

**Maktaba Library of the Year Awards:**

Looking back, looking forward

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Dedicated to all librarians in Kenya – the unrecognized players in the realization of the national development agenda.

The moral rights of the author has been asserted.

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## Preface and Acknowledgement



This book is a product of my experience with the Maktaba Awards in different capacities. When the idea of Maktaba Awards was mooted in the year 2009, I was the Assistant Secretary of KLA. I therefore got the opportunity to sit in the formative meetings where the key framework decisions were made. In the year 2011, our library at Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service (KNA&DS) entered the competition and one thing I am forever proud of is that we won the Best Library Award (BLA) of that year. Having been the Deputy Head of the Library at KNA&DS, the victory gave me a perfect experience of what it is to compete in Maktaba Awards. Later in the year, 2013 I was elected the Vice Chairman of KLA. This position propelled me into joining the Maktaba Awards Management Committee and the Jury of 2014. These two capacities brought me to the core of Maktaba Awards activities. My role in these capacities became so strategic that by the end of activities of Maktaba awards 2014, which also marked the end of the first phase of the programme, I was appointed by the chairman KLA to prepare a proposal for reengineering of maktaba awards in the next phase. Consistent with the public sector planning cycles in Kenya, five years of Maktaba awards was adopted as one phase. In Kenya, all government strategic plans cover five years.

I therefore prepared a proposal which was presented and adopted by the KLA Annual General Meeting of 2014. The proposal looked at the five years of maktaba and made analytical projections into the next phase by of course taking stock of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. That proposal formed the synopsis for this book. It comprised in two parts – the experience and the future of the award, thus looking

back looking forward. In preparing the book, I was forced to do a broad based comparative reading between maktaba and other awards across the globe. It is out of this that my mind was awakened to the need for a book in the area of awards generally and library awards specifically. .

In spite of very many awards projects and programmes in librarianship and other fields, there is very little if any publishing in the area. This is a naked literature gap which if filled will serve a significant utility. In regard to maktaba, a book of this nature will effectively deal with the information gap among stakeholders. Out of ignorance, librarians have continuously complained about some aspects of the awards particularly the judgment criteria. Most importantly, the book has given a critical analysis of all the major aspects of library awards. This will significantly inform the planning and decision making for the next phase of the awards by the concerned organs.

The book is a must read for all the librarians who have interest in maktaba Awards. The principles can also be shared with all other professions who have interest in mounting excellence awards.

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## CHAPTER ONE:

### Background of Maktaba Awards

The period between the 2009 and 2013, remains unique in the history of KLA. I am ever proud to have been part events of this period. During this period, I served for one year as the Honorable Assistant Secretary and because in the second year, my boss the Hon. Secretary went on study overseas the onus fell on my palm to act on that capacity. Our election in office at this point was historic. It came at a point where members were frustrated with a few individuals dominating the association for so many years and refusing to open it up for other members.

When we took office, our work was well chart out. Members needed the glory of the association to be reclaimed. The need could be felt from all over and we never disappointed. There is no perfect leadership but at the close of our term we could count on three major achievements: we brought the sponsorship from Swedish Library Association (SLA), we initiated the branch networks for KLA and most importantly we laid the foundation of Maktaba awards. All these achievements were anchored on a new constitutional order and a vibrant secretariat for the association.

Maktaba award was an offshoot of the different partnership initiatives that our committee was pursuing. These initiatives brought the association in touch with Goethe Institute, through Mr. Eliphas Nyamogo who is in charge of library issues in the institution. The institute has direct interest in libraries for purposes of promoting German culture in Kenya. We all know that books and therefore libraries are the arena where the culture of societies and generations are embodied. Other carriers of culture include monuments, landscapes, objects, language, arts and music (United Nations General Assembly, 2001).

In promoting German culture in Kenya or rather in trying to illuminate Kenyan culture using German civilizations, values and ideals, Goethe has found it unavoidable to go through the libraries as the custodian of books. The institute therefore plays a critical role in the promotion of books and therefore libraries in the country. It is out of these gestures and overtures that maktaba was borne. The idea was borrowed from Germany where the German Library Association (GLA) had been running the Library of the Year Awards for so many years. It is important to point out that Maktaba Awards and its entire framework was borrowed from GLA model and domesticated in Kenya.

The first major meeting in pursuit of maktaba awards was held in November 2009 at Goethe Institute. The meeting was hosted by Goethe Institute and its objective was to work out the modalities for rolling out the awards. The participants in this meeting were majorly librarians drawn from the following institutions:

- i. The Executive Committee of Kenya Library Association.
- ii. Kenya Revenue Authority (Mary Gachihi).
- iii. Ugunja Community Library (Maureen Atieno).
- iv. Kenya Agricultural research Institute (Late, Rachel Rege).
- v. Kenya National Library Service (David Muswi and Athman Chiti).
- vi. Brook - house Schools (Joyce Gacheru).
- vii. United States International University (Sophia Kaane).

- viii. Daystar University (Rosemary, Gitachu).
- ix. Jomo Kenya Foundation (Nancy Kirimi)
- x. Ministry of education (Lawrence Barasa)
- xi. Ministry of National Heritage and Culture (Stephen Mau)
- xii. Moi University (Joseph Kiplangat)

The list is not exhaustive but it serves to convince that the meeting represented all shades of librarians in the country. KLA executive committee itself has representative from a number of libraries. I will not forget the presence of Prof. Ratemo Muchieka of the University of Nairobi who represented views from independent scholars. The discussions were moderated by representative of German Library Association, led by Dr. Karl Suedekum – Head of the Würzburg University Library. He acted as the lead facilitator in the forum.

After listening to lessons from the GLA, the above team came up with the working framework of Maktaba awards covering the objectives of the award, the management structure, the criteria for participation, the library categories, selection of the jury and funding. The solid foundation laid by this team steered the awards successfully in phase One. We must all acknowledge the good work of these founding mother and fathers to the success of the programme.

This book comes after five years of Maktaba Awards. The five year period has since been adopted as phase one of the programme which will always be followed by monitoring and evaluation activities for purposes of reengineering. This borrows from planning framework in Kenya where all public sector strategic planning instruments run for five years. These strategic instruments are then implemented through annual work plans and budgets. This approach further provides a robust basis for monitoring and evaluation of progress at all levels. It is

in considering these frameworks that the maktaba management committee felt that the new phase of maktaba should be preceded by an evaluation of the first phase. The data collected out of this evaluation would then be used in reengineering the succeeding phases. The manner of evaluation was not very scientific, but the chairman KLA managed to send out questionnaires to be completed by libraries. One of the highlights of the questionnaires was to ask for the input of the libraries on how the awards can be improved. These instruments bore no much response but at least they provided some leads.

Away from the questionnaires, I felt that it was paramount to undertake a more detailed analysis of the first phase of the programme. This was the real motivation behind this book. I took meticulous journey through the available information in the internet and pieced them up using the experience I had with maktaba. By and large, there are very limited writing on library awards, but most awards have made tremendous efforts to inform their members about their operations electronically. I relied on these sources. The awards in this case, just to mention but a few include those run by Library Journal, American Library Association, Florida Library association, The Institute of Museums and Library services and New York City Neighborhood Public Library Award among many others. Experiences from these awards were used to benchmark the maktaba activities from a critical perspective as presented in this book.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### The legal Foundation and Structure of Maktaba Awards

#### 2.1 Legal Foundation

Right from its inception, it was appreciated that the existence of Maktaba awards required the protection of law or legal ownership. Globally, most other awards merely operate under the institutions that run them. Through those institutions they end up deriving their legal existence. Assuming that it was KLA running maktaba awards, then the award would merely be recognized as programme under KLA. If this were the case, then KLA executive committee would have taken charge of the award directly or through an appointed committee in line with its constitution. But as pointed out elsewhere in this publication, by the time maktaba was being formed, KLA was not only disorganized, it was highly distrusted by the membership. Additionally, the Maktaba idea came from a partner whom automatically had to be given more say on its execution. Under these circumstances it would have been very risky to entirely entrust the implementation of the awards to KLA. May be the terrain has changed this time round. These arguments explain how the foundation and structure of maktaba was built.

In Kenya, most professional associations in the league of and including KLA are registered under the Societies Registration Act Cap. 108 Laws of Kenya. The act defines a society as an association of 10 or more people registered for reason other than business for profit. A society is defined as an organized group of persons associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes (dictionary.com). My research indicates that most professional associations exist as societies. The societies are legal persons by the virtue of their registration. In law this means that they have the powers to sue and be sued, own property, and enter into contracts (Garner,

2009).

Since maktaba award is not registered anywhere, the law regulating it by extension from KLA is the Societies Act. An understanding of this legal foundation is paramount because without that, the management of the award may find itself at loggerheads with the law. It must also be appreciated that issues of good governance particularly the rule of law are taking center stage in Kenya presently. We can therefore not afford to take anything for granted. Under the societies act, all registered organizations have duties and obligations which they must pursue just to ensure that they don't operate as illegal societies. Some of these obligations which if not followed may attract legal penalties include the requirement that every society must:

- Operate legally as per Cap 108.
- Have its own constitution and rules of operation.
- Hold Annual General Meetings.
- Maintain books of account where monies received and payments are entered.
- The treasurer shall once in a year provide members with a full and true account of all monies received and paid by him.
- Furnish the registrar of societies with annual returns which provides among other things financial reports and list of office bearers among other requirements.

A journey through these issues is key to safeguarding from any legal quandary. This never happened in the past five years but there is need for greater vigilance as we move forward. The key message here is that maktaba depends on KLA for its legal safety, but to what extent is KLA meeting its legal obligations? I don't wish to belabor the question, but as a matter of goodwill, it must be appreciated that under the

new constitutional order the association is strongly committed to the dictates of the Societies Act albeit with some challenges which should be addressed as a matter of agency.

I am raising these issues because issues of good governance are not optional in the country's current constitutional order. This becomes more critical for holders of public offices if Chapter Six of the constitution is anything to go by. A majority of the people running KLA and by extension Maktaba awards are public officers – lest they be caught on the wrong side of the law as a matter of ignorance or failure to be vigilant. To compound this bad situation, Kenya Constitution 2010 opened many avenues for access to justice and courts. Cases, especially civil cases can be easily taken to court even by the very lowly of our citizenry. The constitution further allows any citizen to petition any public office or officer on any administrative issue. This means that at all times, fidelity to all tenets of the laws and policy instruments must be attended to. As far as Maktaba awards are concerned, the Kenya Constitution 2010, the Society's Act and above all the KLA By-laws should always inform and guide all decision making activities around Maktaba awards.

Even after being reviewed in 2012, the association and its leadership has not given consideration and respect to its constitution as was expected. In many instances I have felt that the power of the constitution end up being usurped by imperial chairmen, keen to be in full control of all the affairs of the association. This has been very unfortunate because it is dangerous to trust mortal and infallible men with absolute powers. They end up using it to their advantage and aggrandisement. Today, the reality of pulling the KLA act through is more real and as we move to this new era, there is need for greater resolve to live by its principles and to defend its provision. Otherwise all the time, money and emotions that we have spent on it will be in vain.

Moving forward the issue of legality of both the KLA and Maktaba

awards should be polished. As is apparent, the association and the programme are like Siamese twins on this matter. But I must also hasten to add that the enforcement of the legal responsibilities does not rest wholly with KLA management but is highly dependent on the goodwill of the programme partners. One area that cannot be ignored is the issue of disunited management of Maktaba financial contributions from KLA funds.

In the past, maktaba has handled its financial issues and records independently. This has not been out of any ill motive, but rather because the donors channel their funds to specific components of the Maktaba budget. When this happens they end up paying or rather engaging with the suppliers directly and through their financial management systems. This is how most awards operate. On the other side, KLA operates a central account where all its financial income and payments are anchored. Payments and withdrawals from this account as reflected in bank statements, receipts and payment schedules from the treasurer explains the financial accountability framework for the association.

At the end of financial year, KLA accounts are audited by an external auditor who presents a report to the AGM. The report generally covers all the programmes under KLA and it's the only basis available for the management of the association to share information about their financial activities and take responsibility. With the understanding and agreement that maktaba awards is a KLA project, I want to propose that in future, the auditor's report should take into consideration the financial records emanating from maktaba awards. In 2014, all the donors did the most honorable thing by making available a report of their donations and expenditures towards maktaba. The KLA auditor should pick the exercise from this point.

## 2.1 Operational Structure

Under this theme I sought to give an overview of the administrative structure of Maktaba Awards. By its design, the Maktaba awards was to have a board of trustee, to be the apex organ of its management. The formation of the board was necessitated by the need to ensure some level of independence and therefore smooth running of the award. With the board at the apex, there was need to create more organs so as to ensure that there was inclusiveness and professionalism in the affairs of the programme. To this extent, two more organs were constituted - the management committee and the jury.

### 2.1.1 Board of trustees:

The term trustees come from the term trust. People who sit on board as trustees are elected by members on the basis of trust to safeguard the interest of members in the organization. These interests may refer to the financial and other investment resources of the organization. Members of a trustee are expected to provide fiduciary oversight of finances, physical assets and long term plans to ensure the vitality of a programme (WHOI, 2010). Other than this, members of the board of trustees are looked up to in many other responsibilities including:

- i. Advising and supporting the management in setting up institutional goals and priorities.
- ii. Ensure accountability for stewardship and good governance in the institution.
- iii. Act as ambassadors for the institution on mobilization of funds.
- iv. Chairing or serving in any committees that have been formed in the organization.

Maktaba was meant to have a board of trustees as its highest organ. However to date, this body may not have been formally constituted. I still believe that it was a very noble idea that was a non-starter. While working in the management committee or in the jury, there is no time that we got instructions from the board. If it existed then it might have been overshadowed by the committee or rather, the people who were supposed to sit on the board are the same figures that dominated the other two arms. Therefore, as maktaba moves to the next phase, a few questions automatically arise about this organ. Do we really need it? What would be its mandate? How will it relate with other organs and stakeholders? It is in an attempt to answer these questions that I gave a brief highlight of what boards are and there mandates in other institutions.

Primarily boards exist to protect the interest of members in institutions. This applies probably in situations where members have invested in the institution, financially or otherwise. In Kenya, this is seen so many organization, but mostly those that are owned by shareholders. The ownership system in maktaba may be different. But any contributions towards the programme are in the interest of the librarians in this country. This needs to be protected for the benefit of such librarians. There are risks involved if this protection is not there. The contribution might be misused and the programme might be abused, at the expense of its real beneficiaries.

Therefore granted that members of maktaba are generally the library fraternity in Kenya, organised around KLA, there are interest which if this board was in place it would be called upon to protect. These interests to me include setting priorities for the award, mobilizing sponsors and funds, oversight on the management of resources and guiding the other organs on the implementation of priorities. These duties cannot effectively be formed by the management committee. It is on this account that I believe that this organ is necessary and must be strengthened moving forward. In some awards, most issues end up being divi-

sive and controversial. Under such circumstances, maktaba will need a strong board to intervene and arbitrate. Indeed, under the proposed KLA Act (still a bill), the affairs of the association will be superintended by a board. When this becomes real, it will be cogent to extend the role of this board into overseeing the affairs of the award.

From the five years' experience, we can very objectively determine who needs to sit in this board. The first available slots should be left to the dominant sponsors of the award. In addition, the KLA executive committee should be sitting in that board possibly as a secretary. I feel this would be important on the ground of organizational continuity. Other eminent people can be co-opted to the board on the basis of any other justifiable considerations.

### 2.1.2 The Jury

Jury refers to a committee that judges contestants or applications as in a competition or exhibitions (ask.com). In a court system, juries sit to determine cases. For competitions, the mandate of such a body is usually defined by the award process. The jury would have different roles to play at different stages of the award. When maktaba was founded, the jury was assigned the role of evaluating nominations for the award. Under this role the specific responsibilities included to:

1. Advertise for the award
2. Evaluate the proposals for each category and request for documentation from each library
3. Shortlist the libraries to be considered for the award
4. Visit and validate the short listed libraries
5. Present the rankings to the management team

The work of the jury in whichever award is essentially the same but

differences arise based on the procedures adopted by the award and the organs created to steer it. In the case of ALA wards, the jury is elected on a one year term and their duties include to:

- i. Reviewing of the procedures and criteria for the award for each year and reporting on the same to the annual conference of members.
- ii. Soliciting nominations and re-nominations for the award.
- iii. Identifying winners for the award.
- iv. Making arrangements for the award gala
- v. Keeping records of each nominee.
- vi. Preparing documents to be handed over to the new jury.

The other issue that should be confronted over the jury is to do with its membership. In the first phase of the maktaba awards, some librarians expressed doubts over the technical competence of members of the jury. This may be unfounded, personal or simply a matter of arrogance and ego, but it deserve an ear because if assumed it might undermine the integrity of the entire exercise. To start, the Maktaba award jury was supposed to comprise of professional drawn from the following backgrounds:

- Kenya Library Association (Chair)
- Ministry in charge of libraries
- The Commission for Higher Education
- Jomo Kenyatta Foundation

- Goethe-Institut
- The National Book Development Council of Kenya
- Two independent individuals

One issue that I have always grappled with is whether the jury should comprise of professional librarians or any other professional. I have no straight answer to this, but it is my thinking that professional librarians, of very high standing can make better judges than other professional would do. If we are to stick to the above criteria, then the jury may not guarantee that the experts will be in control of the evaluation since the represented institutions may no send library experts to the jury. This is not healthy. In most awards, experts should have control of the decisions and any other inclusions should comprise one or two people who will bring some technical dimensions to the award. An ICT expert may be include in the jury to help the experts comprehend some technical issues in ICTs. Or when it happens, these ‘non-professionals’ are supposed to bring on board some sense of moderation when decision are being made.

The issue of membership to the jury must be handled professionally as we move forward. I have to admit that the membership prescribed above has really not been followed to the letter. It was not followed in 2014 and it has not been the case presently. That alone presents a case for review. One of the cardinal role of the management committee is to appoint the members of the jury. However this cannot be done arbitrarily. Clear procedures should be designed for doing this. In the case of ALA, there are the following outstanding conditions for appointment to the jury:

- One should not be from the donors to the award.
- One should not come from any of the competing libraries. If this happens then the appointed member of the jury should

excuse themselves.

- Juries are appointed for all the categories of awards.

These varying perspectives should be weighed so that we may re-define the membership, appointment procedures and the role of the jury. This should be done with a clear understanding that the integrity of the award rests squarely on the standing and objectivity of the jury.

### **2.1.3 Management Committee:**

This is one organ whose role is most critical to the success of the award. The committee is the implementation organ of nearly all the award activities. The sweeping powers which the committee was assigned at formation include:

- Appointing the Jury
- Planning
- Managing the finances
- Fundraising
- Marketing, organizing for the award ceremony
- Auditing of systems and procedures.
- Procurement of the award services

It is therefore clear that the committee is everything about the success of the award. It does all the coordination and administration work. It is supposed to be assisted in this work by the KLA secretariat, but because the office of the secretariat far away from the city centre, much of their work is being handle by the office of the chair to the committee based at Goethe Institute. Once the award process is launched this committee has to sit very many times to ensure the process is on the right track.

There are some sticky issues which I think needs redress as we move forward, just to strengthen this committee. As a matter of principle, the committee should be representative of all the shades of librarians, in their different categories. In so far as KLA is the voice and face of all the libraries in Kenya, I still feel that its representation in the committee helps to take into consideration the needs of all shades of libraries. But who appoints this committee? Should it be the board or KLA or should we shirk this role to the KLA annual General Meeting? I think all these are issues of procedures in the profession whose answers lie with the management of the professional association. The committee is the glue that holds together all the other organs. It should therefore be run very transparently and effectively.

As I wind up on this chapter I have a few closing remarks to presents. As I have said, these organs were well intended and indeed necessary. But it's evident that there have been hiccups in their operationalization. The position of these organs must be redefined. One of the missing components in the operationalization of these organs was that the procedure for their creation was left undefined. In the end everybody who happened to be around when the organs were being created ended up being a member. This was a serious loophole which must not be tolerated anymore. As much as possible, the lines between these organs should be clearly defined. When these organs are made functional, the need for one person to be serving in all them or just two of them will not be necessary. In the last awards, the people who served in the committee are the ones who ended up as judges. This creates conflict of interest.

This book has called for the devolution of maktaba awards. When this happens, automatically the structure of maktaba will have to be reviewed. The power of all these organs will have to be devolved to the branches. If members prefer centralization then the members should brace for a compounded and complicated work load on their side. On the other side, KLA as the custodian and the owner of the programme

needs to up its game. In particular, the association should play a central role in coming up with the organs and formulation of their working policies as we take a stride to the new phase.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### The Need for Maktaba Awards

The need for Maktaba Awards stems from contemporary challenges to libraries and weaknesses in the management of library systems in Kenya. Having worked as a librarian in the civil service sector, a commission and now a public university, I believe that I have the professional authority to talk about these challenges and weaknesses. I have also been a classroom librarian, teaching different library related courses. But even more relevant is the fact that in my first stint as a librarian based at the National Documentation service, I had the privilege of visiting a number of offices across the country helping them to set up libraries. This was a wonderful exposure. My master's research also gave me the chance to visit almost all ministry libraries in the country.

I have always maintained that librarians in Kenya, irrespective of where they work, are doing not more than 50% of the work professionally expected of them. Innovation and creativity has nosedived in the profession. Librarians have failed terribly in addressing the poor reading culture in their work places. They end up superintending over services which are not popular, which are not sought for. In the end they resort to perpetual winning and blame games. They blame the management for all their woes. They still cling to the problems that faced libraries in the 1980's to atone for their underperformance: funds, equipment, staffing and management support. The world of librarians cannot be this static!

In my many years of experience, I have come to appreciate one thing about the profession – it is ever evolving without any defined frontiers. As a judge of the Maktaba awards 2014, I was humbled by

the experiences, by what other libraries are achieving. I went to Aghan University Library (which became the overall winners in the awards 2014) and it struck me that the worth of a library no longer vests in the many kilometers of their shelf collection or the size and opulence in the building. It is simply technology, technology and technology. This trend is reverberating beyond university libraries and has caught fire among school libraries. I saw this in Mangu Girls High School Library and Nairobi Primary school. The change is overwhelming and unnerving. In many instances when I am invited to a seminar or a workshop these days, I have been forced to search in the internet to clarify some terminologies. The situation gets complicated when you start scrutinizing the titles of abstracts from presenters in library conferences. Everything- every activity and every service is taking the prefix e- for electronic. Issues like e-resources, e-learning, e-repositories and e-governance are overriding. There are very many other new perspectives to the profession that embody perpetual change. They include issues of knowledge management, embedded librarianship, content management, web 2.0 and digital librarianship. These issues define who a modern librarian should be.

I am always challenged on how to deal with these issues wherever I get an opportunity to serve. In my current employment as user services librarian, I am humbled by the big change of my working arrangements. In my daily routine, it about discussions with user just explaining our systems and resources; organizing workshops for users and doing formal and informal trainings. I look around me and I can't imagine that some libraries don't have automated systems and are still caught up in the traditional work systems. Indeed the defining difference between failed libraries and successful libraries is purely to do with the kind of automated systems that they have put in place.

Libraries without walls are one phenomenon that continues to daunt my imagination as a librarian. For many years it looked very far away but now its reality is coming closer and closer to all of us. The internet

and websites are taking control of our libraries making everything virtual. In the face of open access publishing and astronomical increase in the quantity of e-resources in our libraries, technology is the backbone of modern libraries. The e-discovery tools and off campus access technologies are almost overtaking tradition library management systems in significance. As webometrics becomes that talk of the universities, it behooves all libraries to think seriously about the status of their institutional repositories. It is not a surprise that some libraries are already employing institutional repository librarians. To this extent, it is the librarians who are going to influence the scholarly success of any faculty of university in the future.

I went to Dedan Kimathi University and I was puzzled by what they told me. In their library you can only borrow what they don't have in their e-collection. They also encourage that to access the e-resources, users should not come to the library courtesy of off campus access technologies. These concepts are growing by each day. If gadgets for accessing the e-resources are the challenge, then go Agha Khan University where librarians can borrow tablets for use at home. The librarians' world is really changing and changing very fast. I look at these evolutions and agree that if we don't manage technology, it will sweep us away.

I have given this long story just as a background to what I truly think is the significance of Maktaba Awards. These stories should be told again and again. Visit to these libraries for benchmarking should be made mandatory just like hajj to adult Muslims. I witnessed this when I was in KNA&DS. After we won the awards of 2012, droves of librarians from across the country used to visit our library and talk to us over our services, just to learn from our success. Covertly, maktaba award has successfully brought these hidden stories to the fore for the benefit of the profession. This is no mean achievement.

The second perspective for measuring the benefits is by focusing on

its objectives. The objectives of maktaba awards as postulated by the stakeholder workshop which came up with its working principles are as follows:

- To promote innovation, creativity and professionalism in Kenyan libraries.
- Promote and publicize all library categories and information services in Kenya.
- To encourage more interaction and collaboration between the government, community and the library towards the attainment of national, regional and international goals.
- To promote research activities, development of local content and preservation of indigenous knowledge in the country.
- To accord national recognition to the most outstanding library in Kenya.

How SMART these objectives are in regard to our experience with the award remains to be considered. But for purposes of clarity, we need to map them against other awards out there. Such awards transcend all professions, industry and many other sectors such as sporting. Here home in Kenya, we are acquitted with the Annual Journalism excellence award (ajea) sponsored by the media council of Kenya; the annual media excellence award (amea) run on the basis of sponsorship by among others Consumer Federation of Kenya (cofek) ; civil society of the year award (Csoya) and health innovation award (HIA) operating in the whole of east Africa. I looked closely at the objectives of these awards and summarized them within the framework as follows:

- Acknowledge and promote excellence in the practice of librarianship in Kenya.
- Reward excellence in the practice of librarianship in Kenya.

- Enhance focus on better service delivery to library users in Kenya.
- Stimulate positive competition among libraries in Kenya.
- Publicize and promote library profession in Kenya.

These objectives are in resonance with what scholars have written about the significance of awards. Etymologically the concept of awards originated from competition practices in different fields. That is why by definition, awarding is the act of giving (something) as an official payment, compensation, or prize to someone. It also refers to a prize or mark of recognition given in honor of an achievement (dictionary.com). Reid H. (2005) captures the theoretical significance of awards or rather competitions. He argues that the philosophy of competition has a number of principles but chiefly that:

- Competition is what drives us to become the best we can be.
- We compete to test ourselves against the skills of other.
- Competition is the best way for the human race to advance, and it keeps people happy, occupied and satisfied and seems like a worthwhile thing to have.

Though based on sports competition, the author's analysis is applicable in all the other fields. The author further asserts that institutions and people are drawn to competition by the prospect of learning or proving something – they want to learn about themselves and their competitors, so that the end result is a kind of knowledge that clears some uncertainty. The knowledge is not just about who won or who lost but rather, an understanding of the reasons for the result. That is, why a given candidate won and the other lost. This has to do with the parameters under analysis. The message here is very fundamental that competitions offer the participants the opportunity to identify their weaknesses and work on them moving forward.

Away from theory and philosophy, the 2014 Executive committee of KLA made attempts to hear from the participants on how they have benefited from Maktaba Awards. An online questionnaire was sent to 100 libraries that had participated in the previous maktaba awards, requesting them to give their views on the benefits they associate with the programme. At the end of the survey, 40 questionnaires attracted valid responses. The questionnaires merely requested the libraries to indicate whether they recorded improvements in terms of users, usage, service quality, library image, support from sponsors, funding and community programmes as a result of their participation in maktaba awards. The Responses from the libraries were as per the figure below:

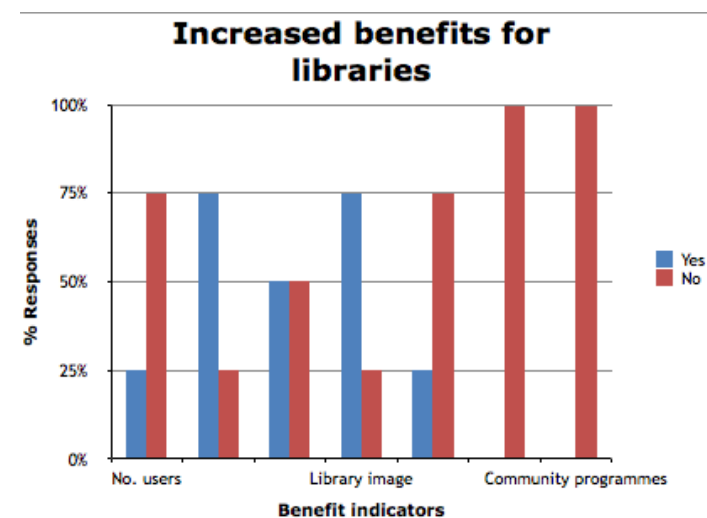


Fig. 1: Maktaba awards survey (2014)

The above figure shows what participants think about benefits of Maktaba Awards. Considering all these parameters, it is evident that the awards have led to improvements in library users, usage, service quality, image and support from sponsors but not funding and more community programmes. This kind of evaluation is important and needs to be reinforced. I have suggested continuous evaluation should form part of the award process. The evaluation instruments should then be

made more rigorous, systematic and guided by the objectives of the programme.

I want close on the chapter by looking at cases abroad. In America, the Institute of Museum and Library services runs the most esteemed award for museums and libraries in the country. The award is called the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, which is meant to award institutions that make significant and exceptional contribution to their communities. In its website, the institute argued that the benefits of the award include:

- A reward of \$20,000 to the winners
- Positive press attention through media coverage of all the shortlisted libraries.
- Increased library profile as seen in visits to websites, attraction to guest speakers during open days and increased users and usage.
- Increased trust and support from stakeholders: users, management and donors

I referred to this case because they have come very close to identifying the precise benefits from these awards. In maktaba there are financial rewards, press coverage for the winner, increased library profile and of course trust from the library stakeholders. Universities have used their success in the award as a selling point in marketing their institutions. For libraries, these benefits should merely serve as a means to conquering greater things. Looking forward, I foresee our libraries at a higher plane of service delivery. For so many years some libraries have been run like bookstores, this will end. Up to now many institutions have not seen the need to employ trained librarians; this will be a thing of the past. Many librarians have not given their whole to the profession; they have not had the necessary initiative to conquer new grounds. Maktaba will challenge them out of these cocoons.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### The Maktaba Process

Every other day, I am bombarded by award announcements in the media, both print and electronic. Away from librarianship, there are many other competitions taking place. Among the professional bodies the focus of such competitions has always been about service excellence and the advancement of the profession. It is in this line that The Law Society of Kenya awards distinguished members of the bar and bench in its annual dinner and dance; the Kenya medical association excellence award; the Kenya Bankers Association awards the best banks every year and many more. Some of these awards come from institutions such as the Capital markets authority of Kenya rewarding the best investor. The same is seen with Kenya Revenue Authority rewarding the leading tax payers. There is unending list of awards in Kenya today.

All these awards have frameworks which Maktaba can be measured against. The frameworks explain the focus of the awards and other execution issues such as eligibility, entries, nominations and vetting. Across the globe, mostly in European countries, the library profession has also embraced competitions in this line by running awards of different kinds including:

- i. **Awards for those who support Library work:** These awards are given to other stakeholders in the information industry and not necessary libraries and librarians. These stakeholders include authors, publishers, illustrators and other players. Most awards organized by ALA tend to be in this category.

**ii. Educational Awards:** These awards take the form of scholarships and fellowships. They are intended to help the beneficiaries to pursue further education or just to attend conferences. They are generally given on the basis of competition or rather to recognize excellence.

**ii. Librarians Award:** The awards in this category target individual librarians on the basis of some outstanding achievements. An example is the Library Journal's Librarian of the Year award and that for the movers and shakers which rewards librarians who have made remarkable difference in the profession in terms of leadership.

**iii. Libraries Awards:** This is the approach that Maktaba adopted. The awards in this nature are meant to reward model libraries. In the context of Maktaba Awards, it is given along the different library typologies based on set criteria.

**iv. Services Awards:** the focus of this award is on service delivery along different lines. The approach takes all the other awards a notch higher by focus on specific service aspect instead of amalgamating services together to determine the best libraries. Examples include Library Journal award for the most community aware library.

The success of all these awards depends heavily on the process adopted and how effectively the process is executed. All awards have documented and easy to follow steps and procedures. Over the years, maktaba awards have been executed through the following steps:

#### **i) Stakeholders Meeting**

Stakeholders' meeting is an outstanding feature of maktaba administration. These meetings are traced to the inception stages, when the working framework for the programme was being devised in the year 2009. As has been explained in chapter one, Goethe institute brought together key stakeholders to prepare a roadmap for the award. It is this meeting that laid the foundation stones for the awards. I remember

with pride that I ably participated in the workshop, agitating for some issues which earned me friends and enemies in equal measure.

This idea of stakeholders meeting has been maintained in the project to date. Every year when the competitions are being rolled out, stakeholders meeting comes first. Today there are different shades of stakeholders in the programme. They include the sponsors represented by Goethe and Jomo Kenyatta foundation; representative of KLA and the department of Government Libraries domiciled at the Ministry arts and culture and the jury. When the stakeholders meet, their work is simply to kick-start the process and impress on the stakeholders to take up their roles as sponsor or otherwise. It is during such meetings that stakeholders declare their level of support to the award. Normally, sponsors will have known what they would be contributing to the awards since this is usually reflected in their institutional budgets.

In my analysis, it has been the duty of the chairman of the management committee to call the stakeholders meeting for the succeeding year. In the case of ALA the annual conference plays this responsibility. In fact, the Annual General Conference of the year proceeding the award year is used as a stakeholder's platform to strategies for the forthcoming awards. This can be considered in future so that KLA annual conference or the award gala is used for this purpose. We all remember that maktaba featured prominently in the last KLA annual conference and AGM. I personally think that in future, as the awards integrate more in KLA, the outgoing committee should present some reports to the KLA AGM that comes after the conclusion of maktaba events for any given year. Such a report should not only cover the experiences of the year but most importantly give recommendations for the future. This will give the association and Kenyan librarians more ownership and involvement in the awards.

## ii) Announcement of the Competition and Call for entries.

One of key aftermaths of the stakeholders meeting is to come up with a team to manage the awards in that given year. This team will then suffice as the management team. When the management team then holds its first meeting, they draw up a calendar of events highlighting all the relevant activities and their time lines. At the top of these activities is the media based announcement of the awards.

Media has been one of the major stakeholders in Maktaba awards. The relationship with the media has generally been on the lines of partnership. In 2014 and indeed the previous years, media announcements for maktaba were funded by Radio Africa. The announcements appeared in the Star, Nation and Standard newspapers. In the electronic media, the Classic FM and KISS FM have repeatedly aired the announcements. In all these media the availability of funds have always dictated the number of times that the announcements are made. In all these years, the announcements can only appear on the newspapers a couple of times (two times in the Star last year). In case of the electronic media, the announcements run for a number of days, a number of times in a day. The timing of the radio announcement is also an issue because there are times when audience penetration is higher. Announcements in the radio were appearing 4 times a day – two times in the morning and two times in the afternoon.

Granted that the purpose of the announcements was to attract entries, I personally believe that the media approach and strategy can be enhanced but it has been adequate by and large. I have heard that some parts of Kenya are so remote beyond the reach of both print and electronic media. This automatically means that new ways must be devised to ensure that all libraries irrespective of where they are situated are reached by announcements.

The overriding aim of the announcements is to give libraries a chance to enter the competition. One of the information aspects of the an-

nouncements is to explain the procedure of application to the libraries. I went through the announcements and I can outline a few features about them:

- i. The announcement extends invitations to all libraries in Kenya to apply for the awards and gives the dead line for applications.
- ii. The announcements give the aim of the award, which is to promote excellence.
- iii. The announcements, request interested libraries to apply giving profiles that cover their unique features in terms of policies and procedures, staff deployment and re-training, currency and relevance of their information materials, innovation and creativity in service provision , promotion of local content and multicultural library services, networking and any other value addition exercise the library is engaged in.
- iv. They give the category of libraries that should participate: School, Special, Large Public, Community, Government and Academic Libraries.
- v. They also give details as to where the applications are supposed to be sent, physically to the secretary maktaba or electronically to the maktaba e-mail (loyakeny@gmail.com).

Going by my experience as a judge in 2014, I believe that the use of profiles have some weaknesses. Some libraries were sending very voluminous documents as profiles, while some libraries only had one paged documents. It therefore means that there was no way of standardizing the process at this point, particularly given the fact that every applicant virtually has a chance to compete unless some logistical is-

sues prevent it.

Apart from the need to come up with profiles that can easily help discern the differences between libraries, I also think that it is utterly preposterous for one to imagine that all libraries in Kenya can compete in any single award on equal terms. Even without data, Kenya has thousands of libraries. If they are all to enter the competition, the management team would not have the capacity to deal with the situation. According to my study of different awards, this problem has been responded to in different ways:

- i. The Marketing society of Kenya Annual Awards and other awards use standardized questionnaires which libraries compete to be entered in the awards. Such questionnaires are generally easy to analyze than relying on open ended profiles.
- ii. In most other awards, not all entrants are evaluated, there is shortlisting based on the information given at the entry level. This shortlisting enables the award to settle on the potential winners and leave out the undeserving cases for assessment.
- iii. In other cases, the entrants into the awards are nominated by other parties other than themselves. Institute for Museum and Library services Awards in the USA has provision for self and outside nominations. This provides an opportunity of second party judgment on the suitability of the participants.

I have looked at these cases to underscore the point that there is need, for the sake of financial prudence, to ensure that the participants who make it to the next stage are not just any other libraries but those that have promises of becoming winners. In the next stage, the maktaba jury must make use of these strategies to short list the libraries that would be finally visited for assessment. Other ideas have also been floated to the effect that branches and chapters should nominate the libraries that compete at national levels. These are pertinent proposals

which should be considered in light of the fact that it has been resolved that the awards be devolved to the branches.

### **iii) Assessment and judgement:**

This step follows the call for entries. Within the framework of maktaba awards, all entrants into the competition should be assessed by one or two of the judges, once or twice during the assessment period. This process is purely controlled by the jury but moderated by the management committee. In Maktaba awards 2014, there were around 70 applicants out of which only 68 were assessed on the grounds of logistics.

When the jury meet to kick-start the assessment, its members would allocate themselves the institutions to visit based on the regions. In 2014, the jury members were paired and given the libraries to visit. I am ever grateful to Ms. Kibandi whom I was paired with. Initially we travelled together, but after realising that I had mastered the art and science of assessment we then travelled individually. It was also a chance for me to know the institutions I had never visited before. I went to the heartlands of Mathare slums to assess Mathare Youth Sports Association Library; To Parklands area to assess Aga Khan University Library; to the national museums of Kenya in west land Nairobi; towards Kiambu area to assess the Mangu Girls High school and met Lydia the librarian; I went deep into the villages of Loitok tok to assess Itilal Primary school library and to Nairobi Primary school library. It was a wonderful experience.

To ensure that decisions made by judges during the assessment are not subjective or biased, different tools are employed. Before the assessment starts, the judges already have the profiles for the libraries, enabling them to have some imagination of the whole library set up. As discussed in the succeeding chapter, the assessment parameters are standardised. Therefore the assessment is matter of observation, discussion and testing to award points for each parameter. The awarding of marks is based on a grading scheme, which simplifies the parame-

ters and gives them some weighting perspective. The scores generally range from 2 to 10 per parameter. The wide room created for discretion in the award of scores along the different parameters may be abused at times. This is safeguarded by the integrity and the professionalism of the judges.

When the judges come from the field, they will have the scores ready for all the libraries visited. A sitting will then be held to do the ranking. At this point all the judges will table their grading forms. At times, these meetings become acrimonious, I learnt. It is not unexpected for a judge to doubt the validity of the scores presented by a colleague. This will lead to arguments. On the other side, there will be a tie among some libraries when ranking is done. In these circumstances, second rounds of visits by different judges will be sanctioned. In remember visiting Dedan Kimathi University to reassess the library headed by my good friend Otiike. I loved the work he is doing there. When results arrive after the second visits, the jury is ready to come up with the overall ranking and will then hand over their reports to the management committee. The winners will be known to the committee from this point.

In the ranking process, there is one more issue to look into. Apart from determining the overall winner based on the scores, the management committee, in consultation with the jury is expected to identify 'the library of the year'. This is a library to be recognised for bringing a unique and outstanding perspective in service delivery. They are libraries which stand out in what they do. Mathare Youth Sports Association Library took this award in the 2014 competition. I participated in the assessment of the library until at one point a felt that they were deviating from library work. They turned library into a place for training the local youths on art and craft and promoting small business activities. I concur that this is outstanding and I congratulate them for that. Previously in 2013, this title had gone to Kenyatta National Hospital Children's Library.

#### **iv) The Award Gala**

This is one of the most memorable events in the library landscape in Kenya. It is generally a special get together for the librarians in the country. Dignified librarians, scholars, invited guests among have participants, have over the years made maktaba galas an event to remember and relish. I have participated in a couple of these events, particularly in 2012 when our library at Kenya National Archives won the awards and in this year's when I served as a judge. The people who grace these occasions also serve to make them remarkable. I look back and I see names like PLO Lumumba, the greatest orator and scholar of our time; Pete Ondeng who holds the global title of esteemed public speaker; Dr. Auma Obama from Nairobi University; International Lawyer Otiende Amollo, the ombudsman and Charles Nyachae of the Constitution Implementation Commission (CIC) and German ambassador among other guests. Just listening to these people speak is in itself something to celebrate.

Without deviating, the award gala is an occasion when librarians, those who participated in the competition and other invited guest come together for the unveiling of the winners. Normally, until official declaration is made, the names of the winners would remain secret. Members of the jury and the management committee would be under oath not to reveal such names. It is however very easy for the winners to have wind of the reality in advance because they have to be invited to the event in a special way. If it is a school library, then the management of the school has to be invited. So to some extent, some institutions are able to predict whether they have won or not.

Apart from the first competition where the gala was organised in USIU University all the other events have taken place at the National Museum of Kenya. Like libraries, the Museum is a heritage and cultural institution. The role of the organization is to collect, preserve, study, document and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural

heritage. Through its exquisite conference halls, the institution has provided more than ideal venue for the gala celebrations. The Leakey auditorium is now a house hold name among the librarians in Kenya. This is where the events have been held repeatedly.

A successful gala, is an outcome of very meticulous preparation by the management committee. It is the climax of a number of activities including the judging process, invitation of guests and participants, preparation of awards if not to mention collaterals like food and drinks. All these arrangements are taxing and those who contribute to this success needs to be acknowledged. The climax of the events are not in the moving speeches and sumptuous meals, it comes when the winners are being declared. The wait will be very long for the participants and the tension palpable. To be a winner of the award is not something to take lightly. The benefits are manifold as discussed in the preceding chapter. Universities have used their titles as award winners to market themselves. If your library wins, the management of the organization will never ever take you for granted. They will be more listening and with this more supportive even with funds. We can also not ignore cash awards and the book vouchers that are given to the winners. In the last awards there was even follow-up training for the participating libraries.

Lastly, many people have expressed the need to have gala organised in different venues. They feel that Museums of Kenya has provided a wonderful venue for the award, but a change is always something good and welcome. For many associations, gala nights have been held in social places such as carnivore grounds for the marketing society of Kenya. Some hold their gala events in posh hotels. This matter can be considered but the issue eventually comes down to money. Apart from museum of Kenya being accessible, it has also been more affordable.

I close on this discussion by recommending two further steps in this process. As I have already mentioned, a training workshop was organised for all the competing libraries on the same day the gala cere-

mony was organised. This was a landmark sensitization event which was facilitated by one of the judges. It is one of the strategies which is critical in dealing with the information gap around Maktaba Awards. It is therefore my take that this activity should be institutionalised and strengthened in the future competitions. Secondly, the need to undertake scientific monitoring and evaluation for awards every year cannot be ignored. KLA through the chairman and the executive officer tried to fill this gap, albeit half-heartedly, by sending questionnaires to the participants. Apart from the low response rate, the questionnaires were not detailed enough. Evaluation is important for the growth of the programme. It will be a means of identifying weakness and dealing with them systematically. I therefore propose that, moving forward, an evaluation and monitoring framework or the awards should be worked out.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### **Marks of Excellence in Kenyan Libraries: Maktaba Awards criteria**

Over the years, I have met librarians who are totally indifferent to Maktaba awards and I have really been interested in understanding why this should be the case about an idea which according to me is a God send to the library fraternity in Kenya. Some of these people have even opposed the participation of their libraries in the awards. One judge in the Maktaba 2014 reported to the panel that a librarian walked out of her in out-right arrogance and refused to be appraised when she went for assessment. This is how unprofessional librarians can be!

These enemies of Maktaba have in most parts cited some farfetched issues as the basis of their opposition to the programme. Most of these oppositions, spring from the lack of awareness about the maktaba assessment criteria. Some people think you win based on the size of your library or rather your sophistication in terms of ICT. I don't understand how these notions have persisted in some people over the years. I made a chapter out the criteria to confront the problem of little knowledge about the award. We all remember the maxim; a little knowledge is as dangerous as a complete lack of knowledge.

To start with there can't be any credible competition without clear criteria of determining the winners. It forms the basis of the competition. The other issue that arises is whether the criteria is credible and agreeable to all players. The aspect of agreeability is a matter of compromise since the needs of all players may not be easy to meet particularly among libraries, given the diversity of their extractions. This is why I believe that for any criteria to be accepted across board, its components must be reached consultatively and with the guidance of experts.

In the Maktaba workshop of 2009, the most consuming item for the participants was on the criteria for determining winners. Opinions were as divided as the different types of libraries. The focus of university libraries and public libraries, plus their service priorities can be very difficult to reconcile. It becomes very complicated when you want to judge school libraries and university libraries on the same scale. It is tantamount to declaring that school libraries will never win any award. It is the weight of these disparities that led to a very long list of criteria for winning the award. Most importantly, libraries basically compete in their respective categories save for when it comes to identifying the overall winner and special mention category. This arose from the impossibility of standardizing the criteria. The criteria adopted after a lot of push and pull from the participants was synthesized into a grading scale that looked into indicators; maximum score per indicator; library score and comments from the judge in question as follows

S/N	Indicator	Maximum Points	Points Awarded	Remarks
1.	Registration of library with KLA	3		
2.	Registration of librarians with KLA	2		
3.	Quality of collection (currency, relevance and diversity)	10		
4.	Accessibility of the library (physical location, signage and opening hours)	3		
5.	Adequate library space and comfort	3		
6.	Addressing cultural diversity	5		

7.	All round service provision (one-stop shop)			
8.	Saving knowledge for posterity (harnessing indigenous knowledge)	5		
9.	Staffing and staff development	5		
10.	Funding for the library and its activities.	5		
11.	Clear collection policy supported by an appropriate budget	5		
12.	Integration of ICT	3		
13.	Services that benefit the local community	6		
14.	Integrated search systems	3		
15.	Lending and delivery (user friendly services)	3		

16.	Promoting online access (e-journals, databases, internet)	3		
17.	Promoting local content (stocking local publications)	5		
18.	Qualified personnel employed in the library	5		
19.	Building safety standards	3		
20.	Continuous service improvement	5		
	TOTAL	100		

*Table 1: Criteria for determining winners in maktaba awards (Author, 2017)*

The competition criteria lie at the heart of any award. It defines the credibility and integrity of the exercise. More importantly in the criteria is the embodiment of the values promoted in an industry or profession. The values in my judgment are global and they can be summarized as follows in the case of maktaba awards:

- Participation in the professional association
- Building quality collection
- Putting in place operational policy instruments in the library
- Embracing ICTs in service delivery
- Promoting local content
- Serving the local community
- Continuous staff development
- Addressing cultural diversity
- Continuous service development

I pointed out in the last KLA Conference that took place in Nobe Hotel, Eldoret that one of the challenges to Maktaba which needs to be addressed in the next phase, was to do with the criteria. Personally after detailed study of the different awards, I feel that the list of the indicators is too long. No award has come up with 20 point criteria for assessment. Other awards have dealt with this scenario using different strategies.

A lesson from Florida Library of the year award indicates that it is possible to reduce the long list of parameters into a few overarching view of the values. The award has succeeded in this by focusing on three dimensions of all the possible parameter, that is:

- creativity and/or innovation in programming
- expansion and/or enhancement of service to all constituents and areas of the community
- leadership in implementing programs that can be emulated by other libraries

Though meant for public libraries, the parameters can apply in all types of libraries. It can very easily be adopted by Maktaba awards for the different types of libraries. The differences in libraries along these indicators would be very easy to discern more so in qualitative terms. It will also go a long way in helping avoid any possible bias by the judges.

The second strategy that has been used by library awards to reduce the number of many and confusing parameters is to have libraries compete in different lines of service delivery. The Florida Library of the year award has the following categories:

- i. Leader of the year award, to recognize those who have served the professional association better.

- ii. Librarian of the year award, to recognize contribution to librarianship in terms of leadership, research, commitment to free access to information among other issues.
- iii. Lifetime achievement award; to recognize librarian with long-standing distinguished record of professional achievement.
- iv. Library of the year award, which is based on the original three categories.
- v. Outstanding new librarian award; to recognize a new professional who has made significant contribution to librarianship.
- vi. Awards for embodiment of values, ideals and different endeavors in librarianship including:
  - Intellectual Freedom award
  - Library innovation award
  - Library change people lives award
  - Library Research award
  - Youth service Award
  - Marketing and public relations award.

The approach by the Library Journal is even more simplified and straightforward. The libraries are awarded in different lines as follows:

- Creativity in developing services and programs that can be replicated by other libraries.
- Innovation in introducing and supporting public access to computers and the Internet.

- Success in educating patrons in computer use.
- Use of technology to expand the reach of library services.
- Demonstrated community support.
- Sustained cooperation with other libraries.
- Partnerships with other agencies and businesses.
- Increase in library use, particularly by new users.
- Evidence of library's role as community center.

This last part of the library journal award speaks it all. Mapped against the Maktaba criteria, the parameters can be reduced into specific areas along which libraries can compete. These categories have not been exhausted in the discussion above. Indeed the categories are not meant to be static. They can change repeatedly to reflect the local professional priorities.

These examples serve to demonstrate that coming up with the criteria for competition can be very challenging. But some principles can suffice.

- i. The criteria chosen should symbolize the service delivery and development priorities of libraries and librarianship in the country. This is the question we should be asking ourselves in the Kenyan case.
- ii. When the criteria adopted is too lengthy, it means that there is lopsidedness in professional priorities in any jurisdiction.
- iii. The criteria adopted should be simplified and easily measurable. This will make judgment sta-

ndardized and unbiased.

- iv. The criteria should not be generalized but scaled to enable libraries compete in different dimensions of service delivery.
- v. The criteria must not be static. It should change continuously to reflect the changing priorities in the profession.

I have to admit that the founders of Maktaba Awards had a very difficult time agreeing on the award criteria. It was even emotive at some point. The differences emerged basically from the point that there are different types of libraries in Kenya. These categories are unequally developed in the country making it difficult to come up with a standard measurement scale. All the representatives of these types of librarians wanted to bring their agenda and fears on board. As a consequent, all suggestions which were tabled ended up being lumped into the current long list of 20 criteria.

I conclude the discussion on this chapter by recommending that the criteria be reviewed to among other things:

- Reduce the number of parameters. This can very easily be done by merging and redefining certain parameters. A case in this regard is the two parameters dealing with KLA: registration with KLA and registration of librarians with KLA. I would rather we consider the participation of the library in KLA activities, which are many including conferences. On the same note, the subject of ICT mainstreaming is also covered by criterion 12, 14 and even 16. These to me can be merged into leadership in the use of ICTs. I also confidently say that separating criterion 9 and 18 which all take about staffing will be daunting and separating them was outrightly unnecessary.

- The parameters should not try to compare the incomparable. This term was used by the Kilemi Mwiria taskforce when they called for the abolition of ranking of schools on performance. The taskforce argued that you cannot compare private schools with public schools on performance because of the different levels of their infrastructure endorsement. On the same note, it is unrealistic to try to compare university libraries with school or government libraries. The management, policy, financial and infrastructural support given to these categories of libraries differs fundamentally. This explains why academic libraries have won the best library award over the years. The approach to determining the best library of the years could be determined by some unique set of values applicable in all libraries.
- iii. The libraries should be awarded and compete along specific parameters as is the case with the library journal. We would then know the best library in terms of ICT application, working with communities and so forth. This will be helpful to the extent that other libraries may want to replicate these experiences in their work environments. Currently we may know what is actually very unique among the winning libraries. May be the special mention category solves this but it is not adequate.

Based on the discussion under this chapter, I expect that the first major exercise for the incoming Maktaba Awards management team and indeed the jury, as we usher in a new phase is to revise the judgment criteria and categories as much as possible. One aspect that is worth exploring in the next phase is whether the award can be extended to reward individual librarians or even stakeholders like publishers as is the situation in other jurisdiction. When we bring publishers in the picture, we would be conquering new territories in partnership. The publishers and booksellers might come on board to sponsor the programme.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### Award Categories

One of the problems facing librarianship in Kenya, is what I have called poverty in authorship. There are few articles written by our scholars, their quality is still a matter of debate. But this poverty clearly expresses itself when you look at book publishing in the profession. A participant in one of the last KLA annual conferences captured this very clearly when he argued that for over one decade the only book emanating from professional librarians in the country was the one authored in 1993 by scholars from Moi University school of Information Science. The book is entitled, Issues in Library and Information Studies. I refer to this book because it became my point of reflection when I was writing this chapter.

In the above mentioned book, Ochola D. (1993) broadly discusses the topic of library typology (types of libraries). In this article the author has given the different approaches for categorizing libraries. First, he posits that to categorize libraries we need to look at their history. As time goes by, new branches are created from the existing libraries. This gives the hierarchical connection (genus/species) kind of relationship in the existing libraries. The growth of new libraries from old libraries is a historical issues defined by socio-economic, political and technological transformations in the society. Historically, the issues can be explained in terms of the changing historical eras (epoch) that goes from antiquity to middle ages and to modern times. Along these eras, new institutions have arisen necessitating the redefinition of librarianship to cater for their information needs. During the antiquity, the libraries were meant to serve temple and governments, in the middle ages they were needed to serve the renaissance agenda and in modern times, democratic and academic institutions have redefined the nature

of our libraries. To cap it all, the author outlined the criteria for categorizing libraries as territorial distribution, location, ownership, type of users, administrative structure, status, subject of collection, scope of collection, nature of organization demographics of the users among other issues.

The approach by this author can be criticized for being too long and not giving any clear-cut boundary between the different types of libraries. Unless applied very selectively, the criteria will place one library in very many categories. This analysis fundamentally reflects how difficult it is to categorize our libraries today. So confounding is the topic that in 1970, the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of Unesco General Conference came up with a working paper on the types of libraries. Other authorities including Gupta J. (2010) and Richard R. (1998) have attempted writing inconclusively on this subject. Another important indicator as to the significance of library typology is the fact that many writings on librarianship have been aligned to the different types of libraries. Unfortunately, amidst the different writings there is very little concurrence as to the acceptable number of library types. This makes me believe that in any country or territory, the scholars have the freedom to decide on the type of libraries. There are however the dominant types that are found in every country, that is academic, public, school and special libraries.

I have given a quite long introduction to this chapter, simply because Maktaba award categories were guided by the different types of libraries. This in part explains the fact that libraries in any one category are unique in their priorities, activities and systems and may not be evaluated on the same scale by libraries on the other categories. This is the fact that people have not understood about Maktaba Awards. School libraries compete on their own just like academic and public libraries. In each category, the winners are sought and awarded equally. This I think should be made clear in future of maktaba Awards. It is only negated upon by the determination of the overall winner, which

assumes that the libraries were competing equally. The special mention is a different case. So which are the categories recognized by Maktaba awards? When maktaba was launched in 2009, the categories which were recognized were as follows:

- School libraries
- Special Libraries – Research and Corporate
- Government libraries
- Public and Community libraries
- Private libraries
- Academic libraries

Over the years, this list has been changing to accommodate new thinking in the area of library typology in Kenya. The attachment (appendix 1) gives the reality of these changes over the years. The year 2014 gives the broadest view of the categories of libraries recognized by the award. I have hereafter analyzed these categories.

#### **i) Academic Libraries**

It is generally assumed that the term academic libraries only refer to university libraries in Kenya. This is a misnomer which needs to be corrected in future if what the literature gives is anything to go by. College libraries are just as important as university libraries. They are also a segment of academic libraries. In the recent past, the country has witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number of higher institutions of learning. The country has 23 chartered public universities running hundreds of campuses; 29 private universities; 48 technical/vocational/trade schools and over 100 proprietary schools (www.wikipedia). All these institutions teach academic and professional courses (Courses based on theoretical knowledge). The libraries that support these institutions all qualify to be treated, theoretically as academic institutions.

In the first phase of Maktaba Awards, university libraries have assumed the status of all the other categories of academic libraries at the neglect of middle level colleges, both public and private. This is unfortunate given the fact that the number of middle level colleges (technical, vocational and trade based) both public and proprietary is much higher than that of the universities. Reports indicate that in most of these institutions, libraries are given inferior roles in the running of their programmes, some proprietary colleges operate even without libraries. Maktaba awards must therefore be used as an opportunity to raise the profiles of these libraries. I serve this sector better if in the coming awards we have categories for university libraries, public colleges and proprietary colleges.

### **ii) Public Libraries:**

Saur, G. (2010) argued that a public library is an organization established, supported and funded by community, either through local, regional or national government or through some form of community organization. Such libraries are equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic or employment status. I have given this definition because, it occurs to me that the line separating public and community libraries has not been very clear in maktaba awards. This definition makes it clear that public libraries are financed by the public and have their services made available for all. In Kenya, the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) occupies this space, though there are some shades of public libraries which match this definition. The service was established in 1965 through an act of parliament (Cap 225 Laws of Kenya). The act gave the service both public library and national library responsibilities in the country. Since its inception, the service has opened over 60 libraries across the country, if not to mention its mobile library systems. These libraries offer public library services wherever they exist. It goes therefore that in Maktaba awards, competition in this category is the preserve of KNLS branches. The winners

since the award kicked off is a clear demonstration of this fact.

### **iii) Community Libraries**

Community libraries serve many diverse functions and needs (beyond providing library services, resources and access to PC and internet facilities) being both venues for the reading and lending books as well as community development centers with strong focus on grass root education, empowerment and economic development, creating hubs for life changing community-based activities and programmes (Shrestha, 2013).

Maktaba awards have served among other things to sensitize people about the existence of community libraries in Kenya. These libraries are a silent force in the grassroots leading in change against a myriad of problems including poverty, lack of access to education and other basic services. It seems that drawing the clear line between community and public libraries is another issue to be addressed. This is not surprising because in the theory of library typology, community libraries arose from public libraries. The definition above serves to help resolve this. In Kenya community libraries are distinguished from public libraries by the coverage of their services, funding, their unique services and ownership. In most communities these libraries serve as resource centers, giving the locals not just reading materials, but also acting as meeting and social places. These libraries go beyond traditional library functions and help the communities where they work to deal with socio-economic and political issues. An example is the Mathare Youth Sports Association Library. The library is situated at the heart of Mathare Slums. In addition to library services, the library is used as a platform for providing life skills in beading, promoting youth sporting activities and running income generating activities. Therefore, the striking feature that defines these libraries in relation to other libraries is the fact that they are community focused, based and are funded by independent sources which are predominantly donors. Some of big

names in this category, going by Maktaba experience include Mathare Youth Sports Association Library; Dr. Ouko Community Memorial Library; Amani Kibera Community Library; Webb Memorial Library; Siaya Community Library; Coastal Resource Centre Mombasa and Slums Development and Resource Centers (SIDAREC) among other names. In the last maktaba competition, Kenya National Library Services Kibera was erroneously categorized and rewarded as a community library. This needs to be corrected in future.

#### **iv) School Libraries in Kenya**

According to Kenya Open Data, the country has 26,197 primary schools categorized generally as public or private (<https://www.open-data.go.ke>). According to the same source, the country has 4,188 secondary schools recognized as private and public. There are also 24 recognized international schools and 121 kindergartens and nursery schools. This statistics may not be fully up-to-date but it points to the magnitude and scope of the school library systems in Kenya.

School libraries are ideally found in schools where they support the curriculum, promote literacy development, and foster lifelong reading habits among children through the development of carefully selected print collections and in developed countries, infusion of educational technology in the learning process. A librarian in charge of such libraries need to ensure that the libraries have a wealth of educational resources for students and teachers in the form of online databases; eBooks; audiobooks; online catalogs; creativity and research tools; and professionally vetted websites that are available at school and home.

In Kenya, school library systems are not well developed due to lack of clear operational framework. Many schools are still divided on whether to grow their school libraries or continue with the culture of individual book ownership by the students. May be they need to borrow a leaf from the academic libraries in this regard. In the recent

past the government has been spending generously on the purchase of school books to primary schools without concomitant policy development on the management of these resources. It is however very encouraging that a few school administrators have seen this gap and are closing it down by employing qualified libraries to drive changes in their libraries.

Due to its rising significance, the school category has been recognized since the inception of Maktaba in 2010. Unfortunately, the category was dominated by the wealthy private and international schools such as Makini, Oswal, Brookhouse, Aga Khan and Maryhill school. These institutions have world class library services. To level the ground for competition in this sector, a new approach was introduced by Maktaba in 2013. From this time, private schools were put in a different category from public schools. It has seen a new group of winners in the competition. They include St. Francis Girls High School Mang'u Library; Nairobi Primary school and Precious blood Secondary School. It at least relieving to see a primary school beat secondary schools in the competition.

#### **v) Special Libraries**

This is one library perspective that needs to be belaboured otherwise it will remain confusing. Christianson (1976) argued that special libraries originated as libraries serving business, industry and government. Additionally, with the rising subject specialization in the universities and the need for technical services, these libraries took the form of technical libraries. Government libraries which served as on-the-spot working collection were some of the earlier special libraries. Other types of special libraries include legal and medical libraries. It seems that by their nature, the boundary of these libraries is limitless so long as professions, industry and institutions grow and specialize.

Special libraries are adapted to the different reader interest by restricting their collection to certain subjects or restricting their member-

ship to a homogenous group. At times these libraries just exist as departments in bigger public or academic libraries as special collections. They are identified with working collections and other specialized materials such as annual reports and other company documents, statistical data, government documents, pamphlets, clippings, and often company internal reports and correspondence which were accumulated in the course of business and were nontraditional materials for libraries.

The breadth of special libraries is very broad. To understand their true identities I believe the ownership view should prevail. The libraries exist as company libraries, scientific or technical libraries, government libraries, parliamentary libraries, bank libraries, newspaper libraries, Business libraries, research libraries and many more. By their ownership and users, these libraries are not very visible and they end up missing out on most professional activities. The libraries that have taken the status of special libraries need to be assessed further to see whether they fit in this class of libraries. It is my feeling that the real special libraries in Kenya need to be traced and documented. This is necessary particularly given that government libraries have been hived off this category. Some of the special libraries that have participated in Maktaba and won include Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development Library; National Museums of Kenya Nairobi Library; Communications Authority of Kenya Library; Institute of Human Resource Management Library; Nation Media Group Library; Kenya Airways; KNA&DS; William Gitobu Library and All African Conference of Churches Library. I look at this list leaves one wondering where the many industry and business libraries are hidden.

#### **vi) Government Libraries**

For many years in Kenya, government libraries operated without structure. The librarians did not have a department but existed administratively on which ever ministry they were posted to. This made the situation very challenging for librarians. Most of them stagnated on

job, they worked without budgets and eventually some resorted to irrelevant responsibilities. This situation persisted up to the year 2008 when the ministry of Public Service undertook broad-based reform of the government. Out of this, librarians were rewarded with a department to help address the many challenges they faced. At least since, they have somebody to blame if things are not going right. It might be early to judge the performance of the department, but it provides a basis of some pride to our librarians. Maktaba award has been one of the beneficiaries of the department. It has repeatedly sponsored the award.

Partly due to the recognition that the department has given Maktaba Awards and also to the rise in stature and number of government libraries, a competition category was created for them. This was with effect from the Maktaba of 2014. This was very unfortunate. Having worked as a government librarian for years, I blame this purely on the mindset of our librarians. We whine so much to the extent that most of us have lost the true values that should guide our professional work. The other problem is the lone ranger and siege attitude of the Association of Government Librarians (AGL). All these are temporary and I believe that with time, government libraries will take control of the Maktaba awards. I trust the ability of most government librarians to lead the sector in this direction.

I have looked at this chapter into details so as to open our eyes to the different types of libraries. By and large, maktaba has been undertaken in line with the globally accepted categories of libraries, but this may not strictly match the reality in Kenya. After all, the categories have not been static. I strongly feel that more needs to be done to reach out to the true representatives of special libraries; government libraries need to be brought on board and college libraries are not featuring anywhere, they need to be sought. Based on these there may be need to review these categories in the future Maktaba Awards and most importantly focus on mobilizing those sectors which have been obliterated in the last phase.

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### Sponsorship of the Award

Funding for libraries and library programmes is a fundamental discourse in the library literature. To survive and grow, libraries need funds. It is not to be forgotten that ability to raise funds was one of the criteria for winning the Maktaba awards. Almost all libraries complain of lack of adequate funds to finance their operations. Whether this has become a library rhetoric remains to be investigated. Ultimately, the question is how the library is dealing with the inadequacy. I have always taken the position that shortage of funds in libraries is just a myth in many cases. It is my take that many librarians are not doing enough to access the money at their disposal. They lack in strategy, lobbying and initiatives that can bring money on their tables. I once worked for a few months in the Ministry of Education library. This is a very active library visited by a number of teachers particularly during holidays. Unfortunately, this library did not have a budget. My moves and maneuvering to have a budget allocated to that library only landed me into trouble with people. Discouraged, I gave up and moved back to the National Archives, my former work station.

There are many strategies of funding libraries and library programmes. In recent years, many librarians have turned to nontraditional sources of funding to ensure that their library or library programmes will be able to provide necessary services with a high degree of excellence. ALA points out that some of the nontraditional strategies include library advocacy, fundraising activities, book donations, library friends and foundations, grants and online fundraising (<http://www.ala.org>). In addition, Carol (2011) brought the concept of a frugal librarian fighting to succeed in the face of diminished and limited resources. The author argues that librarians can withstand these downsides through doing

business differently by taking the road to partnerships, sharing, and innovating. The book further gives insights into supplementary funding sources including grants; save money by sharing resources, tap into grassroots movements to save community libraries; and preserve and enhance important library functions like programming, outreach, and staff development, despite a tight budget.

The discussion above is basically designed to shed light on the trends in funding libraries and their programmes today. It is also intended to provoke the hearts of our librarians to meditate deeply of funding strategies in their libraries. Maktaba awards are one of the biggest library programmes in Kenya and therefore its financing model is a major issue. This model draws directly from the existing library funding models. On the other side, Maktaba funding models can be compared to other established awards globally. The Library journal runs one of the most successful awards in librarianship throughout the world. It is also one of the most trusted and respected publication for the library community. The journal has been in existence for over a century, providing groundbreaking features and analytical news reports covering technology, management, policy and other professional concerns to public, academic and institutional libraries. This is communicated to their audience through print, digital and live content.

The involvement of Library Journal in library awards is a challenge to our publishers that they have a role to play in promoting library programmes. In the recent past, the library profession in Kenya has benefited substantially from the support of international publishers, particularly in organizing conferences. The notable cases include Thomson Reuters and Elsevier. Unfortunately, the support from local publishers is almost nil. This is attributable to one important factor - publishers in Kenya are more interested in schools than libraries. They sell their books to teachers and not librarians. This mentality must be confronted as we move forward. Hopefully when school libraries become stronger and professional in their operations, their librarians will take over book

acquisition roles from head teachers.

The leading sponsors of Library awards globally are the professional associations for librarians. Maktaba awards emanated from the German Library Association. By extension, KLA has been at the forefront in the management of Maktaba. Members of KLA executive committee dominate the Maktaba Management committee, were to sit in the board, sit in the jury and basically the KLA secretariat is partly in charge of Maktaba logistical issues. This is not to mention the financial contribution of Ksh. 250,000 that the association has been giving the award annually over the last five years. There are notable examples in this case. The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) has an outstanding award. The association has mobilized so many donors to award librarians in different categories, depending on the interest of the donor. The categories include:

- Leadership grant
- Distinguished school administrator award
- Distinguished service award
- Information technology pathfinder award
- Intellectual freedom award
- Innovative reading award
- Social justice award.

Every year, the American Library Association (ALA) honor people and institutions through an awards program that recognizes distinguished service to librarians and librarianship. The awards fall in different categories: book awards; grants and fellowships; professional recognition and youth media awards. It is also important to note that in America, different states have library association which also runs

awards. An example is the state of Florida. Other professional associations which have such awards include Canadian Library association

Library associations the world over are run through membership contributions, donations and sponsorships. The sponsors work with the associations on the basis of partnership. This partnership may be to help them promote some ideals or just to market themselves or their services. I have seen these sponsors being categorized as diamond or platinum sponsors. It is on this basis that most association websites' have links for partners. In Europe it seems that the notable sponsors of library awards include Capstone; Demco; Follet; Library Journal; Mackin and Libra.tech. I have really wondered whether these institutions can extend their operations to Africa and possibly partner with KLA. I possible case which I came across is the Melinda and Gates Foundation. The foundation is known to be doing a lot of work in Africa. I open this for the KLA Executive Officer to research out to it among other institutions.

The success of Maktaba Awards in the last phase is owed to sponsors or partners. We acknowledge and celebrate these organizations always for their support. They are the true friends of libraries in Kenya. Goethe-institut is the originator of the programme. The organization was started in 1951 as a successor to German Academy. The academy was founded in 1925 to train foreign German Teachers in Germany. Today Goethe-institute operates globally with 159 institutes promoting the study of German Language abroad and encouraging international cultural exchange and relations. The Goethe-Institut fosters knowledge about Germany by providing information on German culture, society and politics. This covers the exchange of music, theatre and literature. In Kenya like other countries, the organization provides a reading room, library, exam and language centers. Their support to maktaba is based on the appreciation of the role that libraries play in driving the world information society.

Once the systems had been set in place, Goethe-institut further determined the destiny of Maktaba awards by bringing on board almost an equal partner – Jomo Kenyatta Foundation. The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation was established by the Government in 1966 with the sole objective of advancing education and alleviation of poverty. The Foundation carries out this mandate through publishing quality, competitively priced publications as well as running a scholarships programme. The scholarships benefit bright but needy secondary school students in Kenya. It is in the spirit of promoting education that the Foundation works closely with libraries. It may also be in the appreciation that the libraries are their leading markets in the country. In the next phase, we have to appeal to the foundation to help us reach out to other publishers in the country.

Later, the department of government library services came on board to join Goethe and JKF in funding Maktaba. Compared to the other players, the department of government library services has a bigger role in promoting libraries in the country. The department of Government Library Services is under the ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts. It aims at enhancing services of government libraries, but I think this is a misnomer. The department should be working along other players to advance library policies in the country. It is currently in charge of hundreds of librarians employed by the government.

There are other partners whose roles can also not be downgraded. They include:

- i) Book Aid international which provides book donations to the winners.
- ii) Radio Africa which sponsors adverts in print and electronic media.
- iii) e-kitabu which provided tablets to some of the winners.

It needs to be emphasized that the heaviest burden under the award is shouldered by Goethe-institut, JKF then followed by KLA and DGLS. The money that these institutions donate is really what runs Maktaba Awards. It facilitates the work of the jury, management committee, publicity, the gala, financial awards to winners and all the other logistics. In the Maktaba awards of 2014, the contribution from these institutions went as follows: Goethe-institut (Ksh. 1,245,000/=); JKF (Ksh. 1,000,000/=); DGLS (Ksh. 200,000/=) and KLA (Ksh. 250,000/=). Most of the expenditures from these contributions are not in cash form but come as facilitations to various activities and inputs to the programme. Generally the overall winner goes home with ksh. 300,000; the best in each category get Ksh. 50,000; the second best in each category gets Ksh. 40,000 and the third best Ksh. 30,000.

In other professions, very progressive approaches have been embraced in raising funds for awards. These approaches may not be very easily applicable in librarianship, but they are worth considering. The problem is that most libraries have not understood what they stand to benefit from participating in maktaba awards. Once this become the case and participation become almost mandatory, then these methods can be considered. They are basically two and I draw examples from the marketing society of Kenya awards.

#### **i) Charging Participating Libraries:**

All companies entering the award are charged a fee. In 2014, the Marketing Society Awards charged all entrants Ksh. 5000. The entrants were considered at county levels. If Maktaba awards were to adopt this approach in 2014 and with 74 entries, makatba awards would have raised a whopping Ksh. 370,000. This assumes that all entrants would have paid, but this is very unlikely among our libraries, it may even scare participants, but it is worth exploring in future.

## ii) Raising money through the gala nights

Gala nights for the Marketing society Award is an opportunity to raise money. This starts with selling tickets for individuals and companies attending the ceremony. An individual ticket in their last gala went for Ksh. 5000. Not just the gate tickets, companies pay for tables where they will be seated. The cost of the table varies depending on the level of their sophistication. Some tables go for as much as Ksh. 50,000.

These strategies work well for the marketing society because the concerned companies understand that such occasions have marketing dividends. Thus the money spent is recouped in one way or the other. Libraries which offer social services in the society may not be able to justify this. The only way out is to bring on board the stakeholders which do business with libraries. The key stakeholders in this regard are the publishers and booksellers. My search has unearthed that these stakeholders are also involved in some other awards such as the Wahome Mutahi Literary Awards and the Jomo Kenyatta Prize in literary awards which is funded absolutely by publishers and booksellers. Experiences from other jurisdictions indicate that library associations also have book awards in the same line with the literary awards in Kenya. This confluence can be exploited in future to ensure that publishers and bookseller are brought within the radar of Maktaba.

I have argued elsewhere in this book that maktaba award categories have to be broadened as we move to the new phase. This is not just a logistical matter, it is financial. Where will we get the funds to finance more categories in the competition? Such a question is based on fear and must not be tolerated. My reading of the operations of different awards provided some lessons that we can borrow a leaf from. In most awards, the categories are not static. They change continuously depending on the availability of sponsors among other factors. One thing that has to be appreciated is that donors also have interests in the awards in different ways. When for example we are rewarding

librarians for ICT adoption, there are so many institutions interested in the development of ICTs in the country that can be approached to fund that aspect of the award. This is the same case with other areas such as leadership, intellectual freedom, and community service among other perspectives. Accordingly, what the awards do is to identify the categories and map them to potential donors. When a willing donor is found, the competitions are rolled out in that area. Maktaba can go in this direction. The management should take the earliest opportunity to identify the exact areas for the competitions in the second phase and start marketing them as we move forward.

## CHAPTER EIGHT:

### Good Practices in Librarianship

I want to open this chapter by congratulating the libraries that have won the awards in the last five years. I acknowledge all of them in whatever category whether they were number ones, twos or threes. These libraries are the hallmarks of good practices in librarianship in Kenya. They are models to be embraced by their peers who did not win or did not participate. The list of these libraries can be summarized as per the table below.

Winners/ Year	Academic Libraries	Public Li- braries	Special Libraries	School Li- braries	Community Libraries	Overall best
2010	United States University Library	KNLS Nairobi	Communication Commission of Kenya	Brookhouse International School	Webb Memorial Library	United States University
2011	United States University Library	Buru Buru Nairobi	Kenya National Archives and documentation Service	Oshwal Academy Nursery School	Amani Kibera Community Library	Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service
2012	Kenya Methodist University Library	Buru Buru Nairobi	National Museum of Kenya	Agha Khan Academy Mombasa Library	Coastal Resource Centre Mombasa	Kenya Methodist University Library
2013	Catholic University	Buru Buru Nairobi	National Museum of Kenya	Nairobi Primary School (public) and Makini School (private)	Amani Kibera Library	Catholic University
2014	Aga Khan University	Buru Buru Nairobi	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development Library	Nairobi Primary School (public) and Agha Khan Academy Mombasa (private)	Dr. Robert Ouko Memorial Library	Agha Khan University Library

Table 2: Summary of the best libraries by year for the first phase (Author, 2017).

All libraries are invited to benchmark their services and programmes. Reports indicate that after the gala, many librarians have

taken their time to visit these libraries as a matter of learning. As a matter of analysis, the following points can be said about the winners of the award.

- i. Some libraries have won the award repeatedly over the years. This list is led by the KNLS Buru Buru which has won four times in their category.
- ii. School library category was divided into two categories in 2013, that is private and public school libraries. If this did not happen then privately owned and highly funded schools would have taken the lead all through. It is also notable that there is no distinction as to secondary and primary schools.
- iii. The overall winners have been academic libraries all the years, except in 2012 when KNA&DS took the prize.
- iv. The category of government libraries has not attracted any entrants since it was introduced in the years 2013.

The readers will do further analysis of the table and normally come up with their own conclusions. However, the table is meant to promote and celebrate our model libraries in the belief that librarians who are serious with growth in their libraries may visit them for purposes of benchmarking. I am not saying that they are the best, since the judgment is only limited to a few libraries which entered the competition. However, by the scope of maktaba Awards they are considered the best.

Far from its facts, I raised this table at this juncture to emphasize the fact that the list of winners provide model case studies into the subject of good practices in librarianship, by Kenyan standards. This covers all shades of libraries, except the government library sector which has given the programme a wide berth. Over the years, makataba management committee has made attempts to document features which determine the success of the winning libraries. In addition, the criteria for the

competition, provides inkling into what is considered as best practices among libraries in Kenya. Some of the key themes in this regard can be analyzed along the following themes.

### **i) Participation in the Professional Association**

Every professional the world over has a duty to participate in his or her professional association. This is a mark of professionalism and is not a matter of choice. In many professions, tough laws have been put in place to advance this requirement. In Kenya you would not practice Law, medicine, engineering, accountancy and many other professions without being cleared by their professional bodies. In many instances this fact is enforced through accreditation. I have always said that this is the missing link in our association. KLA has been in existence for over 40 years, but it still struggles to secure total support and loyalty of its professionals. Some members have resorted to politicizing KLA activities. But the future looks bright in this respect. So far the current KLA executive committee has put on the table a proposed bill which will make it mandatory for all practicing librarians and indeed information professionals to be accredited by KLA. This step will herald a new era in the affairs of librarianship in Kenya.

Different studies have been carried out on the role of professional associations. One such study by Abdullah and Threadgold (2007) concluded that the formation of independent professional associations for professional practitioners is indispensable for the continued health and vitality of the profession throughout the world. This arises from the roles of professional associations which according to the authors include:

- Keeping members well informed and knowledgeable about professional trends globally.
- Applying universal procedures for individual and corporate accreditation (registration).

- Compelling adherence to professional standards of practice accepted by practitioners worldwide.
- Fostering international relations between professional association with the same aims and objectives.
- Ensuring continuous professional development of its members.
- Administering a comprehensive code of ethical standard and practice.
- Overseeing the training and certification of its professionals.

These ideals are in total harmony with the objectives of the future KLA as captured in the draft bill. Beyond them, I personally feel that building a strong professional association is the cure we have at hand for some fundamental challenges that librarianship faces in the country. They include:

- The profession is not regarded as being scientific.
- Professionalism of many practitioners leaves a lot to be desired.
- Low recognition of the nature and practice of the profession in the society and in industry.
- Lack of agreement on the fundamental responsibilities of the professionals.

It is therefore evident that maktaba has been used as platform to promote the ideals of a strong professional association. Membership to KLA is at the top of the list of maktaba evaluation criteria. It envisions that both the institution and individual librarians should be registered with KLA. It is highly encouraging that a number of participating libraries and their librarians were compelled into registering with KLA for the sake of participating in maktaba and I believe they will continue to be members.

## ii) Application of ICTs

Battles (2003) summarized the state of changes surrounding libraries in the 12th century. He argued that the libraries of the 21st century are no longer simply familiar repositories for books. They have changed and expanded, been rethought and redesigned. Libraries now provide an increasing range of different services, using a multitude of media, and reach a more diverse audience than ever before.

The computer revolution which commenced in the 1960s and the birth of digital library theory in the 1990s are some of the key realities that underpin the success of libraries today. Further to these, is the dynamic use of internet application in libraries. The technologies associated with these paradigms such as digital storage, connectivity, natural language processing, indexing and text formatting and many more are the dominant features of modern libraries. The online information services are fast becoming a reality in Kenya today, particularly among the academic libraries. These services are catalyzed by the momentum of computers, internets and the web.

Application of ICTs in libraries can be discussed under five themes: infrastructure; automation; networking; e-resources and e-governance. These themes can be analyzed as follows:

### a) Infrastructure

The application of ICTs in libraries is driven by having the right infrastructure in place. According to Rahul (2002), the technical infrastructure covers telecommunication networks, internal agency systems, cross-government systems, service delivery network access points (hardware) and internet access. Other traditional elements of this infrastructure include personal computers, telephone lines, mobile phones and Broadband among other factors. However, the emergence of internet has given a new impetus to the concept of ICT infrastructure. For a number of years, institutions maintained independent in-

frastructure and systems which worked independently and separately. This was actually unrealistic in terms of budget, manpower and knowledge. However, with the discovery of the internet, integral communication infrastructures have been developed that allow for workflow among agencies and provide them with the abilities to deliver services under the same umbrella.

In Kenya, the government highly recognizes the role of the internet in the modern economic and administrative systems. It has translated this into tangible and visible programmes, by putting in place infrastructure that takes the form of a government internet, connecting all government networks; an internal portal that provides access to centralized databases and common applications; cross governmental enterprise resources planning solution that automates the tasks at the heart of the public administration (finance, human resource, purchasing and logistics as well as managerial systems) and an e-government portal that provides single entry point to different organizations and their services. Added to the deployment of ICT officers to all ministries and government departments, ours is a truly ICT driven government. Unfortunately, the uptake of ICTs is poorest among government libraries. I blame this on lack of initiative among government librarians. On the side of the public, the internet penetration had significantly deepened over the years. This has resulted from mobile phone enabled access and the rise in wi-fi connections.

To start with, model libraries are those which subscribe to the internet and apply it in serving their users. In many cases libraries have internet access that is only limited to staff computers, neglecting the need to connect their users with the internet within their libraries. Classic use of the internet in libraries is evidenced in institutions like Aga Khan University where users are being issued with tablets and ipads just to ensure that access and use of internet is deepened among their users. The cost of internet access, measured in terms of broadband has also become highly manageable and affordable in Kenya these days.

### **a) Library automation**

Literature indicates that automation of libraries began in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the USA (Laxminarayan, 1986). This was after the World War II. Unfortunately, almost 100 years down the line most of our libraries have not embraced it. Automation is defined as the application of computers in the performance of routine operations in the library. These operations include cataloguing, circulation, acquisition and serial control. The activities consume a lot of staff time, are repetitive and monotonous.

The basis of any library automation programme is the acquisition of an integrated library management system. These systems are very many out there. They are either commercial, open source or custom made. Some of these systems are meant to be free, but the brokers have made the logistical costs to be very high. A case in point is the Koha which is ideally open source, but the promoters sell it at hundreds of thousands of Kenyan shilling. In the face of these realities our libraries and institutions, particularly government continue to perceive these systems as being too expensive. But I want to suffice it by saying that no library can be successful in today's information environment without embracing integrated library management systems.

### **b) E-resources**

Electronic publishing technologies have transformed the nature of modern libraries. In addition, digitization programmes are getting popular by the day. These trends are aided by the new developments in technology including the emergence of devices such as book readers. This trend has also come with very new approaches to the acquisition of the e-resources - Open access, online distribution, pay-per-view, print on demand and subscription. These trends have transformed the nature of modern library collections from being print to digital. This has come with so many advantages including greater convenience for users in terms of quick access and enormous navigational freedom;

reduced paper work, shelving and storage for libraries and expanded markets for publishers (Milanova, 2011).

Any library that persists in maintaining print collection is treating its users to a gross disservice. Whereas the web provides an immense collection of e-resources, they are not suited to any particular context. This is why, in addition, libraries should focus on building their own collection of e-resources. At Aga Khan University, e-resources account for over 70% of library collection and this trend is seen in most other libraries. It is this framework that KNA&DS is undertaking a massive digitization work. The future of libraries is digital resource collection and the movement towards this must start henceforth in all our libraries.

### **d) E-governance**

Wang (2001) predicts that by the year 2020, e-government will be an integrated part of the public sector activities, covering all business processes, service development and communication processes. The concept of e-government is traced to Britain where in 1957 the government sought the use of computers in its offices. In 1980s the government of the United States of America, through the congress enacted the Paper Reduction Act, which among other things, required government agencies to transit from paperwork to electronic culture by giving the public options of submitting, maintaining and disclosing information electronically (Al-adawi, Yousafzai, and Pallister, 2005). This emerging trend became more pronounced in the 1990s following the development of the internet and the World Wide Web (WWW). It is along these lines that Kenya came up with the e-government strategy of 2004 and the ICT policy and strategy of 2006. Xiaolin (2005) put this transformation into perspective by arguing that as a component e-governance library services would switch from physical reading rooms to websites with mainstream services transfers from passive reading and circulation to active and interactive personalized services

such as digital reference, selective dissemination of information, specialized portals, virtual reading rooms and information literacy. Generally, e-governance has taken the digital library perspectives to a higher level. The state of libraries along these theories requires that modern libraries should embrace the following:

Libraries should have web presence in form of websites, web pages or mere links to their institutional websites. This has become a normal feature of university libraries.

The libraries should use their websites as platforms of communicating, providing services and resources to the users. The services that can be provided on the websites include reference, current awareness, circulation, user registration, resource sharing and information literacy programmes. On the other side, the resources that can be provided through the websites include library catalogs, digital archives, digital repositories and news items.

The libraries are expected to provide their services remotely. This has been considered as transactional presence. Once the library has digital objects and databases on its webpage, the users should be able to access such objects from outside the library (their rooms or families). To this end such service will be available to users 24/7. Users will not be expected to come to the library to partake of reference services and to pay fees among other services.

Through the websites, the library should be able to connect its users to external sources of information which may be databases, similar services providers and institutions. This is regarded as networked presence of the library. Users will be treated to a wide scope of information resources and services.

The website should offer the library the capacity to engage with users. This is possible through what has been called web 3.0 in contemporary literature. It means that the library should use web 3.0 tools

such as community networks, blogs, web forums, text messages (micro democracy), newsgroups and e-mail lists to engage with and consult its users over matters of decision making.

These are the features that make university libraries special. They have made efforts to mainstream most if not all these requirements. In the end they have profoundly increased value for their users. These libraries are available to users remotely and no longer face serious problems of space. The synergy of all these aspects of ICTs and their application in libraries make for ideal digital libraries which marks the focus of modern libraries. University libraries are on the anticipated radar, however much work needs to be done by the other shades of libraries. The unconquered potential among government libraries needs to be harnessed forthwith.

### **iii) Working for communities**

In modern times, engagement with communities is not a choice but the norm for libraries. It is one of the paradigm shifts in our libraries. In the developed world this engagement is based on the prevailing social, economic, and environmental issues and may run with other partners. It can take the form of:

- Promoting access to educational and training opportunities.
- Job hunting for locals.
- CV writing for the locals.
- Business incubation services.
- Entrepreneurship promotion.
- Accommodating people affected by disasters.
- Free internet access.

- Dealing with homelessness.
- Play grounds for teenagers.
- Early learning centres.
- Anti-povrty programmes
- Being change agents etc

These trends indicate just how far the library community has come in terms of engaging with its communities. These initiatives help libraries connect more with the community in a manner that goes beyond the traditional outreach services. This has been called turning outwards, which means making the community the reference point of service delivery by helping members of the community to fulfill their aspirations.

Whereas this is the domain of public and community libraries, other types of libraries have not been left behind. They all appreciate the fact that libraries are not just custodians for books and other resources, they are meant to be forces of change in the societies where they exist. This trend is evidenced in different ways among the libraries in Kenya.

- i. Catholic University Library provides information literacy programme to teachers in Nairobi as a matter of community service.
- ii. The Dedan Kimathi University organizes education days where schools in the neighborhood are invited and sensitized on the benefits of education.
- iii. Most community libraries serve the community's needs for meeting places and act as social places for the youths in their neighborhood. This is the same case with most other community libraries.
- iv. Mathare youth sport association, uses its library for

life skills development on areas like beading and other arts and craft activities.

- v. The Aga Khan University Library has helped with the setting up of different hospital libraries across the country through book donations.

These are lessons which our growing libraries can learn from. I consider these gestures as being invaluable in marketing of libraries and promoting information work in the society.

#### iv) Policy Issues

The word “policy” is not a tightly defined concept but a highly flexible one, used in different ways on different occasions. Webster’s dictionary has a number of closely related definitions to the word as follows:

- A definite course or method of action selected (by government, institution, group or individual) from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and, usually, to determine present and future decisions.
- A specific decision or set of decisions designed to carry out such a course of action.
- Such a specific decision or set of decisions together with the related actions designed to implement them.
- A projected programme consisting of desired objectives and the means to achieve them.

In the library context, different policies are necessary to guide operations. Maktaba awards laid emphasis on collection development policy and ICT policy. However a functional library can have a diversity of policy instruments. These instruments may exist separately or in one single document. In the whole they should give procedures and guide-

lines of different service and activity areas. They cover the following areas:

- Collection development
- Budgeting policy
- Ordering policy
- Cataloguing policy
- Processing policy
- Circulation policy
- Stocktaking policy
- Copyright policy
- Users feedback policy
- ICT policy
- Security policy
- User conduct and study atmosphere policy
- Evaluation policy

The list is not exhaustive as many source point out. Many other areas can be uncovered by looking at the at the different policies that have been developed by different libraries. They are variously available in the internet. The form of these policies also varies widely. They cover instruments like laws, work plans, procedure manuals, rules and regulation and standards, so long as they become authoritative in the organization.

At very basic levels, a library needs an annual work plan and a bud-

get. Every librarian should insist on this. It is also unimaginable how many of our libraries have operated for very many years without basic policies in areas of collection development, circulation, stocktaking and processing. Over and above these policy dimensions, the impetus brought by ICTs has made Library ICT policies indispensable – not the institutional ICT policies. These are service delivery values that should be promoted through maktaba among all libraries.

There are many benefits associated with policies, but personally I have found them to be significant tools for lobbying with the management to support the library. Once a policy is accepted and adopted in the organization barriers in their implementation is half resolved. All successful libraries, particularly academic libraries have their operations hinged on policies which are well documented. In many cases, ICT policies for the institutions were not clearly domesticated or customized for library needs. I challenge libraries to insist on their own ICT policies. The absence of library policies should be blamed squarely on the librarians. These are fundamental professional requirements which any trained librarian should aspire to. Therefore as we move forward, our libraries will be expected to have these policies in place.

#### **iv) Continuous staff development**

Staffing problems in libraries is a historical problem. In the 80s, the country did not have adequate number of trained personnel to work in libraries. There were very limited training opportunities and programmes in the country. During this period, many people had to travel overseas to get diploma papers and other qualifications to work in the library. In the late 80s and afterwards, the void was filled by Moi University and Kenya Polytechnic. Today, library courses are taught all over and there is no shortage trained professionals. Indeed the profession has to open up opportunities to create employment for its graduates.

Maktaba looked at staffing issues in two perspectives – employment

of qualifies staff and their continuous development of the employed staff. In a few cases, libraries which do not have trained librarians had the courage to apply for the award. I met Intilal community library in Taita Taveta and Mathare youth sport association library. The people in charge such libraries are trained in other discipline and after the donor subjecting them to some local training, it is assumed that they have the necessary skills. This should be corrected by having specifically packaged courses to such people.

The area of continuous professional development is more challenging. The argument is that after employment people still need to grow professionally. This is not just a requirement for promotion, but basically an issue of performance at work. This is the reason modern organizations have come up with human resource development units. It is in recognition of the fact that upon employment, staff needs to maintain, update, develop and enhance their professional skill, knowledge and attitudes. In the library profession, there are different opportunities for ensuring this. They include conferences, workshops, seminars, short courses and academic training. A number of institutions exist to offer these opportunities. Active participation in KLA activities will guarantee so many opportunities. University of Nairobi Library has also established a number of courses of this nature, just like a few consultancies that we have in Kenya.

All institutions appreciate the need for professional development. As a government policy, every employee has to be accorded at least 5 days training every year. Modern libraries are expected facilitate their staff to pursue opportunities for continuous professional development. This should start by making available budgets for training. But librarians should look beyond their institutional budgets and fight for scholarships and joining bodies which can guarantee them some professional training.

### v) Continuous Service Improvement

Continual Service Improvement (CSI) is not a new concept. Organizations have talked about it for many years but for most the concept has not moved beyond the discussion stage. In any organization, CSI embodies a constant drive toward Service Improvement without negative impact on existing services or associated cost, early recognition or notification of any weakness or vulnerability of a service, and feedback on service improvement opportunities ( .....

According to SLIC (2007) self- evaluation is the basis for ensuring CSI. Through self-evaluation, libraries are able to:

- Recognize strengths in the work it is doing or has done.
- Identify areas for improvement and drawing up plans for action
- Sharing best practice and establishing benchmarks for services to aspire to
- Reporting on the quality of provision to stakeholders

To undertake this self-evaluation exercise, the library needs to identify the indicators of quality performance and this is dictated by its mission and objectives. Many theories have been developed to explain the service delivery parameters. In libraries, the LibQual theory has taken root. LibQual based evaluation generally looks into different parameters including access, resources, websites, staffing, research help, services, facilities and user satisfaction (Miller, 2008). These parameters are all embodied in the in the maktaba award criteria. It is on this not that I consider the maktaba award criteria as a framework for library evaluation and development.

It is only when libraries give attention to continuous serve improvement that they can measure up to the fifth principle of Ranganathan

which states that a library is a growing organism (Barner, 2011). By giving attention to CSI, the libraries will be more focused on their service delivery need and better satisfy their users and other stakeholders. The question about CSI within the framework of maktaba was not easy to operationalize. However any librarian who was asked about their future plan would have so much to say. This could be a basis of judging those libraries which are serious about CSI. The situation made better where the library had documented their ambitions in the form of work plans.

CSI need be taken seriously by our libraries and I noted that it has taken root in most parts. The culture of libraries recycling their work plans year in year out must be condemned and stopped. Every New Year must bring new perspectives in services for any library. Many libraries which were participating in maktaba more than ones had adopted this trend. They were striving to improve in their weak areas by embracing more ICTS, the look of their libraries and offering services to the community. The focus of libraries in this regard needs also to be guided. Priorities according to my assessment can be summarized as follows in line with the different categories of libraries:

Academic libraries are favoured on all matters ICT without which there can be no adequate resources for their operations. Their resources must be of high quality. The libraries are central to the operation of the university meaning they have to be funded and resourced adequately by high quality staff among other issues. On these perspectives, they may not be compared to other libraries.

Public libraries represented by the branches of Kenya National library service operates under a very strong policy framework. Can be compared to no other library (may be community library) when it comes to serving the needs of the community. Their opportunities for funding are broad (fees, government and donors). Because of focusing on the entire public, public libraries are backward in some modern li-

brary trends in technology. The breadth of their collection is broad to allow them provide for the professionals, the young and the disadvantaged groups. Space is also a priority to them.

School libraries, are an upcoming force in the library sector. Schools are hearkening to the need to have modern libraries. They are fast employing trained librarians, joining KLA, embracing technology and streaming their library services and activities. This is to me the sector to watch. They may be disadvantaged in almost all indicators, but on continuous development I give them some credit.

Community libraries operate in a very unique fashion and are generally guided by the dictates of the donor. They are generally inclined to the needs of the local people. It is not very uncommon to find them engaging in life skills provision instead of information literacy. This has given them an edge over other libraries in winning awards for special mention.

## CHAPTER NINE:

### Maktaba Awards in the Future

The maktaba award to me is special opportunity to study the Kenyan library sector in a more detailed way. It has afforded the profession a chance to take stock of its strengths and weaknesses and further to use the programme for quality improvement purposes. This book is in itself an examination of all the issues around maktaba Awards in a critical way for future planning not just for the award but also on matters of professional development of librarianship in Kenya. To succeed in this, I have dedicated this chapter to making my personal submissions on the changes and improvements that should be considered in Phase Two of the programme. The recommendations are gleaned from the lengthy analysis in the preceding chapters and different proposals that have been various tabled by the KLA Executive Committee and the maktaba management board. They include:

#### i) Strengthening Maktaba Awards Organs

As I believe should work independently but complementarily. At least KLA has recognized the need to have the organs reconstituted. As this is done, these challenges should be addressed conclusively to enable the work for the next phase start on a strong foundation.

#### ii) Redefining the Role of KLA in Maktaba Awards

It is common knowledge that KLA has been at the periphery of things in all the entire Phase I of the awards. This is in spite of the agreement across board that Maktaba is a KLA project. Having participated in maktaba at different stages and capacities, I attribute this to a few issues. One KLA did not originate the award idea, it inherited it from one of the donors. This means that it needed time to fully grapple

with its realities. Two, KLA is a minor contributor in financing Maktaba activities. Its contribution has only been one quarter of what the major partners contribute. This matter is compounded by the fact that every contributor independently and jealously manages its contribution, since maktaba does not have a bank account. It nearly amounts to the case of big brother versus the small brother. It is under these circumstances that KLA cannot even imagine that it can control the logistical issues. Lastly, the role of KLA in maktaba is not defined in any document, but only implied verbally in meetings.

The above scenarios have conspired to make KLA impotent in many issues. Therefore in the next face, terms of engagement between KLA and other partners and the clear roles of KLA should be clarified. In the past, KLA has failed to meet the expectation of other partners particular when it comes to bringing new donor on board. However, today the effort the executive officer is making by writing proposals to donors is encouraging. What we have today in my assessment is a rejuvenated KLA with good vision and honest commitment to the growth of the association. As we move forward, the role of KLA should be more defined but above all, the association should rally more partners, enhance marketing and publicity for the award and take center stage in all activities through its executive committee. It should steer the constitution of the new organs as the starting point, in consultation with the board.

#### iii) Review of the Award Criteria

I made a lot of comments on this subject in chapter six. I did this in comparison with other awards out there. My recommendation for the review of the award criteria is in accord with the global practice. In all the awards the criteria is flexible and reviewed continuously to depict the changing priorities and realities in the profession. Maktaba awards should also measure up to this. The ushering in of a new phase provides a very pregnant opportunity to review the award criteria. To cap it all, the following suggestion should be considered:

The number of parameters for determining the best library should be reduced to not more than 5 elements. Florida Library of the year award merely looks at three parameters to determine the library of the year: creativity, expansion of services and replicable programmes. Most of the parameters can be merged into very few items by looking at the bigger picture. It is also noted that the weighting of the parameters was very arbitrary and not supported by any logical arguments.

We should consider rewarding winners in different aspects of service delivery in librarianship. The library journal is a good case study in this regard. It looks at the best libraries in terms of issues like application of ICTs, community service, Cooperation and partnership and information literacy among other issues. With this approach, replication of these trends can be easily replicated in other libraries.

Attempts should be made to reward individual librarians. This means that a decision has to be made. A lesson in this regard can be drawn from the Florida Library of the Year Award.

In some jurisdictions, the sponsors dictate the criteria of the award by channeling their awards to specific lines. But the jury, as the house of experts usually has a significant say on the criteria. This is why in some awards there are different juries to represent different types of libraries or line of professional practice. All these perspectives should be considered in reviewing the criteria for the next phase of maktaba.

#### **iv) Categories of Libraries**

As we all realize, the competing libraries in maktaba have been put in categories and the categories have been evolving since its inception. These categories are precisely in tandem with the traditionally approved approaches in categorizing libraries in literature. The traditional broad categories also continue to give rise to more specific categories as the society develop. This gives a field composed of genus and species categories. This has been captured well in maktaba where

new categories of libraries have been introduced along the years. Government libraries were just introduced in the last year and at one point private and public school libraries were to be separated. These changes are driven by two realities: to level the field for competition by not ‘comparing the incomparable’ and to acknowledge some distinguished category of libraries. The most comprehensive list of libraries that should be considered in the competition was captured in the KLA chairman’s recommendations for the review of maktaba in the next phase. The list was as follows:

- a) Academic libraries (universities, university colleges, and national polytechnics)
- b) Research libraries (public, private, international research institutes)
- c) Special libraries (NGOs, company, business, family, personal)
- d) College libraries (tertiary colleges, polytechnics and training institutes)
- e) Secondary school libraries (public and private)
- f) Primary school libraries (public and private)
- g) Public libraries
- h) Government libraries
- i) Community libraries

It may be argued that some categories are invisible in the Kenyan scene, but with proper marketing they will be unearthed. As a principle, for purposes of competition, the categories should be as specific as possible. A case in point is the academic category which should be opened up into college and polytechnic libraries, away from university

libraries.

#### v) Devolution of the award.

Maktaba award idea is fast penetrating to the deepest depths of the library sector in Kenya. Some branches have already picked up. They are silently conducting the competitions albeit in a small way. Along these developments, there is agreement across board that the awards should be cascaded to the counties in accordance with our new constitution as promulgated in 2010. In this, the board has no option but to comply, but it might have to be implemented gradually starting with branches. I have always thought that in the context of the new constitution, KLA branches should be redefined in line with the counties. All this notwithstanding, a framework for devolving maktaba awards should be worked out and gradually implemented in the next phase. In countries like the USA a number of states have independent library awards. In Kenya, the marketing society of Kenya has embraced county based award system. These are relevant case studies for the management of Maktaba awards.

#### vi) Award Process

I have dedicated chapter four to an analysis of the maktaba award process. I have done this by illuminating the entire chapter with examples from across the globe. In the same chapter I have recommended possible improvements which I may not revisit here. Instead, I have raised this point to look at some recommendations in this book which will have a bearing on the future awards process, if they were to be adopted. They include:

- a) Devolving the awards to the counties will mean a readjustment to the calendar of events to accommodate branch competitions.
- b) Reconstitution of the organs of maktaba may affect the pro-

cess particularly at the level of execution and assignment of responsibilities.

- c) Giving KLA and its AGM a stronger say in the award process. It has been proposed that the AGM needs to approve the management committee and calendar of activities for every year.
- d) Topical based competitions in the awards, instead of comparing all libraries along the 20 parameters may also affect the process.
- e) Shortlisting of libraries to be evaluated will also affect the process.

In my closing remark I therefore throw the challenge that the award process be reviewed in consideration of these factors. It is becoming very clear that when all these are considered, organizing maktaba awards may be a full time and year-long activity in the profession.

#### viii) New partners

This is the single most important challenge to the award as we move to the new phase. The challenge is more eminent in the phase of the fact that this book proposes the broadening of the scope of the award to the counties, along competing libraries and even in terms of categories. To cope with this momentum, the programme needs more resources and therefore donors. The overdependence on a couple of donors is inimical to the proposed renewal of the programme as proposed in this book. It also has to be appreciated that the task of finding new partners is no mean. Over the years, the Executive Officer of KLA has been making attempts in this regard without any tangible success. As a matter of experience with the first phase, the partners on board can play a bigger role in bringing other partners on board. Further, as was advised by Oduo in one of the management committee meetings, when dealing with donors, the higher the number of requests sent out for assistance,

the better the chances of success in finding any donor at all. This is a challenge that the KLA executive officer should take up in a measurable way as we approach this new phase.

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