

**COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SELECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF  
INFORMATION SERVICES FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH  
INFORMATION PROVISION AND UTILIZATION: CENTER FOR LEARNING  
RESOURCES AS A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

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**Abstract:**

*With the rapidity of transformation of the modern society to a knowledge economy, as well as the ever increasing deployment of ICT for retrieval and management of knowledge by libraries, global solutions are now available for hitherto localized and seemingly intractable problems. As laudable as this scenario of a flat world which provides information for*

*virtually any issue of human concern, in unimaginable dimension, may seem, there still exists the need to bridge the yawning gap in women's information access and utilization in Nigeria. It is against this background that the study surveyed and show-cased practical outreach undertaken by the Centre for Learning Resources (Covenant University Library) in addressing particular information needs of women within its environs. The paper highlighted community impact initiatives, workshops, and research targeted at ameliorating specific deficiencies associated with women through the instrumentality of information access and library services. The study extrapolated from the unique experiences of the Centre for Learning Resources, Covenant University to construct a model for modern libraries in developing countries for evolving as agent of reconstruction of their immediate geo-polity. It identified constraints of libraries in community services. The paper concluded that libraries should traverse traditional roles to embrace challenges presented by their peculiar setting in order to maintain continuous relevance.*

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Information Access and Utilization, Sexual Health Information, Libraries as Catalyst for Change, Prevention of HIV/AIDS Infection.

## **Background**

Information is a very vital instrument for maintaining a healthy society and sustaining steady development in all facets of life. When this is absent deficiencies and deprivations of diverse magnitudes are perpetuated. Information is a non-negotiable precondition for effecting any desired change. Without information, people will not know what to do or where to go in a given situation. In essence information is light without which there will be groping in the dark. Adelaja (2009) noted that ignorance is a killer of the destiny of a people. Information brings about change; according to Mingers and Willcocks (2014) the utilization of any information leads to some form of action or result which could be a reply, or an activity, or just a decision not to respond. Therefore, persons who are well informed and conscious of using the information at their disposal are those who will make the right change and not suffer any avoidable predicament.

Twenty-first century libraries are characterized by a daily influx of information and deployment of Information Communication Technology (ICT). There is a steady avalanche of information on virtually every issue of life or subject. This has eradicated what was hitherto known as information poverty in less developed countries of the world. This prevailing trend has equally deepened the information divide among groups in society, thereby creating a wide lacuna in the lifestyle of some disadvantaged persons. The privileged literate and semi-literate are having a jolly ride with availability, accessibility and utilization of information, due to the fact that they are information literate to a great extent. In essence they know what, where and, how to ferret out requisite information.

It is a paradox that despite the era of information explosion, certain groups comprising illiterate women, girls, children and aged still suffer gross deprivation of access to information and experience helplessness in bridging the gap. These groups depend on the good will of some other persons to get informed about their lives, immediate environment and society at large. In order for these vulnerable groups to get some awareness and access the information they need, 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries must embrace a paradigm shift and be contribution driven as much as innovative in their services. Bussey (2009, p.20) noted that her library designed outreach to make library staff visible in the community..... she stated that "the average person must read, see, and hear the same information over and over several

times before it is retained,” and that this is an excellent reason for the library to promote itself wherever it can. In the same vein, the librarians must be information gatherers and disseminators rather than just arm-chair query- answering librarians. Ford (2009) supported this when he recommended that librarians need to reshape their attitude and view community-based library services as essential, as it is the core of what keeps libraries strong and relevant to their communities.

The library is the known and trusted custodian of information resources all over the world with a duty of acquiring, organizing, preserving, storing and making information available to those who need them. Through these activities, the library, has always served as a change agent throughout history to date. Men and women who could not afford a formal school became great individuals by reason of their access to a library (Akparobore, 2011). One avenue for meeting the information needs of a library’s immediate community is Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI). This is a concept that is popular among academic libraries which entails creating a database of users’ profiles including their teaching and research interests and making available to them unsolicited but relevant library resources geared towards facilitation of swift accomplishment of designated goals. The same concept is highly useful for addressing the information needs of chosen target groups in our communities. This can be achieved through librarians’ engagement in relevant surveys especially in the area of perceived needs. With the result of such surveys, librarians become adequately equipped to disseminate necessary information based on need assessment to meeting targeted peculiarities.

Librarians as information custodians are intermediaries who have an enormous role to play in this situation. Information accessibility and utilization presuppose removal of all barriers in format, content, cost, distance, time and language for effective dissemination to the targeted audience. It is against this background that librarians conceptualize information brokerage and repackaging as composite frameworks for outreach and extension interventions to information disadvantaged groups and communities. In view of this prevailing demand on librarianship, the Covenant University Library also known as the Centre for Learning Resources (CLR), is already engaging in some laudable activities to becoming a leading library in this regard in Nigeria. CLR academic staff (librarians) are involved in varied activities that do not only effect changes in the immediate academic environment but to the extended communities within its environs.

### **Rationale for the Paper**

With the rapidity of transformation of the modern society to a knowledge economy, as well as the ever increasing deployment of ICT for retrieval and management of knowledge by the libraries, global solutions are now available for hitherto localized and seemingly intractable problems. As laudable as this scenario of a flat world in providing information for virtually any issue of human concern in unimaginable dimension may seem, there still exists the need to bridge the yawning gap between illiterate women/girls in Nigeria and information access and utilization. It is against this background that the study surveyed the information dissemination activities and community development services of libraries in Ogun state and show-cased practical outreach undertaken by the Centre for Learning Resources (Covenant University Library) in addressing peculiar information needs of women/girls within its environs.

## Objectives of the Paper

- ◆ The paper surveyed the information dissemination activities of libraries in Ogun state.
- ◆ It highlighted CLR's community impact initiatives, workshops, and research targeted at ameliorating specific deficiencies associated with women/girls through the instrumentality of information access and library community development services.
- ◆ It extrapolated from the unique experiences of the Centre for Learning Resources, Covenant University to construct a model for modern libraries in developing countries for evolving as agent of reconstruction of their immediate geo-polity.
- ◆ It further identified constraints of libraries in community development services.

**Table 1: Libraries in Ogun State and their involvement in community Service/Outreach**

S/N	University	Community Development Programme	Details/type/ Target Group	Constraints
1.	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Library	Available	Agric extension services to Farmers	Funds
2.	Tai Solarin University of Education Ijebu-Ode Library	Nil	Nil	Funds
3.	Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye Library	Available	Book Donations & Career talks to Schools	Funds
4.	Covenant University Ota Library	Available	Awreness Campaign (outreach) to Women/Girls, Career Talks, Reading Competitions and Donations to School Children (Sec/Prim/Universities).	Time and Funds
5.	Babcock University Ilishan-Remo Library	Nil	Nil	Nil
6.	Bells University of Technology, Ota Library	Nil	Nil	Funds
7.	Crawford University, Faith City Igbesa Library	Nil	Nil	Funds
8.	Crescent University, Abeokuta Library	Nil	Nil	Nil
9.	Adetokunbo University, Sagamu Library	Nil	Nil	Nil
10.	Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State Library	Nil	Nil	Nil
11.	Mountain Top University, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Nigeria Library.	Nil	Nil	Nil
12.	Moshood Abiola Polytechnic Ojere, Abeokuta, Ogun State Library.	Nil	Nil	Nil
13.	Tai Solarin College of education, Ijebu-Ode Ogun State Library.	Nil	Nil	Nil
14.	Fedral College of Education, Osiele Abeokuta Library.	Nil	Nil	Nil
15.	National library, Abeokuta	Nil	Nil	Nil
16.	Simeon Adebo Library, Abeokuta	Nil	Nil	Nil
17.	Presidential library, Abeokuta	Nil	Nil	Nil

## **Interview Responses:**

*“We used to be involved in such thing but presently, we are not. I will like us to discuss further about this so that we can know where to get involved” (Mr. Benson Public Library Abeokuta).*

*“We are not into any of such because we get directives form the headquarters in Abuja” (Mrs. Sangonuga National Library, Abeokuta).*

*“We do but in the area of our peculiarity so we offer Agric extension services to Farmers. We call them Model communities”. (Dr. Onifade, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Library).*

*“We do occasionally give Career talks to School children and donate Books to them” (Mr. Odunewu, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye Library).*

*“My Library is not into any of such because we are relatively young” (Mr. Oshilalu, Presidential library, Abeokuta).*

*“We are not into any of such activities; we need fund to equip our library properly” (Mrs. Adepero J., Federal Polytechnic Ilaro Library).*

*“We do not have anything like community service yet, our focus is on our users. Don’t forget you need money for all these things” (Mr. Adebajo, A., Tai Solarin University of Education Ijebu-Ode Library).*

Table 1 above revealed that only three libraries out of eighteen are involved in some form of community services and just two of the three can be said to be reaching the “less privileged” in their communities as is confirmed by their interview responses. When interviewed, the National Library affirmed that they cannot get involved in such an activity, as they depend on directives from the headquarters at Abuja for their operations. The other libraries, except the public library, simply said that they are not involved in anything like community service. The librarian of the public library was interested in this initiative and asked to know how and what he can do to affect the local communities. The implication of the responses of these libraries is that many librarians and their libraries have not bought into the vision of community services and so, are not making efforts to gain a stake in the sphere where they can impact positively on their environments. Ford (2009) rightly recommended that librarians need to reshape their attitude and view community-based library services as essential, as it is the core of what keeps libraries strong and relevant to their communities. This is very important if libraries want to sustain their relevance. Instead of bemoaning that ICT is taking the jobs of librarians, librarians must take advantage of ICT as a tool to deliver effective services.

## **An Overview of Centre for Learning Resources**

The Covenant University Library is a leading academic library that has created a niche for itself as a foremost reference centre for other libraries in Nigeria to follow. The library is automated and all routine activities are computerized. CLR has a functional virtual library service, which provides access to the Web-based Public Access Catalogue (WebPAC), and other electronic resources from anywhere in the globe and at any time using Internet Browser (Covenant University Library Handbook). The library’s automation is based on

MILLENIUM library management software which provides robust metadata and other interfaces for effective knowledge management.

### **CLR Efforts and Involvement in Community Services/Outreach**

The library has a unit called Covenant University Library Community Development Committee with the sole responsibility of reaching out to the less privileged with information and learning resources; all academic librarians belong to the Committee. CLR community service initiative is rooted on the realisation that libraries exemplify platforms for democratization of knowledge. Beyond their elitist and sophisticated patron, the need to make knowledge available to diverse populations who ordinarily would not benefit from the robust collections due to certain constraints is pivotal to such services. It helps to bridge the gap between the various classes in society. The leadership ethos of Covenant University propels the philosophy of empowering less endowed groups through redistribution of intellectual wealth. The Committee in collaboration with the University's Community Development Initiative Committee prepared a programme for women and girls that took place on the World Women's Day 2014, on prevention and early detection of cervical cancer. Also a health talk on healthy nutrition and living well was jointly delivered on 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 in commemoration of this year's World Women's Day.

The library has in place an entrenched monthly seminar series dedicated to discussing research findings and current trends in Library and Information Science. Under this platform primary and secondary school teachers and students have been exposed to information literacy skills development, thereby provoking them to be confident in seeking information in both digital and analogue learning environment.

Apart from bringing pupils and students to the library, CLR staff visit primary schools every term in Ota, the University's host community. The purpose of the visits is to demonstrate concern and care for the pupils by contributing to their intellectual development as well as encouraging them to read. During such visits, learning materials are distributed and a talk is presented on the benefits of reading. Academic quiz and debate competitions are organized for secondary schools. In addition, the library donated computers, working tools and books to a university in Ogun state (Tai Solarin University of Education Ijebu-Ode) in the year 2013 and two secondary schools (Iju-Ibiye Grammar School and Igomode secondary School Ota).

By way of advocacy, members of the unit have carried out some research activities that are germane to societal changes among women and girls. On the long run, encounters during these research processes served the purpose of educating and empowering the participants to a great extent while the findings from such research form the bases for outreach. Some of the interventions inter alia include:

- Accessibility, Knowledge and Utilization of HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Information by Female indoor Sex Workers was conducted in Ibadan Metropolis of Nigeria. Findings revealed that sex workers received information on HIV/AIDS and sexual health from peers (friends) plays/Films and broadcast media. They have knowledge of the issue to some extent thereby adhering to some cautions like the use of a condom, contraceptives and so on. However, the danger remains that condoms can break and the supposedly avoided becomes the case. Also they agreed that the terrain of their job is highly volatile and that they could be killed in course of

working. Having been educated on dangers and dehumanization in the job, those who were willing to quit were handed over to the nearby church (Ijirihho 2011).

- Agricultural Information, Indigenous Knowledge and Development Communication Strategies among Women in Ijaye Community. This study was conducted with a view to discovering the most effective strategies for communicating agricultural practices to women in Ijaye. It revealed that the more familiar the strategy/channel the more result were yielded. Therefore, local associations, local festivals (social days), field trips displays etcetera, became veritable tools in the hands of extension workers (Madu and Ijirigho 2004).
- Women in Nigeria: Towards Improved Information Accessibility, Capacity Building and Constitutional Development. The Nigerian woman represents a powerful creative and credible force that must be empowered to contribute to the constitutional development of the nation. Their involvement would be tantamount to catalyzing and releasing dormant but rich potentials to the benefit of all. The paper examined information as a veritable resource for capacity building necessary for principled participation in any polity. It concluded that awareness, confidence and participation of women in constitutional development of a country are a function of information at their disposal (Nkiko, 2007).
- Issues in Girl-Child Education in Nigeria: Implications for Library and Information Support sought to know the opinion of parents on educating a girl-child. it was revealed that the locals believe that educating female children is a waste of resources and effort as they will be married out to become home makers, and be confined to child making and rearing. Thus the need to orientate them about the right of every child irrespective of sex to be educated (Ifijeh, and Osayande, 2011).
- HIV/AIDS Information Awareness among market Women in Oloimuyin Market Sango Ota Nigeria. The market women indicated their interest in acquiring knowledge for the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS, but they cannot read or write. Thus it was necessary to repackage relevant HIV/AIDS materials in their local dialects. There were exhibitions of pictures of infected persons at strategic market locations. This helped sensitize them about the danger of contacting the virus. Occasionally, flyers are distributed in the market as a way of reminding them of what they should know. Billboards could be mounted at strategic locations in the market (Ilo and Adeyemi 2010).
- Curtailing Harmful Widowhood Practices in Nigeria: The librarian's Information Tool as a Veritable Strategy examined the librarian and use of information as a tool in curtailing various harmful widowhood practices in Nigeria. Prominent among these practices are sitting and sleeping on the floor, shaving of hair, drinking the water used in washing corpse, sleeping with corpse and jumping over corpse among others. Widows adhere to these practices to preserve tradition, as a proof of innocence and to attract love from the dead husband and relations. The effects of these practices on widows range from psychological to health challenges, poverty and death. The paper recommended information as a tool that the librarian can employ to expose such harmful practices, inform widows about their rights, including various non-governmental organizations interested in their affairs and to educate the perpetrators on the evil effects of such practices. It concluded by advising the Ministry of Women

Affairs to encourage the formation of Widows' Association as a way of creating widows' visibility (Ilo and Segun-Adeniran 2013).

- Availability and utilization of health information in addressing health issues and interventions among displaced persons in Nigeria: the cases of Boko-Haram victims in Sabo-Chingoro camp in Abuja and Oru camp in Abeokuta, investigated the impact of the use of relevant health information for reduction and prevention of diseases and epidemics that are endemic in overcrowded environment. It was discovered that relevant awareness and education are not part of the relief packages given to refugees in the camps and no health information advocacy is available to them. Thus the study provided valuable data and information to Information specialists and other stakeholders and serves as a guide for the formulation of policies and development of intervention programmes geared towards improvement of the health of internally displaced persons who are living in refugee camps. (Iroaganachi, in Press)

### **SDI and Service Frameworks to Communities**

Outreach to communities and target groups require basic frameworks such as Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), referral services, Outreach Programmes, MobileBook Service, Current Awareness Programmes and Library Services to Children etc. SDI service requires the librarian to have a profile of the client's information needs in order to appropriately meet the need(s). This is a common occurrence in the academic environment, where it is easy for faculty to send their profiles to librarians to get their information needs met. However, the information needs of the illiterate and semi-illiterate community based population can be identified by researching their perceived needs. Libraries exist to serve as many people as possible, disseminating information, preserving culture, and contributing to intellectual and social life (Ebiwolate, 2010). Therefore, libraries irrespective of type must seek ways of packaging and repackaging adequate information and disseminating the same to all of categories of users in need.

#### ***Information and Referral Services***

Information and referral services entail guiding people to information sources and agencies that are capable of addressing problems or answering questions. Libraries ought to have a referral network and a calendar of community events in order to participate effectively in information and referral services as they are at the forefront in providing information and referral services in the society unfortunately, little or nothing of this service is being provided. This is attributed to either non documentation of such activities or outright neglect of a most vital function. The libraries interviewed could not justifiably show evidence of referral services.

#### ***Outreach Programmes***

These are programmes organized to meet the information needs of the less privilege and rural population with the main objectives to create awareness of library and information resources, and encourage the development of good reading habits, projecting valuable information to them. According to Ijirigho (2011), a library outreach programme is a technique for delivering library services to the less privileged and rural areas where there is scarcity of valuable information (non-users, under-served, and people with special needs). Distance learning and other educational programmes can also be extended to the under-privileged. Well-planned library outreach programmes have great potential to improve the quality of life in our communities. Ford (2009) opined that libraries have what others do not, so there is



need to let users know this. He affirmed that librarians have the ability to be in our communities, engage them, and offer specific targeted services which can be the defining aspect of what a library is to any given community. As a result, traditional “outreach” services should be an integrated part of what librarians do. Libraries should bridge the divide by collaborating with community and institutional partners to create and promote services. The existence of library outreach services generates invaluable goodwill within a community (Pointon, 2009).

### ***Mobile-Book Services***

Mobile-Book services are strategies in librarianship targeted at getting people involved in reading by taking the books to them. Okiy (2008) opined that mobile library service was launched in order to extend library services to people irrespective of location. This was introduced in Nigeria by the regional governments in the 1960s and 1970s. By the end of 1977, this service had a fleet of five vans with a total book stock of 12,500 volumes. The vans operated 220 service points in 140 towns and villages. Other library services provided by the state library service included prison and hospital trolley services, films for children, and reference services (Ebiwolate, 2010). Unfortunately these services are no longer in existence except a hand-full that are run by very few individuals, some of whom are not librarians. This stems from poor funding that hampers acquisition of current reading materials necessary to sustain such services. Research findings in rural areas of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, Canada showed that mobile-book services have the potential for a greater variety and quality of service (Friese, 2008). According to Ebiwolate (2010), mobile services have taken library services to areas that would ordinarily not have had any library facility at all.

### ***Current Awareness Programmes***

Public libraries in developed nations function as social development agents by extending services, such as sharing books, lectures on topics that include; child labour, AIDS/HIV, epidemic diseases, reading habits, environmental protection, etc. Consequently, libraries in this category can plan occasional current awareness programmes based on perceived prevailing issues or findings from some purposive surveys, not precluding general information on nutrition, health, loans, financial aid and infant care etcetera. This responsibility is inevitable for sustainable development of libraries. Current awareness services keep users up-to-date, save time and life, help create new ideas, save time and money spent on journals, and reduce paperwork (Oghuvwu, 2007).

### ***Library Services to Children***

Childhood is the beginning phase of peoples’ lives thus a strong educational foundation is required for the future that is desired by the society. Children need the library to develop in them good reading habits and prepare them for lifelong education in consonance with global education policy. In some parts of the world children especially those from rural areas or economically disadvantaged backgrounds first meet books in school, and have limited access to books in the home and community (Usoro and Usanga, 2007). Therefore, extending library services to them becomes necessary for universal basic education to succeed. Public libraries are expected to be in the fore front of library services to remote communities, rural primary schools, nomadic populations and daycare centers. Unagha, (2008) affirmed that if we desire children, and every citizen, to acquire literacy, we must provide reading materials.

## **Factors Hindering SDI and Community Library Services**

Libraries and librarians in the developing world are faced with several issues that inhibit their prospect of achieving their missions and aspirations, due to economic situations. This is manifested mostly in poor infrastructure, inadequate funding, lack of human resources, and so on. Libraries are expected to serve all sectors of the population; urban, rural, literate and illiterate but with these limitations the possibility of achieving their aim becomes reduced. The main inhibitions are discussed as follows:

### ***Poor Infrastructure***

Studies have constantly revealed inadequate infrastructure to be one of the factors hindering improved library operations and service delivery in underdeveloped parts of the world. For instance, the level of ICT deployment in library operations is still relatively low in these parts of the world. Yet, infrastructure is essential for effective delivery of library services to less privilege and rural communities. ICT infrastructural development and poor funding were identified as problems, including poor ICT skills among staff (Adedoyin 2005). More so, the culture of infrastructural development and maintenance is relatively poor in developing nations. In developed nations, public libraries are equipped with ICTs that aid timely delivery of information to less privileged and rural populations.

### ***Inadequate Funding***

Most libraries in the developing countries are poorly funded coupled with the fact that majority of the library materials that are required for effective running of a library are imported from developed nations of the world. Thus it is difficult for many libraries to afford the huge sum of money that is needed to purchase the materials. More so, a shortage of foreign currency and high exchange rates, make such acquisitions very expensive, and in some quarters they just do not exist. Even though lack of funds is one of the problem libraries are confronted with, money allocated to libraries no matter how small, should be appropriately and judiciously distributed by prioritising and addressing issues of the library in phases and rightly appropriating funds.

### ***Inadequate Human Resources***

In developing countries, there is lack of qualified staff with requisite skills and experiences especially in the areas of innovation, and deployment of ICTs in library operations. However, librarians are at a stage when self-development and improvement is inevitable for sustenance of relevance in the field (Chad 2008, cited by Harris 2009). The underpinning issue here is a radical restructuring of education and training for librarians in order to produce librarians who will be suitable for work in the 21st century library. Also employers should endeavour to invest in the intellectual capital development of their employees. The same technology used to access information is an instrument for educating library staff, to provide resources and services more efficiently.

## **Examples of Library Interventions Worthy of Emulation**

It is pertinent to draw inspiration from some notable outreach interventions across the globe to further underscore the fact that this practice makes for balanced development in society:

*The National Library of Medicine's (NLM) core mission includes a vigorous outreach program to help assure that its users, including*

*researchers, health professionals, and the lay public, are aware of and make effective use of health information resources available from NLM. This goal is rooted in the conviction that improved health information access and use provides a foundation for healthier behaviors and outcomes. For the HIV/AIDS community, this explicitly includes patients, their caregivers, and the affected community. The NLM's AIDS Community Information Outreach Program (ACIOP), initiated in 1994, is the principal vehicle for reaching the HIV/AIDS community. A comprehensive evaluation of the ACIOP's performance, impact and continued relevance was conducted by the NLM and Columbia University in 2011–2012. Findings revealed that project objectives were mostly met; high-risk populations were reached; low resource organizations were funded; community partnerships were significant; projects built on existing efforts; information resources and training were tailored to local needs; and most projects overcame barriers experienced. Needed modifications centered on: (1) enhancing evaluation capacity at the individual project level and (2) revising project reporting requirements to increase the amount of information available to assess the ACIOP; both have been implemented (Dancy et al 2014).*

*A Boston Public Library children's librarian provides monthly visits to Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) and brings a book deposit, offers story times, and promotes BPL services and programs. MSPCC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the health and safety of children through direct services to children and families and public advocacy on their behalf. Also, Boston Medical Center's (BMC) bWell Center provides an innovative approach to educating and supporting families of the Boston Medical Center pediatrics department. Boston Public Library partners with the center to regularly bring books for check-out to the bWell Center that focus on health and wellness. These books can be returned onsite or to any BPL location in the city. The library also provides library card registration each month to families at the bWell Center as well as information about different library services and programs. (BPL n.d.).*

## **Models for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Libraries Based on CLR Experiences**

CLR Community-focused Selection Dissemination of Information is hinged on the concept of environmental scanning with the view to understanding peculiar community information needs and addressing them through knowledge distilled from highly technical documents and research outputs embedded in library collections. It is also premised on the consciousness of the new demands and expectations on librarians, leading to the creation of innovative departments responsible for community development initiatives in the library. This Unit should be charged with the task of mobilizing and galvanizing available human and learning resources for outreach services to the target groups in the community. The deployment of information technologies in bridging the existing information divide is a hallmark of a modern library as exemplified by the Covenant University experience. The CLR model also advocates targeted research aimed at solving host community problems and entrenched monthly seminar and workshop fora for dissemination of findings and educating the diverse groups in the environ, thus providing new vistas for empowering the disadvantaged with

information skills and content for a better life. Our Programmes can be targeted at the communities through existing traditional channels such as through heads of extended families, Youth Associations/Forums, Faith-Based Organizations, Market Women Associations, and Farmers Clubs/Association. Thus librarians must use ICTs in accessing, repackaging and sometimes disseminating information to target groups. Furthermore, there is need to educate and train target groups to educate others thereby making a larger impact and reducing ignorance.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Libraries should traverse traditional roles to embracing challenges presented by their particular setting in order to maintain continuous relevance. However, there is an urgent need to advocate for this among librarians, so that together all librarians everywhere will operate with this mindset. It is pathetic that preponderance of libraries that were surveyed as reported in table 1 appears to be lethargic about community services. For the academic libraries, it would be recommended that accreditation agencies and regulatory authorities make involvement in community impact initiatives a compulsory parameter of assessment. This would catalyse such activities and propel concerted efforts at solving societal problems by libraries. The need to take advantage of corporate social responsibilities of organizations within the vicinity to fund the cost of community services is highly recommended as well as budgeting for such activities annually as a conscious planning strategy. Libraries cannot do the job alone thus there is need for collaboration with NGOs and related organizations, if need be, in order to succeed.

All outreach services take some time and money, just like services offered within a library building do. However, some may not cost as much as one would anticipate and knowing that through our services lives are saved, and preserved and that there is development, the programme can be considered successful.

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#### **APPENDIX1: Self Structured Interview Guide:**

- 1) What is your opinion of library community services?
- 2) Is your Library presently involved in anything of such?
- 3) How has your experience been in community services? – Probe for tangible initiatives and community impact.
- 4) What factors do you regard as major constraints to library community services in your environment?
- 5) Can you identify any specific information needs of target groups in your immediate locality requiring library interventions?
- 6) In what areas have your institution collaborated with other bodies to provide community services?
- 7) What are your library's projection and future pathways towards library community services?