THE CHANGING ROLE OF NaFIRRI LIBRARY
AND WHAT IT HAS DONE TO STAY VIABLE

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Abstract
NaFIRRI Information and Data Centre is charged with the processing of information, and documenting, repackaging and disseminating research information to stakeholders while ensuring that all fisheries- and aquaculture-related research information in Uganda is preserved for future use. The paper examines some of the activities in which the Information Centre is currently engaged in order to meet the information needs of its various stakeholders, such as repackaging of scientific information, factsheets, posters, fish in press publications and community barazas. The Centre carried out needs assessments in five districts of the Kyoga basin Lakes in Eastern Uganda and Lake Wamala in central Uganda. The paper discusses the role of the library in data librarianship.

Keywords: Libraries, East Africa, data, fisheries, aquaculture, Uganda, community barazas

The NaFIRRI (National Fisheries Resources Research Institute) Library was established in 1948 to provide information to research scientists in East Africa. The centre has evolved from a small library to a modern Information and Data Centre. It is charged with processing documenting, repackaging and disseminating research information to stakeholders while ensuring that all fisheries and aquaculture related research information in Uganda is preserved and conserved for further use. The Library is referred to as the heart of the institutes because it contains all the institute's reports from the time of its establishment to the present date. It also contains reports of the first surveys done in 1920's on Lake Victoria, Albert and Kyoga.

The role of the Library /Information and Data Centre is changing partly because the library must continue to meet the needs of its various stakeholders in order to stay viable. According to Jennifer C. Hendrix (2010), in order to remain relevant, any institution, including one as established as a library, must evaluate its place in a world. Fortunately, many library professionals recognize this and are driving adaptations designed to ensure that libraries remain an integral part of our society's commitment to education, equity, and access to information.

The Information and Data Centre is currently carrying out several activities in order to meet the information needs of its stakeholders. This paper examines some of those activities such as digitization, repackaging of scientific reports submitted to the Library, informational brochures, factsheets, posters, publications, and arranging community barazas. The Centre carries out information needs assessment surveys of the different lakes where the scientist of the Institute work. The surveys have helped identify some of the research areas for the scientists

Information Needs Assessments
An information needs assessment using focus group discussions was done in four Lake Kyoga Basin districts: Amolator, Kumi, Soroti and Buyende. Stakeholder information needs were identified in fisheries, water environments, aquaculture and socioeconomics.

1. Information Needs For Fisheries
    a) Status of fish stocks
    b) Diversity of aquatic organisms
    c) Breeding seasons & nursery grounds
    d) Types & sizes of fish landed

e) Fishing effort
f) Types and size of fishing gears and methods

2. Water Environments
a). Nutrient dynamics
b). Pollution
c). Food of fishes (algae & invertebrates)
d) Water weeds

3. Fisheries Socioeconomics
a) Income of fishermen (savings, investments)
b) Service facilities
c) Investment opportunities
d) Livelihoods options
e) Credit facilities
f) Marketing strategies
e) Fishing inputs
g) Export data

4. Aquaculture
a). Water environment parameters
b). Stocking rates
c). Pond management practices
d). Fish feeds
e). Marketing aquaculture fish
f). Farming systems (pond & cage, etc.)

5. Emerging Issues
a). Climate changes
b). Study of productivity of Lake Bisina
d). Research in natural fertilizers of the lake using cow dung

Requests To the Government
a)   Provision of legal sizes of nets at subsidized prices
b)   Removal of deleterious fishing methods
c)   Stopping entry of illegal gears into the country
d)   Stopping arrest of people with young fish and reselling them
e)   Building fish markets
f)   Training BMU's on cage culture & fish farming
g)   Consider fishermen under NAADS (National Agricultural Advisory Services) program
h)   Control the of number of fishermen

Results Of the Information Needs Assessment Done In Lake Wamala
Twenty-five fishermen do both fishing and farming. They fish at night three times a week and farm
on the other days. When asked whether fishing or farming brought in more money, they replied that fishing
was more lucrative. They also said that the need to diversify and find alternative livelihoods drove them to do
both. Most fishermen admitted to facing many challenges in fishing and had to farm because fish have become
scarce in the Lake. They have to watch weather patterns and also face the problem of floating islands. Money
from fishing is put into farming and they get a big harvest, though most of the cultivation done is on small
scale. Crops cultivate include maize, coffee, and tomatoes.

Among the problems mentioned were floating weeds or suds and lack of equipment (timber, nets and hooks).
The fishermen also complained about getting fake seeds from NAADS and shops; having no irrigation
systems; lack of transport for getting produce to market; no fertilizers; no agricultural officers to attend to

their needs; and fake pesticides. They said they prefer to have agricultural officers visit them physically on their ground. They belong to farmer groups, but don't often visit each other because of lack of transport.

Other sources of information apart from farmer to farmer visits include radio (Radio Sun, Radio Samba, Mubende Radio); NAADS programs over the radio; group training from NAADS; and contact from service providers, usually on the telephone. Forty-one fishermen had radios while 37 had mobile phones.

All the fishermen agreed to share information with each other whenever they had something to share. They share information on the prices of fish and their BMU (Beach Management Unit) chairman updates them with current price information. They also receive information through agricultural scientists; from the information center in Mityna; and from attending annual agricultural shows.

Methods	%
Radio	22.5
Extension staff	5.6
Group leaders	5.9
Meetings/ barazas	62.2
Local leaders	3.8
Total	100

Table 1. Methods for receiving information from Lake Wamala.

Asked whether they had access to loans, they said they do but the interest rates are high and the periods of repayments are short. They have cooperative savings and credit, but there is little money and they can't borrow. 3Thirty-three said that they had ever taken loans. Of the benefits they get from NaFIRRI, they mainly gain knowledge that they share with others.

Information needs identified included information on crop Input, alternative livelihoods; low cost irrigation systems; health and health facilities; fish markets and prices; and farm inputs. The fishermen in farmer groups asked for help so that they can give their members loans, and also requested that taxes on fixed inputs be reduced.

Information Retrieval For Scientists From the Online Databases
The library is involved in selective dissemination of information and information retrieval for scientists from the online databases. During the period from July 2011 to June 2012, the Library downloaded 74 articles for its researchers.

Repackaging Of Information
The library is involved in repackaging research information through brochures, factsheets, booklets, calendars, etc. Published articles related to fisheries are extracted and repackaged into booklets for scientists.

The library is also involved in outreach. Together with scientists it organizes fisherman communities and disseminates research information to them through barazas. This is done in areas where scientists have worked; the research findings are repackaged in the form of barazas for the fishing communities

Figure 1. Community baraza for the fishing communities.

The Library is involved in updating the institutes Research Management Information System (RMIS) database, which is a management tool of NARO (the National Agricultural Research Organization) In the RMIS database quarterly progress reports and project proposals that scientists prepare are sent to the Library; the Librarian in turn feeds the information from the reports into the RMIS system. The system generates reports that are useful for decision-making. This keeps the Library visible as the administration often refers to it for reports.

The Library is a National ASFA (Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts) Partner. As such it is involved in preparing inputs and participates in ASFA activities.

It is also involved in digitization of historical research information. With support from the ASFA secretariat, the Library received a scanner. This has enabled it to digitize 1,450 items of historical information to date.

The Library also serves as the Data Centre, meaning that the Librarian also serves as data librarian. The Library is a storehouse for all the Institute data, including all the data in its raw form dating back the 1920's when the first surveys were carried out in Lake Victoria and Albert in Uganda. The data sets have been organized in files.

Every year during the month of July the Library participates in a week long Annual Agricultural Show where it disseminates research information to stakeholders.

Figure 2. The Library participating in disseminating information to stakeholders during the Annual Agricultural Show.

References

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