

**Special Libraries in Developing  
Countries:  
Information Management State of  
Affairs and Development  
Opportunities**

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# About Stephen Kizza

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# Agenda

- Special libraries state of affairs in developing countries
- Uganda: What exactly is on the ground?
- Current trends in information management in developing countries
- Fast Tracking !
- Call to action



# Definitions

- Developing nations
- Special libraries

# Uganda at a glance



- Classified as developing nation
- Average income: \$500 (USA: \$45,000)
- Life expectancy: 52.7 years (USA: 78.1)
- Median age: 15 years (USA: 36.7)
- Uganda's economy is growing, mainly the services sector

# “Dire state of affair”

- Journal subscriptions are almost non existence.
- Shelves almost empty
- Tradition publishing and distribution mechanisms have failed tragically.
- Resource Centers holding numerous copies of single documents.
- Research literature, feasibility studies, reports, presented conference papers, remain locked in cupboard of technical officers.

- Most Resource Centers lack Online Public Access Catalogs (OPAC)
- Limited attempt to integrate the holdings of the libraries to respective WebPages which are also not regularly updated.
- A lot of research and reports of local content held in these libraries remain inaccessible
- Inter- library lending is minimal

# Uganda: What exactly is on the ground?

Figure 1. Table showing the number of libraries surveyed against services offered.

TYPE OF LIBRARY	NUMBER OF LIBRARIES OFFERING THIS TYPE OF SERVICE.						
	Journal subscription	Commercial databases	Open Access databases	OPAC	Classification	Computers	Internet access.
Government (4)	1	1	2	1	2	3	2
Government Agencies (6)	0	0	1	0	2	3	2
Research Centers (2)	2	1	2	0	2	2	2
% from survey	25	16.6	41.6	8.3	50	67	50

# Findings:

- Minimal journal subscriptions
- Majority Resource Centers can access Open Access data bases
- Commercial databases accessed through consortia
- Most libraries have computers
- Few computers connected to the internet

# Current trends

- Research reports and special collections are being digitized and uploaded to institutional websites.
- CD-ROM that provide bibliographic databases, on-line catalogues and full text references to some journals.
- Access the internet through satellite connection which is very expensive to install and maintain .

- Limited usage of PDA and WAP to access internet in rural areas.
- Open Access knowledge data bases widely used: HINARI, AGORA , EBSCO-greenFiles etc.
- Free open source software eg Greenstone Archimede, ARNO, CDSware, etc.
- virtual referencing, instant massaging, (IM) Voice over Internet Protocol ( VoIP) are used to enhance information delivery

# Fast Tracking!

- Special Libraries should be proactive in rural areas supplying specialized information in agriculture, mining, forestry fishing etc
- Training of librarians through workshops, lectures and hands on training to get exposure to modern techniques of information management and delivery

# Call to action

1. SLA should draw a Developing Countries Special Libraries Forward Looking strategy with its own vision, mission, goals, and objectives.
2. SLA should encourage its members to reach out to peers in developing nations

# Conclusion

Increase in internet access, ICT facilities, faster communication facilities and a myriad of other innovations are powerful forces special librarians in developing countries need to adapt so that the “good times start rolling” .

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Thank you all for your  
attention

As we :

**Look backwards with *gratitude*,**

**Upward with *confidence*;**

**Forward with *hope!***