

CHAPTER 5

THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY LIBRARY MODEL AS A POSSIBLE MODEL FOR SOUTH AFRICA

5.1 Introduction

In Chapters Two and Three, the historical development and the practical experiences in combining school and public libraries in selected overseas countries have been described. This was done after examining the literature, after analysing published case studies, and after studying official documents and primary sources.

The experiences of these countries in combining school and public libraries were variously assessed but particularly with regard to managerial perspectives. From this analysis several factors were identified as being crucial to the successful combination of school and community libraries in the selected countries. The main reasons why the South Australian model of combined school/community services was more successful than similar models in other parts of the world, were also established.

In Chapter Four, the organisational structures, characteristics, and operation of school and public library services in South Africa were examined. This was done against the background of the apartheid system causing the LIS infrastructure in South Africa to develop unequally. It was found that the African population in the rural areas was particularly disadvantaged by the apartheid political dispensation in respect of LIS delivery. There is, therefore, an urgency to correct this, and provide appropriate LIS access to all South African society. This, however, needs to be undertaken within the constraints of diminishing LIS resources - both monetary and human.

In this chapter, the various factors, found to be essential for the successful combination of school and community libraries in the selected countries, will first be examined against the background of South African circumstances. The particular factors that made the South Australian model of school-community library service delivery more successful than those in the other selected countries, will also be taken into

consideration when evaluating the suitability of this model for South Africa. An assessment of the suitability of the variants of the school-community library model implemented in the selected overseas countries, within the South African context, will also be made.

Answers to the following questions will be sought:

Have prerequisites for the successful implementation of this library model in South Africa been identified?

Are overseas variants of the school-community library model appropriate for South African conditions?

The identified prerequisites for success will be examined within the context of: information on South African conditions obtained from the literature; South African legislation; government policy documents; and personal communication with role-players.

5.2 Factors crucial to the success of combining school and public libraries

In order to determine whether the combined school-community library model can be successful in South Africa, those factors, found in Chapter Three to be crucial in the countries, that experimented with variations of this model, are now examined, taking cognisance of South African conditions.

5.2.1 Political commitment by the government to the idea of school and public library co-operation

An analysis of the literature on school-community libraries indicates that a commitment by government to the idea of school and public library co-operation, as well as the enactment of legislation and policy to endorse such co-operation, has been a strong incentive for the establishment and success of school-community libraries in the

selected countries. It is, therefore, important to determine what South Africa's position is, in this regard.

Co-operation among institutions is usually pursued to achieve an improved standard. This principle is equally valid for school and public co-operation, where teacher-librarians and public librarians can engage in activities with the intention of enjoying mutual benefits. Such co-operation can also contribute to the organisational effectiveness and improved service delivery, which is a priority for the South African government, according to the government's White Paper on *Batho Pele* ("people first") (South Africa. Department of Education 2000b:7).

The principle of co-operation is also in line with President Mbeki's view of co-operation and partnerships, referred to as *Faranani* ("supporting each other") (South Africa. Office of the Presidency 1999), and is in the spirit of *Tirisano* ("working together") - the slogan of the Minister of Education - (South Africa. Department of Education 2000b:3), which drives many of the government's programmes (Asmal [1999]). Moreover, Chapter 3 of the new Constitution compels all spheres of government, as well as government departments, to conduct their activities in a co-operative way (South Africa 1996a:21).

5.2.1.1 Co-operative government

Section 41 (1) (h) (iv) of the new Constitution states:

"All spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by co-ordinating their actions and legislation with one another" (South Africa 1996a:21).

In addition, The *Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act (Act No. 97 of 1997)*, promotes co-operation between the national, provincial, and local spheres of government on fiscal, budgetary and financial matters, and prescribes a process for the determination of an equitable sharing and allocation of revenue raised nationally (South Africa 1997:1). It is, therefore, clear that co-operation, as a principle, is strongly

endorsed by the South African government, and that legislation has been put in place to give effect to this principle.

5.2.1.2 Existence of legislative framework

Before the combining of school and public library services into one facility can be considered in South Africa, the necessary legislative framework has to exist, which would allow this type of intergovernmental co-operation, and would put into effect partnerships between the government and the community.

a) Provision of school library services

As indicated in Chapter Four, paragraph 4.4, in terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)*, schedule 4A, the provision of education at all levels, excluding tertiary education, is a mutual and parallel (“concurrent”) national and provincial legislative competence (South Africa. 1996a:117). The *National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996*, empowers the Minister to **establish norms and standards in education**. The Act empowers and authorises the Minister, through the Department of Education, to develop national policy that will improve the provision of facilities which contribute towards quality education. This is understood to include the provision of library services and facilities in schools (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:8).

As stipulated in the above mentioned Act, the **implementation of standards**, and by implication, the implementation of standards for school libraries, is a provincial matter (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:8). This means that both the national and provincial departments must co-ordinate their efforts to improve the provision of education which should include the provision of school library services (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:8).

Although school libraries are not specifically mentioned in the *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)*, it indirectly makes allowance for the delivery of school library services through the functions assigned to school governing bodies (SGBs).

Section 36 of the Act (South Africa 1996b:16) imposes a responsibility on all public school governing bodies to

“... take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the State to improve the quality of education provided by the school to all learners at the school.”

This must, in principle, include **making provision for quality teaching and learning resources**, which, by definition, implies **developing and budgeting for a model of school library** which, according to the governing body and the school, would be **most suitable for their particular needs** (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:8-9).

The Act also allows, in terms of section 20 (k):

“...at the request of the Head of Department, the reasonable use under fair conditions of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school” (South Africa 1996b:10).

In addition, section 37(6)(b) of the *South African Schools Act, 1996*, makes provision, by agreement, and with the consent of the Head of Department, for the use of such facilities by another school for educational purposes (South Africa 1996b:17). It is thus possible that, in a school without a library, the SGB could assist in utilising library-based resources in other schools, while in a school with a functioning library, the governing body could play a supportive role in sharing the school's library collection with other schools (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:9). The Act is, however, clear in stating that

“... all assets acquired by a public school ... are the property of the school” (South Africa 1996b:17).

Therefore, a library collection and equipment bought by the school are assets that belong to that particular school, even when they are shared with another school (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:9).

b) Provision of public library services

As indicated in Chapter Four, paragraph 4.4, in terms of Schedule 5A of the new Constitution, the provision of library and information services (LIS), other than national libraries, is exclusively a provincial legislative competence (South Africa, 1996a:119). After the 2000 local elections, the establishment and operation of libraries, other than national libraries, can only be assigned to a municipality, by agreement between the province and the local authority, and only if the municipality has the capacity to administer this responsibility.

In 1999, during a workshop on the implications of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998*, for the rendering of community library services, Cillié (1999:10), pointed out that the provinces would have to examine, as a matter of some urgency, their legislation to ensure that the framework for the provision of library and information services in their province is in place, before the local government elections in 2000. She emphasised that, unless the provincial government had provided this legislative framework, within which these responsibilities had been assigned, the Auditor-General would, most likely, consider expenditure on library services by local government, after that date, to be unauthorised expenditures.

One way government bodies could enter into agreements with local government, would be in terms of section 238 of the Constitution which reads:

"An executive organ of state in any sphere of government may -
(a) delegate any power or function that is to be exercised or performed in terms of legislation to any other executive organ of state, provided the delegation is consistent with the legislation in terms of which the power is exercised or the function is performed; or (b) exercise any power or perform any function for any other executive organ of state on an agency or delegation basis" (South Africa 1996a:104).

According to Cillié (1999:11) each of the possibilities in this section of the Constitution would have to be investigated, together with the funding of the services. The different options available could be combined or the responsibilities of provincial and local government could be split. Local circumstances would, however, determine the approach to be followed.

The government actively promotes co-operation between the national, provincial, and local spheres of government. In terms of section 21 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000*,

"... the planning undertaken by a municipality must be aligned with, and complement, the development plans and strategies of other affected municipalities, organs of state of the province within which the municipality is located, and national organs of state so as -

(a) to give effect to the principles of co-operative government contained in section 41 of the Constitution; and

(b) to ensure participation in national and provincial development programmes as required in terms of section 153(b) of the Constitution" (South Africa 2000:18).

Section 153 of the Constitution refers to the developmental duties of municipalities, including the promotion of the social and economic dimensions of the community (South Africa 1996a:63). This could include the provision of library services to the community (African National Congress 1994:71; University of South Africa 1990:223).

From an analysis of the relevant government legislation, it would appear that co-operation between the three spheres of government and between different government departments is obligatory in terms of the new Constitution (South Africa 1996a:21).

It seems, therefore, that nothing in the South African legislation prohibits government bodies from initiating plans and actions involving co-operation between school libraries or between school and community libraries. The legislation actually provides an enabling framework for co-operative ventures between various partners.

5.2.1.3 Government interest and support for the concept

Interest and support for the combined school-community library model, by the government bodies responsible for these functions, often provided the stimulus for the establishment of these libraries in other countries. In South Africa, the national departments responsible for decision-making on LIS, i.e. the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) and the Department of Education (DoE), have both expressed support for the establishment of combined school and

public libraries (South Africa. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology 1996:17; South Africa. Department of Education 1999:18-20).

The *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996* of DACST stresses that

“... structures need to be put in place for possible co-operation between community and school libraries” and that “... modes of linking community and school libraries for improved effectiveness and cost efficiency should be explored” (South Africa. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology 1996:17).

The draft policy document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards*, recommends that, in order to diminish the backlogs in school library services, provincial departments follow either a **transitional** or an **incremental** approach in increasing the number of school libraries. The **incremental** approach would entail the gradual implementation of centralised libraries at schools, which could take years or even decades to achieve. The **transitional** approach, on the other hand, would entail that school communities choose, according to their particular needs, a specific type from a “menu” of library models (Department of Education 1999:11).

One of the options entails the combined school-community library where

“... the school educators and learners and the general community (the public) ... share the same library facility” (Department of Education 1999:18).

Because of the enormous backlogs in education, the conditions in underdeveloped rural areas and townships, the limits on departmental budgets, and the urgency to provide learners with access to a basic collection of library-based learning resources, the policy document recommends that school governing bodies (SGBs) follow the **transitional** approach in their choice of a library model (Department of Education 1999:13).

A UNESCO National Consultation Workshop on Library and Information Services in South Africa, which was held in Pretoria on 24 November 1999, tended also to favour co-operation between school and public libraries. The theme of the workshop was *Cooperation between school and community libraries in South Africa* (Cillié 2000:45). During the workshop, a committee was elected to draw up national guidelines for

promoting co-operation between school and community libraries. The guidelines are to be presented to the DoE and DACST with a view to consulting with the provinces about possible implementation (Cillié 2000:45).

It would appear that there are, within government, especially at a national level, positive signs of an interest in co-operation between school and public libraries, and even in the combined school-community library. Whether this interest will translate into a commitment actually to fund such co-operative ventures, still has to be seen. There is already some indication in the DoE's policy document that resourcing such a library model presents some inherent problems:

"A shared library is a compromise model because it is usually under consideration in situations where there are limited human, financial and physical resources" (Department of Education 1999:19).

5.2.2 Commitment of funding authorities

A commitment by all the co-operating partners to the funding of the combined library is crucial (Little 1996:35-36). Findings also indicate that funding arrangements should be part of an agreement, which defines the financial and other obligations of each partner, and which covers initial capital and establishment costs, replacement costs, and recurrent costs (South Australia 1990:5).

5.2.2.1 Funding of public schools

Public schools in South Africa are funded in terms of section 34 (1) of the *South African Schools Act, 1996*. The document, *National Norms and Standards for School Funding*, on the other hand, sets out the national norms and minimum standards for school funding in terms of this Act, and also deals with the procedures to be adopted by provincial education departments (PEDs) in determining resource allocations to their schools (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:2).

In terms of the new Constitution and the government's budgeting procedure, provincial governments must make appropriations to their education departments from the total revenue resources available to their provinces. Each province determines its own level

of expenditure on education, relative to its overall assessment of needs and resources (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:6). The provincial budget is prepared within the guidelines of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) which has limited all national and provincial expenditure planning to a three-year basis (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:12).

To effect redress and improve equity, public spending on schools is specifically targeted according to the needs of the poorest. Allocations by the provincial education departments (PEDs) to schools are based on the “Resource Targeting Table”: a list of all schools in a province, sorted by the conditions at the school, and the poverty of the community served by the school (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:14-15). Having listed the schools in rank order from poorest to least poor, PEDs have to divide the list in five groups of ten, called quintiles. The distribution of schools by quintile then determines the per-learner allocation (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:15). Allocations to schools are thus made on a sliding per-learner scale which favours the poorer segments of the population. The neediest and largest schools get priority in funding. e.g. the poorest schools in the first quintile receive 35 per cent of the provincial budgetary allocation, while the least poorest schools in the fifth quintile receive 5 per cent (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:14-15).

5.2.2.2 Facilities for school libraries

The construction of schools and of school library facilities is the responsibility of the PEDs (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:13). Existing school library facilities usually fall into two categories:

- the traditional on-site library with its own centralised library collection for the exclusive use of the educators and learners of the particular school;
- a classroom library which focuses on the use of resources in the classroom and which comprises a box or collection of items (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:13-14, 16).

The *South African School Library Survey 1999* has found that, on a national basis, the proportion of schools with on-site central libraries is relatively low and varies from 12,2 per cent (Eastern Cape) to 56,1 per cent (Western Cape) (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Science Research Council [2000]:iii). The percentage of schools utilising classroom collections or classroom box libraries ranges between 12,9 per cent (Gauteng) and 22,2 per cent (Northern Province) (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Science Research Council [2000]:iv).

In the light of the tremendous backlog in school library services in South Africa, quantitative standards for school library facilities are found to be unattainable (Vermeulen 1994:148; Stander 1993b:80; Karlsson, Nassimbeni & Karelse 1996:19).

5.2.2.3 Funding of school libraries

Sections 37, 38 and 42 of the *South African Schools Act, 1996* (SASA), provide that all public schools are budget and cost centres (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:9). In terms of section 38, the SGB of a public school must prepare a budget each year, according to guidelines determined by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education (South Africa 1996b:17). The SASA makes provision for SGBs of public schools to become progressively more responsible for managing recurrent expenditure. Section 21 provides that an SGB may apply to the Superintendent-General of Education to be allocated certain functions, including the right to purchase textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:16). Each provincial education department must develop a “section 21 list” of schools which have been allowed certain functions and may make their own procurements, and a list of schools which are not yet “section 21” schools. The lists are revised each year (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:16).

Schools on the “section 21 list” will receive a lump sum, per-learner transfer to meet the expenditure for which they have responsibility, in accordance with the “Resource Targeting Table”. Such transfers are smaller for more affluent schools than for poorer

schools. If a school's expenses for these services or items are lower than the lump-sum transfer, the SGB may allocate, within the parameters of provincial policy, the transferred amount to the **purchase of other education-related goods and services according to their own perception of those educational needs**. SGBs that are on the "section 21 list" may deal directly with suppliers and contractors for the relevant budget items in accordance with standard procurement procedures (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:16). Schools not yet on the section 21 list must procure their goods and services according to existing departmental arrangements, which makes provision for schools to be informed of their school's budget allocation. This provision aims to prepare SGBs for their role to understand the actual costs of running their school, and to improve their capacity to join the "section 21" list in due course. The PED will exercise administrative controls to ensure that the cost per-learner is maintained at a level consistent with the norms (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:16-17).

A special allocation is given to schools for a category of recurrent costs referred to as "School Books", "Stationery", "Equipment", and "Media Collections". The purpose of this allocation is to provide all learners with a minimum package of learning materials (books and stationery) equivalent to at least R100 per learner, which is to be increased according to the Consumer Price Index or the "reading matter" component of that index, whichever is the higher (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:17).

Section 36 of the SASA imposes a responsibility on all SGBs to raise additional resources to supplement those which the state provides. All parents are encouraged, within their means, to contribute to the financing of public schools, in order to improve the quality of their children's education (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:7).

It follows that, in terms of the SASA, the SGB and the parent community have a critical role to play in deciding how to raise additional funds for learning resources and also how to spend the monetary allocation to their school. By implication, this includes a decision on choosing **the model of library** for their school and **how that**

library should be funded. The Department of Education's draft policy document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards*, states that the establishment of a school library model has to be effected

"... through the collaborative efforts of learners, teachers, teacher-librarians, support staff, parents, administrators, the minister of education (at national and provincial levels), the community, and the school district" (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:5-6).

The emphasis is on **access to a wide range of curriculum-oriented resources in diverse media forms**, so as to achieve the critical cross-field and specific outcomes of the outcomes-based curriculum: *Curriculum 2005* (South Africa. Department of Education 1999: 6-7).

The *South African School Library Survey 1999* (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:v), has, however, established that few schools allocate funds to their own library from their financial resources. The provinces with the lowest library ratio receiving a budget from the school are: North West (24,9 per cent), Free State (25,1 per cent), Northern Cape (27,5 per cent) and Eastern Cape (29,77 per cent). This means that over 70 per cent of libraries in these four provinces do not receive funding from their SGBs. The amount allocated to libraries ranges from over R15,000 in the case of Gauteng to approximately R1,500 in the case of the Northern Province. The results of the survey also show that few school libraries receive additional income from "other sources", including the community, sponsors, and private donors (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:v).

5.2.2.4 Funding of community library services

The provincial allocation for LIS is part of the budgets of the provincial departments with an arts and culture component, for example, in the Mpumalanga province, LIS resort under the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts & Culture (Mpumalanga Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture 1999:1). Provincial LIS have to lobby continually for their portion of the equitable share provided to the provinces (Cillié 1999:10).

a) **Provincial funding**

The distribution of the equitable share to provinces is done on the basis of a redistributive formula, based on the demographic and economic profiles of the provinces, i.e. markedly different levels of economic development, and significant variations in socio-economic circumstances. (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:66,68). The level of wealth or income within a province has been found to be an important factor determining demand for social services, particularly, primary health care, education and income support. The equitable share formula is accordingly redistributive, in order to assist provinces in providing a basic level of services for all South Africans (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:68). National and provincial expenditure is classified by **type of service** set out in the *Budget Review* (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:56).

Provinces finance all their functions from their equitable share, and from their own revenues. Given the historical necessity for social spending, less than 20 per cent of provincial budgets is available for functions listed under **non-social services**, which include allocations for economic affairs; transport; local government; housing; environmental affairs; and **arts, culture, sport and recreation** (South Africa. Department of Finance 1999:95). In the *Intergovernmental Fiscal Review, 1999* (South Africa. Department of Finance 1999:95-96), it is stated that non-social-service functions would constitute 13,8 per cent of provincial expenditure in the 2001/2002 financial year.

With the four largest components: agriculture, housing, local government, and transport, constituting and absorbing about 10 per cent of the total provincial budgets in 1999/2000, the remaining functions, such as **arts and culture**, enjoyed **less than 4 per cent** of the **provincial budgets** (South Africa. Department of Finance 1999:97). Since **library services resort under arts and culture** (South Africa. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology 1996:16-17), their funding does not merit priority in provincial spending. As Cillié (1999:10-11), points out, it will be important to develop a higher profile for LIS, because of the increased demand for the services,

and because of the major role LIS can play in development, education, culture and capacity-building of the individual.

b) Local funding

The local government equitable share is the primary source of funding for poor and rural governments. The formula for distributing the equitable share among municipalities determines a municipal basic services transfer, and a municipal institutional transfer. In addition to the equitable share, local government will receive an assortment of conditional grants aimed at, *inter alia*, providing infrastructure (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:71-72). Two of the primary purposes of conditional grants are: to **support compliance with national norms and standards; and to enable national priorities to be adequately provided for in sub-national budgets** (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:69). A conditional grant is voted as expenditure in the national budget, and is recorded as revenue in the provincial or local government accounts. The national department is responsible for monitoring compliance with the conditions of the grant, whereas the province is accountable for the actual spending of the funds (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:70).

The **local government equitable share** will, according to the *Intergovernmental Fiscal Review, 1999*, constitute **10 per cent** of the **non-social services' expenditure of the provinces** (South Africa. Department of Finance 1999:100). According to the *Medium Term Budget Policy Statement, 1999* (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:65), the small proportion of nationally collected revenue which accrues to local government indicates government's confidence in local government's ability to raise the bulk of its own revenue. In 1999, the Ministry of Finance was, however, reviewing the equitable formula governing the allocation of funds to local government, in order to assess its impact on different-sized municipalities (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:71-72).

The *Municipal Finance Management Bill, 2000* (South Africa. Department of Finance 2000:33), states that draft national or provincial legislation assigning an **additional**

function or power to, or imposing any other obligation on, a municipality, must, in a memorandum that has to be introduced with that legislation in Parliament or in the provincial legislature concerned, **give at least a three year projection of the financial implication of that function, power or obligation to the municipality.**

In addition, the National Treasury, and the Minister responsible for local government and, organised local government, must be consulted before such legislation is introduced in Parliament or in the provincial legislature concerned (South Africa. Department of Finance 2000:33).

It is clear, that these stipulations in the Bill, after having been enacted, will have an impact on the funding and delivery of community library services, if this function were to be assigned to local governments.

c) **Funding of community libraries**

Facilities for community libraries are provided either by provincial or local government, and are normally maintained by the local authority. Local authorities may apply for financial assistance from the provincial LIS for the improvement or extension of existing library facilities, or the establishment of library facilities where none exist (Mpumalangu Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture 1999:22). However, as the new Constitution regards the provision of LIS, other than national libraries, an exclusive provincial competency, the funding of the establishment and maintenance of community library facilities could change dramatically after the local government elections in 2000.

Minimum standards for new public facilities (site selection, minimum square metres, layout of the building, accessibility for the disabled) are formulated in collaboration with the community involved (Mpumalangu Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture 1999:22). Planning for functional libraries is done with the co-operation of the local authority, an architect appointed by the local authority, and the staff of the building planning section of the provincial LIS.

Provincial Library and Information Services use different criteria when considering the establishment of library buildings. The Gauteng Provincial Library and Information Services, for example, take the following factors into consideration when planning a new library building:

- population within the service area of the proposed library;
- population growth over approximately fifteen years;
- the background and character of the community;
- the functionality of present library facilities;
- results of community surveys; and
- the approved site for the proposed library building (Gauteng. Department of Education and Culture [1997]:2-3).

The Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service (MPLIS), on the other hand, consider the following three indicators when deciding on the establishment of library facilities:

- research results;
- expressed community needs, and
- availability of resources (Mpumalangu Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture 1999:22).

The floor area of the library is usually determined by the population numbers that the library has to serve, or the funds available. In some cases, space allocation is calculated according to a formula - based on the population of the community - referred to as the “entering percentage” (Gauteng. Department of Education and Culture [1997]:3).

In Chapter Four, paragraph 4.3, it has been pointed out that the majority of disadvantaged communities in South Africa do not have public library facilities. In the *Mpumalanga Provincial Library & Information White Paper* it is, however, emphasised that the MPLIS does not regard the existence of a library building as a

precondition for the delivery of a public library service (Mpumalangu Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture 1999:22). The use of existing facilities, such as schools, community centres, and clinics, is seen as a possible alternative for housing information resources and delivering library and information services (Hendrikz 2000:8).

The development of the community libraries' resource collections is also the responsibility of the provincial LIS. Different practices are followed by each provincial LIS with regard to this development. Hendrikz, in a personal communication, indicated that the MPLIS, in partnership with the University of Pretoria, was working on a "resource allocation model", according to which money would be set aside for information resources to public libraries. The formula used for this model, when allocating resources to the affiliated community libraries, would take into account "soft statistics", such as redress and accelerated development, rather than "hard statistics", such as library members. It was envisaged that the formula would also use performance indicators in determining the libraries' share of the available funding for information resources. A grading system - developed by a committee, consisting of MPLIS staff and representative public librarians - would be used to determine the allocation of funds to libraries (Mpumalangu Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture 1999:41).

5.2.2.5 Implications for the establishment of combined school-community libraries

From the foregoing discussion it becomes evident that the funding of school libraries and public libraries, under the new constitutional dispensation, presents serious problems for provincial as well as for local authorities. This is confirmed by Hansen (1999:12):

"Ironically, at a time when communities are crying out for information and education, local authorities find themselves in the position of not being able to render these basic services because of a shortage of funds."

The restructuring of local government after the local elections in 2000 will have financial implications for community libraries, the outcomes of which are not yet known. The first signs of local authorities questioning their role with respect to the establishment and maintenance of community libraries have already surfaced in the press (*Woede ... 2001:5*). In the ACTAG report (Art and Culture Task Group 1995:211) this problem was already highlighted:

"It is likely that there will increasingly be cases where local authorities cannot afford to contribute to LIS for their people. In these cases a larger proportion, or even all, of the funding will have to come from the central and provincial governments until the communities are in a position to contribute financially."

This is, however, a problem that is not unique to South Africa, since it has also been experienced in South Australia:

"... local government is about to be reformed in our State, potentially halving the number of Councils. The support, siting and services of school community libraries in the future will be shaped by these developments which demonstrate the changeable nature of services, especially when they 'belong' to co-operating agencies" (Little 1996:42).

The establishment of new library models, although cost-effective in the long term, will initially create additional expense. The schools and the local councils will probably need seed funding for the facilities to get off the ground, because it will be the poorer, disadvantaged communities that will need the combined facilities most. In most cases, as has already been indicated in Chapter Four, these communities will have neither school nor public libraries. If the government is serious about the establishment of combined school-community libraries, some concrete action has to be taken:

"No amount of devolutionary 'washing of hands' can avoid the reality of that ultimate corporate responsibility" (Bundy 1994:5).

What is needed is:

- Clear commitment on the part of the Department of Education which should manifest in **clear policy guidelines** for PEDs, and local councils wishing to experiment with those models;

- The confirmation of the **generic standards** for school libraries, contained in the department's draft document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards*, as **national policy** (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:29-33);
- The allocation by the PEDs of **special grants**, such as those under "Supplies and Services-Other" or "Media Collections", as basic funding **for schools** establishing a combined school-community library (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:17). This allocation could be used for a start-up collection of curriculum-oriented material for use by the learners in the combined library;
- The allocation of **conditional grants to local councils** for funding extra expenses in establishing combined school-community libraries (South Africa. Ministry of Finance 1999:69-70).

In addition, SGBs, parents and local councils need to be adequately convinced about the important role the school-community library can play in the school and the community at large, in order to secure local funding for this library model.

5.2.3 Provision of adequate, suitable and compatible staff

The *Joint-use library guidelines for South Australia* state:

"The staffing level (of the school-community library) should be adequate and the composition of the staff should reflect the needs of the profile community" (South Australia 1990:4).

The **adequate** staffing of a combined school-community library has been a crucial factor in determining its success. In South Africa, this prerequisite could create problems. The Ministry of Education's personnel policy for schools is based on the following key principles (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:5):

- a) schools must be supplied with an adequate number of educator and non-educator personnel;*
- b) such staff members must be equitably distributed according to the pedagogical requirements of the schools; and*
- c) the cost of personnel establishments must also be sustainable within provincial budgets."*

In recent years, PEDs have, however, experienced the problem that expenditure on staff has increased disproportionately to their total expenditure. In the 1998/1999 financial year, the national average of staff costs to total costs in the budgets of PEDs amounted to 90 per cent. The result was that the per-learner spending on non-personnel costs has seriously declined. To arrest this increase in personnel costs, the Ministry of Education determined that the ratio of personnel to non-personnel spending in ordinary public schools should be in the order of eighty to twenty (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:5):

"A reduction in the proportion of the education budget spent on personnel must result in an actual increase in budgeted expenditure on pedagogically critical non-personnel items (such as new school construction, provision of essential services, supply of books and other learning support materials, and educator development) (South Africa. Department of Education 1998:5).

The appointment of **suitable** staff in a school-community library is another prerequisite for success. In this twenty-first century world where global information and technology play such an important role in everyday life, it is imperative that learners acquire information skills and that ordinary citizens learn to manage information effectively. In the words of the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal:

"... if young Africans are not effectively empowered to use instruments of modern communication, they risk exclusion from a world economy that relies increasingly on knowledge and information" (Chaplin 2000:1).

To achieve this aim, an effective information literacy programme is needed. The appointment of teacher-librarians or teachers who have specialised in teaching information skills is essential (Hart 1998:36).

One of the results of the reduction of personnel by the Department of Education, has been that, in many schools, teacher-librarians have been retrenched or re-allocated to other duties (Lor 1998:7). According to Hart (1998:36):

*"The teacher librarians who survived the crunch of recent budget cutbacks now run their libraries in a few free periods. Library budgets have dried up and many school libraries are locked for most of the day or are used as subject classrooms. The new subject **Information skills** is ignored in most schools." (emphasis by author)*

In the *South African School Library Survey 1999* (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Sciences Research Council [2000]:26-27), it was found that the number of personnel assigned the responsibility of managing any of the following, a school library, a classroom library, a box library, or a classroom collection, is roughly equivalent to the number of schools with that kind of library service. However, with the exception of Gauteng, where 30,1 per cent of personnel responsible for the school library have specialised library qualifications, in all the other provinces less than 20 per cent are in possession of the appropriate qualification. In rural areas it would be even more difficult to attract personnel with the necessary specialised qualifications.

These findings have important implications for the establishment of the school-community library model. Firstly, the government's commitment to reduce personnel spending could impact negatively on the staffing of such a model, on the range of services offered, and on the opening hours of the facility. Secondly, the scarcity of suitably qualified staff points to a need for subsidised additional training or in-service training of personnel already in these positions. Thirdly and lastly, personnel of a combined facility should be sensitive to the needs of the particular community being served, and be able to service those needs meaningfully. Such a person should be acceptable to the general community as well as to the school community and, should be able to generate co-operation.

5.2.4 Request from local community and ongoing community support

As has been indicated in Chapter Four, paragraph 4.5, the mere provision of public library services to the previously disadvantaged communities, will not guarantee that such services will be used. The fact that the adult population is mainly illiterate or semi-literate, and the absence of a reading culture (Raseroka 1997:2), as well as the dominance of an oral tradition among the African population (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:101), jeopardises the potential use of public libraries.

It is, therefore, important that, wherever, a combined library service is considered, the community must have indicated that there is a need for such a service, and that it, and

the ancillary services will, indeed, be used (Bristow 1992b:79). There should also be a clear commitment by the local population and the local authority to contribute towards the cost of establishing and maintaining such a facility, and to paying for additional services. A willingness by the local community to render voluntary services to the combined library, is also an important precondition for the establishment of a combined school-community library.

5.2.5 Central support mechanisms

In the selected overseas countries, it was found that central support, such as: a cataloguing, classification and processing service; mechanisms for collection development and inter-library loans; a professional development component; and an advice service, was of the utmost importance (Little 1996:36). In Australia it was found that the withdrawal of central advisory staff has had an extremely negative impact on the rural school community model and has put the success of this model at risk (Bundy 1994:7-8):

*"The most critical need is for School Community Librarians to have ready access to **knowledgeable and authoritative** advice **when they need it** (Bundy 1994:8).(emphasis by author)*

As has been pointed out in Chapter Four, paragraph 4.4.2, the restructuring of LIS in South Africa, has led to a weakened infrastructure of provincial library services, as some provinces, such as the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province have had to start from scratch to establish a fully-fledged provincial LIS. The Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service (MPLIS) has been without a proper head office structure for almost four years, and the staff have been left with minimal support services in terms of professional guidance, staff administration, a budget, and other resources (Hendrikz 2000:2). The Northern Cape Province, on the other hand, inherited a good regional library infrastructure but without any central organisational structure (Hendrikz 1998:2). The new provincial LISs do not, as yet, have the necessary resources and staff to provide central support to community libraries.

There are, however, already signs that the new provincial LIS are making good progress, and are planning to play a meaningful role in the delivery of public library services in South Africa via the various central services. The MPLIS, for example, plans to offer central services to libraries in Mpumalanga to support the following categories of library and information services (Hendrikz 2000:6; Mpumalanga Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture 1999:13-14):

- 1) General library services, e.g. lending, services to the home-bound, holiday programmes, and multi-cultural programmes;
- 2) Professional advisory services, e.g. cataloguing and classification, collection appraisal and development, organising of collections, database design, user surveys, information needs assessment, and questionnaire development;
- 3) Information provision services, e.g. abstracting and indexing, clipping services, literature searching, repackaging of information, current awareness services, and government information services;
- 4) Library management services, e.g. information resources management, library management, personnel management, and library design and layout.

5.2.6 Involvement of all parties in planning for a library model

The experience with the rural school-community library in South Australia has proved that, in order to be successful with the planning for a combined library model, it is important that all the groups likely to be affected by, or involved in, the implementation of the combined library service, are represented on the planning body.

In the South African context this means that a thorough analysis has to be done to establish the leadership in the community concerned. All community structures have to be represented in the planning body so that the library will grow out of the needs of the community and not be imposed from outside (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:107). These structures would differ from community to community. Community representatives would include: traditional leaders (in a tribal area), local councillors

and council officials, representatives of the SGBs of schools in the community, representatives of the provincial LIS and the provincial Educational Library and Information Services (ELIS), representatives for the district council and the education district, local business, as well as any community-oriented voluntary associations, such as church congregations, cultural associations or societies, women's groups, burial societies, saving clubs, and recreational institutions, such as sports clubs, shebeens, 'gigs' (Bekker & Lategan 1988:65). All the community representatives could then be invited to a meeting. This would ensure both inclusivity and representation. At the first meeting with the community the proposed library project would then be presented (Fortuin 1995:35).

Fortuin (1995:34) points out that community participation is a logical extension of the democratisation process which has permeated the country since 1994:

"Besides involving the community with decisions in matters directly affecting them, it also fosters a sense of community pride, ownership and responsibility for services rendered. Community participation ensures political accountability to those who elected politicians into positions of powers"

Fortuin (1995:34) argues that by involving the local community, the broader population is made aware of the aims, objectives and vision of the library. Moreover, valuable interactive links within the community structures are forged which will function long after the completion of the library facility. The representative planning body will also provide the nucleus for the establishment of a "Friends of the Library" body or even for the Library Board of Management that has to be established at a later stage.

It has also been established from the literature that local circumstances are important in determining the success of a combined library. This suggests that local circumstances should provide the starting point for any discussions about the establishing of such a library model, as each community may well have a different list of priorities (Bekker & Lategan 1988:65). All the local conditions should be carefully analysed to determine which library model would be the most appropriate to the needs of the community. Such an analysis should be based on a thorough community survey (Carstens 1994:16).

5.2.7 Careful planning of the combined library

5.2.7.1 Planning committee

To prepare effectively for the combined library, a planning committee needs to be established. This committee should be elected by the representatives of the community during the initial planning stages. Besides community representatives, the planning committee should include the ward councillor, and representatives from the educators, the learners, local business, the district council, the educational district, the provincial LIS, and the provincial ELIS.

Areas that need to be given special consideration by the planning committee are:

- The physical facility: its location, size, and design. Existing library facilities in the community should be taken into account;
- The staff: the number to be used, and the necessary training and experience of the librarian, the teacher-librarians or teachers. The availability of qualified people and voluntary help from the community should also be considered;
- Decision-making authority, e.g. Library Management Board;
- Financing: establishing the amount, and sources of funding available (Fairer-Wessels & Machet 1993:107), determining matters of sharing the costs of services, materials, maintenance, and salaries;
- Collection development: the considerations required to develop a well-balanced collection, taking into account the curriculum needs of the educators and learners and the cultural, recreational and educational needs of the general public, and the need for a well-defined selection policy;
- Administration: hours of opening, the need to provide circulation procedures and policies that would provide maximum service for all, and a means of dividing materials and equipment, if the combined library status were terminated;
- Marketing the proposed combined services.

5.2.7.2 Location of the combined facility

The location of a school-community library is crucial to its success. To be accessible to the school, the combined library should be attached to a school or should be adjacent to a school or a cluster of schools, in the community. To be accessible to the public, the library should be located where there is high density housing (Smit & Hennessy 1995:58) and should be centrally located in the residential area (Smit & Hennessy 1995:64). The library should also be in the most accessible location, that is, near important roads (particularly intersections) and close to public transport terminuses (railway, bus and taxi routes) so as to be accessible to people from both the immediate area and more distant areas (Smit & Hennessy 1995:49,53). If there are existing library facilities in the community, these should be evaluated to determine whether any would be suitable to accommodate a combined facility.

5.2.7.3 Size

According to Stander (1993b:80), there is a tendency in the information world to move away from quantitative standards in determining the level of provision for buildings, materials, staff, budgets and other physical conditions of an information service. Instead, there is a shift to service delivery as the basis on which to determine the nature, size and scope of the facilities.

The combined library should therefore be large enough to provide for the programmes and services required by the school community and the general public being served. Provision has to be made for the time-tabling of whole classes from the school, which would mean that one or two separate classrooms be set aside for information literacy education. These classrooms should have outside doors and be accessible, after school or public library hours, so that they could then be used as study rooms or meeting rooms for community groups (e.g. for gatherings to discuss neighbourhood problems and needs, local government meetings, religious assemblies, ABET, educational talks, and general social contact).

5.2.7.4 Design and planning of interior

The facility of the school-community library should be attractive to a wide range of users and should make adequate provision for a wide range of school and public library services. The use of the facility for educational purposes would, for example, call for:

- table space for group and individual study;
- an area for the use of audio-visual media;
- storage space for books, illustrative and non-book materials, audio-visual media, and audio-visual equipment; and
- an area for electronic facilities, such as the sending of faxes and Internet access.

Ample space should also be set aside to accommodate story hours for pre-school children, and a separate area for adult use, e.g. for browsing in comfort, for quiet reading or for enjoying audio/video cassettes.

As indicated in paragraph 5.2.2.2, according to the *South African School Library Survey*, only 12,2 to 56,1 per cent of schools in the country have on-site central libraries. The Survey has also found that between one fifth and one quarter of centralised school libraries in South Africa are housed in classrooms which do not conform to the basic spatial requirements of a school library. The proportion of libraries that are housed in converted classrooms across eight provinces ranges between 21,4 and 27,7 per cent.

Overcrowding aggravates this situation, because not a single classroom can be spared to serve as a central school library (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Science Research Council [2000]:iv). In five of the provinces significant numbers of schools have, however, plans for setting up library facilities (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Science Research Council [2000]:iv). The data of the survey also indicate that approximately 20 per cent of all existing libraries have no electricity, and between 20 and 30 percent do not have security (South Africa. Department of Education & Human Science Research Council [2000]:v).

From these statistics it is clear that many communities, especially in the disadvantaged areas, do not have existing school library facilities, or they have school facilities that would be unsuitable for housing a combined library, because they are inadequate even for a school library. In addition, as has been indicated in Chapter Four, paragraph 4.3, public library facilities range from non-existent in many disadvantaged and rural areas to fully developed in advantaged areas. All these factors have to be taken into account by communities when planning for a combined library model.

5.2.8 A service based on the needs of the community

When planning the combined library in the South African context, it will be necessary to take cognisance of development theories and development research. The social, cultural, economical and political situation of the learners and the adult users should be taken into account when planning for the combined services. This would imply a unique role for the library to support and facilitate intellectual and personal growth of the users (Stander 1993a:1). Stander (1993a:6) argues that a “basic needs” approach is called for which will make the combined library relevant to the life and work of the people in the community and will contribute to improving the quality of their life. This approach followed by the library should be reflected in its services.

To be successful, the service of a combined library has to be based on an accurate profile of the community being served. This can only be established by conducting an information needs survey. Bekker & Lategan (1988:65) emphasise that wide variations in expressed community needs should be expected. A needs survey, using a participatory approach, should be conducted, and should be followed up regularly:

“Adequate planning to meet varying community needs can only take place successfully when planning inputs both initially as well as on an ongoing basis are elicited from the community itself” (Bekker & Lategan 1988:65).

The degree of success in obtaining information about the information needs of disadvantaged communities will vary according to the type of community (township, informal settlement, tribal settlement), as well as the educational level of the individuals being interviewed (Bekker & Lategan 1988:66). In many instances, the

information needs of illiterate or semi-literates have to be established through a mediator who has to explain the issues involved in the language of the respondent.

Respondents in an exploratory study undertaken by Bekker & Lategan (1988:70) in a black urban townships found that library holdings, traditionally found in libraries, failed to meet a number of important community needs of the black community. There was a strong feeling that library material should:

- not all be in a written form;
- cater for the expressed needs of the community involved;
- not, in general, comprise study material, perceived as suitable for VISTA or UNISA students;
- not include too much fiction, as those communities were unlikely, in the foreseeable future, to use libraries as recreational facilities;
- be free from bias.

Ngulube (2000:1), on the other hand, draws attention to the fact that libraries in Southern Africa are neglecting the information needs of the people in rural communities, while the majority of people in Africa and 58 per cent of the people in South Africa live in rural areas (Ngulube 2000:2). He is of the opinion that librarians have failed to respond to the needs of these communities because they use inappropriate models of information provision. Ngulube believes that new information delivery methods are called for to provide access to information in rural communities, and that librarians need to discover new ways to develop an interest in the use of information by concentrating on other than written materials.

Ngulube (2000:2) believes that collection development policies in the developing world should take into consideration all appropriate media. He stresses that literacy should not be regarded as a prerequisite for the need for information and for information provision, but that neo-literates and even illiterates both require information to raise their educational standards, to advance democracy, to participate in decision-making, to develop the economy, and to enhance the quality of life. By

providing appropriate information, the community will accept the library as their major source of information.

School libraries should also cater for the particular needs of the learners if they are to be used optimally. Stander (1993a:11) believes that the challenge facing the teacher-librarian in the developing world is to discover the dominant drives, needs and interests of the young information user, and to provide reading opportunities and an environment conducive to information use. To be appropriate in the disadvantaged areas of South Africa, teacher-librarians should be sensitive to the needs of their users and anticipate the purposes for which information will be needed.

(1996:3)

Teacher-librarians can arouse the unexpressed information needs of learners, by exposing them to stimulating and interesting printed and audio-visual material, and by setting assignments that force them to make use of the available information sources. Stander (1993a:12) stresses that the reality of Third World librarianship, forces teachers to be creative and enterprising with the limited resources at their disposal.

From the above discussion it is clear that in South Africa a more innovative approach to the delivery of combined school-community library services is called for than those examined in the selected overseas countries.

5.2.9 Locally representative, enthusiastic, and skilled Library Board of Management

The appointment of a locally representative, enthusiastic, and skilled Library Board of Management has been found to be of critical importance to the success of the combined library. This body should represent all parties involved, in accordance with the specifications of the joint-use agreement.

In the South African context, especially in the disadvantaged communities, it would appear that much initial and ongoing capacity-building of the library's governing body members would have to be done by the PEDs and provincial LIS. This has been the experience of the departments of education, when, in terms of the *South African*

Schools Act, 1996, SGBs were appointed to govern the schools at the local level. The DoE has published guides, such as, *Understanding the SA Schools Act: what public school governors need to know (Understanding ... 1997)*, and the PEDs conduct short courses to build the capacity of SGBs so as to prepare them for their roles as school governors.

5.2.10 Clear and flexible guidelines and procedures

In South Australia, the development of clear guidelines played an important role in the success of the school-community library model in that state. The guidelines were felt to be essential in clarifying the needs, roles and responsibilities of all parties and in outlining the outcomes of the co-operative venture. Initially the guidelines for school-community libraries in rural areas were very prescriptive and all forty-six rural joint-use libraries had to adhere strictly to the provisions in the guidelines. With the devolution of power from state to local governments, the need for prescriptive guidelines diminished and the guidelines were rather seen as a guide for local communities to develop and operate their joint-use libraries according to their particular needs. This approach led to the development of variants of the joint-use library model to meet specific conditions and needs of communities (South Australia 1996:3).

In the South African situation, it would appear that in one province various models of a school library would be adopted for implementation by local communities, as has been suggested in the draft policy document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1999:24). Each model, as well as each variant of the model, would then require a different set of general guidelines which would assist the local community to establish and operate the particular chosen model.

5.3 Relevance of overseas variants of the school-community library model to South Africa

Chapter Two established that school-community libraries in the selected overseas countries were most frequently located in schools, either in existing school premises or in separate buildings on the school premises. In Chapter Six, the use of existing school library facilities for combined school-community libraries, especially in the previously disadvantaged, rural areas of South Africa, will be discussed comprehensively.

A later development, in most of the countries, was the creation of a town community centre, which, invariably, incorporated a school, as well as a school-community library, functioning as the cultural and educational centre of the school community and the community at large. This latter variant of the model deserves careful consideration for the urban areas in South Africa, the socio-economic development of which were seriously stunted and distorted by the previous apartheid policies. A new integrated approach to the planning of educational (including LIS) facilities is, therefore, imperative (Smit & Hennessy 1995:4). Smit & Hennessy (1995:1) found that the urban distribution of schools for the previously disadvantaged has resulted in many standardised schools being of poor quality. They (Smit & Hennessy 1995:7) state:

“The physically and socio-economically segregated nature of South African urban areas has given rise to the problem of large-scale ghettos in peripheral locations. The current manner in which schools are separately located within residential neighbourhoods has merely served to reinforce this ghettoization, and any school located within one of these poverty-stricken areas has tended to be incapable of carrying out its intended task, given the nature of its environment, and the lack of exposure of its pupils to the outside world.”

Smit & Hennessy (1995:1), argue that, excluding the current inadequacies associated with the location of schools, the future education system, being orientated more towards vocational training, would need specialised educational facilities with greater emphasis on adult education. Smit & Hennessy suggest also that one way of coping with the changing education system and urban form, would be, to implement the concept of “school clusters” (Smit & Hennessy 1995:1):

“Basically, the idea involves clustering schools around a centrally located hub of shared specialized facilities. Higher urban densities will ensure that pupils from a number of different residential neighbourhoods could be within an acceptable walking distance of a school cluster.”

Smit & Hennessy (1995:1-2) believe that school clusters should consist of several individual school buildings, loosely clustered together and integrated with residential and commercial buildings, around a “... hub of shared specialised facilities (hall, library, workshops, etc.)”. Such a hub should be an accessible community centre which could also be used for adult education and recreation. It is evident that the town community centre, incorporating a school, or cluster of schools, with the school-community library as the cultural and educational centre of the community, appears to be a viable variant of the school-community library model for urban and metropolitan areas in South Africa, where the construction of schools and other educational facilities is still being planned (Karlsson, Nassimbeni & Karelse 1996:21).

Smit & Hennessy (1995:88), however, point out that this type of spatial layout - a cluster of schools around a centrally located hub of shared specialised facilities - need not be limited to urban areas, but that it could also be implemented in rural areas, provided that the population density in those areas would consistently justify such a spatial pattern. They (Smit & Hennessy 1995:81), however, suggest that the rural implementation of the concept of education clusters would be significantly different to that in urban and metropolitan areas. This would indicate a need for a new variant of the school-community library model for remote rural areas.

5.4 Summary

After examining the factors that would be essential to the successful implementation of the school-community model in South Africa, it becomes clear that the introduction of this model into South Africa would not be easy. Too many factors, such as funding, accommodation, staffing, and central support could jeopardise its implementation. Alternatively, the school-community model could represent the only chance that certain communities may ever have of obtaining school **and** community services which, till now, had never been provided. This is especially the case in the remote

rural areas, particularly in the former homeland areas, where there are often no school and public libraries at all.

It was found that the dominant variants of the school-community library, implemented in the selected overseas countries, were the school-housed community library, and the school-community library as the core of a community centre offering various social services to the entire community. In the light of the fact that, in South Africa, the LIS infrastructure and socio-economic conditions vary from province to province, and LIS provision favours the urban advantaged areas, it is clear that many variants of the school-community library model might be applicable to South Africa. It would depend on the specific local circumstances which variant of the model would be most suited to a particular community.

The community centre complex, with a school-community library at the centre, and offering a wide range of social services, appears to have special relevance to growing urban and metropolitan areas in South Africa, since many of the standardised schools in these areas are of poor quality and lack school library facilities. This would, especially, be the case, if such a community centre would be located in the middle of a cluster of schools. Such a facility could play an important role in ABET and literacy training and also advance further education

If the school-community library model, notwithstanding serious constraints, were to be considered for implementation in other areas in South Africa, it would appear that a different approach would have to be followed with the implementation and operation of the model than that which was used in the selected overseas countries. All the factors which could impact negatively on its implementation and operation, as well as the dynamics of the specific community, would have to be seriously considered. Bundy (1994:1) gives the following warning:

"Joint use libraries are complex, and where this complexity has not been recognised adequately in planning, agreements, and organisation, they have usually failed."

In the light of high rates of illiteracy and the dominance of an oral culture in certain communities, a different approach in service delivery would also have to be followed in order to make the service relevant for all the users and potential users in a community.

When all the factors, negative and positive, are openly examined beforehand, only then can the implementation of the school-community library model have a fair chance of success in South Africa. It would be imprudently foolhardy to expedite the establishing of such combined ventures, because of pressure from politicians and government authorities.

In Chapter Six, a specific variant of the school-community model for South Africa will be investigated which appears to have the potential for success, when implemented in a disadvantaged rural, tribal community.