

Towards a viable curriculum: A comparative study of curricula at the East African School of Library and Information Science and the departments of Library and Information Studies of the Universities of Wales, Botswana, and Capetown

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Applying a qualitative research design and using questionnaires, interviews, observation, focus groups, and debate, this study examines the phenomena and implications of change on LIS curricula, the stakeholders' perception of the current curriculum, the processes of curriculum design and review, and the impact of social, economic, political and technological factors at the East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS). For comparative purposes, experiences in the Departments of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wales (Aberystwyth), Botswana and Cape Town are also examined. Findings suggest the need for curricula policy, improvement of programme content both in academic and ICT aspects, indigenisation and harmonisation of programmes, the adoption of varied teaching methods, improvement of space, teaching, research and ICT facilities, internalisation of programmes and the introduction of a practicum are required at EASLIS.

1. Introduction

This is a report of a comparative evaluation of the East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS) curricula of professional programmes with those of the Department of Library and Information Studies of the Universities of Wales (Aberystwyth), Botswana, and Cape Town, with a view to proposing a viable optimum curriculum for EASLIS. The study was carried out between 1997 and 2001.

There is a growing realisation among people in East Africa and worldwide that information is key to all types of development. Furthermore, the explosion of information materials and the technology of processing the materials have overwhelmed the user who cannot optimally utilise information without expert assistance. Economic, social, political and technological changes have spilled into and made an impact on the LIS education and training fields. Apart from acquiring expertise in information management, graduates from LIS programmes are expected to influence those who do not yet know of the indispensability of information to development.

Above all, since considerable funding is required, LIS professionals should have been taught communication, marketing, and public relations skills in these programmes in order to win more funding for LIS development, including education and training. There is need therefore for a corps of educated and trained information professionals with appropriate competencies and skills to acquire, process and access information materials or extract information from them for users. It follows that the curriculum has to be examined and reviewed to cater for the new demands of society. The present study reviewed developments using a case study approach in order to learn from other experiences and consequently establish a viable optimum curriculum for EASLIS that would cater for the changing LIS market.

2. EASLIS

EASLIS was established in 1963 and continues to offer LIS education not only to Uganda (its home) but to other countries including Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Eritrea and even the USA (EASLIS Intake of 1999/2000 and 2000/2001). Due to the fame of Makerere University, EASLIS has grown stronger (as evidenced by a bigger intake now of 433 students compared to 80–120 students from the 1960s to the early 1990s). This is despite the break up of the East African Community in 1977, leading to the opening of library and information science faculties/departments at the Universities of Moi, Kenyatta, Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), and additional departments in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia, whose nationals opting to study library and information science hitherto patronised EASLIS. Due to the fame of EASLIS and the wide patronage of LIS studentships from all over the world, the School has been placed in a most competitive position and its teaching has been subject to scrutiny, by competitors in the region. It is therefore important that a research-based examination of developments and processes is made in order to produce suitable curricula that would produce information professionals with skills and competencies to plan, implement, manage library and information systems and also provide effective services in these systems. EASLIS has existed for a period of thirty-seven years and the shape of the institution is therefore a culmination of past and continuous influences and developments. The study attempted to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the present curriculum and those of the associated case studies, bearing in mind the comment “An institution’s failures are as instructive as its successes . . .” [33, p. 3].

3. The case studies

Three case studies were chosen.

– *The Department of Information Studies (now the Department of Information Studies), University of Wales, Aberystwyth (DIS, Aberystwyth)*

Between 1964 and 1989, the Department constituted an independent institution called the College of Librarianship Wales. In 1989 it became a Department within the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, UK. DIS, Aberystwyth, has a long experience in LIS education in general and curriculum issues in particular. It has trained information professionals from developing countries all over the world, and particularly in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. DIS, Aberystwyth, is also well known for the International Graduate Summer School (IGSS) jointly run by the School of Library and Information Science, University of Pittsburgh, DIS, Cape Town and the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, McGill University, Montreal. The Department has also been offering PhDs by research for more than twenty years. It has a staff with broad international, research and consultancy experience, excellent computing facilities, and one of the best equipped, stocked and run libraries in the LIS field. In addition, the author completed his Master's in Library Studies and registered for his PhD in the Department, making it easy for him to access facilities and staff.

Formal arrangements were made for the researcher to interview staff, inspect facilities, and to attend lectures and the Board of Studies meeting. The researcher also had an informal opportunity to interact with PhD, M. Phil and undergraduate students to discuss curricular issues with them.

– *The Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana (DLIS, Botswana)*

The Department was chosen because it is one of the fastest growing LIS Departments in terms of staff and curricular issues in Southern Africa. One of the most attractive features that made the researcher decide on it as a case study is its "Competency Based Vision Product" which had been presented at SCECSAL, XIII (SCECSAL Proceedings, 1998). It narrated the experience the Department had gone through to establish the real needs of the LIS market which employed its graduates. Interviews with employers and alumni determined the necessary skills and competencies, and the curriculum was being revised on this basis.

– *The Department of Information and Library Studies, University of Cape Town (DILS, Cape Town)*

The choice of this Department was made on the basis that the researcher needed first-hand information on how curricular issues were being managed at one of the oldest LIS Departments in Africa, and in one of the more developed counties south of the Sahara. Of particular interest was the alleged Quality Control of Programmes due to the active role of the National Association in regulating professional activities. Further, the Department offers programmes at the postgraduate level only, an aspect the researcher wanted to probe to establish its advantages and disadvantages. The Department, in conjunction with the University of Cape Town Library, offers

compulsory University-Wide Information Literacy Programmes to popularize ICT, an interesting feature that EASLIS could adopt.

The three case studies were deliberately chosen to highlight different socio-demographic conditions within Africa, and in the UK. Although the cases represented dissimilar institutions operating in different conditions, and despite a few inevitable logistical problems, it appears the choice was valid and provided a wealth of relevant experience and information that could be applied to successful curriculum development at EASLIS. For example, the competence-based-product-vision from, DLIS, Botswana, the information literacy projects at DILS, Cape Town, and the experiences shared and gained at arguably one of the largest LIS Departments in Europe, DILS, Aberystwyth, probably could not have been gained anywhere else with the same level of professional assistance and without more inconvenience.

3.1. Curriculum defined

The word “curriculum” comes from a Latin word “currere” meaning a racecourse. Until recently, even the most knowledgeable professional educators regarded the curriculum as relatively standardized ground covered by students in their race towards the finish line and an academic qualification. Many definitions of “curriculum” have been advanced, some of which are examined below.

Fielding (*Handbook of Curriculum*): what the school expects students to learn and how those expectations are actualised in the classroom and other learning environments managed by the schools.

The American Educators’ Encyclopedia: a complex term that has no agreed upon definition. Some educators define it as comprising all planned experiences in school that are results of what teachers do. Others expand the definition to include all experiences that a learner has at school whether or not planned, to reach the institution’s goal and objective. Such experiences may consist of a pattern of courses, guidance, specific instructions, physical activities, opportunities for experience, testing and evaluation, modes of instruction . . . curriculum should be mutual, complete, have goals and objectives, reflect planning, relate to instruction and learning theories, consider the learner, have criteria for evaluation, be capable of being evaluated and reflect a sound educational philosophy. Curriculum is more than just a programme of studies or a set of courses to be followed by a student.

Zais [44] states that specialists in the field ordinarily use the term “curriculum” in two ways: first, to indicate, a plan for the education of the learners, and second, to identify a field of study. Related to curriculum as a field of study, Beauchamp [8], advances a third meaning. “a . . . legitimate use of the term curriculum is to refer to a curriculum system . . . A curriculum system in school is the system within which decisions are made about what the curriculum will be and how it will be implemented”. A curriculum is looked at in terms of curriculum development, a process involving the elements of the curriculum.

3.2. *Viable optimum curriculum defined*

A viable optimum curriculum in this context means appropriate programme/s of study developed and implemented bearing in mind the needs of the stakeholders, the competencies demanded in the market place, methods of delivering these competencies and the need for establishing whether the programmes have the capacity to address the ever changing LIS scenario by producing competency-based information professionals. Designing an optimum curriculum entails knowledge of the stakeholders' needs, identification of the competencies required in the market place (which itself requires knowledge of the competitors vying for the same competencies), and the creation, implementation and evaluation of programmes to teach and maintain the competencies. It also demands a realisation that the information and library fields are in a fluid state – constantly changing and calling for up-dating of the competencies, if not acquiring new ones altogether.

3.3. *Objectives of the study*

The research objectives involved combining a number of tasks:

- (i) The study of the phenomenon of change and its impact on the LIS curriculum.
- (ii) The establishment of the stakeholders' perception of the contemporary curriculum to meet the needs of the emerging market.
- (iii) The study of curriculum management
- (iv) Recommendations towards a viable curriculum for professional programmes at EASLIS.

The research objectives gave an opportunity to the stakeholders to consider and review the current curriculum and offer views towards determining the shape of a future EASLIS curriculum.

3.4. *Research Design*

– Grounded theory

The research was predominantly qualitative in character, and greatly influenced by grounded theory. This is “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research . . . where the theory formation evolves rather than being the initial force behind the research” [?, p. 21]. One canon for judging the usefulness of a theory is how it was generated. Generating a theory means that most hypotheses and concepts not only came from the data but were systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research. Generating a theory involved a process of research [21, p. 5–6]. Blumer [10, p. 38] offered a metaphor, which clearly explained what is meant by generating grounded theory by being immersed in the empirical world:

The empirical social world consists of on-going group life and one has to be close to this life to know what is going on in it. The metaphor that I like is that of lifting the veils that obscure or hide what was going on. The task of scientific research is to lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one purposes to study. The veils are not lifted by substituting, in whatever degree, performed images for first-hand knowledge. The veils are lifted by getting close to the area and by digging deep in it through careful study. Schemes of methodologies that do not encourage or allow this to betray the cardinal principle of respecting the nature of one's empirical world.

The data and findings of this research were "grounded" through methods that brought the researcher very close to the research participants (the stakeholders, including employers, staff, students, lecturers, users and administrators) in the real setting of what was being studied (the curriculum).

3.5. Contextual scope

The contextual scope was curriculum management, processes and content in the case studies. The approach was holistic. A LIS curriculum is an entity comprising of design – the activities to identify the objectives and the content to meet the objectives; implementation – the teaching of the curriculum, the qualification and experience of the lecturers, the methods applied in lecturing, and the way the curriculum is assessed; the facilities which should create an effective environment in which the curriculum is taught and learnt; and evaluation to establish how the curriculum has met the specified objectives. Each element was important in itself but less so than the whole. The discursive nature of the qualitative design allowed for the discussion or examination of the curriculum as an entity. However, the holistic approach did not preclude component analysis of the particular variables, dimensions and parts of the curriculum. Rather, it meant that the research consciously worked back and forth through the component parts and the whole to sort out the elements and put them back together. Although the emphasis was on curriculum management, the curriculum processes and curriculum content, as well as related factors (including origin, mission, vision, aim/s and objectives, administration, academic staff, facilities, linkages and quality control) which may not strictly be curriculum management, processes or content, were also dealt with because they influence curricular activities as a whole. The examination of these issues identified the strong curriculum features at the case studies compared with EASLIS.

The study was a formative evaluation seeking the improvement of the EASLIS curriculum. The research preferred the Responsive Evaluation Model because it was suitable to the qualitative approach adopted. The Responsive Model personalised and humanised the evaluation process. The researcher freely interacted with the respondents in the focus groups and unstructured interviews, and openly discussed, probed, followed up and crosschecked statements in a friendly but exhaustive manner. The researcher found the exercise very exhausting and lively, which kept the respondents

alert and made them fully participate in the exercise. This gives credibility to the findings. The dialogue and cross-examination within an un-predetermined framework of questions and answers contributed to the candid discussion that revealed unforeseen aspects of the curriculum.

The research took the approach of a heuristic inquiry which is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insight of the researcher, and that of others who experience the same phenomenon (curriculum) [34, p. 71]. This explains why participants were mainly the stakeholders from either information services or education or both.

The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to get in personal and close contact with the stakeholders. This was done through focus group discussions, interviews, and observation, and was conducted in a free and open atmosphere to enable a thorough discussion of various aspects of curriculum strengths and weaknesses. The close contact enabled the research to appreciate the feelings expressed in the answers and the fears expressed in gestures. It afforded the inner perspective; understanding was achieved by participating in the life of the observed, and giving insight by means of introspection [13, p. 226].

– Research questions

One key feature of qualitative research apparent in the study is that there is no hypothesis to prove or disprove. Instead, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is the impact of change on the LIS curriculum?
2. What are the stakeholders' perceptions of the LIS contemporary curriculum?
3. What are the curriculum management processes, content, and related issues?
4. What recommendations would contribute to the realization of a viable curriculum for EASLIS?

Purposeful sampling strategies were applied. The opportunistic sampling strategy was particularly useful because it made it possible, whenever need arose, to involve subjects who had initially been overlooked, for example the Ugandans currently on the Master's programme at DLIS, Botswana. The sample size was based on the principle of "small sample size" in order to allow in-depth examination of a few subjects with high stakes in curricular issues. The minimum sample was basically the recommended focus group of five to nine people but increased in the case of the Debate (88), the Brainstorming session (45) and the Retreat (10), which were useful to obtain more views and to assess compromise views on certain key issues such as mission of the departments, content and level of programmes.

– Triangulation

Triangulation – making use of a combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon – was applied. This can mean using both qualitative and quantitative approaches [34, p. 187].

Denzin [18] identified four basic types of triangulation:

- (i) Data triangulation – the use of a variety of data sources in a study
- (ii) Investigator triangulation – the use of several different researchers or evaluators
- (iii) Theory triangulation – the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data
- (iv) Methodological triangulation – the use of multiple methods to study a single course or programme

Triangulation was necessary because no single method would adequately address all aspects of the LIS curriculum and because each method revealed different aspects of empirical reality. Further, triangulation was particularly important in crosschecking the genuineness or validity of data, particularly when a sensitive issue like the curriculum was being investigated which involved various stakeholders, each perhaps supportive of certain views. In certain instances contradictory views were revealed, for example, a Head of Department stating that employers are consulted, while the employers state the contrary; or some students wanting more academic workload in the BLIS programme whereas others oppose it. This raised a fundamental question about how far stakeholders' views could be accommodated because frequently they might reflect the views and standpoints of vested interests. Stakeholders should be consulted, but their views cannot be depended upon at all times.

The choice of data collection methods were based on:

- 1) Reliability of respondents: respondents had to be available when required and had to be knowledgeable and experienced on LIS curriculum issues.
- 2) Affordability and convenience in geographic scope, financial, and conceptual terms.
- 3) Triangulation – the principle of applying several approaches so as to crosscheck the authenticity of the data.

The methods of data collection applied in this research were:

– *Content analysis*

Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication [7, p. 18]. This technique was applied as a supplementary source of data to develop an independent line of validation. For instance, data from the questionnaires and interviews were compared with the analysis of the content of documents referring to the same categories. Documents subjected to content analysis and from which data were collected included:

- 1) Prospectuses and course outlines from the case studies. Information was sought on: administration, the curriculum development process, programmes, rules and regulations, quality control mechanisms, staffing, facilities, and linkages.
- 2) Relevant reports and dissertations to establish the historical development of LIS education, and findings and recommendations related to its curriculum.

An analysis of library and information post advertisements in the *New Vision* and *The Monitor* for 1997, 1998 and 1999 was also undertaken. (Appendix I) Information derived from these advertisements included the nature of employers, nature of posts, experience and competencies sought, and terms and conditions attached to the appointments.

– *The questionnaires*

The questionnaire was the major data gathering method. It was exploratory and set the ground for the subsequent interviews and observations physically administered by the researcher. It was a very appropriate triangulation method because it enabled double-checking of its findings with those from the interviews and observation. The questionnaire method was used to gather data from the LIS Directors/Heads of Schools and Departments at the case studies; the 1997/98/99 BLIS Students; the sample of LIS employers in Uganda; and the External Examiners and users. The questionnaires were pre-tested to minimise vagueness and ambiguity. The questionnaire approach had the advantage of reaching remote respondents, particularly those at the case studies. However, disadvantages were also obvious, for example, many questions were left unanswered, likely due to lack of time, and some answers were too brief and sometimes difficult to interpret. Many times the researcher had to remind the respondents about returning the questionnaire, and even then many questionnaires were returned very late and seemingly filled in a hurry. There was no clear method for crosschecking the genuineness of answers.

3.6. *The retreat*

A Retreat for making EASLIS Strategic Plans 2001-2005 was held over three days in June 2000. Although the occasion was not specifically arranged for the research, the deliberations were very relevant and the researcher who was also the Retreat Co-coordinator took full advantage. The retreat involved EASLIS staff and major stakeholders – MULISSA representing EASLIS students, the Uganda Library Association representing the professionals, and the Makerere University and Public Libraries Board representing employers. Each of the parties was requested to present a thirty-minute paper that was followed by comments and discussion.

The disadvantage of this approach seems to have been the student representative's reticence to air negative views in front of the administration and the academic staff. The Academic staff could also have been uneasy to express negative views openly in the presence of the administration.

– *Investigation of the feelings of the M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.) students*

This was done to ascertain the views of the seventeen M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.) students in their final year. It was assumed that since they were at the highest level of the programme and that their academic maturity was presumably higher than that of the undergraduate students, they would give critical and constructive views on

the programme from which they were about to graduate. An assignment was set entitled “Problems and Solutions of the M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.) Programme”. It was to be returned within two days. The approach was used to disguise the respondents’ identity, thereby minimising fear of possible victimisation for airing critical views, particularly those critical of the academic staff and administration. According to the students themselves this was a good and successful approach. Consequently the views expressed were unusually candid.

– *Brainstorming Session on Strategic Plans for 2000–2005*

Originally the researcher planned to administer interviews with Makerere University, the Library and Information Science Students Association (MULISSA) and ULA about the EASLIS curriculum. However, these plans were overtaken by the “May 2000, Brainstorming Session on EASLIS Strategic Plans for 2001–2005”. The occasion brought together key stakeholders and it was hoped would generate wide discussions and resolutions about the past, present and future of EASLIS. The researcher was the originator and the convener of the session. The brainstorming was announced three weeks before it took place. The participants were each requested to write and present a paper on the EASLIS curriculum. The academic staff and all students were given notice in good time and requested to attend. Although the session discussed all aspects of EASLIS, emphasis was put on a review of the current curriculum with the intention of proposing one suitable for the 21st Century. The stakeholders comprised:

- 1) MULISSA, representing the student fraternity
- 2) ULA, representing employees, employer institutions and EASLIS alumni.
- 3) Public Libraries Board
- 4) Makerere University Library Services.

– *Debate on “The EASLIS Curriculum is Ideal”*

The Debate on “EASLIS Curriculum is Ideal” was to solicit views on the EASLIS curricula and related issues. It was the most successful method of eliciting open and frank views from the students, alumni and employers who attended. There was no apparent shyness, and for the first time, stakeholders with one voice demanded the immediate revision of the EASLIS curriculum.

4. Description of population (stakeholders)

The decision about the appropriate population (stakeholders) for this research was a priority. Informal consultations were made with the Uganda Library Association, the Director of EASLIS, key LIS employers, the academic staff, the alumni, the staff of Makerere University Library, the Makerere University Library and Information Science Students Association (MULISSA), and some students in the professional

programmes. The consensus was reached that the best representation would comprise individuals with credibility (professional knowledge, experience, activeness, recognition and influence) in the LIS fields. The aim was to get credible sources of accurate data. Stakeholders are briefed explained below:

– *LIS employers*

The employers are the institutions both in the public and private sectors that employ the products of the Schools/Departments. They constitute the demand sector of the LIS market, the supply sector being the LIS Schools/Departments. Employers are naturally concerned that LIS graduates should have appropriate knowledge, attitude, and skills to provide library and information services in a professional manner to heterogeneous users. They contribute to the on-job training schemes for the newly graduated professionals. In addition they provide staff development facilities through continuing education. Therefore, they have a stake in the education and training of LIS professionals in general and curriculum development in particular. The employers who participated in the research included:

- 1) The Public Libraries Board, employing information professionals working in public libraries in Uganda.
- 2) Public and Private Universities including Makerere University Library Services and its sub-libraries, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda Martyrs University, Nkumba University, the Islamic University in Uganda, Bugema University, Mukono University, Namasagali University and Kampala University.
- 3) The Bank of Uganda, representing employers of information professionals working in financial institutions.
- 4) The Monitor newspaper, representing employers of information professionals working in newspaper libraries/documentation centres.
- 5) The Ministry of Public Service, the employer of information professionals in the National Archives, the Deposit Library, and the National Documentation Centre, and libraries and information centres in government ministries and institutions
- 6) The British Council (BC) and the American Centre (formerly the United States Information Service (USIS)) were sampled to represent employers of information professionals working in foreign cultural institutions in Uganda.

– *The Directors and Heads of LIS Schools/Departments*

The Directors and Heads of Departments are a vital arm of the education and training process of information professionals because they provide leadership to the respective Schools and Departments

– *The LIS academic staff*

The academic staff play a vital role in designing, teaching and evaluating the curriculum, conduct research to generate new knowledge, and are involved in professional areas that contribute to the development of the LIS profession.

The LIS students

Although the students are at the receiving end, they are the most important factor in the LIS education process because it is to them that knowledge, attitudes and skills are taught to maintain the development of the professional workers who render services to the users. In the past, students never had any input to the curriculum. With changing times, however, there should be machinery such as evaluation questionnaires or consultative committees through which students can channel their opinions.

BLIS II, III and M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.) students following the courses respectively were involved.

The Professional Associations

1) The Uganda Library Association

ULA is a professional umbrella association for information professionals in Uganda – librarians, documentalists, archivists and associates from related fields. It plays a pivotal role in the LIS curriculum. The Association should be a recognised national body charged with the responsibilities of safeguarding professionalism through a quality control mechanism (accreditation) and ensuring continued updating of the profession and effective service through a code of ethics.

2) The Makerere University Library and Information Science Students Association (MULISSA)

MULISSA is the students' association representing those taking Library and Information Studies at EASLIS, Makerere University. It was founded in 1996. MULISSA is a forum through which educational and professional concerns are debated and policy proposed to employers, the School, and the University. The Association chooses representatives on various educational and other committees. Among the activities it has undertaken so far is the representation of EASLIS students on the Board of Studies to discuss academic, professional and other issues and publishing the MULISA Newsletter.

Information on the activities of Professional Associations in the countries the case studies are located were mainly extracted from the published articles supplemented by information from the web sites. Information was also solicited through interviews with the stakeholders selected from the case studies.

– The users

The users are the beneficiaries of the curriculum. Their views should be obtained so that the Schools/Departments have them in mind when designing curricula to produce the information professionals. User needs were ascertained through a questionnaire distributed in the regions of Uganda. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by research assistants. The researcher made visits to some centres in those cases where the return rate was below 50%, and where the researcher had to supplement with face-to-face interviews.

5. Change and impact on the lis curriculum

In the review of literature related to this study three theories on change were established which could relate to the LIS curriculum. The Ecology Theory by House and Sutton [23] advises that the survival of a population in an organization depended on its fit with its environment. This theory suggests that in order to survive, LIS Departments should monitor changes in the society and reflect them in their curricula. The Abbott Model [1] suggests that changes in society present new problems, which need new skills and competencies to solve. The message to LIS departments is that they have to ensure information professionals they produce can use the new tools to offer new services to society. Bourdieu's Theory [11] talks of fitting to the habitus, which is the ability to adjust in an inventive manner to the competitive changes in professions. It cautions that organisations such as LIS departments will be forced out of the market unless they are innovative enough to adjust to change in the field.

Several authorities have written about LIS trends. These include Burke and Millar [14], Cronin [17], Grover et al. [22], Malinconico [24], Miksa and van House [27], and Sherry [39]. They have categorised the trends as technological, social, political, and economic. Equally, many authors have written about the implication of change and how the trends should be addressed. Malinconico [24] wrote that technologies empower people to do things they could not previously do, which means these technologies must be taught, but above all people should be taught how to manage the new organisational structures associated with these technologies, for example information services and systems. Brittain [12] warned that these trends have opened up the information and related services hitherto dominated by librarians. Grover et al suggested that the future LIS curriculum should produce information professionals who are problem solvers, creative, flexible, innovative and fluent in technology; Simon [41] argued that the curriculum should teach information management, electronic data processing, information analysis, information consultancy and information brokerage. Many of the interviewees at the case studies acknowledged that change is rampant in the library and information fields and therefore there was need to review curricula on a regular basis. Indeed new programmes have already been mounted to meet the challenge for example, the Major and Minor Studies in Information Management, Diploma/MScEcon in Health Information Management, and UDIP/MScEcon in Archives at DILS Aberystwyth. Information repackaging, specialised sectoral information, and information marketing have been introduced at DLIS, Botswana. DILS, Cape Town has started two unique courses: one on information literacy aiming at teaching ICT competences to the staff and students at the University, and the other on information ethics to cater for ethical issues in the information profession.

6. Stakeholders' perception of the contemporary curricula

The stakeholders' perception of the contemporary curricula to meet the emerging market was derived through several methods already discussed above.

– *Programme content*

Three aspects were pinpointed:

- Insufficient information content of the EASLIS PGDLIB and BLIS programmes. For the former, the information content is completely missing; all courses are library science based which means graduates of this programme would have acquired no basic knowledge and proficiency in modern techniques of information generation, processing and retrieval. For the latter, the information science content is studied in Automation in Library and Information Services during the second semester of the second year and Database Management during the second semester of the third year. The courses carry 4 and 3 credits respectively, a total of 7 credits out of the 113 credits of the whole programme, which is a very small content indeed.
- Inadequacy of the BLIS academic content. Two academic subjects selected from the Faculties of Arts, Social Sciences and Sciences are taught during the first year earning 16 credits out of a total of 113 credits for the three-year programme. Some stakeholders, particularly from special sectors such as research and banking institutions, complained that the portion of academic content is too limited to provide adequate subject knowledge. Others, particularly the public library services, have no problem. They argue that emphasis should be placed on professional subjects. As a move to enhance academic content, DILS, Aberystwyth offers two alternatives: a Single Honours degree in which complimentary subjects from another department are taught, and a Joint Honours degree providing traditional library education and also allowing students to develop another area of interest and understand the demands of another discipline. The DLIS, Botswana scheme involves studying academic subjects during the first year (with emphasis on library and information studies); academic subjects with information studies in year two (with emphasis on academic subjects); and a minor academic subject studied in the 3rd and 4th years respectively (with emphasis placed on information and library studies). The arrangement appeared to have several advantages: for example requiring the students to do more information and library studies in the first year, which commits them and minimises losing them to other disciplines. For strengthening subject knowledge more workload is covered in the 2nd year, but it is reduced during the third and fourth years to emphasise information and library studies. It appears that at the end of the programme the graduate has been exposed to adequate academic rigour but also to a suitably greater share of professional content.

Whatever the approach, library and information studies should not be a subsidiary element because a professional degree should emphasise professional knowledge and skills. We have a warning already:

- Ethiopia and Zambian experience would seem to indicate that to offer librarianship [Library and Information Studies] as a subsidiary component of a first

degree programme does little to advance library development, although it ought, of course, to implant an appreciation of the importance of libraries in those who take the course [33, p. 140].

- Lack of a practicum. There are two types of practicum: the lecture room exercises providing practice, for example, in indexing and abstracting which all case studies and EASLIS offer. The second type involves supervised attachment of students for a period of time at a library/information service. There have been varying views on whether the attachments should be at the beginning of the programme so that the students become acclimatised to the library operations and learn the terminology applied, or whether later, after the students have learnt some theory, which then they put into practice. The compromise solution at the case studies has been two practicum sessions: one at the beginning of the first year and another at the end or during the final year. The success of this type of practicum would depend on the attitude of the student, the capacity of the staff and facilities to offer the required training and the co-operation of the host institutions. For example, EASLIS does not have its own facilities to attach the students and therefore relies on employers in the institutions, which can profitably host the students. Unfortunately the employers have not been all that helpful. For example efforts to attach the students to the Makerere University Library Services in 1999 were aborted because the staff demanded payment for supervision, which the School could not afford. Worse still, there are few library and information centres outside the University system which have the appropriate facilities and are willing to assist. The Uganda Library Association has started an internship pilot project, which attaches the BLIS finalists to information systems in the non-governmental sector, banks, and governmental information systems and services. This is purely experimental and voluntary, without a clear future on which EASLIS could rely.

A comparative analysis of programme content at the case studies and EASLIS was made to discover courses not covered by EASLIS. The inadequacy was confirmed for information science in the BLIS and PGDLIB programmes. For example courses such as design and creation of web pages, data communication and information networks, principles of systems analysis, and systems methodologies are not taught.

– *Teaching methods*

A complaint was raised about the predominance of the lecture method as the primary means of presenting content at EASLIS. Its lecturers are well aware that student retention of what is taught would be increased through varied teaching method, and other seminars, tutorials, simulations and practicals are employed, but electronic delivery mechanisms are not available.

– *Mode of programme delivery*

Three major modes of programme delivery were established: Full Time, operating at all the case studies and EASLIS; Part Time, operating at DILS, Aberystwyth and DILS, Cape Town, and. Distance Education Mode at DILS Aberystwyth.

EASLIS offers programmes through the full time mode only. However it has evening programmes, which cater for working students. If EASLIS were to start a different mode of delivery, sufficient numbers of academic staff to teach and supervise research, modern electronic communication systems, accommodation for lecture/seminar/ tutorial rooms and library and information facilities would all be needed. The immediate problem is money.

– *Continuing Education (CE)*

The stakeholders agreed that CE was an important strategy to update professionals and to ensure professional development to higher levels. EASLIS has made similar efforts as those undertaken by the case studies. For example, it has mounted several short courses tailored to specialist needs, including data base management, software applications, records and archives systems management, and library and information skills for nursery teachers. However, it is true that the courses are now less frequent because of dwindling financial support from international organizations.

In the case of professional development, the BLIS programme allows diploma holders to up-grade their qualification in the same way as the M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.) programme admits BLIS graduates. However EASLIS does not yet offer the M. Phil and the PhD taught or research programmes. These could be offered to provide professional development for the M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.) graduates who wish to take further studies. The problem has been lack of academic staff to teach and supervise the programmes. The problem now appears temporary, because it is expected that EASLIS current staff will have obtained their PhDs as required by the Mujaju Report [31, p. 2] to enable them to teach such programmes.

– *Distance education*

An important advantage of distance education is that “. . . it has great potential for the many for whom full time education is not a possibility” [25, p. 105]. As indicated initially by Dodds [19], and subsequently by Mcharazo and Olden [26, p. 204], it is not merely a cheap alternative to conventional education but offers the following economies:

- (a) Large numbers of students can be reached by few teachers;
- (b) Once the teaching materials have been produced and the system established, additional students can be enrolled with only marginal cost;
- (c) New buildings are not required because space-time use of existing facilities is possible;
- (d) Students in employment can continue to work

Distance Education is part of a strategy of CE which DILS, Aberystwyth has developed to a very significant degree, judging by the population of 700 students registered in the programmes, and the range of programmes offered. Its success is attributed to the existence of the enabling electronic infrastructure, information and research facilities, and a team of experienced and dedicated staff.

The stakeholders in Uganda felt that distance education should be started to help those students who cannot attend full time programmes. There is already a Distance Education Wing at the Makerere Institute of Continuing Education from which experiences could be shared along with that of the researcher gained from Aberystwyth. Starting distance education programmes will also solve the issue of dependence on one mode of programme delivery only, because automatically distance education programmes are part-time. However, the constraints likely to affect the commencement of distance education are many. For example, the lack of support by the government for distance education as an important avenue of education to its citizens.

– *Programme quality control*

Four types of programme quality control were identified by the study. First is the University Curriculum machinery comprising several committees at departmental, faculty and university levels. These are operational in all the case studies and at EASLIS. Second is the External Examiners machinery, which is also operational at the case studies and EASLIS. Third is the Professional Association machinery. This depends on the activeness and capability of the professional association in the country. Ideally Library Associations should be involved in monitoring curriculum design, implementation and monitoring standards at LIS Schools/Departments. They should have government recognition and support to do the above. Unfortunately, in Uganda there is even doubt about the stakeholders' unanimity on issues relating to the professional association's control of professional activities. Uganda is not alone in this situation because neither the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) nor the Botswana Library Associations (BLA) are effective as yet in programme control to the extent, for example, of the Quality Assurance Authority (UK). Finally, there are the specialised authorities such as the Quality Assurance Agency created in the U.K to monitor programme quality at regular intervals. DILS, Aberystwyth is subjected to such control. The South African Qualifications Authority was established in 1995 in South Africa for the same purpose. It has covered a lot of ground through consultations with various stakeholders in order to establish effective control of the many programmes existing in South Africa.

– *Workforce surveys and tracer studies*

These had initially been overlooked in planning the research, and were not covered in the questionnaire and interviews. However, this was rectified by a literature analysis and later by seeking specific comments from the case studies. The production of LIS professionals, as in other fields, must be related to the market demand. There is a need to know the nature of posts, how many are filled, and the possible wastage through transfer, death and retirement. Workforce planning can describe the current position, forecast future levels of supply and demand, and ensure that plans are formulated on the basis of information on current and future levels of supply and demand:

It is important . . . to avoid shortages of staff. It is equally important to avoid producing a surplus. To educate and train individuals for whom there is no

prospect of employment is a waste of human resources. Furthermore, any such surplus will reduce the scarcity value of the workforce and can adversely depress salary levels. So, for the effective development of the workforce as a whole, it is vitally necessary to ensure that the right numbers of appropriately trained staff are available [29, p. 6 and 9].

The Faculty of Information Science, Moi University, in 1989 carried out a feasibility study (workforce survey), which concluded that an intake of 39 undergraduates and nine postgraduates would be sufficient for Kenyan information professional needs [36]. A similar study was carried out in Botswana to establish the employers' perceptions of the graduates and curriculum of a Library School in Botswana [3, p. 175–179]. One was recently completed on the graduates of the MScEcon, DILS Aberystwyth [40]. The only LIS workforce survey ever carried out in Uganda was by Birungi [9]. It was a sample survey, which involved Makerere University Library Services, the Public Libraries Board and the Uganda Management Institute. It was not comprehensive and is now out of date. EASLIS therefore has no guide to assist it project the LIS workforce.

Tracer studies could assist in providing information on the destination of EASLIS alumni, the competencies and skills demanded by the employing institutions, and whether what is being taught is relevant. The study established that EASLIS has not undertaken such surveys/studies. (It is hoped findings from the questionnaire to users and the analysis of information-related advertisements in the Monitor and New Vision newspapers in Appendix I of this study will open the way). Such surveys/studies present a big problem because they have to be carried out regularly to monitor changes in demand. This raises the issue of costs, which the Schools/Departments may not be able to afford. One solution could be for the Schools/Departments to institutionalise the surveys/studies in the student research programmes so that the costs are incorporated in the tuition fees package.

– Facilities

The office, lecture space, library and information resources and ICT facilities at EASLIS are inadequate. The current lecture and library space originally built for 50 students cannot effectively cater for the current student population of 410, projected to be 586 by 2005. In regard to ICT, the School has 15 computers meaning that 29 students share a computer. For library facilities, 410 students share a sitting capacity for 50, and the stock is 12,000.

– The academic staff

The stakeholders addressed three areas of concern: numbers; teaching, research and field experience; and academic distinction. The recommended IFLA staff/student ratio (SSR) is 1:12 set in 1976. The SSR was 1:13 at DILS, Cape Town in 1999; 1:20 at DILS, Aberystwyth in 1999 (changed to 1:22 in 2001); and 1.14 at DILS Botswana in 2001. The EASLIS student population in 2001 is 410: 308 students on professional programmes and 102 students on para-professional programmes. The

total staff are 14 – 7 full-timers and 7 part-timers. Accordingly the SSR is 1:44 considering full-time staff only, or 1:22 considering both full and part-time staff. If the 102 para-professional students were to be incorporated in the computation, the SSR would worsen to 1: 58 considering full-time staff only and 1:29 considering both full and part-time staff. It is obvious that the EASLIS SSR is an extreme case. Such number of staff could hardly be expected to teach the programmes, supervise students and at the same time undertake research and publish effectively.

On the second point, it would be ideal if all academic staff had working experience. However, this is not practical because there might not be adequate library and information institutions to cater for the training and besides, it would take too long to acquire both a PhD and working experience before starting lecturing.

On the issue of academic excellence, according to the Mujaju Report [31], at Makerere University, a PhD is to be the minimum qualification for a lecturer. The non-PhD holders are expected to obtain PhDs within five years or face dismissal. There is no research-based argument against or for that policy which is already being implemented. Fortunately it looks possible that all EASLIS current lecturers will have acquired PhDs by the deadline.

– *The proliferation of programmes*

Stakeholders seemed split on this issue. Too many programmes for available facilities and staff are difficult to justify. However it is essential that programmes manageable according to available facilities and resources should be mounted to meet the heterogeneous needs of society. DILS, Aberystwyth has been successful in mounting several programmes in response to market needs. At EASLIS several programmes that have sprung up under the self-sponsorship/private student scheme have been a blessing in disguise because they have improved the staff remuneration packages and consequently their morale, and EASLIS has acquired more computers and furniture. Despite the advantages of these programmes, stakeholders expressed fears that the academic staff are overstretched, which could be detrimental to their health and to the quality of education delivered.

7. Curriculum management, processes, and content at the case studies and easlis

In this research curriculum management refers to the administration of the curriculum process; processes refer to the activities undertaken in designing and reviewing the curriculum, and content means the matter that is taught. Views on these issues were established through the methods already explained.

– *Curriculum management*

Curriculum management comprises three elements: the curriculum policy, the curriculum mechanism, and the rules and regulations. Curriculum management starts

with a curriculum policy, and the first problem is establishing such a policy. There should exist a policy-making body (possibly a Professional Library Association) to handle the management issues. The major concern of this study is with the content of the policy. According to the stakeholders' views such a policy should provide general guidelines on handling curriculum issues such as the curriculum management machinery, the stakeholders to be involved, curriculum design and review, frequency of curriculum review, and curriculum quality control. The stakeholders argued that such a policy would avoid or minimise haphazard management of the curriculum process, which excludes the views of stakeholders, is irregular and without a set programme quality control. In this respect the interviews revealed that stakeholders preferred involvement in the curricular processes through consultation, and that review or designing new programmes should be a regular exercise. The researcher established that the Directors/ Heads at the case studies and EASLIS certainly knew what curriculum policy is and the need for it. They explained very well the elements of curriculum policy. But none would produce a written curriculum policy giving specifics. This is a weakness because policy may depend on what is remembered and on the interpretation of the incumbent Director/Head of Department or a delegated staff member. A written policy, subject to regular revision, would be preferable as the source of policy, reference and interpretation.

At DILS, Aberystwyth, designing and reviewing the curriculum and research, and quality control were undertaken on a regular basis, possibly because of external pressures from professional associations and quality assurance authorities. Botswana reviewed its curriculum at the Strategic Plans Retreat in 1989 and once again through the Competence Based Research in 1999. DILS, Cape Town engaged a curriculum consultant in 1999 to review its curriculum. EASLIS designed the curricula of the semesterised BLIS and the new M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.) programmes in 1989 and 1997 respectively.

– *Curriculum machinery*

All the case studies and EASLIS have various committees. The committees are at different levels: programme, departmental, faculty and university. Membership is a prerogative of the authority but generally reflects all vested interests. Terms of reference always include initiating, designing, implementing and reviewing curricula. There are also other committees, such as a students staff/consultative committee, quality control committee and curriculum work groups to supplement the above committees.

The most common complaint among stakeholders was that they are never consulted. Employers in particular should be consulted because their input is based on field experience and is focused on their employees' needed skills and competencies. It may be a different matter to consult students because their input may be based on vested interests, for example, less workload or avoiding difficult but essential subjects. Other related issues were frequency of consultation and machinery of consultation. Consultation should be held as often as need arises. The consultative mode could be through well publicised and conducted consultative meetings.

– *Curriculum rules and regulations*

All the case studies and EASLIS have curriculum rules and regulations. These have existed since time immemorial and others have originated from the respective faculties, schools, and institutes and are discussed at the same levels and manner as the curriculum before approval. The curriculum rules and regulations are the conditions and procedures or protocol established to control students, lecturers and administrators for the smooth running of curriculum management. They comprise general regulations specifying curriculum requirements; admission requirements specifying qualifications and experience; type, – whether full time or part-time, course work or thesis; duration and structure specifying when and which courses are taught; examination regulations which embrace assessment of courses, grading of courses and pass mark, progression, and re-taking of courses. The Academic Registrar is the Chief Officer whose office ensures that curriculum and related issues are well managed. The Admissions Board, Examination Irregularities Committee and the Quality Control Committee assist the Academic Registrar. The rules and regulations must be up-to date, which calls for regular revision to cater for changes; they must be applied uniformly, and should be clear to avoid ambiguity. One interesting question was whether students should have an input to the making of curriculum rules and regulations. It looks logical that those involved in making the curriculum should also make the rules and regulations that govern it. On the other hand, it could create a conflict of interest.

One characteristic that runs through all the rules and regulations is the provision giving powers to the University authorities to handle unique cases and to take appropriate action such as granting waivers or admission on equivalent qualifications.

– *The curriculum processes*

The curriculum processes are the steps and activities undertaken before and during the design of a new curriculum or revising an old one. The processes should be based on research such as the workforce surveys, tracer studies and analysis of information-related advertisements already discussed. Wide consultations should be made with stakeholders, and particularly the professional associations. As Olden [33, p. 141] commented using the example of the Department of Library Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria, “. . . introduction of a new school and a new qualification [programme] without consulting [the professional association or stakeholders in the country] is not the best way to proceed.” The message is very clear that it is important to hold effective consultation with a professional association and stakeholders of the country before new programmes or courses are introduced. However, unnecessary conservatism or resistance to change should not undermine change appropriate for LIS development. Influences of vested interests should be excluded from curriculum design and review process. In most cases the processes are triggered off by an initiative from an individual staff or group of staff or the Head of Department, and sometimes a pressure group such as the national Library Association. Occasionally a higher University authority such as the Senate makes a specific requirement, e.g.

Makerere University's Senate ordered the EASLIS Board of Studies in January 2001 to submit a proposal on departmentation and staffing of the School. Wherever the initiative originates, a draft is produced and presented to the Department Board/Board of Studies, which studies it critically and forwards it to the Faculty Board. At DLIS, Botswana the draft goes to the DLIS Advisory Committee and at DILS, Cape Town to the Curriculum Development Group before proceeding to the Faculty Board. The Faculty Board makes the final decision in case of a minor module revision. In the case of a major revision or a new programme the draft is forwarded to a University curriculum committee, for example the Graduate Studies Committee at DLIS, Botswana, to scrutinise and recommend it further to a higher University Committee, such as the Senate and ultimately the University Council for approval. The overall principle is that no module or programme should be taught unless it has gone through this machinery. The processes have often been criticised for being long and tedious, but they are important to ensure that good quality programmes are taught.

– *Curriculum content*

This section discusses theories that underlie the curriculum content of any LIS School/Department. Curriculum content has several aspects: the theories on which the content is based, the elements of the content, level of the content, duration during which the content is taught, the teaching and assessment of the content.

– *Theories*

Usually the content is based on three theories. User-centered theory (UCT) shifts emphasis from the technical processes to the people for whom services are designed. This theory insists that information professionals should be taught skills for establishing user needs and designing the best methods of providing services to meet their needs. Competency based theory (CBT) emphasizes the role the information professional is to play in the community. Contingency theory (CT) is based on the argument that changes overturn to-day's skills and competencies and that there is never enough time to teach all knowledge. Therefore CT concentrates on teaching information professionals how to manage change and teaches a wide spectrum of principles to be utilised for different scenarios. DLIS, Botswana is famous for the Competency-Based Approach; however, the researcher got the impression that neither the case studies nor EASLIS use a particular single theory. It is a mixture of one or more.

– *Curriculum elements*

Curriculum elements are the individual parts defined in terms of their nature and relationship to the whole curriculum. They are categorised into core, electives and specialisations. The core is the required set of courses that students are compelled to take because they provide knowledge and competencies, which are fundamental to an information worker. Electives are specialised courses and differ from Department

to Department according to need and sometimes staff competence. Specialisations focus on training for a specific job such as systems analysis and design, database management, abstracting and indexing, music librarianship, or archive management. The case studies and EASLIS subscribe to the core, elective and specialisation principles of the curriculum. The first degree is usually general and run on the core principle while electives and specializations are common in postgraduate programmes. EASLIS is still engaged with the problem of specialisation because it is seen as a disadvantage in Uganda where specialist information jobs are few. It has to a certain extent tended to offer generalist training to get as many of its graduates absorbed and perhaps offer the opportunity to specialise later while employed in a job. The stakeholder however voiced the need to mount specialised programmes which is backed up by the analysis of the job advertisement in the Monitor and The New Vision (Appendix III) which showed specialists were required in the areas of records management (6 posts), information technology support (6 posts) and news editing and reporting (6 posts).

Other concepts are harmonisation and indigenisation of the curriculum. Harmonisation advocates that information studies has a common core of knowledge, which must be taught to all information professionals before specialisation is embraced. A typical harmonised programme is that at the Faculty of Information Sciences, Moi University, where a common core is taught during the first and second years of the undergraduate programme and students take specialised courses – either records and archive management, information science, book trade and publishing or library science – in the third and fourth years. At EASLIS and the case studies the core is taught together with the other areas of information at the undergraduate level. Specialised programmes are offered at DILS Aberystwyth.

Indigenisation advocates that the curriculum should reflect local needs, although not at the expense of international needs. Dr. Mjama, DLIS, Botswana holds strong views on the matter:

You watch in baffling amazement that our major media of information (oral information or folklore) is not accommodated in the curriculum. Some areas like records and archive management are given peripheral treatment. These areas must be re-addressed and their teaching enhanced. There must be Cultural Revolution in our curricula [28].

In 1962 at the Enugu Seminar, and in 1974 at the Standing Conference of Africans Library Schools, the need to indigenise LIS curriculum was stressed. Indigenisation means more than adding certain subjects to the curriculum or relating subjects to the local areas.

A more important challenge lies elsewhere: it consists of a need to re-shape all subjects and to modify the approach to them in the light of local, national library needs – the curriculum in general also ought to be geared to the long term demands of national development. . . there is a responsibility to construct a syllabus which reflects the library situation in the country concerned [6, p. 218].

– *Level*

Three levels were established. DILS, Cape Town teaches only at the postgraduate level. Training at this level was favoured by employers because of the subject or discipline knowledge acquired by the graduate. However, at DILS, Cape Town maintaining a department base on postgraduate students alone was not viable because of the small numbers. This argument concurs with the situation at EASLIS, where 39 postgraduate students (approximately 10% of the total student body) are currently registered for the first and second year compared to the 371 undergraduate students (approximately 90% on the other programmes) [20]. Training at the postgraduate level only may also block outstanding performers on the paraprofessional programmes because they would have no chance to proceed to graduate training, a point stressed below.

The debate still rages on whether LIS schools/departments should teach the paraprofessional programmes also. EASLIS and DLIS, Botswana teach these paraprofessional programmes in view of the outstanding performance exhibited by some of the candidates on the programmes.

– *Teaching methods and curriculum assessment*

Generally students tend to prefer the lecture method because it is less demanding of them, but lecturers must appreciate that they should endeavour to turn out independent learners and therefore varied methods should be used.

The hitherto conventional examination method is now widely supplemented by other assessment methods (progressive assessment) involving essay assignments, tests, Duly Performed (DP) in case of DILS, Cape Town, and attachments/practicum. The ratio of examination and other assessment methods varies from institution to institution. It is 70:30 for undergraduates and 60:40 for postgraduates at EASLIS; and 50:50 DILS, Botswana. The philosophy is to assess the student in as near the working environment as possible.

All the case studies offer a formal practicum or attachment that is also assessed. EASLIS is the exception and the reasons have already been explained. The practicum/attachment/internship is becoming a problem, particularly as student numbers rise and staffing levels at the schools and departments as well as the library and information services are becoming less generous. Yet LIS schools and departments should not graduate information professionals without basics skills and competencies. It is therefore important that a practicum/attachment is incorporated. One way to address the financial issue would be to include the estimated costs in the tuition fees.

– *Programme duration*

Programme duration depends on the level of the programme. Some undergraduate programmes last four years, as is the case at DLIS, Botswana. At DILS, Aberystwyth the fourth year accommodates the optional University Year in Employment Scheme

and those taking a joint Honours with a modern European language spend a year abroad on internship.

At EASLIS the BLIS programme lasts three years. There is fear that it is not long enough to accommodate practicum/attachment and academic studies, which is why four years is the duration of the undergraduate programme at DLIS, Botswana. Complaints have persisted that a one-year postgraduate diploma is too short a time to expect students to cover all the areas expected of them. PGDIPLIS/Masters Programmes lasting two years are becoming popular. The Master of Philosophy programmes are usually two years full time and three years part-time. PhD programmes are of two types: part-time and full time. Full time programmes last three years to four years while part-time last five years. The programmes may have a waiver; at DILS, Aberystwyth, for example, candidates who hold a Masters qualification take three years for PhD research.

The programme rules and regulations always specify the workload to be covered in terms of credits hours in order to graduate. However programme workloads differ from department to department. For example, at DILS the Single Honours workload is 360 credits: 260 credits from core modules from DILS, and 100 credits modules offered from other departments; for the Minor core modules account for 120 credits and the 240 credits from the major discipline.

8. Influences on the curriculum

In the context of this research, influences are change agents. They are occurrences and experiences that bear on the LIS curriculum. They can be historical, political, social, or economic.

– *Historical influences*

The origins of EASLIS, DILS, Botswana and DILS, Cape Town are associated with initiatives from the UK or the US. DILS, Cape Town was one of the first schools of librarianship originating from Carnegie Co-operation sponsorship in November 1928. DLIS, Botswana originated from British Council sponsorship in 1976. EASLIS' origins are the East African Literature Bureau, again an organisation set up by Britain. DILS, Aberystwyth is a U.K.-based department. This historic attachment means that curricula at these institutions had a lot of influence from the British curriculum. The British who taught the curricula or were Heads at the institutions strengthened the influence.

– *The political influences*

A Ugandan educationist, writing on politics as a curriculum determinant, stated:

Curriculum development is a political activity. This is because countries use education to promote ideals and objectives. For example the missionaries used education to spread their religious beliefs. European countries used education

through a defined curriculum to acquire and maintain colonies. Nyerere in his education for self-reliance was trying to promote socialism . . . Most governments try to use the curriculum to indoctrinate the learners to follow their ideologies [32, p. 67].

Political changes can be considered at national and international levels and may be attributed to the change of the political environment such as a new government adopting a different political philosophy. These influences could be negative or positive. Some of them might not have a direct bearing on curricula but may be influencing policies, which ultimately affect curricula. For instance Britain's severance of diplomatic relations with Uganda during the Idi Amin regime in the 1970's, badly affected the academic staff training programmes, the flow of information materials or even linkages and the involvement of External Examiners.

At the national level some governments have failed to recognise information as a key resource for development. Government apathy is reflected in low funding and little investment in communication and telecommunication infrastructure, failure to enact laws, failure to support national information policies and in the non-recognition of the professional library association.

Too much nationalism has been detrimental to curricular interests. Due to national pride LIS departments are on the rise in East Africa (4 in Kenya and 2 in Tanzania), which has undermined EASLIS development as a well equipped, staffed and managed regional school. Sometimes individual countries are forced to act nationally because of intolerable political situations in the host countries. For instance in 1975, Kenya withdrew its students from EASLIS and the whole of Makerere University because of the murder of a Kenyan student during Amin's regime.

Arms of government such as Ministries of Education do exert pressure nationally through new policies, or by instituting national bodies such as Census Units, Quality Assurance authorities and Curriculum Development centres. These bodies evolve policies which could be detrimental to LIS institutions; however some of the policies of these institutions have been constructive and supportive. University authorities have had great influence on the curricula through committees or special directives. Examples are the Mujaju Report [31], and the Quality Control Committee already discussed under EASLIS.

– Socio-economic and socio-political influences

Socio-economic and socio-political influences are pressures within society originating from its structure, philosophies, systems, prospects and challenges. LIS schools and departments are social organisations that society sets up to educate and train information professionals. Information professionals are some of the change agents in society who provide information for the society's development. LIS curricula should reflect the needs of society.

Ugandan society suffers from three major ills: poverty, disease and ignorance, which are complicated by culture. Abject poverty does not allow parents to pay for their own education or that of their children. The result is illiteracy, which still

affects about 55% of Ugandans. Illiteracy closes the door to information/knowledge unless there are alternative means of providing information. Ignorance grows in the vacuum of information/knowledge. Lack of knowledge or information causes disease. Culture in Uganda expects the man to be the politician, the seeker of information and the administrator of the family. The woman produces food for the family and crops for sale, looks after children and keeps the house, but is always too busy to seek information. The culture is such that if there were no adequate resources to maintain the whole family then the girl would stay home and the boy go to school. Most mothers in the rural areas in Uganda are condemned to illiteracy. Many Ugandans do not have a reading culture.

The analysis of the questionnaire to users (Appendix II) established user needs, skills and competencies expected of information professionals, and the modes of delivery of information to users reflects the nature of Ugandan rural people. Those who design and review curricula should bear in mind social factors and the findings from users. This is important to produce a curriculum which will inculcate appropriate skills and competencies to information professionals, to use the right medium and reach the rural areas where information is needed most because it is where the majority, the backbone of the economy, reside.

Because of the growing awareness of people's rights to information, employment and justice, many pressure groups in the library and information fields have been formed. They include organizations of workers, students, publishers, authors, performers, musicians, and journalists. They are recognised by the government and could exert an influence on LIS schools/ departments to establish certain programmes or teach specified courses. For instance through Uganda Library Association and the Uganda employers' pressure, EASLIS replaced the Diploma in Library and Information Science with the BLIS in 1989. However, the Diploma was re-established in 1997 due to the influence of vested interests: employers, particularly in schools, preferred diploma holders to BLIS graduates because they are cheaper to employ. Further, EASLIS wanted the programme as one of the primary means of income generating. The LIS educators would be advised not to handle curricula issues in an ad hoc manner or under pressure but to institute a mechanism to monitor changes and take appropriate action.

With the acceleration of ICT, international trade, politics, sports, and religion, the world has drifted to the reality of a global village: a situation in which what happens in a remote place may affect other places and vice-versa. The information job-market has opened internationally to facilitate mobility of labour, recognition and reciprocity of qualifications. The information professional must therefore respond to these global developments with internationalisation of LIS curricula so that there are international education standards and reciprocity of qualifications.

– Technological influences

ICT has changed the generation, acquisition processing, storage and retrieval of information. Consequently new competencies are required. DILS, Cape Town

has mounted information literacy programmes to equip students and staff with ICT literacy skills very essential in the information transfer process. All the case studies have shifted the emphasis of training from librarianship to information science, stressing ICT in the information process. The BLIS and PGDLIB programmes at EASLIS were found wanting in information content.

ICT has opened the information market in two ways. Firstly, information professionals no longer monopolise the labour market, which other competitors with ICT skills have joined. Secondly the information professionals' intermediary role is steadily decreasing as the population can now access information directly. LIS institutions must not only infiltrate other disciplines to train information professionals but must provide quality education to obtain a competitive advantage.

– *Economic influences*

The premium of information has gone up and consequently the number of students wanting to join the profession in Uganda has trebled. The increased demand has coincided with the private students' scheme, which allows many more students to join the programmes. Responding to this trend EASLIS has initiated several programmes. Stakeholders have expressed fear about over-commercialisation, because the student numbers might overwhelm both the facilities and the academic staff available and the quality of the education may degenerate.

Depletion or termination of international aid to developing countries and the inadequate funding from the national governments to the LIS schools and departments would certainly impact on these institutions. For instance there is likely to be insufficient money to buy and maintain ICT facilities and fund staff development schemes let alone awarding academic staff good pay packages. The staff would seek greener pastures elsewhere, as many of the pioneer EASLIS academic staff did.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations may not be entirely new from the point of view of curriculum experts or LIS educationists. The proposals are nevertheless significant in the sense that they have been established from research as significant curricular and related issues at EASLIS.

1. Curriculum policy

A curriculum policy should be established. The components of such a policy should include: involvement of stakeholders, machinery for handling curriculum processes, curriculum theories, principles and policies behind the curriculum processes, and a timetable for designing and revising the curriculum.

2. Curriculum related research

The concept, role and techniques of conducting curriculum related research as in other fields, must be related to the market demand. There is need to know the nature of posts, how many are filled, those which need filling, and the possible wastage through transfer, death and retirement. The Workforce Planning Model which predicts the future recruitment and training needs in quantitative terms; and the Workforce Forecasting Matrix, a qualitative approach which clarifies the quantitative information and deepens understanding of the workforce and its development in qualitative terms, can both be used.

3. Improvement of programme-related issues

- (i) The PGDLIB and BLIS information science and management content should be strengthened to include subjects such as: management information systems, and programming and systems analysis and design. At least one academic subject should be taken throughout the BLIS programme. German, French and Arabic should be taught to help students with bibliographic control, indexing and abstracting skills.
- (ii) For the M.Sc. (Inf. Sc.) all ICT related subjects should be core. More ICT-related subjects such as electronic document management systems, MIS, multimedia design, software engineering and database management systems, should be introduced.

4. Higher level programmes

EASLIS should mount higher-level programmes such as M. Phil. and PhD as a means of acquiring higher qualifications and teaching research skills, which could generate more knowledge and at the same time improve the status of the School.

5. Harmonisation of programmes

The teaching of programmes should be harmonised to create unity in the profession and to tap new areas of employment.

6. Indigenisation of programmes

Programmes should be indigenised to be relevant to the national needs and teach skills and competencies that could provide services to all types of readers in a country, and particularly in the rural areas. Major vernacular languages should be taught.

7. Quality control

Programme quality control should be a responsibility of the Uganda Library Association, and national quality control authorities put in place, as is the case in the UK and South Africa.

8. Mode of programme delivery

Different mode of programme delivery such as distance and part-time should be started to open the door to those who cannot take full time programmes because of work or family commitments.

9. Internship

A student internship/practicum/attachment should be incorporated in all programmes.

10. Continuing education policy

A Continuing Education Policy should be established to ensure advanced planning of programmes and activities so that the professionals keep abreast of developments.

11. Interdisciplinary co-operation

Interdisciplinary co-operation in teaching, research and use of facilities should be explored between EASLIS and the Institute of Computer Science, the School of Journalism and the Department of Mass Media.

12. The staff development scheme

The Staff must be strengthened through recruiting to improve the current complement of staff and reduce the current SSR of 1:44 to 1:22. Academic staff must undertake research to generate new knowledge, and improve their academic status. There is also need to produce relevant textbooks for teaching. Staff must have greater intellectual exposure through exchange of lectureships, study tours or taking higher studies, and should participate in national and international conferences, seminars and workshops.

13. Leadership

EASLIS should adopt a system of regular election of Director every four years, which is the practice in other Departments, Schools and Faculties at Makerere University.

14. Facilities

The building should provide for offices, a computer laboratory, and teaching space to cater for the projected student enrolment.

Shelving and seating capacity in the library should be expanded and subscriptions to journals and acquisition of more monographs should be made.

15. ICT policy

An ICT policy should be implemented; the ratio of students to computers should be improved from the current 1:60 to 1:10; relevant information management software, virus guard for all computers, computer peripherals and audiovisual equipment should be acquired; an ICT laboratory should be built; and a LAN installed and computer technician be appointed.

16. Linkages

Linkages with national and international Schools, Departments and organisations need to be negotiated and implemented to exchange curricula experiences, including teaching and for support of EASLIS developmental projects. A visiting and exchange of lectureship scheme should be explored.

17. Further research

Further research is needed in workforce planning for the LIS professions in Uganda and the region, and tracer studies of EASLIS Alumni. LIS Education Standards, and especially their relevance and practicability should be further explored, and the effects of curricula related issues on the teaching of the LIS curriculum investigated.

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Appendix I: Summarised results from the analysis of information related advertisements in the Monitor and the New Vision newspapers

Employing Institutions

- 1) Government Ministries (e.g. Ministry of Public Service and Local government.
- 2) Education institutions e.g. Schools, Universities
- 3) International Companies e.g. Caltex Oil Uganda Limited, International Television Network
- 4) International non-government organisations e.g. United Nations Development Programme, Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), the East and Southern Africa Management Institute.
- 5) Government Co-operations e.g. Uganda National Institute of Special Education, Uganda Manufacturers Association, Uganda National Examination Board, and National Agricultural Research Organisation.
- 6) Financial Institutions e.g. Bank of Ugandan, Nile Bank
- 7) Newspaper Houses/Co-operations e.g. New Vision Printing and Publishing Company
- 8) Radio and TV Networks e.g. International Network, Channel TV
- 9) Research Institutes e.g. Centre for Basic Research, Makerere Institute of Social Research.

Job Titles

- 1) Library Services: Librarian, Assistant Librarian and Library Assistant
- 2) Registry: Registry Officer; Registry Assistant and Record Assistant
- 3) Archives: Assistant Archivist
- 4) Research: Research Leader and Research Officer
- 5) Documentation: Documentation Officer
- 6) News Editing: News Editor; Transmission Editor; Information Officer.
- 7) Information Officer TV/Radio; Information District Officer.
- 8) Information: Information Community officer; ICT; Senior Information
- 9) Management Officer; Manager Information Systems; Programme Analyst

Required Experience

This varied from 2 years to 5 years

Qualifications

1. Traditional LIS Qualifications

Para-professional, CLIS, DLIS, Undergraduate Degree, BLIS, Masters Degree, M. Sc. (Inf. Sc.)

2. Non-traditional Qualifications

Para-professional, Diploma in Journalism, Diploma in Stenography, Undergraduate, Degree in Journalism, Degree in Mass Communication, Degree in Computer Science, Degree in Information Technology, Postgraduate, Masters: M.A. Psychology and M. Sc. Agriculture

Analysis according to qualifications	
Degree (IT and Statistics)	4
Bachelor of Library and Information Science	12
Degree/ Diploma (Mass Communication/ Journalism)	6
Diploma/ Certificate in Library and Information Studies	11
Master of Science in Library and Information Science	2
Other Qualifications	
Degree/Diploma in Journalism	3
Mathematics/ Statistics	4
Human Resources	2

Duties

1. Records management: Files control; Central registry supervision; Records management
2. Library and Administration Routines: processing materials; control of materials; service to readers; selection and acquisition; indexing and abstracting; current awareness; collection development; reference and information; library project management; library and information consultancy; management (planning, budgeting, and reporting) and User needs
3. Support Activities: network systems; database management; information systems
4. Publishing: Newsletter Editing; Publishing
5. Others: research management; PR/marketing

Analysis according to duties	
Records Management	14
Library Administration and Routines	17
Information Technology Support	6
Research Work	1
News Editing/ Reporting	6

Appendix II: Analysis of the questionnaire to users

(i) Questionnaire Distribution and Response

Region	Sample respondents	Return rate	(%)
BUGANDA			
Kampala	100	83	83%
Entebbe	100	54	54%
Luwero	100	76	76%
EASTERN			
Jinja	100	55	55%
Mbale	100	63	63%
Soroti	100	54	54%
NORTHERN			
Arua	100	56	56%*
Gulu	100	35	35%*
Lira	100	42	42%*
WESTERN			
Mbarara	100	72	72%
Kabale	100	65	65%
Hoima	100	60	60%

*Low figures in the Northern Region are believed to be due to rebel activities in the region.

(ii) Types of Respondents

Type	Respondents (total 655)	Percentage
Civil Servants	385	59%
Professionals	154	23.5%
Students	77	11.5%
Public	39	6%

(iii) Results

Information needs

1. Development Information: information on development; trade and Commerce Information (Markets & Prices); financial Information; information on donors
2. Agricultural Information: farming; poultry keeping; bee farming; prices and drugs.
3. Educational: continuation education; admissions; examination results; further training and training abroad.
4. Religious information: information on religion; religious seasons; different beliefs; and history of religion.
5. Games and sports: football pools results; fixtures; reports on tournaments; match results.

6. News: National and International News; political features; diplomacy; agreements and protocols
7. Government information: elections; Ministerial Plans; Cabinet reshuffles; Parliamentary Debates; Security information; Information on donors
8. Other information: information on leisure; welfare information; vocational information; information on skills.

Mode of Delivery of Library and Information Services

The following modes were given in the order of priority: oral information, meetings, music/dance and drama, posters/charts (mostly for members of the community), FM Radios and Radio Uganda, Uganda Television (mainly in towns), films and video shows, print media (for the literates) – books, pamphlets, magazines and newspapers. Others included lectures, seminars and workshops, display/exhibitions, and field officers.

Competencies Expected of Information Workers

Public relations (Interpersonal Skills); library skills (processing, control, information/reference); computer skills; communication skills; negotiation skills and literacy promotion skills. Others included project writing; business skills; career guidance/counseling and tact.