

Perceptions of public libraries in Africa

Zimbabwe Report

prepared for EIFL by TNS RMS East Africa

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A top line observation of key findings is presented here to give a quick glimpse of the main findings in the whole report which covered 6 countries.

The state of public libraries

Public libraries are widely available in most of the 6 countries studied offering the traditional service of lending of books and offering a good environment for studying i.e. where school pupils or even university students can complete homework and other classroom related reading, such as reading for examinations.

Most are small with limited space and are resource constrained. Most lack technology related facilities and in some cases relevant books to meet the needs of users.

Awareness, perceptions and attitudes

Users and non users were surveyed in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Awareness of libraries is high even among those not using them. Users share information about their library experiences a lot, mainly with their friends. In addition to the high awareness a majority have very positive sentiments about libraries across all groups surveyed i.e. from policy level all the way to users, including non users. Libraries are perceived as offering academic related information and therefore an extension of academic study. Children's exposure to libraries is limited and a lot more could be done to improve usage.

Role of librarians

Librarians are competent in the traditional roles of a librarian but have limitations in the technology related services.

Low skill levels on technology services result from lacking the facilities that would enable them improve competency. A significant number of librarians admit to lacking the necessary skills for advocacy to generate additional funding.

Importance of libraries

Libraries are seen as essential to the individual as well as communities in general by all groups surveyed. Libraries need to engage with the community at a more tangible level that goes beyond passively providing books information only e.g. facilitating community interaction with service providers of health, agriculture and culture. Stakeholders recognise a role for libraries in these fields. Funding for libraries is low, and donors (local or international) are expected to play a greater role in funding libraries.

Information about libraries

Print media are currently doing more in promoting the library agenda than other media. Digital media like the internet are not properly exploited and with the growth of mobile telephony and data services in Africa, this could be an avenue to explore.

Reaching the target groups

Electronic media is the best way to reach the policy level target audience for libraries. TV and Radio are the most frequently used sources of information and also the most trusted ones.



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Information society and digital divide
 Education
 Economic development
 Health
 Communication
 Culture
 Social inclusion and community development
 Citizen empowerment, democracy and E-Government
 Librarian advocacy
 Relationship with media

Demographic characteristics (librarians)

	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base	35	27	8
Gender	%	%	%
Male	66	59	88
Female	34	41	13
Age	%	%	%
16 yrs - 20 yrs	-		
21 yrs - 30 yrs	23	15	50
31 yrs - 40 yrs	20	22	13
41 yrs - 50 yrs	26	33	-
51 yrs - 60 yrs	17	22	-
61 yrs - 70 yrs	11	4	38
71 Yrs and above	3	4	-
Position in library	%	%	%
Library director/manager	20	22	13
Deputy director/manager	3	4	-
Professional Librarian	43	52	13
Assistant librarian	20	11	50
Support staff	-		
Senior library assistant	-		
Library assistant 1	-		
Administrative assistant	-		
Librarian in charge	-		
Education	%	%	%
Master's degree in the library field	-		
Bachelor's degree in the library field	-		
Professional librarian's education	49	48	50
Master's degree in another field	11	15	-
Bachelor's degree in another field	11	11	13
Professional education in another field	11	7	25
Secondary education	11	15	-
Diploma in library science/Library information	3	-	13
Certificate in library science/Library information			
Decision making	%	%	%
I am ultimately responsible for the decision making	17		
I am partly responsible for the decision making	83		
I am not responsible for the decision making	-		

Library sizes and types

Number of libraries

	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = Number of libraries	21	14	7

Status of library

	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = Libraries	21	14	7
	%	%	%
National library	5		14
District library	19	21	14
Municipal library	29	29	29
Community based library	48	50	43

Most of the libraries contacted for this study are either Municipal or Community based libraries.

Location of libraries

Location of libraries	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = Libraries	21	14	7
	%	%	%
City	86	100	57
Rural area	14		43

Audience served by library

Audience	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = Libraries	21	14	7
	%	%	%
Adults' library	10	14	
Adults' library with a children's department	86	86	86
Children's library	5		14

The average number of people visiting the sample libraries is fairly small compared to numbers seen in other countries.

Number of people served per day

Number of people served	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = Libraries	21	14	7
	%	%	%
1 to 30	54	49	57
31 to 100	40	42	28
101 to 500	10	7	14
Above 500			
Mean (Average number of people)	57.7	68.9	52.1

Is your library an adults' library, adults' with a children's department or a children's library [How many days per week is your library open to visitors

Library sizes and types

Payment for use of library

Type of payment/method	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base	21	14	7
	%	%	%
Yes, for library card	38	36	43
Yes, they must pay annual fee	24	21	29
Yes, they must pay for certain services (e.g. internet access, printing, scanning, etc.)	14	14	14
No, it's free of charge	29	29	29

One third of the libraries visited for the survey in Zimbabwe do not charge for services.

Library stock (Averages)

Materials	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base	21	14	7
Books	3130.4	3231.4	2942.9
Periodicals	4899.2	7671.4	47.8
Sound & Video recording	19.3	4.0	50.0

All figures are unchecked as reported by librarians. Figures for periodicals are in volumes. Local stakeholders are best placed to evaluate the validity of the estimates.

In which municipality is your library located
Is your library an adults' library, adults' with a children's department or a children's library [
Do people need to pay to use your library
How big is your library's stock
How many days per week is your library open to visitors

Library types and size - Equipments

Equipments/materials owned by libraries

Materials c		Zim
Base (libraries)		21
	Number	%
Computers in total	0	62
	1-10	19
	>10	19
Computers for users	0	76
	1-10	14
	>10	10
Printers	0	71
	1	24
	>1	5
Scanners	0	86
	1	14
	>1	
Copiers	0	76
	1	24
	>1	
Telephone	0	48
	1	38
	>1	14
Fax	0	86
	1	10
	>1	5
TV or other audiovisual equipment	0	86
	1	5
	>1	10
Multifunctional equipment	0	86
	1	10
	>1	5

The majority of libraries in Zimbabwe lack basic technology related equipment .

Please indicate, how many such pieces of equipment have you in your library

Services rendered by libraries

Services rendered are still very traditional and although the bases are small there are indications of differences between urban and rural

Librarians perceptions of services provided in their libraries

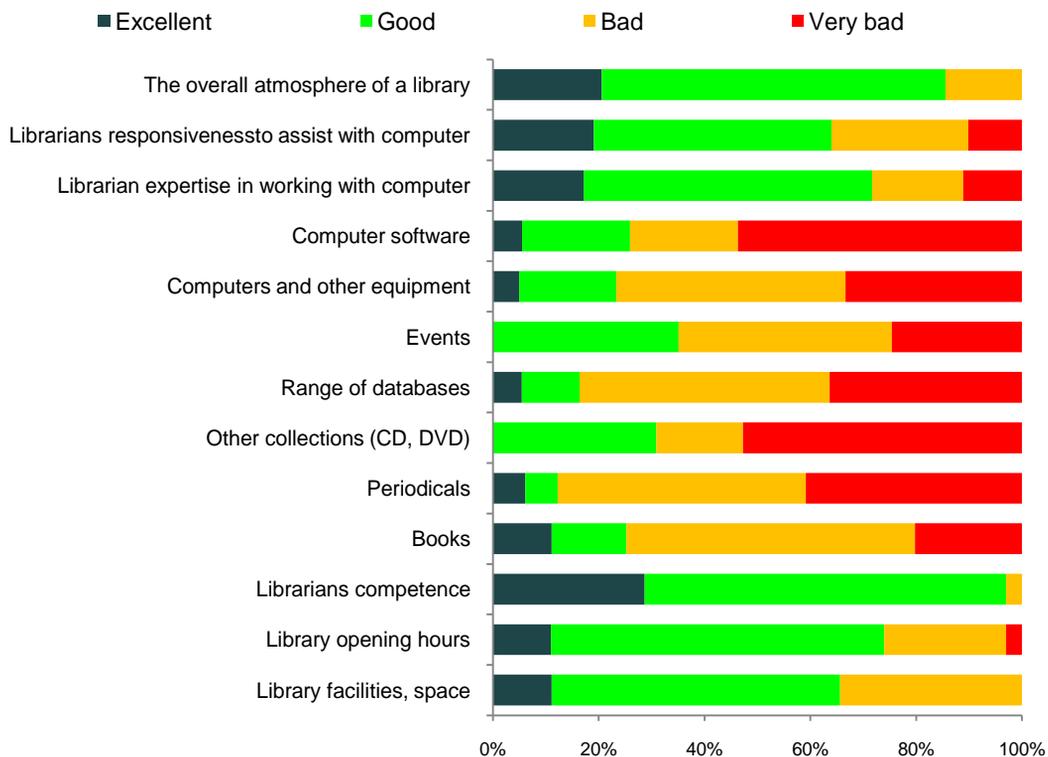
Services provided	Total	City	Rural
Base (librarians)	35	32	3
	%	%	%
Possibility to ask a librarian for help, advice or consultation	94	94	100
Take out/lend books for grown-ups	89	91	67
Use of reference materials, like encyclopedias	74	78	33
Take out/lend books for children	71	69	100
Reading newspapers or magazines	60	59	67
Opportunity to meet other people	60	63	33
A children's section	60	59	67
Opportunity to learn languages	34	31	67
Opportunity to take a class or workshop	31	31	33
Take out CDs or videos	20	22	-
Use of public internet access	20	22	-
Possibility to hear a speaker, see a movie or attend an event	20	22	-
Opportunity to hire rooms/ spaces for study or meetings	17	19	-
Use of computer software	11	13	-
Connection to the internet with your laptop	3	3	-

None of the public librarians interviewed in rural Zimbabwe said that their libraries provide any computer related services though 22% of city librarians say they provide it.

The presence and competence of the librarian is vital since a huge number of users seek advice and consultation from the librarian.

Does your library provide the following services?

Rating of different library aspects by librarians;



The overall atmosphere of the library and librarians' competence are the most highly rated aspects, which is an indication of positive attitude towards their work and work environment.

Although librarians claim to have good computing expertise, availability of computing resource appears to be low as these are rated lowest.

How do you rate the following aspects of your library? Please make an assessment on a 4-point scale, where 1-very bad, 4-excellent.

Automation

Automation		Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = Libraries		21	14	7
		%	%	%
Computerized catalogue	Yes	10	7	14
	No	90	93	86
	Partly	-		
		%		
Computerized circulation system	Yes	5	7	
	No	90	93	86
	Partly	5		14
		%		
Own website	Yes	10	14	
	No	90	86	100

Levels of automation are very low in Zimbabwe public libraries and this could be prioritized as an area for improvement in order to spur growth and innovation.

*Have you computerized your catalogue?
Have you computerized your circulation system?
Does your library have a website?*

Meeting user needs and benefits derived from libraries

Proportion of librarians who say that libraries address the following user needs

User needs served	Total	City	Rural	Adult's	Both	Children's
Base	35	32	3	5	29	1
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)	97	97	100	80	100	100
Information on health issue	60	66	-	80	59	-
To help my child do homework	60	56	100	-	69	100
Information on agriculture	51	56	-	40	55	-
National news or information	51	56	-	60	52	-
Entertainment	46	47	33	40	48	-
Local news or information	43	47	-	80	38	-
It is safe place for my child to spend time	37	31	100	-	41	100
Financial or investment news or information	31	34	-	40	31	-
International news or information	31	34	-	40	31	-
To conduct a job search or write a CV	31	34	-	20	34	-
Information and use of electronic government services	29	31	-	40	28	-
To look for information on starting or running a business	29	31	-	40	28	-
To communicate with distance friends or relatives	6	6	-	20	3	-

97% of librarians mention that libraries serve educational purposes but more than half also mention health or agriculture.

Proportion of librarians who say that users benefit in the following ways from libraries

Benefit	Total	City	Rural	Adult's	Both	Children's
Base	35	32	3	5	29	1
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Develop new skills or learn something new	97	100	67	100	97	100
Obtain new ideas, new interests	97	100	67	100	97	100
Get helpful information for school/ learning	86	91	33	60	93	-
Get helpful information for health and well being	80	84	33	60	86	-
Get helpful information for their business and commerce	71	75	33	60	76	-
Get helpful information about their community	57	59	33	60	59	-
Save time by being well informed	54	56	33	60	55	-
Get information useful in their job	37	41	-	40	38	-
Enjoy spending time in the library	34	38	-	40	34	-
Use the library as a safe and quiet place for study and reading	31	34	-	40	31	-
Not mentioned	3	-	33	-	3	-

An overwhelming majority of librarians interviewed say that libraries serve educational purposes, mainly school homework. However, the benefits derived go beyond that. Learning and developing skills are key benefits of using the library. Slightly above half of the libraries aim to provide information on health or agriculture which is a key sector in this country.

In your opinion, what users needs does the library aim to satisfy the most
In your opinion, do people get these benefits from visiting your library
Besides the above mentioned services, what others services you would like to provide

Operations & management of libraries

Challenges faced by libraries and librarians

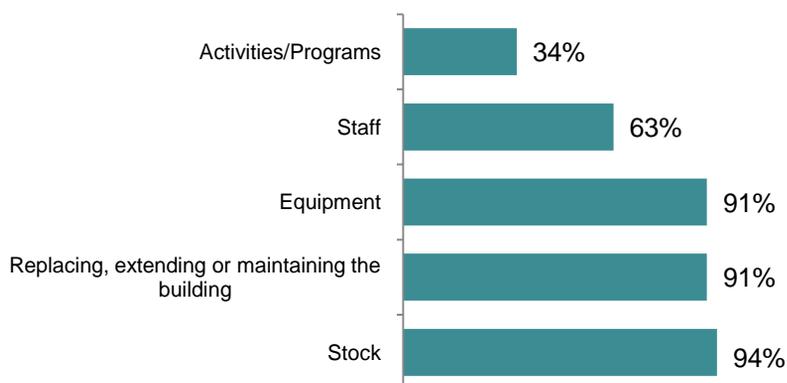
	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base: Total sample	35	27	8
	%	%	%
Inadequate books	40	37	50
Inadequate staff	40	41	38
Inadequate computers	37	41	25
Outdated books	37	44	13
Lack enough funds	34	37	25
Minimal reading space	26	26	25
They have limited resources	17	22	-
Lack of current information and materials	14	11	25
Lack facilities/ lack washrooms	11	15	-

The overriding challenge seems to be financial. Libraries seem to be facing a lot of challenges related to the basic functions and roles of a library. Key among these challenges is lack of sufficient stocks of books and lack of staff. When the time comes, perhaps the internet can provide an opportunity to leap-frog and leave out of date book stocks behind.

What are the biggest challenges in your library work

Priority areas for librarians if funding was increased

Key priority areas



Base: Will prioritize Equipments

32

More computers, TVs faxes, phone and printers	72%
Modern technology equipments like projectors and scanner	22%
Equipments for the physically challenged	22%
Photocopy machines to copy reference materials	16%

Base: Will prioritize Replacing, extending or maintaining the building

32

Renovate the building to avoid leakages	56%
Add more space to accommodate large number of users	38%
Build a new library	9%
Plant a gate, put security lights	6%

Base: Will prioritize stock

33

Stock should be updated to suit users needs	48%
More books required	45%
Upgrade syllabus/ daily newspapers	9%
Increase stock in diversity and improving on the existing st	9%

Base: Will prioritize staff

22

Add librarians	41%
More technical staff	32%
Motivation to all library staff	14%
Inexperienced staff	9%

Base: Will prioritize Activities/Programs

12

Introduce outreach services	33%
A variety of activities and programmes to cater for all categories	17%
More workshops on education, health and other issues	8%
Reading tents for outside services i.e. taking information to the people	8%

Stocks, equipment and improvement of buildings are the key priority areas if funds were made available.

Librarians express the need to have more computers and modern technology equipment.

As in other countries surveyed, there is a need for libraries to stock materials that users consider to be relevant to their needs.

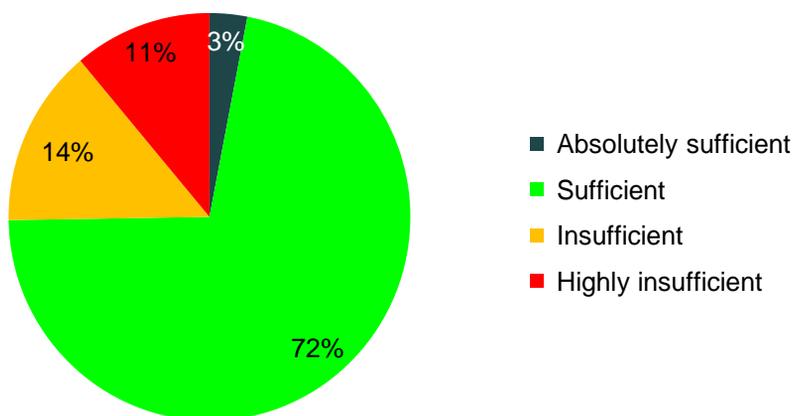
*If your library had more funding, to which of the following areas would you give your priority
Please elaborate each of the priorities marked, what needs to be done
What are the biggest challenges in your library work*

Ability to offer technology related services

Librarians who said they offer these technology related services

Technology service	Total	City	Rural
Base	35	32	3
	%	%	%
The Internet	20	22	-
Online inquiry service	17	19	-
Computer based training materials	17	16	33
Computer literacy training for public	17	19	-
Printing	17	16	33
Online reference materials, dictionaries, etc	14	16	-
Scanning	14	16	-
Office software	9	6	33
Technology help or advice	9	9	-
Electronic Library catalogs	6	6	-

Technology skills self assessment



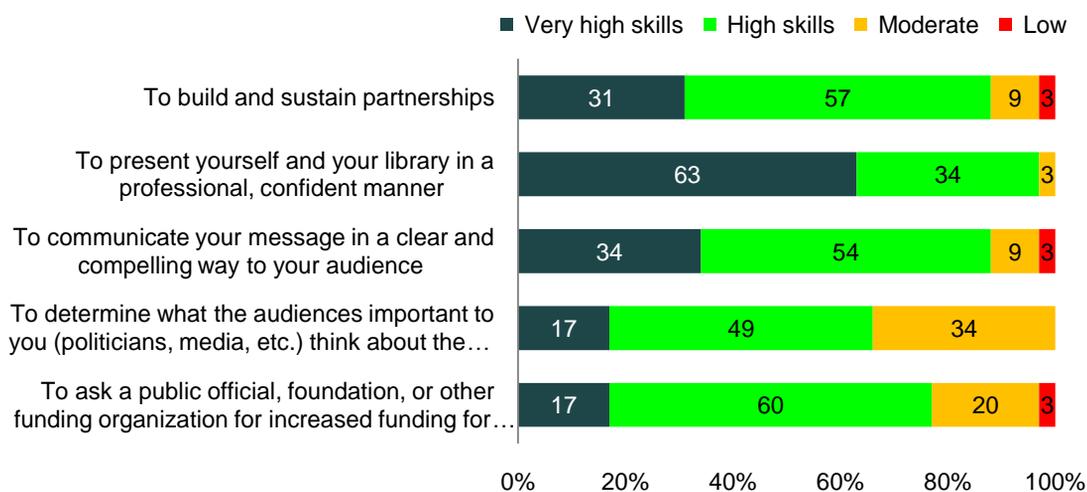
The internet is the top technology related service offered by libraries, however only about 20% of librarians said their libraries offer these services.

Although the majority of the librarians say that they have skills to offer technology related services, very few feel that their techno skills are absolutely sufficient. This high level of self assessment is surprising given the reportedly low levels of equipment available. Technology skill development should be incorporated into any technology related improvement of libraries in Zimbabwe.

*What technology related services are offered in your library
Please provide an assessment of your skills to provide technology related library services*

Increasing support for the libraries

Librarians own skill assessment to increase support for their libraries



Tools used to promote libraries

Tools used	Total	City	Rural
Base	35	32	3
	%	%	%
Reading promotion activities	54	50	100
Forums (for example tradeshows or other events outside the library)	31	34	-
Community events	31	34	-
Visitation to public schools	29	31	-
Marketing among non-library professionals (for example workshops for health workers)	20	22	-
Advertisements through posters/ bill boards	9	9	-
Networking with other libraries	6	6	-

Librarians in Zimbabwe rate themselves highly on skills to present themselves professionally and also building and sustaining relationships. Skill improvement would be required in seeking funds for their libraries from public officials and other funding organizations, as well as determining what users want.

Reading promotion activities are the main approach used to promote library services. Advertising is not an approach used by many.

*Please provide an assessment of your skills to increase support for your library
What tools and means do you use to promote your library services*

Librarian association of their libraries with user experience attributes

Percentage of librarians who associate libraries with these attributes

Attributes	Total	City	Rural
Base	35	32	3
	%	%	%
Friendly	95	97	66
Has highly-skilled librarians	80	84	33
Comfortable	74	78	33
Inclusive	69	66	100
Offers different activities and entertainment	37	38	33
Dynamic	37	35	66
Modern	32	28	66
Innovative	31	32	33
Up-to-date on technology	9	9	0

Librarians interviewed feel that libraries are friendly, and they also rate their overall skill levels very highly. In addition, about two thirds of the librarians interviewed also consider the libraries to be comfortable as well as inclusive. Almost all librarians agree that their libraries are lacking in technology. Other areas of improvement would include modernizing the libraries and making them more innovative.

Now thinking again about your library, please tell me how well you personally believe each of the following words or phrases

Statements in support of libraries and librarians

Percentage of librarians who find the statements very convincing (based on a 5 point scale where 1 is not convincing at all and 5 is very convincing)

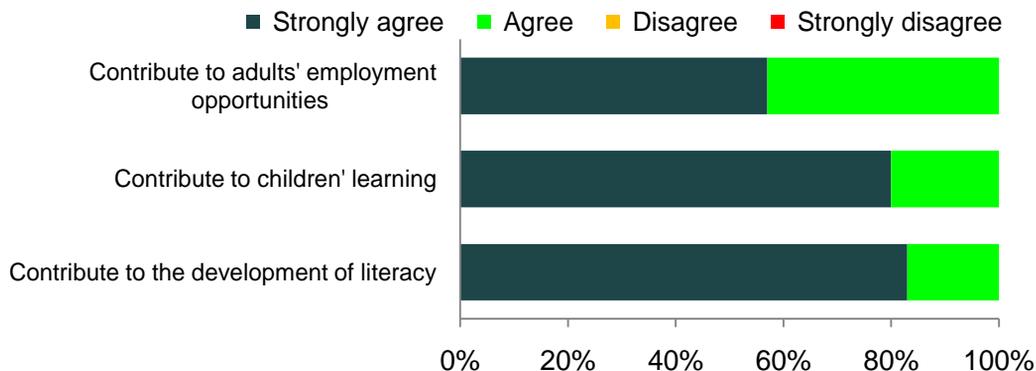


A majority find all the statements very convincing as would be expected. There is however a small number who are not very convinced about inclusivity of libraries and access to all.

Let me read to some statements in support of librarians and libraries. Please tell me whether each statement seems very convincing, somewhat convincing, not convincing to your own point of view

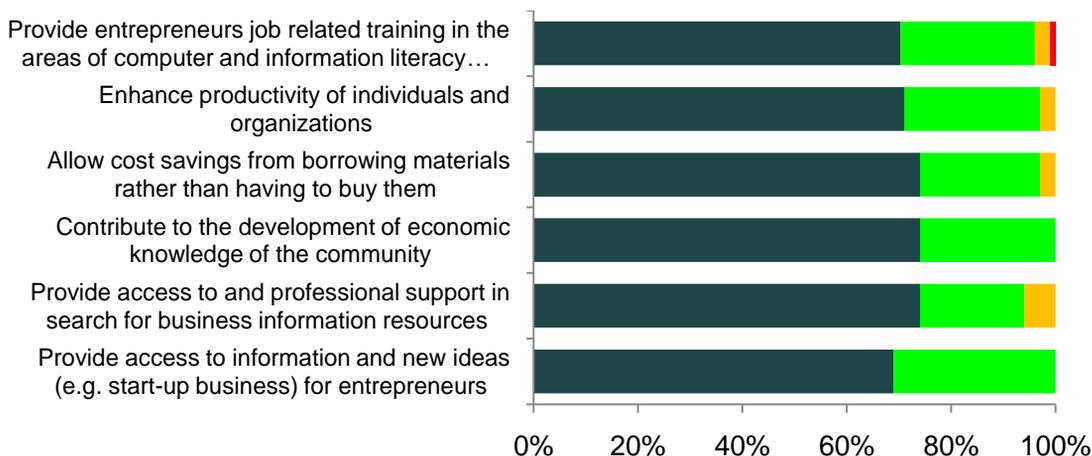
Impact areas

Education



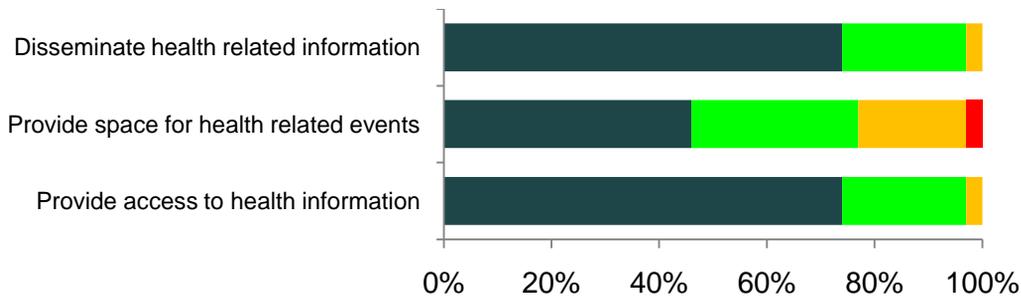
All 3 of these potential roles are unanimously supported in Zimbabwe.

Economic development



The idea of a role for libraries in economic development is very well supported in Zimbabwe with almost no dissent.

Health



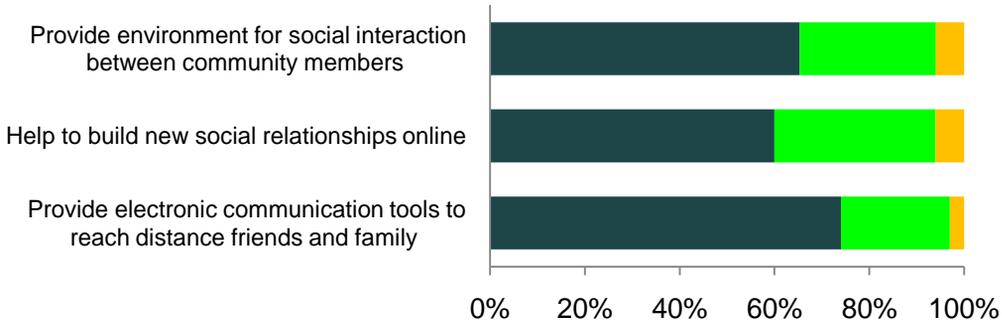
Libraries can help improve the health of individuals and communities by providing access to health information. Some disagreement is expressed regarding provision of space for health related events.

Next questions are about the areas in which libraries can impact their users and communities. Could you please say whether you agree with below listed statements. What is your opinion on each of these areas.

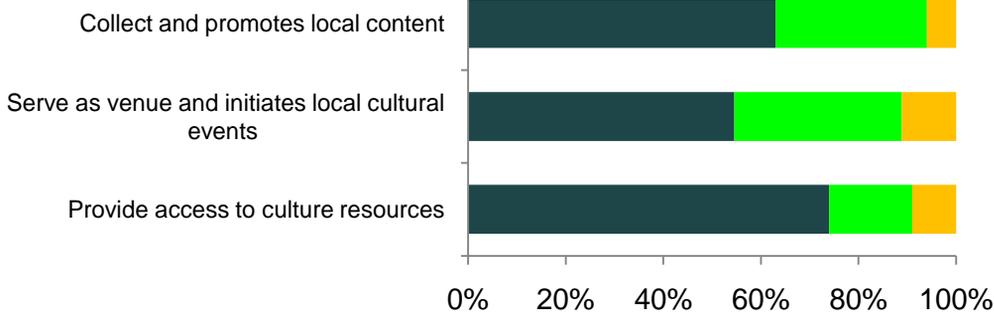
Impact areas

Communication

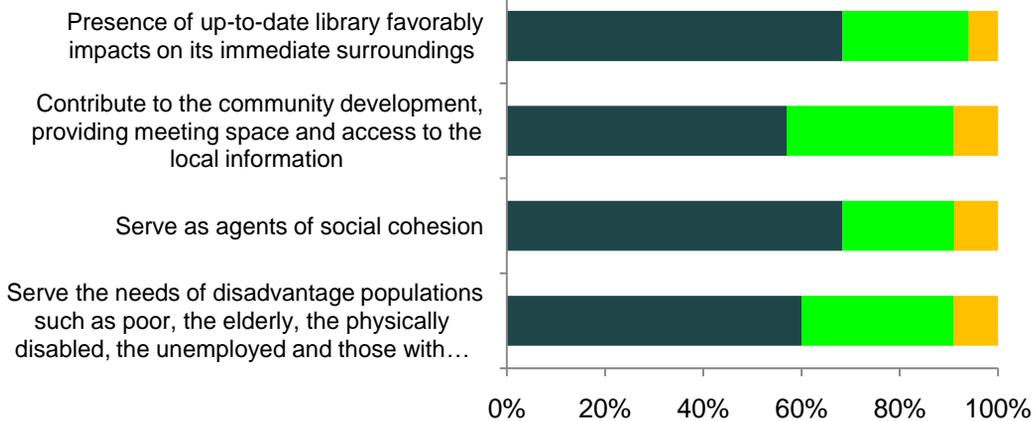
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



Culture



Social Inclusion and Community Development



That libraries enable linkages through communication one on one is almost universally acknowledged despite current low levels of availability of on-line services in libraries.

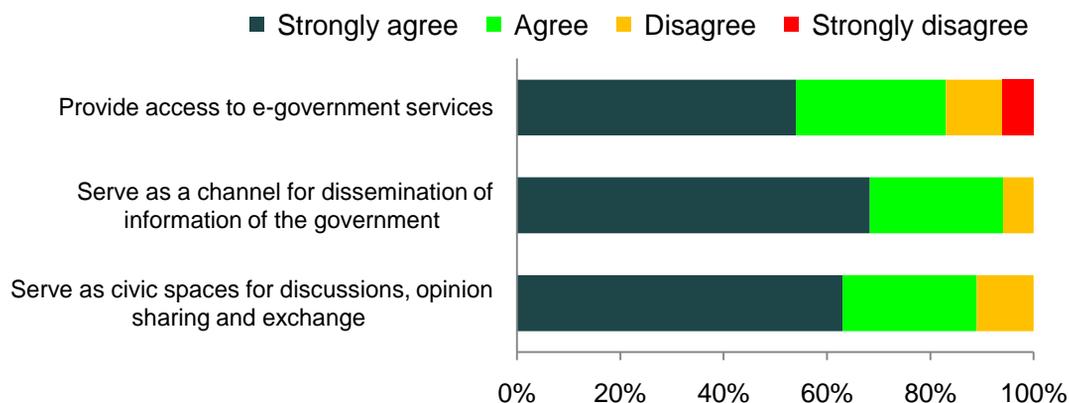
Whilst libraries' cultural role is accepted, a small minority do not think they have potential as venues for cultural events.

A substantial majority support the social role of libraries.

Next questions are about the areas in which libraries can impact their users and communities. Could you please say whether you agree with below listed statements. What is your opinion on each of these areas.

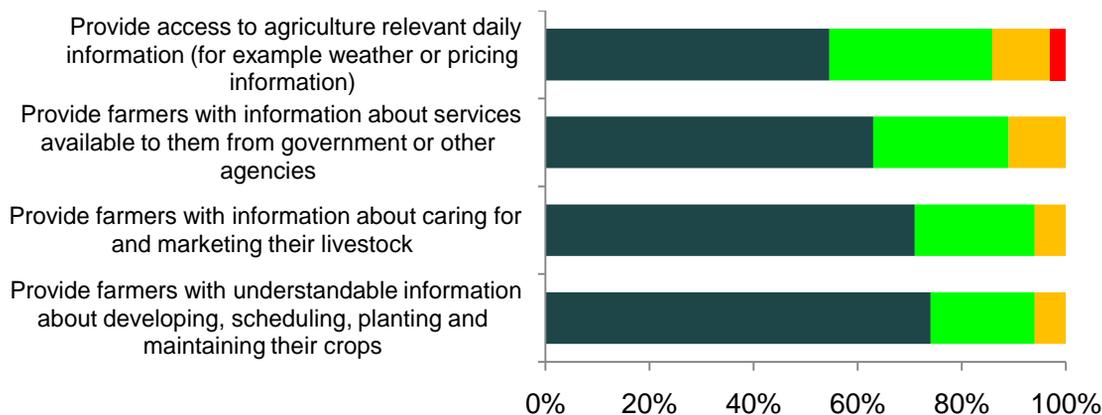
Impact areas

Citizen Empowerment, Democracy and E-Government



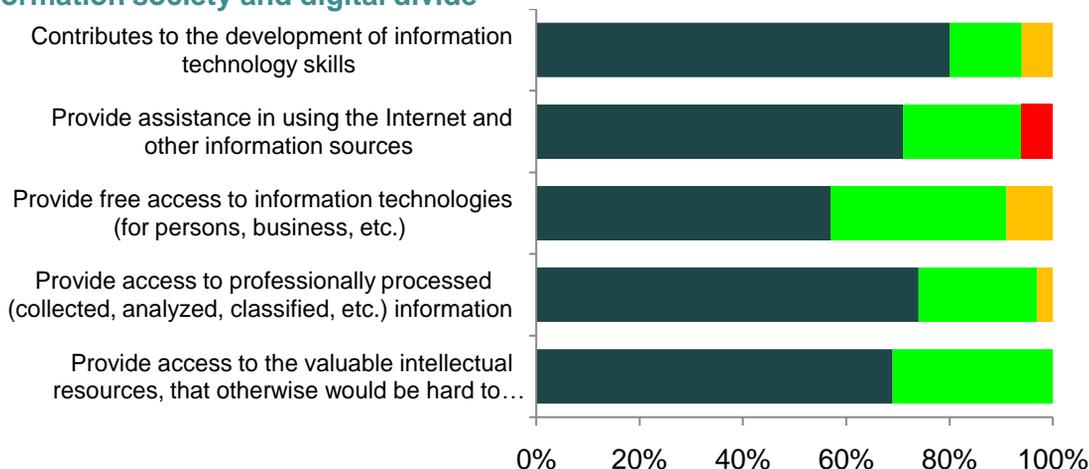
The great majority support the idea of a role for libraries in providing access to eGovernment and other government information.

Agriculture outcomes



Librarians agree that libraries can be impactful in most areas touching on agriculture.

Information society and digital divide



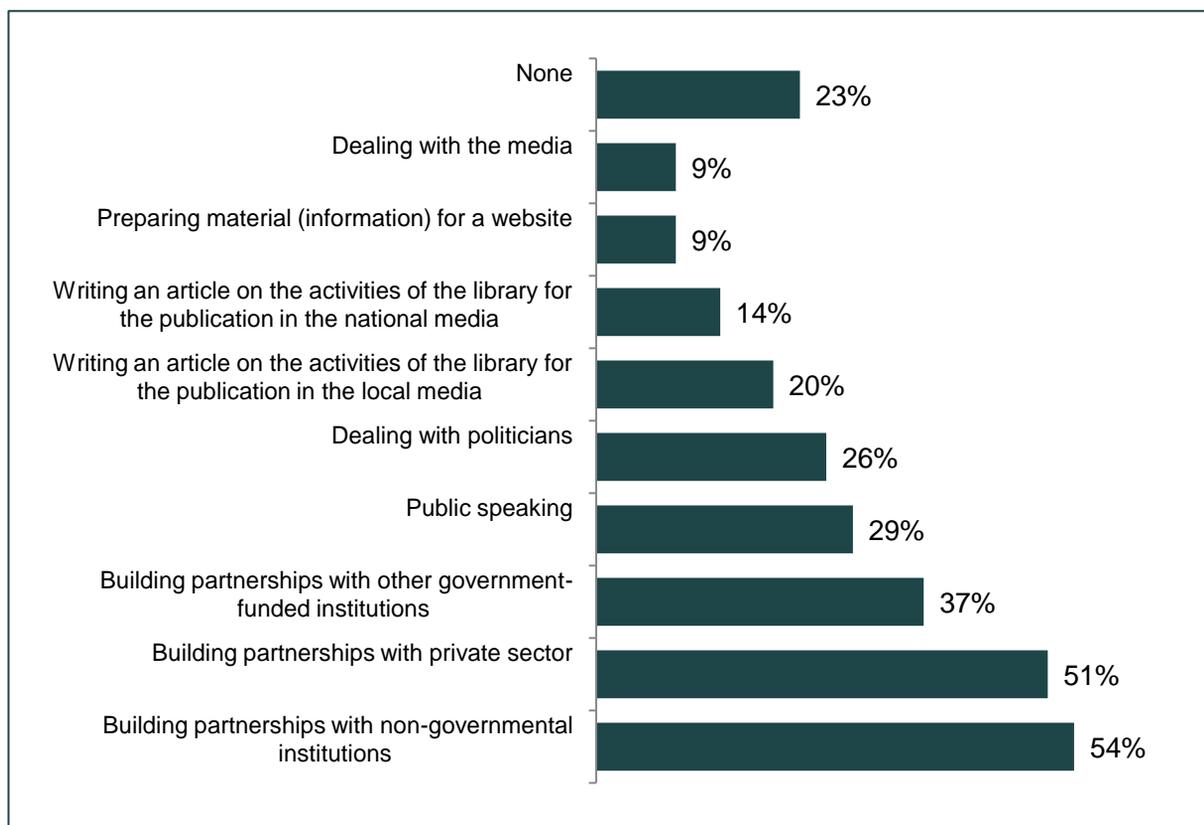
Engagement in all aspects of the information society receives overwhelming support despite current resource constraints.

Next questions are about the areas in which libraries can impact their users and communities. Could you please say whether you agree with below listed statements. What is your opinion on each of these areas.

Advocacy

What librarians are currently doing to promote and advocate for libraries

Percentage of librarians in Zimbabwe using the each of the methods listed to advocate for libraries



Non governmental organizations, private sector and government are viewed by librarians as the key stakeholders who will further the development of public libraries in Zimbabwe. Current use of the media to promote libraries is low.

Which of the below do you use in your work as a means of promotion of library services and library advocacy

Librarians perceptions of media interaction with libraries

Media attention to libraries

Media type	Total	Harare	Bulawayo	City	Rural
Base	35	27	8	32	3
	%	%	%	%	%
Newspapers, magazines	91	93	88	91	100
National radio	46	56	13	47	33
National TV	43	56	-	47	-
Colleagues, friends, etc.	34	30	50	31	67
Internet	23	11	63	22	33
Local radio	6	7	-	6	-
Local TV	3	4	-	3	-
Mobile phone	3	-	13	-	33

Type of buzz about libraries in the media

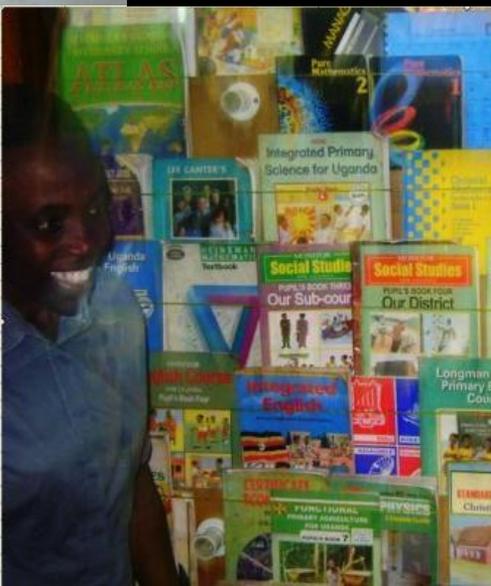
Media type	Very positive	Positive	Negative	Very negative
	%	%	%	%
Local TV	100	-	-	-
Mobile phone	100	-	-	-
Internet	50	50	-	-
Local radio	50	50	-	-
Colleagues, friends, etc.	42	58	-	-
Newspapers, magazines	19	69	13	-
National TV	13	80	7	-
National radio	6	94	-	-

Print media (newspapers and magazines) seem to be paying the most attention to libraries compared to other media types. National radio and national TV are second and third respectively but mentioned only by about a half of the librarians. Information circulating in the media about libraries is nearly all positive.

*What kind of media is mainly paying attention to libraries
Whether information provided about libraries by each media source is*



SECTION 2: LOCAL LEVEL OFFICIALS



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Things that come to mind
 Importance rating
 Awareness
 Usage
 Evaluation of aspects
 Level of information about libraries
 Connection with libraries in past and in future

Services 34

Satisfaction levels
 Services rendered
 Benefits derived by users
 How libraries can promote themselves
 Relevant communication channels
 Alternatives to libraries
 Modernity rating

Management 39

Met local library manager
 Library funding (current, future and options)
 Attribute statements

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Met local library manager
 Community issues and role of libraries in solving them
 Information society and digital divide
 Education
 Economic development
 Health
 Communication
 Culture
 Social inclusion and community development
 Citizen empowerment, democracy and E-Government

Demographic characteristics

	officials of local authorities that operate libraries	officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries
Base (n =)	40	10
Gender %	%	%
Male	80	80
Female	20	20
Age %	%	%
21 yrs - 30 yrs	15	15
31 yrs - 40 yrs	35	35
41 yrs - 50 yrs	15	15
51 yrs - 60 yrs	20	20
61 yrs - 70 yrs	13	13
Education %	%	%
Secondary education	33	
Higher	68	100
Duration in position %	%	%
01-02 Yrs	3	10
03-05 Yrs	45	20
06+	34	50
Decision making %	%	%
Ultimately responsible	28	30
Partly responsible	60	70
Not responsible	13	-

Caution: Base size for officials whose authorities do not run libraries is very small.

Perceptions of libraries

Libraries are considered essential by both officials of local authorities that operate libraries and non officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries. It is however a quite clear that libraries are still serving very traditional roles of lending books and providing an environment for school related studying

Both officials of local authorities that operate libraries and officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries associate a library with either knowledge and information or books.

The physical space provided by libraries is also important as it has high spontaneous association with libraries among the two groups of officials.

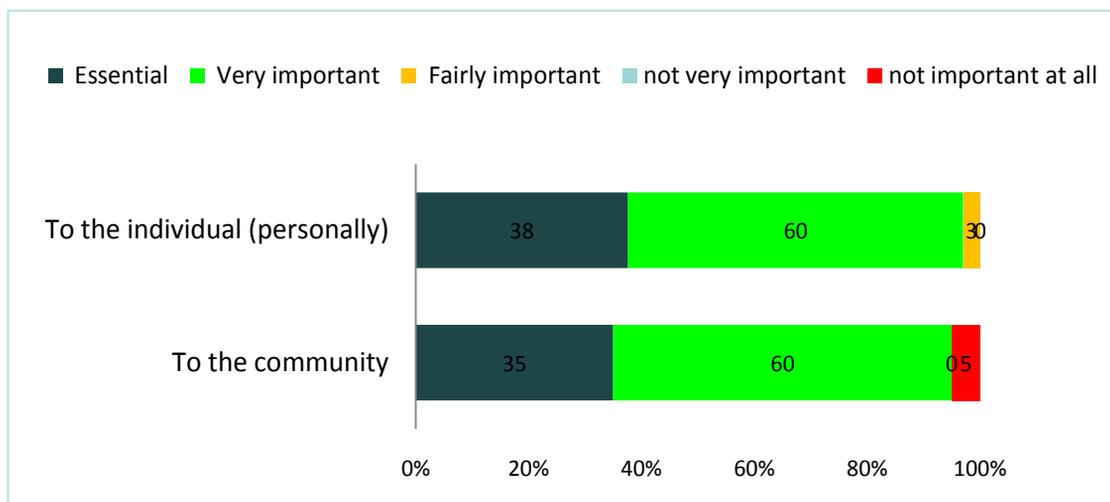
Associations (Officials of local authorities that operate libraries)	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base	40	31	9
	%	%	%
Information/knowledge storage and acquisition	73	79	75
Books	68	68	67
Space: Quiet place/peaceful place for study, relaxation, etc)	28	45	11
Computers	20	26	0
Newspapers/ Current affairs/ Magazines	8	6	11
Educative videos	3	6	0
Librarians	-		

Associations (Officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries)	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base	10	3	7
	%	%	%
Books	70	100	43
Information/knowledge storage and acquisition	60	67	54
Space: Quiet place/peaceful place for study, relaxation, etc)	60	67	54
Computers	30	0	60
Librarians	10	0	20
Educative videos	-		
Newspapers/ Current affairs/ Magazines	-		

Words or images that appear in mind first when you hear the word library

How important are libraries to the local level officials?

Importance rating (Officials of local authorities that operate libraries)



Frequency of using/visit to the library (among those who operate and those who don't)

	officials of local authorities that operate libraries	officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries
	%	%
Over the last three months	65	10
Over the last six months	5	-
Over the last year	8	40
A year ago, but no more than two years ago	10	20
Over the last 2 years	8	-
I have not been in the local library	5	-
In the past	-	30

Overall libraries are considered to be essential or very important to both the community and the individual by the vast majority.

Officials of local authorities that operate libraries have significantly higher interaction with libraries as you would expect. 65% have done so in the last three months, as compared to only 10% among those in local authorities that don't operate libraries.

*Generally speaking, how important or unimportant do you think public libraries are as a service to the community?
How important or unimportant are public libraries to you personally?
When did you last visit your local library?*

Awareness of the local library situation

Extent of knowledge about local library situation (officials of local authorities that operate libraries)

	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = (officials of local authorities that operate libraries)	40	31	9
Level of knowledge	%	%	%
I am very well informed	43	45	33
I am generally informed	50	52	44
Not at all informed about library services	8	3	22

Extent of knowledge about local library situation (officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries)

	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = (officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries)	10	3	7
Level of knowledge	%	%	%
I am very well informed	40	33	43
I am generally informed	30	67	14
Not at all informed about library services	30	-	43

Levels of knowledge about the local library situation in Zimbabwe are high with 70% of those who don't operate library saying they are aware and over 90% of those who operate saying they are aware. This shows that engaging them for improvement initiatives would not be very challenging as they already know what the issues with libraries are..

Overall, to which extent are you informed of the public libraries situation, services and events?

Awareness of the local library situation

Sources of awareness about local library situation (officials of local authorities that operate libraries)

Source of awareness	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
	40	31	9
	%	%	%
It's in my neighborhood and I pass by it	48	48	44
Through my official work for the local council	40	35	56
Through Church and/or Church newsletters	20	23	11
Through friends	18	23	-
Through adult family members	10	10	11
Through my children	8	6	11
Through newspapers/ magazines	8	10	-
Through the internet	5	6	-
Through the school of my child	5	6	-

Friends are an important source of information when it comes officials of authorities not operating libraries.

Sources of awareness about local library situation (officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries)

Source of awareness	Total
	7
	%
Through friends	57
It's in my neighborhood and I pass by it	29
Through adult family members	29
Through my children	14
Through newspapers/ magazines	14

How you found out about the library situation

Relevant channels for information on libraries

Relevant channels (officials of local authorities that operate libraries)

Relevant channels	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
	40	31	9
	%	%	%
Internet	73	68	89
Newspapers, magazines	73	81	44
Colleagues, friends, etc	38	42	22
National TV	35	39	22
National radio	28	26	33
Mobile phone	20	26	-
Local TV	13	13	11
Local radio	13	16	-

Relevant channels (officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries)

Relevant channels	Total
	10
	%
Newspapers/ magazines	80
Friends	30
Church and/or Church newsletters	30
Internet	30
Radio	30
TV	20
School of my child	20

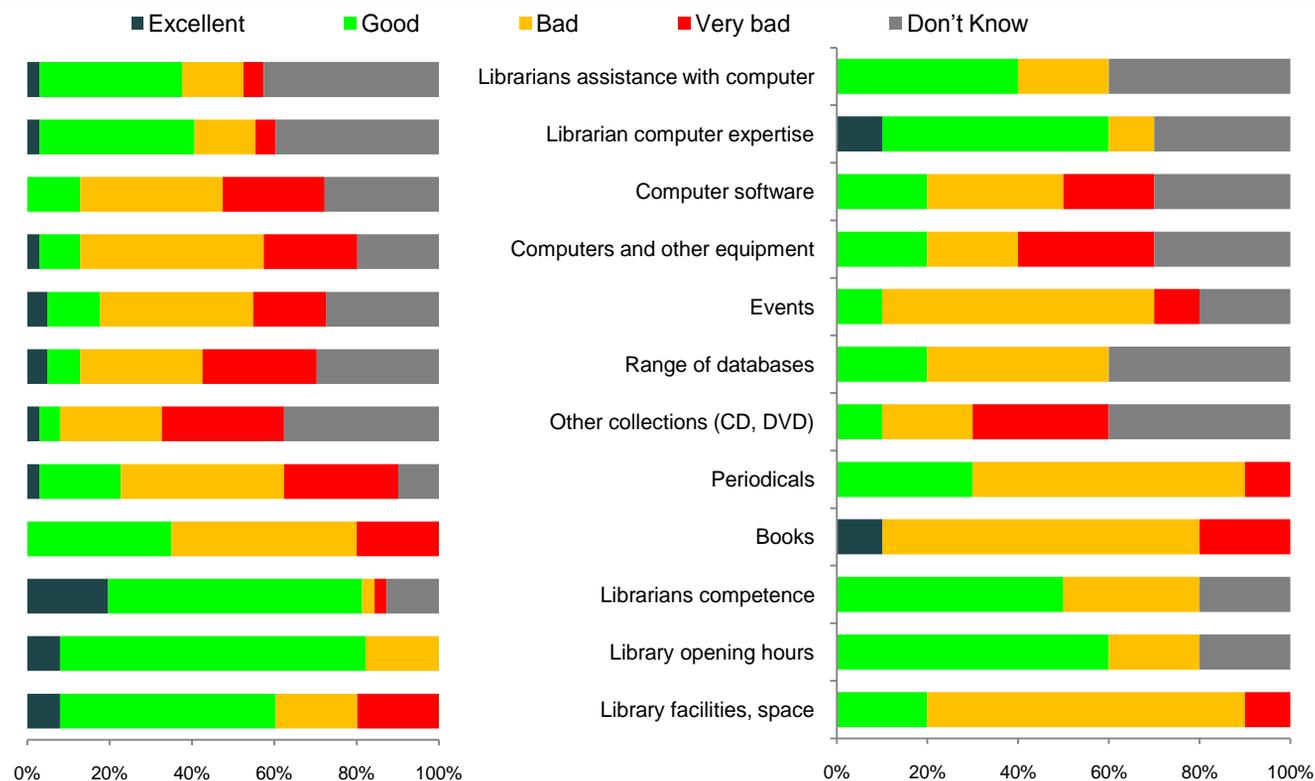
For the officials in authorities that operate libraries, internet and print media are seen as the most relevant channels for receiving information on libraries. Print media is equally relevant for the officials of authorities that don't operate libraries, but the internet is only mentioned by a few.

Most relevant channels for information on library issues

Comparative rating on some library aspects (officials of local authorities that operate libraries vs. officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries)

officials of local authorities that operate libraries

officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries

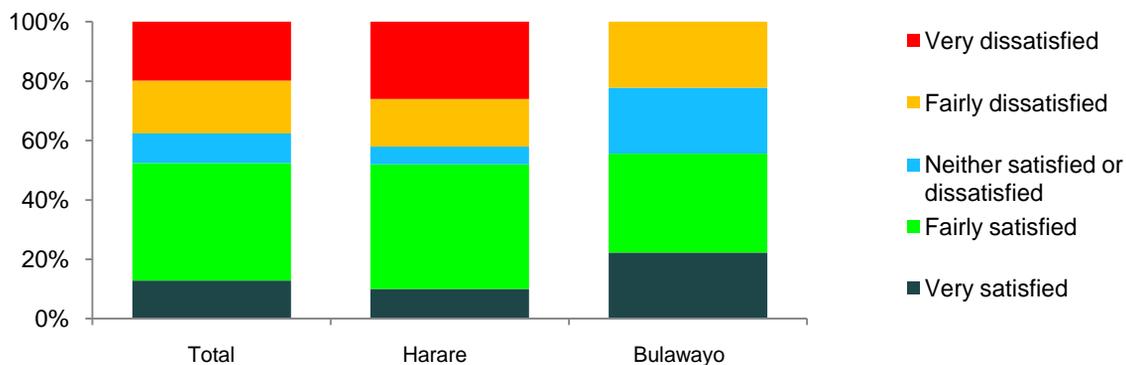


Most aspects of libraries are rated bad or very bad by both groups of officials. Computer related issues like in all other countries interviewed in this study receive low rating on the excellence scale.

How do you rate the following aspects of your library? Please make an assessment on a 4-point scale, where 1-very bad, 4-excellent.

Services rendered by libraries

Satisfaction levels among officials of authorities that operate libraries



Reasons for satisfaction among the officials of local authorities that operate libraries

	Total
Base those satisfied	21
	%
The staff are helpful	57
I like the environment	48
My library is close by/convenient	43
The range of books is good	43
Easy getting to the library (e.g. good parking, good public transport)	33
The staff are friendly	33
It's quiet	33
Long opening hours	29
Has the books I like	29
Easy to enter the building (i.e. good disabled access)	19
Plenty of seats available	19
It's a good place to relax	19
Good place to take children/good activities for children	19
I feel welcome there	19
Plenty of computers	14

Satisfaction with the current library services is fairly modest, with only 50% overall saying they are satisfied with the current situation. Main reason for satisfaction is staff. About half those who are satisfied, said that the ambience is also good.

Level of satisfaction with the current library service
Reasons for satisfaction

Satisfaction with services rendered by libraries

Reasons for dissatisfaction among the officials of local authorities that operate libraries

Attribute	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base	19	15	4
	%	%	%
The range of books isn't good enough	68	73	50
Not enough computers	58	67	25
Not enough seats available	26	33	-
Too noisy	26	27	25
They don't have the books I like	21	20	25
The area isn't safe	16	20	-
I don't like the environment	11	13	-

Proportion of local officials who feel that libraries need to pay attention to these areas

Attribute	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base	40	31	9
	%	%	%
Provision of Computer services	60	61	56
Equip the library with relevant books, CDs and DVDs	35	35	33
Increase the variety of new edition books and materials	28	32	11
Introduce a cybercafé for the users/internet services	15	19	-
Provide books for college students and relevant to the current curriculum	10	10	11
Section of children storybooks should sensitize readers	8	6	11
Have updated materials for education of all relevant fields	8	6	11
Outdated books	8	3	22

Relevance of materials in libraries is the main reason for dissatisfaction in addition to that, lack of computers is a concern that causes dissatisfaction.

Focus for improvement should be on introduction of information technology to the library services as well as making materials more relevant to current and potential users.

Benefits derived from visiting library

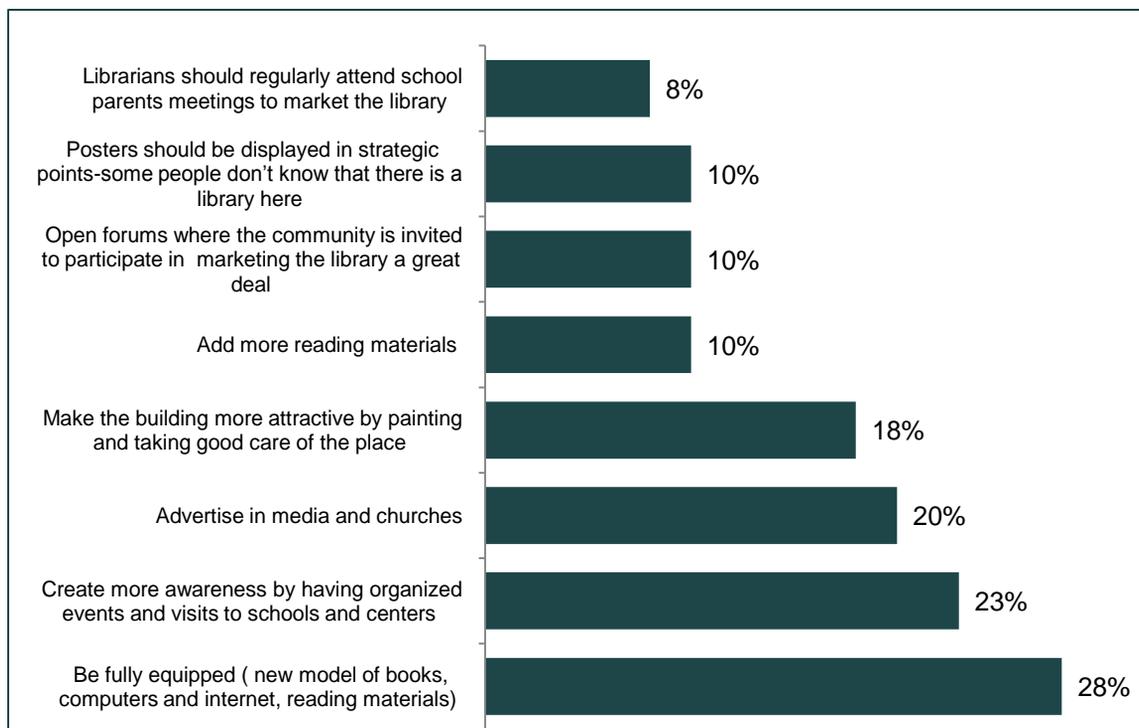
Benefit	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base = (officials of local authorities that operate libraries)	40	31	9
Benefits (spontaneous mention)	%	%	%
Develop new skills or learn something new	75	71	89
Get helpful information for school/ learning	73	71	78
Obtain new ideas, new interests	55	55	56
Library is a safe and quiet place for study and reading	35	29	56
Get helpful information for health and well being	18	23	-
Get helpful information about their community	18	23	-
Library helps to save time	15	16	11
Library helps to be better in their job	13	16	-
People feel comfortable in the library	13	10	22
Get helpful information for business and commerce	5	6	-
Helps to make contacts with other people	3	3	-

Officials believe that libraries are beneficial to users, mainly in the development of new skills as well as supplementing information /knowledge gained in schools.

How people benefit from visiting the library – Spontaneous

Local authorities officials' perception of how libraries can promote visibility

Percentage of officials who say these methods can be used to promote visibility



Equipping libraries with the right materials is mentioned as a major way of promoting libraries. Subsequent to that, the next step is to make people aware through proactive engagement i.e. using events and visitations to schools. Advertising and sprucing up of the buildings are also mentioned as ways of promoting libraries.

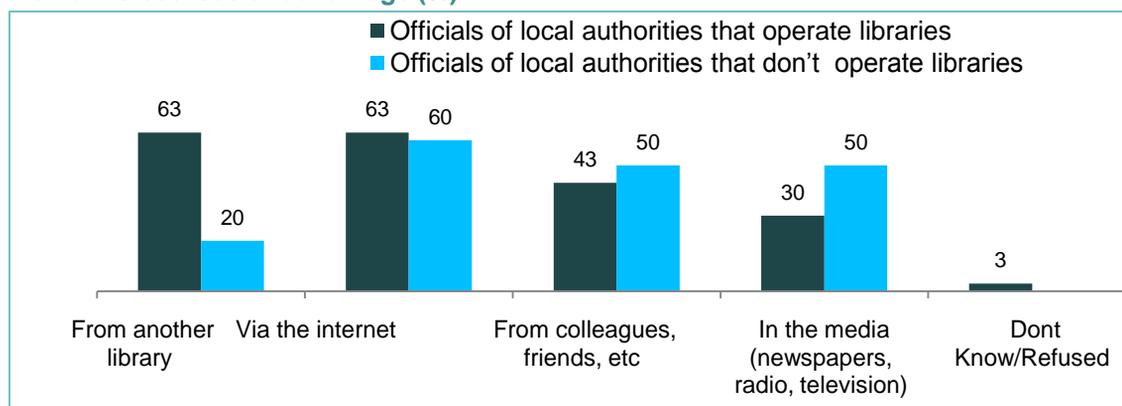
Steps or activities that the library should take in order to promote its greater visibility and prestige in the local community

The purpose of libraries

Local level officials view of the purposes served by libraries

Purpose (officials of local authorities that operate libraries)	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
Base total	40	31	9
	%	%	%
Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)	98	97	100
To help my child do homework	48	45	56
Entertainment	23	26	11
Local news or information	20	26	-
It is safe place for my child to spend time	20	23	11
Information on health issues	18	19	11
To communicate with distance friends or relatives	15	16	11
Information on agriculture	13	13	11
National news or information	13	16	-
Financial or investment news or information	10	10	11
To look for information on starting or running a business	10	13	-
Information and use of electronic government services	8	10	-
International news or information	5	3	11
To conduct a job search or write a cv	3	3	-

Alternative sources of advantage (%)



According to the officials of local authorities that operate libraries, the main purposes of libraries are educational and an aid to school children in completion of their class work and homework.

If the local library was not there, a similar advantage could either be obtained from another library or from the internet, meaning that while libraries are important for the purposes they serve, they have to match up to what is available on the internet so as not to lose relevance.

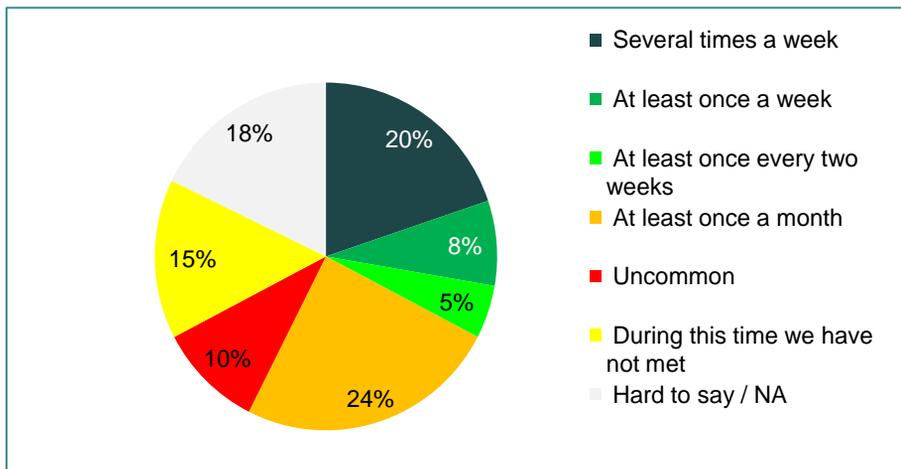
To which purposes libraries do serve the most

If the local library does not exist, where people could get the same Advantages

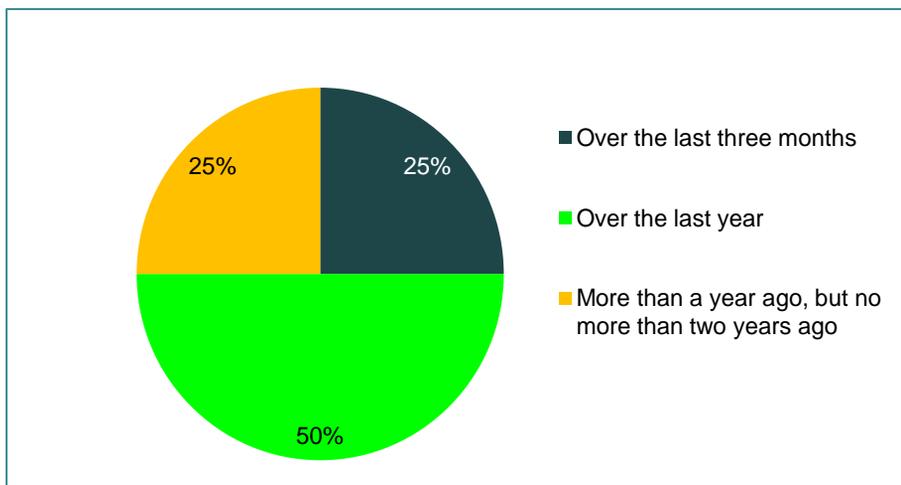
Management & operations of libraries

When last met with library managers

Officials of local authorities that operate libraries



Officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries

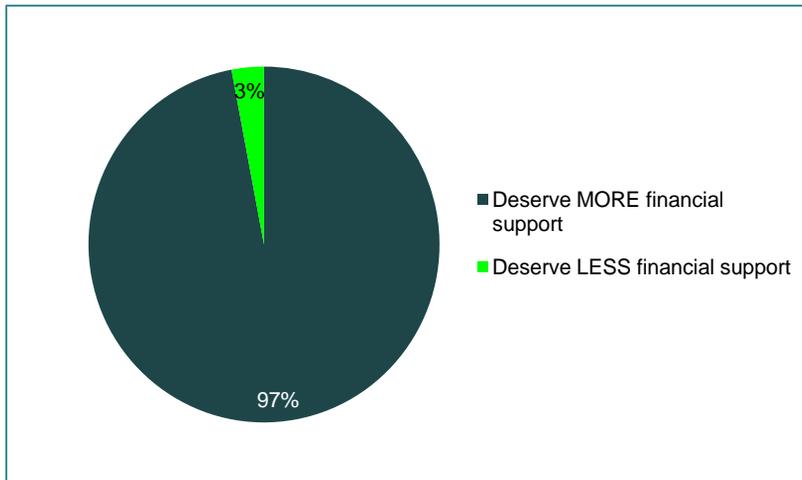


Although not all officials of local authorities that operate libraries are meeting with the library managers frequently, more than half of them meet with the library managers at least once every month which means they have sufficient interaction to understand the needs and challenges facing librarians. The frequency for officials of authorities not running libraries is understandably much lower.

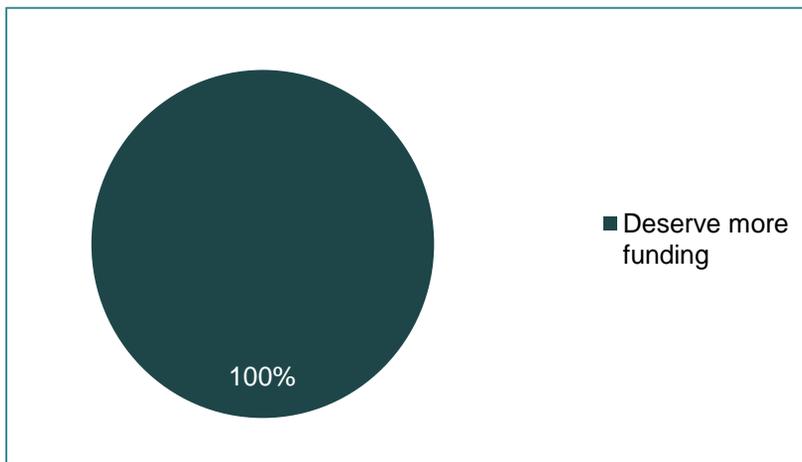
*During the last 6 months, how often have you met with local library manager or librarian?
When did you meet with public library manager or librarian?*

Opinion on funding of public libraries

Officials of local authorities that operate libraries



Officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries



It is accepted that libraries deserve more funding.

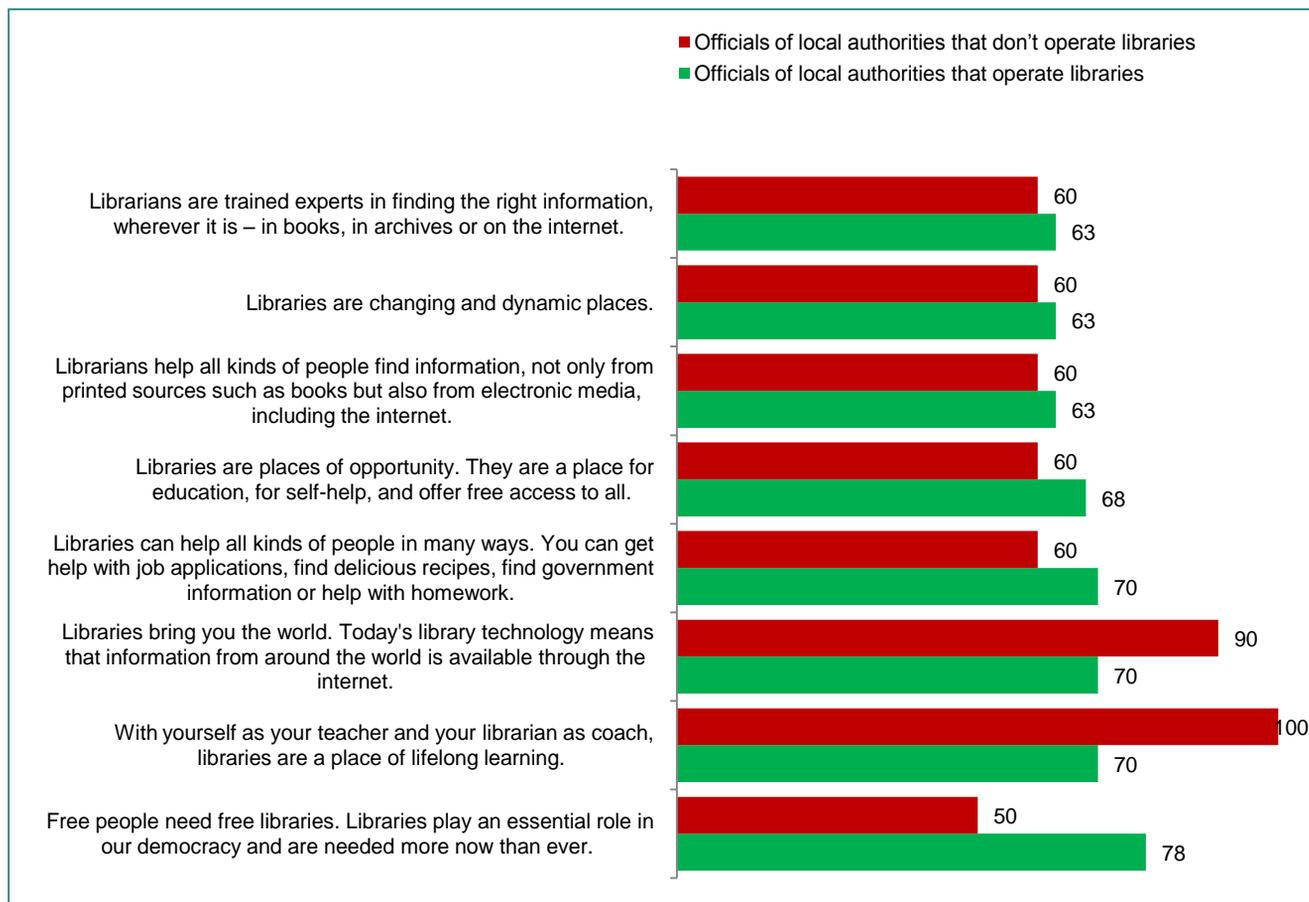
When asked about plans to increase funding for the libraries, most officials in authorities that operate libraries either have no plans to increase funding for public libraries or are not in a position to comment on this issue, perhaps because they are not directly in charge of funds allocation. For those who have plans to increase funding, it is for purchase of books and maintenance of the physical building.

Most believe that funding for libraries will come from fund raising activities (30%) and local or international donations (23%). A few mention government allocations as a possible option for municipal operation of libraries.

Which statement most closely represents your opinion regarding the current funding for public libraries?

Statements in support of libraries and librarians

Percentage of local level officials who find the statements very convincing (based on a 5 point scale where 1 is not convincing at all and 5 is very convincing). The percentages indicated the officials who said that they find these statements very convincing



A majority of officials (both groups) find the statements to be very convincing; over 50% find all the statements very convincing. Officials of authorities that don't operate libraries are very convinced about the ability of libraries to bring global information to the people through the internet as well as the ability of the individual to take charge of their own learning using libraries.

Let me read to some statements in support of librarians and libraries. Please tell me whether each statement seems very convincing, somewhat convincing, not convincing to your own point of view

Libraries & community

Main issues facing community (Officials of local authorities that operate libraries)

Main issues	Total	Harare	Bulawayo
	40	31	9
	%	%	%
No computers and internet services	28	29	22
Inadequate books	20	19	22
Books in the library are mostly old editions	18	23	-
Inadequate chairs	15	16	11
Require more computers	15	19	-
Inadequate funding	13	16	-
Poor infrastructure	13	10	22
Other reference materials people need are not available in the library	10	10	11
Expansion of the library i.e. need more space	10	10	11
Poverty in the community	10	6	22
Unemployment	10	13	-
Library renovation	10	13	-

Main issues facing community (Officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries)

Main issues	Total
	10
	%
Poor infrastructure	30
Need for community library	30
Poverty in the community	20
Unemployment	20
Lack of clean water	20
Environmental degradation	20
Other reference materials people need are not available in the library	10
Insufficient funds for economic development	10
Diseases	10
Poor power system	10
Lack of resource personnel	10
Lack of libraries in some schools	10

Although the officials of local authorities that operate libraries seemed to focus their attention on issues to do with libraries, the common denominator for all issues mentioned by both groups of officials is finances. More specifically the issues that come up include, poverty, poor or non existent infrastructure and unemployment.

What are the main issues of your local community?

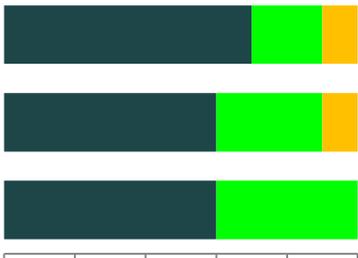
Impact areas

Officials of local authorities that operate libraries

Officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries

Education

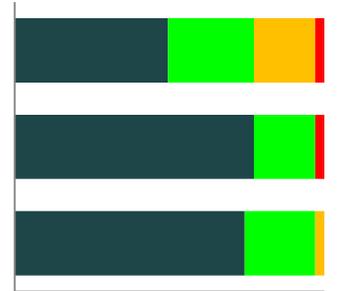
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



Contribute to adults' employment opportunities

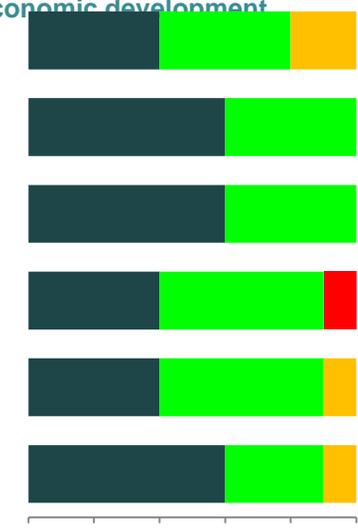
Contribute to children's learning

Contribute to the development of literacy



Though contributing to normal school learning for children and general improvement of literacy is recognized, a minority disagrees regarding impact on employment.

Economic development



Provide entrepreneurs job related training in the areas of computer and information literacy skills and good...

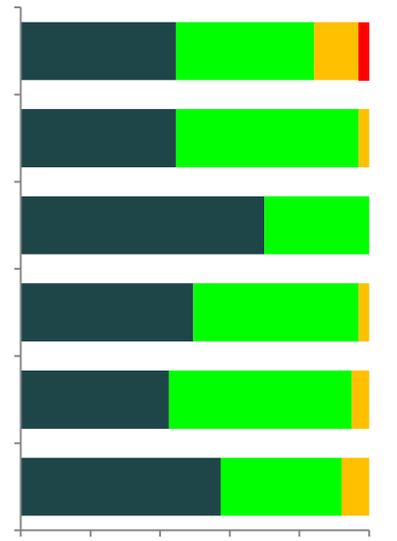
Enhance productivity of individuals and organizations

Allow cost savings from borrowing materials rather than having to buy them

Contribute to the development of economic knowledge of the community

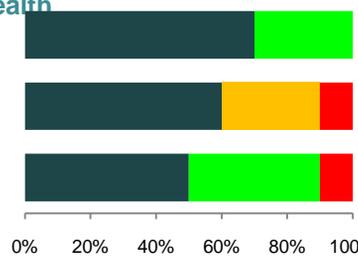
Provide access to and professional support in search for business information resources

Provide access to information and new ideas (e.g. start-up business) for entrepreneurs



Both sets of officials recognize potential library contribution in a number of economic development areas.

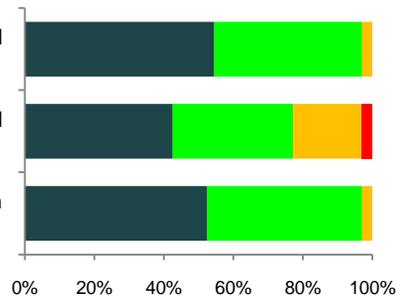
Health



Disseminate health related information

Provide space for health related events

Provide access to health information



There is overwhelming support for the idea of a role for libraries in providing health information but a minority is skeptical about promoting health through facilitating health related events in libraries.

Could you please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with below listed statements? What is your opinion on each of these areas? Could you please comment your opinion?:

Impact areas

Officials of local authorities that operate libraries

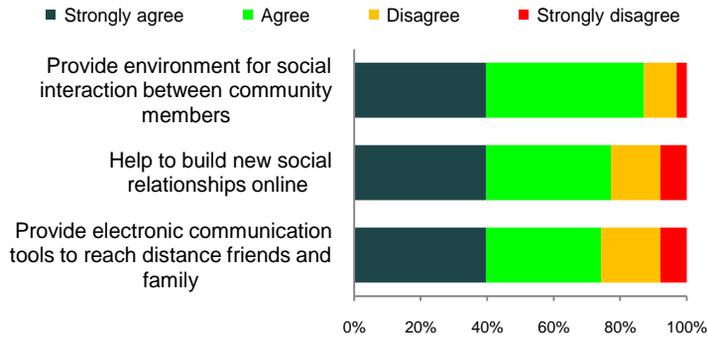
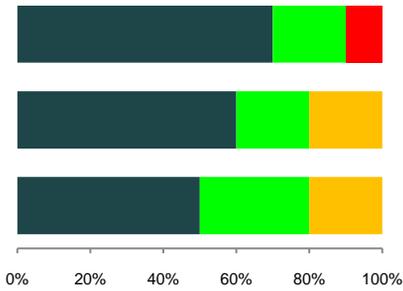
Officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries

That libraries enable linkages through communication one on one is almost universally acknowledged. 75% see their potential to use ICT for this .

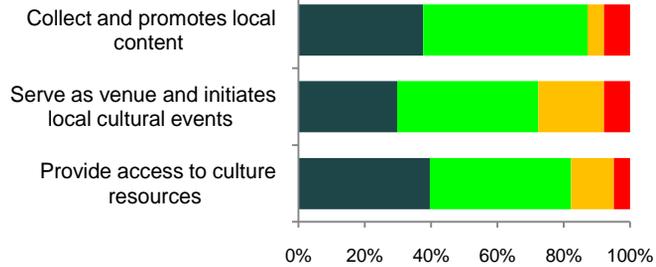
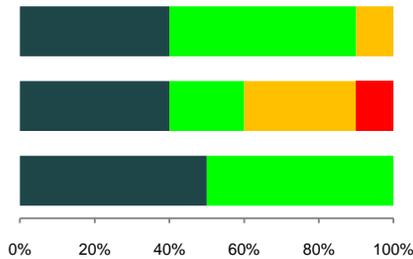
Whilst libraries' cultural role is accepted, a substantial minority do not think they have potential as venues for cultural events.

A substantial majority understand the social role of libraries, including their ability to strengthen social cohesion.

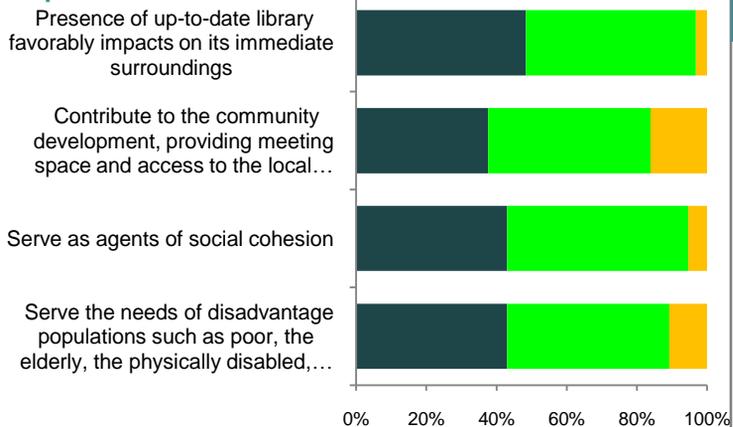
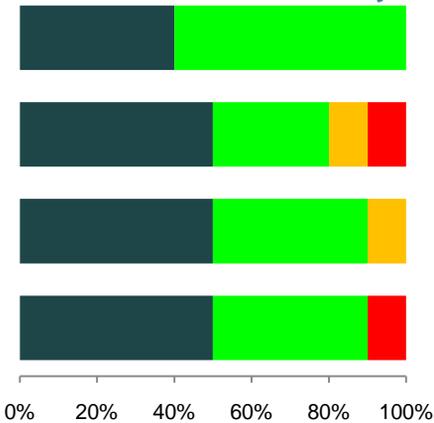
Communication



Culture



Social Inclusion and Community Development



Could you please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with below listed statements? What is your opinion on each of these areas? Could you please comment your opinion?:

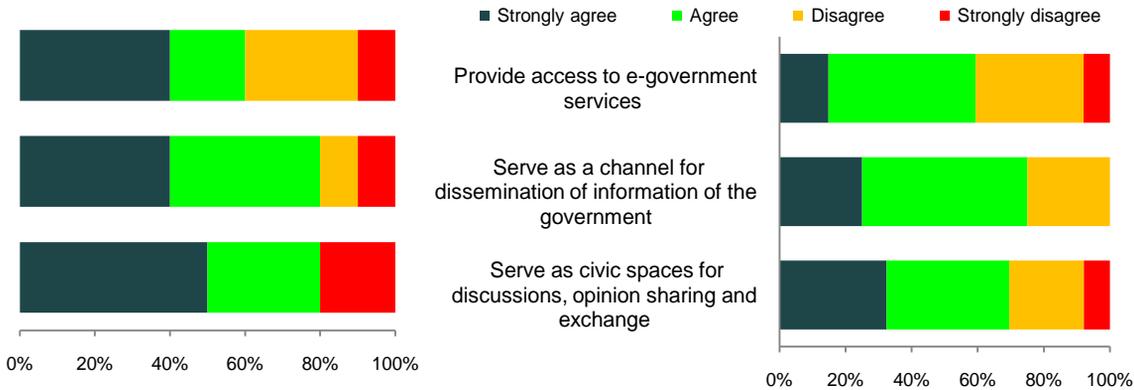
Impact areas

Officials of local authorities that operate libraries

Officials of local authorities that don't operate libraries

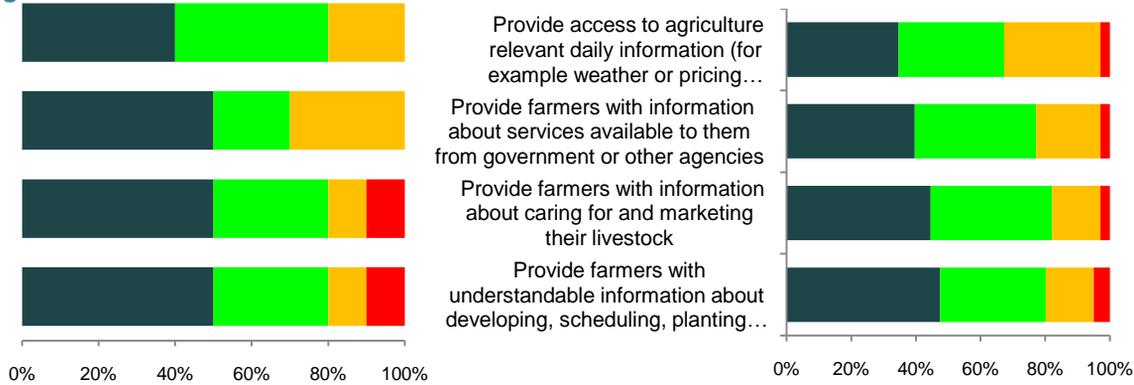
A majority support the idea of a role for libraries in providing access to eGovernment and other government information. The E-government role is obviously a challenge due to practicalities.

Citizen Empowerment, Democracy and E-Government



A majority recognizes a potential role for public libraries in supporting agriculture but a substantial minority disagrees.

Agriculture outcomes



Could you please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with below listed statements? What is your opinion on each of these areas? Could you please comment your opinion?:



SECTION 3: NATIONAL LEVEL OFFICIALS



SECTION OVERVIEW

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Priorities for institution
Education
Economic development
Health
Communication
Culture
Social inclusion and community development
Citizen empowerment, democracy and E-Government
Agriculture

Demographic profile

	Zimbabwe
Base (n =20)	20
Gender	%
Male	80
Female	20
Age %	%
21 yrs - 30 yrs	30
31 yrs - 40 yrs	20
41 yrs - 50 yrs	30
51 yrs - 60 yrs	10
61 yrs - 70 yrs	10
Education	%
Higher	95
Secondary education	5
Occupation	%
Librarian	10
Director	25
Deputy director	-
Chief librarian	10
Deputy librarian	15
Communication officer	10
General worker	-
Head information service	15
Chief/senior cultural office	-
Others	15
Duration in position	%
01-02 Yrs	45
03-05 Yrs	25
06-10 Yrs	20
10+ Yrs	10
Decision making	%
Ultimately responsible	20
Partly responsible	70
Not responsible	10

Caution: Sample sizes for national level officials are quite small at country level

Perceptions of libraries

Associations (National level officials)	Total	Male	Female
Base	20	13	7
	%	%	%
Books	70	62	86
Information/knowledge storage and acquisition	65	62	71
Computers	30	38	14
Space: Quiet place/peaceful place for study, relaxation, etc)	15	15	14
Newspapers/ Current affairs/ Magazines	10	8	14
Educative videos	5		14
Librarians			

About one third of the national level officials interviewed in Zimbabwe associate libraries with computers. Though not a very high number, it is a significant proportion bearing in mind the low penetration of computing in the libraries interviewed in the survey.

What word or image appears to your mind first when you hear a word "library"?

Interaction with libraries

Knowledge about the local library situation among the national level officials is high, with close to two thirds of the officials interviewed claiming to have good knowledge about the situation. A similar number (two thirds) of the officials interviewed in Zimbabwe said they have visited a library in the past 12 months. Although for some it is for personal reasons, majority visited libraries in the course of their duties which either directly or indirectly require them to interact with libraries.

Whereas most appreciate the role that libraries are playing in society, they also acknowledge that libraries are not very well funded by the government and are resource constrained.

It is also clear that owing to the relatively high level of interaction with libraries in Zimbabwe, the officials are aware of the services which need improvement. The key need is to modernize libraries through provision of ICT and also providing materials (books and periodicals) that are relevant to the need of users.

A majority are satisfied with their current level of connection with libraries, and are keen on making improvements if resources were available, which further goes to show a more engaged group of policy makers. The level of continued engagement with libraries into the future cuts at various levels which include policy making level as well as direct involvement in the running of the libraries.

Overall, to which extent are you informed of the local library situation, services and events?

Services offered by libraries

Libraries are said to be offering services mainly to adults and where children are involved books are borrowed on their behalf rather than having the children physically interact with the libraries

Services rendered by libraries (Spontaneous)

	Total	Male	Female
Base: Total Sample	20	13	7
	%	%	%
Take out books for children	70	85	43
Take out books for grown-ups	70	69	71
Use references materials, like the encyclopedia	55	54	57
Ask a librarian for help, advice or consultation read newspaper or magazine	45	38	57
Use public internet access	30	31	29
Learn languages	25	15	43
Use child section	25	38	-
Meet other people	15	15	14
Take out CDs or videos	10	8	14
Connect to the internet with your laptop	10	15	-
Use spaces for study	10	8	14
Attend an event	5	8	-
Take a class or workshop	5	8	-

Borrowing books and reference services come out top, but public internet access is mentioned by 30%.

70%

Overall mention books lending to either children or adults; lending of books is considered the primary service of libraries across board.

Which services have you heard about in the public libraries?

Purposes served by libraries (Spontaneous)

	Total	Male	Female
Base: Total Sample	20	13	7
	%	%	%
Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)	95	92	100
Information on health issue	50	46	57
To help my child do homework	50	54	43
National news or information	45	46	43
Entertainment	35	38	29
Information on agriculture	35	23	57
International news or information	35	31	43
Local news or information	30	31	29
It is safe place for my child to spend time	30	31	29
Information and use of electronic government services	20	8	43
Financial or investment news or information	20	15	29
To look for information on starting or running a business	10	8	14
To communicate with distance friends or relatives	10	15	-
To conduct a job search or write a CV	5	8	-

Benefits derived from visiting library (Spontaneous)

	Total	Male	Female
Base: Total Sample	20	13	7
	%	%	%
Develop new skills or learn something new	85	85	86
Obtain new ideas, new interests	55	54	57
Get helpful information for school/ learning	55	54	57
Library is a safe and quiet place for study and reading	35	31	43
Get helpful information for business and commerce	25	31	14
Get helpful information for health and well being	20	15	29
Library helps to be better in their job	20	23	14
People feel comfortable in the library	20	23	14
Helps to make contacts with other people	20	15	29
Get helpful information about their community	15	23	-
Library helps to save time	15	15	14

Although the main purpose perceived is academic, the end result in terms of benefits extends beyond school work, with issues like business and health being mentioned.

The perception is that libraries serve educational purposes more than anything else which shows that the officials associate libraries with school children more than adults. A significant number see their potential for health and agriculture.

There is an appreciation of libraries improving general knowledge levels of communities mainly through learning new skills or something new. The role of libraries in school work is also mentioned as a key benefit by 55% of the officials interviewed but helping health and business are also mentioned a lot.

To which purposes, in your opinion, do libraries serve the most

In your opinion, do people benefit from visiting the library in the following areas

Proportion of officials who believe the phrases are well associated with public libraries

	Total	Male	Female
Base: Total sample	20	13	7
	%	%	%
Has highly-skilled librarians	85	84	86
Comfortable	70	85	43
Friendly	65	69	58
Inclusive	45	46	43
Dynamic	35	39	29
Innovative	35	38	29
Offers different activities and entertainment	20	31	0
Modern	0	0	0
Up-to-date on technology	0	0	0

Public libraries compared to other tax funded serviced

	Total	Male	Female
Base: Total Sample	20	13	7
	%	%	%
I would rank benefits of other tax supporters services before benefits of public/library	25	23	29
I would rank benefits of public library first since everybody gets information from there	20	15	29
Public libraries benefits services are underfunded compared to other tax support services benefits	20	23	14
None is more beneficial than the other	15	15	14
Public libraries benefit output are more and of stable value than other tax supported service	10	15	-
Public libraries benefit come first because people cannot develop without knowledge	10	8	14

Though having skilled managers and comfortable libraries, libraries in Zimbabwe need to modernize and adopt new and up to date technology.

There are mixed reactions regarding the ranking of the benefits of libraries in comparison to other tax funded services with an almost equal split of opinion.

how well you personally believe each of the following words or phrases describe public libraries

how would you rank the benefits of public library compared to the benefits of other tax-supported services such as schools, health services :

Management of libraries

Funding

	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Libraries are not getting enough funds	100
Public libraries needs additional funds from other sources	15
Public libraries have high resources limitations	5

Preferred communication channels

	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Newspapers	60
Radios	55
TV	50
Internet	35
Bill boards	25
Notice boards	15
Pamphlets	15
Flyers	10
Churches/Mosques/ Schools	10
Adverts	5
Mobile phones	5
CDs and DVDs	5
Satellite dishes	5
Calendars	5
Soccer matches	5
Printed materials	5

All agree that libraries are not getting enough funding but also only 15% of the officials interviewed say that libraries need funding from other sources.

Conventional print and radio are the most preferred ways of receiving information about libraries.

Print, radio and TV are the most preferred ways of getting information about libraries. The internet is also fairly significant with a 35% mention, which points to the growing access to internet and therefore the need for libraries to go digital and electronic in rendering services.

Questions:

Attribute association comments

Help in finding information

Librarians help all kinds of people find information, not only from printed sources such as books but also from electronic media, including the internet.	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Most librarians are well trained and have the capability to assist mainly on printed sources	15
They are good at helping people to find information from all sources	15
They are trained professionals/competent	5
They do not discriminate, they help all people	5
Most librarians do not have internet/computers	35
Not everyone in society benefits from librarians	10
People can access information from the internet they don't need a librarian to help	5

Opportunity

Libraries are places of opportunity. They are a place for education, for self-help, and offer free access to all.	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Everyone who wants to learn is free to use libraries and as a result open new opportunities for themselves	25
Libraries offer education which is essential to human life	20
Allow easy access to expensive books	10
The conducive atmosphere is good for education	10
They create awareness which empower people and utilize their opportunities	5
They have materials and resources in many fields of human interest	5
You can get current or past information e.g. past newspapers	5

Life long learning

With yourself as your teacher and your librarian as coach, libraries are a place of lifelong learning.	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
They help to grow literacy levels	20
You learn something new every time you visit the library	20
You get information that you can't get anywhere else	20
Accessibility and availability at anytime makes people learn continuously	10
Age is not a limitation to use libraries you can learn for life	10
The librarians help people save time and make it easy to learn	10
The knowledge in libraries is enormous	5
The materials and skilled librarians go hand in hand to make us enlightened	5
They are supervised by the government	5
They don't have enough time because they are unsatisfied	5

As in other countries surveyed, the officials appreciate the role and skill level of librarians and also feel that they need more resources and equipment.

Although libraries are not entirely free in Zimbabwe, there is a high appreciation of the role they play in promoting education and knowledge acquisition.

The role of libraries in promoting learning on a continuous and long term basis is not in question. Not many officials mention the role of the librarian in the learning.

Let me read you some statements in support of libraries and librarians'. Please comment on them :

Attribute association comments

Brings you to the world

Libraries bring you the world. Today's library technology means that information from around the world is available through the internet.	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Today's libraries have been digitalized to bring the world closer.	10
Those that have internet access are making it easy for people who would otherwise not access	5
Some librarians are well equipped with the latest technology	5
Libraries don't have computers	25
There is no internet in our libraries	20
Libraries need to upgrade so that they can provide information using modern technology	10
The only challenge with this is piracy and abuse of copyrights	5

Change and dynamism

Libraries are changing and dynamic places. In a typical library, children can be listening to a storyteller, first-time computer users can be learning to navigate the internet, users can get a wide range of books and students get information to help their studies.	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Libraries are now trying to change but are not there yet	10
Variety makes it possible to cater for all	10
Libraries are not very dynamic in our country	30
Libraries keep children busy but it is not the right place for them to learn to use the internet, they will access wrong materials.	5
Most libraries lack ICT services and facilities	5
Shortage of library staff is a limitation	5
Having outdated materials/books is not dynamic	5

Librarians training and expertise

Librarians are trained experts in finding the right information, wherever it is – in books, in archives or on the internet.	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Most are well trained on how to organise information	25
Librarians are professionals and always know how to get the right information.	10
Librarians are always readily available to assist the users find the information they want.	5
Librarians give guidelines to users.	5
They lack of resources to do their jobs right	20
Some librarians aren't competent i.e. cant use a computer	5
Some librarians are not well informed	5
Librarians should be well trained	5
This does not work with public library, they are not very helpful	5

There are more negative sentiments than positive ones regarding the role of bringing people to the world mainly because the libraries don't have enough computing resources.

There is a high level of disagreement regarding change and dynamism, and perhaps this role is more aspirational and ideal rather than a current situation.

According to the national level officials, librarians are trained but lack the resource to do their job properly especially regarding access to information on the internet.

Let me read you some statements in support of libraries and librarians'. Please comment on them :

Attribute association comments

Helping all kinds of people

Libraries can help all kinds of people in many ways. You can get help with job applications, find delicious recipes, find government information or help with homework. The library does all these things.

	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Libraries are the only places you will find information on anything	30
Libraries have a lot of information from different sources which are current and of use to anyone interested	20
Helps students and public to do homework	15
They help people get government information	10
You can get all these thing however there is need to bring them closer to the people	10
They empowers communities and individuals by giving them variety of information	10
They do not do all these things but they should.	15

Free for free

Free people need free libraries. Libraries play an essential role in our democracy and are needed more now than ever.

	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
They are not necessarily free because service are paid for	15
They help build build social cohesion, support initiatives	10
They enlighten the people on politics and democracy and are needed now more than ever	5
Yes through giving information on current affairs, development and research.	5
They give people access to computers and the internet to get information on democracy	5
They don't have funding at the moment and mainly focus on keeping going rather than politics	15

Safe and welcoming community space

The library is a safe and welcoming community space where everyone feels welcome. People see their friends and neighbours there.

	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Libraries belong to the community and people sometimes meet there	35
Public libraries are for all to access	10
Libraries do not discriminate anyone, all people are welcome	5
Its conducive place for everyone	5
Is a quiet place for studies not meetings	30
It is not a social place for meeting friends and neighbours	20

The officials agree that libraries have an important role to play in providing all kinds of information,

The officials think that libraries could play a bigger role in the development of freedom and democracy, but are hindered by lack of funds.

Opinions are split regarding social role of libraries. The fact that some see this role means there is an opportunity to utilize it to be more engaging with the community beyond lending of books.

Let me read you some statements in support of libraries and librarians'. Please comment on them :

Libraries impact

Main issues facing country

	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Insufficient resources especially financial resources	50
Inadequate information resources	25
Sanctions	20
Public libraries are few	15
Unemployment	15
Hiv and aids	15
Lack of modern facilities	10
Lack of computers/ machines	10
Libraries in dilapidated state	10
Poverty	10
Environmental degradation	10

Financial inadequacy and lack of information resources are major concerns. The list of issues all linked to lack of funds by the government.

Main priorities of institution

	Total
Base: Total Sample	20
	%
Facilitating law reforms for social economic and political development	20
Provide relevant materials for user to conduct research successful	10
Disseminate information to the general public to make them aware of what is happening	10
Educate the public about the environment	10
Sustaining a balance between natural resource use and replacement	10

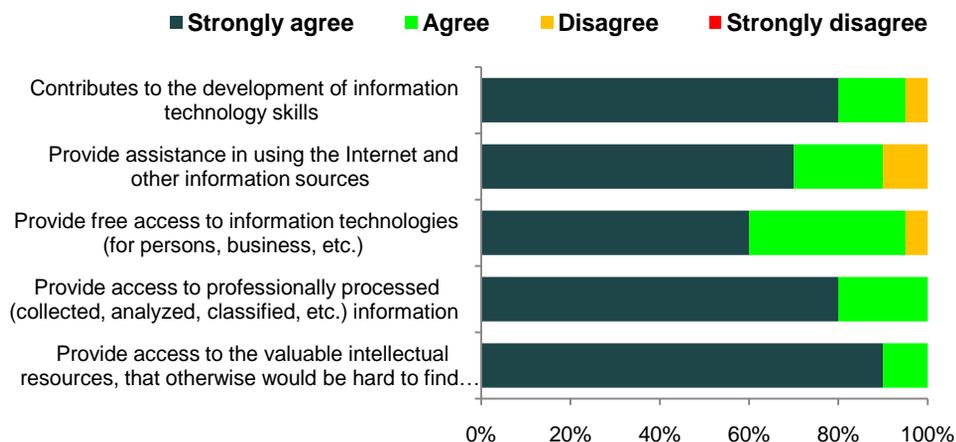
Financial constraints and information related concerns prominently feature in the list of issues. The institutions are very focused on their specific mandates e.g. the media is focused on disseminating information while the environment and natural resources ministry is focused on conservation of natural resources.

What do you see as the main challenges of the country?

What do you see as the main priorities of your institution?

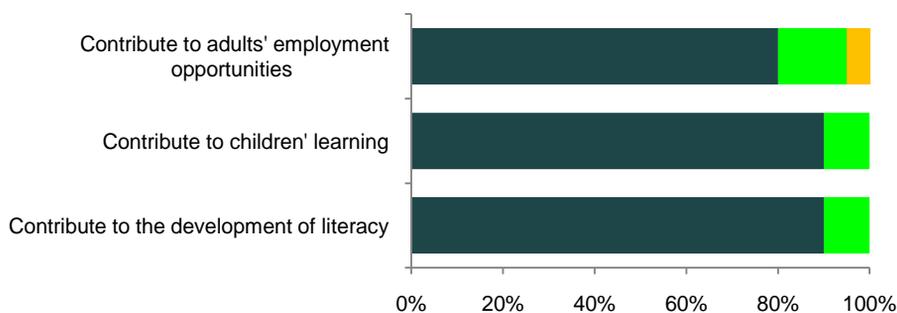
Impact areas

Information society and digital divide



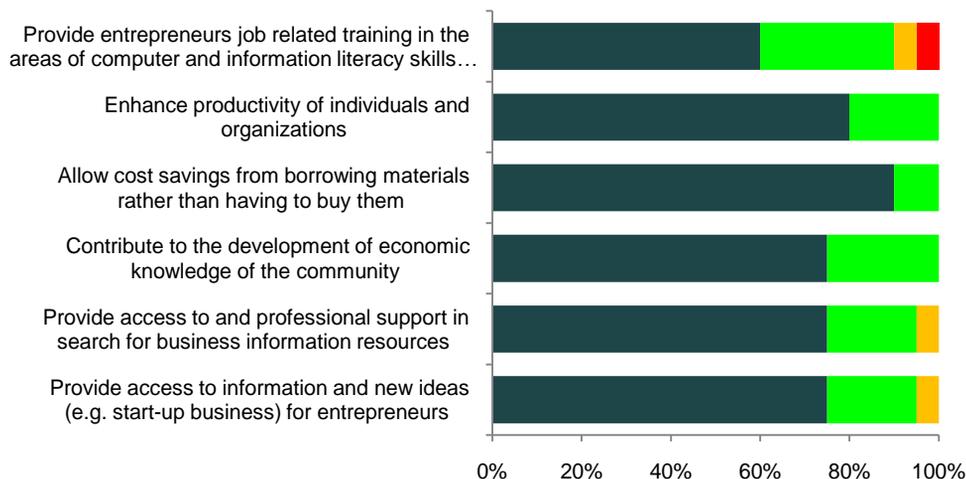
The officials agree that libraries should provide access to knowledge /information and use of ICT services as well as access to professionally processed information.

Education



Overall the libraries are strongly seen to have potential to aid education and development of literacy levels in Zimbabwe as well as to help adults' employment opportunities.

Economic development

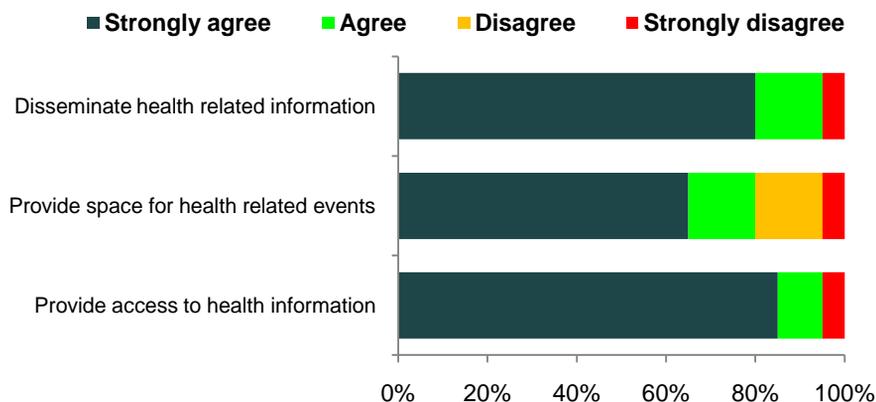


The idea of a role for libraries in economic development is very well supported.

Could you please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with below listed statements? What is your opinion on each of these areas? Could you please comment your opinion?:

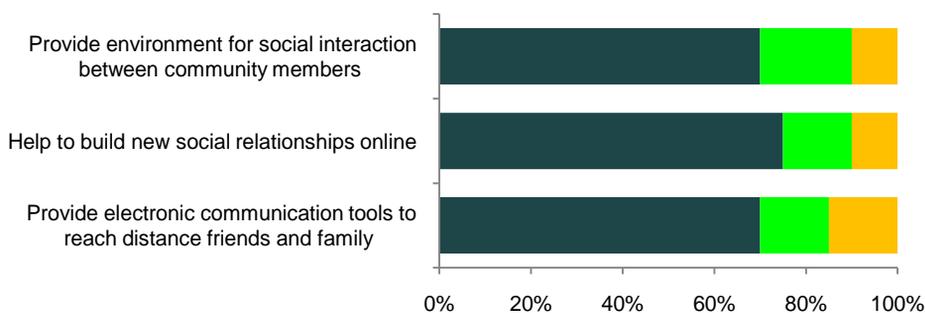
Impact areas

Health



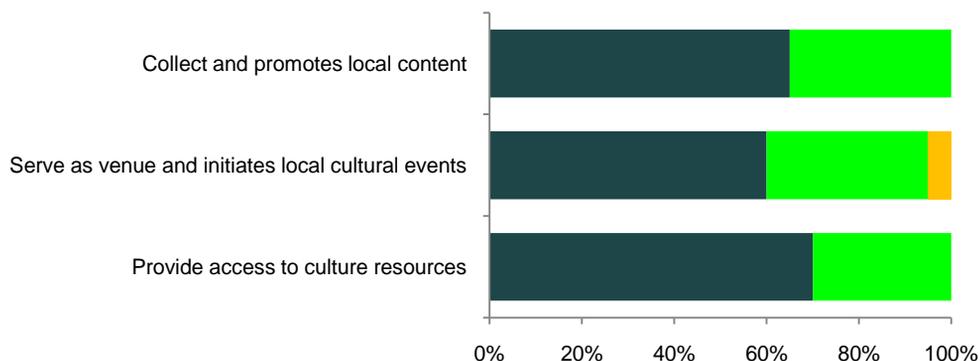
The national level officials agree that libraries have a role to play in providing health related information. A few disagree with the role of libraries in facilitating health related events.

Communication



That libraries enable linkages through communication one on one is almost universally acknowledged. 75% also see their potential to use ICT for this and increase their contribution to social cohesion.

Culture

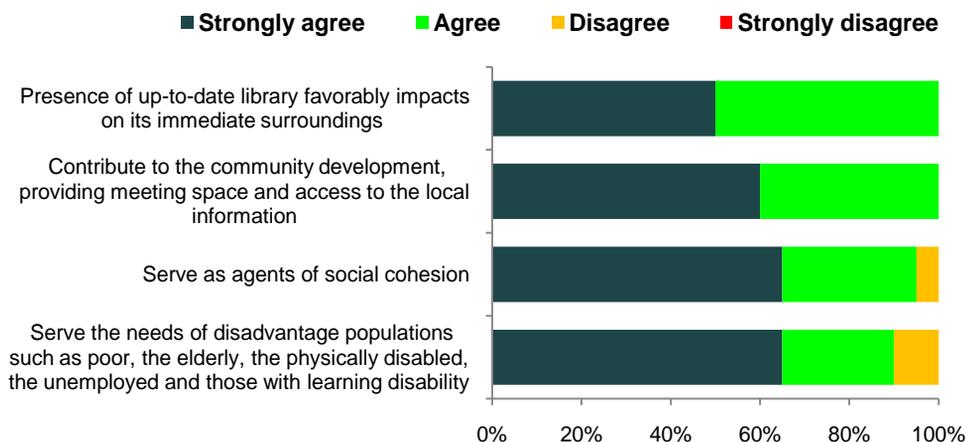


There is little disagreement regarding the role that libraries could play in promoting culture.

Could you please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with below listed statements? What is your opinion on each of these areas? Could you please comment your opinion?

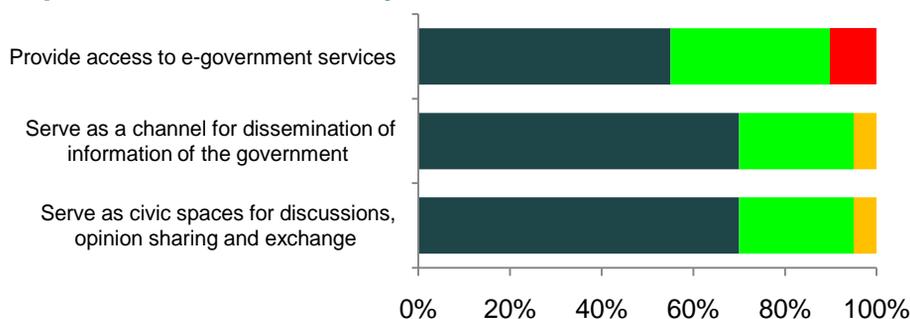
Impact areas

Social and community development



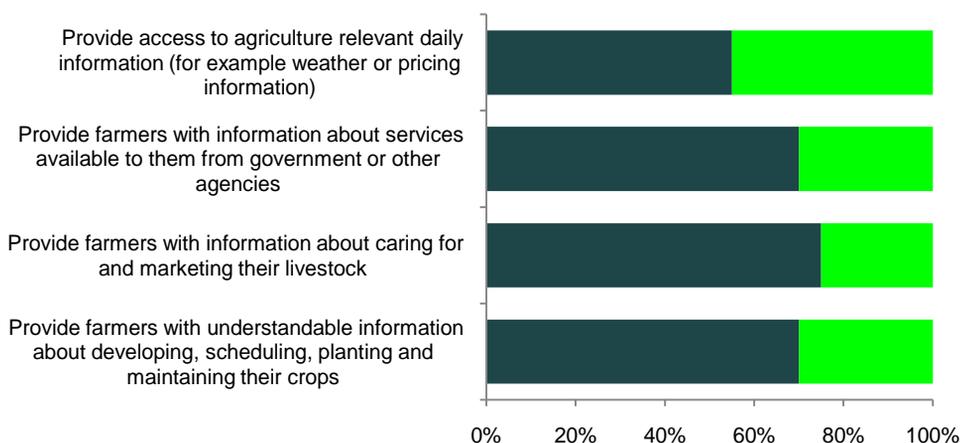
There are very strong positive sentiments regarding impact on social and community development and substantial support for libraries as agents of social cohesion.

Citizen Empowerment, Democracy and E-Government



The great majority support the idea of a role for libraries in providing access to eGovernment and other government information.

Agriculture



All officials agree that libraries can impact on agriculture positively. In view of the importance of agriculture to most African countries, this is one area where libraries would have a direct impact on livelihoods.

Could you please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with below listed statements? What is your opinion on each of these areas? Could you please comment your opinion?:

Conclusion

Whilst service levels are reportedly currently depressed, attitudes to libraries in Zimbabwe are rather positive. Their potential to help provide solutions to problems in the areas of agriculture, health, economic development and social cohesion seem to be widely recognised by all the stakeholders. This could be a good sign for the future when local stakeholders decide what action to take in the light of what they have learned.