

ACQUISITIONS AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN GHANA

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Abstract— *This paper provides an evaluation of education and training for library collection development in Ghana. It presents a brief history of education in Ghana with particular reference to library education. The program of the Department of Library and Archival Studies at the University of Ghana is discussed with regard to course levels and course structure. The syllabus for the course in acquisitions/collection development is also discussed, and various problems faced by teachers and students of this course are highlighted. It is concluded that although students find the course interesting and valuable, problems such as lack of audio-visual materials for teaching and inadequate reading materials for the students must be solved in order to increase the usefulness of the course.*

INTRODUCTION

Ghana has a total land area of 238,537 sq. km. and a population of 12,205,574 according to the 1984 population census [1]. An estimated 31.4% of the population live in the urban areas (defined as any human settlement with a population of 5000 and above) and 68% in rural areas. The average population growth is around 2.6% per annum (3% between 1960 and 1970). It is estimated that about half the population is under 15 years of age.

The population, although urbanized compared to other sub-saharan African countries, is very unevenly distributed. The northern part of the country is sparsely populated. The urban population increased from 23% of total national population in 1960 to 28.6% in 1970, and further to 31.39% in 1984. This urbanization has created great differences between living standards in the towns and those in rural areas, as government expenditure on social welfare, particularly on health and education, increased in urban areas due to a steady urban drift of youth [2].

Ghana comprises a diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups. There are no less than 75 dif-

ferent languages and dialects, each more or less associated with a distinct tribal group. Fortunately, divisive tendencies which might be expected to arise from this situation have been kept under control largely as a result of government policy over the years, and it is possible to speak of a single national consciousness embracing all the varied traditions and cultures. One of the unifying forces has been the adoption of English as the official language, supplemented by five local languages officially recognized for broadcasting and nine for educational purposes [3].

EDUCATION

Ghana was the first British colony in sub-saharan Africa to achieve independence (in 1957) and did so because of its economic strength at that time and the presence of a highly educated cadre of its own, capable of assuming power. Ghana was in the forefront of West African development and progress in education, and just before and after independence its schools and their products were so highly regarded internationally that in the 1960s Ghana became an important recruiting ground for international civil servants in the United Nations and other agencies [4]. However, political instability, general mismanagement, reliance on a one-crop economy and endemic economic conditions have had a disastrous effect on Ghana's post-independence development; in turn this has affected progress in education, libraries and allied services in the country.

A recent government policy guideline on education called for a more research-oriented system which "from very early youth, encourages our children to research into, record and analyse details of our natural environment as well as philosophical and other intellectual heritages [5]." It explained that in order for Ghanaians to use meaningfully whatever we acquire from others, it is necessary that we first discover our own. The document also called on the people of the country to establish community secondary, agricultural and technical schools with curricula geared as far as possible to local needs.

EDUCATION FOR LIBRARIANSHIP IN GHANA

The first library school in Ghana was established in 1944 to serve as a training school for library personnel from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia [6]. The Institute was designed for an experimental period of three years, mainly to prepare West Africans for the first part of the British Library Association Professional Examination.

After the collapse of this school, it was not until 1961 that another library school was established in Accra under the auspices of the Ghana Library Board. The school was moved to the University of Ghana and reinstated as the Department of Library Studies within the Faculty of Social Studies in October 1965. The original program consisted of a three-year undergraduate course leading to a BA in Library Studies [7]. In 1967 the degree course was changed to a two-year Graduate Diploma and further reduced to a one-year course in 1969. In view of the persistent demand in the country for librarians at sub-professional level, a new certificate course in librarianship was added to the program of the Department in 1970. In 1972 the Department introduced the MA degree in librarianship.

In developing countries the impact of national archives and records management systems on economic and social development, on planning, on public administration and on schol-

arly research is becoming more and more recognized. It was with this in view that Unesco, with the financial backing of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), decided to establish a Regional Training Centre for Archivists to serve the countries of English-speaking Africa. On the basis of a thorough exploration of local conditions in the various countries of the region—in particular with regard to the level of existing archival institutions capable of offering the required services and in-service training facilities, and university institutions with which collaboration could be established—it was decided to establish the Regional Training Centre at the University of Ghana and to affiliate it to the already flourishing Department of Library Studies, subsequently restyled the Department of Library and Archival Studies.

In 1975 the centre admitted students for two courses in the archival field at professional and sub-professional levels: a Graduate Diploma in Archival Studies and a Certificate in Archives Administration. At the initial stages Unesco provided a number of fellowships to qualified students, but now governments and foundations support the students.

Finally, in the 1977/78 academic year the university approved the establishment of non-graduate diploma courses in librarianship and archives administration to upgrade the qualifications of persons holding the Certificate in Librarianship or Archives Administration.

The Department is housed in its own building, which was recently augmented by another block. It is equipped with classrooms, seminar room, conservation—cum-microphotographic laboratory, departmental library and individual offices for teaching staff. The Department has been officially designated by the Government of Ghana and approved by the Unesco Secretariat as the National Information Transfer Centre to cooperate with Unesco in the International Information System on Research in Documentation (ISORID). The Department is also an institutional member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the International Council on Archives (ICA) [8].

Library Science Courses

A. Certificate (one year)

1. Introduction to Librarianship (compulsory)
2. Organization and Library Routines (compulsory)
3. Preparation and Use of Library Materials (compulsory)
(This course includes cataloging and classification, collection development, conservation and reprography)
4. Public Relations (compulsory)

B. Diploma (one calendar year)

A project approved by the Department not exceeding 15,000 words.

C. Graduate Diploma (one calendar year)

Part I

1. Management of Libraries and Administrative Science (compulsory)
2. Technical Services (compulsory)
(This course includes cataloging and classification, collection development, conservation and reprography)
3. Information Science (compulsory)
4. Reference and Bibliographical Services (compulsory)

Part II

1. Field Experience (compulsory)
2. Project Work (compulsory)
- D. *M PHIL* (two years)
 1. Information Science (compulsory)
 2. Techniques of Research in Information Studies (compulsory)
 3. *One* of the following special areas:
 - a. Administrative History
 - b. Organization of Information Resources
 - c. Information Retrieval
 - d. Sources of Information
 1. Science and Technology
 2. Social Sciences
 3. Humanities
 - e. Information Technology

Part III

A thesis on an approved topic of not less than 50,000 words. The thesis should preferably be based on field studies and should contribute to knowledge in the management of libraries.

ACQUISITIONS/COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT SYLLABUS*Graduate Diploma*

1. Processes involved in the organization and management of the provision of library materials; selection criteria, e.g. staff, funds. Library policy; evaluation criteria; bibliographical tools and their use for selection in different types of libraries; problems peculiar to particular types of libraries in selection; user demand and the use of surveys; problems relating to selection of non-book materials e.g. microforms, journals; ordering, file/record construction and maintenance, invoicing.
2. Acquisition methods: purchase, exchange, gifts, bequests; legal deposit; cooperative acquisition.
3. Publishing and the booktrade as they affect selection and acquisition.
4. Censorship in libraries; copyright.
5. Problems of acquisition of African materials.

Certificate in Librarianship

1. Types of library materials
2. Selection tools
3. Factors affecting selection
4. Sources of acquisition
5. Methods of acquisition
6. Ordering and receiving

Instruction. On average thirty students take this course every year (twenty students from the Certificate class and ten from the Graduate Diploma class). This is the total intake for those classes in a year and the course is compulsory for all students.

The course is taught mainly through lecture and tutorial methods; no audiovisual facilities are used. Tutorials take the form of classroom discussions of various topics and issues relating to acquisitions and collection development. The lectures and tutorials are expected to be supplemented by students' own efforts in searching bibliographic tools. Unfortunately, most of these tools such as *The Bookseller*, *Publishers Weekly* and *African Book Publishing Record* are either not available or outdated, thereby rendering them of little use for practical teaching.

Some of the search problems have had to be dropped from the course due to the inaccessibility of some bibliographic tools at the Department's library and the main university library. Fortunately, collection development is basically a discussion-oriented course compared to courses like cataloging and classification and reference and bibliographic services, so we are able to manage without some of these tools. Nevertheless, it would be much better for students to handle the materials, so that they can reconcile theory and practice.

Field experience. Field experience and library tours are organized for the Graduate Diploma class. During field experience students are attached to various libraries during the Christmas and Easter breaks, and they move from department to department in the libraries. This enables them to relate theory to practice. In the case of library tours the students are sent on library visits to expose them to different types of libraries, their systems of operation and their resources.

Assessment. Students are assessed by class assignments and tests which make up 30% of the total grading, with the final examination at the end of the academic year taking the remaining 70%. The pass level for graduate students is 50% while for Certificate students it is 40%.

Problems. One major problem faced in the teaching of collection development at the Department of Library and Archival Studies, University of Ghana is the course structure of the Department. As can be seen from the discussion of the courses above, collection development is not taught as a separate course in the Department. At the Certificate level it is combined with cataloging and classification, conservation and reprography as "Preparation and Use of Library Materials." At the Graduate Diploma level the same combination is referred to as "Technical Services." While this arrangement does not allow lecturers enough time to cover the syllabus, it also frustrates the students as they do so much work only to end up answering two questions on collection development at the end of the year because the examination paper also covers conservation and reprography.

There is also the problem of reading materials. In Ghana the majority of university students are poor and cannot afford to buy basic textbooks. They therefore rely on university or departmental libraries. Unfortunately, more than 90% of the materials in university libraries originate from temperate zones [9]. There is an acute shortage of foreign exchange for the acquisition of library materials; Ghana's poor economic situation has left acquisitions librarians almost incapacitated, with hardly any funds to acquire materials. As a result, libraries are full of outdated materials which are of little or no teaching or research value.

Related to the problem of lack of reading materials is the lack of visual aids. Most courses

at the Department of Library and Archival Studies are taught through the lecture method, and note-taking is therefore common. This problem, coupled with the shortage of up-to-date books and journals, has resulted in students relying more and more on lecture notes and handouts at the expense of personal initiatives and research.

There is also a need to intensify the field experience aspect of the course, since most of the students have no idea of the terminology used in this course. This is because they have very little exposure at the acquisitions departments of libraries during field experience. As a result, they become confused regarding selection/acquisitions/ordering procedures as discussed in the classroom compared with those actually practised in the libraries. Too much emphasis is placed on cataloging and classification during field experience at the expense of other areas such as collection development and reference and bibliographical services.

PROSPECTS

The Department of Library and Archival Studies is preparing proposals to the Academic Board of the University for a conversion of the one-year Certificate and one-year Diploma program to a straight two-year Diploma program. It is also proposed that the one-year postgraduate Diploma program be converted to a one-year MA degree program. It is hoped that when these proposals are implemented, separate courses on collection development will be instituted for both the undergraduate and postgraduate program. This will give lecturers more time to treat the course in greater detail for the benefit of students and the profession.

With the introduction of the Economic Recovery Program in Ghana in 1984, assistance has been obtained from the World Bank and other foreign donors such as the British Council and the United States Government. University libraries are now receiving donations of library materials to supplement their collections. These donations have gone a long way to improve the services provided in the university libraries, although a lot more needs to be done in terms of collection development. It is hoped that, as the economy improves, book orders and serial titles that were cancelled or suspended will be renewed in order to increase and update the collections.

The problem of teaching methods in the Department can be improved by the acquisition of teaching aids such as slide and cine projectors. It may also be necessary to arrange for scholarships for lecturers to undertake tours of other library schools in advanced countries to learn new ideas and techniques in order to impart them to students. This can only be achieved with the assistance of foreign organizations, as it is presently very difficult to obtain any such scholarships from the Ghanaian government.

CONCLUSION

A survey of the views of students in the Department (both graduate and nongraduate) shows that they find the collection development course interesting and valuable. This is not so with courses like cataloging and classification or information science, which most of them detest because they find them "too technical" and "complex." It is therefore necessary that this interest be maintained by a reassessment of the course and the introduction of better teaching methods in the Department.

Austere library budgets in Ghana have been crucial in the development of libraries. As a result of the economic recession and falling commodity prices, there have been continuous

decreases in annual allocations to libraries. Acquisitions budgets are thus very weak in all Ghanaian libraries. This has necessitated an improvement in the training of acquisitions librarians to produce librarians who can exploit fully the range of materials available at minimum costs. Improved training methods will also produce a collection developer "who possesses and exercises an overview of the library's collection goals and acquisition funds, and leads a team of collection developers towards accomplishing such tasks as library materials selection, collection development policy writing, collection evaluation, and other collection management activities"[10].

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