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The Global Health Library and HIV/AIDS information

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Meeting:	152 - FAIFE
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Simultaneous Interpretation:	Yes
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20-24 August 2006, Seoul, Korea
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/index.htm>

Abstract:

It is a privilege and an honour to have the opportunity to address this audience at IFLA 2006 in the beautiful city of Seoul. I would like to thank IFLA for this invitation.

The theme of the programme for this session is Access to HIV/AIDS Information: A Life and Death Issue.

I will begin my presentation with a brief introduction to the World Health Organization, its department HIV/AIDS, and UNAIDS. From there I will describe the work of the Library of the World Health Organization, its most recent initiative, the Global Health Library, and how this relates to the theme of the programme.

The World Health Organization (WHO)

- WHO is the United Nations specialized agency for health
- WHO is governed by 192 member states
- Our objective as described in the Constitution: "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health."
- Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- <http://www.who.int>

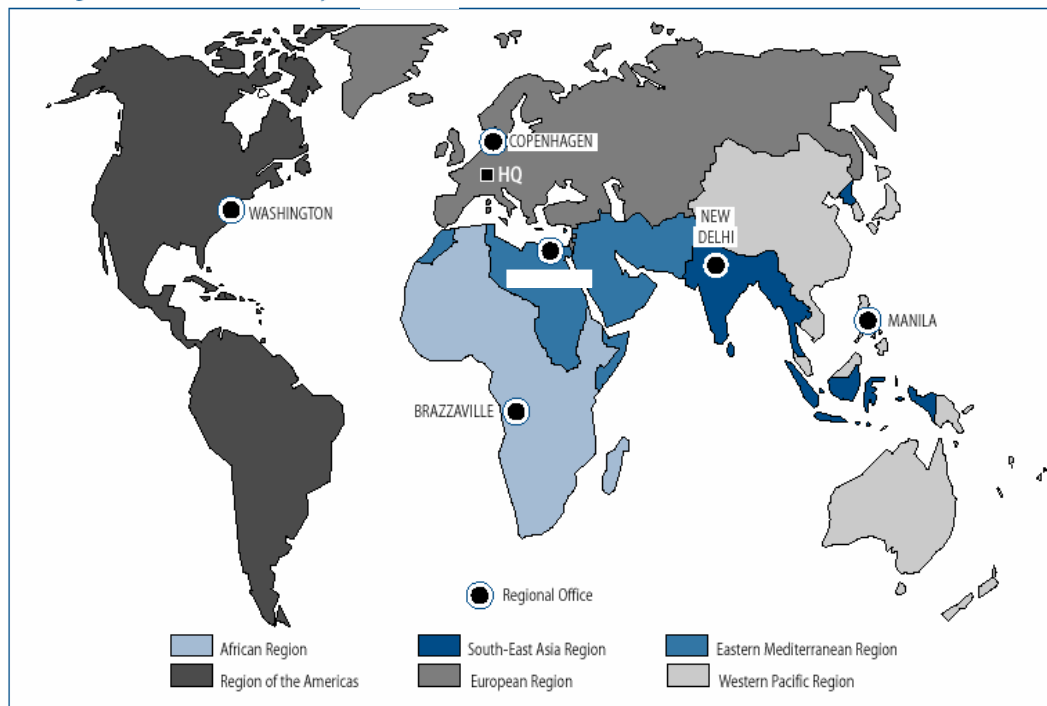
2 | Presentation to IFLA 2006



I would like to begin by setting the context in which I work, which is the World Health Organization (WHO). As one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, WHO is the directing and coordinating authority in international health. The Organization is governed by its member states, in the capacity of an Executive Board and the World Health Assembly. Ministers of Health from the 192 member states meet annually in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss and decide on the work of WHO.

The mission of WHO is clear: the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health is not only the absence of disease, but as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

WHO Regional Offices and the areas they serve



WHO is decentralized into six regional offices with headquarters in Geneva. There are 192 member states and country offices in capital cities of 150 countries.

Special offices are located in Lyon, Washington, New York, Addis Ababa and Brussels.



There is an HIV/AIDS department in WHO which provides technical support to member states to help them scale up in terms of treatment, prevention and drugs and diagnostics supply. The website can be accessed at <http://www.who.int/hiv/en>.

This website is a valuable source of information concerning HIV/AIDS, and includes key topics, information by country, a media centre that includes publications, news and press releases, photos and broadcast materials.


It also provides links to all the WHO departments – more than twenty – that carry out HIV-related functions. Each of these links then go out to other sources in their subject area, for example TB, nutrition, gender, etc.



You are no doubt familiar with the major Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, called UNAIDS, which bring together the work and resources of 10 UN system organizations, including UNHCR, UNDP, WHO and the World Bank. The website can be found at <http://www.unaids.org>

This is the lead agency in the UN dealing with HIV/AIDS, and this site provides much information and news, for it "works on the ground in more than seventy-five countries worldwide."

Library www.who.int/library



WHO.INT

Library & Information Networks for Knowledge

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Main · Country activities · Historical collection · Library database · Reference information · Library index · WHO staff services

World Health Organization

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Welcome to the web site of the World Health Organization Library in Geneva, Switzerland.

The WHO Library and Information Networks for Knowledge (LNK) provides comprehensive library and information services on WHO-produced recorded information in print and other media. In addition, library services give access to worldwide health, medical and development information resources to WHO headquarters, regions and country offices, ministries of health and other government offices, health workers in Member States, other UN and international agencies, and diplomatic missions. The WHO library programmes help regions and developing countries achieve self-sufficiency in providing information services to the health sector.

6 | Presentation to IFLA 2006



World Health Organization

Situated in the centre of this bank of knowledge and information is the WHO Library and Information Networks for Knowledge, also known as its acronym, LNK, pronounced Link.

The mission of LNK is to provide leadership for WHO, its member states and the UN system in the establishing of services and technologies for the provision of public health information through libraries, electronic networks and innovative projects in all media to all levels of constituents, from the most deprived to the most advanced.

LNK is a physical library, serving WHO staff and the public at WHO headquarters in Geneva. And a virtual library, for it is a showcase for everything WHO has published, in all regions, in the 6 official languages, including on HIV/AIDS full text, on the Web. It supports WHO's work as a global knowledge-based Organization, and provides a full range of knowledge services to the international public health community.

The Library has been the source of many key initiatives, especially for developing countries, some of which have been incorporated into the Global Health Library.

Partnerships

- The WHO Library System is a global network that operates as a community
- A large and united community of practice exists in WHO libraries and beyond
- This is the first strength of the Global Health Library



The WHO Library team spans the 6 regional offices around the world, and Geneva. From the regional office libraries come the links with the WHO Offices in countries globally. The regions, the country offices, as well as Geneva are linked to libraries in member states, be they national, academic, medical, public business or special libraries.

Any one of these points of reference can be called upon to provide information on HIV/AIDS from a global, a regional, a national or local perspective or need.

The challenge

"We call upon WHO and other organisations to commit to universal access to essential healthcare information by 2015. We believe such access is a prerequisite to ... achieving Health for All; moreover, it is now, for the first time, realistically achievable."

Godlee, F. et al, *Lancet* 2004; 364: 295-300.

An article was published in the Lancet in 2004, Written by Dr Fiona Godlee, who is now Editor of the British Medical Journal. Connecting the work of WHO to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), she called upon WHO to make a commitment to universal access to essential healthcare information by 2015 (the year the MDG's are targeted for completion).

We had started working on the Global Health Library several months before, and were pleased that a call for this work from a journal as important as the Lancet, has been issued.

Fiona Godlee is now part of the International Advisory Panel of the Global Health Library.

Health information and knowledge

- Knowledge exists, but is scattered over the information landscape, and remains inaccessible to those who need it most
- WHO proposes the Global Health Library, a worldwide coordinated effort

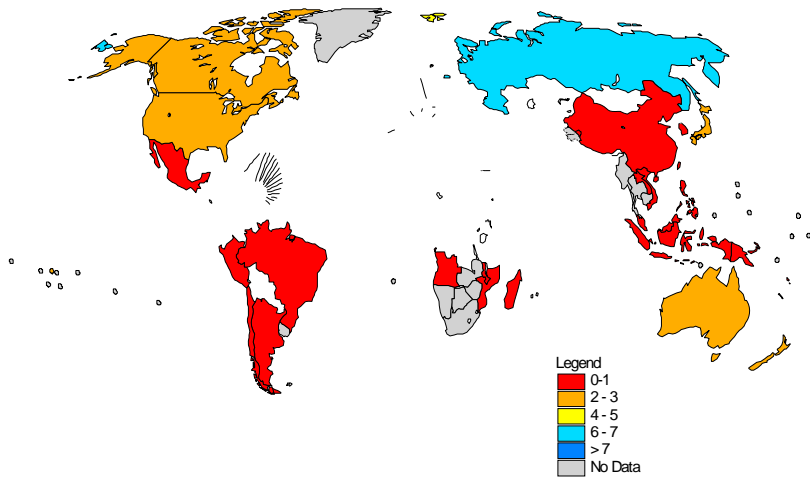
Why a Global Health Library? Health and medical information exists but is it reliable? And where is it? Is it available to the people who need it most? And are those who have access to computers getting the best that is available? When search engines bring forth 60,000 links to a question concerning health you have typed in, how do you know that the top three are the best information you can have? How can you tell if a website that purports to have the answers is bona fide? If you don't have access to ICT, where do you go?

The World Health Organization is in a very good position to know what is available in the world, and what sources you can trust. It is time for a measure of equity as well, for the people who have and those who have not. The Global Health Library, proposed by the WHO is to answer these needs, and embraces the huge challenge of universal access to health information.

What is the Global Health Library? It is an initiative which will provide first stop access to health information in paper, electronic, and any other media as necessary, to those who need it. It will point to reliable information collections and systems, it will facilitate and enable access to content produced by key providers, and it will support communities of practice and training.

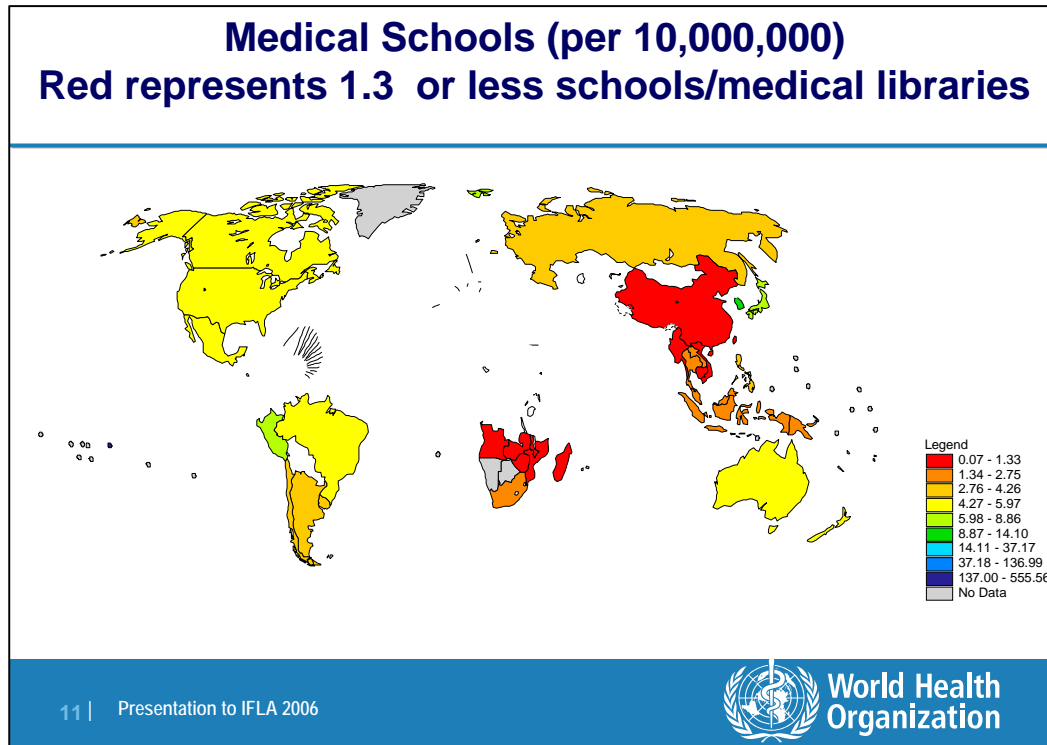
Public Library books per capita.

Red represents areas with less than one book per citizen



10 | Presentation to IFLA 2006

Here is a world map that shows the number of public library books per capita. The sections in red, by far the most represented, shows the incredible number of zero to one book per capita.



Here is another view of the world, showing the number of medical schools with medical libraries. Again, very few in a great section of the world.

This may begin the reflection on why a global health library.

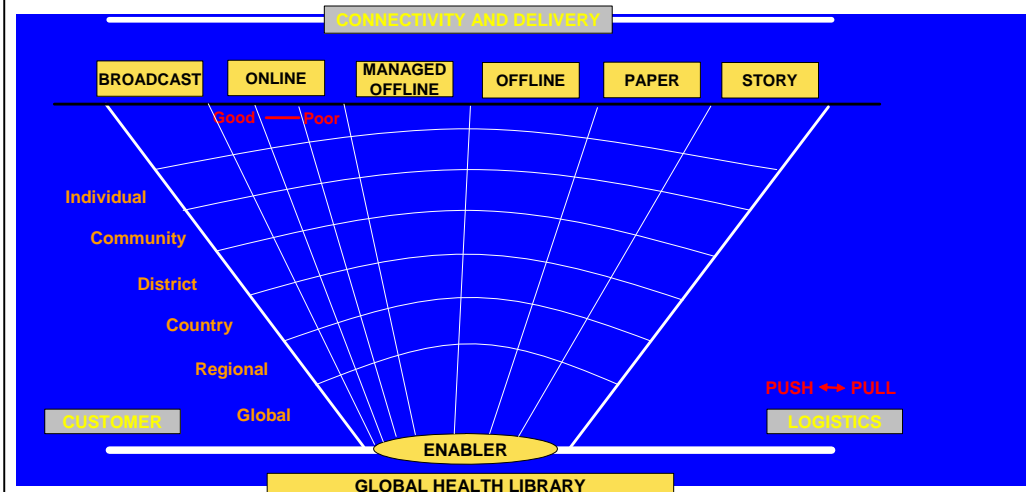
First step access to reliable health information

- The GHIL is a virtual platform that assembles multiple resources and points to reliable content in all available formats, targeted to the needs of specific user groups:
 - Health workers
 - Information providers
 - Ministries of health
 - Policy makers
 - Patients
 - Public

Who is supposed to use the Global Health Library? Universal access means everyone. Twenty years ago, the WHO held a meeting in Ottawa which resulted in a document called the Ottawa Charter. This charter stated that every single citizen had a right to access health information for their needs. It took twenty years before the UK, for example, did a government white paper that seriously looked at this issue, and decided to build a national gateway for its people. This has not been the case everywhere.

The first adopters will be those who use and work with health information the most: health workers, information providers, policy makers, patients, and the general public.

Landscape – Health Information



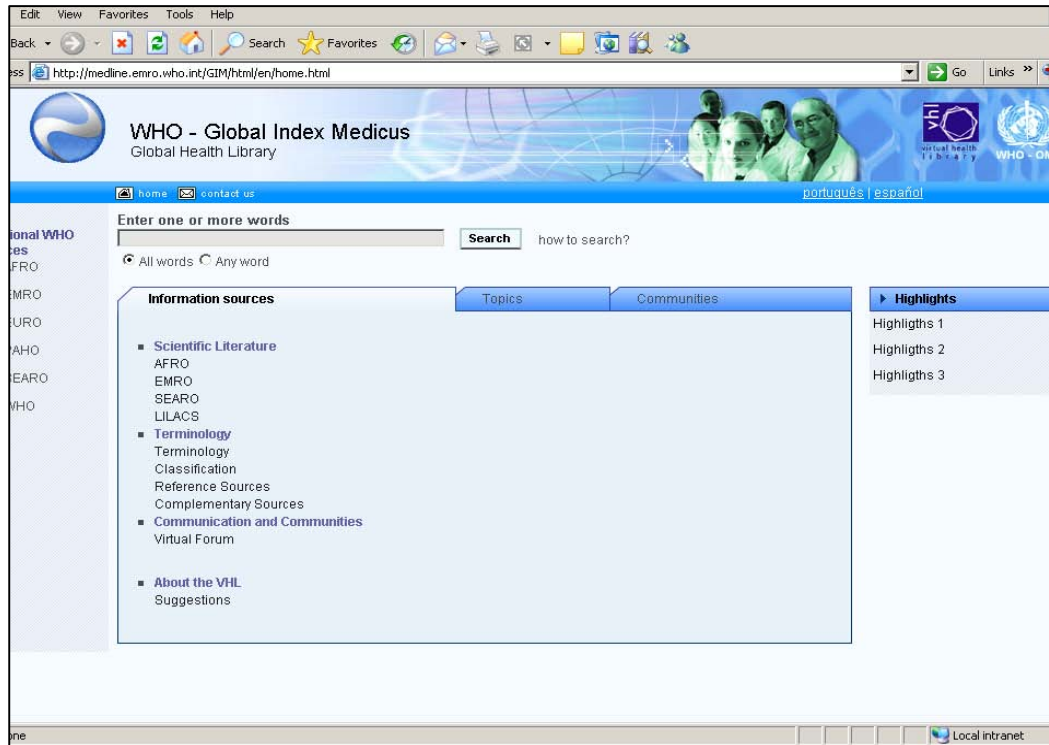
13 | Presentation to IFLA 2006

This diagram is an attempt to map the landscape of health information. It shows how the GHIL can be a virtual platform that assembles multiple resources and points to reliable content in all available formats. It will provide a wide panoply of opportunities for access, including respecting oral cultures, including paper, and including the various methods of capturing online material.

GHL Components so far

- Global Index Medicus: research from the south made accessible
- HINARI
- World Directory of Medical Libraries
- Mobile libraries (GHL Express)
- HIV/AIDS Knowledge Cases

What are the components of the Global Health Library? Work has begun on several modules simultaneously. Parts of the GHL are already in existence, though not well known. A few of these are the Global Index Medicus, HINARI, the World Medical Libraries Directory, Mobile Libraries, and the HIV/AIDS Knowledge Cases. I will briefly describe each of these.



The Global Index Medicus is a collective effort by all WHO libraries. We are used to accessing articles written by the finest minds in the best of medical journals. These are peer reviewed and have made their place in the standards of excellence of the mostly northern hemisphere countries of the world.

However, countries in the south are busy publishing their own journals which deal with the problems of their geographies, and which are relevant to them and their neighbours. This research from the south is being made available through something called the Global Index Medicus, which seeks to give a platform both for the south and the north in terms of health research and information.

So far there are decades of indexed material, some with full text, from Africa, south-east Asia, the eastern Mediterranean countries, and the Latin American continent being made visible through the Global Health Library. Countries from the western Pacific countries will soon be part of this as well.


African Index Medicus

page 1 de 38

go to page 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ► ►►

1 / 753 AIM

☐ select **Record No. 6072**

 to print

Publication Type Technical Report

Title The role of libraries in hiv/aids information dissemination in sub-saharan africa

Author(s) U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

Date of publication 2005


Physical description 165 p.

Available WHO Regional Office for Africa, Library, Brazzaville, Congo

Electronic Access : [Full Text](#)

2 / 753 AIM

☐ select **Record No. 6060**

 to print

Publication Type Monograph

Title Child survival and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa: findings and recommendations of the presidential mission to Africa: January 4-18, 1991.

Author(s) Sullivan, L.W.; Roskens, R.W.


Date of publication 1991

Physical description 31 p.

Available Albert Cook Medical Library, Uganda

The African Index Medicus (AIM) is a proud component of the Global Index Medicus, and has made tremendous strides in the last year. Here is an example of a record from the AIM which describes a study on the role of libraries in HIV/AIDS information dissemination in sub-Saharan Africa, and gives access to it in full text.

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HINARI

About HINARI

Full-text journals, databases and other resources

Eligibility

Register

Partners

Publishers' statement

Frequently asked questions

Training

Using HINARI

Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative

The HINARI program, set up by WHO together with major publishers, enables developing countries to gain access to one of the world's largest collections of biomedical and health literature. Over 3280 journal titles are now available to health institutions in 113 countries, benefiting many thousands of health workers and researchers, and in turn, contributing to improved world health.

HINARI/AGORA USER SURVEYS

HINARI/AGORA User Surveys

In a continuing effort to improve this programme by enhancing access, dissemination, and the usage of research information and knowledge available on the HINARI website, we ask you to complete this short survey. Please note that the survey takes only 5-10 minutes to complete; there is no identifying information attached to the survey; there are no right or wrong answers and the

FEEDBACK FROM USERS

Dear HINARI,


HINARI is very essential for this institution to meet up with the demands of her academic staff with the dwindling of funds for journal subscription. We believe so because we have seen HINARI transform institutions like ours.

Nigeria, April 2006


[More Feedback](#)

HINARI SUCCESS STORIES

Sítio HINARI em Português




Visit our sister programme Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture



[HINARI poster \[pdf 936kb\]](#)

HINARI (Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative) is a WHO partnership with major publishers who have agreed to provide access to biomedical and health literature free of charge to developing countries.



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World Directory of Medical Libraries

Global Health Library (GHL)

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The Global Health Library

Access to reliable health information for those who need it

Access to health information is an integral part of all health systems because it can improve people's health.

The Global Health Library (GHL) will provide first step access to reliable health information in paper form, electronic form, and any other media to those who need it.

The GHL will offer an opportunity to provide a virtual platform that assembles multiple resources and points to content in all available formats that will be targeted according to the needs of specific user groups.

Objectives

The GHL aims to:

- point to reliable information collections and systems, in which different users and user groups (ministries of health, policy makers, health workers, information providers, patients and their families, general public) can focus on the knowledge that best meets their health information needs.
- act as a facilitator enabling access to information contents produced by numerous key providers - be they commercial companies, government institutions, civil society, not-for-profit organizations, and regional or international bodies.
- strive for universality, with focus on developing countries, and will act as a resource locator for print materials essential to areas that do not have access to electronic content.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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HAVE YOUR SAY

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The World Directory of Medical Libraries came about when we tried to find one so that we could contact possible partners. We found that it did not exist! So we put a questionnaire on our GHL website, and the numbers of libraries coming in from all over the world are growing every day. This website will be revised this autumn and the Directory will become a database.



The Mobile Library idea was born 10 years ago when we tried to find a way to get health information to districts in Africa. It is a wonderful idea that worked. Very basic manual type of material was put on shelves in a portable blue trunk and sent to francophone Africa. It was an immediate success, and anglophone Africa asked for one in English. It has now spread to countries in the eastern Mediterranean, the south-east Asian and the western Pacific countries. The beauty of it is that local material in local languages can be very easily added to the trunk, and you don't have to be a librarian or a doctor to learn its very simple system!

We are happy to have had this idea copied by others, notably the International Council of Nurses and other organizations.

HIV/AIDS Knowledge Case

Improved treatment starts with improved knowledge



20 | Presentation to IFLA 2006



The HIV/AIDS Knowledge Case is an off-shoot of the blue trunks. The blue trunk idea gave birth to the same concept for other areas of work in WHO, namely disaster management. We had long been asked, however, for the same principle to be applied to HIV/AIDS. We lacked resources, but were fortunate to be on the receiving end of a grant from SIDA that asked us to go ahead, design the trunk, and send it to the worst hit areas of Africa.



HIV/AIDS Knowledge Case

http://www.who.int/ghl/mobile_libraries

Ready-to-use mini-library containing up to 15 books and other materials on matters relating to HIV/AIDS.

Audience:

Remote areas where ICT infrastructures do not yet exist and where access to traditional print information is not available.

The trunk concept was too big and cumbersome for specialized material on HIV/AIDS, so the knowledge case was born. It is a smaller trunk, and builds on the idea of a mobile library. Library staff worked with experts in HIV/AIDS and came up with the best content they could find. The final product holds fifteen books and other materials, and was shipped out at the end of 2005, beginning of 2006, in both English and French. The feedback has been enthusiastic and heartening.

HIV/AIDS Knowledge Case

How recipients were chosen

- In summary: the number of cases allocated for a country was based on the population size and median estimated rate of HIV prevalence.
- Statistics are taken from the WHO 3 by 5 country profiles which can be found here: <http://www.who.int/3by5/countryprofiles/en/index.html>



The amount of the grant did not allow for coverage of every country, so the countries receiving the cases were those with the highest rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence.

We would like this little library to cover all of Africa.

A good source

- A study done by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science: *The role of libraries in HIV/AIDS information dissemination in Sub-Saharan Africa*, tells us that it is primordial to understand the nature of the concept *library* in the African context:
 - which is traditionally oral, multilingual, and has many cultures;
 - and has alternative information organizations that can also do the job.

I would like to conclude this presentation with what I consider some very wise advice that was published in a study done by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. This study, entitled *The role of libraries in HIV/AIDS information dissemination in sub-Saharan Africa*, tells us that it is crucial to understand the nature of the concept *library* in the African context, which is traditionally oral, multilingual and has many cultures. There are many alternative information organizations that can also do the job, and these are the ones that need to be approached.

Conclusions of this study

- Libraries should establish partnerships with other organizations already involved in dissemination and education activities.
- Libraries in Africa should expand the scope of information sources they collect and distribute.
- The role of African libraries and librarians should be redefined.

The conclusions of this study are three-fold. First that the role of libraries in disseminating HIV/AIDS information is strongest when they establish partnerships with other organizations that are already disseminating and educating. Second that libraries in Africa should be open to collecting sources that are outside the role of traditional libraries. Third that the role of African libraries and librarians should be redefined. This third point, as we know, is not limited to librarians in Africa!

A library that responds to needs!



Camel Library Service gearing for take off in Garissa

This is a library service in Kenya. Our people in various developing countries said, when asked about their needs in terms of a global health library, that if it was only virtual, we could keep it. What they needed were modules that could be carried by donkey to remote places where there are no roads.

Yes, it is a big wide world. It is hard to imagine places where there is so little, especially for those of us who come from places that have so much. Each step towards a solution is precious.

In a world where there is still hunger, where there is poverty of the most dire kind, where disease still rages and where children die before they turn four, librarians have a role to play.

The Global Health Library can point to reliable information on HIV/AIDS from everywhere, accessible from one point. It can make this information available to Africa, and to other continents that need it.

There is much to be done. Partnership is the way. Thank you.