

Public Libraries in Kenya: Financial Management

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Abstract

The concept and activities involved in library budgeting once were narrowly defined, and for the most part were thought of in terms of working with figures to produce a financial statement report. In recent years, however, there has been increased interest in extending the concept of budgeting not only to Public and university libraries but also research libraries to include activities related to planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluating the entire operation of a library or information systems. There is increased recognition that financial management is fundamental to public library system management because it provides the administrators /management council with a common language for communicating, planning, and one very basis for evaluating proposed plans of action and implementation. In this paper financial management in public libraries in Kenya; mainly on income sources and expenditure has been discussed.

Keywords: Public libraries, Budgeting, library budget and financial management

Introduction

Prosperity, freedom and the development of society and individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the aptitude of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play a vigorous role in society. Productive contribution and the development of democracy depend on acceptable education as well as on free and unlimited access to thought, culture and information. As per UNESCO public library manifesto (UNESCO, 1994), the public library, the local gateway to information make available a basic condition for lifelong knowledge, sovereign decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. Manifesto declares UNESCO's belief in the public library as a breathing force for education, culture and information, and as an indispensable agent for the nurturing of peace and spiritual wellbeing through the minds of men and women. UNESCO therefore supports national and local governments to maintain and actively take part in the development of public libraries.

The enormous amount of information produced per second worldwide front is a greatest challenges to library system more so the public libraries in the history of publication. With advancement of standards through IFLA/UNESCO public libraries are stirring from the conventional and conservative services to expansion of database and information sharing through network accessibility of resources. Public libraries crop up in multiplicity of societies, in different culture, historical background, technological and at different phases of economical development. However, their service delivery has universal characteristics although in a varied contexts in which they operate. They primarily provide resources in a variety of media to meet the both diverse users and needs. Public libraries represent an indispensable link in the scientific system chain, a crucial role link in the development and maintenance of wide range and intensity of knowledge modernization and ideas in society and at individual level.

Kenya National Library Services (KNLS): The Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) Board is a national corporation established by an Act of Parliament, Cap 225 of the Laws of Kenya in 1965 the Board commenced its mandated functions in 1967. Board is empowered to develop public library services in Kenya to fill the vacuum that existed before and soon after independence regarding the provision of public library services hence bridge the level of literacy. The headquarters library in Nairobi opened its doors to the public in 1969. Currently, the Board is responsible for managing 8 libraries in 8 provinces and other 24 libraries spread throughout the country at district level.

Kenya: Kenya lies across the equator in the East African region. The Republic of Somalia and the Indian Ocean in the East and South-East, Ethiopia in the North, Sudan in the Northwest, Uganda and Lake Victoria in the West and Tanzania in the South border the country. The country is named after Mount Kenya, a very significant landmark and the second highest mountain in Africa (British East Africa Annexed, 1920).The landscape rises from the sea level in the East to the peak of Mount Kenya, which is about 5,200 meters above sea level.

Objectives of the study

The fundamental principle of creating a national public library network is to provide information and library services to users. The basic purpose of the study was to evaluate the performance of KNLS financial sources and expenditure. The specific objectives of the study are:

- 1) To evaluate the financial performance of public library system in Kenya;
- 2) To suggest best financial management for public library system in Kenya.

Hypotheses

The researcher, initiated the process of investigation, and so it resorted to the following hypothesis for the study:

- 1) Public libraries in Kenya are economically disadvantaged;
- 2) Public libraries in Kenya both in service; staff, policy and collection are in the developing stage;

Scope and limitations

Scope of the study was limited to the public library finance sources, expenditure and public library system in Kenya. The researcher also made a survey of the existing literature on public libraries in Kenya. It was observed that there is scarcity of literature on Kenyan public library system as a whole and librarianship in Kenya in general.

Methodology: Present study used survey method. A survey is one of the most effective and sensitive instrument of research which produces much needed knowledge.

Finance sources

In order to maintain the level of service required fulfilling their functions, public library should be supported by... sustained funding (IFLA/UNESCO public library manifesto, 1994). Adequate level of funding are crucial to the success of public library in fulfilling its roles hence attempt was made to collect data from 32(100%) libraries on main funding sources; it was observed that KNLS is funded by the government. The KNLS Act provides for the government budget provision yearly. The Act does not specify the formulae for the annual, grants nor for usage of the fund, hence was the fluctuation of grants from one year to another noted, proving more strenuous in planning on the side of KNLS. A number of services of funding are used to finance public libraries the primary sources are i) taxation at local, regional and central level ii) grants ; block grants from central, regional or local level. Secondary sources of income may include: donation from funding bodies or private individuals' revenue from commercial activities, e.g. publishing, books sales, sale of works of art and handcrafts, revenue from users fees e.g. fines, revenue from charges to users for individuals services e.g. photocopying and printing facilities, sponsorship from external organizations and lottery funds for specific initiatives. Attempt was made to collect data on annual income from different sources to 32(100%) libraries during 2005 to 2009, which is presented in table 1.1

Table No 1.1: Annual income

Sources of Income	Amount in 2005 (In KSH)	Amount in 2006 (in KSH)	Amount in 2007 (in KSH)	Amount in 2008 (in KSH)	Amount in 2009 (in KSH)
Government	594,550,859(99.50%)	601,765,119 (99.85%)	612,879,870 (99.95%)	578,876,991 (99.94%)	603,411,653 (94.92%)
Donations	2,221,976(0.37%)	567,599 (0.09%)	35,786 (0.01%)	45,000 (0.01%)	32,000,654 (5.03%)
Library cess	-	-	-	-	-
Any other (specified) membership& fines	786,000 (0.13%)	346,865 (0.06%)	287,980 (0.04%)	321,947 (0.05%)	260,435 (0.05%)
Total	597,558,835	602,679,583	613,203,636	579,243,938	635,672,743

The fig 1.1 shows the income during the period of 2005- 2009 by KNLS during which it can be observed that the government grants increased for the period of three years 2005-2007 then dropped during 2008 then again sudden increase is observed, this presents the picture of the fluctuating grants from Government. It was observed that for each registered member KNLS received an average of Ksh 11,370.79 during 2009 financial year, while on an average Ksh 1.63 per person and average Ksh 2.22 per literate population. The data collected was analyzed on annual income for 32(100%) libraries. It was observed that the government does not give grants directly to individual libraries, while it is given to KNLS. KNLS does all the expenditure on behalf of branch libraries. It can be observed that for KNLS, government is the main source of income ranging from KSH 615,657,546 in 2004 to KSH 603,411, 563 in 2009.

The lump sum income is given to KNLS; it has a centralized system of procurement. It can be noted that in KNLS Act, there is no provision for library maintenance grants, however, the lump sum grants from the government annually caters for maintenance among other expenditure. The KNLS also receives income as donations on an average Ksh 6,974,204 per year and other sources like membership fees and fines on an average Ksh 400,645 per year. However, it must be noted that no library deposit is taken from users.

The data collected on library expenditure including salary and allowances by KNLS was analyzed, which is presented in table 1.2.

Table No 1.2: Total expenditure

Items	2005 (ksh 597,558,835)	2006 (ksh 602,679,583)	2007 (ksh 613,203,636)	2008 (ksh 579,243,938)	2009 (ksh 635,672,743)
Salary and Allowances	397,634,600 (66.54%)	396,468,123 65.78%	396,980,321 64.74%	398,956,456 68.88%	397,457,999 62.53%
Books and reading materials	45,564,675 (7.62%)	52,342,876 (8.70%)	53,543,733 (8.74%)	41,876,006 (7.23%)	57,435,423 (9.52%)
periodicals	10,546,789 (1.76%)	6,897,433 (1.15%)	2,769,775 (0.45%)	14,665,548 (2.53%)	9,654,890 (1.60%)
Equipment and furniture	3,564,876 (0.59%)	2,990,432 (0.50%)	3,129,876 (0.51%)	3,567,760 (0.62%)	4,003,876 (0.66%)
Binding	356,970(0.05%)	2,768,943 (0.46%)	1,876,945 (0.31%)	689,654 (0.12%)	867,800 (0.14%)
Other operating cost(vehicles repairs, power ,adverts and cleaning services	143,767,950 (24.06%)	143,349,869 23.79%	157,007,879 25.60%	120,236,123 20.76%	166,996,976 26.27%
Total	Ksh 597,558,835	Ksh 602,679,583	Ksh 613,203,636	Ksh 579,243,938	Ksh 635,672,743

The table 1.2 shows total expenditure of KNLS for a period of 2005-2009. It can be observed that of the total expenditure in this period salary and allowances is ranging 62.88% to 68.53%, while the operation cost i.e. vehicle, power, repairs etc is representing between 20.76% to 26.27% and reading materials ranges between 10.14% to 12.68%. The KNLS Act, do not specify how much percentage to be spent on fundamental items i.e. salary and reading materials annually. Further it was informed by Director of KNLS that even though government grants do keep on fluctuating yearly, KNLS projection for the year 2010 was 50% increase of the previous year on reading materials. Whereas for salary and training KNLS projected a budget of 25% increase of the previous year. Further on lighting and fitting it was informed that each year there is inflation increment provision of 10% of the previous year.

Conclusions

KNLS Act provides for the government budget provision yearly. However, Act does not specify the formulae for the annual, grants nor for usage of the fund, hence the fluctuation of grants from one year to another noted is proving more strenuous in planning and providing services to users. KNLSB in such financial condition like this both long term and short term planning and implementation is a real challenge now and the years to come if it's not resolved. Solution lies with amendment of the KNLS, Act 1967. Grant based funding also has led to an unprofessional management environment of short term planning and consequently inefficiency in service provision and uncertainty about the future. Also the emerging of recently ICT and related internet facilities results has added complexity in managing the dwindling resources in the form of grant funds from the government. Further, KNLS to develop a workable proposal and identify how private organization both local and international level can support public library in Kenya. Mostly in technical, financial and operational risks to hence information support services- through (PPP) also synonymously referred as P3; a concept which is increasingly becoming very popular in the western world in managing the public institutions through partnership.

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