

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

It was a stormy new year for Kenya as the worst violence the country had seen in decades erupted after a hotly contested presidential election in late December, 2007. The first two weeks of January were essentially "lost" to the office for productivity as the embassy closed for most of that time. For at least two months, many staffers were hosting their displaced family members who, rightfully, feared for their lives if they returned home. Over 1,200 souls were lost to violent deaths during the turmoil. During this time, the office received numerous email messages from LOC and AfriCAP participants conveying sympathy, support and concern, for which we were all very grateful.

The lowlights for the year: the termination of seven contract workers, several of whom had been with the office for many years, due to budget constraints and the cessation of acquisitions travel in March-June, also due to budget constraints.

Fluctuations in currency values: Most of the countries covered by this office experienced considerable currency fluctuations, the worst being Zimbabwe suffering hyperinflation to the millionth degree—quite literally. For those countries suffering the worst inflation rates, we have asked the bib reps to invoice the office in US dollars so that they would not lose the value of their funds to inflation in the 1-2 weeks it takes us to effect payment. Even in Kenya, the US dollar value has vacillated from a low of about 60 Kenyan shillings to the dollar to a high of 72, a significant change in purchasing power.

Acquisitions:

The FY2008 total for LC acquisitions was 43,457 pieces, an overall increase of 0.7% when compared to last year.

The FY2008 total for CAP participant acquisitions was 73,679 pieces, a decline of 11% when compared to last year.

The combined total for LC and CAP participants was 117,136 a decline of 7% overall when compared to last year.

These declines are mainly attributable to fewer materials received from Somalia due to the ongoing fighting and intermittent closures of the airport, the fact that several participants canceled newspaper titles, and continued better adherence to the collection policy guidelines applied to receipts (i.e., those under 50 pages). The surprise increases are attributable to the last minute acquisitions trips to seven countries between July and August. In addition, the acquisitions staff put in extra time to process the materials acquired from these trips before the cut off date for FY2008 statistics. This year balances for the AfriCAP participants were not prematurely depleted and therefore acquisitions were uninterrupted throughout the year, unlike last year.

Digitized Table of Contents Project:

LOC Nairobi continued to contribute to the digitized table of contents (DTC) project. This year some 395 files of TOC were contributed, a decrease of 133 records (25%) when compared to last year.

Cataloging:

The cataloging backlog is still non-existent as it was completely eliminated last year as catalogers' productivity increased overall and receipts declined somewhat.

For FY 2008, a grand total of 3,395 records for monographs, non-book materials, and serials were created. This is a decline of 1,879 titles (35%) as compared to 5,274 records in FY07.

A total of 1,603 new authority records were created representing an decrease of 1,145 over the previous year. Modified authorities decreased from 476 in FY07 to 256 in FY08.

Non-book material cataloging decreased by 51% from 1,097 in FY07 to 536 in FY08. The decreases are mainly because of the Cataloging Section losing two senior catalogers during this period and fewer items being acquired. The remaining three catalogers worked hard to increase their individual productivity thus ensuring that there would be no cataloging backlog.

Administration:

The office administration continued the internship program started in FY06 for local library school students. We had two interns complete their internships. After an office overview, the interns were trained in work on the ILS, OCLC, cataloging and periodical indexing.

There was one mandatory retirement this year for the head of cataloging and another cataloger left to pursue opportunities in Switzerland. A new, part-time driver was hired via our Parapet Contract but he was terminated when the Parapet contract was suspended due to budget constraints.

The office received a windfall, manna from heaven, set of compact shelving from USAID that saved over \$15,000 that we would have paid for similar shelving if purchased locally. Most office staffers volunteered to help shift existing shelves into other parts of the office to make room for the new compact shelves. By so doing, we were able to avoid paying overtime wages to the ICASS/State Department GSO section since they would not move the shelves during regular office hours. The new shelving is already filled with our newspaper backlog.

Several staff members received Extra Mile Awards this year for dramatic improvement in their keyboarding skills and efficiency: Alfred Odhiambo, Catherine Nyambura, Elijah Nguru, Winnie Hinga and Miriam Ombogo. In addition, the Acquisitions Unit staffers: Judy Kinyanjui, Miriam Ombogo, Esther Juma, Elizabeth Marita, Ruth Sitonik, Elijah Nguru and David Mbaya also received Extra Mile Awards for various excellent services.

Quarterly Index to African Periodical Literature:

A total of 2,160 new articles were added to the QIAPL bringing the total number of articles indexed to 45,299 from over 700 African journals.

Office Website:

The office website was again updated and revised. The first update took place in November followed by another update in June 2008 and again in August 2008. The June update was very labor intensive as we refined it according to OSI website standards. All pages were scrutinized for accuracy before updating.

Cooperative Acquisitions Program (AfriCAP):

Over the course of the year, good relations with all AfriCAP participants were maintained and one new member was recruited for FY08, the International Criminal Court in The Hague, and another recruited for FY09, the ITSC Library in Ohio. The FD continued to assertively encourage participants to pay on time this year and 31 out of 35 had paid their invoice by mid-October (up from about 20 the previous FY), thus saving a lot of angst and work to reconcile accounts. The FD ensured that AfriCAP serial claims received timely responses and all participant-related emails answered quickly and courteously. We continued to streamline our AfriCAP invoice this year and made it even more customer-friendly than the previous version. Draft invoices were issued in May so that participants could alter their invoices in advance of the billing cycle. This resulted in more accurate invoices overall. For the first time ever, we sent out the AfriCAP invoices via email instead of by snail mail, thus saving postage, printing and labor. It appears to have been a successful "pilot project". The move away from the State Dept. Pouch Services towards more DHL shipments within Africa is paying off in that we are experiencing much better, more timely services from DHL in the areas of invoicing, shipment pickups and deliveries and even provision of boxes/tape to bib reps. However, with the unexpected fuel surcharges slapped on during the energy crisis, it is proving to be a more expensive mode for "transportation of things" than expected.

Newspapers Preservation:

Building on the momentum of two successful proposals to CAMP for microfilming Malawian and Congolese newspapers and Madison Council funds earmarked for older Africana newspapers, we collated and sent some 150,000 pages of newsprint to PhotoDup for filming. We are very grateful to the Madison Council for allotting \$64,000 for filming these older papers that had been accumulating in the office for over two decades. We also spent some considerable time and overtime reorganizing the backlog of newspapers in the office into a more logical arrangement that facilitates access to the older issues on hand. We were hampered somewhat in sending newspapers off for microfilming after we lost our collator due to budget constraints and for running out of postage funds for DHL shipments to New Delhi.

Public Service Outreach:

Most public relations activities were put on hold this year since we had no representational funds available and the FD needed to concentrate on internal affairs such as mastering Momentum and E-Management and further streamlining internal processes as staffers were cut from the payroll.

While on home leave, the FD received a request for and wrote a letter of recommendation for the Slums Information Development and Resource Centers (SIDAREC) application to the STARS Foundation Impact Awards recognizing NGOs focused on disadvantaged children. We have been doing some outreach to SIDAREC on a volunteer basis for the past two years and were delighted to learn that they won one of three \$100,000 grants from a pool of over 150 African NGOs.

The FD also attended the annual African Studies Association conference and Africana Librarians' Council meeting in New York and gave a presentation about the office's activities for the previous fiscal year. She also submitted a report to James Gentner for the ALC Spring meeting in Iowa.



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