

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY CELEBRATES WORLD LIBRARY DAY – for the second time

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN'S SPEECH AT THE WORLD LIBRARY DAY CELEBRATIONS, Friday 21st May 2010

- Guest of Honour, Professor A. B. Kasozi, Executive Director of National Council for Higher Education
- Members of Parliament
- The Ag Vice Chancellor, Mak Univ
- Members of Mak Univ Management
- Keynote presenter, Prof Robert Ikoja Odongo, from EASLIS,
- Deans and Directors, from Makerere University
- Prof Barbara Ford and her team from the Univ of Illinois, USA
- Professors, Senior members of staff from Mak Univ
- Director, National Library of Uganda
- Chairperson of Ug Lib and Inf Association
- University Librarians from CUUL - the Consortium of Uga Univ Libraries
- Representative of the Library and Book Fraternity including the publishers
- Fellow information professionals
- Mak Univ Library staff
- All our Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of Makerere University Library and on my own behalf, I warmly welcome our Guest of Honour, Prof A. Kasozi, who has kindly agreed to officiate in person at this function despite his very busy schedule – he actually had travelled from upcountry. Our Guest of Honour, we, in the Library and Book fraternity, know you as a scholar, researcher and author who has written many books, and as such the most suitable Guest on this day. As you know, libraries won't exist without books and other scholarly works. So, we greatly appreciate your personal and professional interest in Libraries. We also remember your contribution vividly during the Visitation committee chaired by Prof MacGregor, which exposed gaps and weaknesses in the funding of Libraries in public universities, and recommended, among other things, financial reforms and a budget of at least 10% of internally generated funds to be allocated to libraries. [you should hold a stick and carrot and find out how many univ are implementing this recommendation] There are various other issues affecting Libraries which the National Council has provided guidelines on, such as quality assurance, library space, book-student ratio. However, we also need the librarian-student ratio. I should inform the audience that last year, the Deputy executive director of the National Council for Higher Ed, Mr Phenny Birungi, gave a moving key note address during the Library day celebrations. May I take this opportunity to thank you Sir, for all the support you and the National Council continue to provide to Libraries in this country.

May I also welcome all of you our guests and thank you very much for honouring our invitation to come and join us on this great day when we celebrate the World Library day for the second time in this country.

Some Lib and Inf Sc institutions celebrate different days e.g World Book day, World Literacy day, World copyright day, etc. However, during the Mak Univ Library Strategic Plan Implementation meeting held in Nov 2008, the Library decided to join the rest of the Library fraternity to celebrate the World Library day annually.

Although we started celebrating the World Library day in Uganda only last year, the concept of a Library day dates as far back as 1897 in the United States, when this 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 library

contribution to academic, research and outreach functions of the university is one way of promoting libraries. A quick internet search on 'celebrating library day' gives some tips on ways to celebrate Library anniversaries e.g. conduct a variety of events, invite dignitaries, develop a special theme, develop and exhibit historical and current library items, arrange for local media coverage, etc.

The theme of the Library day last year was: "KEEP THE LIBRARY ON THE AGENDA AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE". The theme was drawn from last year's IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations – the highest Professional body governing Library and Info Science professionals) Presidential theme "Keep the Library on the Agenda" and it was combined with the Makerere's motto: "We build for the Future". Up to now, we are calling upon Policy makers, administrators, library users and all stakeholders to keep the Library on the Development agenda as a priority in the Univ functions.

Institutional commitment to this central organ, the Library, is key to quality assurance; hence, Mak Univ has been strategic in maintaining the Library as one of the priorities in its next ten years' plan, **and for this we are grateful.**

This year's theme is "**Makerere University Library: beyond the campus walls**". The theme focuses on community outreach and highlights the role of the Univ library in improving information service delivery beyond Mak University. Community outreach is one of the priorities in the current Mak Univ Strategic plan. For some time, we, at Mak Univ library, have been involved in various outreach activities because we recognise the fact that we are comparatively better resourced than most libraries in this country. We have carried out a number of activities as the chairperson of the organizing committee has elaborated, briefly: reorganizing two sec sch libraries; a three day workshop on outreach run by Mortenson Center, Univ of Illinois, USA; exhibition by publishers and Maklib; awards to two health workers (from Bushenyi and Rakai) who have actively participated by contributing articles and feedback to the Uganda Health information Digest that started in 1997, which confirms that the Digest is a demand-driven outreach service. I should add that going out to provide professional support to the two secondary school libraries has been an eye opener of the need for such support, and already we have been requested by more secondary schools to provide the service.

I would like to thank Mak Univ Library staff who have worked so hard to see that we achieve what we planned to do. It was not easy, but I am glad that we accomplished it and we are now celebrating the achievements. I would like to recognize, in a special way, the chair of the organising committee, Agnes Namaganda and her assistant Irene Mbawaki for the tough job you have, in my view, successfully accomplished.

Our guests, Makerere University library is the oldest library in Uganda, and one of the oldest in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1958, an Act of Uganda's Parliament made Makerere University Library one of Uganda's legal deposit units. In 1972, Makerere University Library became the National Reference Library in addition to its primary role of serving the highest academic institution in this country.

As a Library and a legal deposit unit, we survive because of authors of books and other documents as well as records including audio and visual. When such documents and records are produced, library collections keep growing. We therefore recognize and honour Prof A Kasozi who has authored many books and we congratulate, thank him and request him to continue 'populating' our legal deposit section. I should inform the audience that Prof Kasozi is one of our regular external library users particularly of the Africana section.

I would like to make an appeal to all of you to deposit copies of your works to Mak Univ Lib to abide by the Legal deposit law, and make your work visible internationally as it would be included in the digital institutional repository.

It is now time to celebrate the contributions and achievements so far, and to urge you all to support libraries for academic, research, outreach and posterity.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1 Improved staffing in numbers and professional capacity: Makerere Library staff. Out of 72 establishment, we have 49 graduate librarians (32 females and 17 males – one of the few units with more females). We are grateful to Mak Univ administration for recruiting 23 graduate librarians in the last three years. This has indeed boosted our staffing levels.

Mak Lib staff have been trained in various aspects of ICT service delivery. Most library staff who were computer illiterate in 2000 are now 100 % computer literate. **Staff capacity building** is not only important to the implementation of ICT library project but also to the sustainability of the projects as the skills and knowledge acquired will take the process forward.

Capacity building has had a Multiplier effect and enabled us to implement the outreach activities: the skills and knowledge of library staff are being applied in assisting other University libraries in Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania, Nigeria, etc. We are happy to share our knowledge with our colleagues in Africa in the South-South collaboration spirit.

The benefits of the South-South collaboration need not be overemphasized. It is far more practical for the Sudan – Juba Univ library staff to travel to Kampala, one hour away on the plane, than to Europe which is 9 hrs away. It is also less expensive, which means that the projects in Ugandan libraries or Sudan or Nigeria get more using the same amount of funds than they would if they had international trainers. Furthermore, the culture and environment is much more similar, opening for a better learning experience and sustainable support.

2. The Online Public Access Catalogue for Makerere University, code named Makerere University Library Access (MakULA) became functional in 2004 and is accessible to library users. The change from the manual catalogue (wooden catalogue boxes with cards) to the MakULA terminals gives an impression of ICT integration in library services and advancement immediately one enters the Main Library. Conversion of manual records moved faster than expected. In October 2004, there were about 54,000 records and by April this year, there were over 432,000 bibliographic records/ items representing 357,779 titles (of books, monographs, microfilms, CDs, etc). There are also 12,412 periodical holdings. So far, there are 87,250 patron records in the database/system. The Library Information System (LIBIS), using the Virtua Integrated Library System (ILS) is enabling access to the library collection online which is providing visibility of Makerere University collection worldwide and facilitates resource sharing and outreach.

3 Access to online resources through subscriptions to full-text journal databases has increased from 7,000 in 2004 to more than 25,000 full-text journal titles now. This is complemented by document delivery services both commercial (the British Library) and non-commercial through collaboration with partner University Libraries abroad. The resources have greatly improved the quality of teaching and research as academics are now able to access and use the most current literature as their counterparts in the developed world do. Consequently, this has enriched the research output at Makerere University and in Uganda Tertiary and research institutions. In addition to e-journals, Makerere University Library procured 271 titles of e-books in 2005 and 2006 to increase access to resources.

End-user training: The University Library runs periodical end-user training to equip users with information retrieval skills, which have increased the usage of resources. The training varies from the introductory User-education conducted at the beginning of each year to the periodic sessions run throughout the year. In addition, library staff conduct e-resources training in all public universities, registered private universities and research institutions, eg. NAFIRRI and Virus Research.

4 The **strengthened ICT equipment, and network** are ensuring optimal use of an advanced integrated library information system and internet resources. Over 200 PCs and 220 data points of LAN have boosted the connectivity and increased access to online resources and outreach.

In addition, the Library is setting up a Research commons on the 2nd floor of the new lib building extension, which will be ready by the next Library day.

5. **Uganda Scholarly Digital Library (USDL):** Makerere University's institutional repository running on DSpace has over 700 full text digital records. This has increased Makerere University's visibility on the web.

In addition, a digital music archive has been set up for the first time, in collaboration with the Dept of Music, Dance and Drama, specifically, Associate Professor Sylvia Nanyonga Tamusuza, the ethnomusicologist. There are 1577 digital songs, 20 digitised cassettes of ethnomusicology, etc as you have seen.

6. **Increased library space:** As you are aware, Space is one of the quality assurance issues as the National Council Guidelines show. We, therefore, thank Mak Univ Council, for the support that enabled us to complete the first half of the Library building without any donor funding – so, Mak does not always depend on donors! The new Library building extension has improved the quality of library services in many ways, for example:

- Readers' space has increased by over one thousand seats.
- There are more toilet facilities for all users; in particular, library users with disabilities have, for the first time, got toilet facilities built according to the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) standards.
- Modern libraries provide space for discussion, which has been lacking in the old building. The whole of the ground floor of the new building has discussion rooms.
- Researchers will have more carrels, as the fifth floor has been devoted to this – and furnishing the carrels is expected to be completed soon.
- There are more ICT facilities. The whole building has LAN extension, and there will be OPAC (open public access catalogue) terminals and computers in Research commons as the whole of one floor has been dedicated to this. The furnishing of the Commons is ongoing and the tender for the ICT equipment has been awarded.

We have embarked on yet another extension that is ongoing. The Library has been able to convince University administration to raise funds by setting up a Library Development fee to be able to extend the very needed space for the growing number of library users. May I take this opportunity to thank the Members of Parliament who supported us in this endeavour and the parents and guardians of Mak Univ students since the academic year 2007/8 who have contributed to the Lib Development fee that is being used to construct the ongoing library building of 4,000 sq mtrs.

7. The legal deposit section mentioned above has created a **rich collection of rare manuscripts, the first books, newspapers and other periodicals, photographs, maps, medical and other archives** held at Mak Lib Africana (some exhibited).

8 **Linkages:** During the course of automating and reconstructing Maklib, we established linkages with various local, regional and international institutions to whom we are very grateful. Some of them are here with us, the Mortenson Center, while others have sent us messages of support.

9. Introduction and conducting a **cross-cutting course on Information competency and Management** for graduate students and researchers since 2005. From the evaluation, the course has been highly rated by the participants as key to research.

I should also point out that, Maklib is currently transforming itself into a model academic library in Sub-Saharan Africa. This follows, among others, its emerging the winner of a competitive grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Several University Libraries in East and West Africa competed for the grant, which focuses on automation of the University library. The grant will enhance Maklib's premier position in the country and the region in the provision of library and information services.

One of the lessons learned is that **Automation is never a completed activity because of the ever changing IT developments.**

The persistent **challenges are caused by** limited financial resources. For example, the growing number of users makes it necessary to extend the library buildings to provide more space particularly in branch libraries and Faculty Book banks. There is need to address the ICT infrastructure in branch libraries. The general challenges of limited bandwidth and the textbook-student ratio also remain.

Therefore, on behalf of Mak Univ, I thank the Development partners who support us financially and in our professional activities. We call them 'Friends of Maklib' and we shall be recognizing them annually. This year, we are recognizing the University of Bergen Library and the Mortenson Center for International Library programs, Univ of Illinois.

We extend our gratitude to all you our guests and we hope that together, we shall plan and achieve sustainability of automation and all the projects we have started to facilitate increased access to library resources for academic, research and outreach activities.

Dear Guests, as this is going to be our annual event, allow me to give you an advance invitation for the World Library Day celebrations in 2011 as we pray to live to that day.

Finally, I wish to thank the members of the organizing committee, once again, for all the effort, time and dedication and all the library staff for a job well done sometimes in very difficult circumstances.

I now have the honour to invite Robert Ikoja Odong, Professor of LIS from the East Afr Sch of Lib (EASLIS) at Mak Univ to present the Keynote address. Prof Ikoja Odong has taught many librarians in this country. I also had an opportunity to teach him at Post graduate level. At Mak, Prof Ikoja – as popularly known, has been chairing the Univ exhibition committee which gives Mak Univ a chance to participate in outreach activities, and for all the times he has been the chair, Mak Univ has emerged the winner. We recognise his talents and skills and we found him most suitable to be the keynote presenter on the theme of the day.