

**COMMUNITY LIBRARIES: THE CONCEPT AND ITS  
APPLICATION: WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE  
PINETOWN COMMUNITY LIBRARIES**

by

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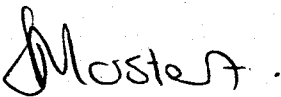
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**JANUARY 1997**

## DECLARATION

I, Bertha Jantine Mostert, the undersigned, declare that the work, *Community libraries: the concept and its application - with particular reference to the Pinetown Community Libraries* is my own work and that all sources used have been indicated and acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mostert' with a stylized initial 'B'.

B.J. Mostert

## **PREFACE**

The writer would like to thank the following people for their assistance with the research project:

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>AGRIS</b>   | <b>Agricultural Research Information System</b>  |
| <b>AIDS</b>    | <b>Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome</b>   |
| <b>ANC</b>     | <b>African National Congress</b>   |
| <b>CEPD</b>    | <b>Centre for Education Policy and Development</b>   |
| <b>CLAC</b>    | <b>Centres de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle en<br/>Millieu Rural (Centres for Reading and Promotion of<br/>Culture in Rural Areas)</b> |
| <b>COLIS</b>   | <b>Community Library and Information Services</b>  |
| <b>ERA</b>     | <b>Easy Readers for Adults</b>   |
| <b>LIS</b>     | <b>Library and Information Services</b>  |
| <b>LIWO</b>    | <b>Library and Information Workers Organisation</b>  |
| <b>NECC</b>    | <b>National Education Coordination Committee</b>   |
| <b>NEPI</b>    | <b>National Education Policy Investigation</b>   |
| <b>NEPILIS</b> | <b>National Education Policy Investigation Library and<br/>Information Services</b>  |
| <b>PADIS</b>   | <b>Pan African Documentation and Information System</b>  |
| <b>RDP</b>     | <b>Reconstruction and Development Programme</b>  |
| <b>READ</b>    | <b>Read Educate and Develop</b>  |
| <b>SABINET</b> | <b>South African Bibliographic and Information Network</b>   |
| <b>SAILIS</b>  | <b>South African Institute of Librarianship and<br/>Information Science</b>  |
| <b>SAIS</b>    | <b>South African Interlending Scheme</b>   |

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**Transforming our Library and Information Services**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the establishment of the first libraries paradigm shifts occurred, especially during times of political, social and cultural upheavals and change. It was the public library, more than any other library system, which had to continually adapt its services as its clientele changed from the privileged few who could read and write, to the masses who looked upon the library as an instrument for mass education. Although the Western public library service did not fulfil a formal educational role, it aimed to support informal and life-long education.

On the African continent public libraries were perceived as tools for mass education for a population thirsting for knowledge. Whereas in developed countries public libraries could still function by providing a relatively passive, buildings-based service, this was not possible in developing countries. What was needed to be relevant to the needs of the public, was a pro-active service, based on each specific community's needs.

The ills of the public library system transplanted to Africa prevented such pro-active and innovative services, thus leaving in its wake a disillusioned public as well as governments. Alternative approaches to rendering the services needed have been attempted, but with little sustained effort and success.

At face value the South African public library system has seemed to be a well-organised and well-developed service. Unfortunately the country's political past hampered the provision of equal services to all race groups. This resulted in a service based on the needs of just one race group, excluding the majority of the population from gaining equal access to information. This situation is currently under revision, and serious efforts are being made to rectify the situation. As is the case with the rest of Africa, it would seem that far reaching adaptations to the existing service structure

need to be made to enable the whole society to benefit from the services provided by libraries.

Some pro-active and innovative library professionals have already started implementing alternative services to communities previously excluded from using library services provided for developed communities. These vanguard services, known as community libraries and resource centres have found innovative ways and means of serving their respective communities. The characteristics of community libraries were analysed in order to determine the functioning of this innovative system.

The Pinetown community libraries aim to bring an information service to their disadvantaged communities. The research has shown that these community libraries are providing a service which has moved a considerable distance along the road of becoming a pro-active community service. Although there are still many shortcomings, the process of transformation is well under way.

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

Free public libraries were introduced in the USA and Britain towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Since then public libraries have constantly been in search of new paradigms to meet the needs of their users. Throughout public library history adaptations have been made to find purposes which are in line with the changing needs of society.

On the African continent, with its Third World conditions<sup>1</sup>, public libraries were embraced as institutions which would aid the educational and informational needs of the population, as well as assist in the process of general upliftment of the disadvantaged in the communities. These laudable ideals notwithstanding, public libraries did not flourish. Literature describing the woes of these services, from which so much was expected, abound, all concluding that the necessary paradigm shift was not made when public libraries were introduced to Africa (Nawe 1993; Sturges & Neill 1990). For example, although highly educational in intent, the necessary adaptations to the methods of information transfer were not made, resulting in services inappropriate to the needs of the majority of specific populations. This weakness needs to be expounded in order to determine the way forward for the provision of library services to disadvantaged populations.

In South Africa the focus has lately shifted away from service to an elite minority, to serving the needs of the majority of the people, especially in the developing communities where the provision of information services has

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<sup>1</sup> According to Sharp (1988:114) the term "Third World" indicates countries which are currently undeveloped or underdeveloped, but who, with appropriate assistance and motivation can change this situation.

become crucial. South African professionals should take their cue from other African countries, because conditions similar to those existing in the rest of Africa, also exist in this country.

Public libraries based on the Western model have traditionally rendered a "passive" service. Users were expected to make use of the facilities of their own accord. Active outreach programmes have not been part and parcel of many of the services offered. Services have mostly been geared to the needs of the well-educated, literate, middle-class members of the community, thus excluding the newly literate and the illiterate.

Within the African context, where a library tradition has not yet been established, this "passive" service model is not conducive to the development of the people and the active improvement of their quality of life. The Zaiman report, for example, identified widespread ignorance about library services as one of the reasons for non-use of libraries in developing communities in South Africa (Zaiman 1988:47). Public libraries can play a vital role in the development of disadvantaged communities in South Africa in the following respects:

- ☐ by serving as a supplier of media; for example, supplying educational institutions with background material for educational purposes;
- ☐ by supplying facilities to development agencies; for example, making available activities rooms for development projects;
- ☐ by serving as a source of community information (Hansen 1992:7).

## **1.2 Motivation / Problem statement**

Library services on the continent of Africa developed as a result of co-operation between former colonial masters and the new governments of the

emerging, independent African states (Kuangamno 1985:264). These services were established with the aim of providing access to information to all citizens.

Surveys conducted by several researchers (Durrani in Wise & Olden 1990; Kagan 1982; Nawe 1993; Sturges & Neill 1990) indicated that libraries did not live up to expectations. Initially remarkable quantitative expansion of services was experienced, but research into the particular information needs of Africa was not conducted. This led to the establishment of services to which the African public responded in an apathetic way, because libraries had little to offer them (Sturges & Neill 1990: 71,73).

Literacy is a precondition for the utilisation of library services (Alegbeleye 1986:191). The mode of communication in Africa has traditionally been oral, and libraries were only of use to the literate minority (Iwuji 1990:57). This created a dilemma: although libraries are still viewed in a favourable light by African governments and communities, they do not receive priority in budgetary programmes.

In his watershed report on library services in South Africa, Zaaiman (1988:20 - 31) identified several reasons for the poor utilisation of the library services which existed in disadvantaged communities. Some of the problems addressed in his investigation were the following:

- ☐ lack of knowledge on the part of librarians with regard to the real information needs of the communities they were serving;
- ☐ meagre provision of libraries in black townships, and their total absence in the rural areas;
- ☐ inaccessibility of the library, for example, users having to travel distances to visit the library, user-unfriendliness of the library and illiteracy;



- ☐ lack of knowledge on the part of the individual members of the communities with regard to services the library can offer;
- ☐ lack of appropriate reading and audio-visual material;
- ☐ lack of involvement of the local community in the management of library services;
- ☐ lack of proper facilities to meet the demand for seating space, and lack of space for non-formal educational activities;
- ☐ lack of librarians with special abilities to work in developing communities.

Johnstone (1988:147) found that although the traditional Western library model was not unacceptable in developing communities, certain adaptations as far as the services offered by the librarians, were required. A new paradigm must therefore be found to enable libraries to serve the needs of developing communities.

Several alternatives are available, for example, workers' libraries, community resource centres, people's libraries, and community libraries. Of these the community library seems to be the most promising. According to Fairer-Wessels and Machet (1993:103) its aims are:

- ☐ to meet the information needs of the community within which it operates;
- ☐ to render a more varied and more pro-active service than commonly offered by public libraries.

These aims imply anticipating the communities' information needs and providing physical space for studying, meetings and workshops, as well as staff involvement in community activities.

Some of the larger libraries in South Africa display a tendency to move away from the Western model and to adopt features common to community libraries. For example, the City of Pretoria decided to call its new public library the Pretoria Community Library. The Pinetown Public Library in KwaZulu-Natal claims to have made more progress with regard to a community library service than through a mere change of name. It is a conventional public library system which is in the process of establishing community libraries as part of the system.

The problem to be addressed in this study is to determine whether these "community libraries" are community libraries in the true sense of the word, or whether they are still conventional public libraries disguised as community libraries.

### **1.3 Hypothesis**

Johnstone (1988:146) found that the traditional Western library model met most of the general information needs of developing communities. However, the specific needs of the members of these communities need to be addressed before the library can play a more meaningful role in the day-to-day lives of individuals. Significant changes to the existing services are therefore required.

The hypothetical base for this study is that public library services in South Africa have not yet developed a new paradigm for "community libraries". A change of name without a new paradigm for service, results in the same service as that traditionally rendered by public libraries.

### **1.4 Aims**

The aims of the study are:

- to do a literature study to provide an overview of the nature of public library services in Africa and South Africa;
- to establish norms for a community library based on literature on community libraries;
- to test the validity of the community libraries in the borough of Pinetown against these norms;
- to report the results of the research and to provide recommendations for a suitable community library model.

### **1.5 Delimitation of the study**

- The focus is on public libraries in South Africa, and specifically within the Pinetown functional region.
- The public library system of the Pinetown Public Library is the centre of the focus. Although basically a conventional Western library system, it also has ten community libraries functioning as part of that system. Only the first five libraries to be established, i.e. St. Wendelins, Thornwood, Klaarwater, Mpola and Tshelimnyama, are included in the study.
- Library staff, as well as users, and non-users (adults as well as children above the age of twelve) participated in the study.

### **1.6 Methodology**

#### **1.6.1 Literature study**

A literature study was conducted to establish the situation concerning library services in Africa, especially South Africa. Trends concerning community

libraries in general, but also specifically in South Africa, were studied to establish norms for a community library.

A background study, using primary documents, was conducted to gather information on the characteristics of the relevant communities involved in the Pinetown area, for example, their social and economical status, their recreational habits, educational standards, and the geographical features of the region. The documents were used to establish the background that led to the establishment of the community libraries. Library statistics were analysed.

### **1.6.2 Survey**

The survey method was employed to collect data on the Pinetown community libraries. According to Line (1982:12), library surveys can be seen as a systematic collection of data concerning libraries, their activities, operations, staff, use and users, at a given time, or during a given period. Although the survey method is not a perfect tool, mainly due to imperfection of human interaction, this method has nonetheless been chosen as it can give an overview of the chosen field of study. It is also a relatively simple method to use when analysing the data gathered.

For the purpose of this study it was regarded as a suitable method because of the language barrier between the author and those to be surveyed. With this method this could be overcome. The fact that the location of the libraries is remote from the residence of the author, made this the ideal method, as many more respondents could be included in a short time, than with any of the other research methods.

### **1.6.2.1 Data gathering instruments**

#### **1.6.2.1.1 Sampling**

Three population types needed to be surveyed, i.e. library staff, library users and non-users.

- All the library staff in charge of a community library, as well as the senior librarian in charge of the Pinetown Public Library, were interviewed.

#### **1.6.2.1.2 Questionnaires**

In the case of library users and non-users the convenience, non-probability sampling method was regarded as the only viable method of gathering information for this study, as most of the areas included in the study, lack a proper infrastructure. With the convenience sampling method, people who are readily available, are selected.

Questionnaires were handed out at all service points in the community libraries, and the immediate neighbourhood.

#### **1.6.2.1.3 Interviews**

An interview schedule was designed to interview the librarians of the community libraries concerned. When matters needed clarification interviews were conducted with the librarian of the Pinetown Public Library.

#### **1.6.2.1.4 Observation**

The researcher observed the libraries in operation. The passive method was used. The purpose of the observations was to assess the general accommodation and stock, and to observe how the libraries operated on a day-to-day basis.

### **1.6.2.2 Data analysis**

Data were analysed using the SAS-programme.

## **1.7 Definition of terms**

### **1.7.1 Public library**

The public library can be defined as an institution, financed by public money, housing a variety of documents and information sources that can be used for the purpose of informal education, recreation, cultural enrichment and/or information. The public library must be accessible to all members of the community (*Harrod's librarian's glossary of terms used in librarianship ...* 1987:636; Shillinglaw & Thomas 1988:259; Vermeulen 1989:2).

### **1.7.2 Community library**

Within the South African context the community library has been described as one controlled, owned and sustained by residents of a disadvantaged community, usually black or coloured, in order to motivate, empower and enable the local people to participate in programmes aimed at meeting their socio-economic, political, educational and cultural needs (Fairer-Wessels and Machet 1993:106).

Coleman (in Barnes 1994:79) sees a community library as a library which contains a different type of material from that normally found in a public library, where there is an active interface between the librarian and the user, as well as close co-operation with other organisations active within the community, and where services rendered are of a highly political nature.

Considering the views of various authors it can be said that community libraries are organisations run by the people for the people, containing information resources chosen with the purpose of meeting the expressed

needs of the people. Their aim is the upliftment and empowerment of the communities they serve. In Chapter 5 the author will analyse community libraries, based on information gleaned from the literature study.

### **1.7.3 Model**

Various authors seem to agree that a model is an abstraction of a real-world system, situation or process (De Greene 1970:69; Flippo & Munsinger 1982:433). Different types of models can be used to solve a problem; for example, mathematical, analogue or verbal. For the purpose of this thesis the verbal method is used, whereby the problem is verbally posed and solutions provided.

### **1.7.4 Communities**

Thornton and Ramphale (in Stilwell 1991a:17) see communities as:

... an image of coherence, a cultural notion which people use to give reality and form to their social actions and thoughts. The sociological existence of communities is founded on social interactions among members, which inevitably produces social boundaries which define them and give them identity. The boundaries of communities are symbolic and exist by virtue of people's belief in their existence. Communities are made, engaged and believed in. Appeals are made to them which depend on the belief of most people that communities ought to exist, that they are the legitimate goal of all political action.

David Smith (in Stilwell 1991b:261) defines communities as follows:

A community is made up of persons who bring to the common life a variety of resources both material and of knowledge and skill. Each member of the community has needs and each has resources. In the most profound sense we are functions of one another as it is the interpenetration and co-ordination of these resources which create the community.

Communities are not heterogeneous groups of people. Communities can differ considerably from each other, in terms of social references, educational levels, problems, and solutions to these problems. In offering information services this needs to be taken into account, and each service needs to

adapt to local needs, constructs, specifications and technologies (Durrance 1984:101). It is important to remember that resources and solutions to problems cannot be imposed from outside on communities - communities should be taught to become self-reliant.

Taking these views into account, it can be said that a community is formed through social interaction between people - which create social boundaries defining that specific community. Each community member has his/her own needs, but at the same time also has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the resources of the community, enabling the community to function, and seek solutions to its specific problems.

## **1.8 Summary of chapters**

Chapter 1 provides an outline of the study as well as the hypothesis, aims and delimitation of the study.

The role played by the public library in society is discussed in Chapter 2. Attention is given to the paradigm shifts that occurred with time, as the public library attempted to carve out its niche among the information services in the world.

Chapter 3 investigates in detail the current situation concerning library services in Africa. Problems and new trends are highlighted in order to draw a comparison with the South African situation.

Services in the South African public libraries have for years been separated according to apartheid laws. The scrapping of these laws in 1990 made public libraries accessible to all community members. A literature study to determine the current situation concerning library utilisation and services is presented in Chapter 4. Recommendations for adaptations to the current public library system, based on the literature study, are offered.



Norms for a community library are established in Chapter 5 to provide a framework for testing the validity of the Pinetown community libraries.

Chapter 6 contains background information on the library services in the Durban Functional Region with specific reference to the Pinetown Public Library.

In Chapter 7 the methodology is described in detail. The data collected in the surveys are presented and analysed.

Chapter 8 consists of the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the research.

The bibliography is presented in Chapter 9.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2. The public library**

#### **2.1 Public libraries: their nature and development**

##### **2.1.1 Introduction**

The development of the art of reading and writing inevitably led to the collection, preservation and organisation of the written word. Since the earliest times these libraries were used by members of the public, although the lack of literacy only allowed a small section of the public to make use of the facilities available.

Education of the broad population always seems to have been one of the main aims of the library, especially with the establishment of the free public library in the Western world during the mid-nineteenth century. The manner in which to educate and function however posed problems, resulting in several paradigm shifts.

In this chapter the general development of the educational function of the public library will be traced, and the latest developments highlighted. A schematic summary showing the educational role of the public library will be provided.

#### **2.2 The public library as a social institution**

Makinta & Dawha (1992:10) describe a society as a complex system or structure consisting of institutions, associations and individuals. These social components are interdependent on each other, performing certain activities or roles, all contributing to the survival and development of the society. The public library is seen as one such important societal institution. Jesse Shera

(in Vermeulen 1989:5) points out that social agencies are shaped by two forces: on the one hand, by the demands made by society on the agency, and the changes in those demands resulting from social change; and on the other hand, by the professional objectives of professional leaders of the agency. Conflict between these two forces might arise when the demands of the society do not correspond with those of the professional leaders. Shera also points out that in the case of the public library, should conflict arise, it will be the ordinary members of society who will judge the service rendered. Should the public library fail to meet expectations, this agency will either fall into a state of decay, or be replaced (Shera in Vermeulen 1989:5).

The public library is one of the most efficient agencies for acquiring, organising and making informational and educational material generally available to the whole society, particularly in societies which provide few or no educational opportunities (Regional seminar... 1968:107). Within the modern context these functions encompass all kinds of media (Vermeulen 1989:6).

Johnstone (1988:1) points out that libraries are mainly found in developed communities where a reading culture is prevalent. She maintains that libraries aim to contribute to the general development and education of the masses.

By nature the Western model of librarianship aims to serve the community in an educational, cultural, informational and recreational capacity. The educational role is fulfilled by mainly supporting informal self-education. To a lesser extent the Western model library also supports formal education, in the sense of supplying information on topics or work related to academic work, for example, assignments, seminars etc. Non-formal education also forms part of the educational role, albeit mostly in a complementary manner.

## **2.3 The public library and education**

### **2.3.1 Defining education**

According to Duminy (1985:1) education is an activity with many facets, covering many fields of specialisation. Harmse (1985:7) defines education as "an activity or happening by means of which the way of life of a living being is changed and directed towards his effective survival". Similarly Hansen & Gerstl (1967:70) see education as an agent of change, a condition of change in the surrounding society, or an effect of change in the other institutions with which it is so intimately interrelated. The assumption is made that for education to be an agent of social change it needs to be under the rational control of persons who perceive a need for change and are capable of designing tools to accomplish it.

When education takes place it takes place in one of three forms: informal, formal or non-formal. Although this distinction is made, it does not necessarily mean that the different forms are entirely independent of each other (Duminy 1985:15).

From a public library point of view both Zaaiman (1988:19-22) and Shillinglaw (1986:41-42) regard these three forms as part of the educational functions of a library service.

#### **2.3.1.1 Informal education**

This type of education forms the basis of all education. According to Duminy (1985:15) this is a spontaneous form of education, taking place in the ordinary day-to-day interaction between children and adults. This interaction is normally unsystematic and unorganised. The *International encyclopaedia of education* (1988:3557) defines informal education as:

... the lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences

and resources in his or her environment - from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

This view is shared by Zaaiman (1988:21) who sees it as education taking place unintentionally, in a situation that falls outside formal and non-formal education. Contact with a book, a journal or an exhibition in a library may provide informal education. Shillinglaw (1986:42) sees an important role for the library in the informal learning process in that it plays an important part in informing the community by means of lectures, discussions, exhibitions and demonstrations. Cultural activities can also form part of this education process.

### **2.3.1.2 Formal education**

Formal education is seen as a planned and systematic way of leading school children and students in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes. The aims, methods, contents and aids used at formal educational institutions are carefully designed to supplement informal education (Duminy 1985:16).

Although public libraries are not part of the formal educational structures, they play an important role in supporting these systems. School children and students of tertiary institutions tend to flock to public libraries to find information complementing their formal study material, and to find a quiet place to study (Zaaiman 1988:19). Luckham (in Vermeulen 1989:16) notices a similar trend in England, and claims that public libraries have in effect become a prop to the educational institutions, many of which cannot provide sufficient reading material or study space for their students.

### **2.3.1.3 Non-formal education**

Non-formal education is:

.... any organised, systematic educational activity outside the framework of the formal school system designed to provide selective types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. It

includes: on-the-job training, literacy programs, political re-education, community development programmes and religious training (*International encyclopedia of education*, 1988:3551).

These programmes are normally offered by various organisations and bodies, especially, in the case of the developing countries, by non-governmental organisations.

Zaaiman (1988:21) sees non-formal education as fulfilling limited and specific educational needs. The role he envisages for libraries in this context, lies in the fields of arranging lectures and exhibitions, and the making available of their activities rooms and halls. Examples of non-formal education can include classes in hobbies, needlework, literacy, and sport. Attendance of these classes normally takes place on a voluntary basis. The main purpose for attendance is self-improvement and self-education (Shillinglaw 1986:41).

As stated above historically education, in one form or another, has always been the driving force behind public libraries. Public libraries, at various times, were seen as a means of educating the working class, protecting them from the evils of drink and idleness, or as a means of educating the masses for democracy (Vermeulen 1989:6).

As an institution of education the public library has to formulate its own objectives. Community support for its services determines the budget, which means the public library must create its own niche in the community by offering services relevant to the community's needs and by marketing these services (Vermeulen 1989:7).

### **2.3.2 Education as a purpose of the public library**

Education was one of the main driving forces behind the establishment of the earliest libraries. According to De Vleeschauwer (1963:21) the earliest

libraries known to man, those of the Ancient East, were established to serve as an auxiliary aid in the development of a literary court caste.

Libraries intended for the "use of the people" were established at various times in history (Vermeulen 1989:2). These libraries, although educational in intent, were only available to those few who had the privilege of receiving an education. The common person was thus excluded from this source of education. Restricted access remained the case until the occurrence of two events that changed the face of public libraries, and with that, their role in education, namely: the Industrial Revolution, with its resultant large metropolitan agglomerations, and the War of Independence which raged in the New World.

These two events brought the realisation to the newly urbanised public that, in order to participate fully in government, they had to be educated, and therefore a system of free schooling, and free access to information became essential (Vermeulen 1989:2).

The urbanisation process started by the Industrial Revolution, directly resulted in the concentration in the cities of a varied public of technicians, craftsman and ordinary workers (De Vleeschauwer 1963:238). New demands made on these urbanites called for thorough professional training, but the educational system was not geared towards meeting their needs. Private initiative thus established a professional educational system. Attached to it were libraries "to introduce the working classes to the opportunity and need for reading, and so to improve their intellectual level" (De Vleeschauwer 1963:239). However, as a result, use of these libraries was still restricted to the mainly educated people (Johnstone 1988:9). The social libraries were directed towards certain classes or groups, and did not last long, as they were in a constant battle for financial survival (Johnstone 1988:9; Vermeulen 1989:3). With the governments' recognition of the educational needs of the

people, the free educational public library made its appearance in the intellectual world of the nineteenth century (De Vleeschauwer 1963:253).

These tax supported institutions were completely governed by educational principles. According to De Vleeschauwer (1963:254) the public library complemented the formal educational system right from the start.

Free public libraries became a reality in both Britain and the United States towards the middle of the nineteenth century, and from the outset these public libraries had a reforming, educational, socialising and civilising mission (Martin 1989:15).

Public accountability brought the responsibility for the public library to prove its worth. Paradigm shifts kept occurring as libraries' role in society continued changing (Hobbs 1982:91). The educational role was the most prevalent in the period just after the establishment of the tax supported public library system, when the library was seen as an instrument for supplementing the public school system (Lee 1982:94). Subsequently this was seen as a method "to increase the effects of the system by the self-culture that results from reading." In subsequent years a more substantial role for the library was sought, and it was asserted that the educational role should be more complementary, rather than supplementary to the formal school system, i.e. that it should be recognised that the school system and the public library formed two parts of one complete purpose, and that without the one the other would be unable to function adequately (Lee 1982:94). According to Lee (1982:94) the public library was to function as a 'people's university' - as an educational institution responsible for the furthering of the education of the people from the point where they abandoned formal schooling.

With the introduction of adult education around the 1920s the role of the library once again shifted towards participation and co-operation in adult education (Lee 1982:94). Learned (in Williams 1988:43) identifies three



problems experienced by new literates in finding information: the fact that the adult is not trained in techniques to find information independently from books; lack of understanding of a field of study due to a poor educational background; and the fact that the new literate does not feel himself at home in any institution. As a solution to these problems he suggests a community 'intelligence' service with the necessary books and other materials, and specially trained staff to disseminate this information. The public library was regarded as the ideal location for such a service. This vision inspired many librarians to join in the adult education movement.

By the 1940s the enthusiasm for adult education had all but waned. Williams (1988:59 - 61) discusses several reasons for the lack of results with regard to all the efforts put into adult education, for example, too few libraries, too little money and available staff to handle these programmes, poor publicity and marketing of the services, and the fact that the masses just were not interested in educating themselves, and concludes that within the library community nobody was prepared to take the blame for the failure of the services. However, this failure was soon to be forgotten with the library emphasis shifting to a concern for social neutrality, and the notion to be everything to everybody (Martin 1989:18). Information in all kinds of manner was supplied to whoever visited the library. However, Martin (1989:18) sees this as a very passive service.

This period of passive service was followed by a frenzy of activity. The 1960s was the period of the great outreach movements and the introduction of community librarianship. Public libraries had to be transformed into places which were both attractive and comfortable for the disadvantaged. The disadvantaged were seen as groups within society who were powerless, or victims of poverty and discrimination and who had to be educated, and turned into good readers of good books (Williams 1988:101 - 102).

The early seventies brought the realisation that the traditional public library, being an essentially middle-class institution, could not do much to relieve the plight of the disadvantaged. The library was perceived as an institution alien and irrelevant to the needs of the people living in ghettos, in reservations or migrant worker camps (Williams 1988:105). New ways of servicing this group had to be found. Community information centres seemed to offer the solution. The most publicised service offered by these centres was that of information and referral. These services were designed to put the client in touch with agencies providing social services (Williams 1988:105). However, a survey conducted by Childers showed that this was not to be the answer (Williams 1988:106). In an on-site investigation into seventeen sites offering an information and referral service, he found that it was mostly an information service that was being offered, and that actual referral on behalf of the client took only between 1 - 10% of the staff member's time.

By the early 1980s the library profession realised that the public library had to stop trying to be everything to everybody (Williams 1988:130). In the whole process public librarians became unsure about their professional identity and took on functions for which they were neither adequately trained, nor equipped (Astbury 1993:64).

Williams argues that what is called for is a selection from among the different roles the public library has assumed through the years, identifying those that would best suit the specific community which the library purports to serve. Identified community needs should serve as the ultimate determinant when making a choice (Williams 1988:132). Only with the selected role(s) in mind, a mission statement, identifying the library's purpose, can be formulated. Williams (1988:137) argues that the identity of the public library should be restored to that of an institution for informal self-education. The library must be left to perform the only task of importance it ever had, viz. that of providing education for those who seek it.

Astbury (1993:64 - 65) agrees that the public library has identified as its client the self-learner, but adds that cognisance should be taken of the fact that the library is operating in an ever-changing society, and its educational role needs to be adapted to these changing circumstances. This also brings to the librarian the responsibility to adapt to new ways of servicing the client, learning new ways and methods of communicating with the client. The latest paradigm shift reflects a new role for the library, viz. from that of a literature-based/print information centre to that of a centre providing information in combination with other agencies.

## **2.4 Libraries and development - the connection**

### **2.4.1 Development**

To define the concept of what is meant by 'development' is not an easy task.

Boon (1992:65) quotes Julius Nyerere as follows:

People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. A man develops himself by what he does: he develops himself by making his own decisions, by increasing his knowledge and ability, and by his full participation in the life of the community he lives in.

Todaro (1989:27) points out that countries and communities in need of development normally have certain characteristics, for example, high levels of population growth; a high degree of various forms of dependence; being it dependence on agricultural production or dependence and vulnerability with regard to international relations; low productivity and living levels and high unemployment and underemployment rates.

With the above in mind, development can be seen as a process during which the quality of human life is improved. According to Todaro (1989:89 - 90) development has three tenets, i.e. sustaining life (the ability to provide basic needs), self-esteem (personal growth) and freedom from servitude (ability to choose). Boon (1992:65) argues that development can be

associated with the life-view, norms, values and opinions of a community or individual. Development therefore relies on the internal, innovative capabilities of individuals and the community, seen within the context of their established norms, opinions and values. External communities and individuals can also stimulate, facilitate and fund development.

In order to develop, access to information is a requirement. Cillié (1995:4) sees information as a strategic resource which contributes directly to socio-cultural, economic, scientific, technological and personal development, and which is indispensable for education and fulfilment of public life. It is a commodity from which the whole community benefits.

In designing library and information services for communities, heed should be taken of the views and opinions of each specific community. If these are not taken into account, services might not accomplish their set goals, thereby not contributing to development (Cillié 1995:5).

Both Zaaiman (1988:6) and Mchombu (1992:58) warn that development cannot be imposed on a community by an outside agent. The need for development must come from within the communities themselves. They must also be involved in planning the desired development and development instruments. Most importantly, they must undertake the necessary development actions themselves. Non-involvement can lead to rejection of development agencies. Kotzé (in Barnes 1994:9) shares this view and issues the following warning:

Transferring a network of ... library services appropriate to the needs of a technologically advanced European country to an African country with an agriculturally based economy would be an example of development through implementation. It would ignore the recipient's educational achievements, its cultural context, need for physical development, as well as other aspects and levels of development. The library service would not have been designed for the needs of its environment, and as a foreign element it would be obliged to defend itself against the environment. The entire network would be protective instead of service oriented.

This view corresponds with that of Shera (in Vermeulen 1989:5), whereby implementation of this kind of service will only serve the objectives of the librarians, i.e. to provide a professional library service to the community, regardless of their needs. Without taking into account the needs of those who are to be served, proper utilisation of the service by the whole community will be severely hampered.

For development to take place effectively and efficiently, certain prerequisites have been identified:

- ☐ the availability of certain minimum infrastructures, for example, transport, education and information infrastructures;
- ☐ co-operation and involvement of all interested parties and groups in the community;
- ☐ consideration of environmental factors;
- ☐ consideration of the values, opinions and norms of the people for the development of a proper knowledge and information base to assist with decision making and innovation;
- ☐ effective and efficient management of all resources (Welsky & Butorin in Boon 1992:65).

As part of a strategy to develop human resources, Shillinglaw (1986:39) argues for the inclusion of elementary, advanced and continuing education. This strategy also needs to provide an opportunity for the educationally disadvantaged to remedy their deficiency, giving the people a chance to broaden their knowledge and skills by their own efforts.

As argued in par. 2.3.1, libraries strive to be agents of education. Zaaiman (1988:35) points out that libraries in developing areas will be required to do much more educational and developmental work than in the traditional Western type library.

The African continent falls within the so-called "Third World". This term has strong political connotations, and can be seen as a way of contrasting the development in the "First World" and that of the "Third World". Sharp (1988:114) warns against the derogatory line of this type of terminology, and argues that people in the "Third World" should be seen as merely undeveloped or underdeveloped, and that with the appropriate assistance and motivation their situation can be changed.

Kagan (1982:1) sees national development as all the processes that contribute to the advancement of the quality of life. Lack of literacy is seen as one of the major stumblingblocks in the process of development. An illiterate is described as a person who displays a tendency towards dependency in several spheres of life, as well as a person who has difficulties with perceiving images with rationalisation and calculation. He argues that literacy would counter all these negative effects (Kagan 1982:2-3). Libraries can act as agents to help eradicate illiteracy. This would involve a radically new service and more active involvement in the field of education. The role that the library can play, especially in rural areas, where illiteracy is most acute, is seen as threefold:

- ☐ to provide information to development agents and agencies;
- ☐ to support formal and informal rural education programmes through the provision of materials to both teachers and students and
- ☐ to serve as centres for community education and culture by analysing and studying subjects of community interest in addition to holding cultural events (Kagan 1982:8).

Chijioke (1989:176) concludes that African libraries are not envisaged as significant role-players in the process of national development. This is reflected by a study conducted in Nigeria in which information was emphasised as an important factor in development, but libraries were not assigned any role in the process. Boon (1992:70) sees the poor quality of the existing information services as one of the contributing factors to this oversight by developers. From literature surveys it becomes evident that existing library services in Africa are not extensively used, and for this reason governments often withdraw their financial support which brings about a collapse in services. Mchombu (1991) recorded the findings of several surveys bearing testimony to this statement. In Botswana the overall percentage of users for all types of library services does not exceed 5%. Likewise in Tanzania, with a population of more than 23 million people, only 1 - 2% of the population use libraries.

Alemna (in Mchombu 1991:27) in evaluating library services in Ghana describes the decade 1974 - 1984 as the worst so far in the history of librarianship in Ghana. As reasons for this observation he cites the following : outdated material, irrelevant material, lack of facilities and poor management. Government reaction to these statistics indicates a considerable scaling down of available funds to these institutions, grudgingly tolerating libraries, librarians and librarianship (Neill, Mchombu & Havard-Williams 1993:14).

Apart from the general role of information provider to society, the public library also seems to be called upon to play the more specific role of supporter of education, as well as development. Table 2.1 provides a model showing the various positions occupied by the public library within society, and the roles it should play.

**Table 2.1 Nature of the public library**

| <u><b>Institutional type</b></u>        | <u><b>Characteristics</b></u>  |
|---|--|
| <b><i>Societal institution:</i></b>     | <p>Society determines nature of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public library as societal institution:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collects, organises, disseminates mankind's records for use;</li> <li>- Supports education and development by supplying information;</li> <li>- Society's judgement causes service to succeed, fail, or be replaced.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| <b><i>Educational institution:</i></b>  | <p>Various forms of education are practised, and supported by public library:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal education:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unsystematic and unorganised;</li> <li>- Achieved through provision of information sources, exhibitions, lectures, demonstrations and cultural activities supported by libraries.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Formal education:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planned and systematic;</li> <li>- Library provides information complementing school and other curricula;</li> <li>- Provides study space.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Non-formal education:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organised, systematic activities taking place outside the school system;</li> <li>- Orchestrated by a variety of organisations, and public and private bodies;</li> <li>- Library arranges lectures and exhibitions and makes facilities available to organisations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b><i>Developmental institution</i></b> | <p>Development implies improvement of quality of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information contributes to the improvement of quality of life, i.e. development;</li> <li>- Information services suit the developmental needs of local communities;</li> <li>- Librarians identify themselves and their service with their communities;</li> <li>- Libraries play a pro-active role in combating illiteracy, which hampers development of underdeveloped.</li> </ul>   |



## **2.5 Conclusion**

As a societal institution the public library can play an important role in the educational activities of members of society, be it in an informal, formal or non-formal way. The worth of the library as an instrument of education can be measured by the use made of the facilities. If the library service is not aimed at satisfying the needs of the society it serves, the service will flounder, and will possibly be replaced by another institution which bases its services on expressed societal needs.

The library has an important role to play in development, be it on national or community level. Where development is aimed at the improvement of the quality of life for both individuals and communities as a whole, libraries can play an important role as providers of information. However, it is of vital importance that information services should not be imposed on individuals and communities, but based on the specific needs of a community. When services are imposed, and they are not what the community requires, they normally fail, as is the case in most information services in Africa. On the African continent libraries are not perceived as significant role-players in the provision of information, and this should probably be blamed on the imposition of an inappropriate public library model on the people of Africa.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3. The public library in Africa**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The introduction of library services to Africa occurred relatively recently. Almost from the start it was clear that public libraries did not meet the users' expectations (Sturges and Neill 1990:73).

The apathetic reaction of the people to public library services prompted many librarians to research the reasons for lack of support and to find solutions to the problems experienced.

In this chapter the problems experienced by African public library services will be highlighted. Experiments completed, or in progress, aimed at finding alternatives to counter these problems, will also be covered.

#### **3.2 Factors inhibiting public library development in Africa**

Stilwell (1991b:237) sees the problems plaguing the library and information services in Africa as:

- ☐ the inability to break with the anachronistic and inappropriate colonial model;
- ☐ inappropriate training;
- ☐ lack of rigour in determining specific needs through analysis;
- ☐ lack of co-operation among agencies involved in library-related work;

- the absence of sustained effort to achieve an alternative framework.

### **3.2.1 Anachronistic and inappropriate colonial public library model**

Library systems adopted in Africa were based on the Anglo-American model of librarianship (Wehmeyer 1991:2). This model is based on home reading of books borrowed by a predominantly middle-class educated public. (Fairer-Wessels 1988:3). Although educational by intent, this model caters mostly for leisure reading (Shillinglaw 1986:40). This model pre-supposes a reading public. Anyim (1972:16) points out that the African people are not a reading people. Imitating the culture of the European, the African acquires a pseudo-culture which is neither African nor European. When in crisis, the African tends to fall back on his African culture, which favours oral communication.

Public libraries in America and Europe developed in response to the spread of mass education and the popularisation of literacy. These existing systems were introduced, with little or no change, as far as organisation and behaviour were concerned, to the African continent. The intention was to aid the development of education and literacy in Africa (Chijioke 1989:175). Raseroka (1994b:3) iterates that the introduction of libraries was closely related to the view of the former colonial powers that libraries could be used as instruments in the education and development of African society. The intentions of these services, however, need further investigation.

According to Raseroka (1993:3) these libraries were intended to promote the culture and language of the English and the French colonists. Musisi (1984:125) supports this statement and points out that the founding of library services in Kenya was closely linked to the establishment of British colonial rule and the subsequent arrival of mainly British settlers and Indian traders. The aim of these libraries was "to enable the African populations to have access to the way colonisers saw development" (Raseroka 1993:3). Neill, Mchombu and Havard-Williams (1993:14) point out that at the time of

independence Africa had a rich and unique knowledge base which could have formed the basis for the development of African librarianship. The interference of the colonial powers in the introduction of these services resulted in an intermingling of local information with that of the western countries, often to the detriment of the local information.

Durrani (1990:165) describes the situation in Kenya as one where most of the libraries are copies of Western libraries. He also concludes that these libraries are totally unsuitable to the Kenyan situation. He attributes the lack of relevance in the library system to the notion of concentrating on the elite few educated, while the needs of the rural population are neglected.

Nawe (1993:4) points out that the appropriateness of this model to the needs of the African people seems not to have been deliberated. The efforts of expatriate librarians, schooled in the Anglo-American library tradition, resulted in the establishment of this specific model. Kagan (1991:30) points out that not much consultation between the library planners and the potential users took place. The vision of the planners was limited to what was familiar to them, and according to Chijioke (1989:175) the people of Africa expected to receive the same model as their European counterparts, and anything less would have been seen as inferior.

The service base of this model relies heavily on a print-based service. Lack of an understanding of the characteristics of the potential clients is reflected in the fact that Africa has an estimated 60% illiteracy rate (Mabomba 1990:12). In Kenya the rural population comprises 90% of the population, most of whom are illiterate (Odini 1990:44). Education is by no means widespread, even less so in rural areas, in spite of the introduction of universal primary education. Level of education can thus be seen as the determinant enabling an individual to use the proffered services. This excludes the majority of the population in Africa. Library services are therefore perceived as elitist institutions, only of service to the educated few

in the population, mainly stationed in urban areas. Neither the services nor the materials are seen as reflecting the needs of the rural communities (Chijioke 1989:174).

Library collections do not seem to reflect the needs of the African public. Donations from former colonial powers and philanthropical organisations in many cases formed the basis of the collections. Views expressed in these books reflect those of the donor organisation. Viewpoints of Europe, North America and other parts of the world are often easier to find on the shelves, than those of an African writer (Sturges & Neill 1990:76), often contradicting those of the African reader's experience (Chakava 1984:351). Isnard (1968:245) agrees with this viewpoint, adding that for those fluent in European languages, enough books are available, but because of the fact that the contents often do not correspond with the interests of the African reader, his choice of books is severely limited.

Raseroka (1993:46) emphasises the strong colonial influence reflected by the language content of most library collections. She points out that book stocks in African library systems are almost entirely written in the languages of commerce: English, French or Arabic. These languages cannot be read by 95% of the population in the countries where they are to be used (Chakava 1984:349). These are also the languages spoken by the educated elite, mostly the educated school-going youth, therefore the mass of potential readers are excluded from reading in a language with which they are familiar. Chakava (1984:349) points out that in most of the African countries the books are published in languages spoken by less than 30% of the population. A further complicating factor is the fact that an estimated 1,200 languages are spoken in Africa, of which only about 600 have a written literature. A severe shortage in material in the vernacular is therefore experienced.

The building of appropriate collections is further hampered by a shortage of material written by African authors (Chakava 1984:352). Much of this is to be

blamed on a tendency among African writers to have their work published by renowned foreign publishing houses (Sturges & Neill 1990:22; Stilwell 1991b:207), as well as the poor output of local publishing houses. Africa's book production for the period 1955 -1977 increased from 1.1% to 1.7% (Zulu 1993:125) i.e. a mere 0.6% growth rate. Alemna (in Stilwell 1991b:205) reports that libraries in Ghana import about 90% of their materials from Britain and the United States (US). According to Zulu (1993:125) this trend is also reflected in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

The oral mode of communication is the prevalent method of information transfer among Africans, especially in rural areas, exerting a strong influence on the lives of the population. Traditional information sources include: oral history from elders, the word of community leaders and traditional rulers, communications at market squares and in drinking parlours, poetry, drama and music (Adimorah 1993:106 - 108). According to Anyim (1972:15 - 16) the culture of the African is essentially oral; even after two centuries of contact with Western civilisation, their culture is still mostly unwritten. Users and potential users grew up in homes where books were non-existent. The few that received an education were taught to listen, rather than to read. He therefore points out that services should be adapted to serve a public which is essentially not a reading public.

Services offered by the Western model are mainly based on the finding and disseminating of printed information. Boadi (1986:4) points out that the growth and well-being of any country depend on the accessibility of information and ideas to all sectors of the community, regardless of whether they are literate or illiterate. For the collection to be of use to the whole community, it should include the following types of material:

- Oral transmissions. This could take the form of group discussions, person-to-person transmission, as well as forms of art, for example, drama, poetry and song. Oral transmissions play a very important part in many

non-literate societies and should therefore be harnessed for the biggest effect;

- Translations of relevant material into local languages which can be understood and read by most of the potential clients;
- Easy do-it-yourself manuals, pamphlets, newspapers and other material that can be read by literate users;
- Audio-visual materials such as posters, charts, diagrams, tape/slide presentations, films, cassettes, recorded or radio programmes (Boadi 1986:6).

Exposure to developments in Western countries can be instructive and models from other countries can provide a useful starting point, but exposure to problems in one's own country cannot be replaced (Benge 1979:222). Adimorah (1993:111) advocates that African public library directors should select what is good in the Western library practice and amalgamate it with what is relevant to the local culture. Stilwell (1991b:211) warns that it becomes extremely difficult to break free from imported models once they have become established.

### **3.2.2 Inappropriate training of library professionals**

The choice of public library model was influenced by the expatriate librarians who came to assist in setting up the library services (Raseroka 1993: 39). These librarians were all trained overseas, giving them a cosmopolitan field of experience. The intention was to develop a system and service which was totally integrated with the social and political circumstances of each individual community. However, their previous working experience militated against its implementation (Sturges & Neill (1990:70). Students educated abroad are often criticised for lacking socially relevant competencies specific to the environment to which they will return (Saracevic in Stilwell 1989:203).

Despite criticism levelled against them, the expatriates did succeed in achieving a remarkable quantitative expansion of library services.

The expatriate librarians, however well qualified, could not relate to the information environment of Africa. Their background and experience was that of metropolitan countries. They were also the group who had to train the next generation of local librarians.

Many of the African library schools seem to have adopted outdated syllabi, copied from overseas, with little or no participation from either the library associations or the employers of the country (Mchombu 1991:34). The training still reflects colonial values. Aboyade (in Makinta & Dahwa 1992:19) summarises the situation as follows: "... realities of the situation in the early years of library education in Nigeria, ... were that the curriculum reflected predominantly British and American systems." The popular trend still seems to be for students to spend a long time overseas, taking courses totally irrelevant to their information environment. This sentiment is echoed by Sturges & Neill (1990:90) and Dahwa & Makinta (1993:18) who feel that the lack of relevant library education takes African students out of the country for long periods, when their energy and services are urgently needed at home. Gibbons & Neill (1986:147) question the relevance of overseas programmes, as it does not represent reality. Swart (1990:26) states that librarians are being trained to serve a First World public - their training does not equip them for a Third World community.

Library education is currently in a conflict situation in Africa. It has to find a way of designing syllabi which can translate a library ethic which draws its inspiration from a print based culture to that of being responsive to a semi-literate information starved society. Aboyade (in Dahwa & Makinta 1993:19) sees the Africanisation of curricula as of major importance. She recommends that the indigenisation of the training programme "can take the form of infusing local content into standard courses, or it may involve an entirely



different interpretation of the theory underlying the profession." At present library schools are producing personnel who are unable to function properly as public librarians within their communities. Mchombu (1991:30) sees the cause of the problem as a structural decoupling of libraries from their key user target groups, and the development of an inward looking mentality which tends to glorify internal processes at the expense of maximising the use of library resources. Stilwell (1991b:169) maintains that although the technical aspects of documentation such as accessioning, cataloguing and classification are important in assuring that the social aspects are being looked after, they should not become the primary activity. The primary activity of a library service is to provide information to people.

Mchombu (1991:34) believes that relevant training should achieve the following:

- instilling a consciousness of the African information environment;
- developing an in-depth programme of specialisation to include repackaging of information, indigenous knowledge resources, and development librarianship.

Gibbons & Neill (1987:148) express the view that library education should be responsive to innovation and change, as well as to changing expectations of library services. Innovations that have been suggested call for the introduction of the so-called "bare-foot" librarian. This type of librarian is seen as an alternative to the professionally trained librarian, functioning mainly in rural areas, and needs to be equipped with a whole new set of skills. Banach (1989:10) sees this person as being equipped with skills like teaching literacy, design and production of audio-visual material, training in oral literature, processing eyewitness information and applying new information to the development and improvement of life appropriate to rural areas. The librarian needs to be based within the community he/she is to serve and

should be fully committed to the advancement of that specific community. The Tanzanian library service has responded to this concept by introducing a system of "bare-foot" librarians. Individuals with at least a primary education are selected by village leaders. The libraries are to be owned and controlled by the community itself. Training is done through a system of short courses.

In order to deliver a staff competent with regard to the challenges being posed by African library systems, proper curriculum planning by African library schools seems to be crucial, and a break from irrelevant training inevitable.

Hikwa (1994: 13 - 14) maintains that for African library services to react positively to social and technological changes, continuing education of existing staff is a prerequisite. He sees this as taking the form of workshops and seminars whereby new skills, knowledge and attitudes can be instilled in the entire staff. This should be done on an ongoing basis, thereby addressing current as well as projected trends as they occur.

### **3.2.3 Lack of needs analysis**

Kempson (1986:183) emphasises that, when designing an information service, it is imperative to analyse not only the extent and nature of the information needs, but also how the needs are satisfied at that specific time. She points out that research indicates that in most cases people turn to oral sources to satisfy their information needs.

On the African continent the oral medium of information transfer has always been the preferred medium. Sturges & Neill (1990:8) note that even with the strong influence of the printed word, the oral medium is still the dominant information medium, especially within rural areas where the majority of illiterates can be found.

Adimorah (1993:106 - 108) agrees with this statement, and also identifies some traditional information sources mainly used for information gathering purposes:

- *Oral history from elders.* Iwuji (1990:55) describes these elders as "repositories which harbour secrets many centuries old." It is the duty of these elders to remember these secrets, which would otherwise pass into oblivion.
- *Traditional rulers* who are responsible for the traditional governance of their communities. They are normally persons well versed in the culture, customs, rites, taboos and community norms of their communities.
- *Community leaders* who serve as the mediators between traditional rulers and the community. They are ready sources of information on community affairs.
- *Artifacts of 'Mbari'.* These artifacts are associated with religious practices in the traditional African community. Mbari's are seen as representing an aspect of some religious experience within the community, be it deliverance from war, famine or child mortality. The artifact fulfils the role of a reminder of a specific event, and thus forms an important source of information depicting religious traditions.
- *Local drinking parlours.* The tendency of the rural dweller is to gather after work in one of the local drinking parlours. These social meetings are used to discuss issues of concern to the community.
- *Market squares.* On market days people of neighbouring communities gather to either buy or sell their products. This is also the place where many relatives meet. During these sessions information on rural happenings is gathered and disseminated.

- *Folklore*. This medium abounds in Africa, and is mostly used in teaching traditional customs, taboos, norms or the wisdom of the ages, thus transferring information on culture.
- *Dances and music*. These are forms of cultural expression used either to convey a message or to serve as a form of communication, and are mostly used during festivals and cultural celebrations.
- *Other sources*. Tribal facial marks, attire and dressing, greetings/salutations and names and festivals are also used to transfer tribal information about culture and customs of each specific tribe.

Library services were introduced to the African people without either proper consultation, or analysis of the information needs and composition of the potential clientele (Sturges & Neill 1990:73). According to Adimorah (in Stilwell 1991b:201) a Nigerian sample interview revealed that most public libraries established in that country were set up without prior examination of the information needs of those who were to use the services. Sturges & Neill (1990:73) maintain that knowledge of these vital issues, was and still is based on conjecture and supposition. According to Mchombu (1991:30) this lack of research led to the belief that the information needs, as well as the information-seeking patterns of the African people would match those of library users in Europe and America. Services based on these presumptions led to the library isolating itself from the general public, content to serve only a small educated, mainly urban based, better off, elite (Odini 1990:37). This is in line with the prediction of Shera (in Vermeulen 1989:5) who argued that should the library fail to meet the expectations of those it purports to serve, it would fall in a state of decay, being judged of no worth in fulfilling the information needs of the majority of the people of Africa.

Raseroka (1993:53) points out that the need for proactive needs analysis is currently more readily recognised within African public library circles. A paucity of human resources and research skills, however, contributes to the fact that research is currently being done mainly by researchers and consultants, supported by practitioners.

#### **3.2.4 Lack of co-operation between related information systems.**

For information to be beneficial to the development of a country, it firstly needs to be available, and secondly, to be accurate and current. Adeyemi (1991:3) notices that in many developing countries information needed for development has become highly segmented, divisive and uncoordinated. Similarly the sources which provide for the flow of information have become both monopolistic and without direction, thus affecting availability, and very likely also accuracy and currency.

Most African nations find themselves in a crisis situation where, although independent for a few decades, they economically remain at the mercy of the former colonial powers. Mchombu (1993:6) argues that the root of the problem lies in the lack of access to information. To prove his point he cites the fact that African farmers are rendered helpless when trying to compete economically against agricultural products from foreign countries that keep pouring into the former colonies. Because of a lack of information, farmers cannot foresee rate drops in the agricultural market, neither can they plan ahead to diversify their crops, and therefore are helpless against the manoeuvres of the international cartels. Sturges & Neill (1990:39) agree with this argument and point out that in a country like Zambia, numerous development projects that were undertaken, failed because of a lack of either the correct, or sufficient, information.

The lack of information concerns all people and/or organisations involved in the development process. Boon (1992:67) identifies the following role players:

- ☐ Those directly involved in the development process, i.e. those who are in the process of development;
- ☐ Those people who facilitate development, working at grassroots level;
- ☐ Those involved in managing development projects.

To satisfy the information needs of the user, the library needs to be able to locate and supply documents whose information content would answer the needs (Odini 1991:93). This information normally exists in a variety of forms and media, which need to be identified and made available to people at all levels, regardless whether they are literate or illiterate.

Library information workers on the African continent generally agree that resources are scarce commodities. To enable them to meet the demand from their users, increased co-operation and resource sharing ought to form the basis of their services (Rosenberg 1993a:107).

Resource sharing is normally seen within the context of libraries co-operating, making available their resources to all participants. Sharing covers the fields of library co-operation, co-ordination, interlibrary loans, co-operative acquisition, storage and processing (Odini 1991:93). With the paucity of resources, combined with the urgent need for development, the utilisation and management of all resources and organisations in possession of information resources, need urgent attention.

Kaniki (1992:85) identifies various information providers. "Information providers" are seen as including all types of communication channels and sources, be it persons, publications, agencies, organisations, institutions or

groups of institutions. Bredenkamp (1995:8) identifies the following methods and organisations which possess a variety of resources and can be used to transfer information :

- *Extension officers* - They are mostly attached to government departments as community workers or development planners. It is a well-known fact that governments create and acquire a large volume of information while conducting their normal business. Information is contained in a variety of formats including correspondence files, reports, information received from the different ministries, departments and parastatals, court records and research reports from government-funded research institutions (Musembi 1992:673; Alegbeyele 1993:309).

Much of this information is not made commercially available. Governmental research results are in many cases only published in internal publications, making public access extremely difficult.

- *Non-governmental organisations and parastatals* - Many of these organisations publish a wealth of information in the form of research papers, reports, conference papers, theses, minutes of meetings and data collections. Unpublished reports are seen as an especially important source of information. Their worth lies in the fact that they contain current and timely information, being issued as soon as the research is completed (Zulu 1993:125; Kaniki 1992:86).

As is the case with governmental research results, the material is not made available in the same way as commercial publications. The trend within these organisations seems to be to publish results in prominent overseas journals, which would ensure more exposure (Otike 1989:203). This raises a problem in retrieving the information locally, as overseas abstracting and indexing journals are not readily available.

- *Radio, television and the press* - The audio- and audio-visual media in particular are seen as extremely important media for providing information provision to the illiterate. Sturges & Neill (1990:12) note that the radio is commonly used in Africa to communicate development-oriented information. The powerful information tool, the press, is however severely hindered in its task of informing the nation, as it is mainly government controlled, therefore serving only as a mouthpiece of government propaganda (Sturges & Neill 1990:19).
  
- *Libraries and archives* - The basic function of the public library is to acquire, preserve and disseminate information. In addition to this function it is the aim of the library to match the needs of the users with the information contents of documents. With the rapid escalation of prices it has become impossible for library budgets to purchase all the needed material, therefore the urgent need for sharing resources.
  
- *Information technology* - Lor (1992:30) points out that networking capabilities are enhanced through information technology, resulting in the quick and efficient sharing of resources which could otherwise have proved difficult or inconvenient to share.

Computers are very much in evidence in Africa, albeit mainly in the urban areas. However, within the library fraternity, technology has not yet made a big impact (Sturges & Neill 1990:28; Musembi 1992:681). According to Nawe (1993:7) this is mostly due to negligence and lack of commitment to sustain the equipment, and not because it is not available.

Many of the problems in properly utilising technology for information transfer, stem from the fact that neither the hardware nor the software is compatible with the services it needs to render. Lack of



maintenance and repair staff, as well as lack of proper telecommunication infrastructure lead to more frustration.

Within the continent it seems as if the international corporations, more than the governments, are utilising technology to supply them with information needed to gain advantage over those that do not have access to these sources.

According to Sturges & Neill (1990:31) many international organisations have taken an interest in providing information to developing countries, by means of using information technology. This has led to the development of several independent databases, for example, Agricultural Research Information System (AGRIS), Industrial Council for Development, Sahel Information Network in Mali, and the Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS). Faye (1995:17) agrees that many databases and databanks are currently in existence across the African continent, but adds that no standards and norms for the processing and exchange of information are currently in existence. Much of the information thus generated can only be used internally by the organisation's members. This leads to an unnecessary waste of resources.

- *Books and publishing* - The book industry is still very much a legacy of the colonial past. Much of what is being published, emanates from local agencies of international printing houses. The main aim of these companies is to make a profit (Otiike 1989:200). This results in international concerns having a monopoly over what is being published for the African audience.

Mchombu (1993:9) advocates the strengthening of the local printing trade, as it would stem the flow of information leaving the African continent. The root of the problem stems from the fact that Third World authors are obliged to publish their work in foreign journals as local facilities are not up

to standard. Kaniki (1992:86) agrees with this viewpoint, adding that because of the time lapse between the appearance of a manuscript and the publication thereof, the material is often not current any more. Many times a great deal of data is also lost in the process. This poor state of publishing leads to a wealth of material often not published.

Mchombu (1993:9) feels strongly that for Africa to solve many of its information problems, the continent needs to build up a strong information and knowledge base. This he feels can be achieved by strengthening the capacity for local publishing. Locally published works should be produced to substitute the unacceptable imported book.

Despite all the talk about resource sharing, Rosenberg (1993a:108) reports that not much has been achieved in that respect in Africa in the past few years. In some cases the perception among library professionals seems to be that the situation is actually deteriorating. Camara (1990:55) sees the following as reasons for the lack of a co-operative information system:

- ☐ insufficient financial resources;
- ☐ inadequately trained staff;
- ☐ lack of a national policy regulating its role and activities;
- ☐ widely scattered documentary resources and considerable duplication of effort due to poor co-ordination among the existing systems and services.

Musembi (1992:680) notes that most information services in Africa are under-capitalised and understaffed. Nawe (1993:7) argues that the financial constraints are mainly due to the perception that library and information scientists do not have the ability to satisfy the information needs of their

users. The failure of governments to realise the importance of information is another aggravating factor.

Kaniki (1992:87) maintains that because of inadequate training, information specialists avoid handling unpublished reports. Due to the inherent problems of this kind of literature, special skills and training are deemed essential. Lack of training results in unpublished reports, for example, feasibility studies, theses and dissertations, various types of reports and surveys, translations and conference proceedings, imperative for development, going unnoticed.

Kaniki (1992:87) identifies the problem areas as those of collecting, organising, storing and use of the material. Malima (in Musembi 1992:679) observes the following about the Tanzanian situation: "There is no systematic collection and organisation of the many extensive and expensive studies commissioned by our government. A valuable resource is lost, often necessitating more studies, covering much the same ground. There is no policy of outflow of such studies, so that one day we will have to purchase the very studies that we commissioned and paid for." As a solution to the problem, Kaniki (1992:87) recommends that the aforementioned techniques receive special attention during the training of information specialists.

The lack of an information policy co-ordinating the acquisition, organisation and dissemination of information, especially for developmental purposes, tends to be a major problem. According to Musembi (1992:681) the absence of an information policy leads to poor co-ordination between related information systems as well as to unnecessary competition. Maktba (in Musembi 1992:681) describes the situation in Kenya as one where "the information scene (is) characterised by lack of co-ordination, maldistribution of activities, gaps and unnecessary overlaps." A workshop held between Gambian and Ghanese documentalists revealed the need felt for such a policy, which should have the ultimate effect of minimising costs and strengthening information activities (Alegbeyele 1993:312).

Kaniki (1992:87) argues that the lack of a firm policy often leads to unnecessary strict control over government generated publications. Very often material is classified as being confidential, while it contains important information needed for development. He argues that the situation is the result of ignorance as to which resources should be regarded as confidential, and which not. This situation could be rectified with a formal information policy.

### **3.2.5 Lack of rigour to find an alternative library framework**

According to Sturges & Neill (1990:73) the reaction of the African public to the public library services rendered, was one of scepticism and apathy. The public perceived these institutions as being of little or no value to their everyday needs. The public's indifference inevitably led to the government's negative reaction, viz. that of barely tolerating libraries, placing them low on national priority lists.

In its search for sustainability and survival the African public library had to search for an appropriate and relevant information system. An overview of the library situation brought the realisation to librarians that the base on which the public library system was founded, had to be reviewed (Raseroka 1993:47). She points out that for quite a number of years, criticism has been levelled at public libraries for presuming that libraries were "a good" for the educational, cultural and recreational activities of the African society. The critics also maintained that literacy should not have been seen as a prerequisite for reaping the benefits offered by the public library.

It was the plight of the uneducated, the poorly educated, and especially the growing number of young people in need of a proper education, that compelled the library to seek ways to become more actively involved in the everyday lives of the people (Sturges & Neill 1990:138).

### **3.3 Alternative public library programmes**

According to Kaungamno (1985:294) libraries, especially those situated in rural areas had to be adapted to suit local conditions. Raseroka (1993:47) points out that selective support of literacy programmes became an accepted part of library services. This adaptation brought a wider acceptance of library services. Support of the new literates formed the basis of services rendered by the rural community libraries and resource centres.

In her thesis Stilwell (1991b:91) argues that these adaptations should be seen as alternative information services rather than public libraries. Alternative information services include the following: community libraries, resource centres and community information centres.

A common factor in the alternative services are that they operate in close co-operation with each community they serve. The community is involved in all aspects concerning the daily running, funding and management of these services.

On the African continent several experiments to find a suitable alternative to the Western public library model have been piloted, some more successful than others.

In 1981 an experimental library project was set up at Badeku village near Ibadan. Its main purpose was to provide an information service to a mainly illiterate community. It was hoped that this experiment would provide an insight into the expressed information needs of the people as perceived by themselves. It was also hoped that with this project the villagers could be made aware of their unexpressed information needs. Aboyade (1984:259-262) describes this experiment in detail, coming to the following conclusions:

- Leisure reading is enjoyed also by rural people, and is not just an activity enjoyed by those who are educated and have leisure time available.
- Villagers can actively seek the information they need, rather than sit around waiting for it to be offered to them. The project team concluded that information which was gathered by own efforts, would be better utilised than those offered to them.
- The library can become the focal point for information transfer in the community. It has the potential of becoming a centre for generating information about the community itself.
- The library can act as a catalyst in providing an outlet for bottled up frustration with what is perceived as the government's failure to deliver.

Rosenberg (1993b:33) points out that this specific experiment proves that mere information transfer is not enough to satisfy the clientele. What is called for are tangible results to their complaints. The villagers, for example, did not want to know how to make a water pump, they wanted the water itself.

In Botswana the Village Reading Room Project was launched. The community provides the buildings, sometimes even building it themselves. They take ownership of the building, materials and service. Training is being given by the centre responsible for rural library services. Assistance in problem-solving is given and material supplied for running the service (Raseroka 1994b:6).

The Botswana village reading rooms are run in conjunction with organisations involved in adult literacy and the National Library Services. Expertise and training of local literacy assistants are provided by the National Library Services. It is the task of these trained assistants to determine the information needs of the community.

The establishment of the village reading rooms led to the situation where they were overrun by students seeking a comfortable study place, resulting in adult learners, for whom the reading rooms were mainly intended, being turned away in favour of their children (Raseroka 1994b:6). Mchombu & Mtunyatta (1988:29,30) report that the utilisation of the village reading rooms by adults in the village are only 5%, extension officers 2%, adult literacy students 16%, primary school children 71% and teachers 4%. The main reasons for the use of the reading rooms were reported to be: to read newspapers and magazines, to find books for leisure reading, to find school related material, material on health, and books on farming.

In Zimbabwe the Rural Library Development, funded by donations, works on the same principles as its Botswana counterpart. In addition to the library a communal publishing project is launched allowing communities to contribute in the publishing of information which they deem of interest to them (Raseroka 1994b:6).

The French Centres de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle en Milieu Rural (Centres for Reading and Promotion of Culture in Rural Areas, (CLAC)) are experimenting with providing agricultural information to adults. All the materials provided are geared towards satisfying the information needs of the farmers. Information is disseminated through the use of videos, and new methods demonstrated by local people. The agricultural process is explained and, if necessary, amended, depending on the context of the information transferred (Raseroka 1994b:6).

A growing tendency towards co-operation between schools and communities in establishing libraries is experienced. A pilot project in this respect is currently being undertaken in Dakar and Senegal. During school hours the library is available to school children. After school the library is open to the community as a whole (Raseroka 1994b:6; Raseroka 1993:51). This trend is also experienced in Nigeria and Kenya where community information centres

are built by the community, for the common use of members of the whole community (Rosenberg 1993b:33).

Rosenberg (1993b:34), however, offers a bleak picture for the continued existence of these information provision services. She describes the life cycle of rural African libraries as:

Originating from the initiative of a group from the community or an aid agency, their birth is followed by a year or two of rapid growth and a good deal of local publicity and attention. This is followed by a period of slow decline, accompanied by theft, the departure of the initiators, loss of interest among staff and users - the library still exists but signs of life is barely discernible. Sometimes this period continues indefinitely, but often a final stage is reached, when all remaining books are removed, stolen or damaged beyond repair and the premises and staff are allocated to another activity.

Doubt as to whether these rural initiatives will succeed, is also expressed by Raseroka (1993:51). In her opinion research into the conditions necessary for rural libraries to become viable, needs to be conducted in order for library services to react and change meaningfully. This view is shared by Rosenberg (1993b:34) who adds that it might even be better to abandon services to the adult learner, and rather concentrate on the school child, being the adult of tomorrow.

Neill, Mchombu and Havard-Williams (1993:15) support this view, saying that despite all the talk, conferences, seminars, journal articles, etc. on the subject of library change in Africa to suit the expressed needs of the African people, very few, if any, concrete and practical results can be showed over the last ten years.

In spite of the negative conclusions reached by Rosenberg, Neil, Mchombu and Havard-Williams quoted above, the research reviewed in this chapter provides some pointers for the basic components of an alternative model for public libraries in Africa. Such a model is presented in Table 3.1.



**Table 3.1 African public library model**

| <u>Basic components</u>   | <u>Requirements</u>  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Prerequisites:<br/>(for successful service)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information policy;</li> <li>- Needs analysis;</li> <li>- Adequate financial resources;</li> <li>- Adequate, suitably, trained personnel;</li> <li>- Systematic collection and storage of materials, including local materials;</li> <li>- Close involvement of communities in planning, building and running of information centres;</li> <li>- Focus on service to youth;</li> <li>- Active involvement in literacy programmes.</li> <li>- Accessible to community members</li> </ul>   |
| 2. <i>Information:<br/>(to be supplied)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information available, relevant, sufficient, accurate and current;</li> <li>- Leads to tangible results, for example, water supply, not just providing information on water pumps;</li> <li>- Offered in a variety of formats, for example, suitable for literates and illiterates.</li> </ul>  |
| 3. <i>Cooperation :<br/>(between related information<br/>systems to make optimum<br/>use of scarce information<br/>resources)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public libraries are focal point for collecting and transferring of information relevant to community needs;</li> <li>- Government departments are dynamically linked to information delivery system via, for example, extension officers to ensure active sharing of valuable grey literature;</li> <li>- Non-governmental organisations are actively tapped for unpublished research results, conference papers, sponsored theses and copies of papers published in overseas journals;</li> <li>- Radio, TV and press are exploited for transfer of development oriented information;</li> <li>- Networking utilising information technology is stepped up with the assistance of international corporations active on the continent;</li> <li>- Standards for information handling and transfer are developed with the aid of international corporations.</li> </ul> |
| 4. <i>Training -<br/>(of suitable personnel)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdated syllabi reflecting colonial values are replaced;</li> <li>- Indigenisation of training programmes receive priority.</li> </ul> <p>Requisites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consciousness of African environment;</li> <li>- In-depth specialisation in repackaging; indigenous knowledge sources, for example oral history; information available from traditional rulers, community leaders, at drinking parlours, market squares, folklore dances and music; design of audio-visual materials, basic publishing;</li> <li>- Literacy teaching;</li> <li>- Continuing education of existing staff.</li> </ul>   |
| 5. <i>Evaluation:</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programmes continuously evaluated with active community participation.</li> </ul>   |

### 3.4 Conclusion

Many of the problems experienced in public library services in Africa can be ascribed to an inappropriate library model, resulting in inappropriately trained staff, and to the fact that the service is not based on needs. From the start, the needs of the communities the public library was supposed to serve, were ignored, and only the needs of the educated, urban-based minority taken into account. This led to negativism from both government and the majority of the population, resulting in floundering library services, proving Shera's point, that should the library not meet the demands of society, judgement would be passed by society on the services rendered, leaving it to fall into a state of decay, or to be replaced (Shera in Vermeulen 1989:5). Rosenberg's findings (1993b:34) quoted above tellingly corroborate this point of view.

Librarianship in Africa has reached the cross-roads. It has the option of slowly dying and falling into oblivion, or adopting a new paradigm, based on the rigorous re-assessment of priorities and the development of self-reliance, concentrating on the most important aspects of the service. New services will need to be developed, or existing services enhanced. Although still undefined these services will, of necessity have to be based on Africa's own resources, embedded in the real information needs of the inhabitants of the continent. The resultant model will have to be a less formal, less book-oriented information service, deeply rooted in indigenous information systems, and targeted at the real information needs of both the actual and the potential clientele (Neill 1991:16,17).

South Africa is very much part of the African continent, and although it has a more dynamic library history than most African countries, many of the problems experienced in African public libraries can also be traced to this service. In the following chapter library services in South Africa will therefore be discussed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4. Public library services in South Africa**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

As a result of the policy of separate development of facilities for whites, coloureds, blacks and Indians, library services for the privileged white minority were developed into an advanced system, while for blacks (who live in the communities covered in the project) were largely underdeveloped.

With the repeal of the Separate Amenities Act in 1990, separate library services for the different race groups also lapsed, and it was anticipated that the well-developed libraries in the former "white" areas would be overrun by new members eager to join. This, however, did not happen in the case of blacks, which prompted the question "Why not?" (Schimper 1993:5).

In this chapter the development of public library services in South Africa and the possible role public libraries can play in national development will be briefly traced.

The problems plaguing public libraries will be reviewed from a South African perspective and comparisons drawn with the rest of Africa.

For the public library to become a role-player in the field of national development, adaptations of existing services will be required. Possible adaptations suggested by the research reviewed, will also receive attention.

#### **4.2 Historical background**

The year 1761 marks the beginning of public libraries in South Africa. In that year Joachim von Dessin, a Dutch resident of the Cape, bequeathed his book

collection to the Dutch Reformed Church, with the express wish that it should be used as the foundation for a public library (Taylor 1967:15 ). In 1820 this collection formed the basis of the newly formed South African Public Library. The development of library services was relatively slow, and government support mostly lacking. In 1874 the government of the Cape Colony started supplying modest funds for library services, also granting official recognition of subscription libraries. After unification in 1910, the Financial Relations Act of 1913 provided official recognition of the fact that provincial councils were to be responsible for the administration, development and financing of the public libraries (Musiker 1986:180).

Inadequacies in the provision of library services to all race groups appeared to have been the norm. These inadequacies were recognised by Ferguson and Pitt (1929:10,18), two gentlemen commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation to survey the library situation in South Africa. These findings were also reflected in the findings and recommendations of the Bloemfontein Library Conference of 1928 in which it was concluded that there was a great need for adequate library provision for the "non-European" sections of the population (*South African Library Conference*, in Walker 1994:117).

Although several service points were in operation countrywide for the "non-white" race groups, services for the black population fell into total disarray due to lack of financial support when they were transferred from the provincial councils to the Department of Native Affairs in 1954. Representations to government for the reallocation of these services to the provincial councils were not heeded until 1970 (Walker 1994:121).

The year 1974 signalled the opening of the first library to all races, when the Johannesburg Public Library opened its doors to the whole community - a step soon followed by the other independent city libraries (Walker 1994:121). The Cape Town City Library had not in practice closed its doors to members of certain race groups and therefore did not need to formally declare its

service points open to all races<sup>2</sup>. The repeal of the Separate Amenities Act in 1990 led to the abolishment of all practices aimed at segregating races. Although legally obliged to admit all races, some town councils introduced stringent measures in an effort to block use of the library by black members, for example, Delmas Public Library introduced a membership fee for non-residents of R500,00 per adult and R300,00 per child per annum. Bethal Library also introduced a non-resident membership fee of R500,00 per person per annum (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:101; Libraries open to all in South Africa? 1990:803).

Provincial library authorities, however, adopted the policy of providing and developing services to the previously 'disadvantaged' groups, in consultation with local communities (Walker 1994:121).

Yet, in spite of these recent developments, Schimper (1993:5) reports that the anticipated rush to the library by black members did not materialise, resulting in the realisation that the services rendered by the public library are of little or no consequence to the wider community. Statistics released by the library authorities underline this lack of patronage by the wider community. The following table shows that no significant increase in library usage took place since 1994, the year in which South Africa became a democratic society, giving everybody equal opportunities and freedom. In fact, percentage wise membership dropped by 0,3% after 1994. Circulation of items, however, showed an increase of 0,5%, which might be ascribed to the fact that library membership, per se, increased by nearly 200 000 members, many of whom are most probably first time users previously having been denied the right to make use of library facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> C H. Vermeulen. 1996. Personal communication.

**Table 4.1 Comparative membership and circulation statistics**

| Year | Membership | Circulation | Population  | Membership<br>as % of<br>population | Circulation<br>as % per<br>member |
|------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1994 | 3 488 610  | 74 891 986  | 37 944 018* | 9.1                                 | 21.5                              |
| 1995 | 3 563 786  | 73 980 966  | 40 725 291  | 8.8                                 | 20.8                              |
| 1996 | 3 639 454  | 80 469 188  | 41 224 100  | 8.8                                 | 22.1                              |

\* *Provincial statistics, part 10, 1994*

*Cape Librarian January issues 1994, 1995, 1996.*

### **4.3 The role of public libraries in the reconstruction and development of South Africa**

The library profession seemed to have been aware of the fact that it was facing a crisis. The theme for the South African Institute of Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) conference held in 1986 was: *Libraries in a time of crisis* (September 1993:72), and at this conference a motion was adopted that the Council of SAILIS be requested to:

assume responsibility for the preparation of a document containing motivated proposals relating to the role of libraries and information services in the promotion of social, economic, and political development in South Africa (Zaaiman 1988:1).

This motion led to the publication in 1988 of the Zaaiman-report: *The use of libraries for the development of South Africa*. This report focused mainly on the public library and the role it could play in the development of South Africa. Adaptations to services which will have to be made in order for them to be relevant to the development process, were also identified (Walker 1994:119).

A positive result of this report was the fact that it led to many thinktanks, conferences, seminars etc. where the profession tried to address the many problems posed by the report.

One of the earliest initiatives was the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), under the auspices of the National Education Coordination Committee (NECC), which conducted research on the issue of educational development and services for a future South Africa. This research was conducted between 1990 - 1992. Although library and information services (LIS) were not initially included in this research, a group of librarians, associated with the 'alternative' Library and Information Workers Organisation (LIWO), initiated a NEPI LIS research group (Walker 1994:119).

In their report they stated what they saw as the desired state of affairs for LIS, i.e. integration of LIS with the education system, and provision for, and accessibility to library services to all on an equal basis.

This report led to the formation of TransLis (Transforming our Library and Information Services), by a number of LIS groups who felt the need for continued discussions towards establishing a new LIS policy for South Africa (Walker 1994:120). In its position paper, presented at the NECC policy conference held in Johannesburg from 2 - 5 December 1993, they indicated that a new paradigm shift was imperative - that libraries should integrate their information services with education (TransLis Coalition. Working Group 1 in Walker 1994:120).

In 1994 the African National Congress issued a discussion document, *A policy framework for education and training*, inviting all LIS stakeholders to comment on the content thereof. This document formed the basis for the work of the Centre for Education Policy and Development (CEPD), an independent trust, which was commissioned by the ANC to 'prepare proposals for implementation, which could assist the new national and provincial governments in the formulation of their plans'. A LIS Task Team was appointed to develop an implementation plan for LIS. Despite the task teams' contributions, LIS are just briefly mentioned in the final RDP document. (African National Congress in Walker 1994:120)

In 1994 the Transvaal Public Library Strategy Group's Community Library and Information Services (COLIS) published a document stating their views on the LIS situation in South Africa, and how they envisaged addressing its problems. The purpose of this initiative was: "to provide society with access to educational, informational, cultural and recreational documents and resources, either in general or for specific users. COLIS must provide equally for all people, regardless of gender, race, creed, age, language, education, ability or financial status" (Hansen 1995:1). To attain this goal, community participation and consultation were to form the basis for the rendering of services.

Despite the fact that all the initiatives indicated that libraries wanted to be aligned with education, the government dragged its feet in allocating libraries to a ministry. Eventually LIS was allocated to the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. Presently LIS is in the process of restructuring its services in the nine new provinces. (*South Africa Yearbook 1995* 1995:354).

Despite all these actions, the question could be asked whether it resulted in real change or whether librarians "spend more time talking and writing to themselves rather than addressing themselves to the wider community" (Bobinski in September 1993:73).

In her speech at the 1995 Annual Conference of SAILIS, Mrs. B Mbandla, Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, described the task she envisaged for the library profession in the newly democratic South Africa as follows: "to be a powerful force in the creation of our new society" (Louw 1995:1).

As a role-player in the educational advancement of the entire community, she urged the library profession:

to bring an awareness of information as a life-changing resource to communities, ..... to develop an information culture and information literacy among all our people (Mbandla in Louw 1995:1).



According to Mrs Mbandla, this needs to be done in close co-operation with government departments on both national and provincial levels, as well as other institutions involved in development projects.

According to Steenkamp (1995:1), the library's contribution to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), includes the involvement in community and government programmes, as well as the provision of information to those involved in these programmes. The basic principle of the RDP is to be a sustainable programme which will empower people through active involvement, and which will ensure peace and safety for all. In order to do this the RDP is aimed at eradicating poverty by raising living standards and giving every individual the opportunity to develop to their full potential. Education and training imbalances need to be redressed, not only at a formal level but also in the broader sense. This will ensure participation of all on the basis of knowledge, skill and creativity (Steenkamp 1995:14).

Thuynsma (1995:5) sees the public library as one of the institutions that are vital in the process of nation building. With the services it can offer, the public library can open both the world of knowledge and that of reading for pleasure to a nation torn apart by political differences.

Steenkamp (1995:15) agrees with this view, adding that the public library is in an excellent position to make a contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of all residents through the existing system of provision of library material, professional guidance and basic facilities.

In contrast to the current government's positive approach, officials of the previous government in 1988 still expressed doubts as to the role library services could play in development (Zaaiman 1988:10). This negative attitude could be the result of the perception that public libraries had little impact on the daily lives of the majority of people in this country. It is therefore important

to determine where we now stand with regard to public library services in South Africa, in order to suggest solutions that could be applied to make the library an active instrument in the development process.

#### **4.4 Current position of South African public libraries**

##### **4.4.1 Traditional library model**

Public library services in South Africa are based on the Western library model, i.e. a print-based service used to a great extent for leisure purposes by a mainly middle-class educated group of people. This implies that literacy would be a precondition for the use of library facilities.

This model proved relatively successful in communities with a high level of education, and therefore of literacy; and communities with access to information in different formats, enough leisure time and a well-established reading culture. However, while these conditions are prominent in most white communities, they are all but absent in the black communities, where lower levels of education and literacy, absence of a reading culture and different types of information and services to supply their needs, are prevalent (Shillinglaw 1986:40). The literature contains widespread recognition of the fact that this model is inappropriate for the needs of the majority of people in this country (Fairer-Wessels 1988:3; Shillinglaw 1986:40).

The policy of racially separated library services favoured white residential areas with regard to funds for library services. Within these areas a well-organised and well-developed infrastructure exists. Public libraries are either affiliated to the Provincial Library Services, or exist as autonomous services in the bigger cities with jurisdiction over a large number of branch libraries and service points.

According to Hansen (1992:6) 42,5% of the rural population (where the majority of the black population lives) has access only to the most rudimentary of public library facilities. Zaaiman (1988:28) is harsher in his criticism and describes the situation as "all but the total absence of libraries in rural areas." This is a situation which also exists in the urban black communities. In 1986 there were only nine libraries for blacks in Natal - three in urban areas, and six in rural areas (Johnstone 1988:5).

According to a survey of the South African Institute for Race Relations (September 1993:75) in 1991 the situation in the four city areas of Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Sandton were as follows:

| <i>Population</i> |           | <i>Libraries</i>              |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Whites            | 1 006 621 | 72 (municipal libraries only) |
| Blacks            | 3 962 652 | 17                            |

Alternative library services, for example, resource centres and community libraries, are in existence, functioning in mainly black areas (Hansen 1992:6). In 1992 the NEPI LIS report indicated the existence of approximately 120 resource centres in South Africa. These resource centres serve a mainly educational role in that they aim at empowering the disadvantaged through the provision of knowledge and skills. This is done through the repackaging of information, the running of workshops, the production of materials and the use of cultural activities such as plays to transmit information (NEPI LIS 1992:30 - 32).

#### **4.4.2 Buildings**

Existing library buildings are not nearly enough to answer the needs of every community. According to Hansen (1992:6) the policy in the old Transvaal province has been to supply a library building for every 6 512 White

residents. To bring all communities on par this would imply that in this region alone 2000 additional units would be needed. Adequate funding has always been a problem. According to Hansen (1992:6) the amount of money available, even with substantial annual increases in the amounts, is not enough to render the services needed to bring all services on par. Given the financial constraints imposed on library services, it seems an impossible ideal to supply standard library buildings to all communities. As a temporary measure, many halls and pre-fabricated buildings are converted into libraries (Hansen 1993:537).

In all the other provinces indications are that the lack of buildings, especially in previously disadvantaged areas, is receiving serious attention from library authorities. In the Free State, 28 libraries have been erected in black areas since 1990 (Dixon 1994:17). Similarly, KwaZulu-Natal, plans to build at least 45 new library buildings during the period 1993-1997 in order to redress the imbalance of library services to black communities in this province (Slater 1994:13). The Cape Provincial Library Service is building 25 new libraries, at present, concentrating on areas previously excluded from services. Because of the backlog in the building of libraries, some of them are temporarily housed in sub-standard buildings (Van der Merwe 1994:10). As a short-term solution, the conversion of ships' containers into libraries for informal settlements, is seen as a possible way of alleviating the acute shortage (Van der Merwe 1995:11).

#### **4.4.3 Collections**

Until recently book collections, still reflected mainly Western principles and ideals, leading to a situation where blacks saw the library as of no use to them (Bekker & Lategan 1988:96). With the growing realisation of a wider public that need to be served, provincial authorities started paying attention to the needs of the disadvantaged communities. However, at the end of the eighties considerable shortages of appropriate material, especially adult

literacy material, easy readers for adults, survival literature, and books in the indigenous languages, were still reported (Hansen 1992:6).

Zaaiman (1988:25) reported that Operation Upgrade (an organisation involved in literacy classes) presented their materials to the major library systems for possible purchase, but they were turned down, possibly because of an unimpressive look. This was alarming because Operation Upgrade is a reputable organisation which has produced numerous publications specifically written for the newly literate, as well as material on practical subjects, for example, health, agriculture, money matters, etc. which could be of use to the fairly literate person. Librarians were obviously in need of a serious mind shift with regard to the information needs of the newly literate.

Commercial booksellers have not shown much interest in providing material that would suit the needs of the newly literate, as they normally comprise the poorest section in the community, with no funds to buy books. It, however, seems as if the situation is changing. Several publishing companies, specialising in adult literacy material, have been established since 1990, for example, Viva Books, Kwela Books, New Readers Project, Fundani and ERA. Most of these companies, in addition to publishing material on topics of interest to the newly literate, also publish material in the indigenous languages (Van Gend 1996:30-31).

Most provincial authorities seem to be actively buying large quantities of these materials which are suitable for newly literates, and are distributing them to affiliated public libraries (Dixon 1994:17; Hansen 1993:536 Pitts 1994:21; Slater 1994:13; Van der Merwe 1995:10).

A wide variety of material is made available to public libraries in all the provinces. The material includes books, magazines, newspapers, compact discs, cassettes, art prints, video's, films, library journals and publicity material. Because of the cost of audio-visual material, not all libraries are

able to have large collections. Small collections are sent from library to library to enable all the communities to have the opportunity to borrow the stock.

In the Free State, 17 public libraries started a pro-active information service whereby any information that may be of use to members in their communities is collected, preserved and made available to all members of the public, irrespective of whether they are library members or not. This information does not necessarily have to come from a reference source. Community members also contribute to this project (Dixon 1994:17).

#### **4.4.4 Literacy programmes**

The level of education of certain racial groups in South Africa has always been a thorny issue. In 1986 the National Manpower Commission released the following figures concerning the educational levels of the labour force in South Africa: 30% has no formal education, 36% only primary education, 31% secondary education and 3% tertiary diplomas and university degrees (Herman in Jantjes 1995:14). With education still in the throes of transition, figures are unlikely to have improved much in the interim.

Fitzgerald (in Witbooi 1995:20) reports that 50% of African children leave school before Std. 3, while basic literacy is attained only after at least seven years of formal schooling (Witbooi 1995:20).

According to Fouché (in Barnes 1994:23) an educational level of at least Std. 8 is usually associated with public library use in black communities. The lack of education in developing communities thus prevents many members of such communities from using the library to help them overcome their disadvantaged position.

In South Africa statistics for illiteracy vary considerably. Some estimates put the figure at between 50 - 60% of the population (Fairer-Wessels 1988:2).

Witbooi (1995:18) quotes several figures published in the literature. For example, the 1990 READ annual report rates illiteracy at 73% of the population, while another study revealed that between 6 and 9 million South Africans over the age of 20 have no, or less than six years of schooling. Jantjes (1995:14) estimates that 66% of the black population in South Africa is not fully literate. The reason for these varying statistics lies in the fact that definitions of literacy vary. Whatever statistics are offered, the fact is that the majority of the population can neither read, nor read with ease. Jantjes (1995:14) also points out that the majority of these people are from black communities and live in rural areas. A significant number of the illiterates are women.

If libraries want to play a part in development, active involvement in literacy classes would seem to be a logical strategy. A survey of the literature, however, reveals that librarians in South African public libraries fail to agree on the degree of involvement. At present two schools of thought prevail. The one group of librarians declares that it is not the role of the librarian to be an educator. They therefore dissociate themselves from any literacy campaigns (Roets 1993:9; Pather 1995:5). The second group sees involvement of the library in literacy classes as a means of survival (Roets 1993:10). Most supporters of public library involvement do not see the role of the librarian as that of a literacy teacher. It is rather seen as one of supporter of literacy classes in whichever way possible, be it through provision of accommodation, or learning and reading matter (Johnstone 1989:299; Zaaiman, 1991:6).

In recent years some Transvaal public libraries took up the challenge of involvement in the national literacy campaign. In 1994, 13 service points were actively involved in either teaching classes themselves, or providing assistance. Eight more libraries were in the process of becoming involved (Roets 1994:3). According to Hansen (1993:537) many of the public libraries are experimenting with methods of assisting the newly literate to retain his/her new found skills. For example, in the Tsakane library, materials

suitable for this group are kept apart from the main collection, in order to ensure easy access. But because literates were found to be shy about their level of literacy, some appropriate material is also interfiled in the main collection. In this way the needs of the whole group are accommodated. Hansen (1993:537), however, emphasises the point that each library has to adopt its own methods as communities differ from one another.

In 1995 the Sandton Administration launched a literacy campaign. The Sandton Public Library decided to become involved and the library staff was trained to conduct literacy training for employees of the Sandton Administration. After investigation it was decided that the Library, Arts and Culture division of the Sandton Administration would extend this programme to the community. This decision culminated in the establishment of a literacy training centre run by the Library Division (Sandton Library part of RDP 1995:4)

Kempton Park/Tembisa Public Library services also became involved in literacy classes through offering their facilities to the Department of Human Resources of the Kempton Park/Tembisa Metropolitan Substructure. These classes are sponsored by Eloptro, and aimed at the general public. These efforts are apparently so popular that a waiting list already exists (Geletterheidskursus in Kempton Park/Tembisa 1995:5).

#### **4.4.5 Socio-economic and cultural conditions**

Given that a person is literate, the act of reading requires certain favourable conditions, for example, time available, proper lighting and space to read. In some black urban, and most rural areas, all or some of these conditions are lacking. Overcrowding poses a real problem. Travelling over long distances to and from work also cause most adults to be unable to make use of library facilities (Lotz in Barnes 1994:25).



#### **4.4.6 Publishing**

As in the rest of Africa, many different languages are also spoken in this country. Officially, South Africa has 11 languages. Material published in languages other than English and Afrikaans, is limited. The latest book production statistics available reflect these imbalances. In 1995 2 716 English and 1 676 Afrikaans titles were published, compared to only 226 in Xhosa, 175 in Zulu and 109 in Tswana. The situation with regard to the remaining language groups was even worse (South African National Bibliography 1995:xxi). The black person thus is often left with no option but to read material in a second language, mostly reflecting Western perceptions and attitudes contradicting his own life view (Chakava 1984:351; Tötemeyer in Barnes 1994: 25).

The main reason for the lack of books in indigenous languages lies with the fact that publishing in African languages has often proved to be a commercial disappointment (Zell in Machet 1993:170). Poverty among blacks results in them not having extra money available to spend on books.

The oral tradition is also very strong in black communities. Because reading is a solitary action, requiring privacy, it is generally regarded as an abnormal and anti-social activity (Osa in Machet 1993:170).

#### **4.4.7 Lack of needs analysis**

Public libraries, also those established specifically for blacks, are neither reflecting, nor addressing the real needs of their communities (Fairer-Wessels and Machet 1993:101). Rather, libraries are reflecting Western library principles and ideas, which are unacceptable to black communities. In 1988 Bekker and Lategan observed how Blacks perceive urban libraries:

By their nature, they do not cater for the needs of the urban black community, irrespective of how well-stocked and developed they may be. This is because people need to be advised, need to be given the

opportunity to ask questions, to ask for further explanation, to see for themselves (Bekker & Lategan 1988:69).

Also:

Their holdings are not geared to the needs of the urban black community, especially as they are generally irrelevant to specific community circumstances.

To overcome this impediment libraries will have to address the needs of each community. This will require constant research into the needs of their communities.

In his report Zaaiman (1988:33) identified the general information needs of Black communities:

☐ Social needs

- health;
- personal hygiene;
- proper sanitation;
- common diseases;
- family planning;
- child care;
- elementary first aid .

☐ Economic needs

- financial organisation;
- acquisition of trade licences to stimulate the formulation of small businesses;
- legal rights;
- agricultural methods to ensure successful harvests.

☐ Political needs

- political problems and choices facing South Africa.

The need for prescribed textbooks and study material as well as basic reference sources has also been identified (Zaaiman 1988:33).

Although these provide guidelines with regard to general information needs, it must be borne in mind that each community has its own unique information needs, and a proper community analysis, by means of community surveys, with regard to the real needs of a specific community, needs to be undertaken before material is acquired for the library. Currently supposition of information needs still reigns supreme.

#### **4.4.8 Inappropriately trained staff**

The shortage of suitably qualified staff presents a problem in the South African situation. In 1988 many libraries, especially in black areas, were still run by inefficient and often untrained staff, serving more as an impediment in the process of information dissemination than a help (Zaaiman 1988:11). Within the library profession it is realised that the changed audience and needs require a changed attitude by librarians towards the way in which services must be rendered. At a symposium held in 1994 by the Department of Library and Information Science of the University of Zululand on the topic "Library and information training: reconciling theory and practice", the importance of these "new" skills and attitudes were highlighted by several library professionals. Some of the skills and attitudes mentioned included: communication skills, computer literacy, service attitude, report writing skills, work ethic, negotiating skills and public speaking skills. These skills need to be instilled during tertiary training (Vermeulen 1995:4). Hansen (1992:6) recommends that tertiary training institutions urgently revise their curricula to include these "new" skills.

Shillinglaw (1986:40) points out that the highly skilled librarians produced by library schools normally join the elite they serve. This alienates them from the

disadvantaged masses, making it very difficult for the public library to offer a relevant service.

In an analysis of the current education and training of library and information workers, Nassimbeni, Stilwell & Walker (1993:31-32) found that a variety of institutions, for example, universities, technikons, and colleges of education, offers courses with library qualifications, ranging from professional to para-professional.

Curriculum offerings reflect the ideals of the inappropriate Anglo-American model and are not addressing the realities of the current library and information structure of South Africa. Until recently the profession failed to attract the attention of significant numbers of black students, thus hampering efforts of providing communities with highly trained and skilled people to run their libraries (Nassimbeni, Stilwell & Walker 1993:32). According to Vermeulen<sup>3</sup> (previously Head of Department: Library and Information Science, University of Zululand (1996)) this situation has drastically changed in the past few years, for example, all but three of the 1996 intake of the Advanced University Diploma in Information Studies students at the University of Natal, were black. Accordingly the curriculum has also been adapted introducing modules directly concentrating on the problems surrounding provision of library services to all South Africans.

As a response to the failure to produce appropriately trained staff, alternative approaches to training have also emerged during the last decade, centring on the fact that librarianship cannot be a neutral activity, but an activity biased towards the disadvantaged. This approach is in direct opposition to the passive, traditional approach.

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<sup>3</sup> Prof. W.M. Vermeulen 1996. Personal communication.

This training has the following characteristics:

- ☐ short term intensive courses;
- ☐ highly responsive to needs of individual resource centres;
- ☐ training done by skilled and experienced resource workers or academics;
- ☐ little cost involved;
- ☐ no differentiation made between different library types: all are seen as library and information services;
- ☐ addressing problems of access to training institutions (Nassimbeni, Stilwell & Walker 1993:37-38).

#### **4.4.9 Cooperative library activities**

One of the major activities of the public library is the identification, assessment and satisfaction of the information needs of the community. Performing this task presupposes access to information sources. According to Kaniki (1993:562) "accessibility [to information sources and information itself] is the single most important determinant to which an information channel is used".

As is the case with the rest of Africa, resource sharing has become a necessity, also in South Africa, mainly because of financial constraints. Co-operative activities, as far as public libraries are concerned, are well established in this country, thereby indicating that systems are in place to assist the library users in their search for information. The institution responsible for the coordination of this task is the State Library, one of the national libraries.

The State Library is one of the legal deposit libraries receiving copies of all sources published in South Africa (Behrens 1994:62). These copies are used to compile the South African National Bibliography, which can be used by all library and information services to determine what is being published in this country. In this manner the user can extend his search beyond the frontiers of his own library catalogue (Behrens 1994:88).

An interlibrary lending scheme, known as the Southern African Interlending Scheme (SAIS), involving approximately 750 library and information services throughout southern Africa, is also the responsibility of the State Library. Through this system the participating libraries make their holdings available to joint catalogues. This implies that they are making their sources available for loan or to provide photocopies, to those members who request an item (Behrens 1994:51).

In 1983 a computer database, the South African Bibliographic and Information Network (SABINET) came into operation, originally serving only 45 institutions. Currently 420 institutions, including many public libraries, are subscribers to this cooperative system. Public libraries can use this system not only to trace material available in South Africa, but also, through the many international databases accessible through SABINET, sources available in countries world wide. Interlibrary lending requests can be done electronically (Du Plessis 1996:15).

SABINET offers the possibility that libraries can download catalogue entries into their own in-house library system. Through the database Book Data, libraries can keep up to date with publications in print (Du Plessis 1996:15).

Lor (1992:28-29) maintains that even with the advanced resources sharing tool available through the SABINET system, it is mainly the research libraries, as well as most university and technikon libraries who are full members of this system. The smaller and poorer libraries, as well as the non-traditional

and alternative libraries remain on the periphery of this service, because of a lack of funds to subscribe to this service. It is especially community libraries and resource centres which are left out in the cold.

Public libraries not subscribing to SABINET can use the SAIS interlending system to access the national book stock. This is normally channelled via the provincial library system. Experience however, has shown that especially the smaller public libraries make little use of this service (Lor 1992:29).

Despite all the available systems to access information, it would seem that information transfer, especially information for developmental purposes, is still severely hampered. According to Cillié (1995:2) this kind of information has up to now only been made accessible for government departments and officials. It is now recognised within library circles that developmental information should be made available to libraries outside the Public Service, noticeably on the provincial level, in order for these libraries to pro-actively play a role in information transfer to all members of a community. How this is to be achieved is still not certain, but Bredenkamp (1995:7) advocates that the existing network of libraries be utilised, and that lessons learned from other African countries be heeded.

#### **4.4.10 Development of alternative library services**

The distribution of public libraries are heavily biased towards white users and their residential areas. The scrapping of the Separate Amenities Act in October 1990, did not do much to alleviate the problem of accessibility to library facilities for all members in the community. Stilwell (1992:214) argues that, for years to come, prevailing political and socio-economic factors will continue to influence access to library facilities for all members of a community.

In order to address the needs of those communities sidelined by the inadequate distribution of public library services, an alternative type of library and information service emerged. Since 1984 a host of non-governmental, non-profit, non-racial and democratic resource centres were established (Dreyer 1991:22). By 1989, 93 resource centres were already listed (Stilwell 1992:214). The NEPI LIS report cited 120 resource centres (NEPI LIS report 1992:31).

Saldanha (in Lategan 1989:11) defines a community resource centre as:

... one controlled, owned and sustained by the residents to motivate, empower and enable the local people to participate in projects aimed at meeting their needs and to develop networks.

From the outset the predominant task of these centres was to strengthen mass-based organisations and to serve the mass democratic movement, seeking to empower communities through the provision of resources and facilities otherwise unavailable to them (Stilwell 1992:213). To enable the resource centres to fulfil this task, close relationships with the community or organisation they serve, are imperative. Drawing from the skills and experiences of their users, resource workers strive to empower the people. They thus act as facilitators in promoting self-reliance.

Community resource centres are located in specific communities, providing the necessary facilities and resources needed by the communities in order for the members to develop themselves (Karelse 1991:14). Services provided could include:

- ☐ the development of relevant resource collections;
- ☐ user training to ensure optimum use of resources;
- ☐ repackaging of information to make it accessible and relevant;



□ referral services (Dreyer 1991:22).

Community libraries are the other predominant alternative information provision system that emerged as a result of the appalling state of library services in the disadvantaged communities. The characteristics of these libraries i.e. community participation in all aspects of the establishment, organisation and maintenance of the libraries, active communication between librarian and user, alternative materials and equal accessibility to all the community's resources, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Within the South African context not many community libraries are operating as yet, although the trend nowadays seems to be to refer to public library systems as community libraries, for example, the Pretoria Community Libraries.

Resource Centres are more commonly found, as they played a direct role in the struggle against apartheid, bringing to disadvantaged groups the necessary information sources and services.

#### **4.4.10.1 Resource Centres**

In her thesis Stilwell (1991:283-311) describes all the different resource centres and initiatives available in South Africa at that time. The author of this thesis, will thus only concentrate on some examples of alternative services.

##### **4.4.10.1.1 Alexandra Resource Centre**

The Alexandra Resource Centre opened on 1 February 1992 (Kalley 1995:201). This centre devises programmes and courses together with the community. Apart from educational and training programmes, several community functions, for example, weddings, funerals, plays, fashion shows, etc. are held. Within the Resource Centre several services, of which the

library is one are offered to the community. The library was initially established as a READ (Read, Educate and Develop) project, aimed at serving students and the Alexandra community. Several innovative ideas, for example, a book club for primary school children, storytelling programmes and audio-visual and computer programmes linked to the school syllabus, have been introduced.

The library moved to the Alexandra Resource Centre in order to make the facilities available to the widest possible selection of the community. For funding the library relies on donor support, with several major companies, for example, Perm, Toyota, South Africa Foundation and Sanlam contributing to the finances.

The library forms part of the Resource Centre Complex. The book stock still needs to be expanded, especially the non-fiction and reference sections. Books in these sections are not allowed to be circulated, due to problems with retrieving the material. Suggestions for specific books can be made to the librarian who forwards these suggestions to READ for purchasing. Needs of the community as well as those of pupils and students are taken into account when new books are purchased. A few magazines and daily newspapers are also available.

The library is most often frequented by pupils and students, but several outreach programmes are aimed at reaching out to younger pupils and adults. Reading programmes on Saturday mornings are aimed at encouraging young children to make use of the facilities. Parents are also encouraged to use the facilities.

Outreach programmes form an important part of the library programme. Literacy classes are presented, and storytelling is done regularly. Stories are dramatised in an effort to encourage reading. Special marketing strategies

are also envisaged especially in order to encourage parents, pupils from technikons and youth clubs to make use of the available facilities.

Community involvement is attained by way of a suggestion box. The Library aims at empowering the community to become involved in collection development, management of the facility as well as imparting information skills (Kalley 1995:201-203).

With the democratisation of South Africa it is envisaged that donor support will wane, thus making the library reliant on governmental support (Kalley 1995:204).

#### **4.4.10.1.2 Ecumenical Centre's Resource Centre**

The Ecumenical Centre's Resource Centre was established in September 1983 in reaction to the information void left in disadvantaged communities through the system of apartheid. The centre is a project of the Ecumenical Centre Trust, an ecumenical Church agency. The resource centre was established in an old school with the aim of providing a centre where people could meet, work and exchange ideas (Berghammer and Karlsson 1988:8).

Although the Resource Centre looks and functions in many ways like an ordinary library, it does differ in some respects.

- The material collected comprises the collective resources of several organisations. Although the material remains the property of each contributing organisation, it is on permanent loan to the resource centre.
- The collection specialises in southern African socio-political subjects, and the material includes printed media, audio media, visual media and audio-visual media.
- The Centre is open to all living and working in the Greater Durban Area.

This Resource Centre can be seen as the pioneering resource centre in South Africa. Through its experiences the Centre was able to contribute to the development of other resource centres in the region. This is done by advising groups on how to start a resource centre, as well as assisting with the development of an in-service training course at the University of Natal, for those staff members already employed in resource centres (Karlsson 1989:21).

#### **4.4.10.1.3 Pietermaritzburg Resource Centre Library**

The Pietermaritzburg Resource Centre Library opened in 1987, aiming at providing a central information service. This resource centre is the result of a joint effort between the Natal Society Library and the Department of Library and Information Studies of the University of Natal. The library is run by an advisory committee, and funded by an annual donation from Old Mutual. Resources are made available for use from the Natal Society Library, University of Natal and the Natal Provincial Library Services. Displays of books are coordinated with workshops and courses offered by the different organisations making use of the premises, in order to enhance these activities and maximise the utilisation of the centre for informational purposes.

Although the initial aim was to provide information only to the affiliated welfare organisations, the enthusiasm of the librarian resulted in it extending its activities far beyond the initial scope. The collection has grown into one of the largest non-computerised collections of information on AIDS (Acquired immunity deficiency syndrome). The centre also became involved in literacy classes and the running of workshops for teachers to empower them to run their own libraries.

In 1991 the Resource Centre ceased to exist as a separate entity and was incorporated into the Tembalethu Community Education Centre's Resource Centre. The Resource Centre acts as an experimental library for Advanced

Diploma students in the Department of Information Studies. Participation in the library forms part of the students' course work requirements (Rayner 1990:46 - 47).

Although limited funds hamper services, the library is seen as a response to the needs of the users, and as such is seen as an important tool in the process of empowering the disadvantaged.

#### **4.4.10.2 Community Libraries**

As stated above community libraries are not yet common in South Africa. However, one "ideal" example has been identified and some of its activities will be described.

##### **4.4.10.2.1 Vosloorus 'Community Library'**

According to Stilwell (1991b:268) the Vosloorus public library seems to represent the community library ideal. It is situated in the Vosloorus township, 17 kilometres from Boksburg. In order to play a role in the community, outreach programmes received the highest priority (Khunou 1994:7). For example, a toy library was started, keeping the children constructively occupied in the library. When accompanied by a parent, the children could borrow the toys over weekends.

Storytelling and puppet shows form a major part of the library's activities, mostly performed by community members.

Adults are involved through talks, seminars, career guidance displays and community clubs, for example, the hikers' club. An activities room and a study centre are made available to the public, even over weekends. This is monitored by a Library Committee who volunteered their services.

Literacy classes form an integral part of the library's activities. The staff qualified as literacy teachers. As a means of advertising the literacy classes, the librarians reached out to the community by talking to ministers, advertising their classes in the churches. Teas, "book days", and cultural activities are also used as a means of advertising the classes. The overwhelming support of these classes soon resulted in candidates being referred to night classes to be accommodated there. Once the learners are able to read, they are introduced to library books.

The outreach programme is also extended to taxis. Old magazines and donated reading material are placed in the taxis for passengers' use. If they need more information on a specific article, readers can contact the library.

Close cooperation with schools is maintained, and teacher-librarians often organise visits to the community library to undertake school projects. User-guidance is also given to the school children, and some of them act as monitors, helping others find their way around the library.

Library hours are in accordance with the expressed needs of the people and the library stays open after hours each day to accommodate those who want to use the facility after work.

Sponsorships are sought when funds or materials are needed for projects. Through some of the projects unemployed people are given the opportunity to learn a new trade or skill. These people are encouraged to sell their wares, and if possible make a contribution to the library (Khunou 1994:8).

Although described by the librarian, Mrs. M Khunou, as an "uphill" battle, these activities reached out into the community, making this public library a vibrant, integrated part of community life in Vosloorus.

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During the apartheid years resource centres focused on providing information to those deprived of access to it because the political system denied them free and equal access to information. The characteristics of resource centres identified by Karlsson (1994:18 - 19) include the following: " the collection is specialised in content" and "there is a special relationship with the 'progressive movement'". The latter term is defined by Karlsson as "including 'extra-parliamentary groups, trade unions and community-based organisations'" (Karlsson 1994:19, footnote). Pakade (in Karlsson 1994:20) states that resource centres emerged through independent community initiatives, as important elements within education and politics as factors of social change and as alternative to state information services.

The resource centre's strong links with the political struggle of the apartheid era (which is now something of the past), and the specialised nature of its content indicated above, probably explain the tendency on the part of public libraries to opt for the community library model in their quest for a paradigm shift which will enable them to meet the information needs of developing communities in South Africa. The public libraries of Pretoria, Pinetown and Vosloo Rust have been identified in this regard. For this reason resource centres will be disregarded in Chapter 5.

#### **4.5 Summary of characteristics of current South African public library services**

Table 4.2 summarises the characteristics of the current South African public library system which reflects some similarities with services in the rest of Africa, but also significant differences.



**Table 4.2 South African public library service: current characteristics**

| <u>Basic components of system</u> | <u>Characteristics</u>   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>1 Library model</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Western library model</b></li> <li>- Appropriate for developed communities;</li> <li>- Inappropriate for developing communities, with low levels of education and literacy, poor socio-economic conditions and an oral tradition.</li> <li>- <b>Infrastructure</b></li> <li>- Well developed in former "white" areas, nearly non-existent in other areas;</li> <li>- Provincial library system prioritising disadvantaged areas. Authorities still reluctant;</li> <li>- Access to networks.</li> <li>- <b>Collections</b></li> <li>- Represent mostly Western values;</li> <li>- More appropriate material, for example, adult literacy material, and literature in indigenous languages receiving attention. New local publishing bodies specialise in adult literacy material;</li> <li>- Number of indigenous languages hamper publishing for local needs.</li> <li>- <b>Community information service</b></li> <li>- Still not widely practised, although a feature of resource centres and community libraries.</li> </ul> |
| <b>2 Needs assessment</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Needs analysis still inadequate;</li> <li>- More research required.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3 Staff training</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training mainly geared to skills required in developed communities;</li> <li>- Awareness of need for changes in curricula to accommodate needs of black communities;</li> <li>- Non-traditional skills addressed but not yet adequately;</li> <li>- Profession divided on issue of literacy training.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4 Library co-operation</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relatively well established, sophisticated systems exist;</li> <li>- Interlibrary lending facilitated through joint catalogues, databases and networking;</li> <li>- State Library co-ordinates interlibrary lending.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>5 Alternative services</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two main types of alternative models: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resource centres;</li> <li>- Community libraries.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Aim at empowering disadvantaged communities;</li> <li>- Forge close links with the community;</li> <li>- Collections based on community needs. Consist mostly of alternative material, for example pamphlets, newspapers and audio-visual material;</li> <li>- Services rendered according to needs expressed by the community. Level of services determined by users.</li> </ul>   |

When comparing public libraries in Africa and South Africa it is obvious that they share many similarities. Both are based on a model inappropriate for the needs of the African public. They are thus hampered in their efforts to play a meaningful role in development. This has the effect of the libraries being sidelined by government officials. Lack of adequate research into the information needs of each community is also a common feature, resulting in inefficient services. Adequate training of staff to cope with the specific problems of this continent, also still remains a problem, as training is to a large extent based on services and practices applicable in developed countries, although encouraging signs of a paradigm shift are evident.

However, significant differences can also be identified. Whereas African public libraries have a poor and sometimes non-existent record of co-operation with other information systems, the South African public library system forms part of an extensive cooperative resource sharing initiative. This provides access to a fair amount of the publicly available information sources within southern Africa, as well as abroad.

Whereas the rest of Africa is still in the process of trying to find workable alternatives to the inappropriate library model, South Africa boasts several well-established resource centres and community libraries paving the way for a paradigm shift. In this respect it would thus seem as if Africa could take a leaf out of the book of the South African alternative services.

#### **4.6 Adaptations required to become a developmental library service**

For the public library to play a meaningful role in development, more relevant library services need to be developed. Shillinglaw (1986:40) advocates that, for the service to be relevant to each community, it needs to be adapted and redesigned, departing radically from the Western model.

In finding a new paradigm for the public library, attention should be given to the following aspects:

#### **4.6.1 Collections**

Collections still reflect mainly Western perceptions and attitudes. This should change so that public library services can become more Africa-centred (Schimper 1993:4). The collections should reflect the dichotomy of the population of South Africa, i.e. it should reflect the needs of both the developed and the developing communities (Vermeulen 1989:12).

As students are the most active users of public libraries, special attention must be paid to their needs. Vermeulen (1989:12) recommends that multiple copies of prescribed books as well as sufficient study material to support formal education, be supplied. According to Van der Merwe (1995:10) this kind of material is currently supplied in large quantities to libraries.

The collection development policy should strive to meet the needs of the multi-ethnic users. If enough material in the indigenous languages is not available, translation services should be utilised to make the necessary material available (Mothuloe 1993:8).

In building collections, libraries should shed their neutral stance. Collections need to reflect the issues uppermost in the minds of their users, even if the topics are contentious (Schimper 1993:4). The public library should have the courage to allow the people the opportunity to read their way to the truth (Vermeulen 1989:14).

A whole range of new materials needs to be included. It should include all kinds of media, for example, tapes and videos made by the local people, transmitting their cultural heritage, stories written by youths and newly literates and audio-visual material (Mothuloe 1993:8; Vermeulen 1989:13).

Alternative material should make up a large portion of the collections (Schimper 1993:4; Vermeulen 1989:13). This material is not produced by recognised publishing companies, and is normally published in cheaper formats. It contains information on subjects vital for the development of communities. Vermeulen (1989:13) emphasises that usefulness and suitability should constitute the major criteria, and not format.

In order to establish a relevant collection development policy, a proper knowledge of the community is of paramount importance. Participative community involvement is essential in determining needs (Vermeulen 1989:14). Regular analysis of the community and community surveys need to be conducted to establish new trends and needs in order to adapt collection development policies (Gericke 1992:4).

#### **4.6.2 Information needs of the community**

Library services need to be based on the information needs of the community. This will require in-depth research (Vermeulen 1989:14). The research needs to determine which services are required to cater for the community's determined information needs. Zaaiman (1989:23) structures the information needs of each community on that of the Maslow hierarchy of needs. According to Zaaiman (1988:22) a community whose needs are at the lower levels of the hierarchy will assign higher priority to information that will enable its people to "survive". Communities differ from one another, and levels of need will therefore also differ. Research should indicate the level of information appropriate to each community's needs.

Research should also indicate information such as, the most appropriate place to establish the service, as easy access improves the library's chances of integrating itself in community life, the most appropriate hours suiting the majority of the community, and the level of development in the community. This will determine the kind of services the library could offer, for example, in

a community with low levels of literacy, the library would concentrate on services benefiting the illiterate, such as literacy classes, repackaging of information and dissemination of information through non-print sources.

Needs must be determined by means of community analyses, community surveys and data collection. With this information in hand the character and the special needs of each community can be determined. As needs often cover a wide spectrum, for example, political, cultural, economic and religious matters, participation of the community leaders and community members is essential when developing a collection for the community (Lategan 1992:4).

#### **4.6.3 Literacy programmes**

The promotion of literacy should gain a permanent place on the agenda of the public library if it wants to play a meaningful role in development. Cram (1996:8) sees it as the moral obligation of libraries to become involved as "it is only by actively supporting illiteracy that we can support literacy, and the developing literacy of the user population we are funded to serve."

Involvement can take different forms: direct involvement in teaching literacy classes, provision of facilities for example, lecture halls, or by acting as facilitator for the classes (Claasens 1994:15; Dahwa & Makinta 1993:16; Lentoa 1995:11; Pather 1995:5; Riding 1987:9).

#### **4.6.4 Marketing the library to developing communities**

The perception amongst the developing communities has been that libraries - with limited exceptions - play no role whatsoever in providing information to the urban black community at large (Bekker and Lategan 1988:69). Libraries are still mainly seen as centres for studying.

Unawareness of library services leads to non-use. Most black communities have had little or no exposure to library services. Awareness needs to be created through active marketing.

Kotler (in Gous 1995:20) describes marketing as: "the analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully formulated programmes of an organisation to facilitate the exchange process with various target markets with a purpose to achieve an organisation's aim". Marketing should be done in such a manner that the products and services on offer are attractive enough to entice the public to make use thereof. To enable an organisation to successfully market its products/services, it is essential to have cordial relationships with the community as a whole. Staff attitudes, such as friendliness and general helpfulness, should form the cornerstone of this strategy.

Within the South African public library service marketing still concentrates on activities mainly enjoyed by the middle-class educated elite, for example, reading circles, holiday programmes, authors visits etc. (*Cape librarian, Boekparade, Kwaznaplis, Free State libraries*). These activities, however, only tend to strengthen the buildings-based nature in which library services became entrenched (Barnes 1994:66).

Innovative methods need to be introduced to make developing communities aware of services offered by libraries, and to entice them to make use of facilities. This view is supported by Bester (1990:5) who maintains that to attract this group, libraries need to make their services and stock more visible. Librarians need to move into the community, actively advertising the library.

Vermeulen (1989:16) also advocates that the library should become involved in activities that will promote it as a cultural centre. The library should become a centre where people can meet, share their knowledge and be

informed on educational issues. Iwuji (1990:58) maintains that the library should become integrated in the civic centre, with the library forming part of the package. Inclusive in this centre should be: indoor and outdoor facilities, adult education classrooms, conference facilities and exhibition and audio-visual centres. This will lead to facilities open and consumable to the general public irrespective of their background. He sees a public library conceived and built along these lines as becoming the focal point in the community, attracting a large number of users representative of the community.

#### **4.6.5 New staff skills and attitudes**

Zaaiman (1988:48) reports that librarians need to develop new skills and attitudes, as the traditional library skills are not sufficient to cope with the demands that will be made by the new library user community. Mothuloe (1993:9) and Karelse (1994:24) see these qualities as: bilingualism, even multi-linguism, speaking at least one African language, cross-cultural awareness, ability to work in a team, good communication and listening skills, skills of facilitation and mediation to help users act on information provided, willingness and ability to interpret, repackaging and application of information to the user's situation and the ability to create appropriate services for the local community.

This is iterated by Nassimbeni, Stilwell & Walker (1993:40) who maintain that the training programme should, although still retaining traditional library skills, also pay attention to the following:

- ☐ recognition and fostering of the oral tradition in communities;
- ☐ the ability to realise the need of rural communities for accessible information, as well as the actual making accessible of information sources;

- literacy training skills;
- local history, culture, socio-economic and political issues;
- the importance of a National Information Policy;
- training in the use, as well as in repackaging, of media for easy information access; training in the use of information technology.

In response to the need identified for revised curricula, the University of Zululand has incorporated some modules in their curriculum such as, community librarianship and computer literacy. A workshop was also held in 1996 which addressed the skills needed by graduates who plan to make Library and Information Science their career. (Personal observation by the researcher).

#### **4.6.6 Outreach**

Luckham (in Riding 1987:8) sees outreach as "going out into the field, creating relationships, activities or groups which did not occur spontaneously but which will enable the library to benefit all sections of the public, ... in fact, becoming a positive social force in the community".

Extension services, as a way of luring users into the library, have proved to be rather unsuccessful, as this kind of service does not evaluate the fundamental problems in the service, but is based on the assumption that libraries are a "good" thing which just needs to be served to the people in a more appealing way. Although these activities may lead to an increase in library utilisation, the service still remains entrenched in the library building, instead of reaching out to the man in the street (Barnes 1994:65,66).



Outreach, however, can be seen as a sincere attempt to provide an adequate relevant service to all sections of society. It reaches outside the library to deprived “information poor” communities (Martin 1989:74). Outreach can also be seen as social intervention - intervention to empower those disadvantaged by society.

Outreach programmes can include:

- ☐ delivering of, or backing up of literacy programmes;
- ☐ provision of study space for students;
- ☐ presentation of life-skills programmes aimed at empowering individuals to cope with daily problems;
- ☐ presenting work skill programmes designed to help specific groups to obtain and/or perform certain jobs;
- ☐ teaching child-care skills;
- ☐ presenting parental development programmes;
- ☐ hosting alternative education programmes in the form of non-formal and informal training (Barnes 1994:89).

These programmes should be adapted to suit the needs of the community, and actively involve them. In this way the library can become the focal point in developing communities.

Table 4.3 provides a model for a public library service that will support the development of South African communities.

**Table 4.3 Developmental public library model**

| <u>Components</u>         | <u>Characteristics</u>   |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>1 Library policy</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal policy spells out aims and purpose.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2 Needs assessment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveys determine needs;</li> <li>- Researched facts form basis for services offered;</li> <li>- Active involvement of librarian helps to meet certain needs, for example, need for advocacy.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3 Collections</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are based on needs of community as a whole;</li> <li>- Prioritise student needs;</li> <li>- Reflect more Africa-centred viewpoints while respecting needs of developed communities;</li> <li>- Adequately represent indigenous languages;</li> <li>- Include contentious material; neutral stance is shed ;</li> <li>- Provides alternative material, for example, pamphlets and audio-visual material, oral stories on tape and material produced by community members.</li> </ul>                   |
| <b>4 Staff training</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional library skills retained but supplemented by new skills:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good communication and mediation skills;</li> <li>- Multi-linguism and cross-cultural awareness;</li> <li>- Interpretation and repackaging of information;</li> <li>- Facilitation and mediation skills.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| <b>5 Outreach</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aims to provide relevant library services to whole community, embracing its dichotomy;</li> <li>- Aims to empower disadvantaged communities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teaches life-skills, work skills and child-caring skills;</li> <li>- is involved in literacy programmes:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- directly by conducting classes</li> <li>- indirectly by providing facilities and services.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>6 Marketing</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintains good relations with the community to market the library successfully;</li> <li>- Library is focal point in community;</li> <li>- Innovative marketing methods are applied, for example, involvement in cultural activities, personal advertising by librarians and making service more visible to public through displays in shopping centres or at fairs.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>7 Evaluation</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuous evaluation of programmes determines relevance</li> </ul>   |

## 4.7 Conclusion

The public library in South Africa has not yet emerged as a developmental force. The literature survey revealed that it is still very much operated along Western library model lines, a model which has proved to be largely unsuitable to the needs of the African people. However, encouraging signs have been identified which indicate that the library profession is aware of the need to find a new paradigm, to prevent the public library from being relegated to the sideline by a government and population who see no use for this institution. The library profession seems to heed Shera's warning (in Vermeulen 1989:5), that society will judge the services offered by the public library, and if found wanting, will either ignore it, or replace it with an agency based on the needs of the society.

The need for urgent action can be detected in the mushrooming of alternative library services in developing communities during the last few decades, providing information services to those previously excluded from them. The success of these alternative services shows that they are filling an existing need, in ways and means that carry the approval of the communities, and from these services public librarians must learn how to provide a more active, integrated, relevant service, based on the needs of the community.

The model presented in Table 4.3 incorporates lessons learnt from alternative library services such as resource centres and community libraries. In South Africa resource centres have had close links with the freedom struggle, and with this stage of our history behind us, this type of service would seem to be less appropriate as a future library model.

In her thesis Stilwell (1991b:241) argues for the development of a library model that is flexible - while not abandoning important principles and practices, the services rendered must be adaptable to suit local needs and each different situation.

Community libraries as represented by Vosloorus Public Library (par. 4.4.10.2.1) would seem to meet this basic requirement of flexibility identified by Stilwell. Pinetown Public Library also opted for this model for their service to disadvantaged communities and the characteristics of community libraries will therefore be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5. Community libraries**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

As indicated in the previous chapter public library services in South Africa have so far failed to live up to expectations. Alternative information services, especially community libraries, offer attractive solutions to the problems experienced with the services rendered to previously disadvantaged communities. The Pinetown Public Library recognised the merits of the community library "model" for its service to disadvantaged communities therefore a discussion of community libraries is relevant to the present study.

The characteristics and methods of service to the community will be defined and described in order to determine clear guidelines for establishing and developing a service along improved lines.

Public library services and community library services will be compared in order to ascertain how they correspond or differ from each other. By using this comparison, the author will attempt to define the exact nature of a community library service, also bearing in mind the inadequacies and remedies highlighted in Chapters Two, Three and Four.

#### **5.2 Community Libraries**

In Chapter one several definitions of community libraries have been identified, but the exposition most commonly referred to in the literature is that of Coleman (in Barnes 1994:74) which will be discussed in paragraph 5.2.1 to facilitate the identification of the major characteristics of community libraries.

### 5.2.1 Characteristics of community libraries

Coleman (in Barnes 1994:79) identifies the following characteristics of community libraries:

- The subject matter of the material found in these libraries is often directly concerned with the lives of the individuals in each community. The materials are mainly of a transitory nature, for example, leaflets, posters, pamphlets and newspaper cuttings. Within mainly illiterate communities resources should also include audio-visual material. A main resource is that of repackaged material. Repackaging of information is seen as the processing and transformation of scientific and technical information into formats which are accepted, understood and useable by illiterates or by those whose reading capacity is minimal (Rosenberg 1986:8). It is seen as the responsibility of the librarian to repackage information (Raseroka 1994a:159; Kempson 1986:188). Stilwell (in *South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:6) emphasises the lack of standard procedures for obtaining and organising the type of material needed in a community library.
- An active involvement between the librarian and the user is imperative. This active interaction leads to a better understanding of the nature of the user's problem. Estabrook (1979:153) argues that this involvement should lead to direct library/librarian involvement in the life and activities of the community. As a result hereof, the community also becomes involved in library decision-making.
- Close co-operation with other organisations and programmes operating in the community is seen as essential. The community library forms only a part of the overall information network. It needs to rely on the cooperation of the other agencies to assist the library in information gathering processes. It also needs to rely on these agencies to refer their clients to,

when mere provision of information is not enough to solve a problem. Community libraries cannot operate in isolation (Stilwell in *South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:6).

- These services are of a highly political nature in the sense that everybody should have the right to equal access of information and society's resources. This is also a characteristic that distinguishes the community library from other information services.

Apart from the characteristics identified by Coleman, several other aspects are also identified in the literature.

Community libraries differ from public libraries in that they are established at the request of the community, and are maintained and funded through resources made available by the community. Community libraries need to be established with the full co-operation of the local population. Consultation with accepted leaders in the community should be used to establish the nature of the service expected. Stilwell (in *South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:6) advocates participative research and participative management as methods for ascertaining the needs of the community. An important aspect that needs to be taken into account is the existing information networks in the community, so as to harness, and not compete with them.

Stilwell (1991a:19) maintains that the social purpose of these libraries differs markedly from those of the public library. While the public library is passive about its sense of social purpose, community libraries are pro-active. Within community libraries neutrality of service is seen as neither possible nor desirable.

Community libraries should be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of social standing. Expensive buildings do not have to be the norm

for housing these libraries. According to Stilwell (in *South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:6) small, cheap units, in close proximity of the people's abodes, can be used.

Information provided should address the real needs of the people. Positive discrimination in favour of the disadvantaged is needed when providing access to the nation's resources. Community information services aim at providing information to the community to help members cope with their designated roles within that community. The information provided covers all aspects of life to assist community members to cope with day-to-day problems and to improve their quality of life (Legoabe 1995:16) This type of information encompasses:

- *survival information* - relating to aspects, for example health, childcare, housing, finances, legal and political rights;
- *citizens action information* - needed for effective participation in the social, political, legal and economic process, either as an individual or as part of the group (Lor in Louw 1993:20; Donohue in Pienaar 1995:15). This kind of information has been necessitated by the growth and specialisation of bureaucracies, as well as the increase in, and complexity of the legislation regulating our everyday lives (Pilkington & Morrison 1996:6).

Community information services can be provided either from within a library, or from a separate centre. It can take several forms, ranging from information and referral, direct service, back-up service to self-help services (Pilkington & Morrison 1996:7).

- *Information and referral* is defined as the "active process of linking a person with a need or problem, with a service which will meet or solve the problem" (Pilkington & Morrison 1996:7). Kantumoya (1992:36) sees this type of service as preventative and educational in the sense that its main



aim is to direct people to find the best assistance for their individual or community problems. Activities involved in this process can cover the following: advice, steering, outreach, community education, referral, counselling, information giving, identification of problems, feedback, community action and research.

- *Direct services* - this means the librarian and the user are in face-to-face contact with each other while information is being disseminated. This would involve active staff involvement between the library and agencies within the community who might be able to assist in finding solutions to certain problems. Kantumoya (1992:36) advocates that libraries might even allocate rooms to certain agencies, which they can use at set times, in order to offer their services directly to the public, for example, giving legal advice once a week to individuals.
- *Back-up service* - this service is based on participation in community contact schemes and includes a multitude of possibilities, ranging from information exchange, collection and dissemination of information, training courses, joint services, campaigns, current awareness bulletins, periodical articles, leaflets and whatever else might be the need of that specific community (Pilkington & Morrison 1996:7).
- *Self-help* - this is seen as the ultimate goal of community information services. Self-reliance and growth as a person need to be the aim of the provision of community information services. This implies that the information supplied needs to be in a form and manner that can be easily understood and used by the ordinary citizen. Posters, simple leaflets in ethnic languages, self-help packages, the provision of bulletin boards to advertise services and jobs, and displays of leaflets on everyday topics, that can be taken by the user to be perused at his leisure, are all methods that can be used to reinforce the principle of self-reliance (Bunch 1993:16; Pilkington & Morrison 1996:7).

Each different community information service will emphasise a different type of service, depending on the needs of the community served. It is therefore difficult to typify a community information service.

Community information services call for a different kind of staff member for providing the information service. Stilwell (1991a:20,24) sees the ideal candidate as a person coming from the community, keeping a high profile in their communities by being an active member in community activities. This will enable the librarian to forge a close relationship between him/herself and the community. Good communication and motivational skills are necessary to ensure involvement by the whole community (Ferguson [1987?]:9). This interaction will result in staff not merely being passive mediators between the published sources and the public, but becoming active participants in the creation of new information sources (Kambule 1992:43).

New skills should also include methods in which information is to be disseminated to the community. Information and skills should be shared in order to demystify and challenge the traditional power relations in society (Stilwell 1991b:318). Kantumoya (1992:34) argues for the easy access of information to all-and-sundry, but especially the lower social groups, against whom information networks have always been biased. He maintains that information in Africa is being disseminated through methods inaccessible to the common man, be it in the rural or urban areas. The National Consumer Reference Council (in Kantumoya 1992:34) has the following to say about the lack of access to information by the majority of people:

People will not be able to get their due as citizens of present day society unless they have continuous access to the information which will guide them through and where necessary, the advice to help them translate that information into effective action, and unless they get their due, they are unlikely to recognise the reciprocal obligation that all citizens have to the society.

The unbiased dissemination of information, using means and methods known and accessible to the man in the street, would thus be a major task of the

librarian. This would entail different skills in actively finding the correct information, repackaging and disseminating it - skills which are not normally used within the traditional public library sector.

*Table 5.1 Nature of community libraries*

| <u>Components</u> | <u>Characteristics</u>  |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 Establishment   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established at request of community;</li> <li>- Needs full co-operation from community.</li> </ul>   |
| 2 Governance      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participative management in the form of a community committee;</li> <li>- Participation ensures relevant services.</li> </ul>  |
| 3 Finance         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funds provided by community/sponsors.</li> </ul>   |
| 4 Aims            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pro-active service;</li> <li>- Empowerment of all community members, especially the disadvantaged;</li> <li>- Making all community resources available to all community members.</li> </ul>  |
| 5 Users           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can determine membership - either open to whole community, or restrictions can be imposed.</li> </ul>  |
| 6 Information     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Directly linked to the everyday lives of community members;</li> <li>- Two kinds of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- survival information, for example, on health and childcare;</li> <li>- citizens action information, for example, information concerning social, political and legal rights;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Mainly alternative material, for example, pamphlets, brochures, newspaper clippings and oral material;</li> <li>- Pro-actively provides information to the disadvantaged in the community, to help them cope with problems in their daily lives.</li> </ul>   |
| 7 Services        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active interaction between librarians and users;</li> <li>- Pro-active approach necessitates different forms of service, for example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information and referral: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Linking the correct service with the correct user.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Direct service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face-to-face contact between the librarian and user to solve the user's problem;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Back-up service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on active involvement of library staff in community activities and services that can make the community aware of sources that can solve their problems;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Self-help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching the users to become self-reliant.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>- Each community determines the type of service rendered.</li> </ul> |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 8 Staff       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different qualities than those of traditional librarians, are required from staff-members, for example,</li> <li>- Staff are known to, and trusted by the community;</li> <li>- Good communication and motivational skills are essential;</li> <li>- Staff are able to repackage information.</li> </ul> |
| 9 Cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active cooperation exists between library and other community organisations.</li> </ul>  |

### 5.3 Defining a community library

When attempting to define a concept, the main characteristics of that concept need to be taken into account. Defining the concept "community library" is no easy task, as community library means different things to different people, as seen from the different opinions offered in paragraphs 1.7.2. and 5.2.1. Its basis, services and the community it will serve, differ according to the needs of each specific community. It is therefore not a static concept which can be applied in all circumstances to all conditions. Based on the general characteristics discussed above, the author will attempt to define the concept in general terms, keeping in mind that variations can occur.

In the author's opinion, a community library is:

"an active, community integrated information service rendered to a specific community, based on specific information needs identified by the community, founded, organised, maintained and funded by community members."

### 5.4 Public library vs. community library

Public libraries and community libraries have certain characteristics in common, but they differ considerably in most. Common ground is found in the respect that both provide service to a community. The manner in which this service is to be provided, however, differs. Another common factor is the fact that both are educational in intent. According to Astbury (1993:64) the public library is primarily concerned with the provision of professional support to fulfil the educational needs of the self-learner. The community library,

however, actively participates in the educational process through offering courses to assist with the upliftment of the community served.

Differences are found in several areas, for example aims, types of services offered, types of material collected, management, organisation and financing and staff attitudes and skills.

Whereas public libraries are established and funded by the government, the community library is established at the request of a community who express their need for an information and library service (Raseroka 1993:50; Stilwell 1989:266). According to Fairer-Wessels & Machet (1993:106) this is a voluntary action taken by certain community members, and excludes any involvement of the government.

The public library service is the concern of the local authority, and therefore they are responsible for the provision of a service. Representatives of the community are responsible to deliver this service. In most cases the library staff instigate and are responsible for the activities and services rendered to the community. Traditionally services include the provision of cultural and leisure information, and audio-visual services (Musiker 1986:183 - 187).

Community libraries decide on their own policy and constitution. The governing body decides on the services to be rendered, the methods to be used, as well as the activities of the library. The choice of users is also determined by this body (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:106). Raseroka (1993:50) points out that the community actively participates in the management of the library.

The public library is financed from public funds, mostly supplied by rates revenue from the local authority (Shillinglaw & Thomas 1988:266; Vermeulen 1989:2). Additional fees can be obtained by levying subscription fees or fees

paid for the late return of material. Additional financial assistance is given by the provincial administration in the form of subsidies for capital costs.

Community libraries obtain their funds from sources other than the government. Fees can be charged for membership, or the community can obtain funds through fund-raising events. Sponsorship from local companies, businesses and foreign sources form a significant part of the funding (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:106; Kalley 1995:202; Lategan 1989:11; Raseroka 1993:50). Kalley (1995:204) in her evaluation of a community library project in Alexandra points out that as South Africa follows the road of democratisation donors will be more and more difficult to come by, and that the financial support of community libraries should more and more become the responsibility of the government and the local authority.

The Public Libraries Research Group (in Muddiman 1990:90) defines the aims of the public library as:

... to contribute to sustaining the quality of life in all its aspects ..... educational, economic, industrial, scientific and cultural. It should make freely available the records of man's experience to all who may ask and thus promote and foster the free flow of ideas.

This view is also shared by Fouché (in Johnstone 1988:12) who sees the general aims of the public library as that of informal education, cultural enlightenment, the dissemination of information and recreation. He maintains that the library should be the centre of communication within the community.

As these are general aims, each community must be assessed to determine the specific needs of the users, and the aims must be adapted to suit local conditions.

Community libraries aim to:

... motivate, empower and enable the local people to participate in programmes aimed at meeting their needs (socio-economic, political, educational). It will also develop networks to co-ordinate their efforts to

uplift the quality of their lives (Saldanha in Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:106).

Stilwell (1991a:20) describes one of the aims of the community library as that of bringing about social change. To attain this aim the library has to gather, organise and seek people as sources of information. As these sources are not exclusively published material, repackaging needs to be done to enable all community members to understand and utilise the content thereof.

A further aim that Stilwell (1991a:20) advocates is that of provision of information in areas of people's lives where they need it most. Information should also be provided to those who have limited access to other sources of assistance.

The aims of these two institutions thus differ radically. The public library offers a relatively structured service, leaving the responsibility for self-development with the individual. Community libraries, in contrast, aims at being actively involved in the day-to-day struggle for survival and upliftment in their communities (Legoabe 1995:16).

Common to both services is the fact that they serve a specific community. Public libraries, being public, tax-supported institutions, are by law required to serve the whole community within which they are situated. Users can include a diversity of age groups, educational levels, interests and culture groups (Shillinglaw & Thomas 1988 266). Services are to be free of charge.

As they are under no legal obligation, community libraries are free to choose the community they wish to serve (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:106). Membership fees can be charged (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:103).

Traditionally the public library offers three types of services, i.e. cultural and leisure services, information services and audio-visual services (Musiker 1986:183 -187). These services are available to the whole community.

Growing concern for the plight of the disadvantaged led to the establishment of community information services in some public libraries, notably in the Free State (Dixon 1994:17). This is a pro-active service, striving to provide any kind of information that might be needed by the community. This kind of service is still not very widely implemented within South African libraries (Stilwell 1991a:21).

Community libraries offer services based on the needs of each specific community. Ritchie (1982:38) advocates that services should be structured in such a way that they address themselves to the problem of helping people to cope with daily problem-solving activities, in order to enable them to fully participate in society. According to Stilwell (1991a:19) services offered are to be politically oriented, addressing the real needs of the people.

According to Shillinglaw & Thomas (1988:266) the public library stock includes a variety of material. Although the whole range might not be available in each public library, it may include the following media: print media for example, books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets and maps, audio-visual media for example, gramophone records, audio-tapes; video-media, for example, video tapes, films and slides, pictorial media, for example, photographs, art prints, paintings and posters. The level of understanding of these sources will mostly be suitable for the layman, although some records may cater for the more scholarly user.

The materials in the community library can include the full range of sources traditionally found in a public library, but the main accent needs to fall on material that will assist communities to better their circumstances. Stilwell (in *South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:5) maintains that such libraries mainly choose material in a form and language that is useful to the people they serve. It can include publications, but information is also gathered from individuals in the community. This information is repackaged and presented in a format acceptable and useable by the majority in the community.



Inexpensive ephemera, newspaper clippings, pamphlets and leaflets make up an important part of the material. Vermeulen (1989:13) aptly names this kind of material, alternative material.

Public libraries, by nature of their generalist information service, rely largely on printed and published information to provide their service (Pilkington and Morrison 1996:6). As an information provision agency they therefore stand largely alone, with little or no liaison with outside agencies or organisations, apart from their participation in the interlending system.

Community libraries cannot operate alone, but form part of an information and advice network (Stilwell in *South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:6). As community information providers they have to rely heavily on the co-operation of other societies and agencies, for information on the one hand, but also for assistance to groups and individuals, when required on the other hand (September 1993:76).

Traditional public library services have been offered in a very passive way. Information services are rendered by merely informing, i.e. relying on printed matter to supply the answer, which is then passed on to the inquirer. Information services seldom reach the stage where users will be advised, i.e. either by selecting and interpreting information for an individual to answer a specific need, or to provide an opinion on what course of action should be followed (Brooke in Jackaman 1973:18).

Both Bekker & Lategan (1988:70) and Zaaiman (1988:48) report that this passive service is unacceptable to the black communities, and that new attitudes and skills are imperative to serve their needs.

The community library regards close contact between the community and librarian as essential. It is therefore important that the librarian is a known and trusted person. Active promotion of information, and follow-up action

such as referral, escort or advocacy, are envisaged (Stilwell in *South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:5).

*Table 5.2 Comparative table: public library vs. community library*

| <u>Components</u>   | <u>Public library</u>   | <u>Community library</u>   |
|---------------------|---|--|
| 1 Establishment     | - By request of local government.   | - At request of community.   |
| 2 Governance        | - Governed by local authority.  | - Participative governance through representative community body.  |
| 3 Finance           | - Tax-supported;<br>- Additional fees through subscriptions or fees;<br>- Subsidies from Provincial authorities.  | - Financed by funds generated by community, for example, membership fees or fundraising events;<br>- Sponsorship from private organisations.   |
| 4 Aims              | - To sustain quality of life;<br>- To make available records of man's experience free of charge;<br>- To provide informal education, cultural enlightenment, dissemination of information, recreation.  | - To motivate and empower<br>- To enable disadvantaged communities to participate in activities<br>- To bring about social change<br>- To provide information to help with upliftment                              |
| 5 Users             | - Serves whole community free of charge.  | - Can choose clientele<br>- Can charge membership fee  |
| 6 Service attitudes | - Passive.  | - Pro-active   |
| 7 Services          | - Cultural and leisure services;<br>- Information services;<br>- Audio-visual services;<br>- Community information services (not widely available).   | - Structure services to meet the needs of the people;<br>- Services intended to help people cope with daily problem-solving;<br>- Politically oriented - provide equal access to available information resources . |
| 8 Types of media    | - Print media, for example, books, periodicals, newspapers;<br>- Audio-visual media, for example, gramophone records, audio-tapes, CDs;<br>- Video-media, for example, video tapes, films and slides;<br>- Pictorial media, for example, posters, photographs and art prints. | - Selects any format as long as it is useful to solve information needs, for example, print media, oral media, alternative media like ephemera, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, personal communications.           |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>9 Cooperation<br/>with other<br/>organisations</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relies mainly on own printed information sources;</li> <li>- Little or no contact with other organisations, except for interlending purposes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cannot operate alone;</li> <li>- Forms part of information and advice network, for example, with clinics, legal practices, local authority.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

## 5.6 Conclusion

Community library services display many qualities that make them an attractive option for the way library services need to be adapted. These libraries are based on the principle of active participation by the community in all aspects of service provision. Community members thus contribute towards the maintenance, organisation and funding. This ensures that each specific community receives a service based on its needs. Active interaction between the library personnel and community members forms part of the service offered, resulting in librarians gaining insight into the real problems and needs of the community, making it possible to pro-actively provide services.

An important aspect of community library services is that of the provision of community information. The aim of a community information service is to empower all community members in order for them to play a meaningful role in their community. In this chapter the different methods through which community information services can be delivered were discussed, concluding that each community's needs will determine the kind of service delivered. Different skills will be required from the library personnel to provide this service.

From the comparison between public libraries and community libraries, it became clear that fundamental differences exist between these two library types. The public library exists as a tax-supported, print-based, passive service, relying mainly on the libraries' own information sources to supply an information service to the community. In contrast, the community library is a community funded, pro-active, service, co-operating with community organisations to provide an information service. The information service is

based not only on printed material, but also on a variety of alternative materials such as pamphlets, audio-cassettes, and audio-visual materials.

Seen from the perspective that the public library endeavours to play a more prominent role in development and education, as discussed in chapter two, it is obvious that the traditional passive public library service offered by public libraries in South Africa, is not sufficient for this purpose. A more active, community oriented service is necessary. Community libraries might therefore provide the solution.

In South Africa several public library systems are calling themselves "community libraries". The Pinetown public library is one such system which adopted this term for its service points in developing areas. In the following two chapters this system will be analysed to see if the libraries in disadvantaged areas are community libraries or whether they merely changed their name to suit the popular trend.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **6. Pinetown library system**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The Pinetown public library system consists of a traditional public library, four branch libraries and ten community libraries. In this chapter the historical background to the development of Pinetown will be described. A detailed description of the development of the public library system will be provided.

The establishment of the community libraries is a relatively new development. Only the development of the five oldest community libraries will be traced as the latest ones are still in the process of establishing themselves in their respective communities. The general background to the development of these libraries will be discussed, the manner in which they are funded, as well as the training of their staff. A section will also be devoted to problems experienced by the librarians.

Except for the historical overview of the town, all information on the development of the library system will be based on reports, pamphlets and articles written by the librarians, as well as interviews conducted with the librarians from both the main library and the community libraries.

#### **6.2 Pinetown**

Pinetown is the principal town of the Pinetown district. It was laid out on Salt River Poort farm, which was surveyed by Thomas Oakes and granted to Andries Marthinus Laas in 1874. Originally it was 2 415 ha in extent, but was later subdivided and 540 ha purchased by A. K. Murray. In 1849 the land surrounding the Wayside Hotel, a staging post on the wagon road between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, was surveyed for a township which came to be

known as Pinetown Estate, named after Sir Benjamin Pine, Lieutenant-Governor (1849-56) and Governor of Natal (1873-75) (Connolly 1982:163; *Official South African yearbook* 1995:280; *Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa* 1973:578).

In 1871 Canon J. S. Crompton took transfer of the balance of Murray's estate and this land, on both sides of Crompton Street, forms the centre of Pinetown today.

By 1855 the town had a population of 151 residents (*Official South African Municipal Yearbook* 1995:280). The town experienced a temporary boom in 1876 when the railway from Durban reached it, but with the continuation of the line beyond Pinetown, its importance as a railhead fell away (*Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa* 1973:578).

Rapid development began after 1925, when the town gained local authority status as a public health committee. The town was proclaimed a township in 1942, and obtained borough status in 1948 (Connolly 1982:163).

Pinetown is a thriving residential, commercial and industrial centre. At present more than 30 heavy industries and 400 light industries have been established in the town's industrial area. Educational facilities include approximately 50 pre-primary schools, 11 primary schools, 5 high schools and 1 technical college. Other facilities include a hospital, libraries, a variety of sports facilities, retail outlets, hotels and banks and building societies. An estimated 100 000 residents live within the town's boundaries (*Official South African Municipal Yearbook* 1995:280-281). Many of the residents commute between Pinetown and Durban for work (*Illustrated Guide to Southern Africa* 1990:340).

Adjacent to Pinetown proper, a black residential area developed, commonly known as Pinetown South. The history of Pinetown South is closely related to

that of Mariannhill Monastery. This monastery was established by Father Francis Pfanner for the Trappist order in 1882, with the aim of converting the tribal black people to the Roman Catholic faith, and to provide education and employment for them. The availability of the monastery caused many families to move to its vicinity.

During the 1960s Government policy attempted the relocation of many of the families living in the area, with no apparent luck. In 1989 the Natal Provincial Administration requested Pinetown to assume responsibility for the upgrading of the black residential area on an agency basis. Today a thriving community live in the area, which is expected to double within the next decade (*Official South African Municipal Yearbook* 1995:281)

### **6.3 Pinetown public library system**

Pinetown boasts one of the oldest libraries in KwaZulu-Natal. The first library was opened by Edward Horton in 1865. The library was housed in his home and his daughter Charlotte was the first librarian. A membership fee of one shilling per month was levied. The first library had as its aim that "the villagers and farmers in the district could share his (Horton's) reading matter and keep in touch with the homeland by means of magazines and [news] papers (Pinetown library - history 1865 - 1995 1995:1)".

The library was transferred to the Pinetown Hall during the late 1880s. From this abode the library moved several times until it eventually was moved to its present building which was custom built for the library in 1983.

The system consists of the main library, four branch libraries, Dassenhoek, Nirvana Hills, Motala Heights and Mariannridge, which opened in the 1970s, and 10 community libraries<sup>4</sup> which have been established since 1992 (Van

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<sup>4</sup> When the research was originally conducted, only 5 community libraries

der Merwe 1995:26). The main library, the four branch libraries, and the ten community libraries are financially supported by the local authority. The whole Pinetown library system is affiliated to the Provincial Library Service, from which they receive their book stock. Staff from each library visit the Provincial library to choose and exchange books (Van der Merwe 1995:26).

The main library is open to the public for 53 hours a week, while both the branch and community libraries are open for 43 hours. At the end of 1994 the total membership of all the service points was 31 219, and the total book circulation was 625 085. Circulation of other items was: 20 185 periodicals, 1 621 records, 6 121 video cassettes, 111 art prints and 748 compact discs (*Official South African Municipal Yearbook* 1995:755, 768).

### **6.3.1 Community library development**

The establishment of the community libraries was the direct result of requests made by the respective community organisations and residents' associations. The many students in need of a library service, the distance between the residences of the communities and the Pinetown library, as well as the prospect of instilling a reading culture in the high school students were cited as reasons for the wish that library services should be established<sup>5</sup>. It was also envisaged that these libraries would be used by adult community groups<sup>6</sup>. After several representations to the Borough of Pinetown, conditional approval was given to become involved in the establishment of community libraries<sup>7</sup>.

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existed. A personal communication with Mrs Whittaker, the chief librarian, confirmed that 10 community libraries are now in existence.

<sup>5</sup> Letter written by the Klaarwater Residents Association, dated 5 February 1992, requesting the establishment of a library service.

<sup>6</sup> Letter written by the Mpola Coordinating Committee, dated 21 February 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Community Library Development - pamphlet.



The first community libraries to be established were St Wendelins, Klaarwater, Mpola and Tshelimnyama which opened their doors to the public in May 1992. In 1993 Thornwood was established. These community libraries are included in the study.

As the members of the community were not local ratepayers, the services could initially not be financed from Borough funds. Funds for salaries and operating costs were obtained from the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration's Community Service Branch. Since 1994 the Borough has taken responsibility for the financial costs, and salaries are paid by the Borough of Pinetown.

The Provincial Library Service provided the book stock, some old furniture and shelves and some audio-visual equipment. In February 1994 Klaarwater, St. Wendelins and Thornwood received new furniture<sup>8</sup>.

Some of the libraries were initially housed in temporary buildings until proper accommodation could be supplied. The Durban Functional Region provided the funds for the building of Klaarwater and alterations to St. Wendelins. The local Joint Services Board approved funds for the building of Mpola<sup>9</sup>.

Funds for activities and special programmes must be generated by the community library staff themselves (Van der Merwe 1995:26).

Each community library started with a complement of two volunteers. These volunteers came from within each community, and in most cases had no previous experience of library work. In April 1994 five of these volunteers were accepted as permanent full-time employees. The remaining five are

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<sup>8</sup> Report on the increased circulation statistics of the Pinetown South libraries dated 23.05.94.

<sup>9</sup> The community libraries of Pinetown South.

employed on a half-day basis. Within the staff structure of the Borough, they are on the same level as Central Library Assistants.

Training and supervision of the staff are provided on a one-to-one basis by the Pinetown Public Library. They are given extensive training for a three to four week period, and from there on are assisted on a personal basis when problems arise. Aspects covered in this period include: issue desk duties, weeding, mending of material, how to do shelf reading, how to do a story-hour and cataloguing and classification. These are all skills taught to librarians functioning in traditional public libraries. It would seem as if skills such as: good communication and cooperation with individuals and the community, repackaging of information and marketing the library services using innovative methods, skills commonly associated with community libraries, are not included.

In an effort to create better cooperation between the central library and the community and branch libraries, a senior branch librarian was appointed in January 1994. The job description of this staff member includes daily contact with the libraries to help with problem-solving and training, to conduct inspections, write progress reports and render general assistance (Van der Merwe 1995:26).

Quarterly, combined staff meetings were initially held, but since January 1995, meetings are held on a monthly basis. During these meetings problems can be discussed with the Chief Librarian (Van der Merwe 1995:26).

Community librarians are responsible for their own activities, workshops and story hours. Lack of proper facilities, for example, activity halls, to stage these activities, seems to pose a problem. According to surveys conducted by the author, the main activities are story hours and holiday programmes for the children.

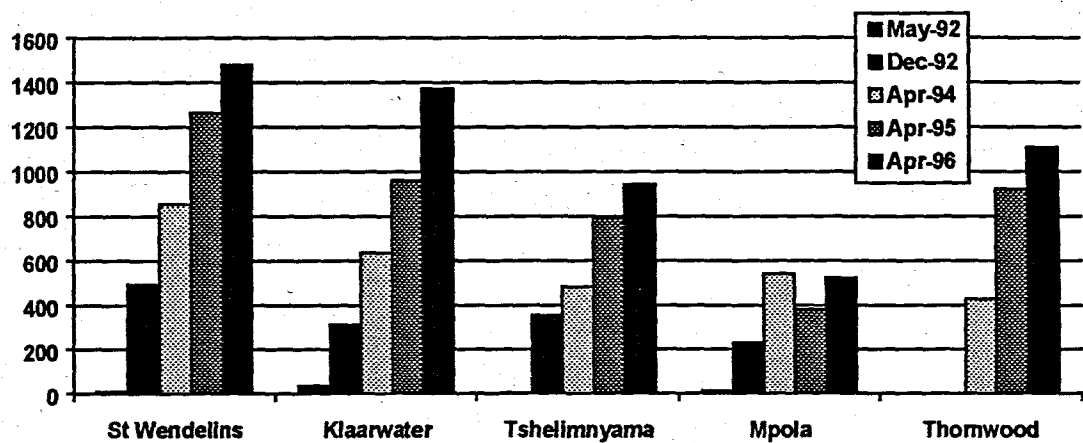
The community librarians assist with community needs assessment. This knowledge is used when selecting books for their libraries from the Regional Provincial depot.

Monthly reports, combined with the monthly statistical report have to be submitted to the central library. An annual yearplanner must also be provided to the central library early in each year.

Marketing activities are conducted by way of posters, which are prepared by the staff.

Membership has showed considerable growth since the establishment of the libraries, as illustrated in the graph below.

Figure 6.1 Community library membership



The only library that had a negative growth rate in any year since 1992 was Mpola in 1995. Much of this can be attributed to the fact that the library space, in that period was extremely cramped, and it had no study space for students. However, since the library moved to new premises in August 1996, the librarian indicated a significant upsurge in membership.

The growth in membership indicates the real need that exists in these communities for informational services.

Liaison with community leaders still seems to be a problem, as the Residents Committees seem to be changing all the time. In general the librarians all experienced some problems with the civic organisations in their communities, in the sense that they wanted to prescribe to the librarians how they should run their libraries. Involvement from community members themselves in the running of the library also varies from library to library, as will be shown in the description of each library.

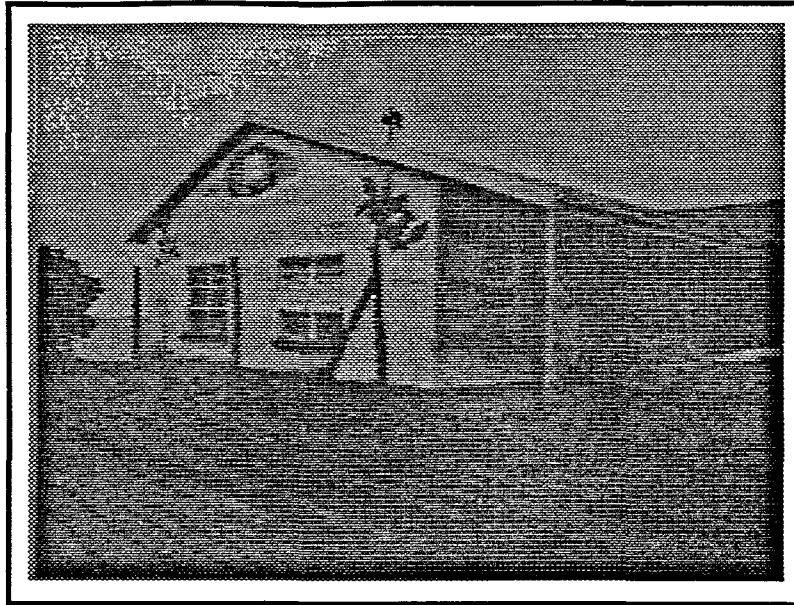
Two of the community libraries, Thornwood and Tshelimnyama, are experiencing serious problems with lack of space. The rooms in which the libraries are housed are very small, and staff do not always have enough space within the library to prepare the books they receive from the Provincial Library for the shelves. They also do not have sufficient space to conduct library activities like story hours. Study space for students and scholars is very restricted, which gives rise to many complaints by the public who feel that they are not offered a good enough service, when compared with the other community libraries. These conditions have a negative effect on the motivation of the staff, and they therefore find it increasingly difficult to work under these conditions<sup>10</sup>.

#### **6.3.1.1 St. Wendelins community library**

This library provides services to a community consisting of about 35 000 people.

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<sup>10</sup> Report on the increased circulation statistics of the Pinetown South libraries, dated 23. 05.94



*Figure 6.2 St. Wendelins Community Library*

The library is a brick structure consisting of one large room, with the librarians' office partitioned off with wooden panels. The library forms part of a community centre, which also houses a training centre, hall and offices. The hall does not form part of the library and admission to the hall is administered by the civics organisation. The size of the library is 200m<sup>2</sup>, and it consists of an adult, children's and reference section, as well as office space for the librarians. Study space is provided for students and scholars, consisting of nine tables with four chairs each. Two photocopy machines are available for use by community members.

The library staff consist of two males, and is open to the public for 43 hours a week.

According to the latest statistics available (July 1996) membership consists of 583 adults and 383 children. Circulation of books for this month was

4 250, whilst 33 tapes were issued. For the year up to July the total circulation was 42 208<sup>11</sup> (average circulation up to July 1996: 43.69 per member)

The stock consists of 5 134 books, of which about 500 are Adult Easy Readers, and 300 textbooks. A small collection of posters, pamphlets and newspaper cuttings is also available. According to the librarian, books written by African authors are extremely popular. Non-fiction books are also very popular.

Activities and services include: story hours, holiday programmes and the provision of a reference service and community information. Literacy classes are conducted by an Adult Education Centre and the library gives this programme its full support. Easy Readers for Adults are kept in the library, and are actively promoted amongst the people attending the literacy classes. The librarians are actively involved in trying to enrol unemployed people at skills training facilities, but financial problems hamper their efforts.

Block loans to crèches, the clinic and certain organisations within the community, for example, women's groups are made on a regular basis.

The librarians organise workshops from time to time in an effort to inform the people about issues which are of importance to the community, for example, AIDS awareness. These workshops are also used to advertise the library.

Book displays are done on a regular basis.

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<sup>11</sup> For circulation purposes books lying around on the tables at the end of the day are also counted - personal communication with Mrs Whittaker, Chief Librarian of Pinetown Public library.

### 6.3.1.2 Mpola community library



*Figure 6.3 Mpola Community Library*

Statistics concerning the number of people living in this community are not available. According to a staff member of the Pinetown Library this community is relatively stable and affluent, as many of the schoolchildren further their studies once they leave school. Most of them are thus in a position where they can hold a well-paid job.

This library was initially housed in a building originally intended to be part of the clinic. It was allocated a very small room in the building, and services were severely hampered by the lack of space. The librarians, however were very enthusiastic and they did their utmost to provide a service to the public. After numerous complaints from the community, a new library was built and the library moved into the new premises during August 1996.

The new library is a brick building consisting of the library, an office for the librarian, a separate study room consisting of 3 tables with 6 chairs each, an activities hall, which also doubles up as a study room when needed, a storeroom and a kitchen. It would seem that the study space is not enough for

the demands made on it, especially during exam times. The activities hall is used for community meetings by the civics, women's groups and school children having discussion groups, storytelling and holiday programmes.

The library is open for 43 hours a week and the staff consists of one male and one female member.

The library has an adult, children's and reference section, as well as newspapers and magazines. The adult and children's sections are very close to each other, and according to the librarian, many adults feel unhappy with the situation, as the noise coming from the children's section bothers them.

According to the July 1996 statistics the library had 304 adult, and 84 juvenile members. During an interview the librarian mentioned that many adults refrain from using the library facilities, as they feel the library is there to cater for the needs of the children. However, she also mentioned that since moving to the new premises, the librarians actively started campaigning for the adults to make use of the facility, with the result that during October 1996, 45 new adult members joined the library.

Book circulation for the month of July 1996 was 1 631. Sixty seven magazines were issued. Book circulation for the year 1996 up to July 1996 totalled 9 458 (average circulation up to July 1996: 24.4 books per member). Six video shows were held, as well as 10 storytelling sessions.

Library material consists of 2 212 books, of which about 250 are Easy Readers for Adults and 150 textbooks. Also included is a variety of newspapers and magazines, 50 posters and a few newspaper cuttings. According to the librarian books by African writers and books in the indigenous languages are extremely popular. Easy Readers for Adults are also well utilised.



Services offered include: community information, for example, referrals and assistance with compiling up of curriculum vitae's, making the activities hall available for community meetings, a reference service, storytelling and holiday programmes and photocopying facilities. Literacy classes for the illiterate, and services for the unemployed, are not offered.

The library has a bulletin board on which community notices are pinned.

#### **6.3.1.3 Klaarwater community library**

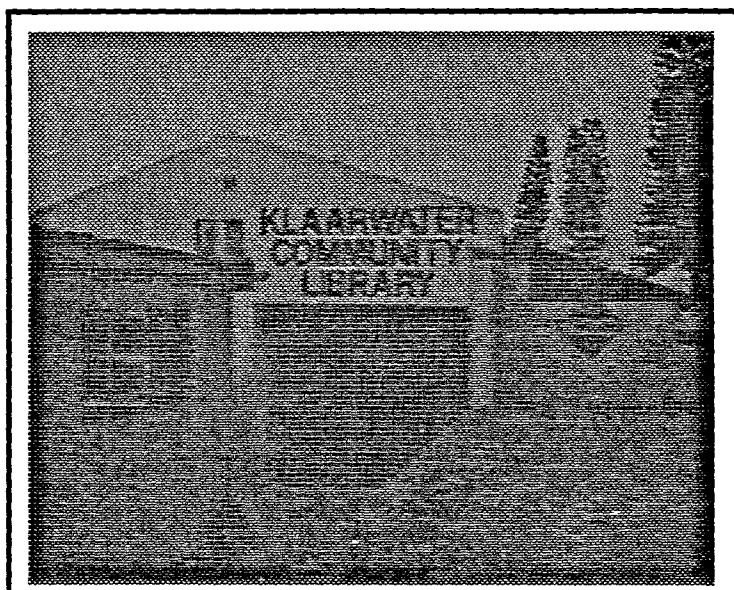
The community library serves a community of 10 000. It is part of a Community Centre complex, which also includes a post office, clinic and crèche. The library consists of a room of 150m<sup>2</sup> containing the adult, children's and reference sections, office space and study facilities consisting of 8 tables with 4 chairs each. The activities hall is also part of the Complex, and is used by a children's dancing group, established by the librarians, literacy classes, storytelling and holiday programmes. Community groups also use the facility.

The library is open for 43 hours a week and the library is staffed by two females.

According to the July 1996 statistics, the library's membership consists of 425 adults and 306 children. 1 840 books, 20 tapes and 34 videos were circulated. In total for this year, starting in January 1996, the library has already circulated 18 671 books (average circulation up to July 1996: 25.54 books per member). One display was mounted in July.

Book stock consists of 2 738 books, of which about 200 are textbooks and 100 Easy Readers for Adults. Other materials include: 7 newspapers and 6 magazine titles, 10 videos, 10 posters and 100 newspaper cuttings.

According to the librarian more books in the indigenous languages are needed, as well as more textbooks for university and technikon students.



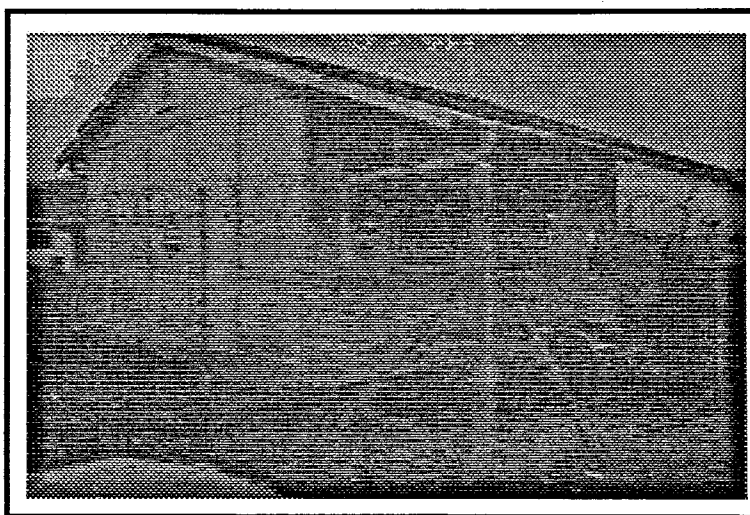
*Figure 6.4 Klaarwater Community Library*

Services offered include: a community information service, for example, referrals, assistance with filling out forms and assistance with the compilation of curriculum vitae's, the making available of facilities for community and library activities, for example, literacy classes and dancing classes, reference service, storytelling and holiday programmes. Books are also made available to training centres which train the unemployed in certain skills, for example, cookery and sewing. A blackboard in the library is used to advertise meetings and activities. A photocopy machine is available for community members' use.

#### **6.3.1.4 Thselimnyama community library**

This library is situated near the Mariannhill monastery. The residential area gives the impression of a semi-urban area, as the houses are far apart. The community consists of about 12 000 people.

The library is a small pre-fabricated building of 40m<sup>2</sup>, adjacent to a crèche. Although the library does not have an activities hall, the crèche facilities are used as a venue for storytelling and holiday programmes. As a result of many complaints received about the size of the library, the librarians have appealed to the authorities to either enlarge the building or to provide a new building. This request is still under consideration.



*Figure 6.5 Tshelimnyama Community Library*

The library room, being so small, consists of a few shelves containing material for an adult, children's and reference section. Study facilities consist of two tables with 4 chairs each. The librarian, not having an office, occupies another table on which a typewriter, for community members' use, is stationed.

The library is open for 43 hours a week and there are two male staff members.

The membership of this library consists of: 359 adults and 162 children. Circulation for July 1996 was 895 books. Circulation of books for the year

1996 up to July was 7 942 (average circulation up to July 1996: 15.24 books per member). One display was made and one story hour held.

The book collection consists of 2 293 books, of which 80 are Easy Readers for Adults and 120 textbooks. A few magazines and newspapers are available. Videos are available, but not for circulation. Shows are held in the library, and especially those that tie in with prescribed textbooks, are very popular. A few games are available for the children to play in the library, but they may not be taken home. A shelf with pamphlets is available and according to the librarian, this is a very popular service.

Services offered include: a community information service, for example, referrals, advice with filling out forms and assistance with compiling of curriculum vitae's, photocopying, as well as the use of the typewriter, reference service, story hours and holiday programmes.

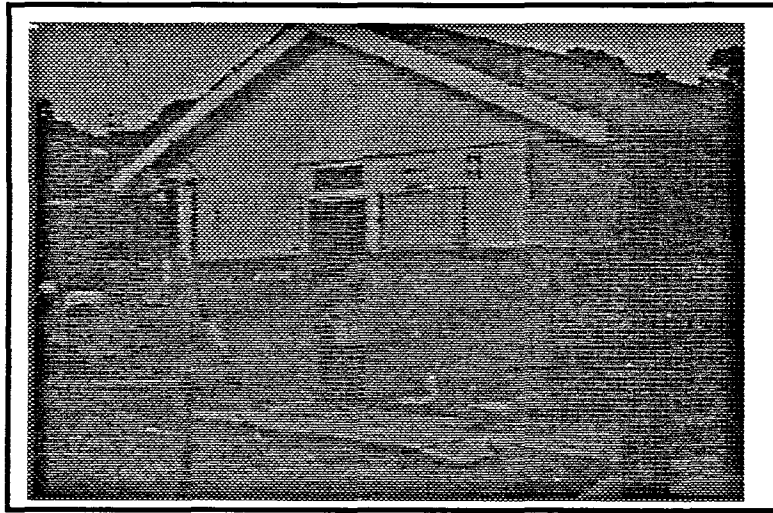
This library has an interesting method of advertising its services. As there is a public telephone booth just outside the library, they volunteered to sell phone cards to the public. With this method they have already attracted many new members who enter the library to buy a card, and then end up enrolling as library members.

#### **6.3.1.5 Thornwood community library**

This area is very densely populated and the community gives the impression of being very poor. Community statistics are not available. The library is a small 40m<sup>2</sup> pre-fabricated building, situated near a shop. A hall is available next door, although it is not part of the library's facilities.

The library is open for 43 hours and the staff consists of one male and one female member.

In July 1996 the membership for this library consisted of 274 adults and 208 children. Book circulation for the month was 807, and the total for the year 1996, up to July 7 167 books (average circulation up to July 1996: 14.87 books per member). One book display was mounted and 3 story hours held. The library also organised 2 art activities for the younger children.



*Figure 6.6 Thornwood Community Library*

The book stock consists of 2 905 books, of which about 200 are Easy Readers for Adults, and 300 textbooks. A few newspapers and magazines are available, as well as videos and a few pamphlets. This library is also in the process of establishing a puzzle library (an endeavour which most of the community libraries are contemplating)<sup>12</sup>.

Services offered include: community information, for example, referrals, practical information such as what is happening in the community and assistance with the compilation of curriculum vitae's, photocopying facilities as well as access to a typewriter for the community members, reference service, story hours and holiday programmes. The librarians are also actively involved in literacy classes. Community notices are written on a blackboard.

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<sup>12</sup> Personal communication with Mrs. Whittaker, Chief Librarian of Pinetown Public Library, October 1996.

## 6.4 Conclusion

The community libraries function as part of the Pinetown Public Library system. As such they are accountable to the Chief Librarian for all activities and programmes being offered at the libraries. From the information gained, it became clear that community involvement in these libraries is not very strong. Except for requesting the establishment of the libraries, community participation is either non-existent, for example, financially, or otherwise very limited. Three libraries have community committees, but their involvement in the administration and maintenance of the libraries are mostly restricted to certain areas, for example, the restoration of the library building, involvement in literacy classes and to a lesser extent, outreach and/or marketing programmes.

The library buildings vary from relatively large and spacious to very small and cramped. However, all the librarians are very enthusiastic about the work being done for and in the community.

The positive response from the communities to the libraries was established by looking at the circulation and membership statistics for the year 1996. When compared with Table 4.1 (par 4.2) which state national circulation averages, it is clear that with the exception of Thornwood and Thselimnyama Community Libraries, the other three Community Libraries, i.e. St. Wendelins, Mpola and Klaarwater have average circulation figures well above the national average. If taken into account that the community library's figures only represent circulation figures for a seven month period, it is obvious that the average circulation might even improve more. However it needs to be taken into account that part of the community library's circulation figures are also represented by books used within the library (see footnote 11).

The fact that the libraries also made equipment such as photocopy machines and typewriters available for community utilisation, contributed to the creation of a positive image of the library.

Although some services such as extension programmes have been seriously hampered by the lack of space, the librarians still manage to carry out their scheduled programmes.

Even though some of these libraries did not look at all impressive from the outside, the librarians have managed to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, which makes the services conducive for utilisation by the community. In order to establish what service and utilisation trends exist, a survey was undertaken to collect more detailed information about the programmes offered by the libraries and about the communities served by them. The survey will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **7. Pinetown community library survey**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter attention will be focused on the operation of the Pinetown community libraries using information provided by the community librarians in order to test the validity of the libraries against the norms set for community libraries in Chapter 5. The problems experienced in running the libraries will also be explored. The views of the communities within which the libraries are situated, will be analysed in order to determine whether the services provided meet their needs.

#### **7.2 Methodology**

A survey was conducted to determine whether the community libraries, as they are operating in the Pinetown municipal area, are true community libraries, or whether they are actually still conventional branch libraries. The surveys involved two target groups:

- ☐ the librarians of the community libraries, and
- ☐ members of communities served, users and non-users.

To gather the necessary information from the librarians self-administered questionnaires and interviews with the librarians of the five community libraries included in the study were employed. The questionnaires provided background material, and the interviews were used to collect more in-depth information with regard to certain aspects of the community libraries. The feedback from the librarians was regarded as crucial for this project.



To elicit feedback from the community, self-administered questionnaires were used. The questionnaires were used to get some idea of the community's reaction to the community libraries, and libraries in general, and to determine whether these institutions serve the purpose which the communities had in mind for them, when they initially requested the facility, i.e. to assist the school children and students in their school work, to nurture a reading culture and also to involve the adults so that they can contribute to community activities.

The questionnaire and interview schedule for the librarians (see Appendices 1 & 2) were aimed at testing the community libraries against the norms discussed in Chapter 5. For this purpose the questions were formulated to:

- ☐ obtain statistical data which would provide evidence of the type of material used and to establish to what extent the material was circulated;
- ☐ determine the reasons why the libraries were used by the community;
- ☐ determine what training the librarians received in running a library;
- ☐ determine what activities were offered by the library to the community;
- ☐ determine to what extent the libraries catered for the information needs of the illiterate;
- ☐ determine community involvement in the running of the library, and of the librarians' involvement in community affairs.

The community questionnaire (Appendix 3) was compiled to:

- determine personal information about members of the community, both library members and non-members, for example, age, sex, educational level and employment;
- determine the extent of reading among the community members, as well as their preferred language type of material;
- determine reasons for non-use of the community library;
- determine the extent of community library utilisation, as well as the type of material used to find information;
- determine the attendance of activities organised by the community library, as well as the need for certain activities normally associated with community libraries.

As the author has no command of the Zulu language, the services of a researcher temporarily attached to the Pinetown Municipal Library were used. The original English pilot study proved to be too difficult for the community members, and the final questionnaire was translated into Zulu by one of the Zulu-speaking lecturers of the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Zululand, Mrs. L.E Zondi.

This area does not have a properly developed infrastructure, therefore respondents were chosen with the convenience method by making use of the respondents available. No specific method was used to determine a sample, and questionnaires were given to all users available at the time the researcher visited a specific library. The questionnaires were distributed in the different libraries on the same day. The researcher waited for the responses to be handed back, as it would have been impossible to retrieve them again once users left the library. She also remained on hand to assist the respondents if any questions needed clarification. To elicit a response

from non-users, the questionnaires were distributed at a shopping centre in Pinetown South, choosing the first 25 people willing to complete the questionnaire. The researcher waited for the questionnaires to be returned.

### **7.3 Problems experienced**

The fact that the author does not understand Zulu, posed some problems in that the people surveyed, answered some of the open questions in Zulu. These responses had to be translated into English, and it is possible that some of the original meaning of the answers was lost.

The questions requesting a ranked response, i.e. answers according to respondent's preference, proved to be a problem, and many respondents did not answer those questions. This could have affected the results. Although this problem was indicated during the pilot study, it was felt that it was important to determine preferences, thus these questions were kept unaltered in the final questionnaires. Instructions were given to the researcher to explain what was expected before the questionnaires were completed. However, in spite of this precaution the ranked response answers still proved to be a problem area.

Children under the age of 12 were not interviewed because the author did not consider them to be capable of making a meaningful contribution to the study, especially in the sense of indicating preferences. Unfortunately the members of this group probably use the facilities more often than other groups, for various reasons, for example, to complete school projects, to find a quiet, well-lit place to study, to attend holiday programmes etc. This needs to be taken into consideration when the extent of community library utilisation is determined.

## **7.4 Response**

Ten responses were received from the five community librarians, as each library has two librarians. In analysing the data, the author used the responses of all ten librarians for obtaining personal data. However, for questions 8 - 19 only the responses of the librarian in charge were used, as the data concerns the libraries' activities and performance.

One hundred and nine responses from community members were received. Users from all the community libraries as well as non-users, were asked to complete the questionnaire. The non-users were found at a central shopping centre.

## **7.5 Data analysis**

### **7.5.1 Community librarians (Questionnaires: Appendix 1 and in-depth interviews: Appendix 2)**

The question number next to each heading refers to the questionnaire completed by the respondents. The questions asked during the interviews were added as comments.

All percentages are rounded off to the first decimal point.

#### **7.5.1.1 Personal information**

##### **7.5.1.1.1 Sex (Question 1)**

Of the ten responses received, six of the librarians were males and four females. It is interesting to note that males form the biggest component. Personal communication with Pinetown librarians indicated that librarians do

not seem to be highly regarded in disadvantaged communities where a reading culture in most cases has not yet been instilled.

#### 7.5.1.1.2 Age (Question 2)

*Table 7.1 Age distribution*

| <b>Age</b>             | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Below 20</b>        | 0                | 0                 |
| <b>Between 21 - 25</b> | 4                | 40                |
| <b>Between 26 - 30</b> | 4                | 40                |
| <b>Between 31 - 35</b> | 1                | 10                |
| <b>Older than 36</b>   | 0                | 0                 |
| <b>No response</b>     | 1                | 10                |
| <b>Total</b>           | 10               | 100               |

The librarians are all relatively young as most of them are under the age of 36. All of them have been working in the libraries since their establishment. During the interviews it became clear that despite their relative youth, all were very enthusiastic about their jobs.

#### 7.5.1.1.3 Standard of education (Question 3-4)

*Table 7.2 Level of education*

| <b>Educational level</b>         | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Std. 6 - 8</b>                | 0                | 0                 |
| <b>Std. 9 - 10</b>               | 7                | 70                |
| <b>Post-matric private study</b> | 0                | 0                 |
| <b>Degree</b>                    | 2                | 20                |
| <b>Diploma</b>                   | 1                | 10                |

|             |    |     |
|-------------|----|-----|
| No response | 0  | 0   |
| Total       | 10 | 100 |

Of the ten librarians, only two had degrees, one of these being a library qualification, while six had at least Std. 9-10. According to the Chief Librarian of the Pinetown Public Library, most of the librarians without professional qualifications have enrolled at the Technikon RSA for a course in librarianship<sup>13</sup>.

#### **7.5.1.1.4 Training of staff (Questions 5-7; Question 1 - interview)**

Nine of the ten respondents received in-house training for periods ranging from three weeks to a month. In-house training was conducted at the Pinetown Public Library covering aspects like shelf reading, issue desk responsibilities, and how to plan and execute library activities, for example, story hours and holiday programmes.

Continual training is received by all. This takes the form of workshops, seminars and practical demonstrations. During these sessions general library procedures and practices are covered. During the interviews with the librarians they maintained that they were also taught skills like communication, telephone etiquette, as well as how to repackage information from a printed source. Whenever a training need arises, it is brought to the attention of the Chief Librarian of the Pinetown Public Library, who then organises a workshop, based on the need.

#### **7.5.1.1.5 Library hours (Question 8; Question 2 - interview)**

The libraries all open at eight o'clock and close at five o'clock from Monday to Friday. On Saturday mornings all the libraries open at nine o'clock, and all

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<sup>13</sup> Personal communication with Mrs. Whittaker, October 1996.

close at twelve, except St. Wendelins, which closes at one o'clock. None of the libraries is open on Sundays.

During the interviews librarians mentioned that many community members complained about the hours, especially when examination time draws near. Many members would prefer the library to be open until at least 19:00 during the week, as well as over the weekends. Despite these requests for extended hours several reasons were given for not opening at night, when presumably more people can use the library. Some of the reasons were the following:

- ☐ The staff complement does not allow for working these longer hours;
- ☐ The security situation is of such a nature that the library hours cannot be extended with safety.

Despite these problems most of the librarians were willing to try and work out new strategies to accommodate requests of the community. At Tshelimnyama, for instance, students were allowed to take study material home overnight, in order to compensate for inconvenient hours.

#### **7.5.1.1.6 Number of items in each library (Question 9)**

Table 7.3 summarises the figures quoted in paragraphs 6.3.1.1 - 6.3.1.5. As exact figures for items other than books were not available for all the libraries, only the presence or absence, of these items in specific libraries is indicated:

Presence: \*

Absence: x

Table 7.3 Library items in each community library

|                    | St. Wendelins | Mpola | Klaarwater | Thselimnyama | Thornwood |
|--------------------|---------------|-------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| Books              | 5 134         | 2 212 | 2 738      | 2 293        | 2 905     |
| Newspapers         | x             | *     | 7          | *            | *         |
| Magazines          | x             | *     | 6          | *            | *         |
| Audio-Cassettes    | x             | x     | 20         | x            | x         |
| Video cassettes    | x             | x     | 10         | *            | *         |
| Pamphlets          | *             | x     | x          | *            | *         |
| Brochures          | x             | x     | x          | x            | x         |
| Posters            | *             | 50    | 10         | x            | x         |
| Newspaper cuttings | *             | *     | 100        | x            | x         |

#### 7.5.1.1.7 Reasons for library utilisation (Question 10)

The librarians had to rank the different options from highest to lowest.

Table 7.4 Library utilisation

| <b>Reasons for library utilisation</b>                      | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>%</b> |
|---|------------------|----------|
| As a place to study   | 10               | 100      |
| To find quick factual information                           | 8                | 80       |
| To supplement school programmes                             | 6                | 60       |
| To find general information                                 | 4                | 40       |
| Literacy classes  | 4                | 40       |
| Community activities, for example, meetings, hobbies, talks | 2                | 20       |
| Leisure reading   | 2                | 20       |
| Other (to find out about employment)                        | 2                | 20       |

As has been anticipated, the use of the library for study space (100%) ranked the highest. This is a trend which is being experienced in both public and



community libraries throughout Africa (Raseroka: 1994:6). The second highest score was given to the finding of factual information (80%). Using the library to supplement the school programme was the third priority (60%). The high score on the above two options can be ascribed to the fact that the libraries keep textbooks of universities and technikons as well as school textbooks. To find general information for continued education scored 40%. In this respect the librarians mentioned that especially craft books and cookery books were very popular. Holiday programmes received a rating 40%, and to find leisure reading material 20%. The latter result seems to support the perception that within black communities leisure reading is still not a high priority. It might also be ascribed to the fact that poverty is rife and that to eke out a daily existence, takes up so much energy and time that leisure reading is not a priority in people's lives. Most workers also have to commute long distances to their working places, leaving them with little leisure time. During the interviews most librarians also mentioned that although African writers were very popular amongst the fiction readers, preference was still given to non-fiction books.

Literacy programmes attracted 40% of the responses. Most of the libraries, with the exception of Mpola, are involved in literacy programmes, either in a personal capacity as teachers, or by providing facilities or back-up material. With the exception of Klaarwater these programmes, however, are not carried out on the library premises. The librarians then have to actively promote their library among the newly literates in order to attract them to the library. This is partly successful. At St. Wendelins, for example, the librarians report that active canvassing is done during the classes, and that the literacy students, through this personal intervention, are actually invited to make use of the library service.

Attendance at community activities, for example, meetings and hobby groups, attracted 20% of the users. The poor use made of the library for such activities can mainly be attributed to the fact that, with the exception of

Klaarwater, and since August 1996, Mpola, the libraries do not have an activities hall in which to cater for these facilities.

Use of the library to find out about employment possibilities received 20% of the votes. With the exception of St. Wendelins and Thornwood not much is done for the unemployed in the community. At St. Wendelins the librarians are acting as agents between a training centre and the unemployed. With their intervention a few of the unemployed could be sent to the centre to be trained as builders. Efforts, however, are hampered by a lack of funds. At Thornwood the library actively lends its support to organisations in the community that strive to empower the unemployed. They provide information on cookery and do displays on needlework or crafts, depending on what skills are being taught to the unemployed at the time.

#### **7.5.1.1.8 Activities hall (Question 11; Question 3 - 5 - interview)**

With the exception of Klaarwater and Mpola, the libraries are not equipped with an activities hall. This results in most libraries not being able to undertake extension work or make their facilities available for community activities, for example, meetings, literacy classes, arts and crafts groups etc. This factor has a negative effect on any activities the librarians may want to offer in order to fully integrate the library in the lives of the community.

Even though an activities hall is not available, most of the libraries use their library space for activities like story hours or holiday programmes. Otherwise, like in the case of Tshelimnyama, they go to the crèche itself to offer the story hour.

The activities halls at Klaarwater and Mpola are used by the following groups on a daily basis: school children, the local authority, art groups, hobby groups, community organisations, churches and the library staff.

### 7.5.1.1.9 Library extension work (Question 12; Question 6 - 7 - interview)

Table 7.5 Extension programmes

| <b>Extension programmes</b>                         | <b>Never</b> | <b>Seldom</b> | <b>Regularly</b> |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Literacy/Support of literacy classes</b>         | 1            | 0             | 4                |
| <b>Story hours</b>                                  | 0            | 1             | 4                |
| <b>Holiday programmes for children</b>              | 0            | 2             | 3                |
| <b>Talks on topics of interest to the community</b> | 4            | 1             | 0                |
| <b>Community information service</b>                | 0            | 0             | 5                |

The librarians had to indicate the frequency with which the activities take place. From their answers during the interviews it was clear that all the activities indicated under "seldom", actually took place regularly. The librarians apparently interpreted daily activities as regular occurrences, and regular weekly activities as "seldom". With the adaptation made to the Table below it would read as follows:

Table 7.6 Extension programmes (adapted table)

| <b>Extension programmes</b>                         | <b>Never</b> | <b>Seldom</b> | <b>Regularly</b> |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Literacy/Support of literacy classes</b>         | 1            | 0             | 4                |
| <b>Story hours</b>                                  | 0            | 0             | 5                |
| <b>Holiday programmes for children</b>              | 0            | 0             | 5                |
| <b>Talks on topics of interest to the community</b> | 4            | 0             | 1                |
| <b>Community information service</b>                | 0            | 0             | 5                |

During the interviews the librarians expanded on their involvement in extension work. With the exception of Mpola all the libraries are directly or indirectly involved in literacy classes. At Thornwood the staff members are trained literacy teachers, and take a regular class. Attendance of this class

totals 45 individuals at present, all of whom are graded according to their level of competence, and taught accordingly. At St. Wendelins the library closely cooperates with the clinic and the Adult Education Centre who are conducting these classes. Easy Readers for Adults (ERA) are actively promoted amongst this group by the librarians. Klaarwater community library cooperates with the clinic conducting the classes, by making their facilities available. ERA are actively promoted among the group. At Tshelimnyama the classes are conducted by the Pinetown Welfare Organisation. These classes are well attended and literacy material is actively promoted by the librarians. Story hours are a regular occurrence at most of the libraries. It would seem that this activity is mostly offered to pre-primary children who visit the library in groups. At Tshelimnyama the crèche is adjacent to the library, with the result that story hours are a regular attraction. At Klaarwater the children are also involved in different activities when they visit the library for a story hour, for example, colouring competitions.

Community information seems to play an important role at all the libraries. During the interviews the librarians mentioned that they try to be up to date with community activities. This is achieved through attending all community meetings and by making regular contact with the Civics and other organisations within the community. If more information is needed they liaise telephonically to whatever information they think is necessary for the community. All the libraries gather pamphlets of organisations within their communities, whenever they get a chance. Most of the libraries do referrals if they cannot be of assistance. If the librarians cannot be of immediate assistance, they try to find the information needed, and contact the enquirer as soon as possible with the answer. As far as practical assistance is concerned, some of the libraries, for example, Mpola and Thornwood, provide printed matter to be of assistance, while the other libraries provide practical help if the librarians have time to do so, or, as is the case at St. Wendelins, the individual will be referred to an organisation that can assist with the problem.

#### **7.5.1.1.10 Publication of own material (Question 13)**

To this question four librarians responded positively and one negatively. When asked what kind of material is produced, all four indicated that it was mainly posters to advertise their activities. None indicated the production of material that might help to explain certain information in an easier way. During the author's visit to these libraries no evidence of repackaged material was found. Repackaging of information therefore does not seem to feature in these libraries.

A few pamphlets were in evidence at most of the libraries, but whether they would be of any assistance to the illiterate and newly literate is doubtful. The pamphlets did not seem to transmit information in a way that these groups would be able to understand it. The content of the pamphlets was also not related to the type of information which might assist the disadvantaged to find solutions to problems.

#### **7.5.1.1.11 Information needs assessment (Question 14; Question 25-interview)**

The librarians had to indicate which method(s), if any, they used to determine the information needs of the community. Fifty percent of the librarians used the methods of observing user behaviour in the library and asking members about their needs. Twenty five percent used a combination of four methods, i.e.: to ask the library members, to conduct surveys, wait for members to express their needs themselves and to go out into the community and actively listen to the needs expressed by community members during social gatherings. Twelve and a half percent of the respondents preferred to conduct surveys, wait for the members to express their needs and go out into the community, and the remaining 12.5% conducted surveys and observed the use of material in the library.

At St. Wendelins a workshop was organised where community members could come and discuss their respective information needs. This library also has a suggestion box which members can use to bring an information need to the librarian's attention, or to complain about services.

#### **7.5.1.1.12 Cooperation with community organisations (Question 15; Question 8 - interview)**

All the responses were positive. When asked to describe the nature of the co-operation, the following were indicated:

- ☐ regular contact with Civic organisations (St. Wendelins) to be informed about the latest activities;
- ☐ regular contact with schools, clinic, welfare organisation and literacy classes;
- ☐ through their community activities the librarians have access to several community organisations, for example, churches, dance groups, choirs, sports groups etc. Liaison with these groups is fully utilised to gather community information. Where necessary, community members are referred to these organisations for assistance.

#### **7.5.1.1.13 Restrictions on membership (Question 16)**

No restrictions are imposed by any of the community libraries.

#### **7.5.1.1.14 Restrictions on the use of certain materials (Question 17)**

All the librarians indicated that some restrictions did exist. Materials that were restricted were mostly reference material. In some libraries, for example Tshelimnyama, videos were not allowed to be taken out, because of problems with retrieval.

The purpose of this question was to establish if the library was biased towards certain issues that might be sensitive in the community, for example censoring of political material and material on controversial subjects like abortion and abuse of women. According to the responses no restrictions were imposed on any subject matter.

**7.5.1.1.15 Acquisition of library material (Question 18 - 19; Question 15 - 22 - interview)**

All the librarians indicated that they acquired their material either from the Provincial Library or through donations. None bought their own material. Donations are mainly obtained through Read Educate and Develop (READ) or the Pinetown Welfare Organisation. If the books are not applicable to the needs of the community, or not in any condition to be used in the library, they are made available to the public to take home gratis.

None of the libraries avoided selection of potentially sensitive material. The question however remains whether the Provincial Library's selection policy does not already pre-select as to what could be read by the communities and what not, and in the process thus avoid supplying material that might prove sensitive.

If specific material is needed to meet the information needs of community members, and the material is not available from the community library's stock, it is requested from either Pinetown Public Library, one of the other community libraries or the Provincial Library in Pinetown. Most of the librarians, however, complained that this system was unsatisfactory as most of the time the book arrived too late to satisfy the need.

#### **7.5.1.1.16 Community involvement of community librarians (Question 20; Questions 21 - 24 - interview)**

With the exception of one librarian who did not respond to this question, all were active members of their communities.

Community organisations to which they belong covered a wide range, including the following:

Thornwood Old Age Group, Isipansula Group, Adult Literacy Group, Parish Council, Education Forum, Sports Committee, Business Committee, Siyaya Culture Forum, St. Wendelin's Culture Forum, Women's League, Crèche Committee, Saraffina Group, Tshelimnyama Resident Association, Thornwood Women's Group, Delani School, Everlasting Joy Gospel Music Group, Klaarwater Sports Committee, Sizanani Women's Club, Health Forum and Qhakaza Women's Club.

In most cases the librarians acted as committee members. In the case of Tshelimnyama community library, the librarian mentioned that it was arranged with the community organisations that one of the librarians should be elected to serve in all committees automatically, in order for them to be aware of the activities in the community.

From the above it is clear that the librarians are active and well-known members in their communities. All these organisations and groups are utilised by the librarians as channels for advertising their libraries. According to the librarian at St. Wendelins they also used their affiliation to these organisations to gain acceptance from the community members.

#### **7.5.1.1.17 Community involvement in the library (Questions 9-12 - interview)**

With the exception of Mpola and Klaarwater, where no library committees exist (according to the librarians it is due to the fact that the community is either not interested, or because the Civics are monopolising the library



according to their whims) all the other libraries do have a committee which convenes at regular intervals.

At St Wendelins the group is very active, taking a lively interest in the renovation of the building and actively proposing ways of securing funds for the project. They also assist in advertising the library amongst local schools.

At Thornwood the Committee meets every Friday. This committee consists mainly of the literacy teachers. They make suggestions for services to be rendered.

At Tshelimnyama the Committee is also very active. The librarians trained them to work in the library as assistants when necessary. They also assist with the organisation of workshops. At present they are attempting to form a youth society that can meet for sports activities, and which can help with community projects.

None of the communities contribute financially to the running of the library. Funds are obtained from Pinetown Borough.

## **7.6 Interpretation of the librarians' questionnaires and interviews**

- ☐ From the answers provided by the librarians, as well as the literature provided by the Chief Librarian of the Pinetown Public Library, it is clear that the community libraries function as part of the Pinetown Public Library System. Although the request for the establishment of these libraries originated from the communities themselves, it would seem that, apart from some initial consultation with the community leaders, the communities are not in any other way responsible for the management of the libraries. The local and provincial authorities are responsible for their finances, as well as the provision of the library buildings. Maintenance of the buildings is also the financial responsibility of the local authority. The community does

not contribute in any way towards the library, either in a financial sense or in an administrative or organisational sense. In her description of community libraries in Africa Raseroka (1993:50) maintains that the community, after requesting the establishment of a library service, maintains, organises and takes financial responsibility for the service. In most cases they also provide the building to house the library.

The modus operandi in Pinetown South where the communities are not responsible for the maintenance and organisation of the library service, leads to a situation where the community libraries are made accountable for their services and activities to a governing body, in this case the Pinetown Public Library, which in turn is accountable to the local authority. Autonomous existence and accountability to the community therefore do not exist. This also contradicts Fairer-Wessels & Machel's (1993:106) view that a community library is one owned, sustained and maintained by members of a disadvantaged community. In the cases where some community involvement does exist, it is fairly limited, for example, at Tshelimnyama the library Committee members have been trained as assistants assist the staff whenever one of the staff members is absent, and at St. Wendelins the Committee members actively try to promote library services. At Thornwood it is mainly the literacy teachers who makes a contribution towards some involvement. The only other contribution by the community seems to be the existence of the suggestion box at St. Wendelins which offers the community the opportunity to air their views, but this still does not allow for much community participation in the management of the library.

- In most cases, the location of the community libraries, is relatively central and they are fairly accessible to the people in the communities, although not all of them are central to the abodes of the people as suggested by Stilwell (*South African libraries must adapt or die* 1991:6). St. Wendelins is just across the road from the civic centre, and attached to a community

centre, but relatively isolated from the residential area. Thornwood Community Library is situated next to a community hall, and near the local shop. The library is actually situated in the residential area, with the houses clustered in the immediate vicinity of the library. This allows for easy access to the facility. Klaarwater Community Library is part of a community centre, with the post office, clinic and a crèche forming part of the centre. The residential area also surrounds this centre. The Mpola Community Library is adjacent to the local clinic, and near the taxi rank, although the residential area seems to be detached from this area. Tshelimnyama Community Library, although adjacent to the crèche, is also relatively isolated from the rest of the community, but it has to be taken into account that the area is sparsely populated.

Taking all these locations into account, it would seem that where the community libraries form part of a community centre, especially if an activities hall forms part of the library, it enhances its chances of becoming a focal point in the community's social activities. This concept was recommended by Iwuji (1990:58) who maintains that the library should form part of a community centre. Where the libraries stand isolated, for example, in Mpola, Tshelimnyama, and to an extent, St. Wendelins, they do not form part of the community life. The library thus loses much of its ability to play a meaningful role in the development of the disadvantaged in the community.

- Judging by the materials offered by these libraries, it must be noted that on face value they do not differ substantially from those services offered by the traditional public library. According to Fairer-Wessels (1988:3) and Shillinglaw (1986:40) the traditional public library is mainly print-based, and aims at self improvement and leisure reading - thus pre-supposing a reading public.

The community libraries concentrate less on leisure reading than traditional public libraries but the information on offer in the community libraries are still mostly print-based. Although the librarians all expressed satisfaction with the subjects covered by the available material, scanning of the shelves indicated that the materials available were those found in any traditional library, with very little, if any, information available on issues concerning the day-to-day life of the community. The material available mainly represents the Western culture, making its applicability remote to the circumstances of people living in Third World conditions.

Although the librarians were taught to repackage information, none applied that skill, with the result that the illiterate are left with no way of getting information, other than through the oral medium, either from the librarian (it is doubtful whether the illiterate would actually ask for oral information from this source, librarians being an unfamiliar source in their daily existence), or from family and friends. An investigation into the audio-visual, as well as the audio material revealed that most of these media were not informative by nature but rather aimed at leisure. The videos contained some informative material, but were mainly based on the National Geographic series, which in the author's opinion is not the kind of information needed in South African developing communities. Pamphlets, although in evidence in some of the libraries, are not up to date nor available in large numbers. They can also not be taken home for perusal. According to the librarians these pamphlets are a popular medium with the members visiting the library, thus attention should be paid to the expansion of this component, especially since pamphlets mostly convey information in a simple way. Newspaper cuttings were not in evidence, although most of the libraries indicated the existence of cuttings. The librarians and community members should be made aware of the importance of this information source, especially for community and current information. Librarians should be taught how to organise and maintain this kind of material for the benefit of their users.

- Community information services are offered by all the libraries. This is a service which characterises community libraries, although many traditional public libraries are also in the process of adopting it as part of their services. Information is regularly updated through the active canvassing of the librarians. Referrals are part of the service offered by the Pinetown Community Libraries, although the librarians do not physically accompany the enquirer to the referred destination. The librarian would then not be in a position to determine whether the enquirer could actually satisfy his/her information need. As it is the ideal of a community information service to bring together the correct user and the correct source that can give the correct answer, it would therefore be advisable for the librarians to follow up on enquiries, to determine whether the user actually found the information needed. Especially in disadvantaged communities, this type of follow-up is important, as empowerment of the people can only be achieved when they obtain the correct information.

Practical assistance is only given when librarians are not tied up with other chores or services. This is a deterrent to those who do not have the ability to help themselves, for example, the illiterate. Unfortunately, the staff complement is very small. It therefore stands to reason that this kind of service cannot be rendered on a full-time basis. However, empowerment and upliftment of the community are closely related to giving practical assistance to those who are unable to do certain things for themselves, for example, the illiterate and unemployed. Ways and means to render such services should therefore be sought.

- All the community libraries, with the exception of Mpola Community Library, are actively trying to be of practical assistance to the disadvantaged in the community, through teaching literacy classes, or by making facilities available for these classes, or by assisting the unemployed to gain skills (St. Wendelins and Thornwood).

- No restrictions are placed on the type of material available in the library. A community library aims to make society's resources available to the community as a whole, without any restrictions.

Although, according to the librarians, no restrictions are placed on the kind of material made available to the public, the author found no evidence of any material not normally found in a public library. The stock mainly consists of material obtained from the Provincial Library Services, and therefore reflects the selection policy of this institution. No trace could be found of material, for example, to inform people about political matters, of legal material informing people about their rights, or material on contentious issues like abortion. Whether this indicates a bias in the selection of material, or a notion that this kind of material does not belong in a community library, or a lack of awareness of major social issues, needs to be probed.

- An interlibrary lending system is in place, which theoretically should give the community access to most of the materials available in South Africa. From the interviews however it became clear that this system is mainly used to request textbooks and study material. Given the previously poor exposure to libraries in the disadvantaged communities, it is also doubtful whether the librarians or the community members are aware of the fact that they can obtain most of the traditionally printed materials that they would want through this system.
- Changed staff attitudes form an integral part of community libraries. For example, good communication and motivational skills, skills in repackaging of information, skills to obtain community information and to be able to utilise community sources to refer people to when needed, contribute to attitude changes and should be instilled during training (Nassimbeni, Stilwell & Walker 1993:40). The community librarians received only in-house training for a very short period of time. From the information

supplied, it is clear that the training received was mainly based on the traditional chores normally performed in a public library. Although they all claim to have been taught how to repackage information, no evidence of such activities could be found. It was also not mentioned that they were taught skills, for example, like how to effectively communicate with a person needing advice or needing guidance in a certain matter, all of which are communication skills closely associated with a community information service.

- As all the community librarians are very active in their communities, the conclusion can be drawn that they are well-known to the community. Most of the librarians have been in the community for a long time and some were even born and bred in the community. Despite this the librarian at St. Wendelins mentioned that they experienced difficulty in being accepted by the community, and had to use their involvement in community organisations to win the trust of the community. This might be related to the general ignorance of the people as to what a community library is. In many cases the librarians indicated the interference of the Civics in their affairs as a problem, and it might be that the community library is seen as an instrument of the Civics. The latter were not highly regarded by community members (Bekker and Lategan 1988:65), although changes have in the mean-time taken place.

### **7.7 Data analysis: Community questionnaire (Appendix 3)**

All percentages are rounded off to the first decimal point.

### 7.7.1 Personal characteristics

#### 7.7.1.1 Sex (Question 1)

*Table 7.7 Sex distribution*

| <b>Gender</b>      | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Male</b>        | 41               | 37,6              |
| <b>Female</b>      | 64               | 58,7              |
| <b>No response</b> | 4                | 3,7               |
| <b>Total</b>       | 109              | 100,00            |

As expected, more females than males completed the questionnaire, probably because males mostly work, or are looking for a job, during the day, while the women more often stay at home.

#### 7.7.1.2 Age (Question 2)

*Table 7.8 Age distribution*

| <b>Age group</b>    | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>12 - 18</b>      | 35               | 32,1              |
| <b>19 - 25</b>      | 44               | 40,4              |
| <b>26 - 35</b>      | 24               | 22,0              |
| <b>36 and above</b> | 6                | 5,5               |
| <b>Total</b>        | 109              | 100.00            |

Within the age group 12 - 18 years, 11 males and 22 females responded. Two respondents in this age group did not indicate their sex. The age group 19 - 25 had 20 males and 23 females responding. One did not indicate sex. Nine males and 14 females responded in the age group 26 - 35, with one



person not responding to the question of sex. Within the age group 36 and above one respondent was a male and five were females.

The high percentage of young people completing the questionnaire could possibly be ascribed to the fact that it is mostly the members of this group that make use of library facilities for study and school purposes.

### 7.7.1.3 Occupation (Question 3)

*Table 7.9 Occupational distribution*

| <b>Occupation</b>        | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Scholar/Student</b>   | 52               | 47,7              |
| <b>Self-employment</b>   | 6                | 5,5               |
| <b>Formal employment</b> | 18               | 16,5              |
| <b>Unemployed</b>        | 33               | 30,3              |
| <b>Total</b>             | 109              | 100,00            |

As expected, the biggest group of respondents, namely 52 (47,7%), were students or scholars. Six (5,5%) respondents were self-employed, 18 (16,5%) were employed in organised business, and 33 (30,3%) were unemployed. This latter percentage was expected. Judging by numerous newspaper reports the country is experiencing a period of high unemployment.

#### 7.7.1.4 Educational levels (Question 4)

Table 7.10 Distribution of educational levels

| <b>Educational level</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> | <b>No response</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Gr. 1 - Std. 2           | 3                | 1           | 2             | 0                  | 2,8               |
| Std. 3 - 5               | 17               | 2           | 15            | 0                  | 15,6              |
| Std. 6 - 8               | 37               | 12          | 21            | 4                  | 33,9              |
| Std. 9 -10               | 40               | 20          | 20            | 0                  | 36,7              |
| Private study            | 1                | 1           | 0             | 0                  | 0,9               |
| Degree                   | 0                | 0           | 0             | 0                  | 0,0               |
| Diploma                  | 9                | 5           | 4             | 0                  | 8,3               |
| Std. 6 - 8/<br>Diploma   | 1                | 0           | 1             | 0                  | 0,9               |
| Degree/<br>Private study | 1                | 0           | 1             | 0                  | 0,9               |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>109</b>       | <b>41</b>   | <b>64</b>     | <b>4</b>           | <b>100,00</b>     |

Of the respondents 36,7% had an education up to Std. 9 -10 levels, closely followed by the second largest group (33,9%) with an educational level of Std. 6 - 8. One person (0,9%) with an educational level of std. 6 - 8 was also in possession of a diploma in welding. A small percentage (9.2%) of the respondents possessed any post-matric qualifications. Ten (8,3%) possessed a diploma and one (0,9%) a degree. Only two (1,8%) respondents were busy with further studies - one of them was already in possession of a degree. The relatively high levels of education can be ascribed to the fact that the majority of respondents were under the age of 25, which is normally the age group associated with school children and students.

#### 7.7.1.5 Reading habits (Question 5.1 & 5.2)

The vast majority of the respondents, 94 (86,2%) replied that they read in their spare time. Thirteen (11,9%) did not read in their spare time. Two (1,8%) respondents did not answer the question. This high level of reading corresponds with the relatively high education levels and the value placed on education in black communities.

##### 7.7.1.5.1 Reading frequency (Question 5.3)

*Table 7.11 Reading frequency*

|                             | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Daily</b>                | 21               | 19.3              |
| <b>Several times a week</b> | 31               | 28.4              |
| <b>Once every two weeks</b> | 38               | 34.0              |
| <b>Once a month</b>         | 8                | 7.3               |
| <b>Other</b>                | 1                | 0.9               |
| <b>No response</b>          | 10               | 9.2               |
| <b>Total</b>                | 109              | 100.0             |

The readers that responded positively were asked to indicate how often they read. Of the 99 that responded to the question 38 (34%) indicated that they usually read books once every two weeks. Thirty one respondents (28,4%) indicated that they read several times a week, followed by 21 (19,3%) respondents who read on a daily basis. Eight respondents (7,3%) read only once a month, and 1 (0,9%) person indicated that, in addition to reading several times a week, reading was also done when looking for specific information. Ten people (9.2%) did not respond. This indicates a discrepancy, as 15 people indicated, according to 7.7.1.5, that they either did not read in their spare time, or they abstained from answering the question. Yet, 99 of

the respondents indicated their reading frequency rate. This can possibly indicate that the respondents who indicated that they did not read in their spare time, did read, maybe for work purposes, or studies. They thus indicated their reading frequency. Fifty two (47.7%) of all respondents read either daily or several time a week and may therefore be regarded as regular readers.

#### 7.7.1.5.2 Reading material (Question 5.4)

The above discrepancy was also repeated in the question covering the materials preferred by the readers. It would seem, however, that this could be the result of an omission which occurred during the translation of the text to Zulu. The English text indicated that questions 5.3 - 7 should not be answered by those respondents who ticked question 5.2. The instruction was only implied in the Zulu questionnaire, and not explicitly spelled out. This possibly led to some confusion.

*Table 7.12 Reading material: preferences*

| <i>Reading material</i>       | <i>Readers</i> | <i>Non-readers</i> | <i>No re-sponse</i> | <i>% Readers</i> | <i>% Non-readers</i> | <i>% No re-sponse</i> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Books                         | 34             | 5                  | 0                   | 31,2             | 4,6                  | 0,00                  |
| Newspapers                    | 9              | 2                  | 0                   | 8,3              | 1,8                  | 0,00                  |
| Magazines                     | 7              | 1                  | 1                   | 6,4              | 0,9                  | 0,9                   |
| Pamphlets                     | 3              | 0                  | 0                   | 2,8              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |
| Others (TV)                   | 1              | 0                  | 0                   | 0,9              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |
| Books/Newspapers              | 7              | 1                  | 1                   | 6,4              | 0,9                  | 0,9                   |
| Books/Magazines               | 9              | 0                  | 0                   | 8,3              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |
| Newspapers/Magazines          | 6              | 0                  | 0                   | 5,5              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |
| Newspapers/Pamphlets          | 1              | 0                  | 0                   | 0,9              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |
| Magazines/Brochures           | 1              | 0                  | 0                   | 0,9              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |
| Books/Newspapers/<br>Magazine | 9              | 0                  | 0                   | 8,3              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |
| Books/Magazine/<br>Pamphlets  | 1              | 0                  | 0                   | 0,9              | 0,00                 | 0,00                  |

|  |           |           |          |             |             |            |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Books/Newspapers/<br>Magazines/Pamphlets | 3         | 0         | 0        | 2,8         | 0,00        | 0,00       |
| Books/Newspapers/<br>Magazines/Other     | 1         | 0         | 0        | 0,9         | 0,00        | 0,00       |
| Books/Pamphlets/<br>Brochures            | 1         | 0         | 0        | 0,9         | 0,00        | 0,00       |
| No response                              | 1         | 4         | 0        | 0,9         | 3,7         | 0,00       |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>94</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>86,3</b> | <b>11,9</b> | <b>1,8</b> |

In analysing the table, reading preferences of readers and those who indicated that they were non-readers will both be indicated, as they also implied by answering this question that, in fact, they were readers.

The most popular reading material was books (35,8%), followed by newspapers (10,1%). Magazines as well as the combination of books/newspapers were read by 7,3% of the respondents. Of the respondents 2,8% only read pamphlets. Combinations of reading materials were popular. The combinations of books/magazines, books/newspapers/magazines, were used by 8,3% respondents respectively. The reading of the combination of newspapers/magazines was preferred by 5,5%, followed by 2,8% respondents who preferred to read books/newspapers/magazines/pamphlets. All the other combinations (see table above) were preferred by 0.9%. Of the respondents 4,6% did not indicate any preference.

It is interesting to note that books were the most popular medium. It is widely assumed that magazines and newspapers are the most popular media amongst the black population, because of their relative cheapness and easy accessibility. These types of materials are also commonly borrowed among family members and neighbours and friends. The assumption can be made that books are so popular because they contain information needed for study purposes, which is the reason why the majority of users utilise the library (par. 7.5.1.1.7).

#### **7.7.1.6 Language preference (Question 6)**

As with the above question, all 109 respondents' answers were used in this analysis, as all but five answered the question.

Twenty-nine respondents (26,6%) indicated that they read only in Zulu, while 30 (27,5%) indicated that English was their language of preference. Forty (36,7%) preferred to read in both Zulu and English, with one respondent (0,9%) indicating a preference for both English and Afrikaans. The combinations of Zulu and Xhosa, and Zulu/English/Xhosa/Swazi materials were preferred by one (0,9%) respondent. Two (1,8%) respondents read a combination of Zulu/English/Afrikaans material. Five (4,6%) respondents refrained from answering the question. This result was expected, as most black occupants of the Kwa-Zulu/Natal province are Zulu speaking. Most of the other population groups have also been traditionally English speaking, thus making it obvious that the two languages, Zulu and English, would be the preferred languages.

#### **7.7.1.7 Community library utilisation (Question 7)**

Seventy five respondents (68,8%) indicated that they made use of the community library facilities, while 34 (31,2%) responded negatively.

#### **7.7.1.8 Reasons for non-use of the library (Question 8)**

The 34 respondents who responded negatively were asked to arrange possible reasons for non-use of the library facilities in order of preference from 1 - 8. This proved a problem, as explained in par. 7.3. However, those who did answer the question gave their reasons in the following order:

*Table 7.13 Reasons for non-use of library*

|   | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Non-awareness of library's existence</b> | 14               | 41,2              |
| <b>Non-awareness of services offered</b>    | 6                | 17,6              |
| <b>Unsuitable library hours</b>             | 5                | 14,6              |
| <b>Lack of time to visit library</b>        | 5                | 14,6              |
| <b>Reading difficulties</b>                 | 2                | 5,9               |
| <b>Distance between home and library</b>    | 1                | 2,9               |
| <b>Uninteresting materials</b>              | 1                | 2,9               |
| <b>Total</b>                                | 34               | 100,00            |

From the responses it became clear that the libraries should market themselves and their services better. Ignorance of the existence and the purpose of the library is quite evident. It is also clear that in the case of people working or living far from the library, the library should strive to accommodate their needs by having flexible hours, especially in the evenings when most of the workers should be free to visit the library.

#### **7.7.1.9 Frequency of library utilisation (Question 9)**

*Table 7.14 Library utilisation: frequency rate*

| <i>Utilisation</i>     | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Daily</b>           | 24               | 22,0              |
| <b>Once a week</b>     | 39               | 35,8              |
| <b>Every two weeks</b> | 10               | 9,2               |
| <b>Once a month</b>    | 5                | 4,6               |
| <b>Other</b>           | 10               | 9,2               |
| <b>No response</b>     | 21               | 19,2              |
| <b>Total</b>           | 109              | 100,00            |

A visit once a week proved to be the most popular option (35,8%), while a daily visit (22,0%) took second place. Less popular choices were a visit every two weeks, and visits for specific reasons ( 9,2%). These specific reasons included:

- ☐ to find specific information;
- ☐ to find a quiet study space;
- ☐ to find information for a school project.

From the above reasons it is clear that use of the library facilities is often related to educational purposes. According to table 7.14 71.6% of the respondents visited the library on a regular basis (regular = daily - every two weeks). This figure includes 5 respondents under "other" who visited the library twice (2 respondents) or three times (3 respondents) a week. During the interviews the librarians mentioned that especially school children use the facilities on a regular basis.

A visit once a month was the least popular choice with only 4,6% of the respondents indicating that as their choice. Of the respondents (19,3%) included in the sample did not respond to this question. Those that indicated their preference under "other" used the library twice (2 respondents), or three (3 respondents) times a week (included above under "regular" users). The other five indicated that they did not have time for a library visit as they either commuted to work, came home too late, or that they were out job hunting.



#### 7.7.1.10 Library hours (Question 10 - 12)

Table 7.15 Library hours: preferences

| <b>Preference</b>                 | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Morning</b>                    | 21               | 19,2              |
| <b>Afternoon</b>                  | 56               | 51,4              |
| <b>Evening</b>                    | 3                | 2,8               |
| <b>Morning/Afternoon</b>          | 23               | 21,1              |
| <b>Morning/Evening</b>            | 3                | 2,8               |
| <b>Morning/Afternoon/ Evening</b> | 2                | 1,8               |
| <b>No response</b>                | 1                | 0,9               |
| <b>Total</b>                      | 109              | 100,00            |

As expected the best utilisation is in the afternoon, coinciding with the scholars and students making use of the facilities after school. What was interesting was the fact that a number indicated evening visits, while in fact none of the libraries were open after 17h00. These users possibly make use of the facilities rather late in the afternoons. The sun sets relatively early in winter (when this survey was done), and darkness is associated with evening.

Table 7.16 Satisfaction with library hours

| <b>Level of satisfaction</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Satisfied</b>             | 71               | 65.2              |
| <b>Not satisfied</b>         | 19               | 17.4              |
| <b>No response</b>           | 19               | 17.4              |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 109              | 100.00            |

The majority of respondents seemed to be satisfied with the current library hours. Those who were not satisfied, were asked to give reasons for their dissatisfaction. The following reasons were stated:

- ☐ We can only use the library after school, which closes after 17:30. (As schools normally close earlier in the afternoon, these respondents could possibly be students attending technikon, college or university classes which might continue until the specified hour).
  
- ☐ The library closes too early - it should open at 8:00 and close at 18:00. Some suggested closing the library at 19:30.
  
- ☐ The library should be open for more hours during the weekend, as this is the only time pupils can use the facility.

**7.7.1.11 Information sources most commonly used in the community  
(Question 13 -14)**

For question 13 preferences according to a rating system were once again requested. Eighty one attempted to answer this question. Many respondents only rated one or two items and not all eight of them or they would give all, or just some of the items, an equal rating, which resulted in discrepancies. These discrepancies made it difficult to analyse the responses with care, but certain trends could be deduced.

*Table 7.17 Information sources: usage*

|                       | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Family members</b> | 44               | 40,4              |
| <b>Newspapers</b>     | 29               | 26,6              |
| <b>Friends</b>        | 24               | 22,0              |
| <b>Library</b>        | 21               | 19,3              |

|                                |    |      |
|--------------------------------|----|------|
| <b>Professionals</b>           | 12 | 11,0 |
| <b>Pamphlets</b>               | 6  | 5,5  |
| <b>Community organisations</b> | 3  | 2,8  |
| <b>Church</b>                  | 2  | 1,8  |
| <b>Neighbours</b>              | 2  | 1,8  |
| <b>Other sources (TV)</b>      | 1  | 0,9  |

The overwhelming majority, 40,4% preferred to ask family members. Newspapers proved to be the second most popular source of information, with 26,6% of the respondents indicating it as their preference. Friends were the third most popular choice at 22%. These top three indications are in line with the oral tradition prevalent in black communities, as well as the easy accessibility of the sources. The preference for these sources was also indicated in the study done by Bekker and Lategan (1988).

The library received 9.3% responses. This low score indicates that the library is not seen as an important source of community information, as indicated also by Bekker and Lategan (1988) in their survey on the role of the library in black communities.

The respondents (21) were asked to indicate reasons for not making use of the library as a source of information. Only a few gave reasons. The following were cited as reasons:

- ☐ The overwhelming majority, 52,4%, that answered this question indicated that they had no knowledge of the library as a source of information. General ignorance of libraries as a whole was evident;
- ☐ Time constraints were also indicated as an important reason for not using the library (23,8%);
- ☐ Of the respondents 4.8% cited poor eyesight as a reason;

- It seems that there might be a perception that this service costs money, as lack of money was twice 9,5% mentioned as a reason for not using the library for gaining information. It might also indicate that money was needed for travelling to and from the library, and that it was not always available;
- Of the respondents (9,5%) indicated that they could not see much use for the library in their lives.

Professionals in specific fields received 11% of the responses. Pamphlets were regarded by 5,5% of the respondents as their most important source of information. Community organisations received very little support and only 2,8% of the respondents indicated them as their preferred information source. Both the church as well as neighbours obtained only 1,8% of the responses, indicating that the church does not play a major role in informing the community. It was interesting to note that neighbours were not indicated as an important information source, which might indicate that, with the current violent situation in the country, neighbours are looked upon with suspicion, and therefore ignored as a source of information.

Only 0,9% of the respondents indicated watching TV to find information.

#### **7.7.1.12 Library sources: Utilisation (Question 15-16)**

Respondents were asked to indicate which sources they most often used to find information in the library. The rating system was once again used. Eighty-eight respondents answered this question. Once again, the rating system proved a problem as explained in par. 7.3.

*Table 7.18 Utilisation of library sources*

|                   | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Books</b>      | 51               | 46,8              |
| <b>Newspapers</b> | 19               | 17,4              |
| <b>Magazines</b>  | 11               | 10,1              |
| <b>Video's</b>    | 4                | 3,7               |
| <b>Pamphlets</b>  | 4                | 3,7               |
| <b>Posters</b>    | 2                | 1,8               |
| <b>Others</b>     | 1                | 0,9               |

- As expected the most popular source was books (46,8%). As books make up the bulk of the library collection it is hardly surprising;
- Newspapers were the second most popular source. Of the respondents (17,4%) indicated it as their first choice. Many of the communities only had a few newspapers available, and according to the Chief Librarian of the Pinetown Public Library, these newspapers were always a few days old, as it was difficult to obtain these papers on time. Most of the librarians do not have ready access to a shop nearby from which newspapers can be bought, thus they need to be received through the mail;
- Of the respondents (10,1%) indicated magazines as their main source of information. Once again, the variety of magazines in most of the community libraries is not very big, and is mostly of a popular nature;
- Video's and pamphlets each received 3,7% of the responses, probably because of the limited supply available in the libraries;
- Posters were the second least used source, eliciting 1,8% responses;

- Of the respondents (1.8%) indicated using other sources in the library to find information (these sources were not explicitly named).

When asked to indicate how often they could locate the needed information, the responses were as follows:

*Table 7.19 Frequency of user satisfaction*

|                     | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Always</b>       | 32               | 29,4              |
| <b>Occasionally</b> | 44               | 40,4              |
| <b>Seldom</b>       | 12               | 11,0              |
| <b>Never</b>        | 1                | 0,9               |
| <b>No response</b>  | 20               | 18,3              |
| <b>Total</b>        | 109              | 100,00            |

The majority seemed to get hold of some of the information they were looking for, although "occasionally" should not be seen as a very favourable indication. The aim of a community library should be to render an information service in such a way that it can assist with most queries, if not from its own collection, then by referring the user to an organisation or body that will most probably be able to assist. Therefore, the high "occasional" rating (combined with the "seldom" and "never" responses) should be taken note of, as this can be an indication that the community library is not functioning properly as a referral medium.

#### **7.7.1.13 Library activities (Question 17-18)**

Attendance of the community library activities could give an indication of how well the community library marketed its services to the community. Attendance figures of these meetings could also indicate whether a need for this specific service is felt by the community.

As indicated in par. 7.5.1.1.8, only two of the community libraries have an activities hall, therefore many of the activities associated with a community library, for example, community meetings, talks on important community matters and cultural activities, cannot take place, or have to be conducted inside the library, where enough space and privacy have proved to be a problem. It would also seem from the information supplied by the community librarians, as indicated in par. 7.5.1.1.9 that only story hours and holiday programmes are regular features of the library programme. That would explain the high “never” response for craft classes and talks on special topics.

The following table indicates the different activities, as well as the frequency of attendance:

*Table 7.20 Attendance of library activities*

|              | Story hours |       | Holiday programmes |       | Craft classes |       | Talks on special topics |       |
|--------------|-------------|-------|--------------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
|              | Fre-quency  | %     | Fre-quency         | %     | Fre-quency    | %     | Fre-quency              | %     |
| Often        | 16          | 14,7  | 13                 | 11,9  | 10            | 9,2   | 19                      | 17,4  |
| Occasionally | 20          | 18,3  | 20                 | 18,3  | 15            | 13,8  | 20                      | 18,3  |
| Never        | 51          | 46,8  | 45                 | 41,4  | 44            | 40,4  | 41                      | 37,6  |
| No response  | 22          | 20,2  | 31                 | 28,4  | 40            | 36,6  | 29                      | 26,7  |
| Total        | 109         | 100,0 | 109                | 100,0 | 109           | 100,0 | 109                     | 100,0 |

What was interesting to note was the fact that many of the respondents indicated that they attended an activity like the story hour either often, or occasionally. As no children under the age of 12 completed the questionnaire, this could indicate a possible discrepancy. However, the majority of respondents were women, which could indicate that the respondents who replied positively, were the mothers of the children who

attended the named activities, and that they accompanied their children to these activities, or sent them accompanied by somebody else.

When asked to indicate services which they would support, if available in their community libraries, the response was overwhelmingly in favour of most of the services mentioned, indicating the great need existing in the community for these types of services.

*Table 7.21 Support for community library services if offered*

|   | <b>Support</b>         |          | <b>Not support</b>     |          | <b>No response</b>     |          |
|---|------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|
|   | <b>Fre-<br/>quency</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Fre-<br/>quency</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Fre-<br/>quency</b> | <b>%</b> |
| <b>Community information</b>            | 99                     | 90,8     | 9                      | 8,3      | 1                      | 0,9      |
| <b>Literacy classes</b>                 | 82                     | 75,2     | 9                      | 8,3      | 18                     | 16,5     |
| <b>Video shows</b>                      | 81                     | 74,3     | 11                     | 10,1     | 17                     | 15,6     |
| <b>Arts and craft classes</b>           | 93                     | 85,3     | 2                      | 1,8      | 14                     | 12,8     |
| <b>Talks on special subjects</b>        | 84                     | 77,1     | 4                      | 3,7      | 21                     | 19,2     |
| <b>Extra classes in school subjects</b> | 91                     | 83,5     | 5                      | 4,6      | 13                     | 11,9     |
| <b>Community meetings</b>               | 83                     | 76,1     | 5                      | 4,6      | 21                     | 19,2     |

The high positive response rate for support of literacy classes is surprising, especially if the fact that most of the respondents (87,9%) had an education to the level that they could be seen as literates (Table 7.10) is taken into account. Their support could be an indication they were aware of the need for these classes for the remainder of the community.

However there seems to be an overwhelming support for more library involvement in the community. It thus poses the challenge to the community libraries to do something about fulfilling these needs.

One of the characteristics of a community library is that it aims to uplift the disadvantaged. In a community where the unemployment rate is high, the



library should take positive action to empower the people. This can be done by supporting literacy classes, which, according to par. 7.5.1.1.9 , most of the libraries are already doing, organising talks on important issues such as AIDS, legal matters, political rights and house ownership, and supporting community activities through making their facilities available for arts and craft classes and community meetings. This, then, is the challenge to the community libraries, to become institutions which support and empower the people, according to the community's own specified needs.

### **7.8 Interpretation of community questionnaire**

Generally speaking the communities appeared to be reading communities, as most of the respondents indicated that they read in their spare time. This could be due to the fact that school children and students represented a significant percentage (47,7%) of the respondents.

Zulu and English were indicated as being the most popular languages. The popularity of these languages, especially those materials written by African authors, was confirmed by the community librarians. What was interesting was that books were the preferred medium, while newspapers and magazines were not as popular. This is in line with the findings of Johnstone (1988:129). However in a study done in Botswana Mchombu & Mtunyatta (1988:30) found that the main reason for people visiting the village reading rooms, was to read magazines and newspapers. It would thus seem that community libraries in South Africa are mainly used as study centres, and sources for finding information. However, as newspapers arrive a day or two late in the community libraries, it might also be a contributing factor as to why it is not such a popular medium.

There still seems to be much ignorance concerning the library and the services it offers. It can either be attributed to unsatisfactory marketing of the library, or apathy on the part of community members. Most of the community

members indicated that they would support programmes like literacy classes and a service like community information services, if offered by the library. The fact, however, is that these services exist in the libraries, or are supported by the libraries, yet it seems that members of the public are generally unaware of them.

There also seems to be a need from within communities that activities like crafts classes, talks, video shows, a place to hold community meetings and extra curricular activities should be offered. Most of the community libraries, however, are hampered by the lack of a community hall. Within the communities having an activities hall, crafts classes seem to be offered, but it is mainly for the benefit of the women. This can maybe explain why so many respondents indicated that they seldom or never attended these classes (Table 7.20). Attention should thus be given to what kinds of crafts the community would like to master, in order to attract as many members of the community as possible.

General satisfaction was expressed about library hours. However, a number of respondents were not satisfied, asking for extended hours. Reasons for this were varied, but concentrated mostly on the fact that evenings and Saturdays were the most suitable times for them to visit the library, as they had other obligations during the day. The need for extended hours was also confirmed by the community librarians. Although the security situation in the community does not allow for extended hours, the extension of library hours should be seen as a priority when circumstances favour a change.

Although a fair number of the respondents indicated that they found the information they were looking for either always or occasionally when visiting the library, it is still a disconcerting fact that most of the time many did not find what they were looking for. This could indicate that either the material in the collection is not what the community needs, or it could indicate that the users are too shy to ask for assistance from the librarians. It would therefore seem

that better communication between the librarians and the users could help to rectify the problem, and that the collection should be developed to support the real needs of users.

The library seems to be well utilised by the respondents, as 71,6% indicated one or more visits within a two week range. This is the frequency normally associated with library utilisation. This frequent utilisation could also be detected during the author's visits, when a constant movement of users was observed. It would thus seem as if the libraries do play an important role in the lives of many of the residents in the communities, albeit then only to supply a convenient study space.

When looking at the reasons for non-use of the library it becomes obvious that the library still needs to do much more marketing, as non-awareness of the library and its services were indicated as the main reasons for non-use. In a community which includes many illiterates the librarians should concentrate on methods that will also reach that part of the community, for example, by making use of audio-visual media like radio and TV to advertise their services. Librarians should also exploit opportunities offered at blood donor clinics, school meetings and local authority meetings to market the library by word of mouth.

Attention should also be given to the other reasons for non-use, i.e. unsuitable library hours, reading difficulties, and uninteresting material, as it could be an indication that other members in the community might experience the same problems. Those who indicated lack of time could possibly be accommodated by means of longer library hours.

As mentioned above attention should be paid to communication between librarians, users and community members. Although library committees do exist, it would seem that they are only partially involved in giving advice on certain library matters, for example, renovations and literacy classes. The

exception is Thselimnyama where active involvement is encouraged, and the users are actually deployed in the library as assistants when needed. This results in lively community participation in the running of the library and its services. At the two libraries without any community involvement the librarians seemed dejected by this lack of interaction. As user involvement is imperative for the success of community libraries, this is an aspect that needs urgent attention.

Table 7.23 summarises the extent to which the basic characteristics of the community library are met by the community libraries within the Pinetown Public Library system. The characteristics used for the evaluation were:

- ☐ established by community;
- ☐ community provides financial support;
- ☐ community involved in running of library;
- ☐ library supports upliftment programmes;
- ☐ library provides a community information service;
- ☐ library cooperates with other organisations to provide service to users;
- ☐ library does needs analysis to determine service needs.

If a characteristic is not met it will be indicated by a x . If the characteristic is met, but unsatisfactorily i.e. not sufficiently active, it will be indicated by a \* . If it is met at a satisfactory level, i.e. sufficiently active level, it will be indicated by \*\* .

The following checklist was used to indicate levels of satisfaction:

Table 7.22 Community library checklist

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Established by community</i>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If community actively asked for the establishment, either through correspondence or through meetings with local authority officials - **</li> <li>- If libraries were proposed by local authority, and established after some consultation with members of the community - *</li> <li>- Libraries built without any consultation with communities - x</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Community financial support</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communities paid for all expenses - **</li> <li>- Communities made some form of contribution towards funding the service - *</li> <li>- Communities made no contribution towards funding of services - x</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Community involvement</i>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communities contributed to three or more of the activities listed - **</li> <li>- Active involvement in delivering a service, for example, as assistants or library janitors;</li> <li>- Active library committee;</li> <li>- Community members involved in publicising/marketing library services;</li> <li>- Community input through suggestions or meetings as to what services they expect;</li> <li>- Involvement of community members in presenting library programmes, for example youth programmes and story hours.</li> <li>- Community involvement in fewer than three of above-mentioned activities - *</li> <li>- Community involvement in none of the above-mentioned activities - x</li> </ul> |
| <i>Upliftment</i>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active involvement in three or more of the following activities - **</li> <li>- Involvement in literacy classes;</li> <li>- Involvement in improving lot of unemployed's plight through cooperation</li> </ul>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with skills training programmes;</li> <li>- Arrangement of, or involvement in craft or cookery classes;</li> <li>- Presentation of repackaged material conveying information in a simple understandable manner to the illiterate;</li> <li>- Providing access to all information resources necessary to cope with daily survival.</li> </ul>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involvement in fewer than three of above-mentioned activities - *</li> <li>- Involvement in none of above-mentioned activities - x</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Community information service</i>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of three or more of the following services associated with a community information service - ** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Referral;</li> <li>- Advice;</li> <li>- Practical assistance with certain tasks for example, the completion of forms;</li> <li>- Provision of community information.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Provision of fewer than two services associated with a community information service - *</li> <li>- No service provided - x</li> </ul> |
| <i>Cooperation with other organisations</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active co-operation with organisations in community - **</li> <li>- Cooperation on ad hoc basis - *</li> <li>- No cooperation - x</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Needs analysis</i>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuous analysis done using a variety of methods, also including non-users - **</li> <li>- Occasional analysis done using a variety of methods, including only library members - *</li> <li>- No analysis done - x</li> </ul>  |

*Table 7.23 Community library performance*

| Name of library | Community library norms  |                             |                       |            |                               |                                      |                |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
|                 | Established by community | Community financial support | Community involvement | Upliftment | Community information service | Cooperation with other organisations | Needs analysis |
| St .Wendelins   | **                       | x                           | **                    | *          | **                            | **                                   | *              |
| Mpola           | **                       | x                           | x                     | x          | **                            | *                                    | *              |
| Klaarwater      | **                       | x                           | x                     | *          | **                            | *                                    | *              |
| Tshelimnyama    | **                       | x                           | **                    | *          | **                            | **                                   | *              |
| Thornwood       | **                       | x                           | *                     | *          | **                            | *                                    | *              |

It needs to be noted that the above-mentioned table is based on the questionnaires completed by the librarians and on the interviews conducted with the librarians. The level of satisfaction of community members with certain aspects of the community libraries' services, for example, the community information service, could not be determined. It is possible that according to them, this service did not function at a satisfactory level. This aspect could be a topic for further research.

Table 7.23 indicates that St. Wendelins and Tshelimnyama performed well in four out of seven categories (10 \* each). Thornwood and Klaarwater in 2 categories with an overall score of 8 \* and 7 \* respectively. The common weakness according to the norms is the lack of community financial support.

## **7.9 Conclusion**

The analysis of the data of the librarians' responses indicated that the services rendered still do not meet the full criteria for a community library. Some positive features were identified, for example, the fact that the community requested the establishment of a service, the measure of community involvement in a few of the libraries, the involvement of the librarians in trying to uplift the community through promotion of literacy classes, the existence of a community information service, and some degree of outreach into the community to bring the library to the community. Problems experienced, for example, unsatisfactory hours, frustration experienced when attempting to obtain the necessary information, with getting needed information through the formal channels, as well as the lack of space for presenting library programmes, were also voiced by the librarians. From the community responses, it would seem that the community also experienced the same frustrations. Many indicated that they would like to have the library open for longer and more suitable periods. Support for programmes which libraries could offer were also overwhelmingly expressed,



should the libraries be able to find a suitable venue for offering such activities. It also became clear that the collection still needed a great deal of attention, especially as far as material in the indigenous languages, and materials by African authors were concerned. More materials in "accessible" formats to the illiterate, for example, posters explaining important community matters and audio-visual materials on specific information needs, should also receive urgent attention.

Unawareness of the existence of the library and the services it could offer, serves as a warning light. If the library wants to play a significant role in the upliftment of its community, it should be an organisation which is known by and accessible to all in the community. It would thus be imperative for the librarians to embark on innovative marketing/publicity campaigns in order to promote their libraries and the services they can offer.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **8. Conclusions and recommendations**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This study looked at community libraries as an alternative to the traditional public library service offered in South Africa. The purpose was to review the current situation in African and South African public libraries to determine what kind of alternative service would be required to meet the needs of South African communities. This information provided the basis for determining the progress made by the Pinetown Community Libraries in meeting the demands of their black clientele who were previously excluded from using mainstream library facilities.

The study also aimed to identify the characteristics of a community library service, to provide a model against which alternative library services could be measured. This model served to determine whether the services offered by the Pinetown Community Libraries are based on the community's information needs, or whether we are merely dealing with a change in terminology instead of a significant paradigm shift (for the black communities for whom community libraries have been identified as a desirable model in this study) from the previously poorly supported Western style public libraries.

In this chapter an overview of the findings with regard to the above will be discussed and recommendations made with regard to solving some of the problems identified during the study.

#### **8.2 Problems experienced/weaknesses in the study**

During the empirical testing of the community libraries several problems were experienced. As explained in par. 7.3, the language barrier posed problems.

With the translations to and from Zulu the original meaning of sentences could have been lost, resulting in not eliciting the response anticipated.

As the infrastructure has not yet been properly developed, it proved too difficult to do the community survey in the residential areas. It was therefore done in a central shopping area where the people were readily available. This however could have resulted in not all the communities being represented evenly.

The use of a ranking system for some of the questions also proved to be a problem especially in the community questionnaire. As explained in par. 7.7.1.11, a large number of the respondents did not follow the instructions correctly, and therefore the questions requiring ranking showed many discrepancies. It was useful, however, for identifying certain trends.

As a result of time constraints, as well as the fact that these libraries are far from the author's place of residence, the author could only visit the libraries twice, and then only for short periods. This resulted in the author acquiring a fairly superficial knowledge of the libraries concerned. Completely objective judgement has therefore not always been possible.

This study is in no way a complete work on the topic, and must only be seen as a minor contribution to our knowledge of community libraries.

### **8.3 Findings regarding public library services**

#### **8.3.1 The nature of public library services**

The literature overview indicated that, since the establishment of the earliest libraries, education has always been one of the main objectives. Several *paradigm shifts occurred over the years in the ways in which this purpose was to be achieved*, ranging from serving the education needs of the elite, to

concentrating on the needs of the poorly educated masses during the Industrial Revolution. Later paradigm shifts switched the focus back to the information needs of the individual, calling for close interaction between the librarian and the user during the process of information transfer.

The educational role of the library is much more evident in Third World countries, where development is a high priority. As an agent for information transfer, be it in a formal, informal or non-formal manner, public libraries in Africa could play a powerful role in the field of education. However, to live up to these expectations, public libraries need to move away from being a passive service based on the needs of an educated elite, to being an active service based on the information needs of a whole community. Failure to make this adaptation will result in the sidelining of this vital service by the communities, as well as by the governments on which it relies for its economic survival.

### **8.3.2 The public library in Africa**

The Western model library system seems ill suited to the information needs and information transfer patterns of the people on the African continent. The reason for this can be found in the fact that these libraries were introduced to this continent without taking into consideration the cultural and educational background of the African people, which differed radically from that of Westerners. This imposed library system proved a great disappointment to the general African public, as neither the collections nor the services addressed their crucial educational and informational needs. The negative reaction to these services brought about a crisis situation in public library circles, leaving them fighting for survival.

Problems experienced in the public libraries in Africa are legion, but stem mainly from the application of a library model totally unsuitable for the African environment. Faced with problems such as a high illiteracy rate, low

educational levels, extreme poverty and non-conducive socio-economic conditions, for example, overcrowded houses, bad lighting and lack of spare time, particularly in urban areas, libraries needed to adapt and provide information in ways other than traditional print-based formats.

Several experimental information systems, using more pro-active methods and materials than the traditional public library have been introduced to several communities, with mixed success, but these efforts still lack force, creating a rather bleak picture of the African public library (par. 3.3). However, the experiments provided useful pointers for a public library model which could succeed in Africa:

- ☐ The main prerequisite would be to base services on scientifically determined needs;
- ☐ Communities should be involved at all levels, from the planning stage to the actual running of the libraries;
- ☐ The service should be a pro-active service offered to the public by staff trained for Third World conditions;
- ☐ Collections should be based on community needs, with local community sources forming an important part thereof;
- ☐ Relevant and suitable information sources, offered in a variety of formats, should be supplied;
- ☐ Libraries should cooperate with related information systems, including government departments, in order to make scarce information sources available to all;

- Services should be revised continuously in order to determine their suitability for local conditions.

### **8.3.3 Public library services in South Africa**

Given the longer history of South African public library services, compared to those in Africa, one would have expected these services to have moved away from the unacceptable Western model to one adapted to suit local conditions. The literature survey, however, revealed that this was not the case, as the services were almost exclusively designed for and accessible to one racial group i.e. the whites with Westernized cultural values. The services available to blacks (the group on which the study focused) were poorly developed and in most cases non-existent. Those which did exist were largely based on the Western model.

In recent years, as the political situation changed, public libraries were open to all races. The question which interested the author was whether South African public libraries took note of public library experiences in the rest of the continent, and adapted their programmes to suit the needs of black communities, or whether they just changed their names to "community libraries" in order to win the favour of the new political masters.

The literature survey revealed the following about the current South African library situation:

#### **8.3.3.1 Traditional library model**

As shown in par. 4.4.1, the services have been based mainly on the Western library model which is unsuitable for communities with high illiteracy, and a low educational level. This resulted in the mushrooming of alternative library services, which were based on the information needs of each specific community. These services are characterised by continued community

involvement in all aspects of the services, for example, finance, and assistance with maintenance, organisation and administration.

#### **8.3.3.2 Buildings**

Existing facilities are not adequate for rendering the type of service required to supply each community with a proper library service, but financial constraints hamper efforts to supply the same facilities to all communities. In par. 4.4.2 some measures to alleviate the problem temporarily have been discussed, showing that pre-fabricated buildings, halls and even ships' containers are used.

#### **8.3.3.3 Collections**

Until recently, collections reflected mainly Western principles. A major effort has been made to supply more material by African authors, as well as material for the newly literate. Materials in formats other than print have also been acquired, for example, audio-cassettes and videos (par. 4.4.3). The availability of community information is also receiving attention.

#### **8.3.3.4 Literacy programmes**

Given the low levels of literacy it has become imperative for public libraries to contribute to the upliftment of illiterates. Although public librarians are still divided on the question of the level of involvement libraries should have in literacy programmes, many have accepted the challenge and have become actively involved, either by becoming literacy teachers themselves, or by making their facilities available for literacy classes.

#### **8.3.3.5 Socio-economic and cultural conditions**

Living conditions, for example with regard to lighting, proper housing, and hours of work in many cases, especially in rural areas, are not conducive to reading.

#### **8.3.3.6 Publishing**

Publishing in the indigenous languages is not sufficient to supply in the need expressed for materials in the vernacular. This makes reading in a person's mother tongue difficult, which slows down the development of literacy.

However, there has been some progress. Although output is still low in numbers, several publishing companies, for example, Kwela Books and Fundani have been established with the purpose of publishing material in the indigenous languages, as well as material for the newly literate.

#### **8.3.3.7 Lack of needs analysis**

Collections still do not seem to reflect the needs of the majority of the community. Needs analysis, in each community, by means of in-depth surveys, will be essential in order to determine specific needs. Such surveys as those conducted by library staff seem too superficial at this stage. Surveys are conducted either through listening what material or information users ask for in the library, by observing user behaviour in the library, or by means of questionnaires distributed to users. These methods only measure the needs of a section of the community. They do not measure user satisfaction, i.e. do the users really find what they are looking for.



#### **8.3.3.8 Inappropriately trained staff**

Staff are still largely trained according to principles embraced by the Western library model. As these have proved ineffective in rendering services to people living in a Third World country adaptations are needed. In the alternative library services, a new approach has been introduced towards staff training in an effort to produce staff members with appropriate skills. However, as discussed in par. 4.4.8. adaptations to curriculums have been affected, or are in the offing at some of the formal training institutions, which augurs well for future training.

#### **8.3.3.9 Cooperative library services**

South African public libraries have access to a wide variety of information sources through subscription to SABINET or by using SAIS. Unfortunately, alternative library services are excluded from these services because of a lack of finances.

Until recently, information for developmental purposes has not been freely available to the public. With the growing awareness that information needs to be made available freely if the country wants to develop, new possibilities for cooperation with government departments are being explored.

While public libraries are struggling to make suitable adaptations to make their services more relevant to the needs of all members of the community, a developmental model on which the adaptations could be based, has been proposed. The following aspects should form the focus during the transition to a community-based service:

- The collection should become more Africa centred, while still reflecting the needs of the whole South African community;

- A new range of materials, for example, pamphlets, brochures, audio-visual and audio materials, is required to address the needs of the community;
- Services must be based on the expressed needs of each community, for example, materials for newly literates, community information, textbooks for student and scholars, or adequate study space for the scholars and students;
- Literacy programmes must form an essential part of the services rendered;
- Libraries should be aggressively and innovatively marketed, especially among members of the community previously excluded from library services;
- Librarians should be taught special skills, for example, communication, mediation and listening skills, and the skill to repackage and present information in an easy to understand format. Multi-linguism should be encouraged.

#### **8.3.4 Community libraries**

Chapter 5 showed that the development of community libraries is the result of the failure of traditional information systems to address information problems, specifically in developing and disadvantaged communities previously excluded from mainstream public libraries. The literature study showed that community libraries differ in many respects from traditional public library services. The basic characteristics of these community libraries include:

- community involvement in all aspects of the library's establishment, governance, maintenance and finances;

- ❑ the availability of a variety of material, concentrating mainly on alternative types of material, for example, brochures, newspaper clippings, audio-visual material and pamphlets;
- ❑ active interaction between librarians and users in order to determine the exact nature of each information request;
- ❑ close cooperation with other information agencies. Libraries form only a part of a whole information network;
- ❑ services moving away from a neutral stance, and biased towards those in the community who have been disadvantaged;
- ❑ active involvement in the empowerment of the disadvantaged in a community;
- ❑ staff needs to be equipped with special skills, for example, communication and mediation skills.

### **8.3.5 Pinetown Library System**

The Pinetown Public Library system has been investigated with the aim of determining the functioning of this system. Special attention has been paid to the establishment and development of the community libraries functioning within this system, because this study focused on these libraries. Information gathered from primary documents and informal interviews with the Chief Librarian showed that this system comprised the main public library, centred in Pinetown proper, as well as branch libraries and community libraries.

The community libraries were established at the request of the communities in Pinetown South, the former black township bordering on Pinetown proper. The initial funding was provided from funds scraped together from the

provincial budgets, but this responsibility was taken over by the Borough of Pinetown. Subsidies for buildings were received from the Provincial Library Services.

Day-to-day organisation and administration are in the hands of two staff members, assisted by a community librarian, stationed at the main library, when problems arise.

The description of each community library aimed at sketching a clearer view of the libraries' physical facilities and their functioning. This is important as it gives an indication of whether the libraries were really integrated with the communities' lives, or whether they were functioning as just another organisation from which certain members in the community can benefit, and the majority not.

From the research it became evident that, although most of the library buildings were of a substandard nature, this did not dampen the librarians' enthusiasm for the services they were rendering. Most of the libraries were in the process of actively seeking methods of becoming more integrated with community life, as well as becoming more accessible to all community members, for example, supporting literacy classes, building up puzzle libraries for young children, and making facilities like photocopiers and typewriters available to the general public. Active community participation is still absent in three of the five community libraries which is a major failing because community participation is one of the main characteristics that set these libraries apart from the traditional passive library service.

## **8.4 Hypothesis**

The hypothesis stated in par. 1.3 was:

That public library services in South Africa have not yet developed a new paradigm for "community libraries". A change of name without a new paradigm for service results in the same service as that traditionally rendered by public libraries.

More and more public libraries in South Africa prefer to be known as "community libraries". In recent years public libraries have made big strides, in their attempts to move away from the traditional public library service. Collections more and more started reflecting the needs of the whole community. Special attention is being paid to the needs of the illiterate in communities and community information services are systematically introduced. However, as shown in Chapter 4, public libraries still have to make many adaptations before they can truly be called "community libraries".

Some public library systems, especially those catering for previously disadvantaged communities, have established services resembling the characteristics of community libraries. One such system is the Pinetown library system. Pinetown community libraries were established as a result of a need expressed by the communities of the previously black residential area of Pinetown South. Although the community libraries are still relatively new, the study showed that progress has been made in several respects.

## **8.5 Findings with regard to Pinetown community libraries**

### **8.5.1 Community involvement**

Community involvement has been identified as one of the important characteristics of a community library. In this respect the Pinetown Community Libraries seem to be lacking to some extent. As shown discussed in par 7.6, community involvement is restricted to the community's request for service. No evidence could be found that the communities are involved in the funding, maintenance or organisation of the library, thus contradicting Fairer-

Wessels & Machet's (1993:106) and Raseroka's (1993:50) views that a community library is owned, sustained and maintained by community members. Although St. Wendelins encouraged suggestions for improved services by means of a suggestion box, it is questionable whether this can be categorised as community involvement, as the final decision whether to respond to suggestions, still lie with the librarians. No form of report back on suggestions seems to be supplied, thus the community is not informed as to what has happened to their suggestions.

The existing library committees seem to limit their involvement to certain aspects of running the library, for example, marketing the library, literacy classes and youth programmes. The only library committee that seems actively involved in the running of the library is the Thselimnyama Library Committee. However, this involvement seems to be limited to assistance when one of the librarians is absent.

Financially none of the communities made a direct contribution. However, considering the current depressed economic situation in the country, it is unrealistic to expect any substantial financial contribution from community members. This leads to a situation where libraries must be run according to rules and regulations laid down by a sponsoring organisation, i.e. the local authority/provincial government, thus not leaving much room for community involvement in the administration of the libraries.

#### **8.5.2 Materials available in the libraries**

From the information gained, it became clear that the librarians are aware of the need for materials other than print-based materials. The need for more material in the indigenous languages and by African authors has also been acknowledged. Most of the libraries have started collections of ephemeral materials like pamphlets, brochures and newspaper clippings, as well as audio-visual materials like videos and cassettes. These collections however

are still very small, and in need of constant updating. As showed in par. 7.6 especially the pamphlet collections need to receive more attention, as these materials are easy to understand, and are more up to date than information found in books.

Although all of the libraries had small collections of materials written by African authors, as well as materials written in the indigenous languages, the librarians stated that there was a crying need for the expansion of these collections. From the literature survey it became clear that most of the provincial library systems tried to alleviate this problem, but it is not yet adequate to fulfil the need expressed for this type of material.

According to the questionnaires' all the librarians were taught how to repackage material during their training period. However, no trace of such activities could be found during the author's visit to the libraries. Repackaging is an important aspect of community librarians' work, as it is a way in which important aspects concerning community life, for example, health and sanitation, can be explained to the disadvantaged in the community. The question therefore arises whether the importance of repackaging is explained, or whether it is just a question of the librarians having been properly trained to perform this task.

All materials are acquired through the Provincial library system, and to a small extent by means of donations. The librarians are free to choose from the material available at Provincial library regional depots. According to the Deputy Director of the Kwazulu-Natal Library Service all affiliated libraries can attend selection meetings or state their demands and needs which are taken into account during the selection process. Regular meetings are also held at affiliated libraries in order for those who cannot attend the selection meetings in Pietermaritzburg, to communicate their needs. However, only a limited number of materials can be bought due to budget constraints, thus

making it difficult to always supply in the stated demand (Zululand Observer, 28 February 1997:18)<sup>14</sup>.

### **8.5.3 Training of staff**

With the exception of one librarian, none of the librarians is qualified. However, according to the Chief Librarian of the Pinetown Public Library, many of the librarians are in the process of obtaining a professional library qualification by means of a correspondence course.

All the librarians received in-house training whereby skills like the day-to-day administration of the library, telephone etiquette and repackaging of material are taught. Regular follow-up courses are conducted when a need is identified. This is in line with the opinion of Hikwa (1994:13 - 14) who recommends continuing education as a method of instilling new skills in the staff.

### **8.5.4 Needs analysis**

Judging by the interviews and questionnaires - scientific needs analysis did not seem to receive the necessary attention. Methods used to determine information needs are restricted to observation and listening. Because these methods only reach a small section of the community, they cannot be used to verify the actual needs of the community as a whole.

### **8.5.5 Cooperation with community organisations**

The librarians indicated that they were actively involved with community organisations in their respective communities. The librarians' involvement in various community organisations is also used to gather information, and to forge contacts which can be utilised if need be to assist a user with an

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<sup>14</sup> Letter, Deputy Director: Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Library Service.



information need when the opportunity arises. The librarians also used these contacts to advertise their library's services.

Although the communities seemed to be unaware of the existence of a community library service (par. 7.7.1.13), 99% indicated that they would avail themselves of this service. Marketing of this service therefore seems vitally essential. According to the librarians those that utilised this service appreciated the service they received, as every possible means is used by the librarians to assist, to find the information from other organisations, or to refer them to the appropriate organisation.

#### **8.5.6 Library extension work**

Extension work has been severely hampered by the lack of a hall as well as lack of space inside the library (par. 7.5.1.1.8). Traditional public library activities, for example, story hours and holiday programmes are offered either within the library or in venues nearby. According to the librarians these activities are well supported. However, to become truly integrated in community life these libraries should strive to become the focal point of all community activities. Non-availability of space should not serve as a deterrent, as the library could still play an active role in organising classes and meetings at different venues, bringing the library to the people through displays or active marketing of library services during these meetings.

#### **8.5.7 Community information service**

All the libraries indicated that they rendered a community information service (par. 7.6). Although it was difficult to establish the extent of this service, it became clear during the interviews that most of the librarians were actively involved in assisting users to find the correct information. They used the knowledge gained from community organisations to collect community

information. Liaison with these organisations was used if referrals needed to be made.

#### **8.5.8 Flexible hours**

*From the responses received from non-library members (par. 7.7.1.8) it became evident that libraries are still an unknown factor in community life. Much of this must be attributed to poor marketing, but it would seem that unsuitable hours also acted as a major deterrent to library utilisation. Dissatisfaction with current library hours was also evident among library users (par. 7.7.1.10). Some flexibility therefore needs to be attained to make libraries accessible to the majority of community members.*

#### **8.6 Conclusion based on hypothesis**

*Judging from the evaluation of the performance of each community library according to a checklist constructed for the basic characteristics based on literature (Table 7.23) it became evident that these libraries are in a transition phase, moving away from the traditional passive public library service to become active in their communities. Proof of this could be found in the fact that communities were becoming more involved in the libraries than was previously the case with public libraries. The library service has become more community-orientated through the collection and dissemination of community information. Through cooperation with other organisations the community library broke out of the isolated mould which became a trademark of public libraries, and in that respect has become an active participant in the information transfer process. The focus has also shifted from service to the educated elite to involvement in efforts to uplift the disadvantaged in the communities, thus resulting in a whole new attitude towards the library user.*

One can therefore conclude that the Pinetown Community Libraries have moved away from the traditional public library services model, and at least

two i.e. St. Wendelins and Tshelimnyama, are well on their way to offering their communities a pro-active community library service, although much more work remains to be done especially in Mpola, who did not do well in the evaluation.

## **8.7 Recommendations**

As mentioned above, the Pinetown Community Libraries have moved well away from traditional public library patterns. However, some aspects still need attention. The following recommendations are made in order for these libraries to become community libraries in the full sense of the word (as outlined in Chapter 5):

- Let the community become involved in the provision of the library service. Involvement does not necessarily mean the community's physical involvement in the day-to-day administration of the library and services provided by the library, although the use of library monitors or volunteer temporary staff could enhance community involvement and create a better understanding of the functioning of the library. Involvement could include activities like the planning of new services, recommendations on different types of information sources, assistance with obtaining oral information from members of the community, and the use of community members for activities such as storytelling, crafts classes and music and drama classes.
- Create open communication channels. Regular open community meetings, providing an opportunity for feedback on the services and for suggestions regarding services for which the community has a need, should be held. These meetings can also be used to educate the community on what exactly can be expected from the service, and how to go about ensuring that a high standard of service is maintained.

- ❑ Launch a publicity campaign introducing the library and possible services it can render to the community. This should be followed by a community meeting where community involvement should be advocated.
  
- ❑ Own funds for every community library should be dealt with as a matter of urgency. It is clear that, due to the current economic situation in South Africa, most community libraries cannot function autonomously. The system of obtaining all materials from the Provincial Library Service, which does not necessarily take specific community demands into consideration when material is selected, stifles any notion of providing specific, alternative material applicable to a specific community's needs. Own funds will allow scope for acquiring community specific information, which will be a step in the right direction. In this respect the community should be encouraged to have fundraising events in order to raise funds for the library. Community involvement can be solicited with regard to the spending of funds generated.
  
- ❑ Staff should be trained to develop skills that will enable them to become pro-active agents of information transfer. They should learn how to anticipate needs, in order to act before such needs are expressed. They should also be taught how to go out into the community, using their knowledge gained to bring the library to the people, and not adopt a "sit and wait" attitude for the public to come to the library.

## 8.8 Conclusion

This research concentrated on the shortcomings of the traditional Western public library system, as a system for information provision to a continent whose traditions, ideals, social and educational levels differ radically from those of developed countries. These shortcomings were used to highlight possible alternatives for a service found wanting.

Although Community Libraries are still a comparatively new development in the library world, it is a system which has the possibility of providing an information service to each community, and each individual in the community, at their own level of development.

The Pinetown Community Libraries, although still not "true" community libraries, have moved significantly away from the passive traditional Western public library service model to become active in their service to communities in dire need of upliftment and development in order to take their rightful place in the South African nation.

Tested against the hypothesis as stated in par 1.3 it can thus be argued that the Pinetown Community Libraries do not merely represent a mere name change, but are moving towards becoming fully fledged community libraries.

## CHAPTER 9

### 9. Bibliography.

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**APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE - COMMUNITY LIBRARIANS**

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND  
LIBRARIANS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The information in this questionnaire will be used in a master's degree study about community libraries. ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS!

Please do not hesitate to give honest answers to the questions - **ANONYMITY IS GUARANTEED - NOBODY WILL KNOW WHAT YOU ANSWERED!** Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Please answer all questions. Mark the appropriate questions with a tick.

1. 

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 1.1 Male | 1.2 Female |
|----------|------------|

2. Age

|              |             |             |             |                  |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 2.1 Below 20 | 2.2 21 - 25 | 2.3 26 - 30 | 2.4 31 - 35 | 2.5 36 and above |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|

3. Standard of education

|                  |                   |                                  |               |                |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 3.1<br>St. 6 - 8 | 3.2<br>St. 9 - 10 | 3.3<br>Post Matric private study | 3.4<br>Degree | 3.5<br>Diploma |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|

4. Do you have a library qualification?

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 4.1 Yes | 4.2 No |
|---------|--------|

4.3 If 'yes', please specify \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you receive in-house training for your present position?

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 5.1 Yes | 5.2 No |
|---------|--------|

5.3 If 'yes' how long was the period of training? \_\_\_\_\_

5.4 Which aspects were covered during your training? Please specify.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you receive continued training from your employer?

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 6.1 Yes | 6.2 No |
|---------|--------|

6.3 If 'yes', which aspects of library work are covered?

|  |
|--|
| 6.3.1 Library procedures   |
| 6.3.2 How to do community surveys to establish information needs in your community   |
| 6.3.3 How to organise library extension programmes<br>e.g. holiday programmes, story hours, etc.   |
| 6.3.4 Marketing your library to the public   |
| 6.3.5 How to organise community activities in your library   |
| 6.3.6 How to do displays   |
| 6.3.7 How to make materials that will transfer a message in such a way to the public that they will understand it easily,<br>e.g. make posters on health topics, child care, sanitation etc. |
| 6.3.8 Other (Specify)  |

7. What form does this continued training take?

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| 7.1 Workshops                |
| 7.2 Seminars                 |
| 7.3 Practical demonstrations |
| 7.4 Other (Specify)          |

8. Please provide detail with regard to library hours:

| 8.1    | 8.2     | 8.3       | 8.4      | 8.5    | 8.6      | 8.7    |
|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|        |         |           |          |        |          |        |

9. Please specify the approximate number of items in your library:

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 9.1 Books                       |  |
| 9.2 Magazines (Titles only)     |  |
| 9.3 Newspapers (Titles only)    |  |
| 9.4 Adult literacy material     |  |
| 9.5 University/school textbooks |  |
| 9.6 Video's                     |  |
| 9.7 Posters                     |  |
| 9.8 Pamphlets                   |  |
| 9.9 Newspaper cuttings          |  |
| 9.10 Other (Specify)            |  |

9. Average circulation figures for the last 3 months:

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 9.1 Adult fiction        |  |
| 9.2 Adult non-fiction    |  |
| 9.3 Juvenile fiction     |  |
| 9.4 Juvenile non-fiction |  |
| 9.5 Magazines            |  |
| 9.6 Video's              |  |
| 9.7 Audiocassette        |  |
| 9.8 Posters              |  |
| 9.9 Pamphlets            |  |
| 9.10 Others (specify)    |  |

10. For what reasons are your library used most? (Please rate from 1 - 9 (1 highest score - 9 lowest))

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 10.1 As a place to study                                     |   |
| 10.2 To supplement school programmes                         |   |
| 10.3 To find quick factual information                       |   |
| 10.4 To find general information for continued education     |   |
| 10.5 Leisure reading   |   |
| 10.6 Holiday programmes                                      |   |
| 10.7 Literacy programmes                                     |   |
| 10.8 Community activities e.g. meetings, hobbies, talks etc. |   |
| 10.9 Other (Specify)   | 1 |

11. Do you have an activities hall?

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 11.1 Yes | 11.2 No |
|----------|---------|

11.2. If 'yes', how often is it used:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 11.2.1 Daily                |  |
| 11.2.2 Several times a week |  |
| 11.2.3 Every two weeks      |  |
| 11.2.4 Once a month         |  |
| 11.2.5 Other (Specify)      |  |

11.3 By whom is it used:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 11.3.1 School children                   |  |
| 11.3.2 Local authority                   |  |
| 11.3.3 Art groups                        |  |
| 11.3.4 Hobby groups                      |  |
| 11.3.5 Literacy classes                  |  |
| 11.3.6 Community organisations (Specify) |  |
| 11.3.7 Churches                          |  |
| 11.3.8 Library                           |  |
| 11.3.9 Other (Specify)                   |  |

12. What library activities does your library offer? Indicate approximately how often.

|   | Never | Seldom<br>(specify<br>how<br>often) | Regularly<br>(specify<br>how<br>often) |
|---|-------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 12.1 Literacy/Support of literacy classes   |       |                                     |  |
| 12.2 Story Hours  |       |                                     |  |
| 12.3 Holiday programmes for children  |       |                                     |  |
| 12.4 Talks on topics of interest to the community   |       |                                     |  |
| 12.5 Community information service e.g. supply information on topics e.g. health, legal aspects, community activities, etc. |       |                                     |  |

13. Do you make (publish) your own material e.g. posters or pamphlets to explain certain topics in easy terms to your community?

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 13.1 Yes | 13.2 No |
|----------|---------|

13.3 If 'yes', please give details. \_\_\_\_\_

14. How do you become aware of information needs within your community?

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 14.1 Ask your members  |  |
| 14.2 Do surveys  |  |
| 14.3 Wait for your members to express their information need                                   |  |
| 14.4 Go out in the community and actively listen to what kind of information they require most |  |
| 14.5 Observe the use of library materials  |  |
| 14.6 Other (Specify)   |  |



15. Do you work with other organisations in your community e.g. health services, schools etc. to find , and distribute information to members of the community?

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 15.1 Yes | 15.2 No |
|----------|---------|

15.3 If 'yes' please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you restrict membership in your library?

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 16.1 Yes | 16.2 No |
|----------|---------|

16.3 If 'yes', please describe the restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. Do you restrict the use of certain material in your library?

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 17.1 Yes | 17.2 No |
|----------|---------|

17.3 If 'yes', please describe the restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. When choosing material for your library, do you refrain from choosing material whose content might be a sensitive issue to some people e.g. material promoting a certain political party, AIDS, homosexuality, etc.?

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 18.1 Yes | 18.2 No |
|----------|---------|

18.3 If 'yes', please give reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. How do you acquire material for your library?

|  |
|--|
| 19.1 Buy it                                  |
| 19.2 Get it from Pinetown Library            |
| 19.3 Get it directly from Provincial Library |
| 19.4 Other (Specify)                         |

19.5 If not buying your own material, how do you go about obtaining material that will suit the information needs of your specific community? Please specify

---



---

20. Are you actively involved in any community organizations?

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 20.1 Yes | 20.2 No |
|----------|---------|

20.3 If 'yes', in which organisations are you involved?

|                          | Name of organization | Capacity |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| 20.3.1 Church            |                      |          |
| 20.3.2 Women's Institute |                      |          |
| 20.3.3 School            |                      |          |
| 20.3.4 Sport             |                      |          |
| 20.3.5 Business          |                      |          |
| 20.3.6 Arts groups       |                      |          |
| 20.3.7 Music groups      |                      |          |
| 20.3.8 Other (Specify)   |                      |          |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

**APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - COMMUNITY LIBRARIANS**

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNITY LIBRARIANS

### SKILLS

1. Explain in detail the library skills taught during your in-house training.

### LIBRARY HOURS

2. Are the library hours suitable to the needs of the community. Give reasons for your answer.

### ACTIVITIES HALL

3. Does the absence of an activities hall have an influence on services which you would have liked to offer to the community.  
- If so, in what sense?

(Question 4 and 5 for Klaarwater and Mpola only)

4. Does the fact that you have an activities hall available allow you to offer any other services which are not offered by the other libraries?
5. How often does the community make use of the activities hall for community meetings and activities.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

6. Illiteracy and unemployment seems to be a big problem in your community. How does your library become involved in the development of these people?
7. How do you obtain information concerning your community?
8. Describe the extent of cooperation between your library and other community organisations. Do you refer your users to the appropriate organisation if you cannot answer their requests from the material you have available in your library?

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

9. Do you have a library committee, consisting of community members?
10. If "yes" describe their contribution.
11. If "no", is the community in any way involved in the running of the library?

12. Does the community make any financial contribution to the running of the library?

### BOOK COLLECTION

13. Are your users generally satisfied with the material available?
14. To what extent are textbooks used in your library?
15. Is there a great demand for audio-visual material in your library?
16. Are pamphlets and posters used often by your users to find information?
17. What kind of donations do you receive in your library?
18. Are the donations applicable for your communities needs?
19. Is the condition of the donated material such that it can be used in the library?
20. What do you do with material which cannot be use in your library?

### LIBRARIAN'S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

21. Does your involvement in community activities assist you to determine the needs of the community?
22. Do you think that your active involvement in community activities contributes to the library being utilised more, as the community know and trust you more, than they would do a stranger?
23. Do you use your community activities to advertise your library?
24. What other methods do you use to advertise your library's services?

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT

25. What do you do if your community survey shows a specific need for which you will need the material on a semi-permanent basis, and the Pinetown Public Library and the Provincial Library Services cannot supply in the need?

### **APPENDIX 3: COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND  
COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The information in this questionnaire will be used in a master's degree study about community libraries. ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS!

Please do not hesitate to give honest answers to the questions - *ANONYMITY IS GUARANTEED - NOBODY WILL KNOW WHAT YOU ANSWERED!* Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Please answer all questions where applicable. Mark your answers with a tick.

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. 1.1 Male | 1.2 Female |
|-------------|------------|

2. In what age group are you?

|             |             |             |                  |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 2.1 12 - 18 | 2.1 19 - 25 | 2.3 26 - 35 | 2.4 36 and above |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|

3. What is your standard of education?

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 3.1 Gr. 1 - St. 2             |  |
| 3.1 St. 3 - 5                 |  |
| 3.2 St. 6 - 8                 |  |
| 3.3 St. 9 - 10                |  |
| 3.4 Post matric private study |  |
| 3.5 Degree                    |  |
| 3.6 Diploma                   |  |
| 3.7 Other (specify)           |  |

4. What is your occupation?

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 4.1 Scholar/Student             |  |
| 4.2 Self-employed               |  |
| 4.3 Employed (by somebody else) |  |
| 4.4 Unemployed                  |  |

5. Do you read in your spare time?

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 5.1 Yes | 5.2 No |
|---------|--------|

If 'no' ignore questions 5.3 - 8.

5.3 If 'yes', how often do you read

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| 5.3.1 Daily                |
| 5.3.2 Several times a week |
| 5.3.3 Once every two weeks |
| 5.3.4 Once a month         |
| 5.3.5 Other (specify)      |



5.4 What do you read?

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| 5.4.1 Books           |
| 5.4.2 Newspapers      |
| 5.4.3 Magazines       |
| 5.4.4 Pamphlets       |
| 5.4.5 Brochures       |
| 5.4.6 Other (specify) |

6. What language do you read?

|          |             |               |                      |
|----------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 6.1 Zulu | 6.2 English | 6.3 Afrikaans | 6.4 Others (Specify) |
|----------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|

7. Do you visit your community library to find reading material

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 7.1 Yes | 7.2 No |
|---------|--------|

If 'no' answer question 8, if 'yes' answer question 9

8. Rate the reasons for non-use of the library from 1 - 8 (1 highest score - 8 lowest score)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 8.1 Not aware of the library's existence         |  |
| 8.2 Library hours not suitable                   |  |
| 8.3 Not aware of the services the library offers |  |
| 8.4 Have no time to visit library                |  |
| 8.5 Library too far from my house                |  |
| 8.6 Finding reading difficult                    |  |
| 8.7 Materials not sufficiently interesting       |  |
| 8.8 Other (specify)                              |  |

9. How often do you use the library:

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 9.1 Daily            |  |
| 9.2 Once a week      |  |
| 9.3 Every two weeks  |  |
| 9.4 Once a month     |  |
| 9.5 Others (Specify) |  |

10. What time of the day do you use the library?

|              |                |              |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 10.1 Morning | 10.2 Afternoon | 10.3 Evening |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|

11. Are you satisfied with the times the library is open:

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 11.1 Yes | 11.2 No |
|----------|---------|

12. If not, please make a suggestion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Which sources do you use to find the information you need in your everyday life, e.g. job vacancies, building costs, community activities, etc. Please rate from 1- 9 (1 highest score - 9 lowest score)

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| 13.1 Talk to family members |
| 13.2 Talk to friends        |
| 13.3 Talk to neighbours     |
| 13.4 Newspaper              |

|  |
|--|
| 13.5 Library   |
| 13.6 Pamphlets   |
| 13.7 Church  |
| 13.8 Community organisations e.g. women's institutes, etc.                       |
| 13.9 Professionals in specific fields e.g. social workers, nurses, teachers etc. |
| 13.10 Others (Specify)   |

14. If you do not use the library as a source of information, please give reasons:

---



---

15. If you use the library to find information, which source do you prefer to use to find your information. Please rate from 1 -7 (1 highest score - 7 lowest score)

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 15.1 Books            |  |
| 15.2 Newspapers       |  |
| 15.3 Magazines        |  |
| 15.4 Pamphlets        |  |
| 15.5 Posters          |  |
| 15.6 Video's          |  |
| 15.7 Others (Specify) |  |

16. How often do you find the information you are looking for

|             |                   |             |            |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| 16.1 Always | 16.2 Occasionally | 16.3 Seldom | 16.4 Never |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|

17. Have you attended the following library activities

|              | 17.1<br>Story hours | 17.2<br>Holiday programmes | 17.3<br>Craft classes | 17.4<br>Talks on<br>special<br>topics |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Often        |                     |                            |                       |                                       |
| Occasionally |                     |                            |                       |                                       |
| Never        |                     |                            |                       |                                       |

18. If the following library activities were offered, would you make use of them:

|   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 18.1 Community Information e.g.<br>information on health matters<br>how to start a business, etc. |     |    |
| 18.2 Literacy classes   |     |    |
| 18.3 Video shows  |     |    |
| 18.4 Arts and craft classes, e.g.<br>drama, pottery, music etc.                                   |     |    |
| 18.5 Talks on special subjects,<br>e.g. cookery, health, social<br>services in the community      |     |    |
| 18.6 Extra classes in school<br>subjects  |     |    |
| 18.7 Community meetings   |     |    |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION

**APPENDIX 4: MPOLA CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE - LETTER OF  
APPLICATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT  
OF COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

Mpola Co-ordinating Com.  
P.O. Box 11017  
MARIANNHILL  
3601

MPOLA CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

P.O. BOX 11020

MARIANNHILL 3601

21 FEBRUARY 1992

THE MANAGER  
BOROUGH OF PINETOWN (LIBRARY SECTION)

P.O. Box 49

PINETOWN

3600

DEAR SIR/MADAM

REQUEST FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBRARY

On behalf of the Community and the  
Committee of Mpola (MARIANNHILL II), I  
herewith request establishment of a depot  
library for the use of our community,  
especially school going youth.

This community to request this service since  
not all of them are able to visit the  
Pinetown Main library after returning  
late from school. After long discussions on the  
matter, by the matter committee, it became  
evident that this service is a necessity.

This type of service will not be utilized  
by school pupils but by adults as well,  
namely, in women's groups, self-help groups,  
gardeners and religiously orientated  
groups.

We undertake to co-operate with you to  
make this exercise a success.

Thanking you in anticipation.

P. N. N. (Chairman)  
P. N. N. (Chairman)

**APPENDIX 5: KLAARWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION - LETTER OF  
APPLICATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT  
OF COMMUNITY LIBRARY**



# KLAMAR WATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

KLARA  
PO BOX 174  
PINE TOWN, BC  
Phone: 253-4811  
5 February 1982  
CLARA  
PO Box 174

THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN  
PINE TOWN LIBRARY

Dear Sir/Madam

## REQUEST FOR LIBRARY TO BE BUILT IN KLAMAR WATER TOWNSHIP:

I have been mandated by the Chairman and the Central Committee of KLARA you to build a library in the Klamarwater Township.

There are several reason for this request .They are, inter alia,

1. There are many students and members of the community who need the library service.
2. The Pinetown Library is far from the community and from many students who would otherwise benefit.
3. The existence of a library here would encourage our High School student to develop a culture of learning and reading, and hopefully, they will make a habit of studying.

We sincerely hope that our request will be accepted, and a library built here.

we await your response.

Yours faithfully

N. Gcwabaza (Deputy Chairperson-KLARA)



**APPENDIX 6: MPOLA COMMUNITY LIBRARY - APPLICATION FOR  
REGISTRATION AS A MEMBER OF THE  
PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE**

102 3/7/92

NATAL PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE L.S.  
APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION AS A MEMBER OF THE PROVINCIAL  
LIBRARY SERVICE

1. Region COASTAL
2. Name of library MPOLA COMMUNITY LIBRARY
3. Postal address 90 PO BOX 49, PINETOWN 3600
4. Rail address .....
5. In the case of a Library Depot, names and addresses of  
 Committee members:  
 1. M.A. MDADANE, PO BOX 11020, MARIANNHILL 3601 (Chairman)  
 2. .... (Secretary)  
 3. ....  
 4. ....  
 5. ....  
 6. ....  
 7. ....
6. Name of librarian RUPHINA SOKHULU
7. Where is your library situated? MPOLA CLINIC
8. Hours when library is open:  
 Monday ..... a.m. .... p.m.  
 Tuesday 09:00 ..... a.m. 16:00 ..... p.m.  
 Wednesday ..... a.m. .... p.m.  
 Thursday 09:00 ..... a.m. 16:00 ..... p.m.  
 Friday ..... a.m. .... p.m.  
 Saturday ..... a.m. .... p.m.

DECLARATION

At a meeting RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS / PINETOWN LIBRARY (state  
 Committee, Municipality, etc.) held on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of MAY  
 1992: the signatories hereto were authorised to apply for  
 registration as a member of the Provincial Library Service.

The controlling body above-named hereby undertakes to:

- (a) provide adequate library accommodation as approved by the Director;
- (b) make the necessary personnel available as approved by the Director;
- (c) comply with the regulations and conditions governing membership of the Provincial Library Service.

19.05.92  
 (Date)

M.A. MDADANE  
 (Mayor, Chairman, etc.)

25.5.92  
 (Date)

[Signature]  
 (Town Clerk, Secretary, etc.)

-4 JUN 1992

APPROVED

[Signature]  
 (Town Clerk, Secretary, etc.)

**APPENDIX 7: NATAL PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION: LIBRARY SERVICES**

**AFFILIATION OF PINETOWN COMMUNITY LIBRARIES WITH NATAL**

**PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE**

NATALSE PROVINSIALE  
ADMINISTRASIE  
BIBLIOTEEKDIENSTE



NATAL PROVINCIAL  
ADMINISTRATION  
LIBRARY SERVICES

☎ 0331-340241 EXT. 226

543030 SA

☎ BIELORG

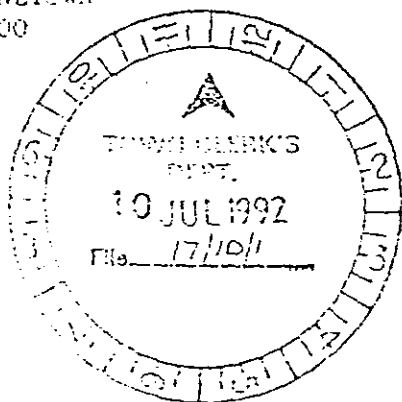
GREYSENTRUM / GREY'S CENTRE  
PRINCE ALFREDSTRAAT / PRINCE ALFRED STREET  
PETERMARITZBURG



PRIVAATSAK  
PRIVATE BAG 5015  
1200 PIETERMARITZBURG

The Town Clerk  
Borough of Pinetown  
P O Box 49  
PINETOWN  
3600

ENQUIRIES: A.S. VAN DEN RIET  
REFERENCE: 16/2/3/3/3038  
16/2/3/3/3039  
16/2/3/3/3040  
16/2/3/3/3041



DATE: 03 JULY 1992

A

CL ✓

Dear Sir

PINETOWN COMMUNITY LIBRARIES AFFILIATION WITH THE NATAL PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE

1. I have pleasure in informing you that approval for affiliation to the Natal Provincial Library Service has been given by the Chief : Library Service for your 4 community libraries of St Wendelins, Klearwater, Mpola and Tshelinyama. Attached please find copies of your application forms. These copies are for your information and safe-keeping please.
2. The members of the Town board are to be congratulated on the insight they have shown in making these much-needed cultural and educational branch libraries of Pinetown available to their communities. I wish to extend a very hearty welcome to each of the communities to the Natal Provincial Library service.

Yours faithfully

*A.S. van den Riet*

CHIEF : LIBRARY SERVICE  
ARvdR\sj

**APPENDIX 8: MAP SHOWING LOCATIONS OF  
COMMUNITY LIBRARIES**

**(Map supplied by the Chief Librarian: Pinetown Public Library)**

