
Librarians' contribution to social change through information provision: the experience of Makerere University Library

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Abstract:

Makerere University Library (Maklib) holdings include a rich collection of data and information resulting from its multiple roles, namely: serving as Uganda's National Legal Deposit unit since 1958, the National Reference Library since 1972, as well as its primary role of serving Makerere University academic community and managing its Institutional Repository. The institutional repository consists of the legal deposit materials and Makerere University institutional documents. One of Makerere University's strategic priorities is community outreach. To support this priority, Maklib conducts various outreach activities which have contributed to social development, for example: Annual Library day outreach since 2009, which includes school support through re-organisation of libraries, training of library staff and donation of books; a periodic health information digest has been produced through repackaging of current literature on topical health issues and distributed to over one thousand-five hundred health units in Uganda since 1997; health information literacy training workshops to equip health workers with skills to utilise information resources and improve the quality of health care provision in Uganda. This paper will share the experience of conducting the above outreach activities and their evaluation, which demonstrate the role of librarians in responding to societal needs. Furthermore, a Library Gender Sentinel Site Committee (LGSSC) was set up in 2004 at Maklib to address gender issues. Among other things, the LGSSC holds a week-long celebration before every International Women's day and distributes information on the day's theme to library users. Since 2012, a Mother's space, where expectant library users take a break, was set up in the new Main Library building extension to provide a conducive reading environment. Maklib proactively collects feedback from library users about its services. This paper also shares the feedback about Maklib services which, among other things, confirmed that 'Change is a fact of life' and information accessed and applied leads to societal development.

Key words: Information outreach, Library and social change, Library and gender, Makerere University library.

1. INTRODUCTION

Makerere University is Uganda's first University founded in 1922. It started as a Technical School, then became a University College of London and later a University of East Africa catering for Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania until 1970 when the two countries were able to establish their own national universities. Makerere then became a National University of Uganda on 1st July 1970 after an Act of Parliament that mandated it to provide undergraduate and postgraduate courses and awarding of its own degrees. Since then, Makerere has remained one of the leading public Universities in Sub-Saharan Africa, as evidenced by the students admitted from the different parts of the world.

Makerere University's vision is "to be the leading institution for academic excellence and innovations in Africa", while its mission is "to provide innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to national and global needs". Among the strategic pillars of the University, is outreach and community development. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) has echoed the need for Universities in Africa to implement curricula that produces a new generation of graduates to act as nuclei for change. Universities, therefore, have a social obligation of knowledge generation and transfer. Transformation of knowledge and technology for use by society should be a commitment for each unit in Makerere University (Makerere University Strategic plan, 2007/08-/2017/18). Indeed Makerere through its various organs including the Library has lived to see this vision and mission achieved. Various scientific innovations have been reported and the periodic webometrics ranking of Universities show that Makerere has steadily been improving (Musoke & Namugera, 2013). In 2013 webometric rankings, for example, Makerere University was ranked 4th in Africa and this was largely due to the increased research output by Makerere researchers that was digitised in the Institutional Repository (MakIR) by Makerere University Library (Maklib).

Traditionally, University libraries serve university students, researchers, academic and administrative staff as their primary clientele. However, as the first organised library in Uganda and a National Reference and Legal Deposit unit, Maklib also extends its services to users from outside the University community such as politicians, extension staff and practitioners in the various fields. Furthermore, given the fact that Maklib is comparatively better resourced than most other institutions, it also provides various services to the private and public research and academic communities outside Makerere University. Maklib comprises of the Main Library and ten branch/college libraries.

2. MAKERERE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ACTIVITIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL CHANGE

This section highlights some of the activities undertaken by Maklib that have contributed to social change and impacted communities.

2.1. Makerere University Library

Makerere University Library holdings include a rich collection of data and information resulting from its multiple roles. The roles include: In 1958, an Act of Uganda's Legislature made Maklib the first legal deposit unit in the country. In 1972, Maklib became the National Reference Library; later it became the Official Depository of the United Nations print materials, in addition to its primary role of serving the highest academic institution in the region. In 2001, Maklib became the national electronic resources coordinator and initiated the formation of the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) through which it has

been able to set up mechanisms for the sustainability of electronic resources subscription. In 2006, Maklib started digitizing its institutional documents as well as the legal deposit materials and archives of different formats. For example, a digital music archive of Ugandan music was set up. In 2011, the Makerere institutional repository upgraded to a newer version of DSpace that, among other things, encompasses the various fields of the music collection. Since then, there are various entries into the institutional repository consisting of audio files, photographs of music activities, as well as over 1500 digital songs of 1940's and 1950's, over 50 digitised cassettes of ethnomusicology, and other digital recordings preserved in the Music archive. The music digital archive, which is part of the digitized Makerere University institutional repository at (<http://makir.mak.ac.ug>) is one example of librarians' contribution to the provision of information for social change. The digitized music collection has a focus on ethnomusicology whose improved access, through digitization, provides information for academics, researchers and practicing musicians who continue to shape and change Uganda's society through music.

In 2011, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social services selected Maklib, among the many information units in Uganda, to host the National Centre for Research and Documentation on Women, Gender and Peace building in the Great Lakes region. The Ministry pointed out that Maklib is endowed with experience to manage such a centre in a sustainable way – Maklib was/is very grateful for this recognition. Furthermore, the Ministry nominated Prof Musoke (Maklib's Librarian) to represent Uganda on the Regional Governing Board, with a Regional Secretariat in Democratic Republic of Congo, which was/is a great honour to her and Maklib in general, given the fact that most countries nominated Commissioners or Permanent Secretaries of their Gender ministries to represent them. The National Centre materials are housed in the Africana section of the Main Library. The bibliographic details of materials are visible in the Maklib online catalogue, while the digitised materials can be accessed in the institutional repository. Researchers, academics, students and the general public (external library users) use the materials.

2.2 Makerere University Library outreach activities

Community outreach is one of Makerere University's strategic priorities. Maklib has, therefore, conducted several outreach activities in support of that priority. The activities include the Uganda Health Information Digest, the rural outreach health information literacy workshops, and Library day outreach programme as outlined below.

2.2.1. The Uganda Health Information Digest

“The Uganda Health Information Digest” (the Digest) is produced three times a year in April, August and December since 1997. Its major aim is improving the accessibility to, utilisation of, and ability to share relevant health information with medical and health workers throughout Uganda, particularly those working in isolated and/or remote parts of the country, who would otherwise not be able to access such information. The booklet is distributed to over 1500 health units including hospitals, health centres, dispensaries, health related NGOs, district medical offices, all district health/social services committees and Members of Parliament. The mailing list has grown from 700 in 1997 to over 1500 now.

Originally, the Digest was funded by the Dryefus Health Foundation (DHF) of USA but funding stopped in 2002/3. Due to demand for the Digest as recorded from letters and messages from its readers, Maklib administration decided to include the Digest in its annual

budget to sustain it. Later in 2009, the Library wrote a project proposal and received funding from the Elsevier Foundation, among other things, to continue producing the Digest for three years 2010 to 2013.

The Digest is produced in both print and since 2012, an electronic version was made available on Maklib website to increase its accessibility. The contents of the Digest are determined by its readers who recommend the topics to be focussed on in subsequent issues. The Digest consists of abstracts from current international databases on topical issues as well as articles written by Ugandan experts on topics of priority concern to Uganda's prevailing health situation. This gives the authors an opportunity to share their knowledge and to disseminate it through the Digest publication.

Effect of the Digest to social development

To understand and appreciate the appropriateness of the Digest to Uganda's health societal needs, examples of comments from a feedback form that is attached to each issue of the Digest are summarised below as reported by Musoke (2006, 2012).

"The Digest is very relevant to Uganda's health needs because it provides information concerning common diseases...It is the only source of current literature I receive...It brings us new knowledge which puts our practice at a higher level...Continue sending this Digest because it is a very good source of information for CME...It has a wider journal coverage than what we have here..."

"The Digest is useful because it is so grounded in our local needs...it responds to our needs with relevant information...The book is very interesting but the volume is small, which leaves the reader in need for more..."

"Thank you especially for the article on irrational drug use, which is a big problem these days...for the article on management of resistant malaria...on eye trauma...on Burkitt's lymphoma...on eclampsia"....

The Digest has also received recognition both locally and internationally for its contribution to continuing medical education (CME) /continuous professional development (CDP) through the provision of current health literature of priority concern to Uganda's remotest areas. For example: the Uganda's Prime Minister who was also the Chancellor of Makerere University in his 52nd Makerere University Graduation ceremony speech of 2006 cited the Uganda Health Information Digest and congratulated MakLib staff for continuing to publish the booklet to enhance the vision and mission of the University by providing access to information.

The Digest has, therefore, remained relevant to the needs of Ugandan health workers and continues to contribute positively to societal needs many years since its first production.

2.2.2 The rural outreach health information literacy workshops

Another outreach activity that started as a follow up of Musoke's (2001) study recommendations and was part of the higher education link supported by DFID/British Council for three years (April 2002 to March 2005) was Information literacy workshops conducted by librarians in rural Uganda.

The project aimed at raising awareness of health workers in rural areas of how to exploit resources in the well-stocked information centres and medical libraries without physically going there; promoting and encouraging a culture of life-long learning; providing an insight in the global knowledge base and how it can be accessed, and through the use of current literature, enable health workers to improve the quality of health care service delivery to Ugandans.

Musoke's (2001) study, among other things, recommended a rural outreach programme where Maklib staff would periodically go to the rural areas of Uganda and illustrate the information resources available in the library and how they could be accessed. Consequently, in 2003 and 2004, the Albert Cook Medical Librarians conducted rural outreach information literacy sessions in six districts and 564 rural health workers were trained on how the global knowledge base could be accessed, as well as sharing the resources available at the Medical library. Document delivery (DD) request forms were distributed during the training sessions. In addition, a DD form is included in the periodical Digest that is distributed to health units in Uganda. As a result, DD requests started being made by rural health workers who had never made such requests before (Musoke, 2006; 2009). Furthermore, between 2010 and 2013, health workers and the community leaders in nine districts of Uganda attended information literacy sessions supported by the Elsevier Foundation.

Effect of the rural outreach health information literacy workshops to society

At the community or health unit level, judging from the evaluation reports and the feedback received thereafter, health workers confirmed that the information and knowledge gained would be used in patient care, research and education/training of other health workers. Numerous remarks were made where health workers expressed their gratitude. Many of the health workers, for example, reported that the sessions raised their awareness of the sources of current information and evidence-based literature.

Through the rural outreach health information literacy project, librarians contributed to poverty reduction. Improved knowledge and better management of patients indirectly reduce poverty as patients get proper health care to avoid recurrence of illnesses due to poor diagnosis and/or management. Furthermore, the information provided was reported to be used in health promotion which leads to prevention of diseases and /or reduction of illnesses. Health people engage in productive work thereby reducing poverty.

At the individual level, health workers who apply the knowledge acquired from the outreach workshops are able to access relevant literature for their study, teaching and research. Some reported that they had used the literature to write grant proposals which gave them both academic and financial benefits; and consequently reduce poverty. Furthermore, the workshops earned each health worker two credit hours of CME, which is part of the requirement by the Ministry of health (MoH) for one to be promoted.

At the institutional level, librarians updated their knowledge and skills in information searching and retrieval, training of users and identifying evidence based health information sources. In addition, the library received equipment and other facilities needed for implementing and sustaining a rural outreach training activity. The library also got an opportunity to publicize its resources and provide literature to all the units visited.

At the policy level, policy makers namely; Heads of health units and paramedical training schools attended the information literacy workshops in person and encouraged their staff to keep updating themselves using the facilities highlighted at the workshops.

At the gender level, women benefited a lot in terms of training and acquiring skills from the project. This was reflected in the number of female participants who turned up for the outreach workshops. For example, the number of female participants who turned up for the 2003/4 Eastern workshops was two hundred and fifty one (72%).

The rural outreach health information literacy workshops conducted by librarians, therefore, made various contributions to society at different levels. The demand for these activities has been the key factor in sustaining them.

2.2.3 The Library day celebrations

This includes various activities that involve different aspects of Uganda's society namely; school libraries, donation of books, training of librarians, workshops for researchers, participation by cultural institutions, members of Parliament, the National Council for Higher Education, etc as well as bestowing awards to researchers, authors, librarians, health workers, etc

Some Library and Information Science institutions celebrate different days e.g World Book day, World Literacy day, World copyright day, etc. During the Maklib Strategic Plan Implementation meeting held in November 2008, the University librarian proposed that Maklib should join the rest of the Library fraternity to celebrate the World Library day annually. In Uganda, the Library Day was first celebrated at Maklib on 22nd May 2009. Since then, it has become an annual event at Maklib.

Although Maklib started celebrating the World Library day in Uganda only in 2009, the concept of a Library day dates as far back as 1897 in the United States, when it was part of a Movement to put a library in every public school. The American Education periodical of September 1910 pages 118-119 gives a good historical account of a Library day. So, the idea of a Library day in which Libraries are promoted, supported and recognised is not new in other parts of the world. Celebrating Maklib's contribution to academic, research and outreach functions of Makerere university and the wider Ugandan society is one way of promoting libraries as change agents.

Each year, Maklib's library day draws its theme from that year's IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations – the highest Professional body governing Library and Information Science professionals) theme and customises it – in the spirit of '**think globally but act locally**'.

The theme of the Library day in 2009 was: "**Keep the library on the agenda as we build for the future**". The theme was drawn from the IFLA Presidential theme "Keep the Library on the Agenda" and it was combined with the Makerere University's motto: "We build for the Future". Maklib called upon Policy makers, administrators, library users and all stakeholders to keep the Library on the Development agenda as a priority in the University and other institutions.

In 2010, the Library day theme was “**Makerere University Library: beyond the campus walls**”. The theme focused on community outreach and highlighted the role of the University library in improving information service delivery beyond Makerere University. Maklib was, therefore, involved in various outreach activities that year, for example: a three day workshop on outreach facilitated by the Mortenson Center, University of Illinois, USA; exhibition by publishers and Maklib; awards to two health workers (from Bushenyi about 300 km west of Kampala capital city and Rakai about 150 km south of the capital) who had actively participated in Maklib activities by contributing articles and feedback to the Uganda Health information Digest. Another activity was the School outreach and support programme that focused on re-organising two secondary school libraries, training of school library staff to maintain the libraries after the re-organisation and donation of books. As a Library that is privileged to have the most qualified staff in the country, Maklib decided to give something back to the community around it by supporting school libraries in various ways. The programme was an eye opener of the need for such support and has become very popular as various secondary schools have requested to be included in the subsequent years.

In 2011, the theme was ‘**Libraries for academia: integration, innovation and information for all**’. The activities included: response to the request to support two secondary school libraries where Maklib assisted in re-organisation and cataloguing of materials, and training school library staff. Furthermore, Maklib conducted information literacy sessions in other Universities and Research institutions to ensure that information can be accessed by all; awards to two researchers (a woman and a man) who contributed the highest number of quality records in the Makerere University digital institutional repository (MakIR) that had enabled the University webometrics ranking to steadily improve. Two essay competitions one for LIS students and the second for LIS professionals on the Library day theme were announced. The winners received awards during the Library day, and they made remarks which supported Maklib’s contribution to the profession in Uganda. The 2011 celebrations ended with a debate on the year’s theme, which was very interesting.

In 2012, the theme was: **Makerere University Library: inspiring, surprising and empowering**. As usual, the theme was in line with IFLA’s theme that year, which was ‘Libraries now! Inspiring, Surprising, Empowering’. Among other things, Maklib held a one day workshop for members of CUUL (Consortium of Uganda Univ Libraries) focusing on Web 2.0 technologies, after finding out that those technologies, which would empower librarians to inspire their users, were not being used by librarians in library work. The evaluation of the workshop indicated that participants greatly appreciated it. Maklib also held a one-day dissemination session during which Maklib researchers shared their PhD and Masters research findings with other LIS professionals. This was indeed inspiring and empowering. Maklib also carried out research to find out whether the library services provided were inspiring, surprising and/or empowering library users. The first day we put up the notice in the library, over 200 questionnaires were filled between 9am and midday; which was very inspiring and empowering for us. We continued with the questionnaires in the library, but knowing that most staff do not come to the library physically (as most of our resources are now online), we sent an online survey to staff@lists. The findings of the survey were analysed and presented during the 2012 Library day celebrations. A paper on this survey was presented at the Qualitative and Quantitative methods in Libraries International conference in Rome (Namaganda & Sekikome, 2013); I proposed a session titled Researching as we practice: the experience of academic librarians – where we shall show case some of the researches we have conducted to inform policy and practice.

In 2011, the University Librarian (Prof Musoke) was invited to officiate at the opening of Buganda Road Primary School Library that had been renovated by Norman Gordino family, who were the founders of the school. The headmistress of the school tasked the University librarian to increase the book stock of the newly renovated school library. Consequently, Maklib librarians donated books from their personal collections, and received some donations from publishers to ‘empower’ Buganda Road Primary school pupils with new titles of books and to contribute to building a reading culture among young people.

The Primary school teachers and pupils were invited to attend the 2012 World Library Day celebrations at Maklib. In a follow up study carried out to get a feedback from the pupils and teachers of the primary school, Mwesigwa (2013) reported, among other things, that: the book donation had made remarkable positive effect on the pupils. Books on games, story books, etc. improved the pupils’ reading skills and enhanced their understanding of social issues. Some pupils indicated that they had learnt the value of giving and appreciated the love showed by Maklib librarians.

The school’s attendance of the 2012 World Library Day celebrations at Maklib was reported in Uganda’s media and in Mwesigwa’s (2013) study as a learning experience for the pupils who pointed out that their visit to Makerere and participation at the library day celebrations changed the way they perceived their country. Examples of comments:

“When you get knowledge, you will be able to advise people in your society”

“It changed my academic life...I will work hard to reach Makerere University...my future is going to be different”; “The visit was very exciting...I wish to go back”

The above comments clearly show that the school outreach programme was an invaluable activity to Ugandan society. The project seem to have shaped the minds of the young people. The demand of Maklib’s continued support to school libraries does not only transform society by promoting civic literacy but also awakens other universities to join the provision of the much needed support to school libraries (Mwesigwa, 2013).

The 2013 theme was: ‘**The future of Maklib with Infinite Possibilities**’, which was drawn from the IFLA theme ‘Future libraries: Infinite Possibilities’. Activities related to this theme included workshops organized by Maklib to demonstrate the infinite possibilities; one of the workshops was for students and academic staff of the Chemistry department and it was organized by Maklib in conjunction with the Royal Society of Chemistry, held on Tue 7th May 2013 to update users on the relevant chemistry journal databases. The workshop was greatly appreciated by the participants. Two other workshops were for librarians; one held on 8th May 2013 and focused on advances in cataloguing and the Research Management tool, while the second one was held on 22nd May 2013 and focused on Libhub which replaced Electronic Library Information Navigator (ELIN). An essay competition on the theme was also organized and it was open for practicing librarians and students. Winners received awards on the 2013 Library day. Maklib had also supported SAGE publishers in its survey of ‘Value of academic libraries in the Developing world’ conducted in 12 universities including Makerere and one of Makerere University lecturers -Mr Sempebwa from CEES-emerged a winner. The Sage Publishers survey winner was also recognized on the World Library day 2013. Thirdly, Maklib recognised a researcher who had produced high impact research above the global average – Prof Moses Kamya from the Department of Medicine in the College of Health Sciences. As four librarians were retiring that year, one of the long serving librarians,

Mr Emmanuel Kizito Luyombya (since 1975), shared his memories and experience of Maklib then and now and the infinite possibilities Maklib has provided. As usual, publishers exhibited their products.

The theme for 2014 celebrations was: “Maklib: a Knowledge hub for transforming societies”. This is in line with the current theme of IFLA, which is: ‘Libraries, Citizens, Societies: Confluence for Knowledge’. The theme highlights the synergies between libraries and societies in the creation and use of knowledge for socio-cultural transformation, as well as the changing role of libraries and librarians in view of the rapid technological developments and increased user expectations. Among other things, Maklib aimed to draw the attention of all stakeholders to the role the Library plays in the University as well as in cultural and national development. It was also time to celebrate the contributions and achievements so far made in the academic and research activities of the University, Uganda and the rest of the world and to urge policy-makers and all stakeholders to support the activities of Maklib as a change agent for the preservation of national heritage for posterity, among others.

Maklib’s status as the first National Legal Deposit unit in Uganda gives it the mandate, among other things, to collect and preserve all documents produced in Uganda, on Uganda and by Ugandans. As a result, Maklib holds a rich collection of materials on Buganda Kingdom as well as documents of various formats in Luganda. Buganda kingdom is the oldest and biggest kingdom in Uganda, whose King invited the Europeans to introduce formal Education in Uganda. Since 2006, Maklib has been digitising various materials starting with manuscripts, photographs and music, which subsequently populate its institutional repository running on DSpace. Maklib was aware that the preservation of Buganda cultural heritage is something of great importance to Buganda Kingdom, and given the theme for 2014 Library day decided to invite the Prime Minister (Katikkiro) of the Buganda Kingdom to officiate at the function. The Prime Minister, who is a lawyer by profession, had authored several books, hence, supporting and sustaining libraries.

During the celebrations, Maklib will showcase the Buganda Government archival treasures such as manuscripts on the history of Buganda, correspondence by the Kabaka and his chiefs, correspondence to the Queen of England, personal diaries of prominent Buganda Government officials, Mengo hospital notes, a rich collection of photographs on Buganda and other kingdoms in Uganda, the digital music archive, various documents in Luganda, among other collections.

Concluding this section, we also point out that in addition to the above activities that have impacted the academic and other communities in Uganda, other University librarians reported that, after attending Maklib’s Library day celebrations, they got inspired to start similar events in their Universities. Hence, the Maklib Library day has had a multiplier effect.

2.3. Library Gender Sentinel Site Committee (LGSSC) activities

In 2004, the LGSSC was set up to address gender and related issues. Its major objective was/is to proactively identify and respond to gender and related needs of library staff and users. The committee is guided by Makerere University’s Gender Mainstreaming Division (GMD) which is responsible for all sentinel sites at Makerere University.

LGSSC Activities

- a) In October and November 2005, the LGSSC organised sensitization seminars for all library staff members to understand the issue of gender in the university and society in general. The seminars were facilitated by the GMD.

- b) In 2006 and at the request of Library Management, GMD with funding from the Carnegie project released US\$ 10,000 to the Library for the procurement of gender sensitive tables for users in the Main Library. Such tables enable women with mini skirts/dresses to sit without worry. This increased comfort for female Library users.
- c) The LGSSC strives to ensure that gender equity is achieved in all library activities. Advocacy has been done in general meetings to raise awareness of the committee activities and objectives.
- d) When Makerere University put in place a Sexual harassment policy, the LGSSC was tasked to assist GMD to publicise the policy and to support its implementation at unit level.
- e) Celebration of the International Women’s Day is another activity initiated by Library Management for the LGSSC to implement. It steers Makerere University Library to join the rest of the world in celebrating the International Women’s Day every 8th March. Among other things, the LGSSC holds week-long celebrations and distributes information on the day’s theme to the library users. Other activities include:
 - Recognition of women authors: The Library has held exhibition sessions portraying the contribution of women authors in different disciplines to the creation of knowledge. This was greatly appreciated by the authors and library users.
 - Recognition of women leaders: Women achievers in leadership positions were recognised and their photographs and professions exhibited for a week. This was meant to inspire the young females in the University (both students and staff) to aim high and achieve great positions in society.
 - The LGSSC produced local promotional materials specific to the library environment. These included gender-related cartoons that were displayed in the Library for a whole week related to International Women’s Day.
 - In 2014, the LGSSC distributed brochures raising users’ awareness of the gender sensitive facilities available at Makerere University Library. These included the gender sensitive furniture and the Mothers’ space, among others.

Maklib’s Heads of the Main Library sections and branch/college libraries also participate in identifying gender related issues from their sections/branch libraries for the LGSSC and Library management to address.

2.4. The Mothers’ Space

Since 2012, a Mothers’ space was set up in the new Main Library building extension, where expectant library users take a break. It is the first such facility at Makerere University. It has comfortable sofa chairs and was painted with cool colours to provide a relaxing environment. Users of the facility are requested to fill a feedback form to enable Library management to improve if need be. Some of the comments made are:

- “the Mothers’ place is beautiful and comfortable for expectant mothers... I am very grateful for this innovation” (Phd student);*
- “when I get tired, I come to the Mothers’ space to relax... actually to nap, and this rejuvenates my body, mind and spirit”(Academic staff);*
- “Mothers are of great value to our nation by virtue of article 33 of the Ugandan Constitution (1995). By providing Mothers’ space, therefore, the Library greatly elevated the status of female library users in this academic community”(Postgraduate Law student).*

3. CONCLUSION

The paper has shared examples of projects and activities initiated and undertaken by librarians as change agents that have contributed to information literacy and societal development. Both the Uganda Health Information Digest and the School outreach programmes have become demand-driven and difficult to stop. Maklib will ensure that the activities continue. The annual Library day celebrations have greatly contributed to raising awareness that libraries are great change agents. The paper has demonstrated that information once accessed and applied leads to societal development.

Furthermore, the feedback from users confirmed that library services are not only important to the academic activities of the University community but also at a personal and/or institutional level that translates into human wellbeing and societal support. Users complimented MakLib for observing human rights of all users and putting in place supportive services for the women and mothers.

Maklib administration will continue the struggle to ensure the services and facilities, that have been so much appreciated, are sustained through project proposal writing and lobbying the University administration to enforce the library development fees.

Indeed ‘change is a fact of life’ and librarians at Maklib will continue to transform the services to meet Uganda’s societal needs. Maklib will also endeavour to cope with the changes created by society and technological developments to be able to remain relevant in a fast changing research and academic environment.

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