

NATIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY IN LIBERIA: A Strategic Plan

I. Introduction

The development of libraries in general has not been a focus of the Liberian government and people. Since the country got its independent on July 24, 1847, it maintained one public library located in the country's capital that was forgotten when it came to development. Many government and public school were built without library facilities. The 14 year civil war that began in December 1989 made matter even worse. The war wreaked

havoc on the country. Out of a population estimated in 2006 at about 3 million, 250,000 died as a result of the conflict. Nearly 1 million people were displaced. Half of that number fled the country. Monrovia and many of Liberia's towns and villages were devastated, burnt and looted. Its only public library suffered the same fate. Today little is left of the written record of Liberia's history or of its intellectual heritage.¹

II. Proposed Mission Statement

The Mission of the National Public Library of Liberia is to improve the quality of life of the citizens by providing materials, services, and programs that promote education, cultural enrichment, and recreation.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Liberian_Civil_War

libraries with collection size of at least 40, 0000

4. Equip the libraries through grants, funding from individuals, philanthropic organizations and government

B. Collection development for branches:

1. Seek donations from individuals and institutions
2. Seek Government funding to purchase materials
3. Build collection using phase 1 collection development policy manual as a guide.

C. Train staffs:

Use training manuals that was used in phase 1 to train staffs for each branch.

6. Provide Internet Service
7. Train staffs of both the children and adult libraries. Training manuals will first be developed to serve as guides in performing this task.

Strategic Priority 2: Establishes Branches in counties

Goal:

Actions:

A. Building:

1. Mobilize communities to establish library board for each local branch.
2. Work with communities to acquire library locations for infrastructures size of 1,000 - 1,200 square feet with room for growth.
3. Work with the communities to erect structures that will house the

III. Proposed Guiding Core Values

This proposed **Guiding Core Values** give a direction to the Library daily operational decision making. They are meant to be the soul of the National Public Library. They relate to achieving Library’s Mission and Vision for the future. The National Public Library will be committed to:

1. Access:

The National Public Library of Liberia will be committed to making information accessible, regardless of format or methods of delivery, to all citizens.

2. Confidentiality/Privacy:

The National Public Library of Liberia will be committed to maintaining user confidentiality and privacy as a fundamental right for intellectual freedom.

3. Democracy:

The National Public Library of Liberia will be committed to its government in which the power is vested in the people and exercised by them through a system of representation. To support and promote democracy, the National Public Library of Liberia will be committed to educating citizens and encouraging civic engagement.

4. Diversity:

The National Public Library of Liberia will value and respect human diversity. The resources and services the National Public Library of Liberia will provide are meant to meet the needs of the community.

5. Education and Lifelong Learning:

The National Public Library of Liberia will be committed to encouraging citizens to be lifelong learners. It will also be committed to partnerships, and will collaborate with K-

Strategic Priority 1: Establishment of Children Library and up-grading /reorganization of present Library

Goal:

Actions:

- b. Procure relevant materials such as reading tables, seating, shelves, circulation desks, displayers, and interactive learning carpets for the children's library.
2. Develop a collection for the children's library. A collection development policy will first be developed to serve as a guide in performing this task.
3. Reorganize and update the present collections of the adult library.
4. Catalog the collections of both the children and Adult libraries.
5. Replace damaged equipment, furniture and sub-standard shelves.

- g. Provides special facilities to meet needs of researchers
- h. Serves researchers by providing access to special databases

Benefits:

Scholars intensively pursue intellectual and professional Interests using locally owned materials. Additional materials are obtained through resource sharing networks. The community is identified as a center for research and knowledge, making it an attractive place for professionals who need easy access to extensive information resources. This role gives the library a unique value in the community

Responsible person(s): Director of Library and Library staff

12, post-secondary education, and private and special libraries to encourage an educated citizenry.

6. Intellectual Freedom:

The National Public Library of Liberia will resist efforts to censor resources.

7. Common Good:

The National Public Library of Liberia will affirm that libraries are essential public goods and are fundamental institutions that require support and use in a democratic society.

8. Preservation:

The National Public Library of Liberia will be committed to acquiring and preserving information from the past and from the frontiers of knowledge.

9. Professionalism:

The National Public Library of Liberia will be committed to having a qualified professional staff, through continuous learning, with the expertise and skills needed to refine collections and teach and assist the public in an information and technology age.

10. Service:

The National Public Library of Liberia staff will be committed to providing the highest quality service to all library users. Library staffs will be navigators, not gatekeepers.

12. Social Responsibilities:

The National Public Library of Liberia will provide information to educate citizens on the critical issues of our society.

13. Stewardship of Resources:

The National Public Library of Liberia staff will be dedicated to the efficient and effective use of resources such as its

holdings, microform materials and equipment, a wide array of printed and electronic abstracting, indexing and manuscript materials. A high percentage of the collection subject areas pertaining to the library's research specialties will contain materials that are scholarly, theoretical, or technical in nature .

- b. Creates in the library an adequate space to house the library's extensive collection, a photocopy center, quiet study areas, and carrels.
- c. Serves researchers by providing access to special databases
- d. Provides special facilities to meet needs of researchers
- e. Assists scholars and researchers
- f. Provides in-depth collections in special subject areas

generally available elsewhere. The library contributes to local economic development by strongly supporting the information needs of businesses and strengthens local government by providing information for policy formulation and program management.

Responsible person(s):

Director of Library and library staff

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7: Research Center

Goal:

The library assists scholars and researchers to conduct in depth studies, investigates specific areas of knowledge, and creates new knowledge.

Action Plan:

- a. Develops a collection that has a large number of titles, extensive serials

holdings, finance, infrastructure, and personnel. The National Public Library of Liberia will accept responsibility of the public's trust and will be accountable for her actions.

IV. Proposed Vision for the Future

The National Public Library of Liberia will be recognized as a center and source of information, a place to gather to discuss and learn the encourager of reading, and the leader in collaboration with other libraries, with Counties, schools, non-profits organizations, businesses and industries. It will be the gateway to lifelong learning, offering a full spectrum of materials, programs, and services.

V. Strategic Priority Vision Statements, Goals, & Action Plans

A. Strategic Priority Vision Statements

In order for the National Public Library to increase its likelihood of successful adaptation to change, a set of critical strategic priority vision statements has been developed. These strategic priority vision statements are identified to guide and implement its mission and to achieve its vision for the future.

These strategic priorities are the fundamental issues the National Public library has to achieve to implement its mission and move towards its desired future. These strategic priorities focus on concerns or barriers to success, which must be addressed.

- b. Conducts in-service training for staff to be approachable and skilled in using reference tools and reference interviewing techniques.
- c. Have in the library a clearly identified and visible location for reference and information services that is staffed during all hours of library service
- d. Provides timely, accurate, and useful information
- e. Have reference and informational services
- f. Provides access to materials through interlibrary loan
- g. Supports business and government
- h. Includes indexes and abstracts in collection
- i. Searches online databases
- j. Includes a local history collection

Benefits:

Library users have convenient, timely access to information needed for daily living and decision making. They can find out about almost any subject and obtain materials not

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: Reference Library

Goal:

The library will actively provide timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents.

Action Plan:

- a. Develops a collection that emphasizes informational materials to support individual, business, government, and community interests. Materials should be available for all ages and reading levels. Have this collection extensive and should include materials such as indexes, atlases, encyclopedias, handbooks, and directories. Maintain subscriptions to special indexing and abstracting services and keep files on area businesses. Collect local documents, memorabilia, and photographs.

The list of strategic priority vision statements is to provide the National Public Library a path to follow in order to link its mission statement and guiding core values to achieve its compelling vision statement for the future.

B. Goals

Goals have been developed for each strategic priority vision statement. These goals are general statements that point toward the Library's future. These goals are milestones the Liberian Public Library aims to achieve that evolve from the strategic priority vision statement. The goals challenge the National Public Library to be more responsive to its internal and external environments in order to achieve its desired future. The goals are general enough that it can't be easily measured. They are compelling directives that translate into tangible focused activities.

C. Actions Plans:

The action plans (objective) listed here are ways to achieve the National Public Library’s goals. They can be easily measured. They are assigned to someone to implement. They are assigned deadline dates for completion. These action plans require resources such as personnel and finance to achieve the goals. The financial aspect will be handled by the National Public Library’s development committee.

D. Benefits:

The benefits are concern with the effects of the actions on the library, users and on the community in which the library is located.

VI. STRATEGIC PRIORITY VISION STATEMENTS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: National Public and Branch Library

become familiar with library materials in a variety of formats and develop reading, listening, viewing, and thinking skills. Parents can obtain resources and services to support their efforts to develop their children’s interests, experience, knowledge, and development.

For the Community, the library promotes early reading and acceptance of reading, factors contributing to successful performance in formal schooling. This role promotes lifelong use of the library and contributes to the library’s image as an educational center for individuals of all ages. This role generates visibility, popularity, and support for the library in the community by reaching children unserved by any other community agency. In addition, services for children are popular with voters.

Responsible person(s):

Director of Library and library staff

popular titles available in multiple copiers.

- b. Gets staff knowledgeable about early childhood development and children's literature and to promote reading readiness to the community. Shows staff how to guide children's choices of books and other materials and instill in them skills in planning and conducting programs.
- c. Creates a space in the library that is easily accessible to young children. The space should be available for story hours. Make shelving and furnishings attractive, accessible, and comfortable for young children.
- d. Fosters reading readiness
- e. Provides story hours
- f. Organizes programs on parenting

Benefits:

Preschoolers have a place designed for their needs with trained adults to help them satisfy their curiosity, stimulate new interests and find information. They

Goal (a):

Develop the National Public Library to serve as clearinghouse for current information on city organizations, issues, and services.

Action Plan:

- a. Promotes city activities and act as liaisons between the library and city groups.
- b. Provides special services to meet city needs
- c. Serves as a source of information about the city
- d. Serves as central point in the city network
- e. Links people with services
- f. Cooperates with other organizations in programming

Benefits:

Citizens of downtown Monrovia will have opportunities to explore their common heritage, discuss their divergent views on issues and current topics, and receive some social services. The library enhances the attractiveness of downtown Monrovia by providing a central location for cultural, civic, and recreational activities.

Citizens of downtown Monrovia will have a one-stop center to obtain current information about their community organizations, issues and services. Accessing this information will help them to become self-sufficient, have control of their lives, and better understand their community issues. The Library also helps link those in need of services and resources with an appropriate provider. This role puts the Library in communication network of downtown Monrovia communities and helps identify the library as part of the community decision making process.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

5: Preschooler's Door to Learning

Goal:

The library encourages young children to develop an interest in reading and learning through services for children, and for parents and children together.

Action Plan:

- a. Collects materials of variety formats for preschoolers and for adults working with young children. Materials such as computers, audiovisual formats, educational toys, and games help children expand their imagination and develop motor and sensory skills. Have

- d. Creates in the library adequate and easily accessible shelf space.
- e. Includes recreational materials in collection
- f. Provides video cassettes in collection

Benefits:

A wide variety of popular materials for reading, listening, and viewing are available to library patrons. Since some individuals purchase these materials, the library returns an economic benefit to those who borrow, rather than buy, such items. This role enhances and supplements the offerings of community book stores, theaters, video outlets, and media. The library's support for cultural and leisure activities makes the community an inviting place to live in and visit. Providing popular materials contributes to a high circulation rate. This, in turn, leads to high visibility for the library in the community

Responsible person(s):

Director of Library and library staff

Responsible person(s):

Director of Library and Library Development Committee

Goal (b):

Establish branch libraries in Monrovia and counties that will assist in the implementation of the mission of the National Public Library of Liberia.

Action Plans Phase 1: Monrovia Branches

- a. Assess the community need and constraints
- b. Decides on the number of branches to be established
- c. Identifies the site locations
- d. Establishes a related fund raising program
- e. Trains staff to take care of the branch libraries
- f. Start the new branch library

Benefits:

It ensures maximum access to public library services for citizens in the communities in which the libraries are located.

Responsible person(s):

Director of Library, Director General, CNDRA, and Library Development Committee

Action Plans Phase 2: County Branches

- a. Assess the community need and constraints
- b. Decides on the number of branches to be established
- c. Identifies the site locations
- d. Establishes a related fund raising program
- e. Trains staff to take care of the branch libraries
- f. Start the new branch library

Benefits:

Responsible person(s): Director of Library and library staff

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Popular Materials library

Goal:

The library will feature current, high demand, high interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages

Action Plan:

- a. Collects current and popular materials in a variety of formats, with sufficient duplication to meet demand. A substantial percentage of the collection should be published within the past five years.
- b. Has staff knowledgeable about current popular interest and anticipate publishing trends and “hot” titles.
- c. Have library promote browsing, attractive displays and good signage.

home repair, foreign languages, and psychology.

- c. Have staff skilled in assisting independent learners and capable of developing self guided materials for introducing learners to various subjects.
- d. Supports independent learning projects
- e. Provides materials in a variety of formats
- f. Makes self-help research guides available

Benefit:

Users can pursue self-determined and self-paced study on various subjects. Independent learners can use the resources of the library to “get ahead,” to do better in their work, to clarify their values, to learn something new, or to adjust to changes in life and work. The library supports an educated, self-reliant, and productive citizenry, thus contributing to the stability, attractiveness, and economic well being of the community. Citizens who use the library can be powerful allies.

It ensures maximum access to public library services for citizens in the communities in which the libraries are located

Responsible person(s):

Director of Library, Director General, CNDRA, and Library Development Committee

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Formal Education Support Center

Goal:

The library assists students of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study.

Action Plan:

- a. Serves people of all ages
- b. Supports formal education
- c. Provides instruction in the use of the library for students

- d. Provides homework help and support
- f. Cooperates with schools in the area
- g. Supports literacy training
- h. Supplements - rather than duplicates- services provided by educational institutions.

Benefits:

Library users find materials to supplement what is available in schools or academic libraries, and can use the library to identify providers of education and training. The Library is an alternative study site when school or academic library are crowded, inconvenient, or unavailable. This role closely associates the library with education, and benefits taxpayers by supplementing, not duplicating, other educational collections. Since this role involves cooperation, the public library must exercise initiative in clarifying its role and initiating cooperative collection development with institutions.

Responsible person(s):

Director of Library and library staff.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:
Independent Learning Center**

Goal:

The library will support individuals of all ages pursuing a sustained program of learning independent of any educational provider.

Action Plan:

- a. Have collection cover a wide range of circulating subject materials relevant to the interests of independent learners of all ages. The materials should be in a variety of formats and geared to varying levels of ability.
- b. Develops collection of audio or video cassettes on popular self-help topics such as health issues, investment planning,