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## **Competencies Required By Teacher Librarians For Stronger Primary School Libraries In Enugu State Of Nigeria**

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### **Abstract:**

*School libraries are central to learner-centred and inquiry-based education. However, the library and its resources only come to life when mediated by a person—the teacher librarian. To perform this crucial role, teacher librarians require competencies in teaching, literacy promotion, librarianship, administration and advocacy. This paper explores competencies possessed and required by primary school teacher librarians in Enugu State of Nigeria. With a purposive sample of 16 teacher librarians from more developed school libraries, the researchers collected data through three instruments: an observation checklist assessing school libraries on accommodation, collections, personnel and services; a questionnaire with five structured clusters on competencies possessed, as well as open questions on factors inhibiting performance and strategies for improvement; and an interview guide. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentages, mean and standard deviation, and narrative description. Findings revealed that the personnel factor was crucial in effective library services; that while none of the teacher librarians had qualifications in both education and librarianship, they did possess some competencies, especially in the areas of literacy promotion and teaching, while lacking others such as library skills. Among recommended actions to increase competencies and strengthen the performance of teacher librarians were: establishment of positions for teacher librarians, continuing professional education leading to dual qualifications, inclusion of library periods on the timetable, development of a curriculum to guide teaching of library and information literacy skills, and advocacy to create a more supportive working environment for teacher librarians. Only such actions can improve performance for stronger school libraries, since only well qualified teacher librarians can deliver effective school library services.*

**Keywords:** School libraries, Librarians, Competences.

## **Introduction**

The school library media centre can be regarded as the heart of the school. It offers services and resources that enable all members of the school community to become critical thinkers and effective users of information in all formats and media (UNESCO, 1999). It empowers the learner by introducing new experiences and promoting access to knowledge and enjoyment. It also provides a flexible learning environment for teaching and learning and encourages the teacher to widen and enrich his/her teaching expertise.

However, crucial to the effectiveness of any school library is a well-qualified teacher librarian. Fayose (2003) has declared that there will never be a strong school library without one. The UNESCO School Library Manifesto (1999, 1) defined a teacher librarian as 'the professionally qualified staff member responsible for planning and managing the school library, supported by as adequate staffing as possible, working together with all members of the school community, and liaising with the public library and others'. Numerous studies, including those of Greenwood, Creaser and Maynard (2008), Gregory and Cunningham (2006), and Williams et al (2002), attest to the importance of this human resource. A committed school head and a well-qualified, dedicated school librarian were repeatedly singled out as critical factors for success.

But what constitutes a well-qualified school/teacher librarian? Current opinion tends to favour some form of dual qualification in library and information science and in education because the school or teacher librarian bridges two professions: teaching and librarianship (Dike 1993). As an integral part of the school, teacher librarians must have a firm grasp of educational principles and practice and the ability to interact freely and equally with classroom teachers. At the same time, they require thorough grounding in library and information science if they are to organize the school library, provide access to varied resources and facilitate their use by students and teachers. In addition to these areas of knowledge competence, teacher librarians require certain personal qualities leading to commitment, leadership and advocacy of school library service. While paths to achieving this differ, the common goal is to develop professionals with competencies that reflect their dual role as teachers and librarians.

Various competencies have been identified as required for developing stronger school libraries. An international working group of IFLA headed by Hannisdottir (1995) divided these required competencies into three categories: teaching competencies, library competencies and administrative competencies. Similarly, the American Library Association (ALA) and American Association of School Librarians (2010) gave the following areas as standards for initial preparation of school librarians: competencies in teaching, literacy and reading, information and knowledge, advocacy and leadership, programme management and administration.

School libraries are not yet well developed in Nigeria, in spite of the education policy putting them 'at the heart of any education enterprise' (Nigeria 2004, 52). Nor is the position of the teacher librarian well recognized (Achebe 2007). While the *National Policy on Education* (Nigeria, 2004) lists librarians among the specialist teachers for primary schools and the *Minimum Standards for School Libraries* (Nigeria 1992) stipulate a number of staff requirements, including the teacher librarian as professional and administrative head of the library, these have remained on paper. Typically, a teacher without library qualifications is assigned responsibility for the school library, often without freeing him or her from a classroom teaching load. Moreover, teachers in charge of libraries may have little opportunity for meaningful continuing professional development.

Given the importance of personnel in creating effective school libraries, this research set out to determine the competencies required by teacher librarians and the actions that might be taken to strengthen their performance for enhanced school library services, as identified by serving staff in some of the more developed primary school libraries in Enugu State of Nigeria.

## **Objectives**

The general objective of this work is to identify the competencies needed by Nigerian teacher librarians to develop stronger primary school libraries. Specifically, the work identifies:

1. Personnel implications of school library development, in terms of accommodation, material and human resources, and services in the primary schools selected;

2. Competencies of primary school teacher librarians in the areas of teaching, literacy, library skills, administration and advocacy;
3. An action plan to strengthen the performance of teacher librarians for more effective primary school library services in Nigeria.

## **Methodology**

The study was carried out in Enugu State in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, using the two major towns of Enugu and Nsukka. The researchers purposively selected 16 primary schools identified as among those having more developed libraries: eight schools in each town; ten of them public and six private. The respondents were the 16 teacher librarians in these schools.

Three instruments were used for data collection.

1. As a guide to observation, the researchers adapted the assessment form used during the Best School Library Competition carried out in Nsukka Local Government Area in 2013. This was adapted from the Minimum Standards for school libraries used in the Anambra State school library competition of 1986 (Anambra State School Libraries Association 1987). The observation checklist scored each school library in four areas -- accommodation, collection, personnel and services -- with a maximum score of 20 points for each checklist area, a total of 80 points for a full score. The total score was also expressed in percentages.
2. A questionnaire for teacher librarians was developed based on the IFLA competencies for school librarians (Hannisdottir 1995), and the American Library Association (ALA) and American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards for initial preparation of school librarians (2010). Section A of the questionnaire asked for personal information on gender, age, and qualification, while Section B had five clusters asking respondents to rate their competencies in teaching, literacy and reading, library management, administration, and advocacy and leadership. Self-assessment was on a four-point rating scale measuring possession of competencies: to a great extent (GE), fair extent (FE), lesser extent (LE), and very low extent (VLE). The structured questionnaire data was analyzed using the mean and standard deviation.

3. To obtain qualitative data, the researchers developed a five-question interview schedule, administered to seven of the teacher librarians. The questionnaire also gave respondents opportunities to comment on factors limiting performance, training needs and ways of improving performance. Qualitative data was used for Objective 3 above, on strategies, and also to elaborate on findings for Objectives 1 and 2.

## **Findings of the Study**

### **Objective 1 - Personnel implications of school library development**

The researchers first assessed school libraries in terms of accommodation, collection, personnel and services, using an observation checklist to score the libraries, and this was supplemented by personal observation during the visits. Observations are described in the sections below. Thereafter, the overall assessment of the libraries in these four areas is given in Table 1. For the purposes of this paper only findings relating to the competencies and development of teacher librarians will be described in detail.

#### ***Accommodation and furnishings***

Effective school library services require a good working environment for teacher librarians. Accommodation was therefore assessed in terms of library size and placement, condition and maintenance, décor and ambiance, and furniture. This assessment also brought out the crucial role of personnel in providing these services and having competencies for creating and maintaining a user-friendly environment. Teacher librarians require competencies for creating a user-friendly library as well as opportunities to maintain it.

Libraries in public schools were very dusty and the books were in disarray. The researchers learned this was because the state government had ordered all full-time teacher librarians back to the classrooms, leaving no one available to keep the libraries open. The two libraries still in operation were managed by teachers who doubled as teacher librarians and classroom teachers. This situation in itself points up the importance of the person running the library. Previously, these public schools had vibrant if modest school libraries with dedicated if inadequately trained teacher librarians. Now few of these libraries were functioning, and on a minimal level, primarily because of the withdrawal of staff.

### ***Library collections***

The researchers took note of the size, balance and quality of the collection, as well as shelf arrangement, accessioning and cataloguing. All but two of the libraries had accession registers, but most collections were not properly catalogued with spine labeling and call numbers to arrange books on the shelves. The exceptions were one private school in Enugu, which has a Library and Information Science graduate as librarian; four public schools in Nsukka that have benefitted from assistance and workshops provided by the Children's Centre; and the University staff school, whose books have been catalogued by library science students. This indicated a major need for library competencies, also emphasized by the teacher librarians, as well as the positive developmental role played by NGOs and library schools.

### ***Personnel***

The third criterion, particularly relevant for this paper, related to personnel. Aspects considered were the presence and qualifications of a teacher librarian; participation in workshops, reading promotion activities and work with classroom teachers; availability of an assistant and student prefects, a library committee and supportive administration as evidenced by development efforts. The questionnaire revealed that the public school teacher librarians were qualified teachers; all but one were holders of the basic teaching qualification for primary school, the National Certificate in Education (NCE), a three-year post secondary program. In addition, four had Bachelor's degrees, of which three were in Education; and one had a Master's degree in Political Science. However, none had library qualifications; from their background such teacher librarians may be well versed in teaching but not in library work.

The picture in the private schools, where library personnel are usually employed specifically as teacher librarians, was different. The teacher librarian in the best school library had both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Library and Information Science. Others held Master's degrees, Bachelor's degrees in Library and Information Science, NCE and Secondary School Certificate. It appears therefore that the private school teacher librarians are less qualified as teachers, though some of them are qualified as librarians. In two schools, libraries are currently under the care of an assistant principal and clerical officer.

Five teacher librarians have attended workshops; these were from Nsukka school libraries working with the Children's Centre. Two librarians from private schools in Enugu attended workshops and are members of the Nigerian Library Association.

### ***Use of the library***

A fourth area assessed was in the use made of the library by pupils and teachers, or user services. This included evidence of borrowing, an active timetable of library periods, access to materials, use of library resources for school assignments, and inter-library loans. The interview indicated that teacher librarians in Nsukka engaged pupils in library activities such as story hour, book club, quiz, debate, drama, and project work. These were stimulated by the annual Library Week organized by the state education board and events such as Children's Day at the Children's Centre. Likewise in private schools, three teacher librarians organized book clubs and story hours, but not in collaboration with classroom teachers. There was little evidence of collaboration with classroom teachers in providing learning materials or conducting library-based activities in either public or private schools.

### **Overall assessment of the selected primary school libraries**

Scores in the four areas were totalled to assess and rank the libraries. Results are set out in Table 1, with school libraries listed in rank order by score and percentage. Several things can be noted from the table. First, it appears to be much easier to acquire accommodation and books (scores of 61.55% and 57.35%) than to bring these to life through personnel (26.55%) and services (36.40%). While there were considerable differences in the quality of the library space and collection, these categories ranked higher for all the schools. Except in the best schools, libraries appear not to be used effectively, and many attracted no score in human resources, that is, personnel. These findings underline the importance of the personnel factor in the success of school libraries, especially the presence of a committed teacher librarian, preferably possessing the requisite competencies in both teaching and library science.

**Table 1 – Overall Assessment of the Selected Primary School Libraries**

School ranking	Type	Accommodation	Collection	Personnel	Services	Total Score	%
		Score out of 20	Total out of 80	Total score as %			
1	Priv	19	19	15	14	67	83.75
2	Priv	18	17	13	14	62	77.5
3	Priv	16	16	9	8	49	61.25
4	Pub	12	14	9	11	46	57.5
5	Pub	12	14	9	12	45	56.25
6	Pub	12	12	9	11	43	53.75
7	Pub	11	12	9	11	43	53.75
8	Priv	10	12.5	0	11	33.5	41.81
9	Priv	14	10	2	7.5	33.5	41.87
10	Pub	10	11.5	9	2	32.5	40.62
11	Priv	18	12	0	2	32	40
12	Pub	10	8	0	3.5	21.5	26.9
13	Pub	12	8.5	0	0	20.5	26.25
14	Pub	10	5.5	0	3.5	19	23.75
15	Pub	8	7.5	0	0	15.5	19.4
16	Pub	5	4	0	0	9	11.25
Average points		12.31	11.47	5.31	7.28	36.38	45.47
% for cluster\		61.55	57.35	26.55	36.40		

Secondly, the private schools were better financed and resourced, and this was immediately evident in some of their libraries. The three highest overall scores (83.75%, 77.5%, and 61.25%) were attained by private schools. However, the results also show that public schools could develop effective school libraries where there was minimal material support but had the drive and enthusiasm of committed personnel. Four public primary school libraries in Nsukka, scoring third, fourth, fifth and sixth highest, had all benefitted from the dedication of highly committed head teachers and teacher librarians, supported by the local education supervisor and library educators working through the Children’s Centre at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Lacking similar support with training, the public schools in Enugu, scoring in the 12th to 16th places in Table 1 above, appear to be the most disadvantaged. While these schools exhibited some library activity in the past, assisted by an NGO and the State UBE Board, all this has been in abeyance since teacher librarians were sent back to the classroom in 2014.

Thirdly, none of the teacher librarians appeared to possess all the relevant competencies for creating dynamic school libraries. This showed in the lack of organization and orderly arrangement in all the libraries, even those managed by staff with library qualifications. It showed, too, in the low level of services, collaboration with teachers, and integration of the library with the curriculum. This led us to examine more closely the views of the teacher librarians on competencies they possess and what more they need for developing stronger school libraries.

## Objective 2 – Competencies of primary school teacher librarians

The teacher librarians between the ages of 25 and 44, all but one of whom were female, were asked to indicate their competencies in five areas (teaching; literacy and reading; the library; administration; and advocacy and leadership) using a four-point rating scale (great extent = 4 points, fair extent = 3, lesser extent = 2, very low extent = 1). Mean and standard deviation were calculated from the responses, which are presented in rank order. The list of competencies, as indicated above, was drawn from the schema of Hannisdottir (1995) and ALA/AASL (2010).

**Table 2 - Teaching competencies of the teacher librarians**

	<i>Teaching competencies</i>	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Guiding pupils in the choice and use of library resources	3.30	.948	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Conducting information literacy and library use instruction	3.22	.971	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Working with teachers to integrate the library with the curriculum	2.90	.875	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Teaching pupils and teachers how to access information from the library	2.90	.875	3 <sup>rd</sup>
5	Developing instructional programs for imparting library and information skills	2.75	.886	5 <sup>th</sup>
6	Teaching teachers and students information search skills	2.75	.886	5 <sup>th</sup>
7	Assisting teachers in developing units that combine use of library and community resources	2.60	1.07 4	7 <sup>th</sup>
8	Teaching the use of newer resources such as information & communications technology (ICT)	2.22	1.39 4	8 <sup>th</sup>
	Overall mean	2.83		

Generally, the teacher librarians felt confident in the area of Teaching Competencies, especially those related to direct guidance provided to learners in using library resources and developing information literacy skills. Fewer were as confident about competencies involving collaboration and working with teachers. The only area below the criterion mean

of 2.50 was teaching the use of newer resources such as ICT. The same picture emerged from interviews, where the teachers expressed confidence in teaching areas, which might be expected since most were trained and experienced teachers. One expressed the view that she was selected because she was ‘versatile’ and ‘capable.’

**Table 3 - Literacy and reading competencies of the teacher librarians**

	<i>Literacy and reading competencies</i>	Mean	Std.	Rank
9	Knowledge of high quality reading materials for children and youth	3.30	.674	1 <sup>st</sup>
10	Promoting reading through story hour programs and book talks	3.10	1.197	2 <sup>nd</sup>
11	Promoting reading through the acquisition and lending of wide variety of reading materials in multiple formats	2.77	1.301	3 <sup>rd</sup>
12	Promoting literacy through organization of library clubs	2.66	1.224	4 <sup>th</sup>
	Overall mean	2.96		

Table 3 shows that the teacher librarians agreed that all the listed items were literacy and reading competencies which they have, though there are high standard deviation scores for items 10, 11 and 12. Prominent among activities mentioned during the interviews were conducting debates, quizzes, story hour and project work.

A less favourable assessment, however, is shown for Library Competencies, as presented on Table 4.

**Table 4 - Library competencies of the teacher librarians**

	<i>Library competencies</i>	Mean	Std.	Rank
13	Enhance access to library collection for all	3.11	1.054	1 <sup>st</sup>
14	Selecting and acquiring books and other library resources	3.10	.875	2 <sup>nd</sup>
15	Ensure that the collection covers the interests of all pupils	3.00	1.154	3 <sup>rd</sup>
16	Have knowledge of library material in the locality	2.80	.788	4 <sup>th</sup>
17	Providing reference and information services to users	2.77	1.301	5 <sup>th</sup>
18	Processing and preserving library materials for use	2.66	1.224	6 <sup>th</sup>
19	Creating displays and other library resources	2.55	1.130	7 <sup>th</sup>
20	Developing collections for topics in the curriculum	2.50	1.080	8 <sup>th</sup>
21	Organizing through cataloguing and classification	2.44	1.333	7 <sup>th</sup>
22	Setting up and implementing a viable circulation system	2.33	1.118	9 <sup>th</sup>
23	Indexing and abstracting newspapers and magazines	1.77	.666	10 <sup>th</sup>
	Overall mean	2.64		

The weakest areas identified were the more technical aspects of library work, e.g., cataloguing, indexing and abstracting, and circulation (competencies 21, 22, and 23). The

teacher librarians felt more comfortable about their competencies in more reader-oriented services like ensuring access, reference and information services and collection development. The high scores of standard deviation in some items might indicate divergence of opinion.

During interviews, several teacher librarians specifically mentioned library competencies as areas of need. For instance, one public school teacher librarian stated: ‘I need more training on how to organize and catalogue library materials and more knowledge of library materials and their uses.’ Another agreed: ‘I don’t really have competency in library work. The only idea is what I did when I was an undergraduate, and it’s theoretical.’ She and others from the public schools in Nsukka mentioned that the skills they possessed in this area were acquired from workshops at the Children’s Centre Library.

**Table 5 - Administrative competencies of the teacher librarians**

	<i>Administrative competencies</i>	Mean	Std.	Rank
24	Enforcing discipline	3.44	.726	1 <sup>st</sup>
25	Keeping accurate records of collection, circulation, etc.	3.12	.991	2 <sup>nd</sup>
26	Planning and arranging the library environment	3.00	1.224	3 <sup>rd</sup>
27	Developing school library policies	2.88	1.269	4 <sup>th</sup>
28	Publicizing library resources and services	2.80	1.316	5 <sup>th</sup>
29	Organizing and supervising work in the library	2.77	.971	6 <sup>th</sup>
30	Training library support staff and student volunteers	2.44	1.130	7 <sup>th</sup>
31	Preparing budget and administering library funds	2.22	1.301	8 <sup>th</sup>
	Overall mean	2.83		

With regard to administration, the low responses on the last two items are not surprising since few teacher librarians have any opportunity to budget and administer library funds, or to supervise staff. Competencies 26, 27, 28, 30 and 31 have high scores of standard deviation, showing divergent responses among the librarians.

**Table 6 - Advocacy and Leadership competencies of the Teacher Librarians**

	<i>Advocacy and leadership competencies</i>	Mean	Std.	Rank
32	Advising the head teacher on school library matters	2.85	1.214	1 <sup>st</sup>
33	Maintaining membership of library associations	2.75	1.388	2 <sup>nd</sup>
34	Drawing attention of the head teacher and parents to the goals of school library	2.71	1.112	3 <sup>rd</sup>
35	Initiating library programs that will gain the interest of parents.	2.66	1.366	4 <sup>th</sup>
36	Serving as the advocate and link between the library and the rest of the school	2.66	1.032	4 <sup>th</sup>
37	Attending workshops and conferences	2.62	1.505	6 <sup>th</sup>
	Overall mean	2.71		

All the competency scores given under Advocacy and Leadership met the criterion mean of 2.50, but not to a very high extent: means were in the middle range, from 2.62 to 2.85. All the items have high standard deviation scores, indicating divergence in their self-assessments.

The highest self-ratings overall were in literacy and reading promotion (with a mean of 2.96), followed by teaching and administrative competencies (both with 2.83). Competencies in advocacy (2.71) and library skills (2.64) were perceived to be lower, and this is also reflected in the comments of the teacher librarians.

### **Objective 3 – Action plan for improving performance of teacher librarians**

Consideration of the information provided by the three instruments indicates the steps to be taken. In open questions and interviews, respondents were asked for suggestions on how to enhance their performance for more effective school library services. Eleven teacher librarians (seven from public and four from private schools) provided suggestions on the questionnaire and/or during interview. Their suggestions in order of frequency are presented on Table 7.

**Table 7 – Suggestions on Enhancing Performance for More Effective School Libraries**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Suggestions of Teacher Librarians</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1.	In-service training for teacher librarians	11
2.	Provision of spacious, conducive, well-secured library accommodation	8
3.	Inclusion of library period on the time table	6
4.	Employing or posting a teacher-librarian to the school library	6
5.	Library advocacy to raise awareness of parents, pupils & NGOs	6
6.	Provision of adequate reading and learning resources for pupils	5
7.	Supply of sufficient library furniture for pupils to read and work	5
8.	Time to manage library and attend workshops/conferences	4
9.	Securing government recognition of position for teacher librarians	4
10.	Use of incentives to encourage reading and library use	3
11.	Provision of support staff and student volunteers to assist	3

These suggestions have been taken together with the findings on the first and second objectives and used to recommend an action plan for moving forward. The plan puts forward five steps that could be taken.

## **Action Plan**

### ***1. Position for teacher librarian established in every primary school***

One major step forward would be to establish a full time position for a teacher librarian in every school. Until this is done, it will be difficult to make a strong case for training, and even qualified personnel will be used for classroom teaching rather than school library service.

### ***2. A qualified teacher librarian: pre-service and continuing professional education for all***

Once a position has been established, who will fill it? Both the school observation and self-assessment of competencies have indicated that most staff are not fully qualified. The teachers lack library competencies and the few staff with library qualification lack background in education. Moreover, neither appears to be versed in learner-centered, resource-based and inquiry-oriented approaches; or in integrating the library across the curriculum.

Addressing this requires a two-pronged attack: short in-service workshops and courses for teacher librarians, and indeed for all teachers, and paths to full qualification through diploma, certificate and degree programmes. In-service workshops and short one to two-week courses on the rudiments of library organization and management and the use of the library in education are invaluable for orienting serving staff. The difference they can make is evident from the experience of the Nsukka schools, especially when such workshops are ongoing and also held on site to involve all teachers. Such courses should continue to be mounted by NGOs like the Children's Centre; higher educational institutions like the University of Nigeria; professional associations; public libraries and government educational agencies such as UBEC (Ngwuchukwu 2013). Moreover, these should be on a regular and cumulative basis with follow-up.

However, short term in-service training is no substitute for full qualification. Government needs to provide avenues for serving teacher librarians to acquire qualifications in whatever area they are deficient, for instance through paid study leave for qualifications in library and information science. The Abadina Media Resource Centre of the University of Ibadan has already initiated diploma and master's degree programmes specially tailored for school library media specialists (Elaturoti 2011). Such programmes would also equip fresh entrants

into the profession and gradually produce a cadre of well qualified personnel for school libraries in Nigeria; they would however need an established position and career ladder.

### ***3. Resources to work with: competencies in selection and use***

Library personnel are essential, but they need material resources to work with, chief among which are well-furnished library accommodation and a diverse collection of resources -- print, audiovisual and digital. Even so, provision alone is not enough: teacher librarians require certain competencies if resources are to be put to use. The teacher librarian from one private school specifically mentioned her need for competencies in ‘selecting exactly the books and resources needed.’

The link between collection development and competencies was implicit in the assistance offered by the UBEC/World Bank-assisted primary school library project of 2000-2002 and the Bendel and Anambra State book depots of the 1980s (Ngwuchukwu 2013). In both cases, government agencies offered a wide selection of varied resources, while at the same time conducting workshops on principles of selection and use of library materials in teaching and learning. Likewise, during in-school discussions Children’s Centre facilitators help teacher librarians explore ways of using varied resources in teaching. These models should be revived and adapted to equip teacher librarians with the requisite competencies in resource selection and use.

### ***4. Developing library and information literacy skills: Library period and curriculum***

Providing the basic human and material resources will only be fruitful if these resources are put to use in teaching and learning. Hence another basic step in any effective action plan is the inclusion of a library period on the timetable. This has been given heavy emphasis by six of the teacher librarians. A library period was approved by the Enugu state government, among others, in 2006, but is still to be implemented.

Once there is a library period, a curriculum is also needed to guide teacher librarians, especially since most lack library training and familiarity with learner-centred approaches to developing information literacy. This is an area where action is being taken. Members of the library school at the University of Nigeria have been working locally on developing curricula for library periods and information literacy for over a decade (Dike, Ngwuchukwu and Onyebuchi 2011). In addition, in 2013, three library educators from the Nigerian School

Library Association (NSLA), including the present author, developed a curriculum for library and information literacy skills for library periods from Primary 1 to Senior Secondary 3. This has been submitted to the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) for further action. The inclusion of a library period not only necessitates a curriculum but also a person to actualize it, that is, a teacher librarian. In this way, each of these steps reinforces the other in developing effective school libraries.

### ***5. Advocacy and raising library awareness***

The importance of raising awareness was brought out by respondents, who stressed the need to sensitize all stakeholders -- government, other agencies, parents and pupils -- on the central role of school libraries in education. Library associations such as the Anambra State School Libraries Association (1977-1991) and the Nigerian School Library Association have played an effective role in liaising with government, public libraries and other agencies to put forward a school library agenda, mobilizing teacher librarians and schools at grassroots level, and providing in-service training (Ngwuchukwu 2013), as have NGOs such as the Children's Centre, which has combined advocacy with training and mobilization of teacher librarians on a local level.

### **Conclusion**

This study looked at the personnel serving in primary school libraries in Enugu State of Nigeria, examining the competencies teacher librarians require to develop stronger school libraries. The work noted that availability of library accommodation and resources is essential, but that the position of a qualified and committed teacher librarian is even more important. It is the teacher librarian who can ensure the use of these resources for enhancing teaching and learning, promoting reading and developing information literacy for lifelong education. The findings indicated a great need for education and training, both through programmes to obtain qualifications in teaching and librarianship and through in-service training. Teacher librarians, however, require certain conditions to put acquired competencies to work, including a well-equipped library, time and a curriculum for library use, and a supportive environment with high awareness of the role of the library in education. The authors have therefore recommended an action plan to enable teacher librarians to acquire the necessary competencies and utilize them for building stronger libraries in Nigerian primary schools, thereby providing quality education for all.

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