Building a community library as an educational resource in an underprivileged neighbourhood

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SIDAREC – youth project

- Slums Information Development And Resource Centres (Nairobi, Kenya) 1996-
- 2 community offices: Majengo Pumwani and Mukuru Kwa Njenga
- Home page: http://www.sidarec.org/
- Vision (from home page):

  Empowered people from disadvantaged communities with easy access to information, resources and other opportunities that enable them to lead decent lives based on social justice ideals

4 main programme areas

- Early childhood education

    (pre-school, legal support, counseling, reading tents ...)

- Entrepreneurship

    (business training, loans ...)

- Youth reproductive health and sexuality

    (clinic, HIV/AIDS, teenage prostitution, sports ...)

- Community media & ICT (computer training, cyber café, Ghetto 99.9 FM ...

... and library with recording studio

- Objective:
  - To improve standards of living in the community through accessing vital information and resources
  - To promote library services in the slum areas

- Situation 2004
  - Books (donations from Books for Africa)
  - Library building
  - Infrastructure

The aims of the library

- Create a conducive environment for learning
- Equal access to textbooks (primary/secondary)
- Academic material for students
- Infotainment rather than entertainment
- Leisure books
- An alternative meeting place

The library serves:

A community of some 80,000 inhabitants (population density of about 43,000 per square kilometre, 65% under 30), 5 secondary schools, 14 primary schools, students in colleges, technical institutions and universities

Cooperation

- E-mail to IFLA asking for partners of cooperation (2004)
- Cooperation based on the following principles:
  – Equal access to information
  – Modern ICT solutions
- Stressed the need for basic library training

Cooperation SIDAREC/OUC

- Memorandum of understanding October 2005. OUC to assist in:
  - The organising of books and other documents
  - Collection development
  - Library management
  - Outreach activities
  - Promotion of reading and literacy

Our philosophy

Open source software

+ Internet access
_____

= Narrowing the digital divide
_____

Digital strategy

- Internet connection
- Website for SIDAREC and the library
- Web-based library automated system
- Focus on adding Internet resources to compliment the collection

- Constraint: Lack of money!

Library automated system

Open source software:
- – Low costs (in principle free)
- – No vendor lock-in
- Our choice: Koha
  - – Internet based
  - – Easy to download records (Z39.50)
- SIDAREC OPAC

Achievements so far

- Conducted training (cataloguing/classification/library system/ library administration)
- Home page for organisation and library
- Strategic plan
- Acquisition plan
- Cataloguing completed
- Secured funding
- Have started buying textbooks

What remains?

- Responsibility of running Koha to be transferred from Norway to Kenya
- Collection development:
  - Purchase local material
  - Internet resources to supplement traditional collection (newspapers, journals, OA)
- Outreach activities/Promotion of reading and literacy (Already offers: puppetry, theatre, video shows, youth/elder forum for intergenerational learning and story telling)

Establish branch?

Mukuru Kwa Njenga:

Youth media lab and library
(recording studio for drama and
video production, radio, stage ...)

Learn more from:

Television programme
(YouTube)