The Lambaye Learning Center for Social Inclusion in Rural Areas

English translation of the original paper: "Le centre d'apprentissage de Lambaye pour l'inclusion sociale en milieu rural".

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Abstract:

Social inclusion in the library assumes that the different building spaces are connected and flexible and that access is guaranteed to all sections of the population. The activities to be provided in the spaces take into account cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. This paper focuses on social inclusion in libraries in rural environments. The example of the Lambaye Learning Center (LLC) is presented as it was the first modern learning centre built in Senegal in a rural area. Three points will be addressed:
- *How is social inclusion designed and practiced in Senegalese libraries?*
- *Social inclusion in rural libraries using the example of the Lambaye Learning Center*
- *How does one measure the social impact of libraries in rural areas?*

Keywords: social inclusion, rural libraries, Senegal, Lambaye Learning Center, evaluation

Introduction

Libraries, like other institutions with public service missions, are tools for democracy and social development. It is vitally important that libraries are in tune with the sociological concepts that shape society as well as local development policies. Since the nineteenth century, it might be said that libraries were driven by social integration, a concept defined by Émile Durkheim as "a process by which the individual participates in social life. Participation takes place through the integration of individuals in several bodies: family, religious, professional groups". This approach has more recently been revisited and a preferred concept is social inclusion. The notion of social inclusion was used by the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann to characterize the relationship between individuals and social systems (Luhmann, 1996) It concerns the economic, social, cultural and political sectors of society.

How is Social Inclusion Conceived and Practised in Senegalese Libraries?

In Senegal, as in most African countries, libraries are not often at the heart of the development policies of government. While libraries are increasing in numbers in these countries, they lack financial, technical and human resources and consequently are unable to deliver effectively on their missions. Lack of resources influences the development of programs and initiatives in these libraries. However, it should be noted that initiatives and actions have been taken to make social inclusion in Senegalese libraries a reality. Structures such as Le Consortium des Bibliothèques de l'enseignement supérieur du Senegal (Consortium of Higher Education Libraries of Senegal COBESS) (http://cobess.dakar24sn.com/) have been working for several years on issues related to social inclusion in libraries through the Marrakesh Treaty (COBESS 2014). People who are blind, visually impaired or have some print disability do not have access to many books because the production of works in accessible formats including Braille or in audio format is negligible. The aim of the Marrakesh Treaty is to help put an end to difficulties of access to information. In 2014, only 1 to 7% of the world's published works were available in accessible formats, partly due to obstacles posed by copyright law. The Marrakesh Treaty, signed in June 2013 by 75 countries including Senegal, will help remove these legal barriers. The Treaty will increase national exemptions for the blind in relation to copyright law. It will allow sharing of books already available in accessible formats across international borders. The Treaty promotes access to information for all, an important aspect of social inclusion in the library.

Libraries and associations are working on other aspects of social inclusion such as the education of street children. One example is the association Futur au Present (Future to Present FAP) (https://www.futuraupresent.com/lassociation/), an international solidarity association created in 2012. FAP works in Ziguinchor in southern Senegal to reduce inequality and poverty, particularly among street children. Most of the children have psycho-social disorders and FAP works to ensure a stable and serene future. FAP is collaboratng with Bibliothèques Sans Frontières (Libraries Without Borders BSF). Education for All programs from Future to Present are developed through the Ideas Box tool designed by BSF (Bibliothèques Sans Frontières 2017). Faced with challenging needs, Libraries Without Borders and FAP decided to work together on the realization of an Ideas Box project. Started in January 2016, the project sought to provide access to education for children and adolescents on the streets, or in early work situations. The selection of the content of the Ideas Box focused on an introduction to the French language, local trades and emblematic figures of history, sport and music of Senegal.

In the case of Senegal, social inclusion programs in libraries focus mostly on particular topics and do not take into account several social domains at the same time. This is exactly the opposite with the Lambaye Learning Center whose objective is to design a global program of social inclusion.

Social Inclusion in Libraries in Rural Areas using the Lambaye Learning Center (LLC) as an Example

Lambaye is one of the communes of Senegal located in the department of Bambey, region of Diourbel. Lambaye is a historic village of more than 30,000 inhabitants. To support people in education, culture, digital access and the promotion of gender equality, a learning centre, the Lambaye Learning Center (LLC) (Students for Senegal 2018), has been built, the first of its kind in Senegal. The goal of the learning centre is to be at the heart of village activities and to meet the needs of the population through the promotion of national languages; women's financial empowerment; preservation of culture; improvement of skills; entrepreneurship of young people; and improving the health of the population.

The construction of the centre was based on an innovative architectural approach with advanced technologies and spaces that consider the needs of all segments of the population. The spaces include:

- Modern library
- Multimedia room
- Children's area
- Multifunctional room for women
- Meeting room

- Theatre for cultural activities
- Kitchen
- Modern toilets

Figure 1: Model of the Lambaye Learning Center

All the spaces are connected to the library which constitutes the focal point. The inclusion aspect was considered right from the beginning of the design of the building by the architects of the US-based firm BKSK (https://bkskarch.com/). The architects consulted and collaborated with the population of Lambaye, including the village chiefs, teachers, women, young people, administrative authorities and many others, seeking input through surveys and face-to-face meetings. The architecture of the building is the result of a rich dialogue with all layers of the population. The design decisions were made collectively. The location and orientation of the building, specific spaces, activities to be provided and the choreography of the building were all discussed, and the outcomes jointly determined. In addition to inclusive access to the building, the activities and services planned in the centre focus on social inclusion. The centre's programs are based on involving all segments of the population to ensure that no one is left behind. To succeed in meeting the LLC mission, it is imperative that the community is involved at all stages of the development and delivery of activities and services to be offered in the LLC.

The programs revolve around:

- Training in the use of digital tools.

It is planned to develop digital training and capacity building programs for all segments of the workforce. Digital is central to all activities. It is imperative for users to master digital skills to integrate them into their professional activities.

- Vocational training programs for women and young people.

Professional training aims to develop the skills of women and young people to make them operational in activities like sewing, trades and crafts.

- Programs of sports activities and cultural activities.

It is planned to conduct sports and cultural activities during the holidays with activities like football tournaments and hiking. Cultural activities will be developed in collaboration with the cultural actors of the local area and include films, exhibitions and games.

- Summer camp programs

Summer camps will be an opportunity for the children of Lambaye to discover other localities. Holiday camps will be accompanied by various events including visits, writing, drawing, games and digital activities.

- Animations around books and reading

Sessions between authors and the public will be organized as well as storytelling, reading and writing sessions. It will also be an opportunity to promote local and African literary production.

- Study programs for education

These programs will be exclusively aimed at boosting the levels of students. Several activities can be carried including reinforcement courses, conferences on themes related to study programs and meetings between students and teachers.

- Programs for environment and health

The main objective of this program will be to raise awareness about the environment and health. Reforestation caravans will be organized as well as hygiene and medical consultations. activities.

How Does One Measure the Social Impact of Libraries in Rural Areas?

The social impact is the totality of the consequences of any organizational changes either directly or indirectly on the activities of its constituents including external stakeholders, beneficiaries, users and customers and internal participants including employees and volunteers as well as society in general. The notion is often used by social innovation actors, such as libraries, to measure their impact beyond simple economic criteria.

The ISO Standard 16439, Methods and Procedures for Assessing the Impact of Libraries (International Organization for Standardization 2014) perceives the notion of impact as the difference or change for an individual or group that is brought about by contact with library services. The impact on people is assessed through the modification of attitudes and skills, the outcome of research studies, professional success or personal well-being. The impact on society can be reflected in social inclusion, free access to information, levels of education attained and lifelong learning, local culture and health and well-being. The economic impact of libraries is seen in their influence on local and regional economic life and in the financial benefits generated. In addition to the use of statistical data, performance indicators or user satisfaction survey results, the standard proposes the adaptation of quantitative or experiential evidence and qualitative or contingent valuation methods and standard questionnaires.

It is important not to confuse result and impact. The result is related to one or more direct objectives targeted by a project. The impact is the long term and perhaps unexpected outcome of one or more programs. Results might be deemed measurable in the immediate or short term while impacts are measured in the long term. The impact of a policy of social inclusion in rural libraries would be access to social transformation or social change which is an observable transformation over time, which affects, in a way that is not only temporary or ephemeral, the functioning of the social organization of local populations and changes the course of their history.

Libraries are levers for access to quality information for the most vulnerable populations and help address priority needs as part of the social inclusion agenda. For example, in Guatemala a rural library offers nutrition classes for babies delivered to parents to help them take better care of their children's nutrition. This program will have a strong impact on the lives and health of children. It is up to the library to measure the impact of this activity to evaluate its social inclusion policy. Libraries are great agents for economic and human development. When they give themselves the means, they have a major impact on the quality of life and the autonomy of their communities.

Conclusion

In summary, the role and missions of libraries have evolved considerably over time. Libraries can play a central role in innovation and the development of strategies to address development challenges. They are in the front line to play the role of digital knowledge managers to connect people and information to solve the challenges of everyday life such as health and employment. Libraries must show their added value as development partners in their communities and must learn to align with national, regional and local development priorities.

To achieve these goals, libraries must, in developing their social inclusion policy:

- Know and integrate into the local strategic development plan.

- Identify community needs.
- Work in synergy with local and national public and private actors.
- Engage youth in citizen actions and develop volunteering.
- Position themselves as participants in the public debate on topics like transparency and governance by observing and collecting public policies.
- Present themselves as places of innovation, inviting innovators to meet the public and presenting workshops ton topics like inventing the future.
- Constitute resourceful places for job search and entrepreneurship, partnering with the National Employment Agency for example.
- Adopt strategies of formal and informal education and lifelong learning.
- Create an area of trust and security, especially for those most vulnerable.

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