

0. Introduction

This report was made on the initiative of the Namibian Library and Information Council and the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture. The Finnish Embassy in Windhoek did finance the project, covering the trips of the two Finnish consultants to Windhoek, as well as their accommodation and maintenance for a month. There is another report connected to this, covering the archival matters and compiled by Sally Harper, as a part of the same project. It is useful to read both reports, because Sally Harper, as a local consultant, adds a lot of detailed information to that available in this report.

The emphasis of this report is on the bottlenecks on national level, or how resources, efforts and problem solving could be improved in cooperation. Therefore, the positive sides of the Namibian library community have not been covered in details. We were in the first place recognizing and analyzing problem areas and addressing prioritized, recommended solutions plus some possible projects to continue the work.

We want to thank all our colleagues in Namibia for co-operation and information we gained. It was a pleasure to work in such a good company! We also thank the Finnish Embassy for its' very positive attitude towards the citizens' access to information and culture, the same attitude which we do recognize in the policies of the Finnish government in general. We could also see, that there have been preceding successful library and information service projects supported by this Embassy: during our stay in Windhoek, we had the pleasure to take part in the launching of the new library of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, also supported by the Finnish Embassy. We hope that this good co-operation will continue in future.

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1. General

The libraries deserve their status and their share of the economical resources by serving some identified needs of their country and user community. The form of the needs vary in different situations. However, the universal main tasks of the libraries are to offer systematical access to information and culture.

Systematical is an important word: in the era of growing amount of information, organized ways to find the wanted content are of most importance. This fact is globally reflected in information society strategies and present career paths of qualified librarians.

All around the world, from the Nordic countries to Turkey and from Mongolia to Mexico, libraries have been included into the national development and information society strategies; and because skills in organizing information are very much demanded in modern working life, more and more professional librarians are moving from the public sector to the private sector which pays better, or inside the public sector to those libraries which can afford better salaries.

A special task for libraries is to support literacy. The acquired literacy must be fed with further reading materials. In most circumstances, the library is the main source for this kind of printed documents.

Another special task for libraries today is to support life-long learning, which is also in Namibian important national political goal. The content of this task includes several elements, from catering material in different forms (books, journals, cd-roms, web materials) for learners in their studies, to offering a space, reading places and devices to their use.

Especially in the information society context the equal access to information, e.g. government and other public information, has gained new importance in the political discussion. If information and knowledge are considered to be the crucial resources, to guarantee democracy, there must be open access points to information sources. Here, librarians add value also by giving guidance in finding information and knowledge.

Further, the information access for researchers is in the information society still more important than before. The archive material is also raising more to focus. The archives and libraries meet each others in many e-government projects. Also there is a general trend of convergence and strengthened co-operation between different information related organisations - e.g. museums, libraries, information services and schools. Inside parent organisations, libraries and information services tend to integrate with e.g. publishing and dissemination functions and archives.

The libraries should nowadays serve all these needs in a balanced way. Basically, there has been a division of tasks between different library types. Research libraries serve the research needs, school libraries support the learners etc. The present tendency, even the megatrend, is towards more networking and integrated services between different libraries. This is possible first and foremost via common web-based services, where they are possible. In Namibia, at least the biggest libraries can join their efforts via Internet, the eIFL Direct Programme as an example. But countrywide Internet penetration can soon be reality in Namibia, too. This should be taken in account in planning for the community libraries.

In general terms, the libraries have in recent decades moved from collection and catalogue orientation towards user orientation. The sensitivity to the user's needs is the starting point of planning the functions. Flexibility is needed in innovative ways. Different library and information service modules (acquisition, content description, reference work, information searches etc.) are combined to different entities case by case: libraries need not look all alike. The newly-opened library and information service in the Namibian Ministry of Environment is a good example of the new orientation: it was tailor-made to offer up-dated material to support the decision making on this important field. (for more information about the development, look e.g. <http://www.ossrea.org/news/article.htm>, chapter 4.1)

Concerning use of information technology in libraries, the development curve of the networked services is often described as a gradual process where the first phases cover the development of the infrastructure, basic content (e.g. web site creation), and access to bibliographic databases. Further development such as interactive services (e.g. requests over the web, loan renewals) and efficient use of electronic resources may take place when a functional infrastructure is in place. Considering that many Namibian libraries struggle with limited budgets, the systematical use of Internet would offer unlimited possibilities for libraries to enlarge their collections. Especially the availability of free, Internet-based learning resources is rapidly increasing.

2. Council meeting, library visits and other background information

On the first two days of the mission, we participated in the seminar of the Namibian Library and Information Council. The target was to find out the wishes libraries, archives and other institutions present to the newly-established Council. The work of the Council is based on the Namibian Library Act (Act 4/2000).

The seminar gave a very good basis for the work, defining the state-of-the-art situation in different library and information institutions. The seminar materials will be published.

The seminar presentation of Werner Hillebrecht is included to this report as an annex (# 1), since it gathers quite well the major bottleneck issues of the Namibian libraries. We support his suggestions concerning the next steps. His paper was also in accordance with the presentations in the seminar. The seminar presentation of Prof. Andree-Jeanne Töttemeyer served also as an important source of background information.

In the material produced for the Library and Information Council seminar on 29-30 November, many of the visited libraries and library services have been described in details. Therefore, only some basic information is presented in annex 2. In annex 3, some Best Practices have been collected.

The documents of the collection development workshop, held in February 2002, were also a good source of background information.

3. Strengths of the Namibian library community

As it was stated in the Introduction, this report concentrates on the problem areas and their possible remedies. However, the Namibian library and archive community has its clear strong points, some to be mentioned here:

- library community works well together, reaching today also to the National Archive;
- Library Act and the NLIC offer a good basis for improvements;
- basically, the same library system in the whole country (CDS/ISIS), with some remarkable exceptions;
- 5-6 new community libraries opened each year, meaning e.g. a huge challenge to build up a collection for each of them
- eIFL Direct Program is in test use in three libraries, offering a good deal of electronic resources
- several new buildings have been launched in recent years, and more is to come;
- English is the official language, which gives the possibility to international experience sharing.
- all kinds of libraries do take part in the national anti-aids campaigning.

In fact, Namibia would very well serve as a model library country for e.g. the IFLA Advancement of Librarianship Program ALP (<http://www.ifla.org/VI/1/alp.htm>), or in the UNESCO programs. This will be especially true, when the first half of the recommendations presented in this report has been realized.

4. Problem areas

Till now, libraries have not been strategically and concretely included in the Namibian information society policies and programs very tightly. However, concerning citizens' access to information, libraries should be elementary and self-clear part of the national projects and they should be strengthened for that role. This has been done in many other countries (see e.g. <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/nipstrat.htm>). The libraries basically have the national infrastructure to reach the citizens, and the professional skills of librarians especially support people in finding the information they need. This potential seems to be underestimated in Namibia. We e.g. heard about two different projects, one run and financed by the United States, the other financed by the Namibian Government and run by a Finnish company, which aim to connect local administration to Internet, but have no contact to libraries. This indicates, that answering the information needs of the citizens has not been included in the plans.

The core problems of the libraries include lack of qualified staff due to poor salaries and imbalanced IT infrastructure without functioning national co-operation and resource sharing.

In the libraries visited, the flow of trained staff to the better paying libraries could be clearly understood, and also out from the publicly financed sector. Concerning human resources, the National Library, CLS, ELS and the ministerial libraries seem to be in the weakest position, with the majority of their posts constantly vacant. Also they have the lowest salaries. The situation cannot be solved without more money for the salaries.

Human resources form the core of the library services which cannot be underestimated. A library is not only a space with a collection of books coupled with electronic services, but it's true meaning and impact for the user community will be visible through the skills and skillful co-operation of the library staff, led by senior professionals.

We could see this also when visiting Namibian libraries. Dedicated, motivated and skilled personnel may get a lot out of even small resources, when they understand how the library can function to attract users and adapt good services to meet the needs of their user community. The core of the library work is not only in good organisation skills, but in ability to set relevant goals to serve the user community.

It is important to emphasize the value of qualified librarians, but attention could be paid also to the improved use of the existent human resources. It may be crucial to recognize the potential of the present staff members who may not yet be trained but may have a great interest and abilities to library and information work. It is important to recognize their talents, strengthen their capabilities and encourage and guide them to find out relevant training.

Also for a Namibian library sector, when having a continuous lack of professionals, it would be extremely valuable to utilize experience of the best practices of the libraries and share the skills of the most advanced libraries and librarians.

The level of utilized information technology varies in different library types quite a lot. The situation is in line with other sub-Saharan African countries: there are less computers for library functions in community and school libraries, and the best equipped libraries can be found among the university, corporate and special libraries.

Community and school libraries are yet in a process of establishing public access to Internet. University library (which presently works under the name Information and Learning Resource Center), National Library and ministerial libraries have Internet connections. However, in the National Library as well as in the ministerial libraries linked to the government network, the connections are extremely slow.

The availability of library services on the Web is still in the beginning. Only few libraries have their own web sites (University library and Polytechnic library) and no one of them offers access to their catalogs through the Web. No digitizing projects or value added services (e.g. subject gateways) exist. No Internet policies or data security related instructions for the users could be found either, although in several libraries printing and downloading were disallowed or prohibited.

The use of electronic resources is in early stage as well. University library, Polytechnic library and National library are testing the use of electronic resources through the eFL/Ebsco Programme. Training for the use of electronic resources is more common at University library and Polytechnic library. Schools also have basic information science (BIS) as a separate subject including the use of Internet, but the major part of schools do not yet have Internet connections.

The introduction of information technology has in many cases been donor driven and funded, which apparently brings also drawbacks to the continuity and co-ordination of services. In this setting, it is important to take into account that in the end of the development project the costs of the system maintenance and Internet connections need to be included to the local budget. This must be considered in time, to avoid cutting off the newly established services. In Namibian library setting, the continuity of Internet connections in school libraries and community libraries is the main concern.

Generally, the core library IT problem is to get the basic infrastructure to libraries nationwide, including computers for staff and public use with well functioning Internet connections. The requirements to this include devices, electricity and telecommunication lines, a space with satisfactory security and protection from heat and dust, and skilled staff. Training to staff is crucial to ensure, that they will be able to use these resources, guide library users and manage with the most common problem solving situations.

Management of resources in a form of co-ordination, co-operation and resource sharing would be necessary and useful in many fields of the library work. National co-ordination would be useful to use the scarce resources efficiently, especially concerning the collection development, purchasing of electronic resources, efficient utilization of library systems and shared/union cataloging. Common training programs and workshops especially for small libraries, as well as channels for continuous collaboration between the librarians to support the professional development would be very useful as well. Regional co-operation between different libraries and librarians could also be very valuable.

Specific fields where co-ordination could be useful but may be out of hands of the library sector, relate to donations and development projects funded by non-governmental organizations or other actors outside the Namibian government. As such, these funds and projects are extremely valuable and important, but the lack of co-ordination may lead to incomplete delivery, duplicate efforts or service discontinuity.

Donations and development projects would require more careful planning and co-ordination to make sure that the delivery of services will be completed. Establishing a library requires at minimum

- library building/space
- collection of printed and electronic publications
- PC and other devices (TV, fax, phone, copying machine) for the use of electronic information and other media (CDs, cassettes, videos) and
- qualified staff to enable their organized and guided use.

In our visit to libraries we saw several examples of "partial delivery" when the prospective library may have received e.g. a collection of books in a storage room, but does not have a library building. Or there may be a PC and a TV waiting for a proper building where they can be protected from heat and dust. In some cases, all the other parts are in place, but there is no qualified staff. In one of the schools we visited, the Internet connection had been cut off since the teachers did not know how to use it - there was no training included in the Internet service package offered to the school.

Without national co-ordination, development projects may also lead to duplicate investments if the same type of services is established to the same region. This does not seem to be the case with single libraries being parts of the CLS or ELS system. However, when the concerned libraries are linked to other institutions (e.g. regional buildings for university and polytechnic, multi-purpose youth centers, art and culture centers), the network of libraries should form a regionally functional unity. The "parallel investment" of establishing libraries for the same user community in the same region is unnecessary and is duplicating the maintenance costs for the government.

Joint services (e.g. multi-purpose centers) as such are highly recommended. Libraries should keep their eyes open to make sure that all possibilities to joint efforts for resource sharing in a same region will be utilized. Also reaching the users from the places where they regularly go, may be a useful idea. E.g. in Finland some public libraries have successfully been opened in shopping malls.

4.1. Salaries and staff training

In the Library and Information Council seminar the most mentioned problem was lack of qualified staff. In particular, there will be a difficult situation after some years, when many nowadays active librarians will retire.

The main reasons are the low salaries, and lack of proper education possibilities in Namibia.

The publicly financed libraries are today in harsh salary competition on professionals capable to arrange and search information. A list of the resignations in the years 1998 and 1999 (annex 4) shows the trend, which hasn't changed since those years. The nationally important institutions, especially the senior posts, will soon be without any professionals. The IT librarian post in the National Library was advertised in the beginning of 2002, but no applicants occurred. This is not the only case, and the National Library shares the problem with the National Archive.

Among the non-qualified staff, the combination of low salaries together with minor understanding about the importance of the work, leads to low work motivation. An example of the problems caused due the lack of qualified staff, occurred during the visit in the Outapi Community Library. There were several (2-3) copies of the same book in the shelves, which indicates that these books are missing from other community libraries (in average, 20 copies are bought to be disseminated to 42 libraries). Examples of these books: Dupries&DeLeener: Land and Life; Lewington: Plants for People; Leys&Saul: Namibian Liberation Struggle. In addition, two books in Nama were found. Nama is not spoken in this part of the country. This indicates problems in the Community Library Service book dissemination system, which at present has not enough library professionals on board. It is remarkable waste of resources to deliver the expensive and often sold-out books like it happens now. This is the high price paid for the low salaries in libraries.

All the library professional posts in the Education Library Service have been vacant for a longer time. An example of a non-bearable situation in staff matters is the post of the Chief Librarian of the ELS: he/she would have lower salary than the education officers working under her/his supervision. No wonder that the post is constantly open.

The salary problems in publicly financed libraries are in different countries solved in different ways. Depending on the budgeting practices, e.g. some of the (in any case) vacant posts can be postponed, and divide the money reserved for these posts between the existing staff, and for the jobs to be announced next. The salary budget remains the same, but the money inside it is divided in a new way. When one of the core problems seems to be the low salaries fixed to certain library profession titles, the titles can be changed (librarian -> information specialist/officer, IT librarian -> system manager). This has been done in many countries. In case the Office of the Prime Minister wants any staff member under the title System Manager to be hired by it and not by the library or the archive, this can be done; the main concern is that the person works for the National Library and the National Archive

in the building.

Another way to circumvent the problem is to contract out tasks. E.g. in Finland, a consortium of 22 research libraries has contracted out the server maintenance of the common library system. This probably must be done with certain tasks of the IT maintenance in the National Library and the National Archive building. However, the share of costs can be divided between the organisations, which makes it cheaper. It should be studied, if this kind of action is in long run more expensive than a better-paid permanent IT specialist.

Recent changes in the salary policy of the Namibian government have also diminished the possibilities to grade up the salaries. Nowadays the only way to get an upgrading is to get better education. Changes in work e.g. movement to more demanding tasks, give no reason for salary improvements. Earlier it was also possible to get personal promotions, from e.g. library assistant to senior library assistant, but now the amount of different posts is fixed in public institutions and no personal upgrading can be done. Internationally, and also in Finland, the trend is opposite: public institutions tend to build up new salary structures based more and more on personal achievements and level of tasks.

Recommendation: The library and archive salaries should be lifted up, at least to the teacher level, to be able to compete with the private sector and to ensure staff to publicly financed libraries also in future. The IT support staff, librarians or others, must possibly be up-graded separately, in relation to the general salary level on this area. E.g. consider the possibilities to hire system manager with an appropriate salary instead of an IT librarian.

Library education is an important factor here. There is some library education available in UNAM, University of Namibia. It offers information studies on two levels: diploma (2 yrs) and bachelors degree (3-4 yrs). However, the librarians on the field are not satisfied with the results of the education. According to them, a student can pass the diploma level without learning the minimum of the professional skills. There are talented students as well, but taking in account the competition on the educated information specialists, the libraries with low salaries will not be the ones to hire these.

The situation has been remedied with training, but first of all, the university education should answer the needs of the Namibian librarians better, or Namibian students have to complete their higher library studies abroad.

Outside Namibia, the nearest university level education is available in Botswana, South Africa and in Zimbabwe. According to several comments, the education in SA and Zimbabwe is appreciated most among the Namibian librarians.

Basically, it is possible to hire library professionals from the neighbor countries, but the low salaries are an obstacle here, too.

Recommendation: to continue efforts to up-grade the library education level of the motivated but un qualified staff in libraries by supporting financially especially on-site learning on diploma and bachelor degree levels in universities offering this possibility.

Recommendation. It is foreseen, that there will be a growing need for training

professionals in project management, and this should be included in training programmes.

In the situation identified above, it would be extremely important to motivate even the unqualified members of the staff to take new responsibilities. There are natural potentials among the staff, e.g. towards using Internet in their work. Younger men use Internet in any case, and they could be trained to be e.g. PC resource persons, which are badly needed in all computerized institutions.

Recommendation concerning the IT training of the library staff

- to train all the persons working in the National Library and the National Archive building in the basics of computers (computer driving license, see e.g. http://www.tieke.fi/ajokortti_english.nsf), to make them able to see when their computer problem can be solved by switching the printer on, and when it is more difficult.
- to train all the librarians in national/shared tasks to understand the CDS/ISIS use in the union cataloguing setting
- in each library, at least 1 staff member should gain basic level understanding of PCs, network connections, programs in use and Internet as well as be able to do troubleshooting in most common problem situations, virus checking, maintenance procedures and program installations/upgrades.

Recommendation. To continue the training workshops for the non-professional community library staff and include topics like

- selection of material, collection development and user needs survey
- information sources on some central areas, like Namibia knowledge, agriculture, health, law & citizenship, and business/career development, and to have the lecturers from the concerned libraries and organisations
- for those working in libraries equipped with PCs, training in computer use (computer driving license, see e.g. http://www.tieke.fi/ajokortti_english.nsf), computer use in libraries, and on Internet as an information source

4.2. Collection development

Collection development in an African country has its ' special character. The budget is usually remarkably small, the availability of material suitable for local circumstances varies, and the donations from other countries must be treated as one part of the process. Use of electronic publications, if affordable, need a reliable electricity and telecommunication infrastructure. Thus there are many professional challenges.

The role of the printed and electronic resources for the library users is worth considering. Electronic resources through Internet would be extremely valuable: there is an unlimited potential to expand the scope of available information meaningfully. It is noteworthy that Internet offers access to wide variety of free information resources as well as charged electronic resources, which could be purchased via a national consortium and with the possible support of donors. Digitization of the nationally and culturally valuable material should be considered, too.

The global eIFL Programme of the Open Society Institute (www.eifl.net) has

helped also Namibian libraries to offer more than 5000 electronic journals and other sources to their users. This new way to access information will strongly affect the collection development policy, and the co-operation between libraries. E.g. consortium forming is an actual task for the Namibian research and higher education libraries.

Recommendation. Since literacy and learning present key issues in national development, it would be useful to gather links to the most useful free educational resources to support learning. This link collection could be a database or a list of links available through the Websites of libraries.

Internet connections as such do not guarantee that electronic resources are well available. Visits to the libraries indicated that Internet connections, when in use, are often slow or unreliable. In this setting, Internet can be used rather for searching, locating and quick browsing of information. Printing, saving the content to files or emailing the results and information content will be necessary for further reading and studying of electronic information. Also CD ROMs are widely used in libraries, although internationally the trend is towards the Web use of electronic resources instead of CD ROMs.

As long as the Internet connections are missing, unreliable and slow, libraries need to rely on printed publications or utilize electronic resources in offline form (e.g. CD ROMs). They also need to ensure that the most necessary material will be available in printed form. Also it is noteworthy that public access to Internet as well as printouts are often charged services in libraries, which may restrict their use compared to printed materials, no matter which technological advances may come.

Generally, it would be useful to define how to focus to meet the user needs with the printed material and electronic resources. Concerning community libraries, the rough estimate is that fiction, textbooks, national heritage related publications as well as the publications with the minority languages are scarcely available on Internet. Printed collections do serve well with these material types. However, general reference material, scientific articles and research reports, news and latest findings supporting e.g. business, research and development could be found well and extensively from the Web.

In February 2002, the Namibian libraries had the first national collection development policy workshop, to be continued in Spring 2003. This is a welcomed development. During our visits to libraries we recognized several topics, relevant to this work.

The community libraries need a bigger acquisition budget. In the recent years, 5-6 new libraries per year have been opened, but no remarkable increase in the acquisition budget can be seen. This has been remedied by some big international donations, but this advantage comes to an end in 2002.

There is need to form a policy for acquiring text books and other learning materials to the school and community libraries, and UNAM & PON centres. There are not enough textbook copies available for all the learners. It is foreseen that the need for open and distant learning material will grow. Libraries must decide with other interested and active organisations, which will answer this challenge and by which means. The NOLNet collections, offering in the first place the textbooks, have proved to be very popular and needed. According to the statistics, 68% of the community library users are students or other learners.

Another matter in a breakdown point is the language of community library materials. Afrikaans is not considered to be prioritized, though many readers themselves want to read especially fiction on it. Basically, UNESCO, IFLA and other international organisations recommend to equip libraries with materials on those languages the users prioritize (see e.g. the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, www.unesco.org/webworld/libmanif/plpublib.htm). In Namibia, the matter should be solved by looking at

- language groups and skills on the area the library is serving,
- lending statistics according to language, and
- availability of material in the concerned languages.

Recommendation: to include in the coming national collection development policy clear statements at least about

- need for material and respectively to budget for the new community libraries to be founded, as well as the existing ones to be served on constant basis,
- finding a consensus between different actors on the responsibility to disseminate learning-related material around the country,
- the language policy in community libraries, in particular concerning fiction, and
- the role and emphasis of the printed material and electronic resources (offline/online - eIFL Direct / EBSCO and eIFL S&T).

Till now, Namibia lacks a digitization policy. This is a common challenge for the libraries, archives and museums, to open up larger national and international access to central parts of Namibia's heritage.

Recommendation: a digitization policy for opening larger access to the Namibian cultural heritage via Internet should be compiled.

The problems in disseminating publications of the government and the international organisations and donors are evident. Excellent research reports and other publications are produced, but may stay in the government departments or non-governmental organizations without gaining publicity and reaching the user community. A good example are the informative and high-quality posters, published e.g. by the ministries of Environment and Tourism, and of Fisheries. These would be excellent material to be spread via the community and school libraries, but this should be organised. This would often be very used material. E.g. the most popular documents in the National Library are the World Bank reports. In community libraries, the Government Gazette would be an important source of new information, crucial for citizenship. A special matter is, that the Namibian legislation should be publicly available on the Internet.

A strong positive example of using community and school libraries in information dissemination, is the aids/HIV information. In each library we visited, this material, in some cases also condoms, were available.

The newspapers are an indicator of the significance of libraries in remote communities. They are not easily reachable all around the country, but a very important source of public and current information, read by large audiences. It was a pity to see in some libraries, that the newspapers arrived irregularly, apparently due to thefts along the mailing route. An extra positive feature in

some Namibian newspapers are the pages published in indigenous languages, on which there is not too much material available in general.

Recommendation: NLIC to look for methods to improve the dissemination of especially printed public information (by the government and international organisations), e.g. by training the persons in charge of those functions in the concerned organisations. The content of the training could concern e.g. publication and delivery policy of an organisation.

Recommendation: NLIC to support efforts to get the Namibian legislation and other important government regulations to the Internet.

4.3. Administration

The administrative position of libraries in Namibia is somehow unclear, apparently due to the vertically and horizontally complicated structure of the Namibian government. E.g., the library staff in ministries reports to the concerned ministry, but the salaries etc. come from NLIS. During our visit, we did not get unanimously clear, what will be the position of community libraries when the present decentralization process has been completed. International experience suggests to be careful to leave (public) libraries too much dependent on local decision making. This leads too often to very uneven service level in access to information in different communities.

In library administration, problems with lacking library directors on one hand, and with lacking leadership on the other hand were recognized. The human resources should and could be managed better also in places, where senior librarians and library directors are in place.

The main problems are the constantly vacant senior librarian posts, which return back to the weak salaries paid in the publicly financed libraries. The unqualified staff, as motivated they may be, need professional guidance. Some of the libraries visited, were recently left without a professional librarian, and that could be seen. The book and journal circulation system and other routines may work even well, but the interaction with the users to develop the library is stuck.

Concerning leadership, it is not granted, though the management were in place. In some cases it looked like the supervision would mean only simple commands and controlling, without any element of training, guidance or motivating the staff members. The potentials of the staff could be recognized more clearly, and according to that, encourage them to up-grade their skills.

In addition to managing the daily routines, the leading librarians should be able to communicate the goal of the work to their staff, and share their vision about the services to the users with the staff.

Recommendation: to offer senior librarians training in leadership and management.

As an example, we considered especially the staff in the National Library and National Archive building. All these four institutions have important responsibilities connected to the national development and heritage. To strengthen their general awareness about the Namibian heritage, a common study and refreshment tour to Etosha and to the Northern Namibia, including

museums like the Nakambale Museum in Olukondo, could be made. This would help them to see the meaning of their national level work in larger perspective.

The community libraries are mainly dependent on three decision making bodies: decisions about the premises and the staff are made by the regional and/or local administration, and the material is sent to them from the Community Library Service, which also organizes training. There is little room for independent responsibility concerning the setting of the work. However, this would be needed in inter action between the concerned decisions and user's needs, to avoid wrong decisions and waste of resources. The community library staff should be encouraged to take more responsibility on their own work.

Recommendation: to continue and strengthen the collaborative work of the Book Selection Committee work and encourage the staff in the community libraries to collect and report feed back about the needs of their users.

Recommendation: the regional librarian in charge of community libraries, as well as the librarian in charge of the ministerial libraries, must be consulted in staff elections, buildings and other important decisions concerning libraries by the respective decision makers.

Limited opening hours in most Namibian libraries restrict the use of libraries efficiently. Most libraries are open only in office times (8-17), thus disallowing working people to use them. Some examples (UNAM, Oshakati Community Library, Walvis Bay Community Library) are encouraging exceptions. One way to re-organise opening times without major renovations, is to have the libraries open on Saturday but closed on Monday.

Recommendation. The opening hours in Namibian libraries should be re-thought, to serve the users better when they have free time.

The level of school libraries varies a lot. According to ELS, ca. 80% belong to group C, where only a minimum book collection is available. Group B, offering the collection and a good space, and group A, also including professional help, form the rest 20%. The smallest of them are not indeed libraries but collections of books in some corner or storage room. In these cases they may serve the reading promotion, but not the life-long learning or other pedagogical goals. If there is no professional librarian, the school has really good luck when having a teacher enthusiastic in library service - we saw one such person. In addition, we met some teachers, who understood the importance of the library through their own professional orientation. It is however a different professional skill than the librarians have. It is a challenging task to equip all the Namibian schools with some collections, not to speak about professional assistance in information finding and use. The more school libraries can be combined with communal libraries, the better, or equip a group of schools near to each others with a common, better resourced school library.

4.4. Premises

Several new libraries have been built up or buildings have been equipped for libraries in recent years. All the major libraries in Windhoek have or will in the next few years have new buildings.

On the countryside, the libraries are dependent on regional offices concerning the space. The CLS sends the opening collection (min. 2000 books according to the recommendation, in reality the smallest collection has been 700 books), when an appropriate space is available. Finding a library space seems to be a slow process, and it is difficult to get understanding to the requirements of a proper library room. CLS has a list of the minimum demands, but this list is often circumvented to get at least some kind of space for the library. From our point of view, the list should in fact be tightened, having in mind that in the next ten years even the community libraries will be computerized, and must be equipped accordingly.

More co-operation between sectors of administration is recommendable. The library visits indicate, that under the same roof, several services like communication & information, youth, culture and libraries, even schools, successfully support each other and share some resources like computers and network connections. In some communities, it would be a good decision to combine the school and the community library. In Opumako, this had been done, and the users were pleased.

According to the experiences of the library visits, air-condition is a priority in equipping new library premises. A library cannot serve on-site (usage of reference material, reading places), if it is impossible for people to stay there, not to speak about the circumstances of the staff. The new library in Okahao, to be opened in January 2003, is a good example. The premises are basically fine, but will be underused without proper air condition, or in minimum, the ceiling. Outapi Community Library, located in a new multi-purpose youth center, is an opposite example: the air-conditioned space is used effectively and versatilely, full of learners and other users all day long. Paradoxically, in some libraries (like Oshakati), the PC's had good air-conditioning but the people had not. The air-condition seems to be the provision to get the most out of the intellectual capital collected in the library shelves.

Another factor in libraries is proper isolation against dust. E.g. the Omuthya Community Library and the CLDC, located in the same old house, were too dusty to allow the use of computers.

The Outapi Community Library indicated also the next step in library premises: there is a clear need to separate the silent reading/reference room from the more noisy usage of the library.

Safety against burglaries and thefts is too weak even in the National Library and National Archive, which indeed are in charge of big parts of the national heritage, hard won and collected.

Recommendation: The library premises in communities and schools should be properly protected against heat and dust. In other words, they should have air conditioning and dense enough windows and doors. In larger villages and towns, separate rooms for reading and other library use are recommended.

Recommendation: the security matters especially in libraries important for the national heritage should be taken in consideration better than now.

Recommendation: to build up as many libraries as possible as part of multi-purpose centers, arts and crafts centers and other combined buildings. In some municipalities, a combined school and community library can be a good solution.

4.5. Information technology issues

Information technology infrastructure in Namibian libraries is divided unevenly and situation in different libraries varies a lot. This concerns the computers and library system for staff use, as well as the public access to library databases and Internet.

Major part of the community libraries and school libraries do not have computers or Internet connections. On the countryside, missing or unreliable electricity and telecommunication networks cause additional problems (e.g. poor technical quality of databases when library system is in use). Lately, with the support of the NOLNet project, some school and community libraries have received computers and other technical devices including training to their use. More schools have received corresponding support e.g. through the SchoolNet project.

When information technology is taken into use, training and availability of technical support are elementary parts of the delivery. Otherwise, the devices and connections may stay unused, or the staff is unable to solve even the simplest problem situations.

Recommendation. All community libraries should be computerised. The maintenance costs like the connection costs etc. must be included in the budgets on permanent basis. The contract for the Internet connections is worth doing on shared basis (a group license for all the community libraries), to get reduced prices.

On the other hand University library at UNAM has moved to a brand new building with the video conferencing facilities, computer training rooms and a range of computers with public access to their catalogs and Internet connections. Polytechnic library has also a well functioning technical infrastructure with computers for the staff and a public access, library system and exceptionally good web pages on the Internet.

All ministerial libraries have in principle computers and a library system (CDS/ISIS) available to their use for record and collection management. They are expected to get technical support through the corresponding ministry. However, their Internet connections in the government network are extremely slow. The situation among ministerial libraries varies a lot. The Ministry of the Environment and Tourism library is a good showcase of the goal oriented establishing of a successful information service and library. It offers several advanced databases and information resources as well as public Internet access for their users. To compare: the National Planning Commission does not have any library system or Internet connection in use.

The National Library and the other units (Community Library Service, Education Library Service, National Archive) in the same building have computers for the staff and users and several servers. Each of them has its' own library system. In addition, the database maintenance of the National Library & National Archive building has been divided into three different servers. Again, the slowness of the government network with Internet connections disallows them to benefit from their devices and connections. E.g. for the cataloguing and interlibrary loans, downloading from SABINET is in practice impossible.

In addition, there are several technical problems in their internal network (no chart of cabling, problems with physical cables, configuration problems with connections) and system management practices (missing backups, data

security, problem solving practices/logging, lack of documentation).

The setting and multitude of the National Library databases is also very complex (see annex 8). It requires at least documentation of the coverage and status of the databases, to ensure their future. Especially, when the catalogers who have the best understanding of this environment have left/are leaving the library, it will be a challenging task for the new staff to understand the database environment.

The core problem in the National Library and the National Archive together with the network problems is the lack of technical staff. It has not an assigned systems librarian or technical staff for PC support. Technical problems are solved case by case by librarians/library assistants who have other tasks as their primary responsibility, and no training for the technical problem solving. No planning or documentation exists for the maintenance and support of technical environment.

Occasionally, external consulting is used to overcome serious technical problems. With many library functions (e.g. interlibrary loans), the staff has gone back to manual procedures. Duplicate work is done in cataloguing and database production (see e.g. annex 5).

In general, the table in annex 6 specifies the level of resources and services in different libraries and coordinating units (CLS, ELS).

4.6. Network connections

Modern national and research libraries, and very soon also the community and school libraries, need a proper connection to the Internet. In the Windhoek libraries, the Parliament Library and the Polytechnics Library have their own good connections, and can work effectively. The UNAM connections are satisfactory.

The biggest problem is in the building of National Library and National Archive. After the removal to the new house in 2000, they use Internet through the government network, which primarily serves the ministries and concentrates on the intranet. In the government network, their website and public access databases have been removed inside the firewall, thus their network services have been lost.

The slowness and cut-offs of the network connection are hurting work within the National Library, as well as in the National Archive. Utilization of the Internet resources and services is practically impossible. Sending of an e-mail can take ten minutes. The interlending and reference department staff doesn't use SABINET very much, because it takes so much time. One ILL query can take hours to complete. The benefits of the Internet connection cannot really be used in the whole building.

As a comparison, the Internet connections and user training seem to work meaningfully better in some rural libraries linked to the NOLNet project than in National Library and ministerial libraries. It goes without saying, that this should not be the case.

In the future, more information resources will be in electronic form. Already now, over 5000 electronic journals and several bibliographic databases are available

for the National Library, but again, underused. A search which resulted 20 reference hits, took two working days. It is clear that these resources cannot be effectively used, and the Namibian user community is excluded from these contents, which would mean the extension of the selection of relevant journals to rise from hundreds to thousands. As it is now, it is beyond imagination to open up the eFL resources for the users. This, however, is the common way to work in the libraries offering the same material.

Recommendation: the reasons of the network connection problems in the National Library and National Archive building must be found and solved. The best alternative / first aid might be to move out from the government network and replace it with a private provider. In the meantime, the ministerial libraries as well should have a functioning network connection.

Comments from librarians suggest, that unlimited Internet connections cause continuous troubles. They are very support-intensive, and tend to get stuck for viruses, misuse etc. There is an alternative, the so-called thin clients (network PCs), easier to control and maintain (see <http://www.mhl.org/thin/thinclient.htm>).

Recommendation. The possibilities to offer thin clients / network PCs instead of unlimited Internet access should be considered.

Recommendation. A common web page for all the institutions located in the National Library and National Archive building should be created. It can introduce the most important web resources available in the house, and give a link to them. In the course of time, this can be developed to be the common portal for all Namibian libraries, including e.g. professional discussion lists for problem solving and gather links to the most important free Internet resources for libraries.

4.7. Technical support

Technical support presents one major problem area especially for the National Library, National Archive and the other units in the same building, as well as for small community libraries. There are various levels of support required, depending on the information technology and system environment.

For small libraries with few computers and Internet connections in use, training, maintenance and problem solving with PCs and Internet connections is the main priority. Without these skills, the devices and connections cannot be taken into efficient use, staff may easily give up their use when the problem situations occur or they may make incorrect conclusions of the required fixes. Lack of system support led e.g. the Education Library Service to acquire an own, separate printer network, because there was no one to do a simple action, the activation of the existing network points.

Data security, including clear instructions for the users, is a crucial part of the maintenance. Without virus checking, PCs may get stuck very quickly. There should be clear instructions for the staff to do virus checking continuously and to update their virus checking programs regularly. E.g. in the NOLNet libraries, the most often mentioned technical problem was that "the PC just hanged up and stopped to function". This is quite often an indicator of viruses, or a result of downloading too big files to the computer.

Maintenance and problem solving with PCs requires training for staff. NOLNet

has organized “International computer driver’s licence” -type of training for their participants with good experiences. Since this training covers e.g. the basic information of PCs, word processing, and Internet searching, it would form a good basis. Additional crucial skills to be trained for these librarians, cover troubleshooting in most common problem situations, maintenance practices (e.g. backups, virus checking), program installations and upgrades.

Recommendation. In each library at least 1 staff member should gain basic level understanding of PCs, network connections, programs in use and Internet to be able to do troubleshooting in most common problem situations (virus checking, maintenance procedures and program installations/upgrades).

In a larger technical environment the complete setting of hardware, software and network may come into the picture and systems support is needed. E.g. University library and Polytechnic library receive hardware and network support from their computer departments. For the National Library (and the other offices in a same building) the situation is apparently worst. No assigned technical staff is available and no satisfactory support is practically available through other sources (Ministry of Basic Education, Office of the Prime Minister). Situation with other government libraries varies by ministry - and the level of their technical support may differ meaningfully.

Recommendation. Systems management support staff should be acquired for the National Library, National Archive and the offices in the same building as a shared resource to support in the first place the library system and database management, co-ordinate and develop electronic services and related problem solving.

Since the library and the archive have a wide variety of problems, external consults are required as well to solve the present problem issues. Network expert is required to analyze the problems with the internal network/cabling, since there are also problems with the connections in-house. Operation system upgrades, installations and main tenance services may be contracted out (e.g. the new server must be taken into use and a new version of Linux needs to be installed). Library website and databases need to be opened to public use which are easiest to manage with the help of the external assistance (may also require consultation with the Prime Minister’s Office concerning the firewall).

Recommendation: to check the possibilities to contract out the server maintenance and heavy, ‘one time’ IT duties of the National Archive and National Library.

Selected staff members in the National Library and Archive building should be trained to PC support, but all librarians/library assistants should get “Computer driver’s license level training” due to their national level work. The staff should be qualified to maintain the national level resources and have abilities to apply the possibilities of new technologies into their work and procedures.

Recommendation: see the recommendations in chapter 4.1.

4.8. Work processes

The amount of untrained persons and the lack of union cataloguing affects the daily work in the Namibian libraries. Lacking basic skills in computers cause also extra work: only very few of professionals and non-professionals

are able to use all the most general benefits of the computers effectively (e.g. cutting, copying, pasting).

As an example, the work process of acquiring, cataloguing and disseminating material in the Community Library Service are presented in annex 5. There are many points of double work. E.g. the titles of the books to be purchased are written in different documents four times, when it is basically possible to integrate the whole process: to begin by writing the minimum information for the acquisition/tender lists, and then append the information in the course of the process. Possibly, due to the rare operating system (OS/2) no down-loading of ready bibliographic records from other databases can be made. Also there have been so many continuous problems with the cataloguing database, that the card catalogue must be manually maintained for the back-up. The reasons should be surveyed separately. The acquisition module of the CDS/ISIS version LAMP is not used because it is slow.

Usage of several, CDS/ISIS databases, not communicating with each other, is waste of trained professionals.

Recommendation: the system and network setup for the CLS and ELS should be analyzed and integrated with the whole National Library building system as a whole.

Recommendation: see also the recommendations in chapter 4.9.

In the community and school libraries work processes are much simpler. The community libraries benefit of the ready-made catalogue cards they get with the books. However, the catalogue cards are not always inserted into the catalogues. On the other hand, during our trips to community libraries, we heard about several local efforts to build up own electronic catalogues. Some of these initiators did not even know that CLS is maintaining also a digital central catalogue of the books in the community libraries.

ELS maintains a central catalogue, but does not send the cards to the schools. In the schools we saw, that most of them do produce their own catalog in any case, on varying levels. There seems to be need for catalogues in the smallest book collections, too. But this matter should be solved as a part of the whole union catalog system suggested in recommendation 3.

Because the community libraries are mainly one-man-run, the interests of the person in charge can be seen in the focusing of the work. Someone is stressing recreational reading, some other puts effort to support learning. This is unavoidable, and gives a slightly varying profile to each library.

A serious problem in some community libraries are the thefts. Not too many methods have been found to get back the books which were lent out but not returned. In these cases the community libraries do cut off the lending right, but it does not help too much. A positive exception was the Okuryongava community library, where the person in charge has mobilised local children to recognize the library books and pick up them for returning.

Damaging books, e.g. by cutting out pictures and pages is also common. This happens especially in bigger libraries (Windhoek City Library), where the staff cannot see every corner. A partial remedy could be re-organizing

of the shelving and other furniture in a way which gives better view to the whole building.

In the school libraries the dissemination of the books from Windhoek to the schools is a problem. Sometimes the books stay in the regional offices, and do not reach the schools. This is again waste of resources.

4.9. Co-operation issues (ILL, cataloging, promotion of libraries and reading)

Gathering bibliographic records and holdings information of the location of publications to one national database is internationally a common practice. Most often this also means shared cataloging work and possibilities to copy records from the Union database to local collection database (or vice versa). The library staff can utilize work already made by other libraries. Duplicate cataloging work can be avoided.

The benefits of a union catalog are many. If available via the Internet, other libraries and library users can find out the information on publications through one database and also locate the publications. A union catalog also supports collection development, acquisitions and processing of interlibrary loans, since one can easily check if the publication already exists in the country and where it is located. Within the setting of a union catalog, there is also a tendency to unify the cataloguing and content description principles and practices which will save resources nationally. Namibian libraries would in principle have a good opportunity to create a union catalog, since many of the libraries have the same library system (CDS/ISIS). However, production of union databases is still based on off-line practices - data transfer in batches.

National Library has a basis for the union catalog in the form of the NAMCAT database, but there are several technical problems with it. The content of the database is of high quality.

Concerning the content and possible functional integration of the Union catalog on national level, some other issues come up. In the optional environment for the Union catalog, online connections to the data base should be available and copying of the records to local use should be possible. At present, this is not possible even within the National Library, because the maintenance of the database is done in batches.

The database should be available for libraries and users for searching through the Web or telnet connections. Neither option works at the moment. The database is only available for online searching for the National Library staff (and users by request on a reference desk).

The union catalog should also cover the most important national collection databases (e.g. National Library, University library, Polytechnic, Ministerial libraries, Community libraries and School libraries). The databases of community libraries and school libraries are not included to NAMCAT. Also it is not presently possible to transfer data from the University library database to NAMCAT even in batch mode, since there is no export option in their library system (Urica).

In general, the whole setting for the Union catalog requires a separate planning project to define the coverage of the content, level of integration and the library system which would be utilized including the functional requirements (e.g.

copying of records and searchability through the Web). (see annex 7).

Concerning international material, the possibilities to copy records from union catalogs exists in principle. SABINET, South African Union Catalog, gives also access to the OCLC bibliographic records. It gives the best possible world-wide coverage to bibliographic records. The OCLC records can be copied to SABINET and in principle, also the SABINET records could be copied to CDS/ISIS. Due to the slow network connections at National Library, online copying is in practice impossible.

In a way the Namibian Union Catalog is also available through SABINET: the National Library, UNAM library and Polytechnic library add their new records and library holdings codes to SABINET. However, the union catalog for Namibia is not available as an individual database but as a part of the larger unity.

Improved co-operation can be realized in the framework of the CDS/ISIS applications providing, that data transfer from one system to an other will be possible. More can be benefited, if a new library ICT system will be acquired for common use. It could cover all the major libraries, but at least the NL, UNAM, PON, ELS and CLS. On the other hand, information from UNESCO, Brazil, Indonesia and Russia indicate, that CDS/ISIS has been strongly developed. It should be surveyed before the decision making, if this offers possibilities to Namibian libraries.

If there will be more co-operation in cataloguing, it will be a challenge to unify the content description. At least two versions/levels of the Dewey classification are used, as well as different systems for indexing. E.g. expressions of the Namibian languages vary in different libraries. But experiences show, that there are union cataloguing systems where each library is maintaining their own content description systems.

Some of the used Dewey classifications are very deep. It is unclear, who use the results of this work. The international trend is towards free text and thesaurus based search via the web. The classification will in future support mainly the placement/shelving of the books and rough structuring of electronic resources. On the other hand it is an advantage that the Dewey classification is in use, since it is the most widely used library classification on the web. It offers a common, well-known tool to librarians and even to the most advanced end-users worldwide.

Recommendation: The co-operation on national level should be strengthened. As a first step, NAMCAT should be up-dated and made available for the public via the Internet. For resource sharing, a principal decision should be made, to develop the Namibian union cataloguing system, taking in account the possibilities offered by SABINET and including connections to the National Archive, if appropriate. Depending on further decisions,

a) either the CDS/ISIS versions will be integrated for common use and the possibilities will be studied, to utilize CDS/ISIS for union catalog use and future needs

b) or a new integrated library ICT system will be purchased for common use.

The system and network setup for CLS and ELS should be analyzed and integrated with the whole National Library building. This is a versatile problem, possibly including controversial interests, and a separate project to find out the best solutions is needed.

Recommendation: an agreement on the levels and means of content description (classification and indexing) should be agreed between the libraries, at least among those taking part in some shared cataloguing system.

Marketing and promotion are a common challenge for the Namibian library community. The target groups would be the decision makers, and the population, plus the youth making choices of profession. The topics should include first of all a plan to get access to information via libraries to national information society programs, and other actions to make the libraries more visible and significant in the society.

One proved way is to connect libraries to modern technologies. E.g. a visible launching of the eIFL electronic material could modernize the image of libraries.

The community libraries have achievements to market: openings of so many new libraries, and the raising numbers of registered library members. More can also be done for promoting the reading culture, giving focus e.g. to literature in indigenous languages, to certain information topics like health, Namibia information etc.

A good example of actual promotion is the Parliament Library, which is developed as a model library to be presented to the MPs.

A further idea is to develop adult media literacy programs, based on the school subject Basic Information Science.

Recommendation: Library and Information Council should produce a promotion program on library issues and reading in the information society.

Recommendation: a workshop giving examples (of other countries) and indicating means and approaches to promote and enhance the image, status and salaries of the librarians. (E.g. new titles, new visions, connections to information society programs, visibility in media and for community, lobbying).

Recommendation. According to the model of the Basic Information Science in the schools, a model for BIS program for adults could be developed. The material can be partly disseminated in video- or CD-rom format.

5. Recommendations

These recommendations target to look to the situation in ten years, taking in account the need to get qualified staff to replace the key persons to be retired in the near future, and the general lack of professional library staff. The idea is to re-organise some of the core work in ways freeing professionals from cataloguing to other demanding library tasks, and to make the use of IT more efficient.

The first five recommendations are in prioritized order, the rest are grouped according to the topic.

Recommendation 1: The library (and archive) salaries should be lifted up, at least to the teacher level, to be able to compete with the private sector and to ensure staff to publicly financed libraries also in future. The IT support staff, librarians or others, must possibly be up-graded separately, in relation to the general salary level on this area. E.g. consider the possibilities to hire a system manager with an appropriate salary instead of an IT librarian.

Recommendation 2: the reasons of the network connection problems in the National Library and National Archive building must be found and solved. The best alternative / first aid might be to move out from the government network and replace it with a private provider. In the meantime, the ministerial libraries as well should have a functioning network connection. Systems management support staff should be acquired for the National Library, National Archive and the offices in the same building as a shared resource to support in the first place the library system and database management, co-ordinate and develop electronic services and related problem solving.

Recommendation 3: The co-operation on national level should be strengthened. As a first step, NAMCAT should be up-dated and made available for the public via the Internet. For resource sharing, a principal decision should be made, to develop the Namibian union cataloguing system, taking in account the possibilities offered by SABINET and including connections to the National Archive, if appropriate. Depending on further decisions, a) either the CDS/ISIS versions will be integrated for common use and the possibilities will be studied, to utilize CDS/ISIS for union catalog use and future needs b) or a new integrated library ICT system will be purchased for common use. The system and network setup for the CLS and ELS should be analyzed and integrated with the whole National Library building. This is a versatile problem, possibly including controversial interests, and a separate project to find out the best solutions is needed.

Recommendation 4 concerning library manager and staff training ·to offer senior librarians training in leadership and management. ·there will be a growing need for training professionals in project management, and this should be included in training programs Concerning IT training of the library staff ·to train all the persons working in the National Library and the National Archive building in the basics of computers (IT driving license, see e.g. http://www.tieke.fi/ajokortti_english.nsf), to make them able to see when their computer problem can be solved by switching the printer on, and when it is more difficult. ·to train all the librarians in national/shared tasks to understand the CDS/ISIS use in the union cataloguing setting ·in each library, at least 1 staff member should gain basic level understanding of PCs, network connections, programs in use and Internet as well as be able to do troubleshooting in most common problem situations, virus checking, maintenance procedures and program installations/upgrades.

Recommendation 5: to continue efforts to up-grade the library education level of the motivated but unqualified staff in libraries by supporting financially especially on-site learning on diploma and bachelor degree levels in universities offering this possibility.

Recommendations on training

Recommendation. To continue the training workshops for the non-professional community library staff and include topics like ·selection of material, collection

development and user needs survey information sources on some central areas, like Namibia knowledge, agriculture, health, law & citizenship, and business/career development, and to have the lecturers from the concerned organisations and libraries for those working in libraries equipped with PCs, training in computer use (computer driving license, see e.g. http://www.tieke.fi/ajokortti_english.nsf), computer use in libraries, and on Internet as an information source.

Recommendation. Since literacy and learning present key issues in national development, it would be useful to gather links to the most useful free educational resources to support learning. This link collection could be a database or a list of links available through the Websites of libraries.

Recommendation: NLIC to look for methods to improve the dissemination of especially printed public information (by the government and international organisations), e.g. by training the persons in charge of those functions in the concerned organisations.

Recommendation. According to the model of the Basic Information Science in the schools, a model for BIS program for adults could be developed. The material can be partly disseminated in video- or CD-rom format.

Recommendations on administration and co-operation

Recommendation: to include in the coming national collection development policy clear statements at least about other need for material and respectively to budget for the new community libraries to be founded, as well as the existing ones to be served on constant basis, ofinding a consensus between different actors on the responsibility to disseminate learning-related material around the country, othe language policy in community libraries, in particular concerning fiction, and the role and emphasis of the printed material and electronic resources (offline/online - eIFL Direct / EBSCO and eIFL S&T).

Recommendation: a digitization policy for opening larger access to the Namibian cultural heritage via Internet should be compiled.

Recommendation. All community libraries should be computerised. The maintenance costs like the connection costs etc. must be included in the budgets on permanent basis. The contract for the Internet connections is worth doing on shared basis (a group license for all the community libraries), to get reduced prices.

Recommendation: NLIC to support efforts to get the Namibian legislation and other important government regulations to the Internet.

Recommendation: to continue and strengthen the collaborative work of the Book Selection Committee work and encourage the staff in the community libraries to collect and report feedback about the needs of their users.

Recommendation: the regional librarian in charge of community libraries, as well as the librarian in charge of the ministerial libraries, must be consulted in staff elections, buildings and other important decisions concerning libraries by the respective decision makers.

Recommendation. The opening hours in Namibian libraries should be re-thought, to serve the users better when they have free time.

Recommendation: an agreement on the levels and means of content description (classification and indexing) should be agreed between the libraries, at least among those taking part in some shared cataloguing system.

Recommendation: to check the possibilities to contract out the maintenance of the server and heavy, 'one time' IT duties of the National Archive and National Library

Recommendation. A common web page for all the institutions located in the National Library and National Archive building should be created. It can introduce the most important web resources available in the house, and give a link to them. In the course of time, this can be developed to be the common portal for all Namibian libraries, including e.g. professional discussion lists for problem solving and gather links to the most important free Internet resources for libraries.

Recommendation: Library and Information Council should produce a promotion program on library issues and reading in the information society.

Recommendations on physical and virtual security, building and equipment

Recommendation: to build up as many libraries as possible as a part of multi-purpose centers, arts and crafts centers and other combined buildings. In some municipalities, a combined school and community library can be a good solution.

Recommendation: The library premises in communities and schools should be properly protected against heat and dust. In other words they should have air conditioning and dense enough windows and doors. In larger villages and towns, separate rooms for reading and other library use are recommended.

Recommendation: the security matters especially in libraries important for the national heritage should be taken in consideration better than now.

Recommendation: Workshop giving examples (of other countries) and indicating means and approaches to promote and enhance the image, status and salaries of the librarians. (E.g. new titles, new visions, connections to information society programs, visibility in media and for community, lobbying).