

### **Основные тенденции и перспективы развития библиотек в Республике Камерун**

Представлена текущая ситуация и тенденции развития библиотек в Республике Камерун. Основные выводы свидетельствуют о необходимости реформирования процесса подготовки библиотечного персонала путем внедрения информационно-коммуникационных технологий. Нынешнее развитие библиотек в Камеруне предполагает создание системы организации и функционирования библиотек, с помощью которой должны быть представлены и определены все ее основные задачи, сфера охвата, взаимодействие, ресурсы, правила или принципы.

*Ключевые слова:* Республика Камерун; библиотечное дело; развитие библиотечного дела; библиотечный персонал; квалификация библиотечного персонала; библиотечная система; библиотечно-информационная среда; информационное обслуживание.

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### **Basic Trends and Prospects for the Development of Libraries in the Republic of Cameroon**

This paper presents the current situation and trends of categories of libraries in the Cameroon. Major findings show the need for reforms of the library staff training process, through the introduction of information and communication technologies. The current development of libraries in Cameroon involves the establishment of a mode of organization and functioning through which the major tasks, scope, missions (objectives), interactions, resources, rules or principles should be presented, defined and determined.

*Keywords:* Republic of Cameroon; librarianship; development of librarianship; library staff; qualification of library staff; library system; library and information environment; information service.

Under the scientific conditions, social and economic development of the Republic of Cameroon, the problem of transformation of the libraries and information services of the country remains urgent and a subject of great concern.

The Republic of Cameroon covers an area of 475,442 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 25,640,965 inhabitants [1]. Today in the library system of the Cameroon there are about 150 libraries, with 46 are under the control of the Ministry of Arts and Culture: the National library, public libraries, municipal and children's libraries; 50 high school libraries and colleges of general and technical education of the Ministry of Secondary Education, 16 university libraries of the Ministry of Higher Education; the other libraries are under the supervision of other bodies such as the research institutes of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation and religious denominations [2]. At the beginning of 2017 there were about 423 staff in Cameroon's libraries, of whom only 67 (15,4 %) are professionals with advanced training in library science; 289 staff (66,4 %) had no training in Librarianship at all; 79 staff (18,2 %) had just completed practical training in major libraries in the Republic of Cameroon and other African countries. State universities and ministries are the largest employers of librarians (45 % and 20 % respectively). Only 30 graduates from Department of Library and Information Science of the Advanced School of Mass Communication (ASMAC) of the University of Yaoundé II worked in the Cameroon library network, (7 %) of the total number of librarians [2].

In the former USSR 10 librarians were trained (8 people at the Minsk Institute of Culture and 2 at the Leningrad Institute of Culture [2]).

At the moment in Cameroon, there is the absence of a training school for medium library staff. The Department of Library and Information Science of the Advanced School of Mass Communication (ASMAC) of the University of Yaoundé II operates without appropriate staffing (Associate Professors and Professors). This Department does not allow for postgraduate studies (Doctorate / Ph. D) in Library and Information Science. Such a possibility is reserved for Foreign Schools or Faculties of Library and Information Science. The Main library of the University of Yaounde I has the largest number of library staff in Cameroon.

The staff of the libraries are unequally distributed throughout the national territory. The Central Region has the largest number of library staff in Cameroon – (63,8 %), in the South West Region (12,5 %); in the other regions of Cameroon this percentage remains very low.

Cameroon has two official languages (French and English) inherited from colonization (France and England) and thanks to them, Cameroon is part of both the Francophonie and Commonwealth. French and English unite populations from more than 200 ethnic groups. These two official languages are also the main languages of professional training for Cameroonian librarians of the country. Of all Cameroonian library staff, 82 % of senior librarians were trained in French-speaking countries and 18 % in English-speaking countries [2].

The total collection of libraries of the Republic of Cameroon is estimated at 2,5 million documents on all media. This collection is essentially in French and English directly related to the history of the country mentioned above [2]. The main channels of library acquisition are: legal deposit, purchase, donations and bequests and exchanges. The Main library of the University of Yaounde I, the largest and oldest in the country, has more than 65.000 books and works in various fields of knowledge; it was created in 1963 and the first site located on the road to Akonolinga, (Centre Region) just one year after the creation of the Federal University of Cameroon (Decree № 62 / DF / 289 of 26 July 1962). The occupation of the present premises dates back to 17 November 1967, the day of the official inauguration of the Federal University of Cameroon in Ngoa-Ekelle. At the moment, this library is merely struggling to meet the requirements and standards of a modern university library, the acquisition budget is almost absent or at best occasional, which justifies the low renewal of the collection to the great disadvantage of students, teachers, researchers and other users [2].

The main current problems that hinder the development of the libraries of the Republic of Cameroon are:

- absence at the national level of a body defining library policy and the training of library staff, the coordination of library interests and government programs for library development;
- lack of qualified, senior staff in libraries;
- absence of normative documents regulating the activity of the libraries of the Republic of Cameroon;
- lack of the training system for librarians integrating both initial and basic training, internships, retraining and further training of library specialists, the interrelationships between different levels of training of library staff;
- absence of official duties of library workers and no reliable graphic mode of functioning (working) for users of the libraries;
- no elaboration or development missions and policy of each concrete library;
- lack of networking of library specialists, which does not contribute to the creation of the common information and training area at regional, national and international level;
- lack of financial, material and technical resources [2].

For the development of the libraries of Cameroon. We propose the following orientations:

- the establishment of a clear government policy for library planning at the national level;
- the implementation of normative and legal documents regulating the activity of libraries;

- forming the system of professional training, retraining and advanced training of librarians and information workers;
- financial, material and technical means, sponsors and fundraising.

The reform of Cameroon libraries relies above all on the indispensable training in technologies for the personnel. To better serve users in an appropriate manner, library staff must take ownership and control of new technologies, both those introduced in the library and those that offer online services.

At present, the librarian is not only the curator of the cultural heritage, the manager of the documentary collections and the support to the users in a library, the organizer of the cultural activity and leisure, but also the specialist who must possess the new competencies, knowledge, the know-how, which correspond to the needs of the information society. He must have knowledge in the organization of the information environment; know how to use computer tools (Microsoft Windows Word Office, Excel, Power-Point, Acrobat Pro, scanning tools, etc.). He must also know how to use and control the application of bibliographic exchange format standards. Mastering bibliographic reference management software allows the librarian to collect, save, quote and share books, articles, videos, dissertations, theses, book chapters, reports, official publications, websites, automatically retrieve references and associated full text, organize references, annotate and index them if necessary, automatically create citations (footnotes or citations in the text) and bibliographies as well as many other online information sources (library catalogs, databases.). Among these management software, we will mention: Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote, Reference Manager, etc. [3].

Technological innovations have led to the emergence of a new user-service in library bibliographic activity: remote or virtual service. As a result, the information search process is gradually moving onto the internet. Modern library and reference services now offer users information via the Internet, that is, virtual consultations. The efficiency and the quality of the execution of virtual information depend on the competence and the knowledge of the librarian (mastery of professional knowledge, definition of the research strategies and orientation of the users in the various information research activities. Virtual information requires the correct formulation of the response in line with the request. In connection with this, the librarian must be able to work with the web technology tools 1.0 (surfer domain: passive, consumer, he seeks information with search engines) and web 2.0 (the librarian: contributor, active, producer of information, the librarian goes towards the user and builds with the user) [3].

In the system of continuing education of Cameroonian library specialists, it is necessary to use interactive teaching technologies: distance learning, webinar (online conference) and information and communication technologies for teaching, etc.

Today, the web allows any user to directly find the information in the multimedia form, the comfortable system of navigation, the fast and simple movement between references [3]. The creation and development of Cameroon's web portals and library sites has become a major and urgent issue.

Moreover, the use of internet resources makes it possible to broaden the range of services offered by the library, in particular the service grouping several libraries pooling their resources, the immediate interaction between the user and the information specialist, but also the distribution of effort between several libraries, e-mail, live dialogue and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) [3].

The appearance of the digital document and the electronic resources (information resource that is accessed via a computer, such as e-mail, CD-ROM or, most commonly, the Web) provide some hope for the Cameroonian libraries sector. These resources provide access to a wide range of research materials and tools, including electronic journals, scholarly databases, e-books, hybrid collections, Internet information portals, which contain links, often thematic, to sites.

Interlibrary loan and the electronic delivery of documents are important means at the present time of the operation of the information landscape and the guarantee of the general accessibility of the information, make it possible to quickly fulfil the requests of information to users and qualitatively increase the level of library services [4; 5; 6]

It is necessary to elaborate the concept of the information cooperation amongst libraries in Cameroon, in which there will be objectives and the definite tasks of the libraries of the country, its role being to create a common space of information in Cameroon, enable users to access information resources within the country and in remote areas.

For the modernization of the Cameroon library system, it is important that library staff regularly take part in the General Assemblies of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), conferences, symposia, seminars, congresses and workshops organized by international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations or Associations, such as the International Center for Analytical Library (ILIAC), the International Federation of Documentation (FID), the International Francophone Association of Librarians and Documentalists (AIFBD), UNESCO, International (Crimea, LIBCOM, etc.), the Association of Information and Documentation Professionals (ADBS) and the African Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (AFLIA), etc.

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### **Трансформация концептуальных подходов к обслуживанию пользователей библиотек**

Концепции обслуживания пользователей библиотек трансформируются под влиянием социокультурных процессов. На первоначальных этапах доминировала книгохранилищная концепция, ей на смену пришли культурно-просветительская и педагогическая. В СССР главенствующую роль выполняла идеологическая концепция, а с его распадом – социализирующая, информационная и сервисная концепции. В обществе знания формируется концепция «открытой библиотеки»: из места хранения и распространения информации она превращается в центр интеллектуального взаимодействия и творческого развития членов сообщества.

*Ключевые слова:* трансформация концепций обслуживания пользователей библиотек; книгохранилищная концепция; культурно-просветительская концепция; педагогическая концепция; социализирующая концепция; информационная концепция; сервисная концепция; концепция «открытая библиотека».