



KENYA LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES CONSORTIUM

Maximizing Use Library Resources Kenyan Universities during COVID-19 pandemic & Beyond

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Presented at KLISC Webinar on Libraries in the COVID-19

Situation

15th July 2020



Purpose/Objectives of presentation

- ❑ To review the contextual issues **access to Library and Information services in universities** in the COVID-19 period
- ❑ To assess the **risk level in libraries and library staff** in relation to exposure COVID-19 infection
- ❑ To explore **mitigation measures in opening of physical university libraries in the context of COVID-19 pandemic**
- ❑ To propose institutional measures **for maximizing the use of library e-resources in the context among in universities in the context of COVID-19 risks, lockdown & beyond**



Contextual issues in access to Library and Information services in universities in the COVID-19 period

- i. **Forced shift of education, research and business operations to online/virtual environments due to COVID-19 lockdown: e.g.**
- ❖ Increasing **online teaching** in universities: ODEL/blended courses
 - ❖ Increased **work-at-home arrangements** for researchers, undergraduate & postgraduate students, NGO & and public service employees

Implications for universities

- ✓ Separation of students, faculty and researchers from physical libraries
- ✓ Unprecedented **high demand for electronic information services**
- ✓ Increased demand for variety in e-resources offering (to cover different subjects/courses)



Contextual issues access to Library and Information services in universities in the COVID-19 period

ii. Increased cost of global library e-databases for research, teaching and learning

- ☐ Annual increase in price of databases: 5-7%
- ☐ Average increase in the last 5 years 30%
- ☐ Increased preference of pre-payment for e-databases among suppliers/publishers: e.g. Ebscohost, Springer etc.

Implications for Library Consortia in purchase of e-resources

- ☐ Reduced purchasing power of the library consortium
- ☐ Purchase of fewer number of e-databases subscriptions



Contextual issues in access to Library and Information services in universities in the COVID-19 period

iii. Unfavourable financial climate facing universities due to COVID-19 disruptions

- ☐ Reduced budgetary allocations to public universities from exchequer
- ☐ Reduced revenue collections in private universities

Implications for access to library services

- ☐ Delays in payment of library e-resources acquired through national library consortium
- ☐ Reduced revenues for the national library consortium (about 30% reduction over the last 2 years for purchase of e-databases on behalf of member institutions)
- ☐ Increased disconnections of institutions from access to e-resources



The risk level of libraries and library staff in exposure COVID-19 infection

- ❑ The risk level in libraries, for users and library staff in exposure COVID-19 infection is quite high:
- ❑ Librarians and their clients are therefore highly vulnerable to COVID-19 infection
- ❑ Why?
 - Libraries are a social space frequented by many people of different age groups and geographical backgrounds
 - The goods of trade in the library (books, ICT equipment frequently change hands either between library users or library staff
 - People spent a lot of time in libraries mostly sitting in close contact with each other
 - Includes closed spaces with groups of people working together



The risk level of libraries and library staff in exposure COVID-19 infection

❑ Implications for operation of library services

- In normal situations libraries provide an high risk environment for rapid spread of COVID-19 (among staff and students)
- The library is a point of convergence for university community & therefore risk of infection in the libraries touches on the entire campus
- There is need for university administration to pay special attention to make libraries a safe place against COVID-19 infection



Risk mitigation measures in opening of university libraries in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

- i. Implement to the letter Ministry of Health / University Guidelines on COVID-19**
- ☐ Admit fewer users into the library building at any given time
 - ☐ Implement staff work shifts
 - ☐ Enforce wearing of masks washing of hands & use of sanitizers,
 - ☐ Maintain high levels of sanitation within the library: Dusting surfaces with sanitizers regularly,



Risk mitigation measures in opening of university libraries in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

ii. Develop/Implement Specific COVID-19 Policies& Protocols/ for Libraries

- ☐ Library operations are quite unique & therefore there is need for policy changes & protocols to guide its operations in the context of COVID-19 infection risks
- ☐ Suggested measures include:
 - Phased approach in opening...starting with small groups of users
 - Borrowing (“Take away) services only on the interim
 - Preference for online research services
 - Possibility of courier/postal service for in delivery of critical textbooks to users)
 - Quarantine periods for returned books
 - Use of outside library gardens/villas/Gazebos as reading/discussion spaces (e.g. Mount Kenya University & Kabarak University)
 - Use of e-payment platforms for library dues



Risk mitigation measures in opening of university libraries in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

- iii. Refocus attention to the use of online library services as opposed to face-to-face, print, “physical library services”**
- ☐ Reduce physical human contact in favour of social distancing
 - ☐ Convenient for work-at-home arrangements, e-learning, etc.
 - ☐ The use of e-information is a desirable strategic choice towards ensuring quality outcomes in education and research



Institutional strategies for maximizing library resources

- ❑ The main question: How do universities ensure access to quality scientific for teaching, learning and research?
- i. Allocate/secure adequate budget for e-resources
 - ✓ Guarantee continued/ uninterrupted access t by the institution as o KLISC negotiated prices:
 - ✓ Institution more than 90% off the commercial price by use of KLISC-negotiated resources



Institutional strategies for maximizing library resources

- ii. Implement remote Digital library services (DLS) for the academic community
e.g.
- ✓ E-reference service/ user advisory services,
 - ✓ Digital research information support/ access support to community members
 - ✓ As much as possible majority of library & information service should be offered thro online means
 - ✓ This will avoid a situation whereby the library will be disconnected from users leading to decline in performance outcomes throughout the institution



Institutional strategies for maximizing library resources

iii. Provide targeted information literacy training for staff & students

- ☐ e.g. search strategies, academic writing skills, publishing skills, etc.
- ☐ Ensures that stakeholders are well prepared to use the e-resources even in their remote locations
- ☐ Preference should be given to online training
- ☐ Key areas of training:
 - ✓ Access & retrieval of online sources/information& data mining
 - ✓ Referencing tools: Mendley, etc.
 - ✓ Use of antiplagiarism checks
 - ✓ Online/open access publishing

V.



Institutional strategies for maximizing library resources

- iv. Mobilize students as *Knowledge Ambassadors* to advocate among students to use both physical and digital library resources
- v. Digitize scientific information resources in the university
 - ✓ Institutional documents: research reports, policies, procedures,
 - ✓ Examination past papers
 - ✓ Theses and dissertations
 - ✓ Publications: modules, journal articles by faculty staff, etc.



Institutional strategies for maximizing library resources

VII. Adopt technological innovations in library services e.g.

- ✓ Integrate digital library with the institutional online learning management system to ensure seamless access to e-resources by online learners, researchers
- ✓ Upload MARC records of e-books to the library OPACs: e.g. Proquest books,
- ✓ Implement remote access technologies e.g. E-Z proxy, Remotex (KLISC negotiated), VPNs
- ✓ Implement Digital repository technologies for internal resources e.g. Theses, journal articles, research reports



Thank You!

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