

common theme of looking at the road ahead. Identifying and implementing competencies for teacher librarians is still needed to direct professional training and clarify roles in developing countries. Since few guidelines are mentioned in the literature it is clear developing countries have been left out of these discussions. Development by local and international professional associations can make meaningful change.

Developing countries overview

A quick survey of many developing countries shows that school libraries are recognized as an adjunct to schools and education. Depending on the degree of leadership and advocacy in the country, the role of the school library can range from a small warehouse to a friendly well-equipped learning centre. Many countries have followed a public library model, where the resources are the key component. Few have examined the potential for an integrated school library service that works in close collaboration with the teaching / learning process.

Most developing countries have huge populations in need of an education. Economic restraint often means other social problems receive budget emphasis. Classes are large and crowded. Teacher education is often limited. Pedagogy mirrors the way the individual was taught herself, rather than changing educational philosophy and practice. In some countries many elementary school teachers do not have teacher certification. Standard exams are rigidly enforced, and the results on the exams determine the status of the school in the community. People's careers depend on this status. Collections are generally small. Budgets for new materials are frequently non-existent. Local publishing is often minimal.

Chile

Chile's Ministry of Education is currently implementing educational reform with the objective to update the curriculum to meet rapid change occurring in local and global society. The reform also sought improvements in quality and equity. It was recognized that young Chileans need better opportunities to acquire and practice information skills. Improved education offered a chance for developing the whole person and citizens better equipped to contribute to the economic, social and political development of the country.

A recent initiative called the MECE Program (Improvement of Quality and Equity of Education) was implemented in thousands of subsidized primary and secondary schools involving 120,000 teachers. The MECE Project, financed by the Chilean government and World Bank funding aimed to:

- support the academic process within the new curriculum, and programs of study.
- support professional development needs of teachers,
- diversify education
- increase motivation of students
- provide material for schools and classes.
- improve the quality and equity of public and subsidized education.

The quality of public education in Chile, compared to private schools, was poor and required major improvements. Most schools had no libraries at all and any existing library facilities did not meet basic requirements in collection size or quality, staffing, furniture or equipment.

To meet these shortcomings, the MECE Program installed classroom libraries in primary schools—a lending library model was seen to be the solution. Classroom libraries consisted mainly of language and mathematics books and a few educational audiovisual materials.

In secondary schools, MECE invested US \$60 million to improve traditional library services, renaming them Learning Resource Centers (CRA) and establishing supervision by the CRA Department of the Ministry. Teachers from the schools served as teacher librarians, coordinators in charge of the CRA. These positions were supported by training courses, which focused on library management. The teacher librarians spent approximately eight to ten hours in the library and larger schools were permitted one-two clerical assistants.

The program investment also developed CRA facilities and collections. All schools in the project received educational materials in a variety of formats, periodical subscriptions and furniture over three rounds of collection development. Selection was based on input from students, teachers and parents using MECE prepared catalogs and resulted in several thousand new titles including books, periodicals and audiovisual materials. The MECE program established basic collections in all secondary schools of about 1500 volumes. Periodicals had not been a regular collection item in school libraries prior to the MECE and became a popular item attracting many students and teachers.

The improvements were accompanied by a significant increase in library usage of 55%. Libraries also increased hours of operation. Forty per cent reported opening their doors on Saturdays to extend access to the greater community.

A complementary project called Enlaces (Links) for subsidized schools also brought improvements of a more technological level. Latest hardware, network capabilities, software and educational multi-media were donated. The objective of Links was to connect distributed resources so schools could communicate and share knowledge. Most schools have Internet access and use the Internet in learning.

With the CRA in full implementation, the next step is to implement similar measures and funding in primary schools. A permanent fund for CRA must be established. Full-time teacher librarians must be hired in order to continue the programs initial goals to improve the quality and equity of Chilean education.

Latvia

Many schools in Latvia have a school library facility and collection. Some have well-trained professional librarians working in the facilities. Frequently these professionals do not have a teaching background. There are professional training facilities in Riga, and some courses are offered in regional colleges.

At this point, there appears to be little attention to the integration of the library into the teaching / learning process. Space in most libraries would be too limited to accommodate a full class. Adjacent study halls may be used for library lessons from time to time. Access and control have been the principal activities. Some beautiful exhibits related to local and ethnic crafts are available in the schools. Work of students may be acquired for later use in the libraries. Many

clipping files have been elaborately maintained. Some schools do considerable binding and repair of materials. Unfortunately, many libraries are also responsible for storage and distribution of textbooks. Multiple copies of books appropriate to the previous regime may still take up a large amount of precious library storage space. There is no federal policy that allows weeding.

An active and strong computer technology program is being mounted through the Ministry. Leadership is generally provided from the University of Latvia Faculty of Science. Many schools have large and well-equipped computer laboratories. A limited number of local electronic databases are housed in these technology centres. Only in a few schools is there a close working relationship between the technology teachers and the librarians.

The University of Latvia has established a Centre for Continuing Education, which offers professional development opportunities for clients from a variety of kinds of libraries. The Centre is cost-recovery based, and genuine efforts are made to seek external funding for programs, to invite speakers, to involve local individuals and to model the success in their programs.

A very successful Children's Literature Centre is operated under the auspices of the National Library. It has an excellent collection of all the recent publications in the country, and sessions are offered to help teachers learn more about these books, and to discuss ways they can be used effectively in the classroom to encourage an appreciation of literature.

The Latvian School Library Association is quite active. Presentations have been made to the Ministry, to administrators, and at conferences. Working papers have been prepared. Tools and guides have been shared with the membership.

Courses are beginning to be offered in the Faculty of Library Science related to school librarianship. Efforts have been made to collaborate with the Faculty of Education to get related courses shared in both departments. A collection of professional materials is being acquired from abroad to help Faculty members grapple with the changing perspective of the role of the teacher-librarian.

There is a serious need for leadership from the Ministry of Education, which would put a pedagogical face on the components of a school library program. The leaders at the provincial level have wide latitude in making decisions about what programs they will fund (within their limited budgets).

IASL & IFLA could be very supportive by encouraging international school library leaders to tour in these countries to meet the leadership teams at various levels, and to encourage them to examine an integrated modern school library and information services model.

Malaysia

Malaysia gained its independence peacefully from the British in 1957. While the British had laid the foundation for an educational system from as early as the 1800s, the system was modeled after the home country. School libraries did exist in the larger schools, but were primarily meant

for recreational reading. Since independence, the country has placed greater emphasis on education, but school libraries still played a minor role in the quantitative expansion process.

Like most Asian countries, the Malaysian education system places heavy emphasis on success in examinations. Getting good grades in examinations greatly influences entry into universities and colleges, and the choice of an eventual career. While libraries exist in every school, their role is secondary because rote learning of specific subject matter is more important in performing in examination.

However, times are changing as evidenced by Jusoh (2002) at the International Association for School Librarianship in 2002. There are over 9,100 schools in Malaysia and every school has a library, or school resource center as they are officially known. Resource centers vary in levels of development, ranging from one corner of a classroom to a purposefully designed building. The government has also embarked on a 'Smart School' project, which will eventually see all schools in the country re-vamp curriculum to meet the needs of the information age, and increased use of information resources.

Like most developing countries, Malaysia does not have full-time teacher librarians. Instead, selected teachers are asked to take charge of the school resource center as one of their administrative duties. In some cases, they are given a reduced teaching load, depending on the number of other teachers available in the school.

These teacher-librarians have many advantages: most of them are trained teachers, they are familiar with the school curriculum, they are regarded as peers by their teaching colleagues, and the majority of them are very dedicated. However, they are constrained by a lack of training and time.

Given the limited amount training, their primary role is to manage the resource center as best as they can. They are basically responsible for resource selection, acquisition, cataloging and classification, maintenance of the collection, and occasional library skills lessons. The limited time does not allow them to formally work with teachers to integrate the library in the teaching-learning process.

A small committee of teachers—determined according to student numbers—assists with library management. Student assistants also help out with the responsibilities. The Senior Assistant (Assistant Principal), and sometimes the Principal, heads this committee and thus the school management is kept aware of developments in the library.

Some of the responsibilities of this committee are alleviated by the support received from the district level Teachers' Activity Centers, the State level Education Resource Centers, and the federal level Educational Technology Division of the Ministry of Education. The Educational Technology Division, for example, produces an annual list of recommended books, magazines, and CD-ROMs (considering that all schools have a common curriculum), thereby reducing the work of the school-level personnel in selecting materials. The district level Teachers' Activity Centers help by cooperatively producing teaching learning materials that can be used at the school level.

Some schools employ clerical staff, either seconded from another section of the school or sponsored by the School Parent Teacher Association. In many cases, the student assistants capably manage the non-professional aspects of the library.

Most teacher librarians were trained through in-service education—short courses ranging from one weekend to 3 months. Some have had an opportunity to undergo a pre-service course in resource center management. A small group of selected teachers have attended a one-year in-service course on Library and Information Management, or enrolled in a Masters level program at one of the four Malaysian library schools.

Teacher librarians have many of opportunities to obtain in-service training. Short courses are conducted the Teachers' Activity Centers, State Education Resource Centers, and the Educational Technology Division. These courses deal with library management, promotion of reading, teaching information skills, and the use of information technology. In addition, the National Library, the State Public Libraries and the Librarians' Association of Malaysia also organize short courses on specific aspects such as cataloging, indexing and abstracting, and use of information technology.

There is no uniform current syllabus for the training of teacher librarians, but most training programs are run to meet local needs. Teachers' Activity Centers, which are in close contact with the teacher librarians, are the primary organizers of these training programs.

The competencies required by teacher librarians in Malaysia have been examined in small studies but a comprehensive study is needed. Earlier studies have indicated a need for training in management, librarianship, education, and information technology. Few guidelines exist for teacher librarian competencies in developing countries. (Abdullah & Singh, 2000)

Most teacher librarians start their duties in school with little formal training, and depend on their own experiences or advice from their colleagues to run the library. A system of “on-demand help” is needed, even if it is in the form of self-instructional materials sent to the schools at the beginning of the school year. Training should also provide options of regular face-to-face training and distance education to cater for the time constraints of the teachers.

Perhaps the biggest problem Malaysian teacher librarians face is professional isolation. Another major role that international associations can play is to promote networking among teacher librarians. Sharing visions, strategies, ideas, and experiences and best practice may influence decision makers.

While there are formal and informal school library associations in the country, these groups primarily exchange information among themselves. They are not able to attend overseas conferences, cannot afford to buy professional books or subscribe to journals, and have very limited opportunities for scholarships to study abroad or overseas tours. While the Internet has opened up opportunities for international communication and learning, the connectivity in many rural areas is very poor. International associations can help by facilitating access to these resources at affordable rates. Books, professional magazines and journals, and CD-ROMs need to be made available to these teacher librarians at minimal cost.

International associations could also develop and disseminate training materials. Programs around the globe overlap content yet little effort is made in sharing this knowledge base. International associations should facilitate a system to locate and provide access to training materials at minimal cost.

With the increasing emphasis on information technology, many Malaysian teacher librarians are under pressure to keep up with rapid changes. Investigating the possibility of donating used software, developing countries is one example.

St. Lucia

As new schools are being developed in St. Lucia, there are facilities provided for central school library and (often separately) for technology services. Unfortunately there are no designated staff funded for these projects. Teachers may be assigned to work in the library part of the time, where they performed mostly clerical and supervisory functions. There is no coordinator from the Ministry to assist with these functions. The Public Library staff provides some assistance.

Training for the library personnel is through a library technician program offered by the staff of Hunter J. Francois Main Library at Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, along with other professionals in the public and special libraries in the area. The courses focus on library organization and management, with some attention to literature and resource services. There is no component in this course, which deals with information literacy, resource based learning, or cooperative planning and teaching which would make it useful and relevant to a modern school library program. For advanced training, it is necessary to attend University of West Indies in Jamaica, or travel elsewhere abroad. There appears to be no specific courses in the Faculty of Education, which deal with any of the above components, other than in passing in pedagogical courses.

Through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States there have been some efforts to survey the programs in both school and public library services. Reports were prepared, and some school principals have made conscientious efforts to implement the recommendations. Some work was done to develop a Teacher Centre as part of the Ministry of Education Curriculum Department. It is also located on SALCC campus. An education television component has also been initiated.

The local library association meets on an occasional basis. A strategic plan of action needs to be developed to work with the MOE Permanent Secretary to raise the image of school librarianship, information literacy and resource based learning within the curriculum constructs.

IASL and IFLA could be supportive by offering support to training programs on a seminar or workshop basis. If these courses could be standardized, and brought parallel to the requirements of UWI, credits might be accumulated, not only in St. Lucia, but on some of the other Caribbean Islands also.

Distance Education programs could be very beneficial in this region. Local agencies need assistance to find funding sources for such courses, and help in working out the logistics of offering such types of training.

Sri Lanka

The role of the teacher-librarian for most of the schools is one of a clerk who looks after the very limited collection of books, occasional magazines and some government pamphlets. Materials are usually needed in three languages. There is an extremely small budget for any new materials. When new materials are acquired, they are frequently supplied from the central office of the federal Ministry of Education.

Small community libraries provide a minimal service. There is no regional public library system, and little influence from the National level. Communities can organize as they wish, hire a local person (usually with no training), and set up their own systems. There are not information networks for schools to use.

Training is generally done by several Faculties of Library Science, some courses at Teachers College, and courses offered by the local professional association. The National Library & Documentation Centre offers some programs in various parts of the country. Until very recent times, there were no instructors who had studied school librarianship, nor who had worked in a modern school library even in practise work setting. The courses generally follow the traditional perspective of professional librarianship for academic institutions.

The World Bank has endeavored to assist in establishing a National Institute for Library and Information Services. Unfortunately, leadership, staffing, and resources have been very slow in coming. Collaboration with the Ministry of Education has not been well developed.

Some efforts by various provinces to establish training programs related to Resource-Based Learning for teachers appears to have some grounding. Study tours for Provincial Educators have provided some basis for an understanding of the kind of services that could be provided in at least the National schools. Some International Schools have good model libraries and staffing.

Another World Bank program to encourage reading at the early years has been remarkably successful in all provinces. Small collections of materials have been provided centrally. Training programs for the reading resource teachers has been undertaken for about 3 % of the schools. Unfortunately there appears to have been little involvement of school library personnel in these activities.

In order for school libraries to become real in this country, a strong advocate needs to work closely with the Ministry of Education and the Colleges of Education to initiate training in Information Literacy and Resource Based Learning as pedagogical approaches for all teachers and administrators. As these components are understood, accepted and integrated into the teaching / learning process, it will be necessary for the school libraries to be transformed into child-centred learning environments.

As a parallel in this development, a movement towards constructivist learning, and away from the definitive role of final examinations will have significant impact. Some steps have been taken in this direction with World Bank funding.

Leadership with clear educational vision, sound pedagogical philosophy, and a willingness to model modern learning principles will be needed. A Strategic Plan of Action needs to be presented to the Permanent Secretary, Minister of Education, and a Council of the Library & Information Service Professionals in the country. Until the concept of modern school library & information services programs are understood and accepted as a vital and integral part of total education, little progress will be made here.

IFLA and IASL could help this country by producing a clear statement of the role and functions of a modern school library program. At this time, most of the talk is about the school library. The relevant thing is not the facility, but the educational activities that occur in the school library. These activities can be systematically described as the components of a modern school library program.

How the components of a modern school library and information services program appear in practice, suggestions for how they can be initiated, and methods of assessing the success of each component, will be the best publications that IASL and IFLA can develop for the educational administrative leaders in developing countries. Measuring Hong Kong school libraries along side developing countries, where the issues of access to information and collection development remain the main agenda items is not a new comparative assessment. However, the evidence indicates lobbying, leadership and securing a role for teacher librarians as instructional partners is a global priority.

Hong Kong

A range of schools provide for the needs of Hong Kong families. How school libraries are resourced is often very different between government schools, partially subsidized schools and schools where most students are of expatriate families and Chinese who have spent considerable time overseas. English Schools Foundation schools teach in English and are subsidized as well by local government, but require English fluency and charge fairly high fees. International Schools and their libraries, by virtue of student body and adopted curriculum resemble their 'home' countries. For a true look at the state of Hong Kong schools, the following discussion will focus on those funded in whole or part by the government whose medium of instruction is Chinese.

The Hong Kong school system is well supported by the Education and Manpower Bureau. The Bureau sets the education agenda and provides support for school libraries through ongoing training, a centralized professional collection and personnel who have a background in librarianship.

The overall picture for Hong Kong school libraries is impressive—they continue to evolve in collection size, mission and technology. However the lack of an instructional role in developing countries is also apparent in Hong Kong. Recent education reform is very progressive in scope, based on models of other Western countries. Platitudes of information society and knowledge economy motivate a general commitment to changing practice to develop a new generation of problem solvers. An entrenched rote learning and exam culture is yet to fully move to one of the guiding reform principles of information literacy, expressed as 'learning to learn'. The key

reform document discussed the role of the school library but did not explicitly outline the role of the teacher librarian within the reforms. One of the key learning areas “Learning to read and reading to learn” has been the emphasis adopted by teacher librarians. However, a shift from a public library model to one combining the information profession with an instructional and collaborative responsibility remains a stumbling block for those working in and studying teacher librarianship.

School library standards governing basic requirements in space, collections and staffing complements have been in place for over two decades. Collections range in condition and currency and some teacher librarians find it difficult to compete in budget allocations. Most schools maintain up-to-date collections of professional resources for teaching staff, administered by the library.

Some schools are yet to move away from distributed classroom collections of books that tend to be disparate in content, organization and condition. Centralizing access and lending is part of a wider challenge in collaborative teaching.

Bibliographic control is also well established in local schools. With the wide-spread addition of automation to almost all libraries, organization is becoming more streamlined. The Hong Kong Teacher Librarian Association secured funding several years ago to develop a Union Catalogue further enhancing cataloguing of Chinese materials.

Programs to promote reading and library usage have also played a major role in library planning. Extensive reading schemes are popular in addition to traditional story time programs in primary schools. Library lessons—scheduled periods of library instruction often in the classroom and not in the library—cover basic bibliographic instruction and reading promotion.

Teacher librarians are posted at most schools, but do not necessarily have any background or training in librarianship. Most school libraries are without clerical support. As a result, schools rely heavily on student volunteers, or library prefects to assist with more routine operations.

Regulations now require teachers to have professional teaching qualifications. Post-graduate diploma programs and Bachelor degrees are offered at several local universities. The University of Hong Kong is the only award in Education with a specialization in library and information studies.

Local colleges and continuing education programs, some in partnership with the Education and Manpower Bureau, plan a variety of in-service training and diploma courses.

The Hong Kong Teacher Librarians Association has a large membership and Web presence however most communication and publications are in Chinese. Key members are also active in IASL and the Hong Kong Library Association. A small and informal group of librarians in English speaking schools (ALESS) also shares information within the community but membership is mostly expatriate professionals working in ESF and International schools. An unfortunate reality is that the two groups face a language barrier in sharing knowledge and advancing teacher librarianship through organized efforts. An annual conference of teachers and teacher librarians should be organized for Hong Kong.

Teacher librarians, especially those with recent training in the diploma in teacher librarianship through HKU SPACE and the Bachelor of Education (LIS) at HKU face a number of challenges to modernize their school libraries. An established role statement recognizing best practice exists. Teacher librarians face role conflicts similar to those identified by Haycock (2001) in Canadian schools due to organizational barriers of policy, resource funding and an over-emphasis on the outdated book and reading role. Students in Hong Kong LIS programs often express a resignation that their expertise and true role is not recognized. They are reluctant to challenge organizational culture, despite the ammunition of best practice and educational reform documents. They describe themselves as ‘small potatoes’ facing resistance at the administrator’s level in achieving necessary change.

Conclusions

The progress of school libraries across the world as discussed in the limited and diverse snapshots above, truly shows the continuous nature of improvement. If we associate, share and lead, we will find that International associations can be a strong boost to helping local communities develop the confidence that they too can have quality school library and information services.

Hong Kong teacher librarians must assume a far greater leadership role in pedagogical change, lobbying for a partnership with teachers in curriculum development. Next steps must prioritize meaningful change in a role statement incorporates an instructional emphasis. Schools would benefit from a review and restructuring of work processes away from ‘busy work’ such as original cataloging and wrapping books in plastic jackets to free time for collaborative planning with subject teachers. More flexible scheduling and the elimination of traditional library lessons will maximize collaborative opportunities and make student time in the library more authentic, immediate and responsive.

The Hong Kong community of teacher librarians in English and Chinese schools must form a more cohesive partnership from existing associations. With a population comparable to North American states and provinces, it makes good sense to be planning an annual conference or meetings to cover current issues and best practice.

In developing countries, progress is being made, but there is little that links these communities together nationally or internationally. The low salaries of most library staff make it impossible for them to afford membership in international associations. IASL and IFLA could work collaboratively to encourage local associations to link with the various committees, special interest groups, and other liaisons to take advantage of the services. Access to websites and listservs could be immensely helpful if there were at least one individual who would take the initiative to share the information locally. Print publications at a very economical rate are also needed in developing countries. Basic guides on organization, management, and suggested activities would be very useful.

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