The University of Nairobi

Library Newsletter

ISSUE NO.1   **MARCH 2021**

TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARY SERVICE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On March 15, 2020 all universities in Kenya were ordered to close down to prevent the spread of the Covid - 19 virus with the first case having been reported a week earlier in the country. This informed the widespread physical library closures prompted by the then public health concerns that emerged and, the status quo has remained up to date. The Ministry of health in the country began giving protocols and guidelines on prevention of the spread and care as cases of COVID-19 gradually appeared across the Country. The emphasis was on contact tracing, improvement of hygiene and more so hand washing, social distancing, and use of face masks among other protocols. This advent of Covid- 19 within no time was declared a pandemic by

the World Health Organization (WHO), making institutions and especially departments in the University to suddenly and dramatically shift to Information Communication Technology (ICT) based alternative mechanism of teaching, learning and the modus operandi of the nature of service delivery in response. The University of Nairobi was forced to transition to online learning for the remainder of the semester and the subsequent semesters. The lockdown that was initiated by the government of Kenya at the beginning of the Covid - 19 pandemic, necessitate majority of library employees to work from home as this was the case with most organizations and entities in the country with the exception of the most essential service providers.

The University of Nairobi Library (UONL) response was typical of academic libraries during the time and had to significantly adjust its operations and services to carry out basic functions of acquiring, organizing and disseminating information in support of the University mission. More specifically the University Library had to avail reference, research materials and other library services to the students, academic staff, non-academic staff and other users through Information Communication technology so as to support the academic activities that were taking place off campus and remotely. Basically all in-person reference services were suspended, and all patron interactions took place via phone, email, chat, or other remote technologies. The

University Library in actualizing and realizing its mandate to meet user's expectations, developed a comprehensive information fluency programme that was delivered through Zoom and Google meet platform to ensure that they build requisite capacity among staff and patrons, so as to enable them navigate through different intricate technology and use the new platforms to access services and specifically electronic resources available via the internet. The UONL through elaborate and continuous training expanded their virtual consultation offerings, that informed the rapidly shift from

an in person to an online consultation service model. In quickly adjusting to these new circumstances, the library was in effect expanding on the growing practice of offering and

assessing virtual patron consultations and access tolibrary electronic resources — that is, patron interactions that occur over the internet through the library homepage, email,

New implement sitting arrangement

instant messaging, or video conferencing. This virtual service is particularly important as users are able to continue with learning and research without their academic calendar being affected or interrupted. Transitioning to fully online modes of patron interaction during the recent disruption has enabled librarians at UONL to provide continuity of service, emphasize their

ongoing availability to student and faculty researchers, develop and test new skills and strategies. The University of Nairobi reopened partially in January 2021 and the library has integrated its traditional approach of service delivery with adoption of information communication technology. Users accessing the library follow a strict protocol of access that is informed by the MOH guidelines, and to a greater extent some of these limitations can be overcome by use of aforementioned information technology platforms. With the revenging Covid- 19 pandemic the challenge to all UONL library users is to act a new, adopt the new approach to the library service delivery and support the university librarians in refining the online training module through continuous feedback and participation. {J.Waweru}

BRIEF HISTORY OF ARCHIVE SECTION - UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

The establishment of the Archive Section in the University of Nairobi was

through the publication of Kenya Gazette **notice No. 36622 of 22nd November,**

1974; however, it was not until 1978 that a professional archivist was

appointed to the Library staff. The Archive Section is located in the basement of Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library.

The section started operating in 1978. It has acquired, arranged and preserved various types of records. The records preserved here goes back to 1950s when the Royal Technical College was established .One of the main objective of this unit is to assemble, for safe custody and research, any records, archives and other related materials with historical development of the University since its' inception. These include:-

1. Royal Technical College records
2. University of East Africa records
3. University of Nairobi records.

A section of the archive with preserved records

Private Collection.

There are records donated by the public to the University Archive and contributes to the growth of the Institution's collection. These are information materials which are of value to historians (researchers) and students and they are dated 1920s to 1973. These include:

1. Daly and Figgis Files. This is one of the oldest and well established legal institutions since pre-colonial Kenya. The records comprise of civil cases, criminal cases, probate and administration etc.
2. Lambert Papers. Lieutenant H.E. Lambert came to Kenya in 1913 and served as a District Commissioner in Kiambu, Embu, Kitui and Meru from 1919 to 1940. These are

Administrative papers, land tenure, language papers (Kiswahili and other language) and kikuyu traditional law and customs.

3. Barlow Papers. A.R. Barrow was a Scotland Church missionary who intensively researched on Kikuyu language, traditions, and studies on various dialects.
4. Hodge Papers. Stephen Oswald Vere Hodge came to Kenya in 1914 as a settler and worked as a District Commissioner for Southern Karachuonyo districts in Kisii between 1927 and 1929. His collection contains records of diaries detailing the running of his farm (Sidai Farm).
5. Makhan Singh Collection. Makhan Singh was a trade unionist in Kenya.

His records comprises of general correspondence and press cuttings on trade union matters.

6. Lord Francis Scott & Delaraine. He was a settler and a farmer.

The private collection covers different subjects such as:-

- Legal issues (court cases during colonial time)
- Land issues especially in kikuyuland and Meru
- Kikuyu traditional law and customs
- Kiswahili language
- Studies of various dialects
- Trade union matters
- Farm records (Sidai farm & Deloraine farm)
- Administrative of records of Kiambu, Kitui, Embu and Meru
- Early Kenya Photographs.

Newspapers.

These include daily and colonial newspapers namely daily nation, East African Standard, Colonial Times, Mombasa Times, The Kenya Daily Mail, Baraza etc. dated 1911 – 1985.

Machine Readable Records.

These are records on microfilms, microfiche, tapes and cassettes. The microfilms comprise of Masters and PHD thesis written by those who undertook their studies outside the country, either on Kenya or East Africa dating back to 1895. There is a vast collection of microfilms of migrated records of East African Protectorate, 1903 – 1938 and East African Standard dated 1902 – 1969. In the year, 2019, there was a new development where conversion of microfilm records to digital format to enhance visibility was done. The researchers can access theses and East African Protectorate microfilms online, from Library Digital repository.

USERS SERVICES.

Users of Archive comprises of:-

- Members of staff of the University who use the records to transact their business and also for teaching purpose.
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students who use newspapers and private collection.
- Bonafide researchers (internal and external) in pursuit of information to support their research.
- Registered members of public seeking information from the wealth of newspaper collection.
- Researchers outside the country who seek for information through emails. *{Grace Kiragu}*

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARY

The University of Nairobi (UoN)s is a public university in Kenya and is a collegiate research university based in the capital city of Nairobi. Its history dates back to 1951 when it was the only one in existence before independence. In 1954 it was known as the Royal Technical College of East Africa and admitted its first students in 1956. It was established to provide technical training for all races in the country. It become an independent university in 1970. In that year, the University of East Africa was split into three independent universities: Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. On 20 May 1964, the Royal College Nairobi was renamed University College Nairobi as a constituent college of inter-territorial. It transformed into the first national university in Kenya and was renamed the University of Nairobi in 1970 through the Act of Parliament. The University has six colleges and ten campuses.

The University of Nairobi Library is one of the significant departments established to provide students and staff of the University access to the extensive range of information resources to enhance the academic work of the University.

The library was established in 1950's. The first library was located at the second floor opposite the Gallery of the Assembly Hall in the

Our mission

To provide quality information services that empowers the university in carrying out its core activities in teaching, learning, research and community services/consultancy

University (at the senior common room). In 1955 the library had a total of 997 books. However, in 1977, the total collection increased to 280,000 books. The Construction of Gandhi Memorial Library begun in 1960 and during the 60s the library relocated to the Gandhi Memorial Library where, it was located until the construction of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library was completed in 1987. The foundation stone of JKML was laid in 1981 however, the actual construction work started in 1982. The project was financed by the government of Kenya in

response to the need for a better and spacious library in the country's oldest Institution of Higher Learning. JKML is located within a kilometer from the CBD.

Librarian moving from Gandhi Memorial Library to Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library

The consequences of double intake necessitated the urgent movement to the new library immediately after completion. The first Librarian was a Caucasian called Mr. D. A. R. Kemp who served from 1955 upto 1966 when he resigned to take up a post in Australia and Mr J. Ndegwa was appointed acting Librarian with effect from 1st December 1966 who served up to 1988 as the first Kenyan University of Nairobi Librarian.

Mr. Ndegwa, librarian, (receiving donated books) Mr Solomon Karanja,

Registrar; Mr. Eric Ericson, Vice Presidentof Union Carbide Africa Limited; Mr. Arthur Porter, Principal of the University College Nairobi; Mr. George Crabb, Senior Lecturer in Civil Engineering

Librarians moving from Gandhi Memorial Library to Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library. Mrs. Salome Mathangani (far right) took over from Mr. Ndegwa as The University Librarian

When it opened its doors the library services being offered were; ordering, acquisition, bindery, photographic work, repair and cataloguing for all other libraries and some services were centralized. The growth of the library in terms of Information resources, staff and readers has been growing steadily. For instance in the year 1970s the library had a total of seven branches; Institute

of Development Studies Library (IDS), IAS, Population Studies & Research Institute Library (PSRI), IDIS, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences Library (CAVS), Medical Library at Kenyatta hospital , Kikuyu Library and Chiromo Library

Mrs. E .Kimani (middle) took over from Mr Ndegwa

At present the library system comprises of the Main Library, **Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library** (**JKML**), and fourteen (14) branch libraries listed below:

- College of Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences Librar y (CAVS), Kabete Campus
- College of Architecture & Engineering

Library (CAE), Main Campus

- College of Biological & Physical Sciences Library (CBPS), Chiromo Campus
- College of Health Sciences Library (CHS), Kenyatta National Hospital
- College of Education & External Studies Library (CEES), Kikuyu Campus
- Institute of Development Studies Library (IDS), Main Campus
- Institute of Anthropology, Gender & African Studies Library (IAGAS), Museum Hill
- Population Studies &

Research Institute Library (PSRI), Main Campus

- School of Business Library, Lower Kabete Campus
- School of Law Library, Parklands Campus
- Kenya Science Campus Library, Ngong Road
- Mombasa Campus Library
- Kisumu Campus Library
- Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library (MGGL)

Current, Director, Library and Information Services, Mrs. Angela Mumo (far left)

Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML) caters to both College of Humanities & Social Sciences (CHSS), and the College of Architecture & Engineering (CAE).

Currently, The Director of Library and Information Services is Mrs. Angela

Mumo. JKML can house 1 million volumes of books and has a seating capacity of 1300 readers. The Library has 13 branches and services offered are; literature searches, bindery, dissemination of information, reading space, bindery, photocopying, reservation, user education, and circulation. *{Grace Sitienei}*

DISABILITY MAINSTREAMING AT THE LIBRARY

The library has adopted a non discriminatory, inclusive service delivery policy to all its users. Users with disabilities, whose number is approximately 150, are served with dignity. The disabilities cut across the board with the mobility disabled being the highest.

There are various facilities for users with disabilities. These include screen readers such as Job Access With Speech (JAWS) and Non Visual Desktop Access (NVDA). These are for the users with visual disabilities. The library website is also speech enabled and the information can be enlarged to the comfort of the user. Other facilities include, modified washrooms, ramps, lifts, adjustable furniture and sections for users with disabilities. Furthermore, the library has trained staff on the Kenyan Sign Language (KSL). In serving users with disabilities, reasonable accommodation and affirmative action is observed as stipulated in the University of Nairobi disability mainstreaming policy, 2020.

Disability matters in the library are handled by the disability mainstreaming subcommittee which among other activities , undertakes field visits to bench mark with other institutions dealing with Persons with disabilities such as Kenyatta University, Kenya institute of special education, Salvation army Joy-Town Primary school Thika etc. Most recently the committee visited the Maktaba Kuu library at KNLS along 3rd Ngon'g avenue In Nairobi. The team learnt quite a lot from the visit. Below is the team together with the hosts in front of the visually disabled section

The library uses V- Smart library Management system, provides free Internet services to student and staff, during the period of COVID pandemic user education has been conducted online.

The system has a stock of approx. 760,000 volumes, electronic resources, lots of specialized collections and professional staff who are highly trained who and readily available for consultation.*{Everlyn Anambo}*

University of Nairobi Disability mainstreaming Committee Members at KNLS