courses offered in them.

The place of academic libraries as capital-intensive educational agencies that require, for their uptimal performance, physical facilities, personnel, accommodation, books, journals, electronic resources, etc have been documented in the literature. (Ehigiator, 1997; Anafulu, 1997; Nnadozie, 2007; Ubogu and Okiy, 2011, etc). To acquire the necessary facilities for the discharge of their statutory responsibilities, these academic libraries require adequate funding for their capital and recurrent expenditures. Presently, such funds come from two (2) main sources, namely; (i) financial allocations from parent institutions, which varies from fixed percentage of an institution's gross/entire budget to adhoc arrangements (Emojorho, 2004 and Akporhonor,

2005) and (ii) yearly financial disbursement from the Education Trust Fund (ETF), established under Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993, with the objective of using funding with project management to improve the quality of the various levels of education in Nigeria. To strengthen and enable the ETF achieve its mandate, Act No. 7 of 1993 was amended in Act No. 40 of 1998 to impose a 2% education tax on the assessable profit of all registered companies in Nigeria (Nigeria, 1998). The ETF is now called Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET-Fund) following a recent amendment of the original act which has further streamlined and restricted the operations of the fund to periodic financial allocations to the country's tertiary education institutions.

CRUX OF THE MATTER

Contemporary economic realities clearly show that the challenge of diminished funding is exacerbated by inflationary spirals which have diminished the purchasing power of libraries worldwide (Ananwu and Akanwa, 2001). This is in the midst of increasing output of published, unpublished and digitized information sources, as well as, Information and Communication Technology (ICT). As a result, the cost of scholarly information held by academic libraries to support teaching, research and publication continues to increase at an exponential rate. This dwindling library vote, nay, reduced purchasing power, is exacerbated in the developing countries, by an alarming external debt profile (CBN, 1996, and Kalu, 1999), the ongoing devaluation of their national currencies and other austerity measures (Anyanwu and Akanwa, 2001). Added to the foregoing is Ford's (1991) time-honoured reminder that in the higher education sector, academic libraries compete with teaching departments, administrative services and students union for share of their institutions' budget.

The present financial strait into which Nigerian Academic Libraries has fallen is a sharp contrast with the situation during the oil boom era in the 1970s. During the oil boom decade, adequate fund was made available to academic and other libraries in the country from revenue that was flowing into the country's treasury through crude oil sales. This reflected in construction of imposing library buildings; increased frequency of acquisitions; as well as, quality and quantity of new books, journals; and other scholarly publications. However, the decline of Nigeria's economy, which became evident from the early 1980s, naturally took enormous tolls on the funding of these libraries. As governmental financial receipts declined, the once booming economy nose-dived and, as a consequence, it became increasingly difficult to access ample funds for libraries, education and other social services. The decline in the funding of Nigerian Academic Libraries has not improved significantly since the country's economic crises of the early 1980s (Anyanwu and Akanwa, 2001).

For libraries in Nigeria's tertiary institutions to discharge, creditably, their unique and vital roles, adequate funds must be made available. The reality, which is rather disappointing, is that most of those academic libraries receive far less funding than the percentage usually approved for them by both overseeing government ministry/department and the educational institutions under which these libraries operate.. Various efforts to arrest the declining financial fortunes of academic and other libraries in Nigeria are replete in the country's library literature (Anafulu, 1997; Zakari, 1997; Okiy, 2005, Akpohonor, 2005, etc). Worthy of note is the fact that some of these suggestions come from outside the library community (Yabani, 1997 and Fafunwa, 1998). For instance, the allocation of 10% of the recurring annual budget of Nigeria's tertiary education institutions for library services was championed by Universities. This funding arrangement was concretized in a 1992 agreement between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government (Okiy, 2005). The policy has now been adopted by Polytechnics and Colleges of Education which make up the other strata of Nigeria's tertiary education sector. However, the inability of most executives of these tertiary institutions to adhere strictly to this policy continues to constrict and erode the capacity of their libraries to access funds for their services, as well as, recurrent and capital projects. This regrettable situation was captured succinctly in a memo which showed that the 10% of the country's Polytechnic recurrent grant set aside annually for funding of libraries, procurement of equipment and collection development; has not been implemented by most institutions (Yabani, 1995). More than a decade later, this unsatisfactory funding regime, which cuts across the different categories of academic libraries in Nigeria, has not changed (Akporhonor, 2005). There are also instances where library funds are diverted to non-library projects by chief executives without the consent of the management of their institution's libraries (Zakari, 1997).

Besides, the extensive financial interventions of the Education Trust Fund (ETF) now Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET-Fund) have not been enough to singularly revive the fortune of Nigeria's Academic Libraries. This accounts for the present situation in which "…journal subscriptions have been halted while the collections can no longer support the research and teaching needs of the faculty and students (Bassi, Camble and Merimon, 2007). In an era of information explosion, Nigerian Academic Libraries lack the enormous financial outlay required to provide scholars and researchers a wide range of communication technologies necessary for quick retrieval of information from immediate and remote databases. They cannot design modern information services, maintain the buildings, service equipment, train staff and pay electricity bills, amongst other recurrent expenditures. Inadequate funding is also responsible for the inability of most academic libraries in the country to install telecommunications facilities like computers, Internet, V-SAT and other gadgets required for the execution of library networking, resource-sharing and consortium initiatives. The funding difficulties of Nigerian libraries in general, and academic libraries, in particular, are not entirely new as evident in reports by Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), Okiy (2005) and Igun (2006). A recent published article by Ubogu and Okiy (2011) suggests clearly that not much has changed. This is shown graphically in ***Table 1*** which is the result from a field survey of the prevailing funding situation in ten (10) academic libraries in Nigeria. It can be seen that the funding of these academic libraries has not improved despite the increasing research interest on the subject and the suggestions therefrom. This points to a failure or inadequacy of the existing funding options. The major reasons for this are captured in ***Table II*** which is also excerpted from Ubogu and Okiy's (2011) recent report cited earlier.

Table 1: *Adequacy of the Main Source of Funds for Nigerian Academic Libraries*

Options	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Yes	2	20%
No	8	80%
Total	**10**	**100%**

Source: Ubogu, and Okiy (2011)

Table II: *Problems of Alternative Sourcing of Funds*

Problems	**A**	**DA**	**UND**
Librarian's attitude	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	-
Inadequate philanthropic culture of Nigerians	10 (100%)	-	-
Inadequate structures for effective and efficient accountability and transparency	10(100%)	-	-
Unco-operative attitude of those involved in the fund-raising process	3(30%)	5(50%)	2(20%)
Inadequate time to plan the due to head librarians tenure in office	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	-

Source: Ubogu and Okiy (2011) Key: A = Agree; DA = Disagree; UND = Undecided

It is clear from the foregoing that the existing funding arrangement for academic libraries in the country has not made the desired impacts. The task of the present report, therefore, is to identify pragmatic and feasible funding models which can be exploited to make Nigerian Academic Libraries responsive to the research and information needs of the 21st Century.

SOME FUNDING OPTIONS

There is no doubt that the Nigerian economy is not as developed and buoyant as those of the big industrialized countries. This underdeveloped economy, undoubtedly, affects the volume of funds available to manage academic libraries in the country. However, prudent management of available financial resources, efficient fund administration and fiscal discipline can help generate the funds required for library services in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions. The failures of existing funding arrangements call for radical fund-raising measures. A few of these alternative sources of funds, which are recommended in the ensuing paragraphs, might appear weird. But, such unconventional but practical funding options, if considered and implemented, hold bright prospects for the provision of the enormous financial resources required for qualitative library services in Nigerian higher educational institutions.

Although the proprietors of tertiary institutions in Nigeria have not funded their academic libraries adequately (Ubogu and Okiy, 2011), the present precarious financial state of these libraries is also a clear indication that heads of libraries have not effectively harnessed these libraries' revenue-yielding potentials. This means that there are several money-spinning ventures which have not been appropriated by the managers Nigerian Academic Libraries. A few instances will suffice: Nigerian Academic Libraries can generate sizeable revenue by establishing well-equipped, properly-managed and profit-oriented bindery services. If managers (i.e. Head Librarian) of these academic libraries are pro-active, they can lobby and influence the leadership of their parent institutions to generate a policy mandating all graduating students to bind their project reports, theses or dissertations in the bindery of their institution's library. An efficient bindery operated by an academic library can also generate additional revenue through patronage from outside the institution. The revenue-yielding potential of well-managed bindery services in an academic library is enormous considering the large number of primary patron i.e graduating students. Its success, however, depends on the creativity of the Head Librarians, as well as, strong policy back-up from the parent institution.

Launching of Endowment Funds is another source of income which has not been tapped by academic libraries in Nigeria. Endowments are a form of benefaction in which philanthropic individuals and corporate organizations provide a permanent means of financial support for a particular project. Heads of these academic libraries can borrow a leaf from industrialized Western societies where funds have been specifically endowment for the development of academic libraries. Although this practice has not gained grounds in Nigeria, its rarity does not diminish the success stories of endowments made to specific academic libraries in different parts of Africa (Ifidon and Ifidon, 2007: 123 – 124). Resourceful academic libraries in Nigeria can, therefore, reach-out to both local and foreign well-to-do individuals, corporate bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Through targeted lobbying and sensitization, these groups could be persuaded or encouraged to endow a significant proportion of their wealth to support the services of specific libraries in tertiary institutions of learning.

The reprographic/photocopying services found in almost all academic libraries in Nigeria can be redesigned to make it easier to determine the amount or receipts accruing from the venture. The point is that it is possible for libraries to break away from the usual piecemeal receipts from reprographic services. The space/accommodation for reprographic/photographic services can be leased to private operators for an agreed fee payable at predetermined intervals. Under this novel arrangement, revenue received by academic libraries from the lease of space for photocopying service would come as lump sums at agreed intervals which can be re-invested in specific projects or services. This makes for accountability because the income would be both steady and easily verifiable. Besides, managers of these academic libraries are saved the headache of staff supervision, incessant breakdown of machines, funding of repairs and sundry hassles that accompany photocopying services, especially in the midst of staff shortages.

Heavy fines should be levied on overdue books to serve both as deterrent for other defaulters, as well as, boost the revenue base of these academic libraries. Charges can also be imposed on outside borrowers and other users who are neither staff nor students of the institution to which the library belongs. Another potential source of income which managers of academic libraries should explore is charging of fixed amounts for the use of the libraries' electronic databases and special collections like reserve books, historical collections (incunabular) and core reference materials. Specific levies can also be imposed on the use of project reports, theses, dissertations and related unpublished but vital primary sources of data in the holdings of Nigerian Academic Libraries. This policy has enormous potential for revenue-generation since these unpublished materials are, unarguably, among the most sought-after in these libraries. Furthermore, management and staff of Nigerian Academic Libraries can attract funds from the public by sensitizing religious groups (especially, Christians and Moslems) and philanthropic organizations/individuals on the centrality of libraries in tertiary education and the need to contribute to their funding and sustenance, through cash donators, grants and bequeaths. This should be achieved using sustained publicity in both print and electronic media. There is no doubt that effective mobilization will ignite public interest in academic libraries and spur kind-hearted rich individuals to donate to improve services of academic libraries.

An Emergency Educational Infrastructure Intervention (EEII) Fund Act is hereby proposed for enactment by the Nigeria's National Assembly. The EEII Fund would be different from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET-Fund) in the sense that while the later is permanent, the former would be an ad-hoc levy that would last for a period not less than 5 years but not more than 10 years. Besides, unlike the TET-Fund, contributions to the EEII Fund would be drawn from specific sectors of the Nigerian economy. This bold recommendation is clearly on the understanding that serious problems require radical approaches for their solution. To actualize the EEII Fund, companies in the telecommunications, banking, insurance, mining and construction sectors, as well as, the Customs and Excise Service, would be required to contribute 2% of their gross profit annually to the pool for the period of the emergency.

To avoid multiple taxation which is a disincentive to investment, firms in the nation's oil and gas sector, which are already contributing to the Petroleum Development Trust Fund (PDTF), would be exempted from the envisaged EEII Fund. While the general intention is to use the EEII Fund solely for the development of infrastructure in Nigeria's educational institutions, the specific objective is that five percent (5%) of the Fund would be dedicated to library services in each of Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, respectively. Implementation of this proposal would bring about a remarkable improvement in the funding situation in Nigerian Academic Libraries. This will result in 15% of the EEII Fund being dedicated solely to academic libraries in government-approved tertiary institutions which will alleviate the financial difficulties of these libraries if prudently utilized. Besides, the statutory allocations which the TET-Fund gives to academic libraries in the country's public tertiary schools should be reviewed upwards to reflect the prevailing economic realities, as well as, enable these libraries undertake bigger capital projects in the discharge of their core mandate.

It is obvious that an overwhelming percentage of the manpower needs of the Organized Private Sector (OPS) in Nigeria are supplied by indigenous tertiary institutions of learning (Ohuabunwa, 2013). A relationship, therefore, exists which can be leveraged by a pro-active head of an academic library to the advantage of his library. In that case, the OPS in Nigeria could be mobilized to contribute towards the funding of library services in the country's tertiary institutions. Through sustained sensitization, advocacy and collaborations, an effective arrangement could be worked out, through which the OPS would either set up permanent endowment funds or make periodic financial grants to sustain library services in Nigerian Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education.

A special Library Development Fee (LDF), payable annually, should be levied on every student in Nigerian tertiary education institutions. This yearly levy of ₦2000 per student is subject to review every five years to reflect prevailing economic realities. To avoid unnecessary administrative bottlenecks and sundry issues likely to obstruct easy access to the money by library administrators, students should pay the proposed LDF into a dedicated account of their respective institutional libraries. This account should be managed by either of University, Polytechnic or College Librarians, as the case may be. Since knowledge of lobbying techniques is useful in promoting library needs in the midst of competing priorities (Meraz, 2002), administrators of Nigerian Academic Libraries should device ways of securing funds through beneficial collaborations and establishment of specific roles for each of alumni associations, philanthropists and even, Students' Union Governments (SUG). Helmsmen of these academic libraries, who go the extra mile to sensitize their institutions' Parent's Association, and other critical stakeholders of the central role of library services, can also raise substantial amounts of fund for library services.

The Public Procurement Act, enacted by the Federal Government of Nigeria, should be amended. The proposed amendment should to insert a clause compelling companies executing contracts or other businesses in Nigerian tertiary institutions, to donate a stipulated fraction or percentage of their net profit from such transactions, for library services in the benefactor-institutions. In addition to the normal professional competence, the size of contract/business could be tied to the volume of financial assistance which the contractor is willing to give for the institution's library services. This is a sure way of making the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) relevant to the provision and funding of library services in various tertiary educational institutions in the country.

Although the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) was established, originally to, among other things, accelerate the development of indigenous manpower for Nigeria's vital oil and gas industry, it can, nevertheless, carve out a role for itself in the funding of Nigerian Academic Libraries. The PTDF can do this by making funds available to libraries in tertiary educational institutions that offer programmes in petroleum and engineering-related disciplines. Such assistance could be in the form of periodic financial grants, defrayal of procurement cost of study materials, installation of ICT components and purchase of other library equipments. In the conventional tertiary institutions, the PTDF can intervene in the purchase of science books and journals or tie any financial assistance to the procurement of these science-based information materials.

FUND ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES

These alternative sources of funds, should be accepted by relevant authorities in Nigeria, and strictly implemented by managers of academic libraries. It is only then that these funding options would engender a reasonably steady inflow of revenue into Nigerian Academic Libraries. Whilst this is the desired outcome, the attendant challenge of efficient and prudent fund husbandry should not be overlooked. It is, therefore, necessary to set up a clear mechanism for accountability and other aspects of fund management in these academic libraries. There is certainly no exaggerating the fact that fund management is as important as its generation.

Receipts from the proposed EEII Fund should be paid into a central pool/account, to be domiciled in a commercial bank to attract interest. A Management Committee would be established to, among other things, oversee the EEII Fund, work out equitable sharing formulae for all academic libraries in the country and ensure that release of the allotment of each beneficiary-library is made as when due. Each beneficiary-academic library is expected to create a functional Accounts Unit/Desk and open a dedicated account into which receipts from the EEII Fund and other funding options (i.e. PTDF, OPS, LDF, SUG, etc) would be paid. Although funds for these academic libraries would be directly controlled by library administrators, there would be close monitoring by management of their parent institutions to ensure effective application, and periodic retirement, of such funds.

As part of the foregoing regulatory framework, an annual audited account of funds received by these academic libraries should be submitted to the Executive Secretaries of National Universities Commission NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), respectively through various Vice Chancellors/Presidents, Rectors and Provosts. Administrators or heads of academic libraries in Nigeria should provide for their benefactors, detailed report of projects on which financial grants and other cash donations received from them were expended. Further receipt of funds and financial assistance from statutory government agencies should be tied to successful retirement of funds already received. The retirement of funds must be made within a stipulated timeframe. Such feedback mechanism and openness in fund administration would engender confidence between both parties with the potential for more monetary assistance in future.

A legislation should be enacted with provisions making delays in release of approved votes, as well as, misapplication of such funds, a punishable economic offence. Such infractions should be investigated and prosecuted in courts by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) which are Nigeria’s anti-corruption agencies. These strict measures would ensure that funds appropriated for library services in Nigerian tertiary institutions are used for the intended purposes. Besides, heads of these libraries would have both direct access to their funds and a reasonable measure of autonomy in fund administration.

CONCLUSION

Library and information Services (LIS) in Nigeria is not adequately funded. The fate of academic libraries is not different as funding for these libraries, which comes largely from their parent institutions and ETF, now TET-Fund has not been sufficient. As the purchasing power of revenue accruing to different levels/tiers of government in Nigeria continues to diminish, responsibilities and obligations of these governments continue to expand. This has severely limited the amount of money available for the capital and recurrent expenses of the country's academic libraries, amongst other educational and social services. It is, therefore, very clear, as captured in Nigerian library literature, that academic libraries in the country cannot continue to rely on the present sporadic and insufficient budgetary allocations by government through their parent institutions. In line with the foregoing, some income-generating ventures have been identified, which if implemented, would yield the additional financial resource required to meet the increasingly complex demand of library services in 21st Century tertiary institutions.

Prominent amongst the funding options recommended in this paper is the establishment of an Emergency Education Infrastructure Intervention (EEII) Fund of which 15% would be dedicated to the funding of academic libraries in Nigeria. Money from the EEII Fund would be remitted to government-accredited tertiary institutions for their library services at the beginning of each academic session. Charging of a special Library Development Fee (LDF) per student, payable every session is another sure way of generating substantial funds for academic libraries in the country. Amendment of the existing Public Procurement Act to insert a clause, requiring companies executing contracts and other businesses in Nigeria's tertiary institutions to dedicate a stipulated percentage of their profit for library services in the awarding institution, is another sure source of revenue for these academic libraries. There is do the need to sensitize and encourage the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) to carve out a specific role for itself in funding academic libraries in tertiary institution offering petroleum and other engineering-related courses.

Increased governmental commitment and interest in the development of academic library through library-friendly legislations is of essence. There is also a need for more advocacy and publicity in the mass media on the crucial role of academic libraries in the operational efficiency of their parent institutions. Through such awareness programmes, profit-oriented corporate establishments and non-governmental voluntary organizations could be mobilized to provide financial assistance to Nigeria's Academic Libraries. A firmer and consistent implementation of the policy requiring tertiary institutions to commit a specific percentage of the budget to their libraries will definitely increase the amount of funds for libraries services in these institutions. This is in addition to more business-oriented and profit-driven approach to the management of reprographic services, which are traditional economic activities of most academic libraries in Nigeria. Furthermore, there should be a consistent implementation of fines on loan defaulters just as charges could be levied on the use of electronic databases, core reference nationals, reserved books and theses/dissertations.

The alternative sources of fund recommended in this paper might appear both novel and revolutionary. But such unconventional but creative funding options might hold the key to the generation of the substantial outlay of finance required to provide library services befitting of tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. What is needed is a break from the present dissatisfactory arrangement through demonstrable political will, enactment of enabling legislative instruments, creation of workable financial administrative framework and judicious management of available financial resources.

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