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NIGERIAN LIBRARY SYSTEMS WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Being a keynote delivered during the Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Library Association held in National Library, Enugu from 30th November – 1st December, 2017

By

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Preamble

When Dr Mrs Uzoigwe informed me of the NLA Enugu State Chapter desire to engage me as their keynote speaker during the 2017 Annual Conference, I was taken aback. My first reaction was “Is there anything new to libraries and librarians in this part of the world”? They have the best of the library schools, very outstanding and strong libraries and library association. Nigerian Librarians have attended international conferences and continuing professional development programmes in large numbers and above all Nigerian library system has one of its own as a member of IFLA Governing Board who have anchored the International Advocacy programme in Nigeria and other African countries. All these have actually translated to capacities and competencies needed to know what to do, who will do what and what is needed to achieve them. In the area of funding, Nigerian libraries and librarians are not lacking, many fund/grant giving bodies have really blessed libraries and librarians in Nigeria. However my long lasting meditation provided the justification for this keynote – “To speak behooves the mouth and to hear behooves the ear”. My conviction is further predicated on the fact that charity begins at home hence, we must narrow our keynote to Nigeria. That gave rise to my chosen topic - “Nigerian Library Systems Working together to promote National Development”. We will attempt to primarily consider the keywords in the topic – Nigerian Library, System and National Development. We will further discuss ways and means of Nigeria Library Systems Promotion of National Development and we conclude.

Nigeria Libraries

Nigerian Libraries are simply libraries situated in Nigeria. As inscribed in the draft National Library Policy, they exist at the federal, state, and local government levels. They include academic, public, special, school, national and private libraries.

System

A system is globally accepted as sets of inter-related elements that form an activity or a processing procedure to achieve a common goal. Simply, a system is a set of interrelated parts

working together towards a common goal. Typical examples of system are human being, family, library. A system can actually be a sub-system in a bigger system. A system could be of different types but we will restrict ourselves to information system in which library belongs. Information system combines people, hardware, software, communication networks and data to achieve its purpose. These combined parts work in four basic components of input, process, output and feedback control.

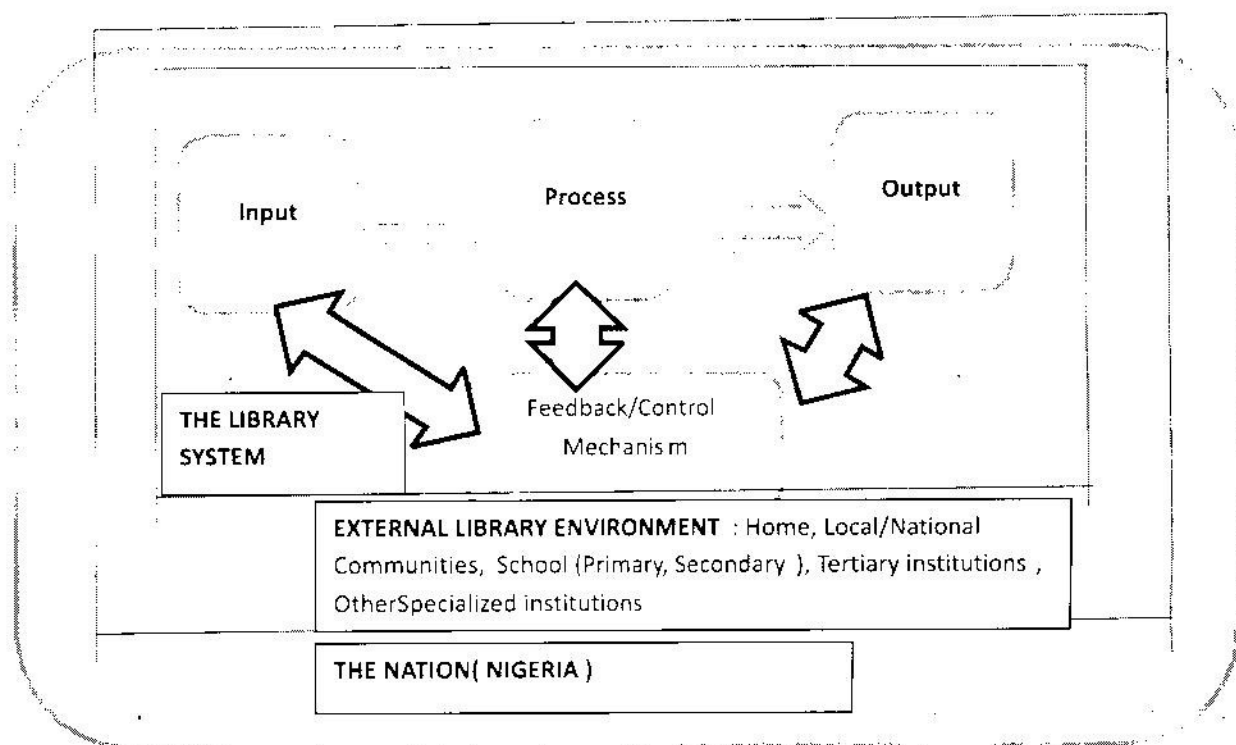


Fig. 1: A Typical Library system showing its internal and external environment

The diagram showcases the place of Nigerian libraries as systems in the home, local/natural communities, school (primary & secondary), tertiary institutions. This means that the library is not an island rather found in the environment which it influences and which influences it.

So the Nigeria Library Systems (public, national, school, academic, special and private) working within its components of input, process, output and feedback mechanism achieve their mandate for national development (Nigeria development).

National Developments

National development is another way of saying development of a nation. Development of a nation has always been defined based on economic growth which involves increase in total value of goods and services produced, measured by Gross Domestic Product GDP. However, Sen. (1999; p.14) informed

that “adequate conception of development must go much beyond the accumulation of wealth and the growth of national product and other income-related variables, without ignoring the importance of economic growth, we must look well beyond it”.

Hence Aguna-Alfaro (2006) rightly insisted that we must go beyond wealth accumulation to consider every aspect of people's life which may include improvement in human welfare, quality of life, social wellbeing, environment and politics. What this means is that when we refer to national development, we must x-ray the fruits of economic growth as it relates to literacy rates, education, better health and nutrition, high level of social cohesion and skills and equality. In other words national development must beam search light on human development indices some of which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1990, P.10) included as long and healthy life, to be

educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living, political freedom, guaranteed human right and self-respect. Thus, a nation may be termed developed where the indices of development ; human development and others are pointing to the positive; Where man and material efforts are geared towards living system that works ;where things are working not necessarily in ideal situation.

Status of Nigerian Development

If we agree on the foregoing definitions as it relates to development, can we now consider the status of Nigerian development based on available statistics. Generally, we will consider the Nigeria development indices, employment, poverty, education, mortality, life expectancy, diseases, environment, (Poverty rate, employment, mortality life expectancy, Prevalence of HIV(diseases) Environment (Co2emission: kidnapping

rate (social), nutrition (nourishment) General human development indexes.

Human Development Index (HDI) according to UNDP (2016) is a survey measure of assessing progress in three basic dimensions of human development namely a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. The measure of healthy life is life expectancy at birth, knowledge level is determined by the mean years of education among the adult population (average number of years of education recorded in life time by people aged 25 years and above) and the standard of living is measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capital.

The combination of data on life expectancy at birth, expected year of schooling, mean years of schooling and GNI per capital provide the HDI value for each year. HDI value for Nigeria from 2009 to 2013 is presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Trends in Human Development Indicators

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
HDI		0.462	0.467	0.50	0.504
IHDI				0.276	0.300
GNI per capita (2011 ppp\$)	4597	4716	4949	5176	5353
GNI index	0.578	0.582	0.589	0.596	0.601
Life expectancy at birth (in years)	50.8	51.3	51.7	52.1	52.5
Life expectancy index	0.474	0.481	0.488	0.494	0.5
Mean years of schooling	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2
< 5 mortality rate (per 1000 life births)		132	128	12.4	124
Educational Index		0.8686			0.8139
(Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	0.31*				0.247

*2008 value. Sources: Human Development Report (various years), NBS (2015)

Though the Table 1 shows human development index to be on the increase, the change seems to be insignificant and of little value when consideration is given to the various indexes as life expectancy

and other as shown in Table 2. The indexes considered unemployment, mortality, life expectancy, prevalence of HIV and environmental issues in form of CO₂ emissions and under nourishment.

Table 2: NIGERIAN RATING IN SOME OF THE DEVELOPMENT INDICES FOR THE YEARS 2015 and 2016

Index	2015	2016
Unemployment		13.4%
Poverty head count Ratio at \$1.9ppp day	*53.5	
Neonatal Mortality Rate		34.3 deaths per 1,000 live birth
Infant Mortality Rate	69.4 death per 1000 live birth	
Under 5 Mortality Rate	108.8 death per 1000 live birth	
Life Expectancy	53years	
Prevalence of HIV(Age 15-49)		2.9%
CO2 Emissions(CO2 produced during consumption of solid , liquid & gas fuels and gas flaring)	86.895KT	
Undernourishment as a share of population	7.0%	

*53.5 (2009 data)

A close look at Table 2 shows that there is need to enhance the score chart of Nigerian development indices especially in the area of HDI. This informs efforts made by UN member nations to develop and implement national development actions through MDGs and SDGs. In view of development challenges, the United Nation (UNO) sets several targets to engage 189 member nations in development. The very recent target are enshrined in the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) signed in September 2000 with the achievement set for the 2015; and the 17 Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 target signed in September 2015. By way of reminder, the MDGs are to: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Achieve universal primary education, Promote gender equality and empower women, Reduce child mortality, Improve mental health, Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease, Ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. Leveraging on the achievements recorded at the MDGs, the SDGs set to: End poverty in all its forms everywhere, End hunger,

achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, Ensure availability and sustainability management of water and sanitation for all, Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, Full and productive employment and decent work for all, Build resilient infrastructure, Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. Reduce inequality within and among communities, Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of territorial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss, Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

From the Nigerian rating on the indices earlier considered, we can judgmentally decide whether Nigeria is actually part of the couch of the moving train. Having considered the status of Nigeria in some of the development indices and considering the goals

(MDGS and SDGS), do you think that Nigeria Library systems have roles to play in the promotion of the set goals in view of the scenario in the Nigerian environment.

Ways and Means of Promoting National Development by Nigerian Library Systems

Since the MDGs and SDGs declarations, global libraries through the International Federation of Library and Associations (IFLA) made frantic efforts to demonstrate the place of libraries in the achievement of the MDGs and SDGs. In other words libraries are expected to ensure that their constituency are supportive of Nigerians' healthy life, education, a decent standard of living, political freedom and self-respect.

Recall that the Nigeria Library Systems is made up of the national, public, academic, special, school and private libraries. Each has a definite or somehow definite community which it serves (the external environment). The Library utilizes the information system components: input, process, output and feedback mechanism to ensure that it pays its own toll in the development of Nigerian society.

Nigerian Library Systems must realize that its place in the national development map has become more important than ever before. Recall that Library systems stock-in-trade is knowledge and information. Recall also that we are in the knowledge or information economy. In other words Knowledge and information are pivotal in the development of any nation. The Nigeria Library Systems must combine the people, hardware, software, communication and data elements in its input, process, output and feedback to promote national development. What plays out in the Nigerian library system is presented in Figure 2. Reflecting on

Figure 2 as a point to what the Nigeria Library System should produce, it is clear that the libraries are central to

development with knowledge and information as its output.

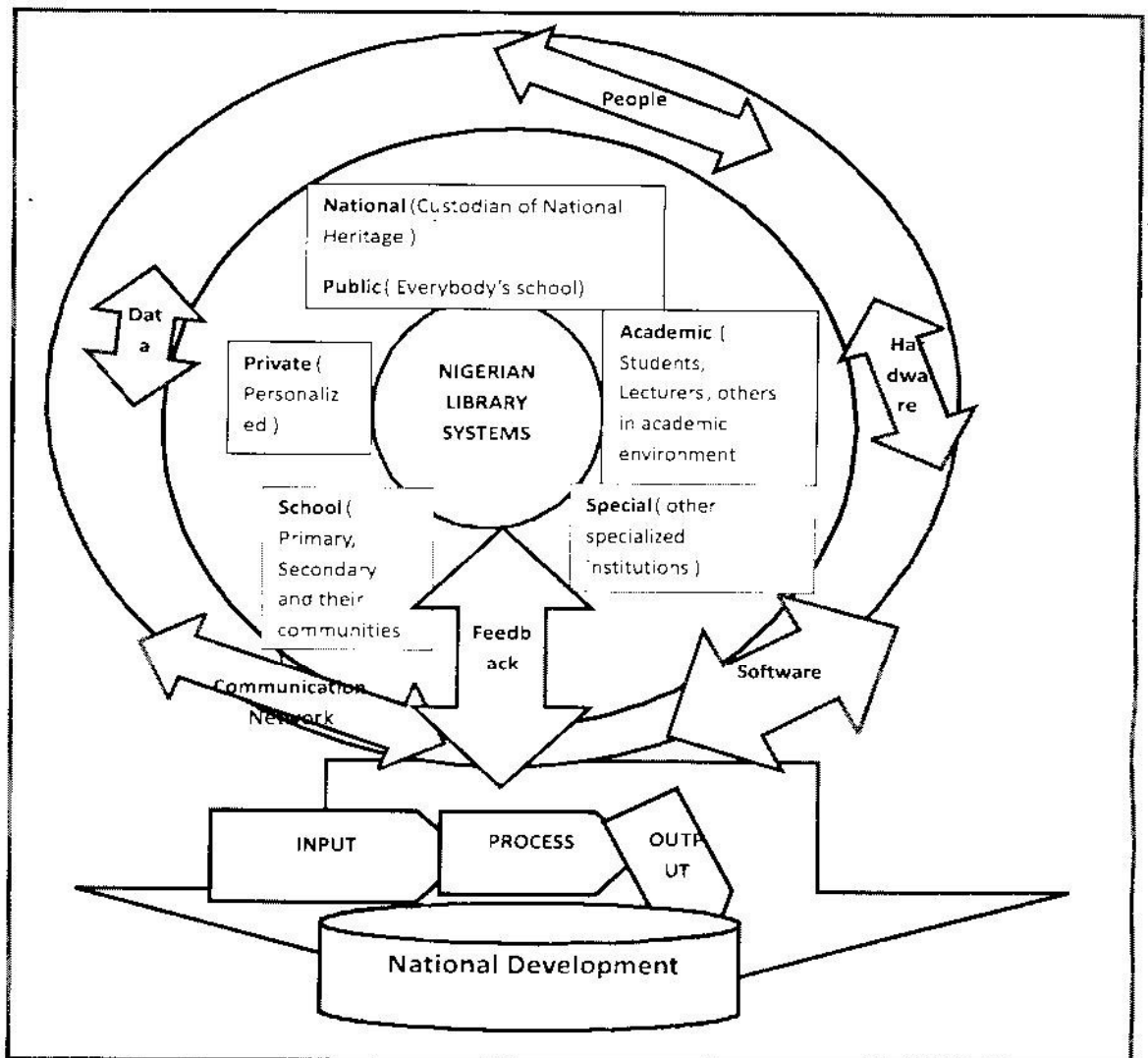


Fig. 2: Diagrammatic Representation of Nigeria Library System in National Development

Effective approach to its responsibility will be driven by each library asking itself the following questions:

- Who are the members of my external environment;
- What are the characteristics of these members of my community;
- What are their challenges with reference to HDI and other indices;
- What should be the contribution of my community towards national development;
- What services should my library system offer to support my community towards national development;
- How will I package the services in view of the characteristics and challenges of the members of my

external community/environment to aid them contribute their quota towards national development.

The above items could be summed up as community or user assessment. Equipped with complete knowledge of the community, the position of IFLA(2013) on libraries and development upholds which posits that **"the library is the only place in many communities where people can access information that will help improve education, develop new skills, find jobs, build business, make informed agricultural and health decisions, or gain insights into environmental issues"**. Their unique role makes libraries important development partners, both by providing access to information in all formats and by delivering services and programmes that meet the needs for information in a changing and increasing complex society. In effect every library in Nigeria is expected to provide access to information and knowledge to address employment, mortality, life expectancy, reduced prevalence of different types/kinds of disease, challenging environmental issues and ensure equality, political freedom and good standard of living.

IFLA justified this responsibility of libraries in the following outlines:

- a. Libraries provide opportunity for all in spite of race, nationality, gender, sexual preference, age, disability, religious, economic circumstances and political belief;
- b. Libraries empower people for their own self-development;
- c. Libraries offer access to the world's knowledge;
- d. Libraries provide expert guidance;
- e. Libraries are part of a

- multitasking-holder society; and
- f. Libraries must be recognized in development policy frameworks.

Ladies and gentlemen, every library in Nigeria must endeavor to achieve these indifferent shades and colours. Knowledge of the community the library serves is the key. National library must demonstrate the leadership to justify the place of library in national development. Advocacy with sound political undertone must be its engaging watch word with a view to the development of resounding policy on libraries. It must strive to integrate Nigerian Library Systems in the Nigerian development policy framework.

Public library must have a full grasp of the nature, characteristics and desires of its community and package its services to satisfy them. Academic libraries must stand up to be counted, demonstrate leadership in plethora of competences needed for knowledge and information gathering as well as different forms of literacies and technology adoption. It must serve as the shoulder on which students, staff and other researchers in the community must stand to reach their information/knowledge peak.

For school libraries there must be a shift from sitting to overlook student come to use the school library to participating in decision "affecting [the use] of technology, curriculum and resources at the school" (Eric Digest). The library must be ready to prepare students for "information and technology – rich workplace of the future". The library must understand its role as information specialty arena and educator. Special libraries must understand that the cooking and product of research (food) is found in its

domain. If the community is transitory, it must package knowledge/information to accommodate the fluidy nature as the case of some research institutions. Know the community and give them what they want in a manner that adds value to their position towards national development.

It must be emphasized that every library must play its wing, hand the ball over to the next player in the other wing all aimed at getting food security, increased life expectancy, reduced unemployment etc.

Challenges

We will not close until we at least itemize some of the challenges to Nigerian Library Systems effective promotion of national development.

Some of them are:

1. Timidity;
2. Lack of competences;
3. Laziness;
4. Self-defeat;
5. Unprofessionalism; and

6. The Nigeria factor.

Conclusion

The important position held by the Nigerian Library systems in the development of this country cannot be overemphasized. In spite of opportunities created through continuing professional development, many LIS professionals are yet to come to terms on their place in the development of this country –Nigeria. Cognizance of the present knowledge economy, Nigerian library systems holds the key to development. Success in that area implies knowledge of what they have as a system, knowledge of who constitute the members of their community, knowledge of where the MDGs and SDGs concerns placed their community and articulating the best approach to their challenges. This success is predicated on the change required of Nigerian Library systems as it relates to competences (Knowledge, skill and attitude) as well as the Nigerian factor.



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