

## CHAPTER 7

# GUIDELINES FOR A PUBLIC LIBRARY-BASED SCHOOL-COMMUNITY LIBRARY FOR THE RURAL, TRIBAL AREAS IN SOUTH AFRICA

### *7.1 Introduction*

In Chapter Six, a variant of the school-community library model - the public library-based school-community library - was investigated and described. A community in a rural, tribal area of Mpumalanga was described, which displays distinct characteristics, thus making it the type of community that could successfully implement this model. Then, the rationale for investigating this variant of the school-community library model was explained. Thereafter, the presumed characteristics of the model were described within the context of a rural, tribal community. The perceived advantages of this particular variant of the school-community library model, for implementation in the rural, tribal areas in South Africa, were given, as well as the conditions needed for its successful implementation.

In Chapter Three, the important role the guidelines, which were developed by the state of South Australia for the operation of their rural school-community library, was emphasised as being one of the reasons that this model had been, and still is, a success in South Australia. An overview of the most important aspects of the South Australian guidelines was given. A detailed, tabulated exposition of the South Australian guidelines is given in **Appendix H**.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to provide an answer to the question:

What guidelines are needed to facilitate the effective implementation and operation of the public library-based school-community library in the rural, tribal areas of South Africa?

As many of the guidelines for the public library-based school-community library in the rural, tribal areas of South Africa will correspond to those of the guidelines for

the school library-based school-community library in the rural areas in South Australia, emphasis will be laid on the most important guidelines, applicable to the public library-based model, and to the specific socio-economic conditions in the rural areas in South Africa. A detailed comparison between the two sets of guidelines (that is, those for the rural school-based school-community-library in South Australia, and those for the public library-based school-community library in the rural, tribal areas in South Africa) will be giving in a tabular form in **Appendix L**.

## ***7.2 Guidelines for the establishment and operation of the library model***

### **7.2.1 Community survey**

Before any model for library service provision for a community can be considered and implemented, detailed, objective data about the community have to be obtained. This is done by conducting a community survey. Official data relating to the demographic, geographic and socio-economic characteristics of the community should be obtained from official sources, such as Statistics S.A. and the Human Sciences Research Council. This information has to be supplemented with other community-specific information, such as the number and type of clubs and associations, community leaders and representatives, literacy programmes conducted, and other activities of the community, by making use of a questionnaire survey (Carstens 1994:16). An assessment of the specific information needs of the community also needs to be done.

This information gathering process will lead to the development of a community profile, indicating what types of services, (e.g. activities for pre-school children, meeting places for youth clubs), and what types of stock, (e.g. ABET material, audio cassettes for illiterate users, and large print material for the elderly), are needed. An information needs survey will also indicate in which subject areas material is needed and at which educational level. Since ordinary citizens, councillors, educators, and community planners, who may verbalise the need for better utilisation of educational institutions - such as school and public libraries - often lack the knowledge of the

specific functions of these institutions (Clubb & Davis 1979:146), these people should be involved in the community survey to gain insight in what services these institutions could offer to the community.

## 7.2.2 Planning of combined library

### 7.2.2.1 Planning Committee

To develop an effective strategy for the combined library, a planning committee needs to be established, representing all the stakeholders. These should include community leaders, the ward councillor, and a representative of the educators, learners, local business, the district council, the education district, the provincial LIS, and the provincial ELIS.

The planning committee has to monitor the implementation of the public library-based school-community library. In doing so, the planning committee should analyse all the details collected during the information gathering process. It should ensure that the expressed needs of the community are met, while taking into account all relevant government policies, such as the draft policy document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1999), and the draft document, *A Four Year Implementation Plan of the Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 2000a). The planning committee has to give special consideration to the following issues:

- The physical facility: Its location, size, design, and, in the case of an existing public library, what alterations are required to meet the needs of both the cluster schools and the community;
- The staffing of the facility: The number of staff needed, the training and experience required of the librarian in charge, the part-time use of teachers or teacher-librarians from the cluster schools, the offering of information literacy education, and the attention given to the curriculum-related needs of the learners, and the use of volunteers.

- The decision-making authority: The interaction of the local council, Library Management Board, and the SGBs of the cluster schools in appointing, evaluating, and dismissing staff members;
- Financing: Determining how the costs of services, materials, maintenance, and salaries will be shared;
- Collection development: The development of a well-balanced collection, taking into account the curriculum needs of the educators and learners of the cluster schools, and the cultural, recreational and educational needs of the general public, as well as the need for a well-defined selection policy.
- Administration: Hours of opening, circulation procedures, and a library policy that will provide maximum service for all; as well as a procedure for dividing materials and equipment in the event that the combined library status be terminated;
- Marketing the combined services.

#### **7.2.2.2 Location of building**

The library should be located within the area of the educational cluster, consisting of primary and secondary schools. All components of the cluster must be within ten minutes walking distance of one another (i.e. within a 750 metres periphery) (Smit & Hennessy 1995:56). The library should be in the most accessible location - centrally located in the residential area - near important roads (particularly intersections), and close to public transport (railway station, bus and taxi routes) (Smit & Hennessy 1995:49,53, 64).

The library would, ideally, be grouped with crèches, clinics, adult education centres, and skills training centres to provide easy access by adult learners, rural women, infants and the elderly (Smit & Hennessy 1995:83). A holistic approach has to be followed.

### 7.2.2.3 Size

The size of the public library-based school-community library can only be determined after a complete community survey has been conducted. The library must 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 one or two separate rooms that can be adapted for information literacy education classes. These classrooms have to be large enough to accommodate whole classes from the cluster schools, and have outside doors in order to be accessible outside of school and public library hours. These rooms could double as study rooms and meeting rooms in the evenings for community groups, and be used for community gatherings, local government meetings, ABET classes, educational talks, skills training, and general social contact.

It would appear that an area of approximately 500 square metres has been found to be adequate as a starting point for a rural library (Gauteng. Directorate Library and Information Services [1997]:2; Mpumalangu Provincial Library & Information Service 2000). The building plan has to be flexible enough to accommodate provision for additions to the building, in case of an expansion of services or an increase in the population.

### 7.2.2.4 Design and planning of interior

The facility of the public library-based school-community library has to be attractive to all the users in the community. Adequate provision must be made for a wide range of school and public library services. Educational activities would, for example, call for:

- table space for group and individual study;
- an area for the use of audio-visual equipment;
- storage space for
  - an expanding book collection;
  - audio-visual materials such as video and sound recordings;
  - illustrative and non-book materials, such as wall-charts, maps, photographs, pictures, pamphlets, brochures and newspaper cuttings;

- audio-visual equipment;
- an area for electronic facilities, such as word processing, the transmission of faxes and e-mail, and Internet access to conduct information searches.

Areas for incompatible activities, such as story-hours for pre-school children, and curriculum-related and reference work by learners, should be sufficiently separated to avoid mutual disturbance. A separate area should be set aside exclusively for adult use, for browsing in comfort, for quiet reading or for enjoying audio or video cassettes. These requirements would call for a room of irregular shape, where space could be used flexibly according to a variety of needs (Jones 1977:315; Gauteng. Directorate Library and Information Services [1997]:1). The placement of doors, the location of the circulation counter, and the placing of the shelves should allow for maximum supervision by staff. Access doors to the library should be kept to the minimum.

Provision must be made for a circulation space, a reference section, an office for staff, storing space, an activity room for pre-schoolers, an area for group activities, and study facilities. A direct telephone line is essential. A pay telephone should be available close by. There should be adequate outside lighting for evening opening. Adequate provision must be made for toilet facilities and for a kitchen and refreshment area where light meals can be taken (Gauteng. Directorate Library and Information Services [1997]:2). The library must be easily accessible to the physically impaired, and should have rest rooms also for disabled persons. The toilets should be accessible after hours.

### **7.2.3 Funding**

A commitment to the shared funding of the library must be made by all the co-operating partners and this must be formalised by a written agreement. This joint-use agreement must state: which parties (e.g. the provincial LIS, the provincial ELIS, the local council and the community) have entered into the co-operative arrangement; what their specifically formulated roles, responsibilities and contributions are in providing the service; the total budget and the proportionate contribution of each party; and how the budget will be prepared and approved. The funding arrangements must be realistic and focus on the sustainability of the services.

Cost items that have to be taken into consideration are (South Australia 1996:6):

- the library facility;
- the salary of the librarian and additional support staff, as well as the part-time services of the teacher-librarians or teachers of the cluster schools;
- the curriculum-oriented material for the school learners of the cluster schools;
- the materials for use by the general public;
- the costs of the provision of centralised services, including acquisition, cataloguing, and access to central collections of specialised materials, the interlibrary loan system, advisory services, professional development, and marketing services;
- the provision of computer networks;
- building costs;
- maintenance costs, e.g. lighting, heating, cleaning and minor building repairs.

Other cost items that need to be addressed are insurance, valuation of assets, depreciation, purchase of equipment and other assets, and income. Decisions that have to be taken include (Queensland 1996:23):

- How will the building be insured?
- How will the contents be insured?
- How will liability be covered?
- In the case of the total destruction of the building, what provision will be made for negotiating its replacement?
- How will the value of the assets (building, furniture, fixtures and fittings, and collection) be appraised and apportioned to meet the accounting needs of each of the parties?
- What method(s) will be used to determine the annual depreciation of the assets?
- How will the value of assets acquired - including library resources donated - be recorded?

- What decisions will be made concerning purchase, replacement, maintenance, and repair of furniture and equipment?
- What must be done to ensure that the combined library is eligible for grants, subsidies and allocations of funds?
- What fees and charges will apply in the library?

#### **7.2.4 Staffing**

It is important for the public library-based school-community library that a qualified librarian should be in charge, although a qualified paraprofessional would probably be adequate. The personal commitment to the combined library and a commitment to community library service should be an important consideration in appointing the librarian. The librarian ought to be employed by the local council.

Use should be made of shift workers to allow for longer opening hours. Library assistants could be employed by the local council or voluntary workers could be used. The use of library prefects from each participating school should be encouraged.

Each participating school should contribute to the staffing of the combined library. Provision must be made for teaching hours, and hours for attending to administrative duties. Service hours should be distributed evenly among the staff of the participating schools as well as the time-tabling of classes for the teaching of information skills.

#### **7.2.5 Joint-use agreements**

The agreement must include (South Australia 1990:5; Queensland 1996:11-12):

- Details of the parties entering into the agreement;
- The funding arrangements, covering capital and establishment costs, replacement costs, and recurrent costs. All parties' responsibilities and commitments in relation to both initial and ongoing expenditure have to be defined. Arrangements should be made for regular review, agreement revision, and periodic major evaluation of the facility and services;



- Details relating to the establishment, structures and powers of the library management body. A constitution may also be included;
- Arrangements for the provision of physical and intellectual access by all user groups to the service;
- Matters relating to the building, e.g. the size of the building, and recognition of the need for areas and equipment for different types of usage by diverse groups;
- Details on how policy for the library will be formulated;
- The conditions of ownership of land, buildings, furnishings, fixtures, fittings, and materials;
- Responsibility for insurance and maintenance;
- The process for resolving conflict within the library management body;
- The means for identifying the total staffing needs; and the responsibility of each partner to these needs;
- The process for evaluation of the service;
- The procedure for changing or terminating the agreement and how the assets will be handled in the case of dissolution of the combined service;
- Arrangements for the disposal or alternative use of the venue;
- Details of the land and plans attached as a schedule (in the case where the combined service is established in a new building).

## **7.2.6 Organisational structures and line functions**

### **7.2.6.1 Management body**

A Library Board of Management or a Library Management Committee has to be appointed, which will act as a policy-setting body, and will also work in close co-operation with the librarian in charge of the library. This body should include representatives from all parties involved, in accordance with the specifications of the joint-use agreement (South Australia 1990:6). Its composition must include the principal (or nominee) of each school, representatives of the school community (e.g. SGBs) and the community at large, a representative of the learners, nominees

of local government, and of the education district. A representative of the teacher-librarians and the librarian in charge should be *ex-officio*, non-voting members (South Australia 1996:17).

The library management body should elect its own chairperson, but the chairperson should, preferably, not be an employee of the department of education or of the local council (South Australia 1996:17).

The management body should operate within the parameters of a formal constitution. Membership of elected or nominated members of the management body should be for fixed periods as determined locally (South Australia 1996:17-18).

The management body should determine policy rather than become involved in day-to-day administration. This body has, however, the responsibility to develop, maintain, and monitor a strategic plan reflecting the relevant priorities of the local authority and the participating schools. To ensure that the community has a co-ordinated and focused plan about information provision, there should be full and continuing consultation between all the bodies represented on the management body (South Australia 1996:18).

#### **7.2.6.2 Functions of the library management body**

The management body in consultation with the librarian and teacher-librarians will (South Australia 1996:17):

- determine the hours for public use of the facility;
- monitor the staffing requirements and make recommendations for additional staff to the appropriate authority;
- plan and monitor the effective time-tabling of classes from the cluster schools for information literacy education;
- be represented on the interviewing panel for the employment of library assistants and volunteers;

- promote the library in and to the community and in general, establish meaningful communication with that community;
- determine the library needs of the local community by participating actively in the ongoing assessment of the community's information needs (Burns 1988b:37), and by making appropriate decisions about the library service;
- determine and manage the library's operating budget;
- monitor the need for access to information through new technology (South Australia 1990:6);
- ensure the appropriate distribution of public library material to any additional service points (South Australia 1990:6);
- ensure the annual submission of audited statements of expenditure to the provincial LIS, the provincial PED and the local authorities;
- ensure the submission, to the appropriate authorities, of requisitions for library public library bookstock and other centrally provided materials (South Australia 1990:6);
- provide statistical reports to the appropriate authorities as required;
- meet regularly, at least once a school term, to consider the business of the library and plan for future development;
- review annually the operation of the school-community library and implement changes as required;
- consult with and report to the authorities which they represent;
- make recommendations concerning library space (South Australia 1990:6).

### **7.2.6.3 Librarian, part-time teacher-librarians, and library assistants**

The librarian will be responsible to the library management body for different aspects of the management of the library. She or he needs also to liaise with the principals of the cluster schools with respect to the time-tabling of the classes for Information Literacy Education.

The part-time teacher-librarians will be responsible to the principals of the relevant schools with respect to the service rendered to the school community, and the teaching of information literacy to the school learners.

The library assistants and volunteers will be responsible to the librarian for carrying out the policy of the library in relation to the public.

## **7.2.7 Administration and organisation**

### **7.2.7.1 Policies and procedures**

In consultation with the community, the provincial LIS, and the provincial ELIS, the library must formulate a library policy and a set of procedures to ensure appropriate practices for the selection, acquisition and organisation of materials, by incorporating current developments in technology.

All library materials (other than general reference, special collections and audio-visual materials) should be available for loan to any eligible borrower, unless otherwise determined by the librarian in charge. Special policies have to be formulated to regulate the lending of curriculum-oriented materials to the public, and the reservation of such material, because of the continual demand for these materials from the different schools. As far as possible, all parts of the collection should be available to any eligible borrower. The question of the paying of fines for overdue material should also be considered.

Wherever possible, audio-visual software and hardware should be centralised in the library rather than be kept in the relevant schools. This material should not be available on loan to the public, but should be used exclusively within the library.

Policy regarding the shelf space allocation and arrangement of the materials for children, young adult, and adult users, and the possible separation of public library materials from curriculum-oriented materials, should be formulated under the guidance of the provincial LIS and the provincial ELIS staff. Whenever possible, the needs of

the particular community should, however, determine the method by which the library materials are shelved and displayed. The system adopted for the cataloguing and classification of the curriculum-oriented collections should also be decided in consultation with , and under the guidance of, staff from the provincial LIS and the provincial ELIS.

Library policy has to be formulated which is consistent with the philosophies and policies of the co-operating bodies, and in accordance with the relevant legislation, such as *The South African Schools Act, 1996*, the *Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998*, the *Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000*, the *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000*, the *Employment Equity Act, 1998*, the *Skills Development Act, 1998*, the *Cultural Institutions, Act, 1998*, and the *Copyright Act, 1978*, as amended (Gray 2000:5), as well as with provincial and local legislation and regulations.

In formulating policies for the combined services, the relevant government policies must also be considered, such as the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996*, the draft policy framework. *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards*, and the draft document, *A Four Year Implementation Plan of the Policy Framework for School Library Standards*, the *National Norms and Standards for School Funding*, and curriculum documents, such as *Curriculum 2005*.

#### **7.2.7.2 Roles and responsibilities**

Roles and responsibilities within the combined school-community library context should be unambiguously defined (South Australia 1996:29).

##### **d) The librarian**

The librarian has the responsibility to:

- manage the collection of information resources in the best interests of the community needs;

- ensure that these resources are readily available to the community;
- introduce the community to new and emerging information technologies and instruct and support them in utilising these technologies to meet their needs;
- support the cultural activities of the community;
- act on the recommendations of the management body;
- promote the school-community library and the activities of the local council to the community;
- participate in resource sharing through the interlibrary lending network.

**e) Teachers of the participating schools**

The teachers of the cluster schools have the responsibility to (South Australia 1996:29):

- assist users in the selection and handling of resources under the direction of the librarian;
- undertake appropriate training and professional development;
- participate in the selection and maintenance of the information resources;
- promote information literacy by planning units of work in collaboration with classroom teachers so as to enable learners to become information literate;
- provide for resource and information service needs of teaching staff and learners;
- utilise current and emerging information technologies to provide the widest possible range of information sources for the school community.

**c) Principals**

Each principal of a cluster school has to:

- enlist the support of the SGB in his or her school to ensure that the learners have access to library-based resources. This would include getting their support for allocating funds for the acquisition of these resources;

- encourage the parents of his or her school, within their means, to contribute to the financing of the school, including the library facility;
- assign teachers or teacher-librarians on a part-time basis to the school-community library;
- monitor the performance of such teachers assigned on a part-time basis to the library;
- contribute to the operation of the management body;
- understand, support, and promote the combined service provided through the school-community library.

**d) Library assistants and volunteers**

The library assistants and volunteer workers in the school-community library work under the direction of the librarian to:

- assist users in the selection and use of resources;
- participate in the selection and maintenance of the information resources;
- undertake appropriate training and professional development;
- assist in the promotion of the school-community library.

**7.2.7.3 Administrative issues**

Hours of opening will be a matter for decision by the management body and should meet the needs of the local community. The school-community library has to be accessible to the public during normal school hours, and for any additional hours per week as is needed by the community, and at times which will ensure community accessibility to the library.

A procedures manual should be compiled explaining the correct performance of the different activities in the library. This will promote consistency of practice, and also facilitate in-service training of staff in the case of staff turnover.

## **7.2.8 Collection development**

The librarian must, under the guidance of the provincial LIS, build a balanced selection of stock, taking into account the local needs of the community. The missions of both the public library and the school library should be taken into consideration when developing this collection. The formulation of a well-considered and co-ordinated collection development plan could play an important part in obtaining, maintaining, and sustaining the community's support and commitment (Stack 1996:9).

The book-stock for the several schools must be built and maintained as would be the case in a normal school library and should be based on curriculum needs. The parent community and the SGBs of the participating schools should be encouraged to contribute in building an extensive and varied curriculum-oriented collection in which all the schools can share.

There should be "co-ordinative thinking" on the part of the chief librarian and the teacher-librarians when acquiring information resources, particularly where allocations from participating schools' contributions are considered (Mitson 1982:73). There should also be a good balance between the book-stock and audio-visual materials.

## **7.2.9 Operation and services**

### **7.2.9.1 Service objectives**

The first step in planning for an effective combined library and information service is to formulate community-oriented service goals. Changes considered in improving the services can then be evaluated, firstly, in terms of the extent to which the service goals are based on community needs, and, secondly, in terms of how the intended strategies will achieve their intended outcomes. In the light of diminishing funds for the delivery of public and school library services, the sustainability of new programmes should be carefully assessed beforehand (Burns 1988b:35-36).



### 7.2.9.2 Range of services offered

The combined library and information service has to provide materials and services appropriate to its community, as defined in its profile, taking into consideration the resources available from the country's, and the particular province's, library and information network.

To meet the information needs of its users, the library should offer the following services and products directly or through the sharing of resources via the interlibrary loan network:

- A resource collection including print materials, such as books, periodicals, pamphlets, brochures, pictures, and posters, and audio-visual items, such as video and audio cassettes, as well as CD-ROMs.
- Information and reference services, including the provision of dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and directories of organisations and services; interlibrary loan services; the compilation of bibliographies; online access to databases; and a current awareness service;
- Information literacy education, reading guidance and regular displays of interesting or new fiction;
- A community information service with a permanent display of current local news and an integrated vertical file of community information;
- Photocopying, fax and e-mail facilities;
- Story-telling sessions, involving elderly people, puppet shows, and games for the pre-primary children;
- Book talks and reading programmes, based on the interest areas of adults and children;
- Video presentations on topics of interest to the community;
- Recording of information on video and audio cassette for the illiterate element of the community;
- Other community-specific services, e.g. a local history or local art or crafts collections and displays; a career guidance service, and a toy library.

### 7.2.9.3 Outreach programmes

Outreach programmes should be based on the assessment of the community's needs and could include:

- Cultural events, incorporating displays of items from the resource collection;
- Recreation programmes for young people;
- ABET classes;
- Services for the elderly, such as the filling in of forms, and legal, financial, or health-related advice by experts;
- Circulating block loans to classrooms of the cluster schools (book box service). The proximity of relevant library resources in the classroom, where teaching and learning takes place, will stimulate the use of books and reading materials and encourage the use of the library by learners and teachers;
- Access to providers of further education and the provision of study collections;
- Computer literacy classes and classes in word-processing.
- Circulating of books at book depots in remote rural areas.

### 7.2.10 Training

The professional development and in-service training of the librarian is the responsibility of the provincial LIS. Short courses should be given also to the library assistants. Attention should be paid to the special needs of the librarian with regard to the combined service. The professional development of the teacher-librarians is the responsibility of the provincial ELIS. Joint short courses should be offered by the provincial LIS and the provincial ELIS to prepare both the librarian and the teacher-librarians or teachers of the cluster schools for their roles in the combined library.

### 7.3 Summary

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to formulate guidelines which could facilitate the effective implementation and operation of the public library-based school-community library in the rural, tribal areas in South Africa.

The guidelines which have been formulated cover areas such as: the planning for the library facility and its services; the funding arrangements between the partners in the co-operative venture; the staffing of the combined library; the concerns that should be addressed in the joint-use agreement between the co-operating partners; the governance and management structures for the combined library; administrative and organisational matters; services and outreach programmes; collection development; and staff training and professional development.

In South Australia, the guidelines for the operation of school-community libraries in the rural areas, have proved to be of fundamental importance to the success of that particular school-community library model. Since no guidelines have yet been developed by the South African PEDs to guide SGBs in the choice, implementation and operation of school library models suggested in the DoE's menu of school library models (South Africa. Department of Education 2000a:4), the guidelines formulated in this chapter aim to fill that void in departmental policy. It is anticipated that the above guidelines could assist in directing decision-makers, such as education planners, provincial and local government officials, SGBs, SMTs, as well as parents and community members, in the consideration, planning and implementation of this particular variant of the school-community library.

It must, however, be remembered that local circumstances, rather than universal principles, have made the school-community library a success in the overseas countries studied. Local solutions must be found for local needs and problems. Vermeulen (1994:154) shares this view:

*"In South Africa, with its current glaring imbalances in the provision of education for different communities, a rigid statement of school library standards is bound to either frustrate or discourage schools depending on their position in the development continuum. ...However, this does not obviate the need for guidelines (now preferred to the more prescriptive terms standards)."*

The above guidelines should, therefore, not be regarded as prescriptive, but as an tool to guide decision-makers and communities in the rural, tribal areas of South Africa who may be considering this variant of the school-community library model as a possible option in their area.