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## 8 The End Justified the Means

### Building Makerere University Library Extension with a Low Budget

**Abstract:** The paper shares the experience of Makerere University librarians, Uganda, in raising funds locally and setting up a model academic library in Sub-Saharan Africa. The first building of the Makerere University Main Library was opened in 1959, extended in 1972 and doubled its space in 2011. Both the growing number of students and advances in information and communication technology led to the need for the construction of a new library building extension, which is connected to the old building by a bridge. The recent extension made it possible to cater for information and communication technology facilities previously difficult to fit in the old architecture. Due to financial constraints, however, the extension was built in a phased manner; the first half of the building (4,000 m<sup>2</sup>) was completed in 2007, while the second half (also 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>) was completed in 2011 and opened with a colourful ceremony in 2012. The paper reports the expanded facilities that have provided infinite possibilities for library users and have increased overall library usage. For example, modern libraries provide space for collaborative work, which was lacking in the old building; group study rooms with wi-fi connectivity have been used since 2007. Additional information and communication technology facilities for different categories of library users including those with disabilities are outlined. A Research Commons providing a one-stop centre for academic work was established. Makerere was the first university to provide such a facility in Uganda. A Learning Commons for undergraduate students, a multimedia unit, a mothers' space for expectant library users and staff, a fountain to provide the soothing sound for the 24/7 reading area and a music digital archive are highlighted. Indeed, the new library building has provided infinite opportunities as development partners were attracted to support the effort of librarians and donated modern information and communication technology facilities and furnishing for the new building. The paper finally reports the various lessons learned.

## Introduction

Makerere University was founded in Uganda in 1922, making it one of the oldest public universities in Africa. In 1949, it became a University College of London, then later a University of East Africa catering for Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Macpherson 1964). In 1970 when the East African countries were able to establish their own national universities, Makerere became a national university of Uganda.

By 2013, Makerere University was spread over three campuses, namely the main campus, the College of Health Sciences, and the Agricultural Research Institute. The main campus, which covers 350 acres of land, is located on Makerere Hill, 5 kilometres from Kampala, the capital city. The College of Health Sciences covers 45 acres and is located on Mulago hill adjacent to the National Referral Hospital, two kilometres from the main campus. The Agricultural Research Institute is located 25 kilometres from the main campus. There is also a 650-acre Buyana farm for the College of Veterinary Medicine which is located 55 kilometres from the main campus (Makerere University 2012).



**Figure 8.1:** The new library building, ready 2012. (Photograph by Makerere University).

Makerere University's vision is "to be the leading institution for academic excellence and innovations in Africa"; while its mission is "to provide innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to national and global needs"(Makerere University 2015). Makerere University's motto is "We build

for the future”, and the University has indeed continued to build and rebuild what was destroyed during the civil wars and turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s. For example, various buildings have been constructed, multi-disciplinary and ground-breaking research has been published, various scientific innovations have been reported, support from development partners has increased and the periodic webometrics ranking of universities show that Makerere has steadily been improving. The improvements have attracted students from within and outside Uganda and Makerere has continued to build for the future of Uganda and beyond.

Even after becoming an Ugandan University, Makerere has continued to attract students from different parts of the world as the 2012/13 academic year admission list shows, for example, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Southern Sudan, Somalia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe; Britain, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Korea, India, Italy, Norway, Philippines, USA and Sweden. Consequently, Makerere University’s admission has risen to over 36,500 students of whom over 3,000 are graduate students.

The growing number of University students, the increase in study programmes coupled with paradigm shifts in curriculum and research, the increase in research and the rapid information and communication technology developments have all changed the routines of traditional academic librarianship. The changes are very demanding in a Sub-Saharan African university environment where shortages of infrastructure and facilities are very common due to decreasing budgets. These changes and demands, therefore, need an innovative librarian who, by using various initiatives and networks, seeks to meet the never-ending needs of university library users by creating and maintaining quality library space using the meagre financial resources available.

This paper reports the construction of a new library building extension that doubled the existing space using locally generated funds. That achievement resulted from innovative library leadership, good planning and support from the University administration (Figure 8.1).

## Makerere University Library

Since the 1990s, Africa has been experiencing a rapid expansion in higher education and research. Most universities and research institutions are repositioning quickly to address the demands created by the rapid expansion. These institutions need a vibrant library and information service at the centre of all their activities to be able to meet the changing information needs of their users (Musoke 2010).

In 1958, an Act of Uganda's legislature made Makerere University Library (Maklib) the first legal-deposit unit in Uganda. In 1972, Maklib became the National Reference Library in addition to its primary role of serving the highest academic institution in the region.

Traditionally, university libraries' primary users are university students, faculty/academics, researchers and other administrative and support staff. However, most university libraries in Sub-Saharan Africa also extend services to users from outside the university community, as some of these libraries also play a role of a national reference and/or legal-deposit library. Furthermore, given the fact that university libraries are comparatively better resourced than most other institutions, Maklib continues to extend its services to the research communities as well as practitioners from outside Makerere University, who would otherwise not be able to access such library and information services. The multiplicity of roles that Maklib handles strains its services and facilities (Musoke 2012).

Maklib comprises the Main Library and ten branch/college libraries. Two of the branch/college libraries are off campus, serving the College of Health Sciences and the Agricultural Research Institute. The eight branch/college libraries are situated at the main campus in the various colleges. These are relatively small and mainly handle the book-bank issues (recommended text books), provide some guidance to students and staff on e-resources usage and collect materials for the institutional repository. For Makerere to continue to excel in its provision of quality higher education, it has had to maintain its library and information services as one of the key priorities in its previous and current (2007/8–2017/8) strategic plans (Makerere University 2007).

Libraries are central to ensuring quality teaching, learning and research. Library space is one of the quality assurance issues according to national and international standards. Over the years, there has been a lot of pressure for space at Maklib resulting from the growing number of students, a situation that gets worse during examination period.

At Makerere University, it has been noted that many students entirely depend on Maklib for reading space, as their crowded residences cannot provide an appropriate alternative. Some academics have argued, though, that students have laptops; so, they can sit anywhere and access online resources, meaning that librarians are fussing over the need for increased library space and facilities. Those views and arguments, however, are far from the reality on the ground. Records show that many students live in environments that are not conducive to reading or private study. Consequently, Maklib space and facilities get stretched and strained due to demand and overuse, which lead to tear and wear and the need for regular refurbishment, as well as an increase in physical space in branch/College libraries. This paper outlines the journey that led to the extended

library space and increased information services at Maklib amidst challenges of a low budget as the country has been recovering from a civil war.

## Makerere University Main Library Buildings



**Figure 8.2:** The late Queen Mother cutting a tape at the opening of the library building in February 1959. (Photograph by Makerere University).

Before 1959, Makerere University Library was a small tutors' library that was housed in what is now the main administration block. In February 1959, the Library moved to the present premises at a grand opening by the late Queen Mother (Figure 8.2). The visitors' book signed by the late Queen Mother is part of Maklib's important records and not yet an archive. The same book was signed at the opening of the new extension in 2012.

The 1959 library building has been extended three times, with the current new extension opened in 2012 by the President of Uganda and the Vice-President during the celebrations to mark Makerere@ninety, Uganda@fifty as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) Centenary celebrations. CCNY donated the information and communication technology equipment for the new building extension.

The story of the buildings, which now form Makerere University Main Library, was earlier reported by Holdsworth (1960), who was the University Librarian at that time. He pointed out that "It was, like most buildings, a compromise in the end. There were certain unchangeable conditions, like a grant which could not

be increased, and a site which could not be moved. Not that we wanted to move the latter, but we would have liked to increase the former.” The experience was similar when planning for the new building extension opened in 2012. According to Holdsworth, the 1959 building cost £140,000. “With such a sum, it was apparent from the start that one could contemplate only the nucleus, the first stage, of what would ultimately become a much larger building. It would nevertheless have to cater for all the services expected in a university library, albeit some of them in a very restricted way, but would have to be designed in such a way as to allow these services to expand naturally, without involving unnecessary reconstruction.”

Unlike the current extension that has been built using mainly local materials, most of the materials used to construct the 1959 building were imported, for example windows and window-frames, steel, high-quality cement, roofing felts, ceramic screens, steel shelving, cork tiles, acoustic tiles, most hardware, lighting and sanitary fittings. Holdsworth reported that the high cost of insurance and freight was worth getting the best quality materials. “In the long run, they effect savings in maintenance costs – and in a country without examples of modern libraries, we should set the standard as high as possible, and this led us to stress quality even at the cost of a reduction in the size of the building”. It was further reported that the site selected in 1959 for the Main Library had to be attractive, prominent and central within Makerere University. Indeed, the Main Library is situated strategically very close to the main administration block. The initial rectangular shape of the building resulted from a number of considerations, prominent among which were the thought that about 33,000 square feet could be afforded; that three storeys were the permissible height; and that a higher building would obscure the extensive views from the neighbouring buildings over an adjacent valley. This building was to be a nucleus from which future extensions would be made and should therefore be as compact as possible. The general tendency in East Africa at that time was to build narrowly to get cross ventilation and 82 feet seemed as wide as one dared to make a building while still complying with local building regulations about cross breezes and light. A three-storey building 82 feet wide fixed the length of 140 feet. These dimensions gave a reasonable undergraduate library. The development of research collections and facilities was planned for a second stage of building, and it was anticipated that this would take the form of an additional linked block, while extra modules could be added to the length of the undergraduate library when this became necessary. Nothing, therefore, was done to prejudice future extensions, and according to Holdsworth, the interior design was made to allow first arrangements to be tentative and changeable at will in future. Indeed all the extensions have taken the form of an addi-

tional linked block, which shows that the first building architects planned well and really built for the future.

In 1959, Makerere University was reported to have had a student body of 750, a growing bindery and offset printing and photographic sections. The new building was able to accommodate 270 library users, had 40 library staff including binders and 120,000 volumes of books and periodicals. With an expected accelerated rate of growth, Makerere library would obviously need additional space, and Holdsworth reported that “we pinned our hopes on a further Colonial Development and Welfare grant for an extension by the end of 1965 at the latest”. The 1966 extension added the “L” shape to the Main Library building. The article by Holdsworth reported, in detail, the choice of site, the modular building, reading areas, external features, interior decoration and ceiling height economies. This is a must-read article for librarians and architects and all those interested in building libraries that are smart, flexible and economical before they start work, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where there are few examples from which to draw.

## The New Library Building Extension

Although the 1959 building and its subsequent extensions were designed in such a way as to allow services to expand naturally, without involving unnecessary reconstruction, the introduction of new information and communication technology required a certain infrastructure to be catered for in the architectural design. Consequently, both the growing number of library users and advances in information and communication technology led to the need for the construction of a new library building extension, which is connected to the old building by a bridge on level three, fulfilling the plans of the 1959 architects who indicated that the “building was to be a nucleus from which future extensions would extend”.

## Fundraising

In 1997, during Makerere University’s celebrations of 75 years, it was decided to focus on the Main Library space issues and to start a fundraising drive for the Main Library building extension. The fundraising during the platinum jubilee raised about 40 million shillings (US\$ 17,000). Maklib decided to forego various things, which led to savings over the years that added 900 million shillings (US\$375,000). The rest of the money was provided by Makerere University Council (the governing entity of the University) with support from the university manage-

ment. This provided some of the long-time savings of the university (£300,000 sterling) which enabled the Library to start the building extension project in 2004, but in a phased manner of two equal parts. The first half of the extension was completed in 2007 and it has been used since then. It cost 3.4 billion shillings (US\$1.4 million) without furniture and other furnishings. When the construction had started, it was easier to interest Makerere University development partners in supporting the furniture and furnishing of the new extension. The Norwegian government provided funding for the furniture and furnishings.

Funding the second half of the extension became problematic as the University could not immediately raise more funds. This was a big problem for Maklib leadership given the fact that:

- in August 2006, Carnegie Corporation of New York announced a competitive grant of US\$2.5 million to develop a model university library in Sub-Saharan Africa outside of South Africa;
- Makerere University Library joined the competition, was successful in the first round and was invited to submit a full proposal to compete with the shortlisted university libraries;
- finally, the Makerere University Library proposal emerged the best amongst the various university library submissions.

However, there were conditions to be fulfilled by 30 April 2007 before the final award, and these included:

- the completion of the second half of the Library building extension to provide appropriate space for the model library;
- sustainability of the model library, for example replacing broken/obsolete computers and paying for software licences, at the end of the grant;
- increasing the bandwidth to accommodate the increased information and communication technology facilities.

The author, who was the University Librarian then, came up with an idea of charging fees to students. She shared this idea first with the then Deputy Chairperson of Makerere University Council, who supported her and advised her to discuss it with the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs and the Finance Department. The University Librarian then presented the various options to management and the then chairperson and deputy chairperson of Council in a brief meeting called by the Vice Chancellor. They all supported the idea. They agreed to present it to the full Council, which approved the proposal to raise funds by setting up a library development fee to extend the much needed library space. Initially, the fee was to build the second half of the Main Library building extension and to sustain the information and communication technology infra-

structure beyond donor funding, and later to increase space in the branch and college libraries.

The proposal, however, led to unrest at the beginning of the academic year in 2007/8, as the students petitioned the Uganda Parliament and the Social Services Committee to stop Makerere from charging the library development fees. The University Librarian set up a sensitization drive together with the then Dean of Students and held various sessions to demonstrate the benefits of extending library space, including the US\$ 2.5 million grant. In all these struggles, University management as well as library management stood with the University Librarian, but it was a tough journey, difficult, tedious and exhausting. Later, the Social Services Committee of Parliament visited Makerere University and the University Librarian took them through the same sensitization session. They were convinced and congratulated Maklib and the entire University on winning the Carnegie grant.

Finally, the proposed policy was endorsed by the members of Parliament and the Ministry of Education. The Library development fees, 123,500 shillings, have been contributed by parents and guardians of Makerere University students since the academic year 2008/9. The fee is listed as “Development Fees” in the admission documents. Mrs Kiganda, the then Deputy Chairperson of Council commented “We have struggled as women and we have won – cheers Maria”. The author replied: “The end justified the means”.

Constructing the second half of the Library building started in October 2009 and was completed in January 2012 to add another 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of space (Figure 8.3). By the time of completion, the second half of the building extension cost 5.2 billion shillings. This means that the cost of both the first and the second half of the building extension was 8.6 billion shillings (about US\$ 3.5 million) excluding information and communication technology equipment, furniture and furnishings.



**Figure 8.3:** The second half of the library extension – July 2010. (Photograph by Makerere University).

## The Interior Designer's Note on Colours Selected for the Library Interior

The interior designer pointed out that we should never overlook nature's use of colour as our primary source of inspiration. "Snowberry", which is derived from nature's green colour is restful, soothing, cheerful and health-giving. Although the selection of snowberry has a twist towards yellow, it still takes reference from African natural settings. It is youthful and yet its calming effects were among the major reasons for its selection within the walls of Makerere University Main Library. Researchers have also found that green, in this particular case snowberry, has the ability to improve reading, concentration, speed and comprehension. Snowberry is one of the refreshing accent colours. Therefore, when blended with a coral pink, the combination has the ability to relieve stress and enable relaxation for library users. Snowberry has a great way of bringing the outside within, while lifting the room to provide dramatic colour changes that could occur from day to night. This varied change in ambience provides calm and ease, both fundamentals required for effective and efficient reading.

Coral Pink is derived from pink, which is the colour of happiness and is sometimes seen as a colour that represents light-heartedness. Brighter pinks are youthful, fun and exciting while vibrant pinks have the same high energy as red. Coral pink which has been used for the library interior is an urban, modern and yet graphic colour. The contemporary palette is graphic in the sense that the combination of snowberry and coral pink provides neutral tones and cool teals which allow blocks of colour to be used in different areas as contrasting partners required for open space planning. This concept helps segment the open spaced library at Makerere University. The selection of warm tones of coral enhances the palette with hues from the opposite end of the colour spectrum. This creates harmony within the library and accentuates Makerere University's values seen through the use of the green hue (snowberry) associated with energy, action and confidence.

## The Art Pieces

In addition to selecting the colours, type of paint and the firm which did the painting, the School of Industrial and Fine Arts, in liaison with the librarians, designed the signage, the sculptures and fifty-seven art pieces which have earned Maklib many positive comments from library users and visitors.

Apart from the sculpture of a boy and a girl reading a book at the front, as well as the sculpture of a woman pouring water from a pot at the fountain sym-

bolizing women's roles, there are two major sculptures which were paid for by the Rockefeller Foundation. One depicts a war victim, to commemorate the lives of Ugandans who died during the war and the resilience of the human spirit in Uganda, while the second is a flute boy, symbolizing peace and resilience. That sculpture celebrates the return of peace to Uganda which followed the political instability and wars of the 1970s and early 1980s. Carved in copper and wood, it is placed at the ground floor of the new library building extension at the entrance (Figure 8.4).

Maklib greatly appreciates the professional support from TECHO Consult, the School of Industrial and Fine Arts and the entire College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT). The support included the architectural design of the building extension, supervision of the building contractor, choice of materials, paint, colours, art works, furniture and furnishings, layout and other aspects of interior design of both the old and the new buildings.



**Figure 8.4:** Flute Boy sculpture symbolizes peace and resilience. (Photograph by Makerere University).

## Makerere University Library's Inspirational Facilities

It was indeed a dream come to a reality and the end justifying the means when finally a new building extension was opened in 2012, and both the President of Uganda and the Vice President congratulated Makerere on the achievement and thanked the leaders for being innovative. Inspired by the state-of-the-art facilities,

the Vice President expressed his optimism that whoever stepped in the library would always come out better informed, knowledgeable and wiser. He encouraged Ugandans to go back to Makerere University to do research and register for higher degrees to be able to optimize the use of the enhanced library resources and facilities. The developments at Maklib were reported by the Ugandan media, for example, *The Observer*, with such headlines as “Discover the new Makerere’s library” (Talemwa 2011a), “Who really uses the Library?” (Talemwa 2011b) and “Nsibambi commends Makerere Library” (Alina 2014) The developments were also reported at an international level in a poster session at the 78th World Library and Information Congress organized by IFLA at Helsinki, Finland in August 2012.

The improved services and facilities include a doubling of library space by the addition of 8,000 m<sup>2</sup> making a total of 16,000 m<sup>2</sup> at the Main Library. This addressed the shortage of library space that had caused students to complain and led to chaos during the examination period. The expanded library space now comfortably accommodates students even during the examination period, when the old library building used to be full to capacity and students used to sit in between the shelves and in the corridors. The new extension has provided more toilet facilities for all users and in particular, library users with disabilities who have, for the first time, obtained toilet facilities built according to international standards.

The new extension provides places for quiet reading, noisy group study, meeting and eating in the canteen, workshops and seminars, presentation opportunities and discovery of colleagues’ or peers’ research. Information and communication technology facilities for different categories of library users are provided on every floor; the whole building has LAN extension; and there are OPAC terminals in different places. The new library building extension has five floors.

## Ground Floor

The ground floor has an information desk, cloakroom, 3M security gates and a reference librarian’s office, which are standard facilities in most modern libraries. Information and communication technology facilities for library users with disabilities have been strategically located on the ground floor, just after the security gate. The computer laboratory for users with disabilities has Jaws and Magic software to support the blind and visually impaired. The furniture in this unit is flexible to ease usage by those physically handicapped. The building has ramps for access and a lift. Such facilities are lacking in most Ugandan universities. Makerere University admits all blind and visually impaired students and most other applicants with disabilities in Uganda, thereby extending University education to this usually marginalized group of students. A secretarial bureau

near the entrance provides photocopying, lamination and stationery to support the needs of library users (Figure 8.5).



**Figure 8.5:** Maklib new building reception. (Photograph by Makerere University).

A relaxation area in the space in front of the group study rooms has sofas, low tables and a magazine rack for library users to take a break and relax. A digital archive of Ugandan music is housed on this floor, while the music collection and work room is on level one. The music archive has, through digitization, preserved and conserved traditional Ugandan music for study, teaching and research. The unit was built according to international standards and has attracted many local and international researchers. Since January 2011, the music archive has upgraded to a newer version of DSpace encompassing all fields of the music collection, making them visible on the web. The archive includes over 3,000 audio files, photographs, over 1600 digital songs of 1940s and 1950s, digitized cassettes of ethnomusicology, and other digital recordings preserved in the music archive. Maklib greatly appreciates support of the University of Bergen for training the music librarian and archivist, which has greatly built the capacity to manage this collection. Maklib also acknowledges the contribution of Dr Nanyonga Tamusuza, an Associate Professor of Music, who has supported the development of the archive and the music collection in general.

Half of the ground floor of the new extension provides a 24/7 reading space, very popular among students during examination periods. This was carefully designed to allow light, aeration and freshness needed to support extended periods of reading and concentration. Adjacent to the 24/7 area is a fountain that provides a soothing sound to keep library users awake (Figure 8.6). The fountain is in the form of a beautiful sculpture of a woman and her child pouring water from a Ugandan

pot, and is well lit with blue lights beneath the water to give it a natural look. A modern canteen or physical social space is located next to the 24/7 area. It provides space for eating and meeting, which was lacking in the old library building.



**Figure 8.6:** The fountain provides a soothing sound to keep library users awake. (Photograph by Makerere University).



**Figure 8.7:** Collaborative work in Group Study Rooms. (Photograph by Makerere University).

Half of the ground floor of the new building extension has discussion rooms, which are very popular. They have wi-fi connectivity enabling the users to use laptops and discuss or prepare course work. The group-study facility had not been included in the original library building extension. However, the librarians had observed that library users held discussions in the designated reading space for silent reading, while others sat in small groups outside the library. The architect was then convinced and the building design was changed to include a group-study facility. Maklib has eight group-study rooms with one for users with disabilities (equipped with appropriate hardware and software as already indicated), one for music researchers, one for IT-related collaborative work, while five rooms are for general library use and are provided on a first-come first-served basis (Figure 8.7). Each group-study room was designed to seat eight people. However, ten people were the norm. A post-occupancy evaluation was conducted in April 2011, just before the examination time, a peak period for library usage, to investigate the causes of the crowding of the facility despite the efforts of the librarians to control the number of users. Another issue of concern to librarians was that students were holding discussions in areas meant for silent reading and in those areas where they used to hold discussions before the group study facility was put in place.

The results of a post-occupancy evaluation indicated 10 to 15 users per group study room; the users were all undergraduate students; and they preferred the group study to individual silent reading areas for various reasons. These included:

- they provide a good environment for discussions without inconveniencing those who prefer quiet reading and enable users to avoid disturbing others;
- they are convenient to use for group interactions which help one to ask questions and gain more knowledge;
- the availability of white boards, markers and tables makes it easy to demonstrate and teach each other;
- they are comfortable, easily accessible, well-aerated, accessible, and near the exit/entrance and the canteen.

Several lessons were learned from this study, which will be used, for example, to provide group-study facilities in the branch and college libraries that are going to be extended. The library administration has started addressing the issue of shortage of collaborative space by procuring tables with umbrellas and chairs which will be placed outside the library on verandas and in the library compound as Uganda has favourable weather most of the time.

## Level One

The first floor has two seminar rooms each able to seat thirty people. They are equipped with wi-fi, a computer, a presentation table and white board. They are booked in advance for use by academic members of staff and other groups including the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries. The music collection and work room as already reported are on this floor.

Academic staff had pointed out that students keep knocking on their doors in the departmental offices, making it difficult to concentrate. Space has therefore been created with swipe cards to provide access to space specifically designed for academic staff, which is proving very popular. There is also a quiet reading space for all library users.

## Level Two



**Figure 8.8:** Learning Commons. (Photograph by Makerere University).

The second floor includes a Learning Commons to provide undergraduate students with a one-stop centre for academic work (Figure 8.8). Makerere was the first University to provide such a facility in Uganda. The Learning Commons has two separate sections, individual study and a group commons. The individual study facility has 138 internet-connected computers installed with Windows oper-

ating system and MS Office applications. Each computer is placed in a cubicle with 0.25 m<sup>2</sup> of work space. The group commons, on the other hand, has 12 workstations. Each workstation is divided into four partitions, each with a computer and enough space to allow at least two students to engage in a discussion. The facility is for users who come in a group and need to do collaborative work using computers. The computers have specialized research analysis tools and software like SPSS, Atlas.ti, and Endnote. If any course requires software for academic purposes, the lecturers are encouraged to propose it so that the library procures and installs it. The group commons facility also has eight cubicle spaces where users with laptops can sit and hold discussions.



**Figure 8.9:** Multimedia Unit. (Photograph by Makerere University).

The presentation room, commonly known as the Powerpoint room, is equipped with a workstation, a laptop, ceiling-mounted projector, white board and screen. The room has some movable 30 chairs and accommodates users who might meet and share presentations or individuals who pre-test presentations. The presentation room draws many users to the library as some individual departments lack such a facility. The facility is used on a first-come first-serve basis, but advance booking is allowed by sending an e-mail at least 24 hours before the scheduled time. There is a multi-media unit with a networked printer and scanner, a high-tech digital camera, a digital recorder, a DVD/MP3/ CD player, and a radio (Figure 8.9). The multimedia room also has a television set connected to over 20 international educational, research and academic channels as well as local channels.

This is conveniently located on the same floor as the learning commons and the presentation room to enable library users to make use of the facility for learning, teaching and research. There is a browsing area where users can take a break and relax. The “Ask a librarian” desk is also on this floor to assist users. A training laboratory with computers for hands-on training of up to 32 people is available on this floor and it is popular among lecturers and their graduate students. The Directorate of Research and Graduate Training together with the library training team conduct periodic training of graduate students in this facility. A collection of audio-visual materials is also shelved in a specialised facility on this floor. The remainder of the floor consists of quiet reading areas.

### **Level Three**

The third floor contains staff work rooms for the Digitisation and Technical Services sections, the University Librarian’s office, the Board room and staff lounge. In between these offices is a welcoming waiting area. The old library building lacked such an area, and visitors to the University librarian used to wait outside the office. Of special mention is the mothers’ space where expectant library staff and users take a break. It is the first such facility at Makerere University. It has comfortable sofas and was painted with cool colours to provide a relaxing environment. The rest of the floor is quiet reading area.

### **Level Four**

The fourth floor accommodates the Research Commons. The Maklib Research Commons was set up to meet the growing needs of current literature-driven research, and staff provide a differentiated service to graduate students, researchers and academic staff. Half of the top floor of the new building extension has been devoted to the Research Commons, a one-stop centre for study, teaching and research information. This facility provides both a collaborative environment in which researchers come together to share, discuss, and get to know what their peers are researching, and an individual study environment. It is equipped with 90 computers, and there are facilities for laptops. Research Commons users receive support from library staff led by MIT (Masters in Information Technology) graduates specifically trained to provide such support. A study on the usage of the Research and Learning Commons facilities is ongoing.

The new textbook short-loan section, commonly known as IDA, occupies the second half of Level Four. Additional new shelves and over 1000 new textbook

titles donated by the Carnegie Corporation of New York have been included. The IDA section in the old building was full to capacity, making it necessary to create the IDA extension in the new building. It is spacious with a beautiful view of Mulago Hill and very popular among library users who prefer a quiet reading area.

## Reorganization of Space

The old building was continually remodelled and improved to match the new extension and the new information and communication technology developments, providing increased aeration where needed, modern furnishings and potted plants to give the library some life. Re-organization of the existing space in the old library building opened up more space for library users, for example:

- on level three, opposite the former University Librarian's office, the shelves with old reference books were removed and space is now open for library users;
- on level two (former law section), all the books were removed and the space is now open for use. On level two near the bindery, the heaps of books were removed, sorted and shelved; the area was painted, fans installed and it is now used as a reading space;
- the book bank section which was occupying three-quarters of level one was moved to level three. That space is now a reading area;
- the periodicals section which was on levels two and three now occupies part of level two only;
- furthermore, the previously scattered reference collection (on levels one, two, three and four) was amalgamated on level four to ease its management and save users' time. As a result, the IDA (formerly on level one), and Law (formerly on level two) are now on level four, as is the Africana collection.

After the opening of the new library building extension in 2012, more re-organization of space was embarked on. An *ad hoc* space reorganization committee was set up in March 2013 and submitted its report. Among other things, stocktaking was recommended. It started in the IDA short-loan textbook section. Infrequently circulating books were withdrawn and shelved in the open shelves loan area on level two of the old library building. The stocktaking and related space re-organization exercise was completed in August 2013 before the new academic years started.

## Lessons

Several lessons were learnt. While creating quality library space in academic institutions in developing countries is challenging, maintaining the quality of the created space is even more difficult. Once the building is constructed, attention moves to other demands. The librarian has to become more innovative to ensure that a budget line for maintenance is not removed from the overall library budget. Furthermore, the increased availability of space comes with its own challenges, which requires a firm budget line. For example, staffing issues (number, level and skills), more surveillance equipment and air conditioning require additional funding. It seems the need for funds is never-ending. Maklib now needs a bigger budget! After occupying the new building, the librarians also noted that there were things that could have been done better or differently. These will be discussed with the architects at an appropriate time. From the post-occupancy group-study evaluation, it became evident that all new library buildings should have collaborative study areas. Hence, the proposed new buildings at the College of Agricultural Research Institute and the Medical Library will include group study facilities in the architectural design. Maklib will address other issues raised by library users, for example providing more white boards and markers, and more opportunities for collaborative study spaces.

Indeed, as observed by Harrison (1968, 18), “the character and efficiency of a University is gauged by the treatment of its central organ, the Library”. With adequate support, the Library will be able to address the lessons learned and continue to deliver the services needed.

## Conclusion

Indeed the end justified the means! This paper has shared the experience of Makerere University library leadership, who successfully mobilized funds from local sources resulting, in the addition of 8,000 m<sup>2</sup> of new library space with modern information and communication technology facilities not found in other libraries in the country. All the troubles and struggles are now part of history. What is important is that the expanded space and facilities are in place and are being enjoyed by people who would otherwise not be able to access them. Extending library space, without donor support, and winning various competitive grants from development partners which have successfully been implemented, have led to the reconstruction and transformation of Maklib. These are some of the major achievements between 2004–2014 of the author’s library leadership, which has

continued to build for the future of Uganda and beyond. Maklib continues to transform itself into a model academic library in Sub-Saharan Africa. These developments have enhanced Maklib's premier position in the country and the region in the provision of library and information services as well as providing support to other libraries in Uganda, Southern Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana and Tanzania.

Innovative library leadership and support from University administration do make things easier. Once quality space is created and/or extended, various other demands from library users, library staff and other stakeholders engage the library administration, usually requiring more funds which may not be easily available after the completion of the building. After building, there is also a feeling of "we could have done this better" and yet the funds are exhausted. Hence, as the Library architect commented "once one starts building, one never stops". Maklib will continue seeking support to address the financial and related challenges to be able to maintain and sustain the quality library space and facilities. The major lesson, therefore, is that it is indeed possible to mobilize financial resources locally to increase library space and provide the needed quality infrastructure and library services with a low budget. Determination and innovation are important. Whatever route one takes, the end should justify the means.

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