



Namibia's Regional Libraries: Interim Report of the Regional Study and Resource Center (RSRC) Evaluation

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TECHNOLOGY & SOCIAL CHANGE GROUP

The Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington Information School explores the design, use, and effects of information and communication technologies in communities facing social and economic challenges. With experience in 50 countries, TASCHA brings together a multidisciplinary network of social scientists, engineers, and development practitioners to conduct research, advance knowledge, create public resources, and improve policy and program design. Our purpose? To spark innovation and opportunities for those who need it most.

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ABSTRACT

The Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington's Information School was commissioned by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to conduct a performance evaluation of Namibia's regional libraries, officially called the Regional Study and Resource Centers (RSRC) Activity. The Activity included the construction of three regional libraries in underserved areas of Namibia in an effort to improve access to information resources, training materials and programs, and study facilities. The performance evaluation comprises a set of quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts and was designed to serve the needs of two major stakeholders, MCC and the Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS), as well as the citizens of Namibia and the United States for accountability purposes. This interim report is the second of three evaluation reports and focuses on RSRC operations, services, and usage.

KEYWORDS

Libraries, Regional Resource and Study Center, RSRC, Namibia, evaluation, ICTD, ICT4D, M&E, impact, Millennium Challenge Corporation, MCC

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Acronyms

EQ – Evaluation question

IPA – Implementing Partner Agreement

IREX – The International Research and Exchanges Board

ITOCA – The Information Training and Outreach Center for Africa

MCA-N – Millennium Challenge Account Namibia

MCC – Millennium Challenge Corporation

MLS – Master of Library Science

MLU – Mobile library unit

MoE – Ministry of Education, fka. See MoEAC.

MoEAC – Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Namibia

NAMCOL – Namibian College of Open Learning

NLAS – Namibia Library and Archives Service

NPC – National Planning Commission

OPAC – Online public access catalog

RSRC – Regional study and resource center

SME – Small and medium enterprises

TASCHA – Technology and Social Change Group

UKS – Universal Knowledge Software

Executive summary

Background

As part of its Compact with the Government of Namibia, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funded the Regional Study and Resource Center (RSRC) Activity under the Education Project. The Activity aimed to construct and develop programming for three RSRCs¹ with accompanying mobile library units in the Oshana Region, Ohangwena Region, and Gobabis Region. The Compact came to an end in September 2014, and the three initial RSRCs were opened to the public in September and November of 2014.

This report presents the interim findings of a performance evaluation of the RSRC Activity. The interim report is the second of three evaluation reports prepared by the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington Information School, under contract from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The evaluation comprises a set of quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts divided into two stages: Component 1 and Component 2. Component 1 data collection was undertaken March-April 2015, with the final report published April 2016. Component 2 addresses the following evaluation questions (EQ):

- EQ2: What types of resources and programming are RSRCs providing?
- EQ3: Who uses the RSRCs and what do they do?
- EQ4: Do students, job-seekers and business people report outcomes such as improved test scores, job seeking and acquisition, and business creation and enhancement as a result of using the resources provided by RSRCs?
- EQ5: How sustainable are the RSRCs?
- EQ6: How active is leadership in promoting and achieving the vision of the RSRCs?
- EQ7: What is the influence of the RSRCs beyond their walls?

Component 2 includes two rounds of data collection: Round 1 (July-August 2017) and Round 2 (July-August 2018). This report focuses on the results of fieldwork conducted during Round 1 of Component 2. (Round 2 findings will be published in 2019.)

Of the evaluation questions established for Component 2, this report focuses primarily on evaluation questions 2, 3 and 6, with a lighter touch to the other questions. In particular, outcome data (EQ 4) will primarily be reserved for the final report. This report also draws from the findings presented in the Component 1 evaluation report, which evaluated the RSRC planning and implementation activities from the inception of the RSRC activity through the close of the Compact in September 2014.

¹ This report uses “RSRC” as the official term of the Activity and is interchangeable with the universal term “library.”

Methodology

The following seven data collection methods were employed:

1. Surveys – with RSRC patrons
2. Panel studies – with learners, with business section patrons
3. Interviews – with key informants, with RSRC Staff
4. Focus group discussions – with youth learners, with business section patrons, with general community patrons (including adult learners), and with educators
5. Secondary data analysis – of RSRC administrative reports and system-generated data
6. Media analysis
7. Observations

Evaluation participants included two primary RSRC user groups, who were targeted in this evaluation to better understand the educational and economic outcomes of the RSRCs, and other groups who provide either a complementary perspective on the experiences of the primary RSRC user groups or who can speak to the RSRCs' operations and/or authorizing environment.

Two main patron groupings used in the analyses are “learners and students” and “business section patrons.” Individuals were placed into one of the following groups based on their stated primary occupation status (e.g. learner, student, employed, self-employed, unemployed looking for a job) in the patron survey.

Learners and students: Individuals age 15 and up who are attending secondary school, the Namibia College of Online Learning (NAMCOL), university, or another institution and categorize their primary occupation status as “student.” This category is comprised of two subgroups: youth learners (ages 15-19) and adult learners and students (ages 20 and above).

Business section patrons: Individuals who are (1) currently employed for wages (part or full-time), (2) entrepreneurs, or (3) unemployed job-seekers, all of which are groups that have the potential to use the RSRC to support their income or employment needs.

The patrons surveys employed a stratified sampling strategy to ensure adequate participation from the two main patron groups, whereas staff and key informant interview participants were purposively sampled, selected based on the depth of their knowledge and experience with the RSRCs, as well as level of responsibility within their organization.

Conclusions

Who uses the RSRCs?

- Overall, our findings show that the RSRCs serve targeted population groups – learners and students, and business section patrons, which was a goal stated in the Compact – without attracting as many other community members (e.g., pensioners, homemakers).

- The RSRCs are used by many individuals who lack comparable resources at home, such as home internet access and electrification.

How and why do people use the RSRCs?

- Patrons use the RSRCs for a variety of purposes, including studying, schoolwork, searching, and applying for jobs, entertainment, and relaxation.
- Many who visit the RSRC for education-related and work-related purposes also engage in personal/social or entertainment use.
- Strong usage patterns suggest RSRCs are meeting the needs of patrons (i.e., high frequency of use, increased use over time, and voluntary use).
- Overall, the RSRCs appear to serve an important role in the community by providing services that patrons cannot find elsewhere.

How satisfied are patrons with the RSRCs?

- Most patrons are satisfied with the RSRCs, and particularly the resources offered: the availability of computers, books, Wi-Fi, and the space itself.
- Patrons are less satisfied with policies that limit their usage of those resources: current operating hours, computer time limits, noise levels, and the unavailability of water and food.

Are the RSRCs adequately developing the resources necessary to ensure efficient operations and high-quality service?

Operations

- The RSRCs have far exceeded Compact expectations on the number of monthly visitors.
- Looming budget cuts are likely to hamper the quantity and quality of public library services in the near future.
- Library usage could be increased by extending RSRC operating hours, in line with the expectations stated in the Compact.

Staffing

- The RSRCs continue to be understaffed, with fewer than three-quarters of positions filled. The hardest position to fill and retain has been mid-level librarians.

Facilities

- Patrons are mostly satisfied with the condition of the facilities but would benefit from having easier access to food, water, and quieter space in the afternoon.

- Several issues that surfaced during the rushed end of the Compact period have persisted, particularly those involving water and power systems, as well as not having a dedicated maintenance staff who understood how those systems operated.

ICTs and equipment

- ICT services are highly valued by users and one of the most important services the RSRCs offer. Copy and printing services are also well-used.
- Yet there remains significant potential to improve and maintain services by addressing challenges around internet reliability/speed, internet usage policies, and equipment maintenance and replacement.

Collections

- Library books and resources were valued by patrons, yet many would like to see the collections improved.

Service delivery

- The RSRCs have provided a range of services targeted to learners and business section patrons.

Outreach

- The mobile library units have been underutilized for several reasons, including the high costs of maintaining and operating them, particularly given the vehicles' design problems.
- Yet library staff and key informants recognize the importance of outreach activities and are strategizing how to keep meeting communities where they are despite a new round of budget cuts.

Overall, the RSRCs are serving a valuable function in the communities they serve. This evaluation has illuminated numerous ways in which the RSRCs are supporting learning and community development. Youth learners, adult learners, and students are taking advantage of the range of resources and services offered by the RSRCs. Business section patrons, consisting of job-seekers as well as wage earners and entrepreneurs, are taking classes, using the computers, and receiving support for their activities. The facilities are unmatched in this regard; community members do not have access to comparable resources elsewhere.

During this evaluation period, the first round of data collection, the RSRCs were operating under severe budgetary limitations. This was due to a nation-wide budget crisis that has impacted all of government. In this context, the achievements of the RSRCs are commendable. The library staff did the best they could under the circumstances, making do with less, striving to continue offering popular services.

The evaluation also surfaced numerous areas for improvement. Some of these have budgetary implications that will require prioritization. Others may require a change in policy or practice, or some other creative solution. Indeed, the April 2018 stakeholder workshop proved to be a valuable opportunity for RSRC leaders and NLAS to both raise and discuss some of the more systemic challenges, and exchange practical ideas that they could begin to implement immediately.

Ultimately, sustainability is an area of concern. While the RSRCs have been able to navigate the budgetary crisis as well as could be expected, at some point the cracks will widen and there will be more serious consequences. The RSRCs are understaffed, computers are beginning to show their age, the mobile library units are in disrepair, among others. In short, the RSRCs won't be able to sustain achievements to date unless these underlying issues are addressed. Sustainability will be a major focus of the evaluation's final report in 2019.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This report presents interim findings of an evaluation of the Regional Study and Resource Centers (Regional Libraries). The interim report is the second of three evaluation reports prepared by the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington Information School, under contract from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

This is the second draft of the interim report. Draft 1 was presented at a stakeholder workshop in Namibia on April 4, 2018 to share the findings and capture participants' reactions, interpretations, and other feedback. These inputs have all been incorporated into Draft 2.

1.2 Overview of the compact and the RSRC activity

As part of its Compact with the Government of Namibia, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funded the Regional Study and Resource Center (RSRC) Activity under the Education Project. This Activity aimed to construct and develop programming for three RSRCs with accompanying mobile library units in Oshakati (Oshana Region), Ohangwena (Ohangwena Region) and Gobabis (Omaheke Region). Their design, collections, staffing, and areas of emphasis are meant to offer a range of specific services and activities to patrons and in their communities, to highlight the importance of literacy and learning to every age and income level, and to signal the urgency of promoting a “learning culture” throughout the entire country. The RSRC Activity was comprised of two sub-activities carried out by consulting teams and contractors, with management oversight being provided by the Millennium Challenge Account Namibia (MCA-N):

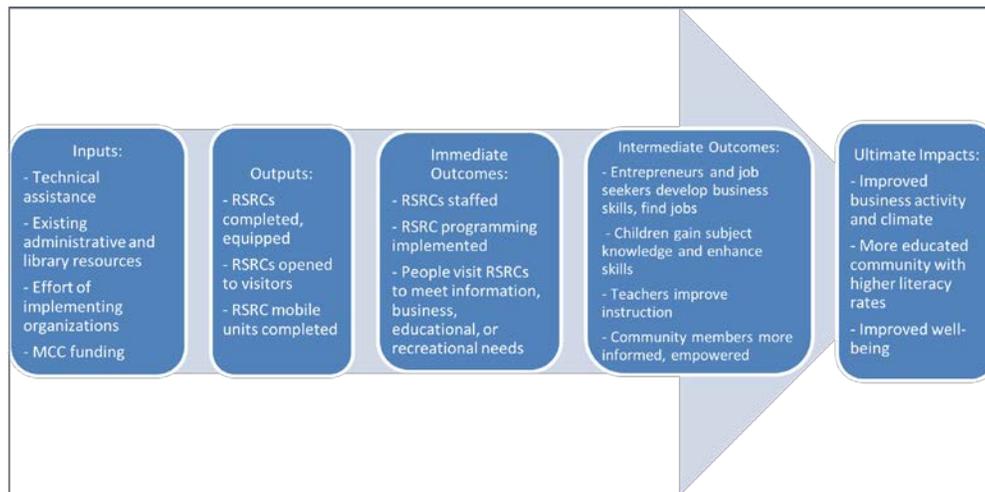
- Sub-activity 1: Construction of 3 Regional Study and Resource Centers (RSRCs)
- Sub-activity 2: Technical assistance and training for RSRCs

The Compact came to an end in September 2014, and the three initial RSRCs were opened to the public in September and November of 2014.

1.2.1 Program logic

The Namibia RSRC program logic which guides this evaluation is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Namibia RSRC program logic



Source: MCC. (2015). Summary of Component 1 Evaluation Report, p.2

Operational goals

Specifically, the RSRCs have established the following operational goals:

Staff:

- Facilities fully staffed
- Clear staff roles and responsibilities
- Strong staff performance
- Staff design programs that serve community needs

IT:

- IT and equipment available to staff and public

Facilities:

- Welcome spaces conducive to use by patrons
- Leadership:
- Strategic partners add reach, strength, and capacity to RSRC programs
- Leadership ensures RSRC are learning organizations continually striving to meet community needs

Mobile library units (MLUs):

- Mobile library units strategically providing RSRC services to remote communities

1.2.2 Program participants and geographic coverage

Program participants

Stakeholders of the RSRC sub-activity (NLAS, MCA-N, and MCC) delineated five participant groups (i.e., intended users of the RSRCs):

1. Learners (secondary school students)
2. Business section patrons (job-seekers, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs)
3. General community members (for reading, IT access, information needs in health, e-government, agriculture, etc.)
4. Children (pre-primary through primary school)
5. Other targeted groups (e.g. adult learners, distance learners, IT learners, and other disadvantaged groups as defined by each RSRC)

The primary target beneficiaries for the RSRC evaluation are the first two groups – learners and business section patrons – with a secondary target being general community members.

Geographic coverage

The three sites covered by this evaluation are:

- The Ohangwena RSRC located in the town of Ohangwena
- The Omaheke RSRC located in the town of Gobabis
- The Oshana RSRC located in the town of Oshakati

The Oshana, Ohangwena, and Omaheke regions were deemed to have a stronger need for RSRC services than other regions in the country. The regions were selected on the basis of need -- including population density, poverty level, a limited presence of libraries, and/or low secondary school performance -- as well as opportunity for an RSRC to achieve high impact.

1.2.3 Literature review

The literature review submitted December 2013 served as a reference for developing the evaluation design. The evaluators drew on specific insights from evaluations referenced in the literature review to refine their instruments, sampling strategies, and analysis plan. A section on library outcomes was added in June 2018 to contextualize the findings in this evaluation. (See Appendix 1.)

The literature review identifies several evaluation reports focused on public library systems at the national or sub-national level. Most of these large-scale evaluations examine libraries in Europe, North America, or Oceania with the (explicit or implicit) purpose of demonstrating the value of publicly funded library services. As such, most of these focus on measuring library utilization and the perceived outcomes or impacts of use, as opposed to measuring library

activities and operations – and this is particularly true of multi-country studies based in developing or transitioning countries. Those reports that do include library activities take a summative, rather than formative approach.

Studies on educational outcomes suggested public libraries support positive behaviors and motivation, but that these do not necessarily translate into better grades. A comparative study (Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, South Korea, and the U.S.) found that the level of benefits from public library use was perceived differently across countries, and the two most significant benefits from public library use were fun in reading and self-education (Vakkari et al., 2016). For learners in the U.S., Bhatt (2010: 151) found an association between library use and a child doing more homework and a decrease in misbehavior compared to their peers. Research from Denmark (Nielsen and Borlund, 2011: 106) found the supportive environment of public libraries for independent learning generated a sense of freedom to do or learn things at a comfortable pace, and enabled learners to explore a topic of interest in-depth. However, the hypothesis that “students who have access to and use a rural village library would have higher [overall grade average] than students who do not” was not supported by a study on library users and non-users in Uganda (Dent and Goodman, 2015: 57).

Studies on business-related outcomes were mixed. In a study in Lithuania and Latvia, 64% of Lithuanian respondents mentioned that library Internet access led to improved performance at work, and 60% responded that they saved money by using the Internet at libraries. Respondents reported to save time, access a wider range of publications, use e-banking, download films, and communicate with friends with no cost (Pabērza and Rutkauskiene, 2010). Gichohi et al.’s (2017) study explored how information needs of small-scale business enterprises (SBEs) were addressed by public libraries in Meru County, Kenya. It found that their level of awareness of public or community libraries as sources of business information was lower compared to alternative channels, such as suppliers, fellow businessmen/women, customers, the Internet, social media groups, college or university business libraries, and church.

This evaluation contributes to the existing literature in several regards.

- The evaluation is broader in scope than other evaluations on library systems in that it follows the life of the RSRCs from construction through the first years of operation, rather than evaluating a system that has been in existence for decades.
- The evaluation examines implementation, performance, and outcomes of the library rather than exclusively focusing on service utilization or outcomes/impacts.
- The evaluation focuses on a pilot project enabled by donor funding and is intended to influence the development of other RSRCs in the country.
- This evaluation is also different because it will comment on the degree to which the RSRCs are likely to create a ripple effect in regard to the country’s reading habits and learning culture.

2. Background: Component 1

2.1. Component 1 overview

The evaluation is divided into two components. Component 1 addressed the question, to what extent were the RSRC implementation activities completed by the end of the Namibia Compact (September 2014) and what factors facilitated or inhibited completion?

The final Component 1 report is available at:

<http://tascha.uw.edu/publications/namibia-rsrc-activity-performance-evaluation-component-1-report/>

This question was a modification of the EQ1: *Was the MCC investment implemented according to plan?* The evaluator's initial plan to determine whether the MCC investment was "implemented according to plan" proved too broad to address adequately, due to the absence of a clear master planning document.

Interviewers conducted 23 interviews in March and April of 2015 with Ministry of Education officials and staff, MCA-N and/or MCC program directors and project managers, and MCA-N's contractors who had been directly involved with planning, designing, or implementing an RSRC-related task or have played an otherwise critical role in the ongoing operations of an RSRC. The document review process served three objectives: (1) to determine "the plan" for the RSRCs and how it changed over time and (2) to verify interview data by comparing and contrasting information provided by participants with planning documents provided by MCC, IREX, and others, and (3) to obtain important information about the RSRC Activity that was not communicated during the interviews. (Appendix 1 provides a list of the documents reviewed.)

The primary evaluation criterion was whether or not each task had been completed by the end of the Compact, or in a few cases, whether the task was proceeding as intended.

Therefore tasks that were close to completion, including tasks in which some but not all subtasks had been completed, would still be classified as incomplete. Tasks of a more ongoing nature (e.g. relationship-building), which did not lend themselves to designations of complete or incomplete, were reviewed for the extent to which some observable efforts had been made. Particular attention was paid to the extent to which a variety of factors had affected effective completion of tasks.

2.2. Summary of component 1 findings

2.2.1 Completion of the RSRC activity

At a high-level, both RSRC sub-activities were completed: RSRC construction finished before the Compact closed, overcoming substantial construction delays; and MCA-N and its contractors provided assorted technical assistance and training, the scope of which grew in response to the increasingly apparent needs of the Ministry of Education (MoE). To this extent, it can be said that the RSRC Activity met its high-level implementation goals.

2.2.2 Completion of implementation tasks and subtasks

At the task- and subtask-levels, by the end of the Compact there were several items that had not been completed or still needed to be resolved.

Figure 2: Status of RSRC implementation by the end of the Compact

Overview

Overall, based on the key informant ratings, interview responses, and the Evaluator's observations in the field, four implementation tasks are deemed to have been completed, while five tasks are deemed to have been incomplete by the end of the Compact. To a large extent, the late completion and opening of the Omaheke RSRC affected all ratings.

Completed Tasks

- All IT and office equipment had been procured and installed, even if not fully operational.
- Operational plans and policies had been prepared, and the consultative process for design and construction of facilities had occurred.
- Mobile library units had been purchased and operational plans were ready.
- The RSRC venue was setup to ensure that all three service priorities (students, business, other) were being addressed.

Uncompleted Tasks

- Training and pilot community information needs assessment had been conducted in Oshana and Ohangwena only.
- The staffing plan had been developed but positions were not fully filled (63% at Ohangwena, 48% at Oshana, and 15% at Omaheke). Three chief librarians had been selected, but only one had begun working. Senior librarian and IT positions were generally the slowest to be filled.
- The Oshana, Ohangwena, and Omaheke buildings were designed, constructed and furnished before the Compact closed. Maintenance plans were not in place, however.
- Some books and media had been procured. It is unclear what level of stocking was expected to be complete by the end of the Compact.
- Some relationship-building had occurred, but RSRC staff was mostly unequipped for this task. It is also unclear what the precise expectations were for MCA-N and NLAS versus RSRC staff.

Source: Namibia RSRC Activity Performance Evaluation: Component 1 Report (2015), section 5, p27.

This finding should be interpreted in context of the complexity of the RSRC Activity. Every single task and subtask came up against one or more inhibiting factors, even as most also

benefited from some facilitating factors. The inhibiting factors ran the gamut from basic construction and hiring delays to delicate political relationships. Certain critical tasks, specifically staffing and collections, seemed to have been particularly hard hit by inhibitors that were out of their control, such as a systemic talent shortage. Others, such as relationship-building, may have suffered from some vagueness of definition as well as general low capacity and skill of staff.

Task completion was most facilitated by a continuity of relationships between the RSRC Activity implementing partners (especially NLAS and MCA-N) and other stakeholders, such as the larger MoE and national educational institutions, the persistent lobbying of implementing partners to gain various concessions needed to keep the project moving (e.g. improved salary structure for library staff), the allocation of additional tasks to the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX, contracted to provide technical assistance), and the general public and official goodwill towards the RSRC concept.

The issues that most greatly inhibited task completion were changes in the program timeline and changes in staffing plans and recruitment. These two issues were interrelated, with timeline changes (mostly construction-related) holding up the staffing process, and delays in the staffing process contributing to lags in the timeline.

2.2.3 Major successes

Rallying support for the RSRC Activity: RSRC Activity management was particularly successful in generating an inclusive consultative process (even though important partners could not always participate). Key informants communicated a clear sense of value attached to the RSRC concept at community, regional and national levels.

Persistence and responsiveness to emerging gaps and limitations: Several key informants emphasized that simply “getting it done” was a significant achievement. While it is not clear whether some challenges could have been avoided, or if the rate of response could have been faster, management did react to the numerous challenges the Activity faced and took action to mitigate them – e.g., bringing IREX on board to address capacity issues, lobbying for better compensation rates for librarians to improve recruitment prospects.

Influencing policy: MCA-N, the MoE, and IREX pushed to make sure the central government understood that obtaining quality RSRC staff was critical to the MoE and MCA-N achieving the Compact’s objectives. MCA-N’s lobbying on behalf of the libraries may also have helped institute long sought changes that may help make public librarianship a more attractive profession in Namibia. In this sense, staffing was one of the biggest challenges faced by the RSRC Activity, but also one of the areas of most significant achievement.

Planning for foreign exchange fluctuations: The provisions made by MCA-N to hedge against foreign exchange losses instead led to budget gains – when currency fluctuations worked to the advantage of the RSRC Activity.

2.2.4 Major challenges

Low capacity of local industry and workforce: Some of the most critical aspects of the RSRC Activity were impacted by the dearth of qualified or experienced professionals. First the

construction industry did not have the capacity to carry out the volume of work required to build the facilities, leading to delays for rebidding processes. Second was the staffing challenge, which was recognized as a high-risk area from the start with the likelihood of this occurring rated as “somewhat high” and the potential impact rated as “high” (M&E Plan, p. 37). An insufficient pool of library professionals, particularly for junior and mid-level professionals, has remained the critical issue. The MoE was only able to fill the chief librarian positions by recruiting individuals from outside Namibia, as those with both library and strategic management expertise within the country were in very short supply.

Construction delays: As happens with most building projects, the construction process was significantly delayed, in this case for more than one year for each RSRC. However, the challenge was exacerbated by the impending closure of the Compact, which led to the rush to the finish line in September 2014, meaning a compressed timeline for other activities such as staffing, training, community needs assessment, and equipment-testing.

Proportionately limited personnel resources: Despite significant effort and dedication to this Activity, the MoE did not have the capacity to administer the RSRC Activity at the level expected by MCA-N, mostly due to a shortage of personnel at NLAS. Thus, as several key informants noted, MCA-N had to take a major role in providing tactical leadership for the RSRC Activity, which had not been the original vision.

2.2.5 Recommendations

For NLAS

Implement full-scale community needs assessment (CNA): The current services of the RSRCs are based on the results of needs assessments conducted in communities proximal to Oshakati and Ohangwena. Those assessments were essentially part of the staff training program at these locations rather than the full-scale, farther-reaching CNA activities planned by IREX. By the Compact’s close, the Omaheke RSRC had not conducted a CNA because it had not yet opened and had hired few staff people. It may be worth following up as soon as possible with a full-scale CNA at all three RSRCs. Doing so would allow for a more complete assessment of the information needs of community members or, at the very least, to verify that the current body of services provided at the RSRCs is adequate.

Explore options for meeting the goal of extended opening hours: The planning documents reviewed express consistently and clearly the expectation that the venues would have extended hours of operation to facilitate convenient access for different populations. This goal remains unfulfilled due to staff shortages and national policy that limits the amount of overtime public employees can work. It is not clear whether this has resulted in any significant populations being systematically excluded from use of the venues.

Closely monitor status of RSRC infrastructure, especially facilities and mobile library units (MLUs): Maintenance is likely to be a recurring challenge, despite the low-maintenance goals built into the RSRC design. The assignment of a full-time person to be in charge of managing and maintaining each facility should be seriously considered to pre-empt avoidable long-term maintenance problems.

Strategize on best approach to collaborating with organizations with which conflicts of interest may arise: There is a potential for duplication of effort by RSRCs and other organizations with similar information access objectives. Some, such as fee-based information centers may have different (commercial or profit-oriented) business models, whilst others, such as other government agencies, may have the same model. Care will need to be taken if RSRCs seek to develop public/private partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

Revive the mobile library units: These units are essential to accomplishing outreach goals, which are strongly tied to the RSRCs' effectiveness in meeting broader objectives of the Activity. However, their sustainability is questionable considering that, at the time of this evaluation, the MLU at each RSRC had broken down after, in most cases, only a single trip and was awaiting replacement parts and repair.

Allow time to observe and learn from pilot RSRCs: It would be advisable to monitor the three RSRCs for a period of time to learn from their operational experiences as well as users' experiences before embarking on significant upscaling of the concept.

For MCC/MCA

Develop a clear vision of success and set more distinctive targets toward its achievement: The specific tasks associated with project implementation should be explicitly identified, there should be a clear articulation of what success would look like, and appropriate indicators should be agreed on to measure success. Although broad goals were set for the RSRC Activity, there was limited specificity associated with several tasks. Looking at the relationship-building task for example, this is not a discrete task and it is likely that staff and management will do some degree of relationship-building in the normal course of their duties. However, establishing more concrete and explicit goals about relationship-building would be necessary to elevate this from an incidental activity to a task of more critical significance. It will also make it easier to monitor and evaluate, if indeed that is desirable.

Identify critical success factors and ensure measures are in place to facilitate execution: In the case of the Namibia RSRC Activity, critical success factors could be said to have been the completion of construction and the availability of suitably qualified library management staff.

Set clear milestones and roles, and be ready to change the program oversight structure if needed: The roles, responsibilities, and rights of partners and vested interests need to be clear from the beginning. Looking again at the relationship-building task, it was not clear whether the task was considered a strategic activity (to be implemented by MCA-N and RSRC top management) or a practical activity (to be implemented by RSRC staff), or both. The capabilities of partners would ideally be well understood from the outset, but be prepared to amend Implementing Partner Agreements if it becomes apparent that such plans are not feasible given the reality of implementation.

Bring program management consultants into the project earlier: Technical assistance, such as that provided by IREX, should begin early in the project to ensure activities like strategic

planning, policy development, and staff training plans are incorporated into facilities design and are not derailed if construction runs behind schedule. Such consultants could also provide ad hoc assistance to the implementing partner organization (e.g., MoE) should support be needed. It is possible that NLAS' technical capacity was not well understood before the oversight structure was determined, hence the late realization of the need for additional support.

Ensure local partner is provided with adequate autonomy, authority and capacity resources for critical decision-making: Given the Compact's fixed end date, project management needs the ability to make critical decisions to avoid unnecessary delays. This can be challenging in a project that seeks to be participatory and collaborative in nature because it could require, for example, granting managers the authority to move forward with action, even if a full consultation process cannot be completed (e.g., because stakeholder feedback is not forthcoming). Additionally, the implementing partner organization (e.g., NLAS) needs to have the appropriate resources (personnel in this case) to be able to focus on high-level management tasks. In some instances, this may require hiring a specialized and dedicated person to serve as a counterpart to MCA-N's project manager.

Consider possible modifications to Compact closure procedures and policies: A more phased out process for closing out Compacts may be beneficial to support adequate handover of facilities and knowledge, make it possible for pending sub-contract obligations to be met, and prevent an excessive rush to complete tasks, potentially compromising quality.

Key informants

In addition, key informants also highlighted the following in their recommendations for future RSRCs:

1. If RSRCs are used as a template for future venues, tailor them to community specificities.
2. Build smaller and more durable facilities.
3. Improve design consultation process to promote clearer understanding of technical design details.
4. Engage with local community for community needs assessment and RSRC awareness creation.
5. Improve staffing situation by beginning hiring process before construction work starts, and investing in building the capacity of existing staff members.
6. Change Compact agreements to require earlier declaration of maintenance strategies, and to facilitate smoother transition after closing.

3. Evaluation design

3.1. Evaluation purpose and type

MCC has contracted the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington to design and implement a performance evaluation of the Namibia Regional Study

and Resource Centers (RSRC) Activity. This evaluation has been designed to serve the needs of two major stakeholders, MCC and the Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS). For MCC, the evaluation provides a summative assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of its investment in the RSRCs from the planning phase through the first two years of their operation. In this way, the evaluation aims to inform MCC's ongoing strategies for education-sector investments while also performing an accountability function for citizens of Namibia and the United States. For NLAS, which is a directorate within the Ministry of Education, this evaluation provides a formative assessment to help guide program improvements within the three RSRCs studied, as well as other RSRCs and libraries across Namibia, a summative assessment of the achievements of the first years of the RSRCs, and a foundation for ongoing assessments of the initial and future RSRCs.

Overall, the evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness of the RSRC Activity in achieving outputs and outcomes related to education, economic development and community development. The primary approach is mixed methods, involving both qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation seeks to understand the historical path the RSRC Activity has taken; current and on-going operational practices; user behaviors and opinions; and the implications for the effectiveness and sustainability of RSRCs.

The evaluation does not examine financial documents or employ intervention counterfactuals. Approaches such as return on investment, benefit-cost analysis, economic impact assessment, and randomized controlled trials are beyond the scope of this evaluation.

3.2 Evaluation questions

The Namibia RSRC Performance Evaluation project comprises a set of quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts divided into two broad categories:

Component 1 addressed the evaluation question:

- EQ1: Was the MCC investment implemented according to plan?

Component 2 addresses the evaluation questions:

- EQ2: What types of resources and programming are the RSRCs providing?
- EQ3: Who uses the RSRCs and what do they do?
- EQ4: Do students, job seekers, and business people report outcomes such as improved test scores, job seeking, and acquisition, and business creation and enhancement as a result of using the resources provided by RSRCs?
- EQ5: How sustainable are the RSRCs?
- EQ6: How active is leadership in promoting and achieving the vision of the RSRCs?
- EQ7: What is the influence of the RSRCs beyond their walls?

This report presents the interim findings for Component 2. The report is focused primarily on evaluation questions 2 and 3, with a lighter touch to the other questions. In particular, outcome data (EQ 4) will primarily be reserved for the final report.

This report also draws from the findings presented in the Component 1 evaluation report, which evaluated the RSRC planning and implementation activities leading up to the end of the Compact in September 2014.

3.3 Timeframe

Component 1 data collection was undertaken March-April 2015, with the final report published April 2016.

Component 2 involves two rounds of data collection: Round 1 (July-August 2017), and Round 2 (July-August 2018). Round 1 findings (Interim report) will be published in late 2018, and Round 2 findings (Final report) will be published in 2019.

Based on a review of the literature and the experiences of the evaluation team, we decided to divide the evaluation in this way so as to quickly capture data around the implementation of the RSRCs within the timeframe of the MCC Namibia Compact (Component 1). This allowed the evaluation team to then develop a comprehensive evaluation plan, featuring multiple methods that would address the full range of evaluation question, including data about the extent to which usage of the RSRCs has resulted in positive outcomes for the target beneficiaries.

The RSRCs are new facilities showing initial significant improvements in the country's library system. It is not uncommon for libraries to draw uncharacteristically high numbers of visitors when they are new, yet several years may need to elapse before long-term user and usage patterns and outcomes become evident. Additionally, staff and leadership will need time to gain experience with new technologies and service philosophies, and also to implement changes that respond to evolving user needs, processes that may require incremental improvement.

In the end, the evaluation will occur over three years. Component 1 was conducted in 2015, and Component 2 in 2017 and 2018. This represents sufficient time to generate findings that will aid Namibia's ongoing efforts to improve the RSRCs, derive lessons for future RSRC rollouts, and provide MCC with lessons for future investment opportunities.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data collection

The following seven data collection methods were employed:

1. Surveys
 - RSRC Patrons
2. Panel Studies
 - Learners
 - Business section patrons
3. Interviews
 - RSRC Activity Key Informants
 - RSRC Staff

4. Focus Group Discussions
 - Youth learners
 - Business section patrons
 - General Community Patrons (including adult learners)
 - Educators
5. Secondary Data Analysis
 - RSRC administrative reports
 - RSRC electronic system-generated data
6. Media Analysis
7. Observations

A research firm in Namibia, Sustainable Development Africa (SusDAf), carried out data collection for the Patron surveys, Panel studies, Focus group discussions, and Media analysis activities. SusDAf contributed research expertise, knowledge of the local context, language familiarity, and a network of local field workers to implement these activities on the ground.

TASCHA researchers conducted the interviews with key informants and staff, as well as multiple observations at each of the RSRCs.

4.2 Study sample

The sampling strategy was designed to capture data that represented the expectations and aspirations of the RSRC designers and implementers, and data which is of maximum utility going forward.

The sample sizes for each data collection method were based on knowledge of the RSRC sub-activity, its target participants, and the types of analysis to be undertaken. In some cases, a triangulation of methods (e.g., surveys, panels, interviews, observation) has allowed a somewhat lower estimated number for a specific method than if one of the triangulating methods were eliminated.

Table 1 shows the sample design and the actual sample for round 1.

Table 1: Overview of data collection activities: design versus actual

Activity	Sample Size: Design		Sample Size: Actual
	Total/R SRC	Total/Round	Round 1
Patron surveys: Stratified ⅓ each secondary students, business section patrons, and general community	140	420 140 per group	450 144 youth learners 149 business 157 general community
Panel study: Learners	20	60	60
Panel study: Business section patrons	20	60	60
Interviews: Key informants	n/a	10	9
Interviews: RSRC staff	5-7	15-20	15
FGD: Learners	6-8	18-24	12
FGD: Business section patrons	8-10	24-30	10
FGD: Educators	6-8	18-24	16
FGD: General community patrons	6-8	18-24	7
Observations	1-2	3-6	6

The other methods include: system-generated data, administrative reports, and media analysis. Analysis of data from these three methods are included in the findings section.

As shown in the table, there are differences between the sample targets and the actual sample achieved during fieldwork.

Patron surveys: Challenges were encountered obtaining consent for secondary school learner patrons at the Oshana RSRC, and to some extent the Ohangwena RSRC. In order to reach the sample targets the evaluation team extended fieldwork, engaged librarians in recruiting respondents, and included patrons using free Wi-Fi outside the library.

Panel interviews: The initial plan was that a total of 40 patrons (20 secondary school learner and 20 business section patrons) be randomly selected for participation from each RSRC respectively. This was supposed to give a total sample size of 120 across the three regional RSRCs. The sample was to be pulled from the 150 secondary school learner patrons and 150 business section patrons across the three regional libraries. The plan was further to strive for an equal sex breakdown for learners and business section patrons. Other criteria included representative of different frequency of use and only to select those in Grade 11 and below. Age was not stratified.

Due to challenges in getting sufficient numbers of patrons at some of the RSRCs, the above strategy was not followed for male and female secondary school learner patrons at the Oshana RSRC and female secondary school learner patrons at Ohangwena RSRC. Due to low number of patrons, all male and female secondary school learner patrons at the Oshana RSRC and female secondary school learner patrons at Ohangwena RSRC were invited for panel interviews.

FGDs: The initial plan was to recruit secondary school patrons, business section patrons and general population patrons purposively from the list of patrons who participated in the patron survey. Educators were to be recruited with support from the Chief Librarian as educators were initially found not to make regular or much use of the RSRCs.

It was difficult to recruit patrons to participate, resulting in FGDs having to be re-organized numerous times. It should be noted that no-shows agreed to participate after the patron interviews and again when they were called over their mobile phones. Invitees did not refuse to participate; they normally indicated their interest and promised to participate when called over the phone, but then did not show up. Usual explanations for not showing up (when called on the phone) were that “something else came up in the meantime,” “too busy,” and “not in town at the moment,” amongst others. As a result, most of the FGDs were conducted with fewer than the target number of participants.

For the learner FGDs, only one participant was in age group 20-24, and rest of the participants were in age group 15-19 (i.e. "youth learners").

Observations: Target observations were achieved. In most cases, a single observation included both a morning and afternoon session, allowing for the evaluation team to observe use of the RSRCs at different times in the day.

4.3. Analysis approach

4.3.1 Patron group definitions

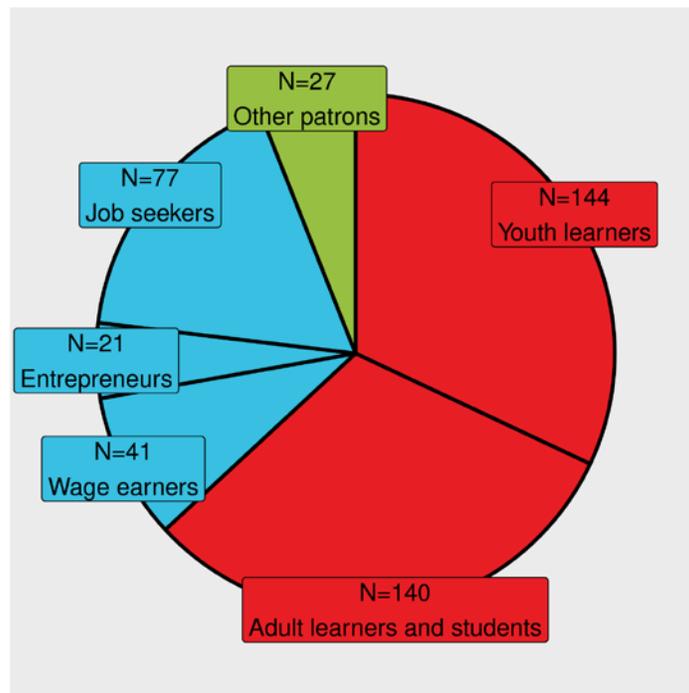
This evaluation analysis used definitions for the patron categories that vary slightly from the stratified sampling definitions.² The analysis groupings were based on evaluation priorities, specifically those around learners and students (with an emphasis on youth learners) and patrons who use the RSRCs for work/job-related activities. Patron groupings used in the analyses are as follows:

- **Learners and students.** Learners and students are respondents who indicate “learner” or “student” is their primary occupation. This category is further comprised of two types of users: “youth learners” (ages 15-19) who are attending school, and “adult learners and students” (ages 20 and above) who are attending secondary school, NAMCOL, university, or otherwise categorize their primary occupation status as “student.”

²The initial stratification for analysis included students (secondary and adult), business users (entrepreneurs and job seekers), and general users (retired/pensioners, unemployed not looking for a job, housewives). Based on findings from Phase 1, which indicated some of these populations were difficult to define and capture, the categories were adjusted. For example, the “general users” category was found to be insignificant in size.

- **Business section patrons.** Business section patrons are comprised of three categories of users: (1) those currently employed for wages (part or full-time), (2) entrepreneurs, and (3) unemployed job-seekers. The categories were developed around individuals who have the potential to use the RSRC to support their income or employment needs.
- **Other patrons.** Other patrons include anyone not included in the above two categories, such as those retired, unemployed not looking for job, homemakers, and those who refused to answer what their primary occupation is. “Other patrons” are not included in the report analyses as a discrete population of interest, as the sample size is too small to make meaningful claims.

Figure 3: Breakdown of user groups used in analysis (patron survey)



4.3.2 Other group definitions

Other evaluation participants included:

- **Educators:** Administrators, teachers and school librarians at secondary schools within each RSRC catchment area who may or may not use the RSRCs.
- **Key informants:** Government officials at the national and regional levels and people associated with librarian professional development in Namibia. Several key informant participants in Component 2 interviews also participated in Component 1 key informant interviews.
- **RSRC staff:** Individuals who work at an RSRC, including the chief librarian, section heads, and IT staff.

4.3.3 Data integrations

This is a mixed methods study, employing several quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the evaluation questions. This approach allows for triangulation of data to generate more robust findings. For each findings section, we use one method as the primary source, and triangulate with data from other sources as appropriate. For example, in the section on “Why do patrons use the RSRCs” (Section 5.2), we provide findings from the quantitative patron surveys first, and complement these with data from the focus group discussions and other qualitative methods.

4.4 Limitations

As in any evaluation, there are several limitations that should be noted when reading the report. Some of these limitations were part of the evaluation design (e.g. implications of stratification), while others surfaced during the data collection activities (e.g. limited number of focus group participants). The primary limitations were:

Patron categories: One of the major findings from this round of data collection was the revelation that the vast majority of general community members were actually adult learners and students. We used the enumerator monitoring sheets to re-code the survey data so that we could create a robust category for these adult learners and students. While in most cases we were able to re-analyze the data with the new patron group categories, there are a few instances where this was not possible. The survey instrument has been updated for round two data collection in 2018.

Patron breakdown: The patron survey was stratified to achieve equal numbers of learners, business patrons, and general community members, as well as to achieve male/female balance. As such, it was not possible to report the actual breakdown by patron category or gender. In the evaluation design stage, it was deemed more important to be able to conduct analyses by patron category and by gender.

Administrative data: The evaluation team did not verify the accuracy of administrative data supplied by NLAS. Also, RSRCs are not consistent in how they collect some types of administrative data. This is noted in the report.

Focus group discussions: The data collection team faced immense challenges getting participants to show up for focus group discussions (FGDs). Many strategies were attempted to address this situation, but while we were able to meet the minimum number of groups, we were unable to meet our target participant numbers. Some FGDs were conducted with only two or three participants. The overall low number of FGD participants presented analytical challenges with regard to identifying and having confidence in response patterns.

5. Findings

5.1. Who uses the RSRCs?

The first set of findings concerns who uses the RSRCs. The report begins by discussing the population groups, followed by the demographics of patrons, with a focus on learners and business section patrons. Demographic characteristics include age, gender, education level, occupation status, income, and transportation time.

The patron survey sample was stratified to achieve equal gender representation and be comprised of one-third youth learners, one-third individuals with business or employment-related goals, and one-third other patrons (the vast majority of whom were recoded as “adult learners and students” after analyzing their primary occupation status). As a result, findings on age, gender, education level, and occupation status cannot be directly extrapolated to make statistical statements about *all* users of the RSRCs. However, by combining what was learned from each method, we are able to make broad statements, with confidence, about who uses the RSRCs.

5.1.1 Population groups

Top findings

- The majority of RSRC patrons over the age of 15 are learners and students.
- Large numbers of business section patrons also frequent the RSRCs.
- It appears there are very few community members who use the RSRCs outside of learners, students, and business section patrons.

Youth learners (N=144) and adult learners and students (N=140) constituted the largest population groups in the final sample (N=284). It was not difficult to achieve the target sample of youth learners. The more interesting finding was the high number of general community members who used the RSRCs for formal learning purposes, and for this reason we decided, for analytical purposes, to categorize these individuals as “adult learners and students” rather than “general community.” With this, in addition to the large number of adult business section patrons who are taking classes, we conclude that the RSRCs are engaging a broad swath of the population that has education needs.

Business section patrons (N=139), although fewer than learners and students, are also a significant user group of the RSRCs. Locating business section patrons was not a challenge to achieve target sampling numbers.

The remaining “other patrons” (N=27) represent a relatively small number. “Other patrons” includes the retired, unemployed not looking for a job, recently graduated not looking for a job, and homemakers. While not priority target groups, it is nonetheless noteworthy that there were relatively few people in these categories using the RSRCs.

Overall, these findings support the stated RSRC goal of serving the primary target population groups -- learners and business section patrons -- while not catering as much as expected to other community members.

Table 2: User types, number of respondents (patron survey)

Type	All	Ohangwena	Omaheke	Oshana
<i>Learners</i>				
Youth learners	144	45	54	45
Adult learners and students	140	58	22	60
<i>All learners and students</i>	<i>284</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Business section patrons</i>				
Waged employees	41	19	7	15
Job-seekers	77	11	43	23
Entrepreneurs	21	8	3	10
<i>Total business section patrons</i>	<i>139</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>48</i>
Other patrons				
<i>Total other patrons*</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>7</i>

*Given the small sample size we do not use other patrons as a unit of analysis

5.1.2 Demographics

Using the patron survey as a base, this section analyzes the demographic characteristics of the most common population groups that use the RSRCs -- youth learners, adult learners and students, and business section patrons.

Top findings

- Many learners, students, and business section patrons have low household wealth: one in four lack electricity at home and nine out of ten lack home internet access.
- Nearly everyone, male and female, owns a mobile phone.
- Entrepreneurs tend to have the most wealth and access to home internet.
- Half of business section patrons were unemployed, looking for a job. And of all job-seekers, half came from homes without electrification.
- The vast majority of learners, students, and business section patrons walk to the RSRCs.

5.1.2.1 Learners and students

Age and gender

By definition, the youth learner group is comprised of individuals in the 15-19 year-old age range. Adult learners and students were relatively young, with 73% aged 20-24 and 18% aged

25-29. By gender, female adult learners and students were somewhat older (79% aged 20-24, 12% aged 25-29, and 9% aged 30 and above) than males (91% aged 20-24, 6% aged 25-29, and 2% aged 30 and above). Seen another way, female adult learners age 25 or older made up a larger percentage of female respondents than male adult learners in the same age group (21% female and 8% male aged 25 or older).

The gender stratification targets were largely met, although there were slightly more males than females. This allows us to conduct gender-based analysis when looking at perceptions and uses of the RSRCs. Stratification by gender does not, however, allow us to make statistical statements about the overall gender breakdown of RSRC patrons.

Table 3: Age and gender of learners and students (patron survey).

	Age range (%)							Gender (%)*	
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	F	M
<i>All learners and students</i>	51	43	4	1	1	0	0	44	56
Youth learners	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	53
Adult learners and students	0	86	9	2	1	1	1	41	59

* The survey sample was stratified by gender so these figures cannot be used for extrapolation

Education

As the sampling methodology was designed to oversample youth learners currently enrolled in secondary school, it falls in line that more than half of all these learners in the survey (79%) had not completed secondary school. 21% of survey respondents had completed secondary school.

The highest level of education the majority of the adult learners and students group completed was secondary school (60%), with many (35%) only completing some secondary school. Interviews have found a strong presence of programs that support adults completing secondary school. It is possible that those adult learners that have only completed some secondary school are enrolled in such programs. More female adult learners and students completed secondary school (66% vs 56% of males), and fewer had completed some secondary school (28% vs 40% for males).

Table 4: Highest level of education completed by learners and students (patron survey)

	Highest level of education completed (%)						
	Some primary or less	Primary school	Some second.	Second. school	Some post-second.	Univ. or more	Voc / tech institute
All learners and students	0	7	51	41	1	0	1
Youth learners	0	13	66	22	0	0	0
Adult learners and students	0	1	35	60	2	1	1

* Note: this includes all individuals that indicated they were taking classes, regardless of occupation type.

Occupation status

To be considered a youth learner, a respondent must have indicated “student” was their primary occupation and they must have been 19 or younger. Therefore, by definition, all youth learners have “student” as their occupation status.

Income

Among all learners and students, 65% report monthly household income of under N\$ 10,000 and approximately 18% under N\$ 1,000. Responses among youth learner and the adult learner and student groups were similar. Income was also similar by gender, with the largest difference shown by those who refused to answer (13% female, 7% of males).

In terms of household amenity ownership, home internet stands out as being particularly low (around 10%), which helps explain the popularity of internet access at the RSRCs. Similarly, while a majority (73%) of all learners and students have electricity at home, there are still many people living in homes without electricity, again presenting another attractive feature of the RSRCs. Differences by gender were small to non-existent for household items like radio, television, electricity, and a refrigerator. There was also no difference for owning a mobile phone (both male and female reported 94%). The two largest differences were owning a computer (38% of female said so vs 49% of male) and a car (56% of female said so vs 63% of male).

Figure 4: Average household income of learners (patron survey)

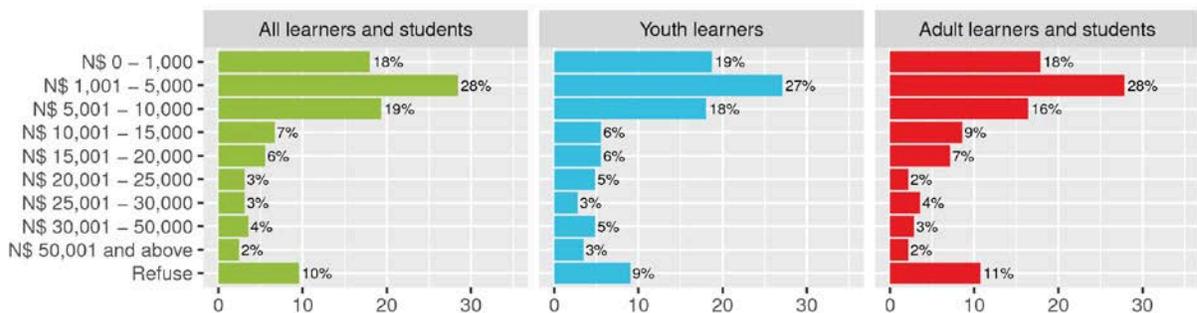


Table 5: Percent of households with items of value (patron survey)

Item	All learners and students	Youth learners	Adult learners and students	Female	Male
Bicycle	26	30	24	24	28
Car	60	65	56	56	63
Computer	44	43	45	38	49
Electricity	74	79	69	72	75
Flush toilet	60	67	51	56	63
Internet connection	10	11	9	12	9
Landline phone	10	13	6	7	11
Mobile phone	94	93	96	94	94
Motorbike	4	4	4	5	3
Radio	86	88	84	84	88
Refrigerator	71	73	69	71	72
Television set	74	79	69	72	75
Refused	3	3	2	2	3

5.1.2.2 Business section patrons

Age and gender

Of all business section patrons, the majority (62%) were ages 20-29, with 18% aged 30-34. Job-seekers were predominantly (94%) age 34 and under, with 20-24 years old representing the largest age group (45%). Among entrepreneurs, the largest age group was 30-34 years old (33%). There were no entrepreneurs above 54 years old or below 20 years old. Wage earners also tended to be young (66% under 29).

By gender, female business section users were slightly older (35% aged 15-24, 24% aged 25-29, and 42% aged 30 and above) than males (37% aged 15-24, 34% aged 25-29, and 27% aged 30 and above). Female business section patrons age 35 or older made up a larger percentage of female respondents than males in the same age group (22% female and 10% male age 35 or older), with the difference primarily coming from patrons aged 20-29 (51% of female business section patrons were aged 20-29 vs 69% of males).

With regard to gender, it proved challenging for fieldwork to achieve equal gender representation, leading us to conclude that there are likely more male than female business section patrons using the RSRCs. This was not an unexpected finding.

Table 6: Age and gender of business section patrons (patron survey)

	Age Range (%)								Gender (%)*	
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	F	M
All business section patrons	4	32	30	18	7	4	2	1	37	63
Job-seekers	6	45	26	17	4	1	0	0	38	62
Entrepreneurs	0	10	19	33	14	10	10	5	29	71
Wage earners	2	20	44	12	10	7	2	2	39	61

** The survey sample was stratified by gender so these figures cannot be used for extrapolation

Education

The majority of all business section patrons completed secondary school (45%) or more advanced schooling (23% across all advanced levels). Job-seekers were similar to the other two business groups in that 35% only completed some secondary school or less, compared to 29% of entrepreneurs and 26% of wage earners. However, job-seekers were less likely to have taken any schooling past secondary school (13%, compared to 39% of entrepreneurs and 32% of wage earners). Entrepreneurs were more likely to have completed vocational/technical school (10% compared to 1% of job-seekers and 0% of waged employees) and wage earners were more likely to complete university or higher (12%, compared to 6% of job-seekers and 5% of entrepreneurs).

By gender, female business section patrons tended to be more educated than their male counterparts. 16% of female business section patrons only completed some secondary school compared to 32% of male business patrons. And while 51% of female business section patrons completed secondary and 12% completed university or more, 41% of male business patrons]completed secondary and just 6% completed university or more.

Business section patrons showed the largest diversity in education across locations. In Ohangwena, 42% reported that they completed some post-secondary (university or technical), compared to 4% in both Omaheke and Oshana. Just 2% in Ohangwena completed university or more, compared to 0% in Omaheke and 22% in Oshana.

Nearly one-third of all business section patrons were currently taking classes, entrepreneurs (43%) and waged employees (42%) outpacing job-seekers (26%).

Table 7: Highest level of education of business section patrons (patron survey).

	Highest level of education (%)						
	Some primary or less	Primary school	Some second.	Second. school	Some post-second.	University. more	Voc / tech institute
All business section patrons	3	3	26	45	13	8	2
Job-seekers	1	3	31	51	6	6	1
Entrepreneurs	10	5	14	33	24	5	10
Wage earners	2	2	22	39	20	12	0

Table 8: Percent of business section patrons taking classes (patron survey)

	Currently taking classes	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
All business section patrons	34	66
Job-seekers	27	73
Entrepreneurs	43	57
Wage earners	41	59

Occupation status

Of all business section patrons, just over half (55%) were unemployed and looking for a job. 22% were working full time, 15% self-employed, and 9% working part time. By definition, all job-seekers were unemployed and looking for a job; all entrepreneurs were self-employed; and all wage earners were working either full or part time. Differences by gender were small, with the largest in the self-employed group (12% of female business section patrons gave this response compared to 17% of males).

Table 9: Employment status of business section patrons, % of respondents (patron survey)

	<i>All business section patrons</i>	Job-seekers	Entrepreneurs	Wage earners
Student	0	0	0	0
Recently graduated from school and not employed	0	0	0	0
Work Part time	9	0	0	29
Work full time	22	0	0	71
Self-employed	15	0	100	0
Unemployed - looking for a job	55	100	0	0
Unemployed - not looking for a job	0	0	0	0
Retired/pensioner	0	0	0	0
Homemaker by choice	0	0	0	0
Refused to answer	0	0	0	0

Income

Income was investigated directly through monthly household income and indirectly through household amenity ownership.

Among business section patrons, 71% report a monthly household income of N\$ 10,000 or less, with approximately 16% under N\$ 1,000. However, while 77% of job-seekers reported monthly household income of N\$ 10,000 or less, 68% of wage earners indicated the same with just 53% of entrepreneurs reported income of N\$ 10,000 or less. 23% of job-seekers indicated a family income of under N\$ 1,000, compared to 5% of entrepreneurs and 7% of wage earners. By gender, 61% of female business section patrons reported monthly household income under N\$ 5,000, compared with just 37% of male business section patrons. And while 18% of female business section patrons reported monthly household income of N\$5,001 to N\$ 10,000, 30% of males did.

With regard to household amenity ownership, there are stark differences among job-seekers, entrepreneurs, and wage earners. In particular, job-seekers have the lowest levels of electrification (53%, compared to 81% and 73%, respectively) and internet (4%, compared to 24% and 10%, respectively). This is all as one would expect, contributing important context for understanding the value these business section patron types derive from the RSRCs.

Table 10: Average monthly income of business section patrons, % of respondents (patron survey)

Patron type	Monthly Income in N\$									
	0-1K	1K - 5K	5K - 10K	10K - 15K	15K - 20K	20K - 25K	25K - 30K	30k - 50K	50K and above	No Resp.
All business	16	30	25	4	4	3	4	4	2	9
Job-seekers	23	36	18	0	3	3	1	3	1	12
Entrepreneurs	5	24	24	5	0	0	10	14	5	14
Wage earners	7	22	39	10	7	5	5	0	2	2

Table 11: Household amenities of business section patrons, % of respondents (patron survey)

Item	All business	Job-seekers	Entrepreneurs	Wage earners
Bicycle	17	13	5	29
Car	47	38	57	61
Computer	40	30	52	51
Electricity	63	53	81	73
Flush toilet	58	47	81	66
Internet connection	9	4	24	10
Landline phone	8	3	19	12
Mobile phone	94	91	95	98
Motorbike	3	3	5	2
Radio	84	82	86	88
Refrigerator	68	56	81	83
Television set	64	57	76	71
Refused	3	5	5	0

5.1.2.3 Transport to the RSRC

In this section we examine both learners and business section patrons. Overall, by far the most common mode of transportation to the RSRCs for learners is walking (85%), while it is somewhat less for business section patrons (68%). Youth learners primarily walk (86%), followed by car (13%) and bicycle (2%), while adult learners and students only walk (83%) and use a car (17%). There is large variability between locations and by user group. For youth

learners across all locations, walking is the most common: 80% in Ohangwena, 97% in Omaheke, and 81% in Oshana. For business section patrons, 73% in Ohangwena use a car, while 87% in Omaheke walk, as do 78% in Oshana.

By gender, there were no differences for learners. For business section patrons however, 37% of female business section patrons used a car compared with 27% of males (63% of female business section patrons walked vs 70% of males).

Travel time in minutes, from home to the RSRC, averaged 21 minutes for all learners and students (20 minutes for youth learners and 23 minutes for adult learners and students) and 18 minutes for business section patrons. For all learners and students, this was 27 minutes in Ohangwena, 15 minutes in Omaheke, and 20 minutes in Oshana. For business section patrons, this was 20 minutes in Ohangwena, 18 minutes in Omaheke, and 17 minutes in Oshana. Differences in travel time by gender were small, averaging 22 minutes for female learners (21 minutes for male learners) and 19 minutes for female business section patrons (17 minutes for males).

During the focus group discussions, some patrons stated that long travel times combined with restricted operating hours were significant hurdles to RSRC use. (See section 5.5.1.2.) Some educators also said that their school was too far away from the RSRC to make use of it: “We are too far from library, about 10km, to use the library often. The learners are too small to travel on their own. No transportation to take them there.” (See section 5.2.)

5.2. Why do patrons use the RSRC?

5.2.1 Learners

Top findings

- Learners and students overwhelmingly use the RSRCs for studying and schoolwork.
- Teachers play an important role in sparking initial RSRC usage, after which learners go on their own.
- Entertainment and pleasure also drive usage of the RSRCs.
- Books are also valuable, especially for homework assignments and NAMCOL.
- The RSRCs provide resources and services that four out of five learners and students cannot get elsewhere.
- Male and female learners and students use the RSRC for the same reasons.

Learners and students overwhelmingly use the RSRCs for studying and schoolwork

Schoolwork appears to be the driving reason many learners and students go to the RSRCs. This is evident from the responses to different questions in the patron survey, the panel interviews, and focus group discussions.

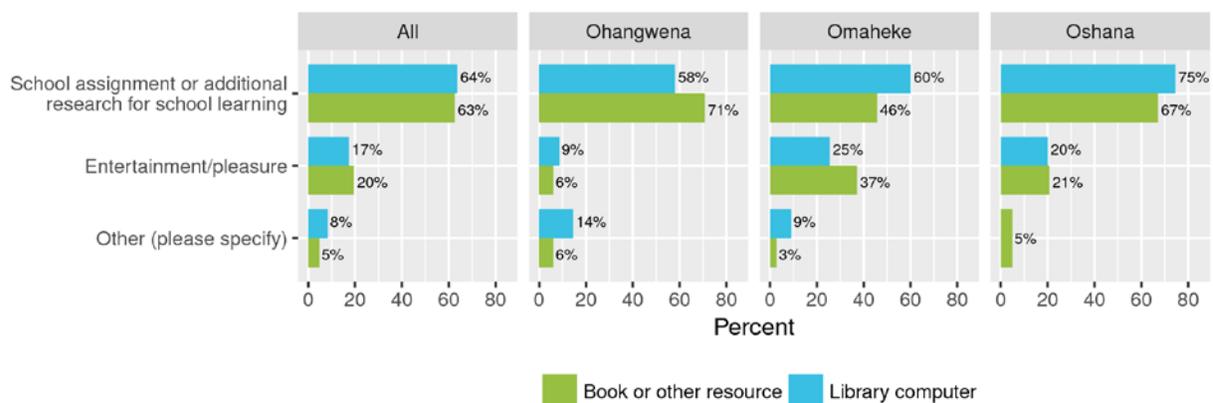
Nearly all learner panel respondents indicated that a main reason for using the RSRC is to study and do homework. Just over a third indicated Wi-Fi/internet use is also an important reason.

On the patron survey, when asked to rank the top three reasons for coming to the RSRC on the day of the survey, the most common ranked choices by learners were to study (36%) or do homework (25%). The other most commonly ranked reasons were to “play games, watch videos, or other entertainment” (16%) and “catch up on the news” (10%). Note that while 280 respondents picked their top reason, only 13 provided their second reason, and just 8 their third. Thus, analysis of this question ignored the ranks and looked at the percent of respondents who chose any rank for each possible category.

By gender, there are some differences in rankings for the top three reasons. Female learners and students ranked studying and doing homework (38% for studying, 27% for homework) slightly more often than males (35% for studying, 22% for homework). Conversely, males ranked playing games slightly more often than females (17% of males, 14% of females). The largest difference was catching up on the news, which 3% of females ranked while 15% of males did so.

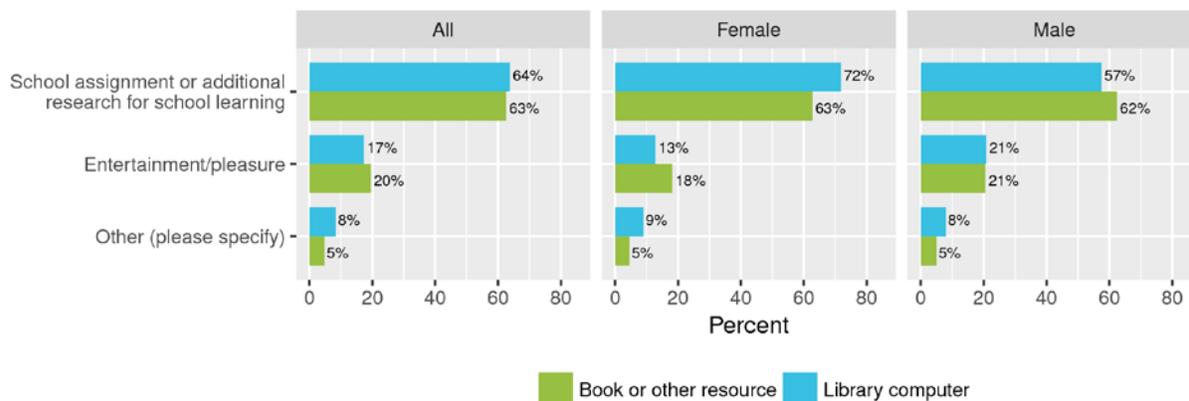
A multiple-choice question about use of the RSRC computers showed the vast majority of all learners and students (64%) indicated the main reason they *used the computer* at the RSRC was for school assignments. An additional 17% used the computer for entertainment/pleasure. Youth learners and adult learners and students showed similar response rates. The use of books/other resources in the last four weeks was also primarily for school assignments (63%), followed by entertainment/pleasure (20%).

Figure 5: Learners' and students' main use of RSRC computers and books/other resources in the last four weeks (top three responses, patron survey)



Female users tended to use computers more for school than male users (72% compared with 57%, respectively), with 21% of males using the computers for entertainment compared with just 13% of females. The differences in book use were small.

Figure 6: Learners' and students' main use of RSRC computers and books/other resources in the last four weeks, by gender (top three responses, patron survey)



Teachers play an important role in sparking initial RSRC usage, after which learners go on their own

Learner panel interviews revealed the significant role that teachers play in why learners use the RSRCs. Two-thirds of learner panel respondents indicated that their teachers advised them to visit the RSRC. Further, around 18% indicated that at some point in the past they have been required by their school or class to visit the RSRC. Some learners in the focus groups also confirmed that their first visit to the RSRCs was required by their teachers, but they now choose to go voluntarily. Male and female learners responded similarly.

Educators' experience with and perceptions of the RSRCs

Focus group discussions were held with educators in the Ohangwena, Omaheke, and Oshana Regions to better understand learners' motivations for using the RSRC and any discernible changes among learners resulting from their use of the RSRCs. Educators' experience with the RSRCs and RSRC staff was also of interest because the RSRCs had intended to increase awareness of their services in schools and offer library services directly to the schools in their region.

During the focus group discussions, some educators revealed they did not use the RSRCs, either because they didn't have a reason to or that the RSRC was located too far away. For instance, one educator saw little need to visit the RSRC because she could "get most of the information from the Internet, and we have Internet at school." Other educators stated they lived too far from the RSRC to use it and that they did not bring learners to the RSRC due to distance. Of the three focus group discussions held, the group in Oshana revealed they had little direct experience using the RSRCs. Three out of five educators in the discussion mentioned that they had not used the RSRC in person, and had used it only indirectly when they used books on loan from the RSRC to the school library.

In Omaheke and Ohangwena, where educators did not specify that the distance to the RSRC hinders them from using it, focus group discussions shared that they visit the facility roughly once or twice in a month. For instance, several educators described their efforts to incorporate RSRC use into their teaching practices. The educators explained that the library offered a good range of resources such as reference materials, access to the Internet, and textbooks which were

not available or limited in schools. A few focus group discussants in Ohangwena mentioned that their school librarian borrows books from the RSRC to use in the school library, including subjects such as biology, mathematics, science, geography, and English. An educator also mentioned how she utilizes Wi-Fi at the RSRC to download clips on the Internet related to biology and geography. In Omaheke, this included suggesting students use the library to search for definitions of difficult vocabulary words or research information for completing projects in history and geography.

Educators perceive the RSRC as (potentially) an important source of information, and some view school library as an alternative

Among the educators who had used the RSRCs, the RSRC was seen as an important resource for their schools, or had the potential to be. The educators mentioned that the RSRC is important in providing computers for learners' collaborative work and office services, like printing and faxing. On the other hand, the educators believed the RSRCs could play a stronger role supporting schools and learners by expanding the availability of the "right books" and "necessary resources," including more non-fiction books, and getting the mobile library units running to benefit the learners who live far from the RSRCs.

The comments of educators in the focus groups implied a need to facilitate more communication between schools and the RSRCs. This was echoed by educators' statements that RSRC staff had not recently visited their schools to hear their concerns or to encourage use of the RSRC.

Entertainment and pleasure also drive usage of the RSRCs

The next most common reason for learners to visit the RSRC (after studying, school assignment/learning) was for entertainment/pleasure, both for computer use and for books/other resources. 17% of learners indicated that their main reason for using computers at the RSRC in the last four weeks was for entertainment/pleasure, with youth learners and adult learners showing similar response rates. Similarly, although the use of books/other resources in the last four weeks was primarily for school assignments, 20% of learners said their main reason for use was entertainment/pleasure.

The panel interviews confirmed this: about one-quarter of learner respondents mentioned that one of their main reasons to visit the RSRC is to relax or for entertainment, including doing Facebook, browsing YouTube, using WhatsApp, watching soccer, and playing games (30% of males, 23% of females).

There are large differences by location in terms of usage for entertainment/pleasure. Learners and students in Ohangwena reported lower levels (9% computer use and 6% books/other resources) compared with Omaheke (25% computer and 37% books/other resources) and Oshana (20% computer and 21% books/other resources). Entertainment rates were higher in Omaheke (37%) and much lower in Ohangwena (6%).

By gender, differences were larger for computer use than for books/other resources. 72% female used library computer for school assignments compared with 57% of males, while for books/other resources it was 63% females and 62% of males. Only 13% of female used a library

computer for entertainment compared to 21% of males (differences in entertainment use for books/other resources were also small: 18% of female and 21% of male).

Interpreting data related to the use of libraries for entertainment/pleasure is not straightforward and is frequently colored by stakeholder views on the topic. In some evaluations, significant entertainment/pleasure use is deemed problematic and not an appropriate use of public or donor funds. Over time, this view has waned and there now tends to be a greater appreciation for the inherent value of entertainment/pleasure as a legitimate pursuit. Moreover, entertainment/pleasure can serve as a hook, bringing people to a library who otherwise may not feel motivated to do so, many of whom may subsequently make use of other resources. In this evaluation team's experience, the 17% (patron) and 25% (panel) figures are very reasonable and we would not recommend steps to discourage entertainment/pleasure uses of the RSRCs. At the same time, many libraries have instituted use policies, especially with regard to computers, to ensure that patrons have sufficient access to constrained resources for learning and other targeted uses.

Books are also valuable, especially for homework assignments and NAMCOL

The value of books and other reading materials was apparent across methods. In the patron survey, the majority of learners and students (63%) indicated the last book or resource used was for school assignments, while 17% indicated it was for entertainment purposes. (Note that this is similar to the priority activities learners indicated they do on the RSRC computers.)

The value of books and other reading materials was also reflected in learner panel interviews. Books and other text-based document materials ranked second, after study spaces, as important resources in supporting school work for both males and females (among the five possible choices of: "books and other text-based document materials," "TV and media related sources," "computers," "study spaces," and "meeting rooms"). 23% of male learners and 30% of female learners in the panel interviews mentioned that one of the main reasons they visit the RSRC is to "read" books. In terms of specific materials read, males mentioned schoolwork related materials or novels not available at school. Females mentioned story books/novels (slightly more so than males), physical science and accounting books, or other study related materials.

Whereas the learner panel interviews informed the degree to which the RSRC's collections were valued, focus group discussions revealed the reasons why they were valued. Learners in focus group discussions mentioned they highly value the books and booklets available for studying purposes that would otherwise be too expensive to buy:

They have ranges of books which is more useful to the grade tens and twelves because they have the books that we were told to buy, but they are very expensive. So is good that the library is providing those books.

There are also NAMCOL booklets here which are very expensive for us to buy but now we get them at the library to use for free. Going through old questions papers, it helps to achieve better grades.

However, some focus group participants and interview participants believed there were not enough school textbooks and booklets to meet the needs of learners and noted other gaps in the libraries' collections, as described in Section 5.5.5.

The RSRCs provide resources and services that four out of five learners and students cannot get elsewhere

Apart from the RSRC, learners and students used a variety of resources to meet their education needs. In panel interviews of learners, 77% of males and 73% of females mentioned that they use other resources to meet their study and education needs. The most common responses, as captured by the patron survey, were home (85%), followed by friends (41%), school library (32%), and professionals (30%). There are large differences between RSRCs: Learners in Ohangwena use a variety of resources, while learners in Omaheke primarily just use resources at home (93% use this) with the next closest resource at 17% (resources from friends).

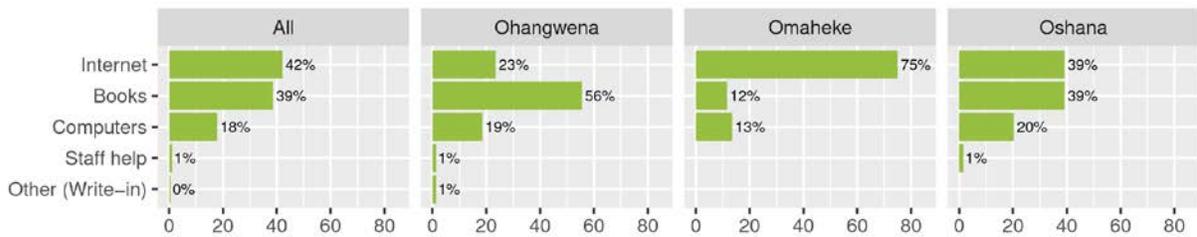
When asked to rank the top three reasons for choosing to come to this RSRC instead of going somewhere else, the most commonly ranked response (anything within the top three) indicated by learners and students was "This is the only place in the area with the resources you need" (81%). The response was ranked most frequently across locations. Furthermore, 67% of those who ranked it gave it a rank of one (65% in Ohangwena, 82% in Omaheke, and 58% in Oshana). Other top-ranked responses included: "More convenient to get to" (55%) and "It's quieter than other places" (51%). Additionally, 22% chose "the technology is better" and 18% said it is "safer than other places."

By gender, slightly fewer females ranked "this is the only place in the area with the resources you need" (77%) than males (84%). There was little difference for "it's quieter than other places" (53% of females ranked, 50% of males) and "safer than other places" (20% female, 16% male). The difference was much larger for "closer or more convenient than other places" where only 46% of female ranked versus 62% of male. Female ranked "staff are knowledgeable or helpful" (11%) more often than males (6%). Other differences were small.

There are differences by location, with safety ranked more frequently in both Omaheke (31%) and Oshana (21%) than in Ohangwena (6%). Convenience is ranked much more frequently in Oshana (74%) than in Ohangwena (47%) and Omaheke (44%). Learners seemed to think the technology was better in Omaheke (30%) than the learners in Ohangwena (19%) and Oshana (20%). That the cost of service was affordable was ranked more frequently in Ohangwena (13%) and Omaheke (11%) than in Oshana (4%).

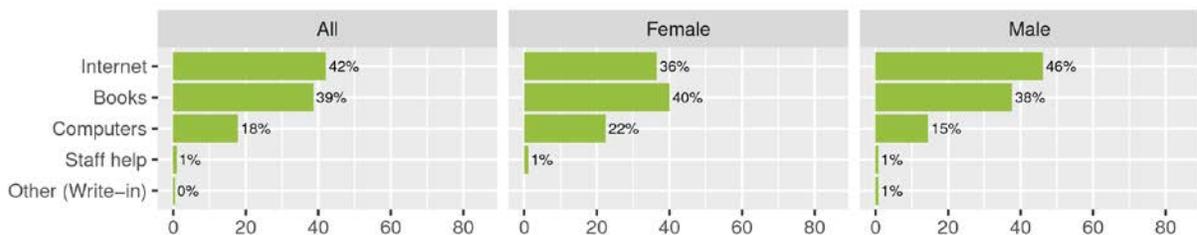
Delving deeper into the importance of library resources, learners and students who ranked the response "this is the only place with the resources you need" were asked a follow-up question about what the most important resource was to them. Of the 202 learners and students who answered this question, 42% said Internet, 39% said books, 18% said computers, and 1% said staff help. There is large variability between locations however. In Ohangwena, only 23% said Internet, compared with 75% in Omaheke and 39% in Oshana. Books were much more important in Ohangwena (56%) than Omaheke (12%) and Oshana (39%).

Figure 7: Resources indicated as most important for learners and students where the RSRC is the only place with the resources they need by location (patron survey, N=202)



Differences were much smaller by gender, with about the same percentage of female learners and students (40%) choosing books compared to male learners and students (38%). Compared to males, more females chose computers (22% of females, 15% of males), but fewer females chose the Internet (36% of females, 46% of male users), so combined they are very similar.

Figure 8: Resources indicated as most important for learners and students where the RSRC is the only place with the resources they need, by gender (patron survey, n=202)



In the panel interviews, the ways in which the RSRC is considered superior to other resources was expanded upon. More than half of learners interviewed (half of males and 60% of females) explicitly stated that the RSRC is a better source for information than other sources, such as textbook, mobile phones, teachers, friends, and family members. The main reasons were mostly due to the greater scope, depth, or accuracy of information available. Also, of those who think the RSRC is better, 40% indicated free Wi-Fi is an important value of the RSRC compared to alternative resources. For example, a female learner mentioned:

[My family members] give me information about their own knowledge, which might be inaccurate sometimes, but the library always provides relevant information.

A male learner said:

There are differences because the teacher does not give you more information than what you get in the internet. Also, when using the internet from the phone, you need to buy data but at the library it is for free, which allows to search for much information as you want.

There were other learners in panel interviews who mentioned alternative sources of information as better than the RSRC (27% of males, 20% of females). Both male and female learners

mentioned the reason as, for example, that the RSRCs lacked school textbooks or did not provide assistance with school work.

5.2.2 Business

Top findings

- Business section patrons use the RSRCs for a wide range of purposes, including applying for jobs, reading the news, entertainment, and studying.
- Male and female business section patrons use the RSRC differently. Females are nearly twice as likely than males to visit the RSRC for job search purposes and three times as likely to use library resources to obtain information for educational needs. Yet males are twice as likely as females to visit the RSRC for work-related activities or to use library resources for entertainment or pleasure.
- The RSRCs provide resources and services that four out of five business section patrons cannot get elsewhere.

Business section patrons use the RSRCs for purposes beyond just those related to work, including news, entertainment, and other personal uses

When asked to rank the top three reasons for coming to the RSRC on the day of the survey, the most common ranked choice by business section patrons was to catch up on the news (19%). The other most commonly ranked reasons were to “conduct a job search” (13%) and “play games, watch videos, or other entertainment activities” (12%). Additionally, 35% of business section patrons ranked “other,” with most write-in responses specifying activities related to education (39% of “other” responses, or 14% of all business section patrons) or work (35% of “other” responses, or 12% of all business section patrons). For example, education-related activities written-in by respondents included “studying (part-time course)” and “applying for my courses,” indicating the potential role for RSRCs to support education and lifelong learning for adults. Work-related tasks written-in by respondents included “check work-related emails” and “typing my application letter.” Note that while 139 business section patrons picked their top reason, only three provided their second reason, and none their third. Thus, analysis of this question ignored the ranks and looked at the percent of respondents who chose any rank for each possible category.

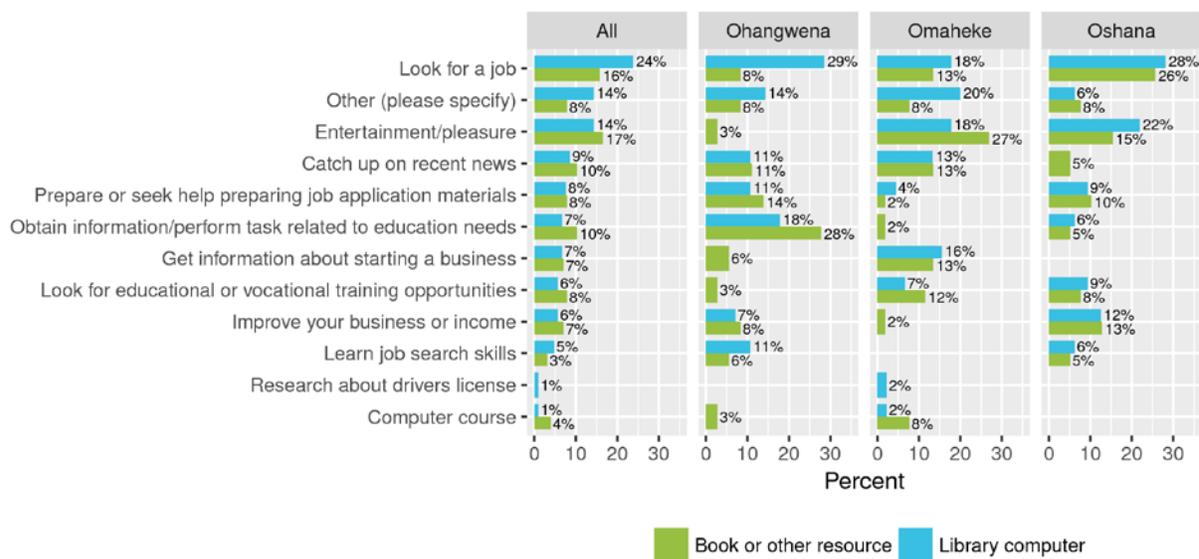
A multiple-choice question about use of the RSRC computers showed the most commonly indicated main reason for using a computer at the RSRC was to look for a job (24%), followed by entertainment (13%) and preparing job materials (9%). Another 15% of respondents indicated “other.”

The results of the panel interview showed greater weight for RSRC business use, as half of the business section patron respondents indicated one of the main reasons they visit the RSRC is to search and apply for a job or write CVs (37% of males, 63% of females), and 20% of the respondents mentioned doing work-related activities (27% of males, 13% of females). Work-related activities included writing work emails, searching for business opportunities, and gathering information or resources for work purposes, etc. For other main reasons for visiting

RSRCs, 60% of the panel interview respondents indicated using Wi-Fi (without specifying if this was for work or pleasure) and 37% visited for entertainment purposes. Of note is that significantly more males responded that Wi-Fi is a main reason for visiting RSRCs compared to females (73% of males, 47% of females).

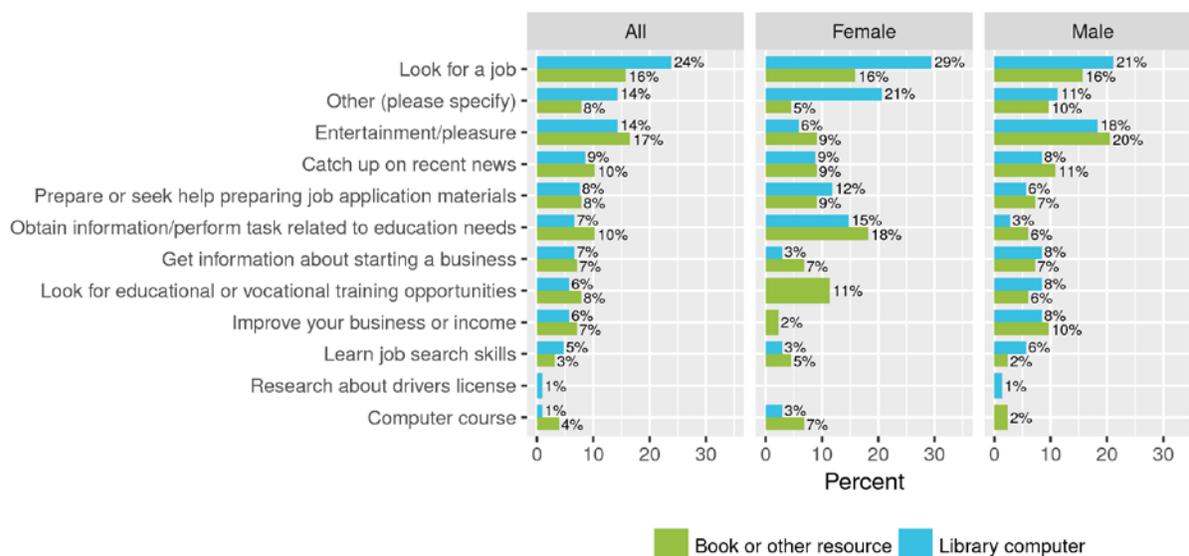
This pattern was repeated when respondents were asked to select reasons for using the last book or resource at the library. The top reason was entertainment/pleasure (17%) closely followed by to look for a job (16%), and “obtain information/perform task related to education needs” (10%). There was some variation across libraries: in Ohangwena, “Obtain information/perform task related to education needs” was a more common reason (27%), while in Omaheke entertainment was more common (28%) and in Oshana it was Look for a job (28%).

Figure 9: Business section patrons’ main use of RSRC computers and books/other resources in the last four weeks, by location (top three responses, patron survey)



By gender, there were differences particularly around entertainment/pleasure. Female users were lower in both books (9%) and computers (6%) than male users (18% computers, 20% books). Conversely, female users were higher in “Obtain information/perform task related to education needs” with 15% for computers and 18% for books, compared with male users (3% computers and 6% books).

Figure 10: Business section patrons' main use of RSRC computers and books/other resources in the last four weeks, by gender (top three responses, patron survey)



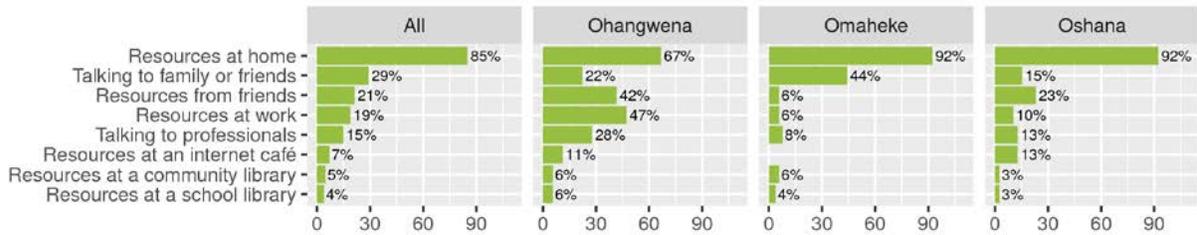
In the focus group discussions, business section patrons elaborated on work- and income-related uses. Some examples were about specific services, such as making business cards. Some patrons mentioned information search, such as using the Internet to find information on poultry farming. Usefulness of attending trainings were also revealed in terms of using PowerPoint presentation programs and other business knowledge from trainings in the RSRC: “When we attended courses here on business, our minds opened, that what we are pushing in the business is not working, then we can change and sell something else.” Business section patrons also commented on the use of computers and Wi-Fi (e.g. search online for detailed job information after first seeing it in the newspapers, search online for job vacancies, type CVs, and apply for jobs online). The business panel interview further supports this as one-quarter of the respondents indicated using a computer as a main reason for using the RSRC.

The RSRCs provide resources and services that people cannot get elsewhere

In order to better understand the value of the RSRCs we also asked what other resources people use to meet their job-related needs. The most common response of business section patrons was “resources at home” (85%), followed by “talking to family or friends” (29%) and “resources from friends” (21%). Fewer business section patrons spoke with professionals as a resource (15%).

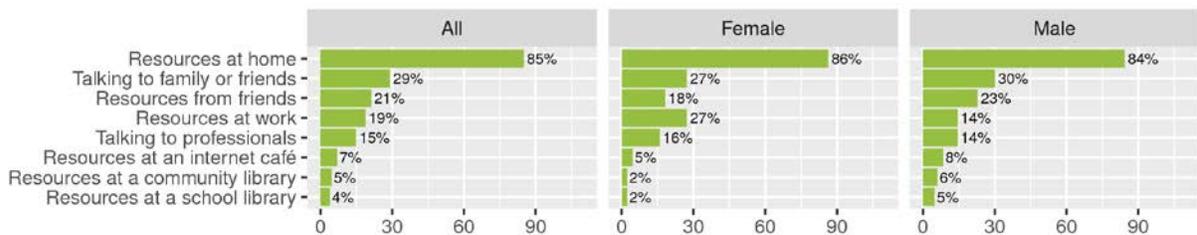
There was some variation across locations. In Ohangwena, 47% indicated “resources at work,” and 42% chose “resources from friends.” In Omaheke and Oshana, a significant portion chose “resources at home” (92% for both), but only 67% did so in Ohangwena.

Figure 11: Other resources business section patrons used to meet job-related needs, by location (patron survey)



By gender differences were generally small, with the exception of resources at work (27% female vs 14% male).

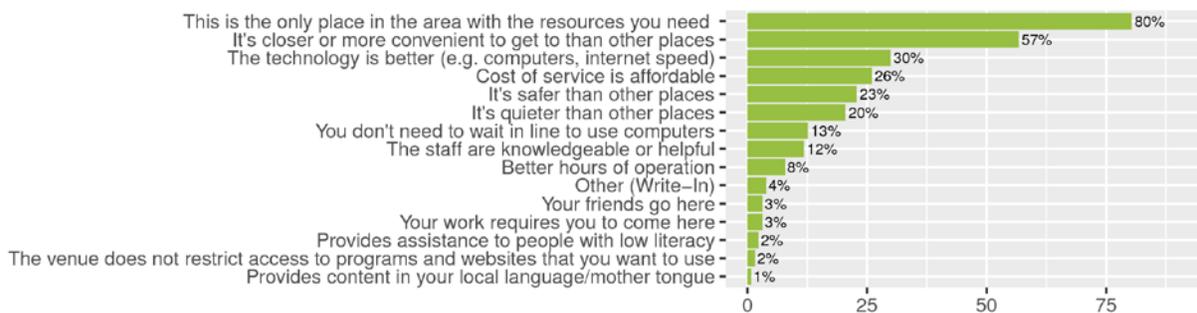
Figure 12: Other resources business section patrons used to meet job-related needs, by gender (patron survey)



In business section patron panel interviews, 43% of males and 30% of females responded that they use other resources to meet their business or employment needs, along with the RSRC.

When asked to rank the top three reasons why they chose to come to this RSRC instead of going somewhere else, the most commonly ranked reason (anything within the top three) from business section patrons was “this is the only place in the area with the resources you need” (80%), followed by “it is closer or more convenient to get to than other places” (57%). Of the 80% that ranked “this is the only place in the area with the resources you need,” 79% gave it a rank of 1, as the most important reason. By gender, there were small differences in the top two reasons (“only place in the area with resources you need” and “closer or more convenient”). The differences were larger for “the technology is better” (39% of female ranked, 25% of male) and “cost of service is affordable” (34% of female ranked vs 22% of males). Of the 87% who ranked “only place with resources,” 71% of female gave it a rank of “1” vs 81% of males. Of the 57% who ranked “closer or more convenient,” 25% of female ranked it “1” vs 29% of males. Differences by gender in ranking value for “technology is better” and “cost of service” were small.

Figure 13: Reasons business section patrons chose to come to this RSRC instead of somewhere else (patron survey)



Business section patrons in the panel interviews elaborated on the value of the RSRC over other resources they have. More than half indicated the RSRC is better (47% of males, 60% of females), and of those respondents, mostly noted free or inexpensive services such as Wi-Fi, newspapers, and computers, as the reason. For example, a male business section patron mentioned:

All the library resources are free. The resources I previously made use of, I needed to spend money on. For example, if I have to use my phone, I need to have mobile data to access my WhatsApp. The newspapers I needed to buy, and I don't work so it was difficult to buy the newspapers every day. I had to borrow my friend's laptop whenever I wanted to type something and sometimes I could not get it because he also needed it.

Also, a female respondent said, "The computer training offered by the library is for free and all courses offered at the church we paid. Copies at church is also very expensive compare to the library."

The value of the Internet for job application processes can be seen through the narrative of one focus group participant:

When newspapers advertise some vacancies...they advertise saying, no application will be accepted if you don't apply via Internet. Only if you apply online, will you be accepted.

Pertaining to Internet use in job applications, another participant shared how library use is beneficial compared to alternatives such as Internet cafés, in terms of saving costs:

I can save the little that I have for other things because most of the resources are cheap or free. I can now send many application letters to different companies because I do not have to pay anything. In the past, money is a problem; when I did not have anything to use at the internet café, then I will not be able to apply.

Yet, there were some responses which reveal unmet needs. For example, some respondents said they use newspapers to access job vacancy information, yet they found a dearth of current newspapers at the library. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with library resources is discussed below, in Section 5.5.6.

5.3 How do patrons use the RSRC?

The report now turns to how patrons use the RSRCs. We examine four areas: (1) frequency of RSRC use, (2), services used and frequency of activities, (3) usage on behalf of someone else, and (4) emerging outcomes.

5.3.1 Frequency of RSRC use

Top findings

- RSRC visitation is relatively high - about nine times per month for learners and eight times for business section patrons
- A majority of learners have increased their use of the RSRCs since their first visit
- Learners tend to visit the RSRCs on their own volition, not because it is required by their school

5.3.1.1 Learners and students

Learners and students, on average, visited the RSRC nearly nine times over the previous four weeks. Learners tend to spend longer at the RSRC for visits of their own free will versus visits required by school. For learners and students, 37% of visits required by school were less than one hour, compared with just 12% of free will visits. By gender, the difference in number of visits was small (8.8 for female and 8.5 for male). The time spent also showed only small differences for visits required by school (30% female under 1 hour and 39% of male) and free will visits (9% female under 1 hour vs 15% of male).

Nearly all learners in the panel interviews indicated that their use frequencies varied throughout the year, with just over half indicating that their use increases during the school year (57% of males, 47% of females). Many learners go home during the holidays, resulting in the RSRC being too far to visit. This, however, underscores the importance of the RSRC as a school resource.

Of the learners who mentioned in the panel interviews that the use of RSRC varies within a year, some specified the differences in use during the school term versus during vacation. They generally showed a similar pattern—more school work during school terms, more entertainment activities during holidays. For example, a male learner mentioned:

During school term I use the library to do homework, read from the library books things related to school work and typing my school summaries. During the holidays I use it more often but not always to do the school work; is more to download games on the internet.

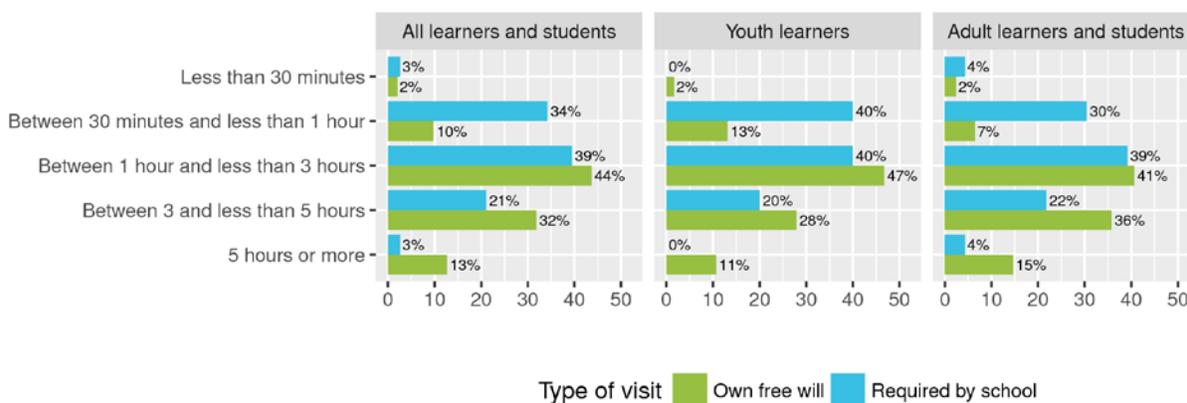
A female learner mentioned:

I only use it [the library] when there is certain information I need about assignment and projects during school terms. During the holidays I use it to borrow story books, use computers, and meet with friends.

Table 12: . Number of learner patron visits to the RSRC over the last four weeks (patron survey)

	Average # of visits	n
All learners and students	9	284
Youth learners	8	144
Adult learners and students	9	140

Figure 14: Time spent by learners at the RSRC for visits required by school vs. visits of own free will (patron survey)



More than half of learners in panel interviews indicated they now use the RSRC more often than when they first began using the venue, in contrast to one-fifth who report they use it less than at first. The reasons they use it more tended to be for school-related tasks (e.g., find a resource, use a study room, do homework, prepare for exams). Of those that use it less, about half indicated it was because of a RSRC feature (e.g. too noisy, bad hours, no longer novel) while one-third indicated it was because of other obligations (e.g. family).

A minority of learners and students indicated they visited the RSRC with their class during the previous four weeks (14%) or visited alone simply because it was required by their school (15%). Looking at visits with classes, there was some variation by location: in Ohangwena 2% of learners and students visited the RSRC during the previous four weeks *as part of* their class, compared to 16% in Omaheke and 27% in Oshana. Visits over the past month as a requirement for class assignments also varied by location (only 9% in Ohangwena visited, 14% in Omaheke, and 23% in Oshana). By gender, 15% of female learners visited with a class versus 13% of males. For visits required by their school, 10% of female learners did so versus 19% of male learners.

While these data indicate that schools are not bringing their learners to the RSRCs in large numbers on a consistent basis, as reported earlier, teachers have played an important role in encouraging learners to use the RSRCs for the first time. As described in Section 5.2, two-thirds of learner panel respondents mentioned that they were advised by their teachers to visit the RSRC and around 18% indicated that they had been required by their school or class to go to the RSRC. Focus group discussions also reflected educators’ efforts to incorporate RSRC use into their teaching practices.

5.3.1.2 Business

Business section patrons on average visited the RSRC approximately 8 times over the previous four weeks. Across all business section patrons, 47% reported spending between 1 and 3 hours per visit, and 25% between 3 and 5 hours per visit. Differences by gender were larger, with male business section patrons visiting 9.2 times (with 11% staying less than 1 hour) compared to just 6.9 times for female business section patrons (with 25% staying less than 1 hour).

*Table 13: Number of business section patron visits to the RSRC over the last four weeks (patron survey)**

	Average # of visits	n
All business section patrons	8	139
Job-seekers	8	77
Entrepreneurs	11	21
Wage earners	7	41

* Does not include the visit on the day of the interview

*Table 14: Average time of each business section patron RSRC visit over the previous four weeks**

	All business section patrons	Job-seekers	Entrep.	Wage earners
Less than 30 minutes	3	1	0	8
Between 30 minutes and less than 1 hour	13	14	11	10
Between 1 hour and less than 3 hours	47	39	47	62
Between 3 and less than 5 hours	25	31	21	13
5 hours or more	13	14	16	8

* Does not include the visit on the day of the interview

The panel interviews indicated business section patrons are relatively consistent in their use of the RSRC, with the majority noting that their use does not vary by day or year. 45% also indicated that since they began using the venue, their overall use has remained the same, while just over one-third indicated their use has gone up. Of those whose use increased, about one-third

noted an increased use of resources such as computers. Just under half of those who indicated their use decreased noted other commitments (such as work) as a factor limiting their time at the RSRC.

In terms of gender, 40% of males and half of females mentioned their overall RSRC use has remained the same, and 17% of males and 23% of females indicated their use decreased. A noticeable difference was among those who indicated their use has gone up: 43% of males versus 27% of females. Among the male panel interview respondents who mentioned their frequency of use has gone up, the reasons included: attending trainings; gained ability to use computers; changes in business activities; studying and looking for jobs more than before; or more aware about the services offered. Female respondents mentioned the reasons as: developed an interest in using the library; more aware of how to use the resources; attending trainings; applying for jobs more, or; found receiving assistance from the staff helpful.

5.2.2 Services used and frequency of activities

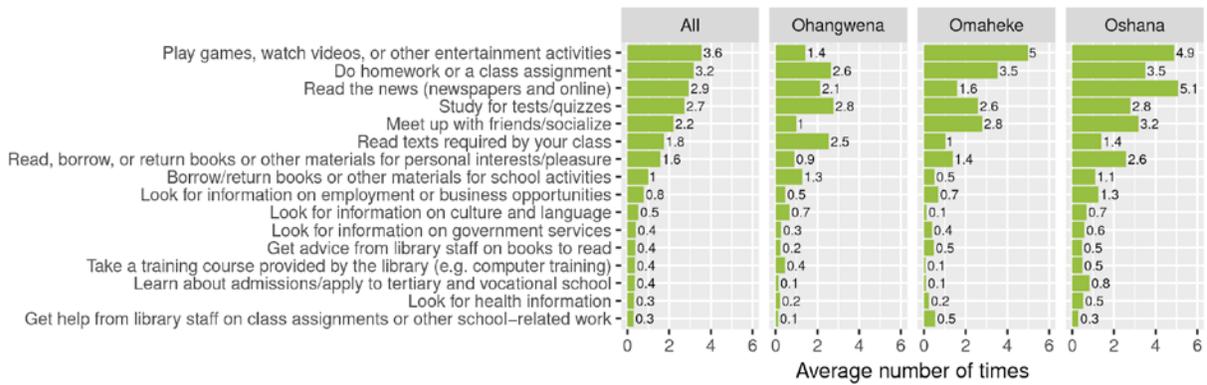
Top findings

- There is little difference between the frequency learners use the RSRCs for entertainment and education-related activities. Business section patrons' use was mixed between personal and work-related activities.
- Help from librarians, computer use, quiet rooms/spaces for study, and Wi-Fi use are the top resources/services used by both learners and business section patrons. Learners also frequently used social areas, while business section patrons also frequently used job announcements and public notice boards.
- Many business section patrons took ICT classes at the RSRCs, with limited time the most common factor inhibiting participation in RSRC trainings.
- Among learners and students, more males attended trainings at the RSRC than females; but among business section patrons, more females participated in the trainings.

5.3.2.1 Learners

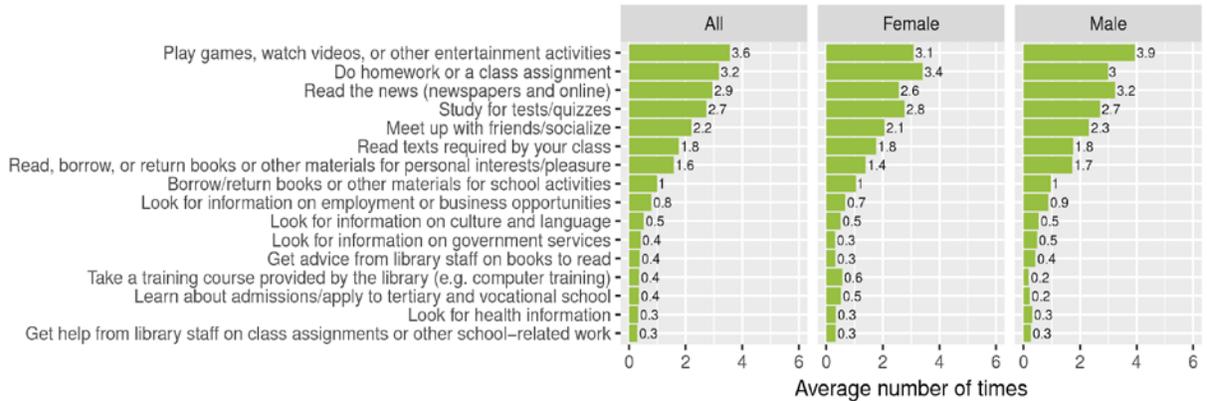
The most frequent activities learners reported doing at the RSRC over the four weeks before the survey include playing games (average of 3.6 times), doing homework (average of 3.2 times), studying for tests/quizzes (2.7 times), and meeting up with friends (2.2. times). There were some differences across RSRCs. Learners at Ohangwena used the venues much less frequently than at Omaheke and Oshana to play games (1.4 times vs 5 and 4.9 times, respectively). Oshana learners also read the news more frequently than in the Ohangwena and Omaheke (5.1 times vs 2.1 and 1.6 times, respectively).

Figure 15: Number of times learners and students have used the RSRC for different purposes over the previous four weeks, by location (patron survey)



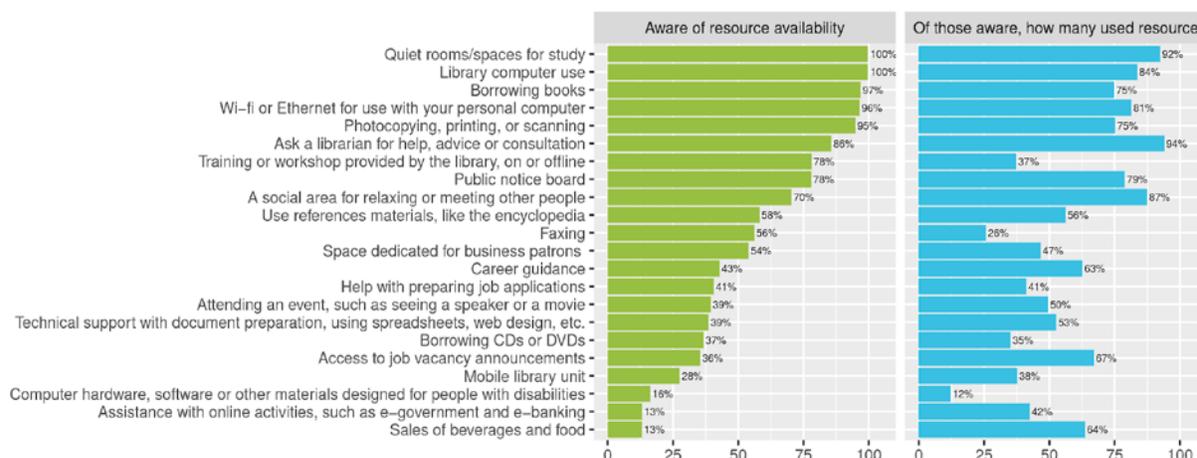
There were some differences across gender, but much less than by location. Females used the RSRC less frequently to play games (3.1 times vs. 3.9 times for males), and did homework or a class assignment slightly more often (3.4 times vs. 3 times for males). Males read the news more frequently (3.2 times vs. 2.6 times for females). Other differences were small.

Figure 16: Number of times learners and students have used the RSRC for different purposes over the previous four weeks, by gender (patron survey)



To help understand patron interest and use of services, learners and students were asked if they were aware of specific services being available at the RSRC and, if so, if they had ever used them. Although not perfect, this process allowed us to investigate usage of services by focusing only on those patrons that knew the service was available. Of these subgroups that knew of available services, the most common resources and services used at the RSRCs were: help from a librarian (94%), quiet study space (92%), social area (87%), RSRC computer use (84%), and RSRC internet for use with a personal device (81%). Of those learners that were aware of services designed for people with disabilities (16%), 12% indicated they used it.

Figure 17: Services and resources known to be available by learners and students, and which ones used (patron survey)



Adult learners and students who completed secondary school or higher were somewhat more aware of trainings or workshops provided by the RSRC (77% aware of this resource) compared to adult learners and students who only completed some secondary school or less (73% aware). However, of the adult learners aware of this resource, the same percentage (43%) used it for both education levels.

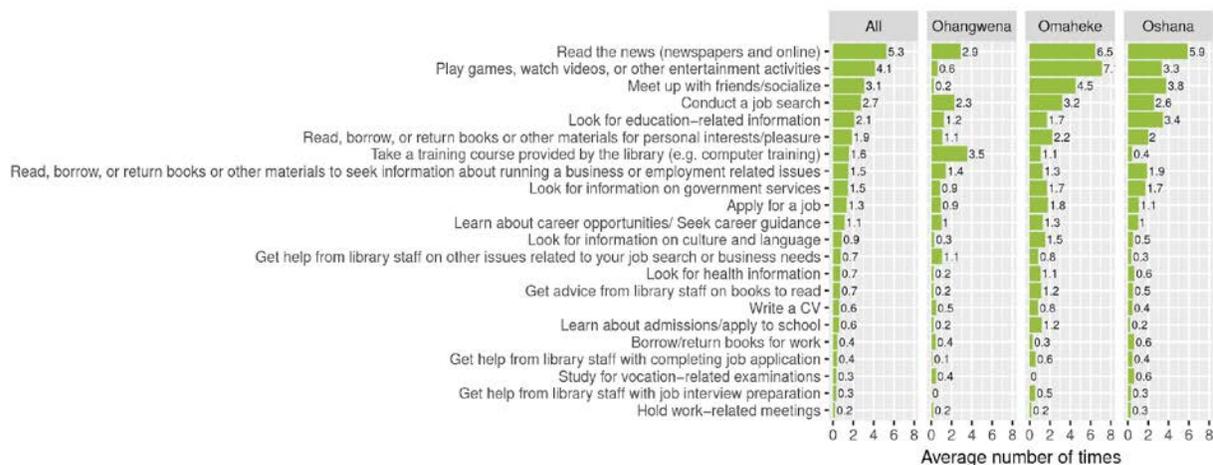
When asked about participating in trainings, about one-quarter of learner panel respondents indicated they had taken a training at the RSRC, the majority of which were ICT-related. Of those that did not attend a training, 41% indicated they didn't have time, while about one-third were unaware of them. In terms of gender, 30% of males and 17% of females attended a training.

When asked if there were other services they would like to see available at the RSRC, 45% of learners indicated there were (31% of youth learners and 61% of adult learners and students). Among those, desired services most commonly noted were more books (particularly school books); increased availability/accessibility of computers and computer hardware; and faster internet. 41% of female learners would like to see other services, as would 48% of male learners.

5.3.2.2 Business

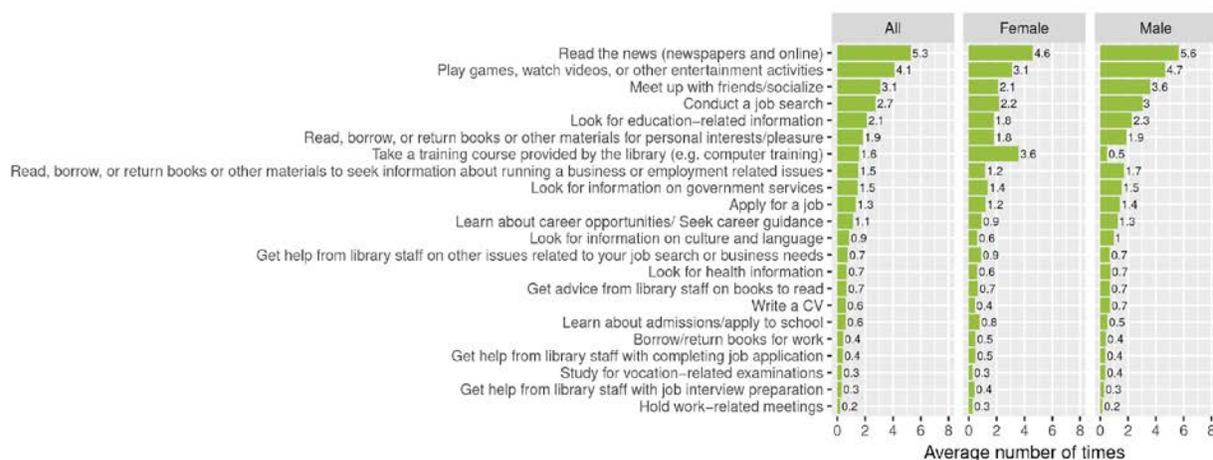
The most frequent activities business section patrons reported doing at the RSRC over the four weeks before the survey include reading the news (5.3 times on average) playing games and other entertainment activities (4.1 times), meeting up with friends (3.1 times) and conducting a job search (2.7 times). There were some differences across RSRCs. Business section patrons at Ohangwena used the RSRC much less frequently over all. For example, they read the news 2.9 times on average over the four previous weeks, compared to 6.5 and 5.9 times at Omaheke and Oshana, respectively. They also used the RSRCs less to play games (0.6 times versus 7 and 3.3 times).

Figure 18: Average number of times business section patrons have used the RSRC for different purposes over the previous four weeks, by location (patron survey)



In general, female business section patrons used the RSRC less frequently than males for most of these activities. For example, reading the news (4.6 times for females, 5.6 for males), play games (3.1 females, 4.7 males), meet up with friends (2.1 times for females, 3.6 for males), and conduct a job search (2.2 times for females, 3 times for males). In contrast to learners, where males were higher, female business section patrons took training courses provided by the library much more frequently than males, averaging 3.6 times versus just 0.5 for males.

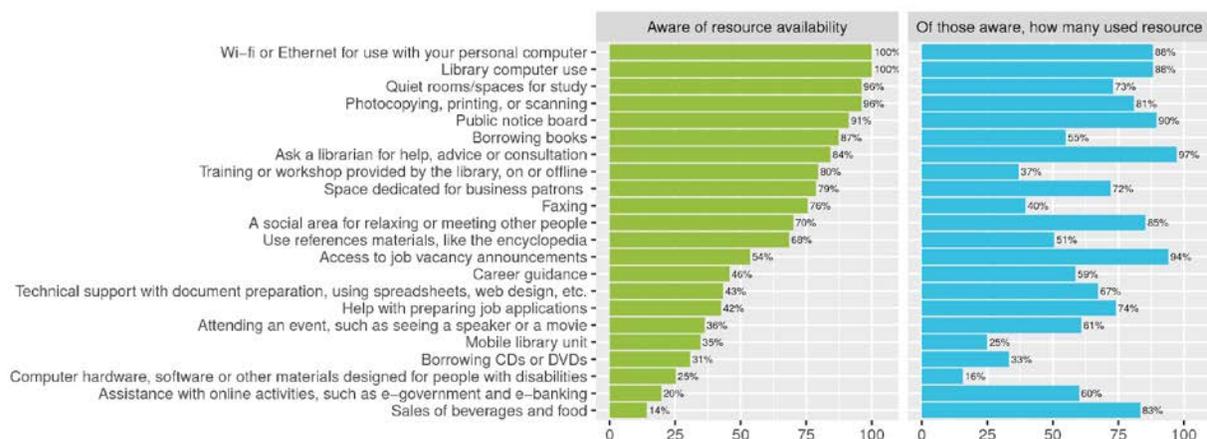
Figure 19: Average number of times business section patrons have used the RSRC for different purposes over the previous four weeks, by gender (patron survey)



To help understand patron interest and use of services, business section patrons were asked if they were aware of specific services being available at the RSRC and, if so, if they had ever used them. Although not perfect, this process allowed us to investigate usage in services by focusing only on those patrons that knew the service was available. Of these subgroups that knew of available services, the most common resources and services used at the RSRCs were: help from a

librarian (97%), accessing job announcements (94%), accessing the public notice board (90%), RSRC internet use with personal device (88%), and RSRC computer use (88%). Of those business section patrons that were aware of services designed for people with disabilities (25%), 16% indicated they used it.

Figure 20: Services and resources known to be available by business section patrons, and which ones used (patron survey)



When asked about participating in trainings, nearly 40% of business panel respondents indicated they had taken a training at the RSRC, and all of them had taken ICT related training. A few people also took business entrepreneurship (2 females) or English literacy trainings (2 females). Of those that did not attend a training, 27% indicated they didn't have time, while about one-fifth were unaware of them and one-fifth indicated they had no need. In terms of gender, one-third of males and 43% of females attended a training.

When asked if there were other services they would like to see available at the RSRC, 53% of all business section patrons (42% of job-seekers and 63% of entrepreneurs) responded affirmatively. Among those, the most commonly desired services were more books, more courses, and faster internet.

5.3.3 Usage on behalf of someone else

Top findings

- Nearly one-quarter of learners and business section patrons indicated that they use the RSRC on behalf of others. This was true of both male and female patrons.
- Learners tended to use the RSRC on behalf of someone else mainly for education needs, while business section patrons used it for others nearly equally for education needs and employment needs.

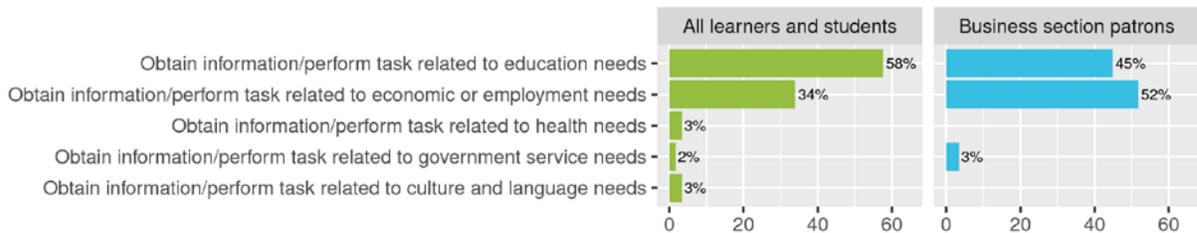
- Youth learners who used the RSRC on behalf of someone else tended to do it for education needs while adult learners and students tended to use it for economic or employment needs.

Learners versus business section patrons

Identical percentages (24%) of learners and students and business section patrons indicated that they use the RSRC on behalf of others. Within the learner category, this practice was more common among the adult learner and student group (26%) than youth learners (19%). Among business section patrons, waged employees were most likely to use the RSRC on behalf of others (36%), followed by entrepreneurs (26%) and job-seekers (17%).

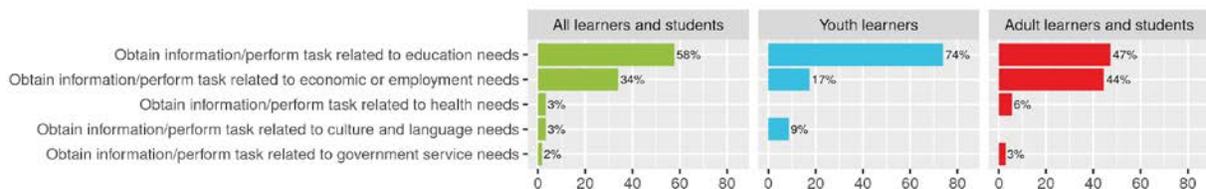
Among learners and students, 58% of those that used the RSRC on behalf of others indicated education needs were the main reason, while an additional 34% indicated employment. 52% of business section patrons who used the RSRC on behalf of someone else indicated employment needs as the main reason for use, with 45% indicating education needs.

Figure 21: Main purpose for using the RSRC for someone else (patron survey)



Some differences were apparent across learner types. Comparing youth and adults, we see large differences. While 74% of youth learners who used the RSRC on behalf of someone else did so to obtain information/perform a task related to education needs for someone else, just 47% of adult learners and students said the same. And 44% of adult learners and students who used the venue on behalf of another did so for economic or employment needs, compared with just 17% of youth learners. The sample size of business section patrons was too small to make inter-group comparisons.

Figure 22: Main purpose for using the RSRC for someone else, by learner type (patron survey)



Gender

Some differences emerged by gender amongst those who used the RSRC for others, mainly in the purpose of that use, rather than in the percentage who used it for others. 26% of female

learners and students used the RSRC for others, and of those 72% used for others for education and 24% for employment. Similarly, 21% of male learners and students used for others, but of those 43% used for others for both education and employment. Only three female business section patrons used for others (20%) and of those, two were for education needs and one for employment needs. 24% of male business section patrons used for others, and of those, 60% used for others for employment, and 35% for education.

5.4. Patron satisfaction: Comparative

This section provides a quantitative analysis of the top areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction investigated through the patron survey. The purpose is to provide a high-level comparative look across issue areas. The top areas are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.5 by incorporating data from other methods.

5.4.1 Learners

Top findings

- Satisfaction is very high among learners and students: four out of five indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the RSRC.
- Satisfaction was highest for convenience of location, availability of computers, availability of books, and range of books.
- Hours of operation are a hindrance to increased use, and availability of refreshments and noise levels were also reported as dissatisfaction areas.
- Areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction were consistent across learners and students, and male and female patrons.

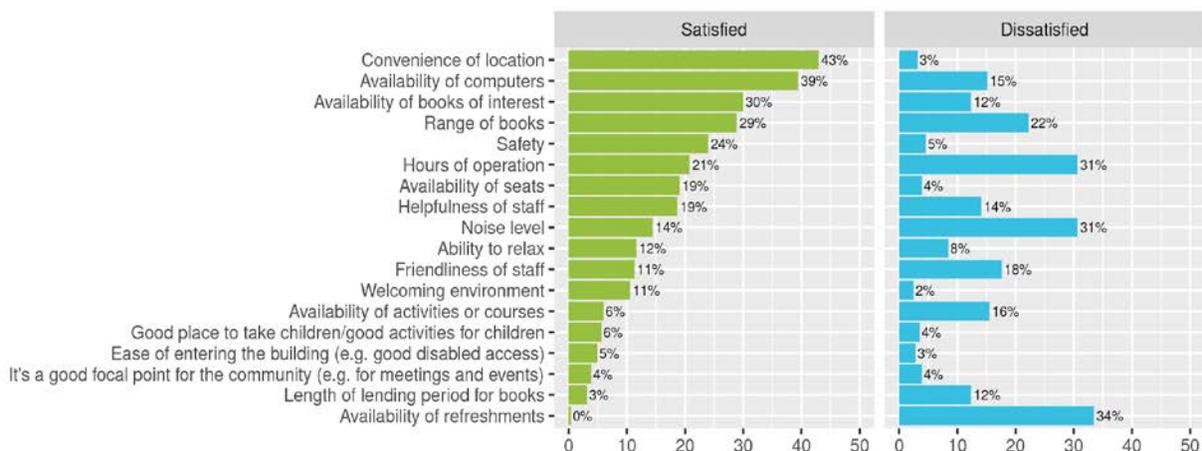
Overall, learner and student respondents in the patron survey indicated satisfaction with the RSRC facilities and resources. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied with the library, 82% indicated a 4 or 5, while less than 3% indicated 1 or 2. Reporting was similar among youth learners and the adult learner and student category. Gender differences were negligible, with 80% of female learners indicating a 4 or 5, compared to 84% of male learners.

When ranking the top three RSRC features learners and students were most satisfied with, the most common features mentioned were convenience of location (43%), availability of computers (40%), availability of books (30%), and range of books (30%). Learners indicated they were least satisfied with availability of refreshments (34%), noise level (31%), and hours of operation (31%). When asked if there were any barriers preventing them from using the RSRC more, well over half of learner panel respondents indicated operating hours limited their use.

Female learners were most satisfied with convenience of location (46%), availability of computers (37%), availability of books of interest (31%) and range of books (29%). They were most dissatisfied with the availability of refreshments (35%), noise level (29%), hours of operations (25%), and the range of books (25%). Male learners were most satisfied with the availability of computers (41%), the convenience of location (40%), the range of books (29%),

and the availability of books of interest (29%). They were most dissatisfied with hours of operation (35%), noise level (32%), and the availability of refreshments (32%).

Figure 23: RSRC aspects learners and students are most satisfied and dissatisfied with (patron survey)



When asked for suggestions on how the RSRC could better support their education, learners in the panel consistently indicated extending hours of operation (23% of males, 40% of females) and extending open days to the weekend would be a significant help (30% of males, one-third of females). Nearly one-third mentioned acquiring resources more tailored to education. Changing computer rules was also mentioned by 17% of respondents, although what that meant varied. For example, while some learners felt the maximum time using the computer should be extended to at least one hour, others felt that there should be more control of use, such as limiting use of entertainment activities. In terms of gender, more females hoped for tailored resources to education (27% of males vs one-third of females), and more males suggested changing computer rules (20% of males vs 13% of females).

Learners appear to highly value the RSRC for its role in supporting their goals. When asked to evaluate how important the RSRC was to their personal goals (scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important), 98% indicated 4 or 5 (88% very important). Less than 1% indicated a 1 or 2. Responses were similar for youth learners and adult learners and students. 97% of female learners indicated a 4 or 5, as did 99% of male learners.

Table 15: Learner satisfaction with the RSRC, % of respondents (patron survey)

	All learners and students	Youth learners	Adult learners and students
1 (very dissatisfied)	2	3	1
2	1	1	1
3	15	16	14
4	23	22	23
5 (Very satisfied)	59	57	61

Table 16: Learner perception of the RSRC's importance to their personal goals, % of respondents (patron survey)

	All learners and	Youth learners	Adult learners and
1 (not important at all)	0	0	0
2	0	0	1
3	1	2	1
4	10	11	9
5 (Very important)	88	87	89

The high value placed on the RSRC was seen in the learner panel interviews. Nearly all respondents (97%) indicated the RSRC is needed for their education success, while 85% indicated the resources are needed for their education. In addition, nearly half of learner panel respondents indicated the venue resources were critical for non-educational impacts as well.

Half of learner patrons in the panel interviews indicated that they are willing to pay to use the RSRC (47% of males, 53% of females). 63% indicated they incur financial costs using the RSRC, of which 58% of respondents noted they had costs for printing/copying and 29% for transportation. In terms of gender, more males spend on copying and printing (40% of males vs one-third of females), whereas more females incur transportation costs (13% of males vs 23% of females). The responses also showed that male and female learners were willing to pay for services such as: borrowing books, CDs or DVDs; using computers; entering the RSRC; attending trainings; making copies; and/or printing. Also, a few male and female learners mentioned that they are willing to pay an annual membership fee.

5.4.2 Business

Top Findings

- Satisfaction is very high among business section patrons: four out of five indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the RSRC.
- Satisfaction was highest for convenience of location, availability of computers, range of books, and helpfulness of staff.
- Areas to improve included hours of operation, adding more business courses/job-related support, and changing computer use rules. Noise and lack of refreshments were also common concerns.
- Males were twice as likely as females to report that hours of operation were a barrier to using the RSRC.

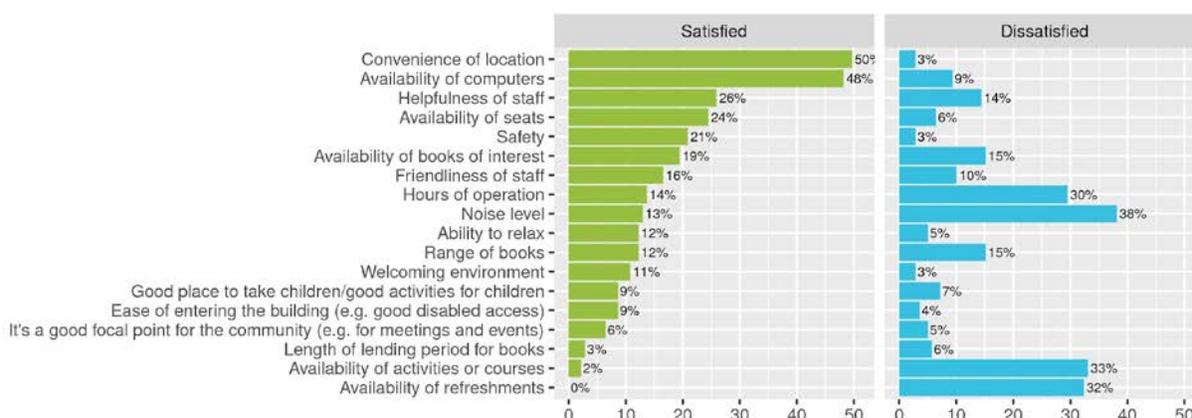
Overall, business section patrons were satisfied with the RSRC facilities and resources. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied with the RSRC, 80% indicated a 4 or 5, while less than 5% indicated 1 or 2. Reporting was similar among job-seekers. However, 14% of entrepreneurs indicated they were very dissatisfied with the RSRC, compared with only 2% of waged employees. And whereas 60% of job-seekers and 56% of waged employees indicated they were very satisfied with the venue, only 29% of entrepreneurs indicated the same.

Among the primary RSRC features, business section patrons indicated they were most satisfied with convenience of location (50%), availability of computers (48%), helpfulness of staff (26%), and availability of seats (24%). Business section patrons indicated they were least satisfied with noise level (38%), availability of activities or courses (33%), and hours of operation (30%). Female business section patrons were most satisfied with the availability of computers (43%), helpfulness of staff (28%), availability of seats (20%), and hours of operation (20%). They were most dissatisfied with the availability of activities or courses (39%), noise level (35%), and the availability of refreshments (31%).

Male business section patrons were most satisfied with the convenience of location (48%), availability of seats (27%), and helpfulness of staff (25%). They were most dissatisfied with noise level (40%), availability of refreshments (33%), and hours of operation (32%). Female business section patrons were most satisfied with the convenience of location (53%), availability of computers (43%), and helpfulness of staff (28%). They were most dissatisfied with the availability of courses (39%), noise level (35%), availability of refreshments (31%), and hours of operation (26%).

When asked if there were any barriers preventing them from using the RSRC more, 35% of business panel respondents indicated weekday operating hours limited their use (47% of males, 23% of females). 22% of business panel respondents mentioned not operating on weekends as a factor which limited their use (30% of males, 13% of females).

Figure 24: RSRC aspects business section patrons are most satisfied and dissatisfied with (patron survey)



Panel interviews indicated that the services business section patrons valued the most were internet/Wi-Fi (mentioned by 65% of respondents; 70% of males, 60% of females), computers (45% of respondents; 47% of males, 43% of females), and the presence of free resources (40% of respondents; 40% of both males and females). This was supported by focus group discussions as they also revealed that business section patrons valued Wi-Fi (e.g. “The Wi-Fi within the library is very fast, that makes it easier for us to get our information very quickly”) and inexpensive price for making copies.

When asked for suggestions on how the RSRC could better support their business needs, one-quarter of business panel participants indicated making hours of operation longer during weekdays (30% of males, 20% of females) and one-fifth of the participants mentioned extending open days to the weekend (27% of males, 13% of females). In addition, 37% indicated providing job-related assistance would be important (e.g. providing CV examples, compile job advertisements from the newspaper, courses in job-skills or how to apply to jobs). And nearly one-third mentioned changing computer use rules (e.g. increasing maximum time to 2 hours, controlling youth computer use).

Overall, business section patrons appear to highly value the RSRC for its role in supporting their goals. When asked to evaluate how important the RSRC was to their personal goals (scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important), 99% indicated 4 or 5 (93% very important). No respondents indicated a 1 or 2. Responses were similar for job-seekers and entrepreneurs, and slightly higher for wage earners (100% indicated a 4 or 5, with 98% indicating 5). It appears that although there was a group of entrepreneurs dissatisfied with the RSRC overall, there remained overwhelming feelings that the RSRC was an important resource to meet their goals. Eighty-six percent of entrepreneurs indicated 5 (very important) and 10% indicated 4. 100% of female business section patrons indicated a 4 or a 5, as did 98% of male business section patrons.

The high value placed in the RSRC was seen in the business panel interviews. Most respondents (87%) indicated the RSRC is a critical resource for their work success (90% of males, 83% of females), while 72% indicated the venue resources were critical for non-business/employment impacts as well (70% of males, 73% of females).

Two-thirds of business section patrons in the panel interviews indicated that they are willing to pay to use the RSRC (73% of males, 60% of females). 72% indicated they incur financial costs using the RSRC, and two-thirds of respondents noted they had costs for printing/copying and 22% noted they incur costs for transportation. In terms of gender, as with the case of learners, more females incur transportation costs (17% of males vs. 27% of females).

Similar to learners, business section patron panel interviews revealed that males and females were willing to pay for services such as: borrowing books, CDs or DVDs; using computers; entering the RSRC; attending trainings; renting a hall for meetings; making copies; and/or printing. Also, a few male and female learners mentioned that they are willing to pay an annual or monthly membership fee.

Table 17: Business section patron satisfaction with the RSRC, % of respondents (patron survey)

	All business section patrons	Job-seekers	Entrepreneurs	Wage earners
1 (very dissatisfied)	3	0	14	2
2	2	3	0	2
3	16	14	19	17
4	25	23	38	22
5 (Very satisfied)	54	60	29	56

Table 18: . Business section patron perception of the RSRC's importance to their personal goals, % of respondents (patron survey)

	All business section patrons	Job-seekers	Entrepreneurs	Wage earners
1 (not important at all)	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	1	1	5	0
4	7	8	10	2
5 (Very important)	92	91	86	98

5.4.3 Learners vs. business section patron comparison

Top findings

- All patron types tended to be very satisfied with the RSRCs -- four out of five survey respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the RSRC.
- Satisfaction with books was more often ranked for learners and students than business section patrons.
- More business section patrons were dissatisfied with the availability of courses.
- There are some significant differences in satisfaction and dissatisfaction trends across RSRC locations.

Across all locations, satisfaction/dissatisfaction has slight differences between learners/students and business section patrons. Although both groups indicated satisfaction with the location (43% of learners and students, 50% of business section patrons), business section patrons more often ranked satisfaction with the availability of computers (48%) than learners/students (39%). Satisfaction with books was more often ranked for learners/students than business section patrons: satisfaction with the availability of books of interest was ranked by 30% of learners and students but only 19% of business section patrons, while satisfaction with the range of books was ranked by 29% of learners and students and just 11% of business section patrons. 18% of learners/students ranked dissatisfaction with the friendliness of staff, compared to 9% of business section patrons. Conversely, 32% of business section patrons ranked dissatisfaction with the availability of activities or courses, compared to only 16% of learners/students.

Comparing patron satisfaction of RSRCs location, there are some significant differences. Although satisfaction with location is generally noted, it is less so in Oshana. Among learners and students, satisfaction with convenience of location was ranked by 52% of respondents in Ohangwena, 49% in Omaheke, and 30% in Oshana. Among business section patrons, similar trends were observed (59%, 53%, and 38%, respectively). Perhaps a contributing factor to this is feelings on safety: very few rate satisfaction with safety in Oshana -- 5% of Oshana learners/students and 4% of business section users rated satisfaction with safety, compared with 35% of Ohangwena learners/students (30% business section) and 36% of Omaheke learners/students (31% business section).

Another large difference across locations regarded noise level. For learners, only 9% indicated dissatisfaction with noise in Ohangwena, compared to 55% in Omaheke and 34% in Oshana. For business section patrons, 14% rated dissatisfaction with noise in Ohangwena, but 46% did so in Omaheke and 52% in Oshana.

Other areas of note include:

- **Friendliness of staff.** For learners and students, 6% rated dissatisfaction in Ohangwena, 12% in Omaheke, and 33% in Oshana. For business section patrons, 2% rated dissatisfaction in Ohangwena, 4% in Omaheke, and 22% in Oshana.

- **Availability of activities or courses.** For learners and students, 15% rated dissatisfaction in Ohangwena, versus 32% in Omaheke and just 5% in Oshana. For business section patrons, 23% rated dissatisfaction in Ohangwena, versus 53% in Omaheke and 18% in Oshana.
- **Availability of refreshments:** in Ohangwena, 65% of both learners and students and business section patrons rated dissatisfaction with this, while in Omaheke 21% of learners and 22% of business section patrons did, and in Oshana 11% of learners and 12% of business section patrons did.

5.5 Are the RSRCs adequately developing the resources necessary to ensure efficient operations and high-quality service?

This section focuses on critical services and resources at the RSRCs as identified by evaluation participants and stakeholders. For each service or resource listed, the analysis includes:

- The **background** on the service or resource, including the importance of the service/resource to the project and any concerns discussed in the Component 1 report. The background reflects the views of project stakeholders gathered from key informant interviews conducted in March-April of 2015 during Component 1 data collection and a thorough review of planning documents from the project's implementation phase (i.e., the period before the RSRCs opened to the public). Document review included review of Compact agreements, including the Compact signed by MCC and the National Planning Commission (NPC) in 2008 and the Implementing Partner Agreement signed by MCA-N and the MoE in 2009. (An overview of the evaluation findings for Component 1 is provided in Section 2 of this report.)
- A discussion on the extent to which the service/resource is meeting the expectations of patrons, staff, and key informants from Component 2. The discussion includes: (1) the status of the service/resource at the time of data collection (July-August 2017); (2) the perspectives of patrons, staff, and key informants on the usage, quality, and effectiveness of the service/resource; and (3) challenges that influence items one and two.
- The actions for moving forward, including actions that are suggested, planned, or in progress. Actions often address approaches for overcoming challenges or improving the service/resource.

The information presented in this section incorporates data from several data collection methods: staff interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions with patrons, and administrative data provided by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MOEAC, which became the new name of the MoE after the department was restructured in 2015), while also drawing from observations conducted by the evaluation team, survey data, and panel interview data.

The topics covered include: General operations, Staffing, Facilities, Information and communication technologies, Collections, Service delivery, Outreach, and Management.

5.5.1 General operations

Top findings

- For fiscal year 2017-2018, the RSRCs expected their operating budgets to shrink to less than 25% of what it had been the year prior.
- Extended operating hours (after 5:00pm on weekdays and/or during the day on Saturdays) had been an explicit expectation of the RSRC sub-activity since the project's inception, yet the RSRCs were only open during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. The RSRCs were aware of the strong demand for extended operating hours among people in the community and some were pursuing plans to do so. Also, unannounced changes in operating hours were a source of frustration among some patrons.
- By the second year of operation, the RSRCs had achieved double the number of annual visits targeted in the Compact by year five.
- The number of monthly visits to the RSRCs has consistently risen for Omaheke but appears to be falling for Ohangwena and Oshana after peaking in 2016.

5.5.1.1 Operating budget

Background

- As part of the Implementing Partner Agreement, the MOEAC agreed to provide ongoing funding for the RSRCs.
- During Component 1 interviews, several key informants were concerned that funding for the RSRCs would be reduced over time. Specifically, a few individuals were worried that funding for the RSRCs would be redirected toward schools in the regions.

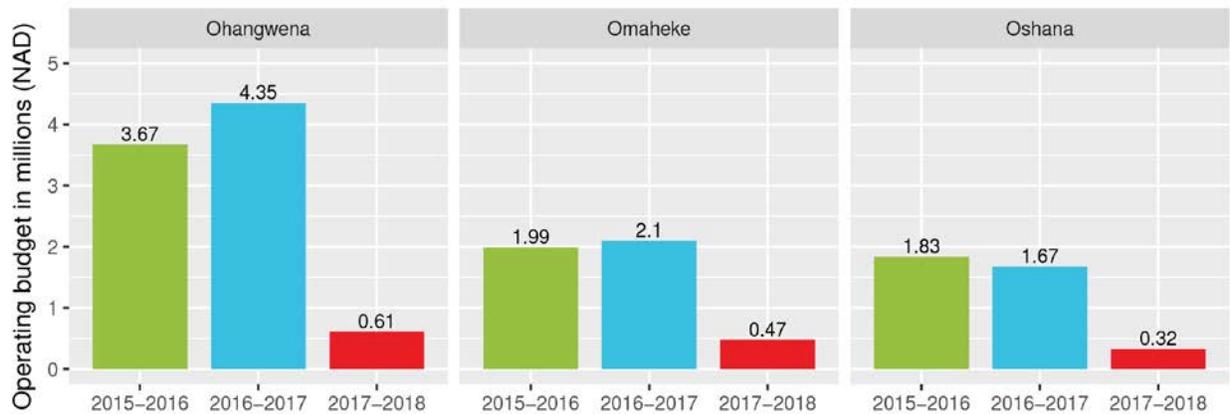
Discussion

As of October 2017, when the evaluation team collected budget information from the RSRCs, the RSRCs had completed two full fiscal years and were beginning on a third. The operating budgets remained relatively stable for the first two fiscal years but dropped precipitously in the third year.

Compared with operating budgets in FY 2015-2016, the RSRCs in the north had increased funding in second fiscal year (19% in Ohangwena and 6% in Oshana). In contrast, the Omaheke RSRC received less funding in year two (a decrease of 9%).

The following year the operating budgets for all three RSRC fell sharply, each by more than 75%. Specifically, in FY 2017-2018, Ohangwena was expected to operate with only 14% of the funds received in the previous year, Oshana with 19%, and Omaheke with 23%.

Figure 25: Annual RSRC operating budgets



The consensus among staff and key informant respondents was that the RSRC budgets had been reduced in response to the country's fiscal crisis. Interview respondents spoke of the cuts as necessary and in-line with budget reductions across all government departments, and they expected that a return to previous levels of funding would not be possible until the country's fiscal situation improved.

Staff interviews revealed staff were well-informed of the impending budget and had begun preparing for the impact. The regions made their own decisions about what types of funds and which specific services would be cut from the budget. Across the RSRCs, staff anticipated the budget would affect venues' services in the following ways:

- restricting community outreach to locations near the RSRC
- delaying mobile library repairs and operations
- freezing all staff hiring
- reducing on-site support to schools throughout the region
- providing fewer professional development opportunities
- delaying the extension of RSRC operating hours
- freezing book purchasing
- ending color printing service for patrons
- halting maintenance services and repairs
- ending library security services
- coordinating with community libraries over the phone rather than in person

- not purchasing or renewing software licenses (e.g., antivirus, operating system, Microsoft Office)
- MCA-funded schools receiving less help repairing computer hardware
- switching to a slower internet package
- not buying replacement laptops

Unlike staff, patrons who participated in focus group discussions seemed unaware of the looming budget cuts at the RSRCs and did not explicitly anticipate changes in RSRC services.

Nearly all interview respondents spoke about the budget cuts from a place of acceptance, speaking of the need for resilience given the fiscal situation affecting all government departments in Namibia. Some key informants and staff respondents tried to remain positive about future operations despite the FY 2017-2018 cuts. As one key informant stated: “That’s why we are cutting, so that we sustain.”

Yet the individuals who handled the RSRCs budgets most closely appeared distressed while discussing how services would be dramatically reduced. A few staff described how funding had already been insufficient during the first two years of operation, and so the cuts in the third year would drastically change the nature of services offered.

So the budget is really a problem in terms of sustainability... It is just too small money. Even this [amount of funding we were budgeted in 2016-2017], what will you do... to maintain this big structure here? You see these windows here... you have to outsource cleaning services... and the toilets and these floors here they need polishing all the time... We have schools, they need computers, we have the schools, they need books. You have to run a car here, up and down every day, we have two cars, and we have a bus. So [last year’s funding was] nothing at all, now with [less than one-quarter of that amount], it was just a joke.... So you cannot depend on these declining budgets, we must have [other] options.

Actions

A few respondents spoke about their plan to apply for outside grants and funding. A couple others talked about the potential or need to mobilize community members who had adopted the RSRCs and their own, to help advocate for the RSRCs and the services they provide [ki 07, 08, 01]. One key informant said:

Given the economic situation right now, one cannot really tell what’s going to happen next and we’re just hoping that the economic situation will improve because we don’t want to see [the RSRCs] going down, we don’t want to see services being cut. That’s the least thing that we want to see and we are fighting really that. If we’re to give up some of the things that we’re doing to make sure that these centers are functioning then we’ll do that, but then we really need also the community members to be involved because you cannot fight some of the battles alone so you really need somebody like community members to say “no, we really need this here.”

The respondents did not outline plans to actively push government officials to restore funds. Yet the interviews were conducted just before the start of a new fiscal year (August 2017), and so plans may have been formed in the ensuing months.

5.5.1.2 Operating hours

Background

- During Component 1, the body of planning documents reviewed clearly and consistently set the expectation that the venues would offer extended hours of operation (evenings and/or weekends) to provide convenient access for different populations.
- In 2015, key informants explained that the goal of expanding hours had not been achieved due to staff shortages and national policy that limits the amount of overtime public employees can work.
- At the time, it was not clear whether the operating hours had resulted in any significant populations being systematically excluded from use of the RSRCs.

Discussion

As of August 2017, the three RSRCs operated during typical business hours (e.g. 9:00 to 17:00) Monday through Friday. None of the RSRCs remained open into the evenings or opened their doors on weekends.

From the perspective of RSRC users, patrons at all three regional libraries stated unequivocally that operating hours should be extended. In interviews, roughly half of panel participants stated that the library could better support their needs by extending operating hours to include evenings or weekends.

For many patrons, the libraries' opening hours were a main source of dissatisfaction: nearly one-third of survey respondents (31% of learners/students and 30% of business section patrons) ranked operating hours as one of their top three sources of dissatisfaction at the library. Although on the other hand, some survey respondents ranked the hours as being most satisfactory (21% learners/students and 14% of business section patrons).

In the focus group discussions, learners talked about having little time to use the library after school, especially for those who live further away from the libraries.

In the library, the opening time is very short and some people stay really far, so sometimes it feels like I did not achieve what I came to do.

The library should be open at least until six o'clock in the evening so that we have enough time to finish what we came for because sometimes we have to do other things after school and only have an hour to get to the library and do what you need to do.

Someone might come at two o'clock, let us say from Eehnana, and they will get here at four. So they won't have time for anything. The time is not enough.

A few staff respondents described how the RSRCs' operating hours limited the success of their programs. Aside from job-seekers and individuals outside of the labor force, these staff described how most adults cannot attend library training classes during typical work hours without forgoing time on the job and/or income. One staff member in the Business and Research section of the library cited this as a reason for low attendance at SME workshops.

[When] we had that presentation from the banks [for SMEs], we had [only] a few people coming in because they felt when they close their businesses, that is like time of them being away from making the money... Yes, after-hours, I think the turnout would be better than during the day because they don't want to leave their businesses and come for a workshop.

Within the IT Section, demand for basic computer remained strong, yet at one library a staff person regretted how many of the people who signed up for the class could not participate due to the times it was offered.

I typed [a list of people who want to take the basic computer class]... it's about 178 people, but most of those 178 are people who have 8:00 to 5:00 jobs. They want to get after-hours training, after 5:00... I just wish they could approve it so that we could have it after 5:00. It would be nice. Even three days a week won't harm, like Monday to Wednesday.

During focus group discussions, patrons also discussed how many people in the community have been excluded from using the RSRC due to its operating hours.

Right now, the library only caters for university students and job-seekers, because school learners are in school in the morning. People who are working only get time after 17h00, and [during the] weekend or at that time the library is closed.

Furthermore, because the evaluation data is drawn entirely from RSRC patrons and stakeholders, we expect the actual negative effect of the libraries' operating hours on library usage is much stronger than our data reflects.

Finally, unannounced changes in operating hours were also a source of frustration to patrons. A few respondents in the focus group discussions were displeased to find, after walking to the library, it was closed. The observations confirmed that one morning an RSRC was closed for over two hours due to an all-staff meeting, while over one dozen patrons stood in the courtyard waiting for the library to open, looking quite unhappy.

Despite widespread acknowledgment that the library could accomplish more if it were open outside of its normal hours, respondents explained how national laws, budget constraints, staffing shortages, and, perhaps to a lesser extent, staff willingness, had limited their ability to change the hours. The challenges discussed included:

- The libraries are understaffed and do not have the capacity to stay open additional hours.
- Some staff may be reluctant to work in shifts or over the weekend.
- Overtime must be paid to any employee who works on a Saturday, even if the total hours worked by that person is consistent with labor standards.
- The library cannot operate outside of the 8:00 to 17:00 window, Monday through Friday, without approval from the National Assembly. [Note: Consensus among stakeholder reviewers is that this interview perception of labor laws was incorrect.]

Respondents' accounts of these challenges varied and sometimes conflicted each other, revealing that individuals have different interpretations of the labor laws and the sensitivities around labor relations. The various interpretations of national labor laws may be driven, to some extent, by different interpretations across government and workers unions.

I think that the laws and policy, people at different levels have different understanding. Like in our government I think most of the people have never worked shift hours so when you tell them that you can open after hours, they want overtime and that's going to be costly. So there has been now discussion with the workers unions and all that but then they didn't take it lightly. They said if people have to work after hours you have to pay them for after hours, but all we were asking is shift hours actually. (Q: So is that conversation still in progress?) It's still in progress...Yes, we just hope that we get some people with understanding that we have to improve our services but people who are protecting employees seem to be more. But the process I think is still ongoing.

Actions

Despite these challenges, as of summer 2017, Ohangwena had plans to begin offering Saturday service in September 2017. Management at the Ohangwena and Oshana regional libraries expressed an interest in extending their hours into the evenings or on Saturdays, as well.

5.5.1.3 Visits

Background

- The Millennium Challenge Compact (2008, Annex 3, p 7) established two indicators to measure the achievement of the RSRC Activity. One of these was "Total number of annual visits to three new MCC-funded RSRCs." The baseline was set at 31,000 annual visits based on library usage data prior to the construction of the RSRCs. A five-year target was set at 100,000 annual visits, based on an annual increase of 20%.
- In Component 1, several key informants believed the success of the RSRCs should be measured by how many patrons use it, and that successful libraries would attract more people over time. Most of all, key informants wanted to be sure the RSRCs did not become white elephants as large physical structures that go unused.

Notes about the administrative data

Data about RSRC visits comes from administrative reports provided by each RSRC. Some caveats about the data follow.

- The three RSRCs capture visit data in different ways, such that their data may not be directly comparable. Ohangwena and Omaheke collect visitor data using sign-in sheets at the front entrance, such that each library visit corresponds with one library patron on a particular day. This approach risks undercounting the number of visitors, as individuals could conceivably enter the RSRC without signing in. Oshana captures the number of visitors using an automatic system at the entrance gates, such that each library visit corresponds with an individual entering a library, and not strictly the number of visitors. Typically libraries will apply a formula to adjust downward because the gates will overcount as a result of patrons going in and outside of the main building (e.g. to use the restrooms). However, a follow-up communication with NLAS revealed that the only adjustment Oshana makes is to account for the number of staff, so the overall reported count is considered to be inflated. While observation concurs that Oshana at times is a much busier library than the other locations, this would not account for the large gap between Oshana and the other locations.
- Library visit data have not been collected continuously since January 2015. The evaluation team could not obtain data for the second half of 2015 (June through December), and each RSRC had gaps in reporting for one or two months in 2016.
- Methods of collecting or reporting data at the RSRCs may have changed over the data collection period. For instance, it is possible that data practices improved over time, leading to more accurate figures at the latter end of a time series. The evaluation team spoke with RSRC managers throughout the evaluation period and did not learn about any changes to data collection or reporting practices after 2015.

Discussion

The RSRCs opened to the public in September and November of 2014. Administrative data show that from January to December 2016, in their second year of operation, there were 199,614 reported visits to the RSRCs. (The 2016 figure is likely inflated because of the Oshana overcount, even though Omaheke reported only 10 of 12 months' worth of data, and Ohangwena and Oshana reported 11 of 12 months). Compared to the target set in the Millennium Challenge Compact -- of 100,000 visitors by Year 5 -- the RSRCs had surpassed the target by two-fold in Year 2. In a sense, the RSRCs achieved double their target in half the time, again with the caveat that the Oshana overcount inflates the total figure.

Each of the three RSRCs averaged more than 2,500 visitors per month between January 2016 and July 2017. (This average only accounts for months in which data was available.) Visits to Oshana made up two-thirds of the total monthly visits.

Average number of monthly visitors
(January 2016 - July 2017)

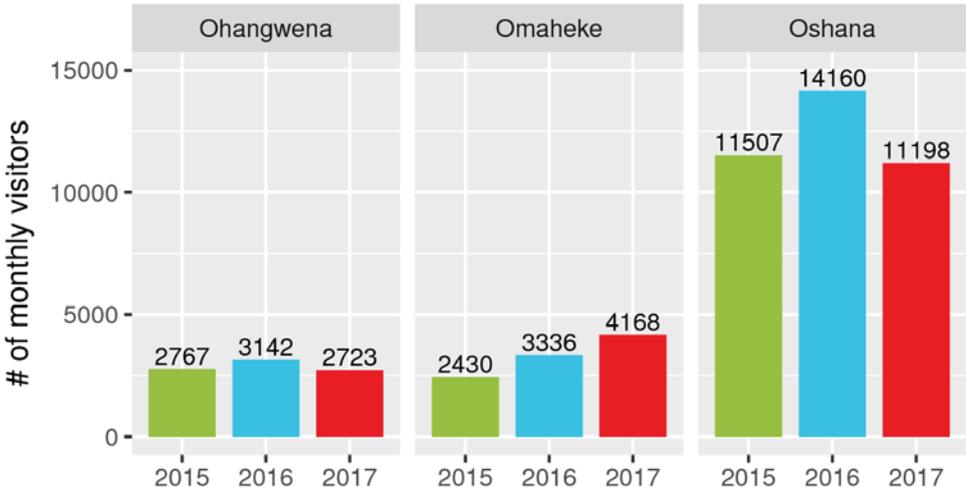
Ohangwena: 2,592 visitors
Omaheke: 3,305 visitors
Oshana: 12,548 visitors

To show changes in RSRC visits from 2015 to 2017, the evaluation team calculated the average number of monthly visitors over a three-month period for each RSRC. The period of February through April was chosen because those were the only months for which data existed for all three RSRCs in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Furthermore, those months do not coincide with the December to January lull in usage described by library staff.

Looking at the number of visits over time, concerns that usage of the RSRCs would plummet after the first few months of operation did not materialize. Instead we see that the number of visits rose at all three venues from 2015 to 2016: by 13% in Oshana, 23% in Ohangwena, and 37% in Omaheke. However, in the following year, the average number of monthly visits noticeably declined in Ohangwena (-13%) and Oshana (-21%), while once again increasing at Omaheke (25%).

At this time, it is unclear to the evaluation team why the numbers of visits changed at the three RSRCs. Year 2018 data will be instrumental in determining the extent to which the decline in usage is a trend or not.

Figure 26: Number of monthly visitors (administrative data, calculated as the average month using data from February to April of each year)



Action

No actions are known at this time.

5.5.2 Staffing

Top findings

- The proportion of staff positions filled has hovered around 75% for the regional libraries, except for Omaheke, where staffing levels have fallen to just 56% since March 2015.
- The position of mid-level librarian had the highest vacancy rate, with 71% of positions unfilled across the three libraries as of August 2017.
- The regional libraries seemed to have grown accustomed to operating with fewer staff than planned, but this may be more of a resignation that reflects people’s understanding of the dire fiscal situation of the country. During the stakeholder workshop one key informant suggested reconsidering the meaning of “fully staffed,” possibly bringing the number down from 34 staff positions to 20 positions, but this “solution” was not shared by others.
- Staff shortages were said to have curbed outreach activities across the three RSRCs, as outreach requires staff to work in two locations concurrently. Staff turnover was found to be disruptive to some in library management.
- The RSRCs had provided a number of professional development opportunities to staff through in-house and external trainings, as well as supporting several staff members pursuing degrees in higher education.
- Staff were most interested in professional development opportunities on topics specific to the sections they worked in. For instance, some staff in the children’s section were interested in learning more about childhood development and how to plan lessons for children of different ages.

5.5.2.1 Staffing levels

Background

- Long before the RSRCs were constructed, stakeholders recognized that staffing the regional libraries would be a critical issue given the shortage of trained library professionals in Namibia.
- A few months after the RSRCs opened, during the Component 1 interviews, key informants continued to voice their concerns about staffing levels. Two-thirds of respondents identified personnel issues as a key challenge the venues were likely to face.
- Two key informants from Component 1 also said that, as long as staffing levels remain below 100%, a successful RSRC would need to be staffed by individuals who are flexible in their roles and responsibilities and can jump in wherever needed.
- A few key informants from Component 1 recommended that the RSRCs address the country’s librarian shortage by investing in staff members: developing the skills of lower-level staff, promoting staff rather than hiring from the outside, and by offering continuing professional development opportunities to incentivize staff to keep growing and stay at the library.

Discussion

As of the summer of 2017, finding and retaining staff continued to be one of the top challenges at the regional libraries.

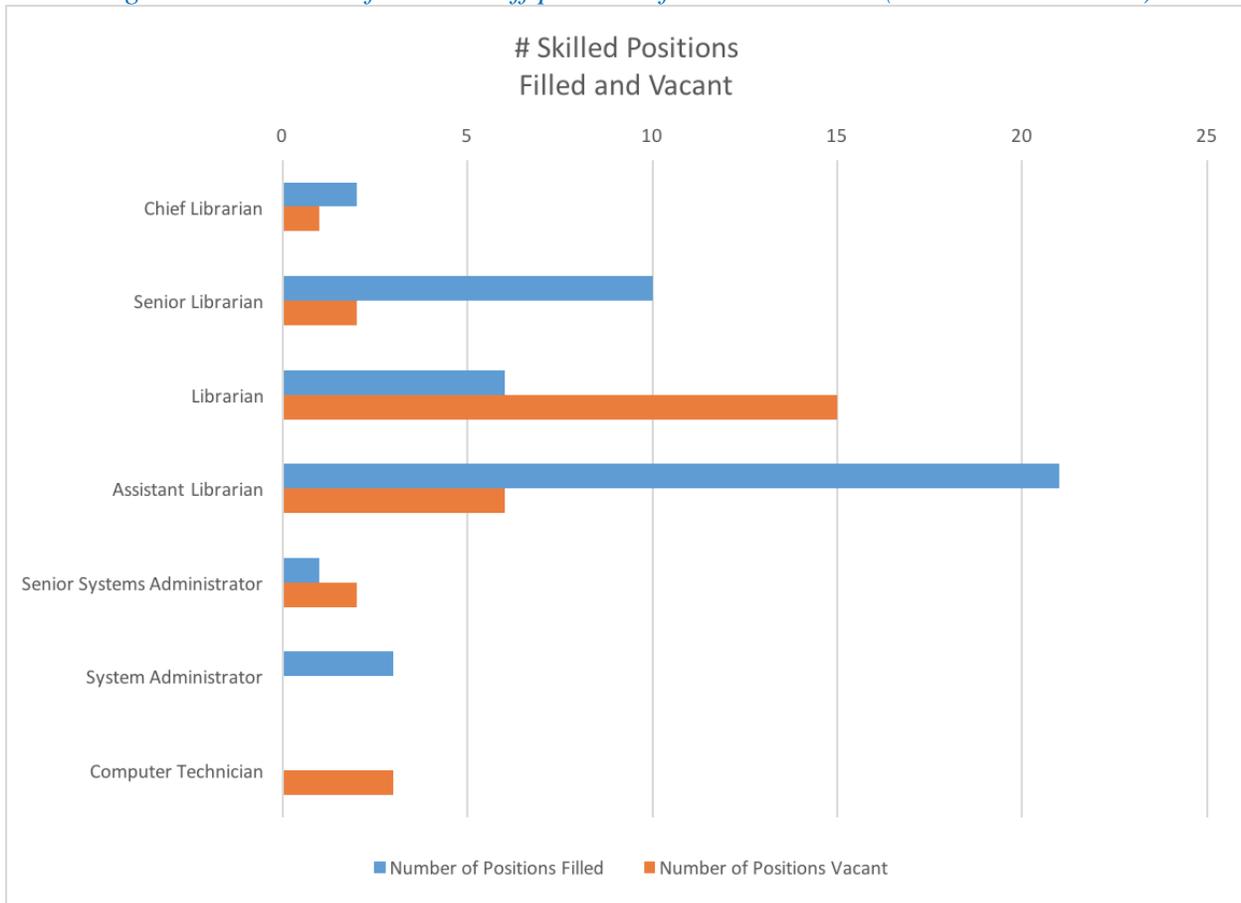
The approved staffing structure for each RSRCs calls for 34 to 36 positions at each library. As of August 2017, a quarter of positions were vacant in Ohangwena and Oshana, while almost half of the positions in Omaheke went unfilled. From 2015 to 2017, this figure had improved somewhat for Oshana and Ohangwena (7 points and 6 points), yet decreased by 25% for Omaheke.

Table 19: Percentage of staff positions filled

	March 2015	August 2017
Oshana	69%	76%
Ohangwena	72%	78%
Omaheke	74%	56%

The majority of vacancies were for positions requiring library skills or computer skills. Excluding cleaners, watchmen, drivers, and admin office staff, we found the percentage of skilled staff positions filled to be even lower: at Ohangwena, 67% of skilled positions were filled; at Oshana, 71%, and at Omaheke, 42%. Across the three regional libraries, the vacancies included 15 mid-level librarian positions (of 21 approved) and 5 IT staff positions (of 9 approved).

Figure 27: Number of skilled staff positions filled and vacant (administrative data)



The staffing situation for skilled positions appeared to be the most challenging in Omaheke. In addition to having key leadership positions unfilled (i.e., chief librarian and two senior librarians), vacancies were noted for 2 of 3 IT staff positions, 4 of 7 mid-level librarian positions, and 5 of 9 library assistant positions as of August 2017.

The root challenge of RSRC staffing remains the national shortage of qualified library professionals and the downstream effects: competition for the qualified professionals leading to difficulties with recruitment (i.e., hiring) and retention (i.e., preventing turnover), which together contribute to understaffing at the RSRCs.

Turnover

Staff respondents attributed turnover to staff leaving for other opportunities, and not in response to working conditions at the regional libraries. From the perspective of a few staff and key informant interview participants, salaries at the regional libraries were simply not competitive with private sector or UNAM libraries. Addressing the shortage of mid-scale library staff, one respondent described the problem specifically in terms of the RSRC pay scale: senior librarians were adequately compensated for their skillset, yet mid-level librarians, whom had very similar skills, were paid significantly less, and provided little room to advance to senior-level positions.

Staff and key informants were also said to have left their positions for personal reasons, such as to advance their education and to move to more desirable locales (i.e., young professionals who preferred working in more urban environments). For instance, one respondent noted how four staff at the Ohangwena RSRC had left for jobs at the Oshana RSRC in Oshakati. Competition for staff across the three locations was common.

Funding

In 2017, a very significant challenge to staffing the libraries emerged: a hiring freeze imposed in response to the government-wide budget cuts. According to one key informant: *“Hiring has been frozen unless a post is critical... we must have permission from the Permanent Secretary, even if the post is budgeted for.”* The hiring freeze was said to have indefinitely delayed hiring particularly important roles: chief librarian at Omaheke and senior system administrators (head of IT) at Omaheke and Oshana.

Patrons, staff, and key informants had different views of the staffing shortages. Patrons did not speak about their experience at the library in regard to staffing levels. However, during focus group discussions, several patrons mentioned moments when staff were not available to help them or did not have the requisite skills to be helpful. If more librarians worked at the regional libraries, it is possible, but not certain, that such situations could have been prevented. For instance:

Sometimes when we go [to the library] we don't know where to go and there is no immediate attention. Sometimes they are very, very slow... If you have to wait for the right person to come, after some hours you will get the help, but that is very discouraging. You wouldn't want to go again.”

Among staff at Ohangwena and Oshana, there was a sense that staff were growing accustomed to having only 75% of positions, as had been the case for over two years. The library service most affected by staff shortages, as mentioned by a few participants, was outreach. From one participant:

Right now we are understaffed. There are a lot of positions that are not filled. We are working with minimal staff and now we're used to it but it really used to be a problem, and especially if you're having this outreach thing, people going out. It's tight but at least we are surviving.

Compared to staff shortages, turnover appeared to be the more pressing issue among staff respondents because staff departures proved to be quite disruptive. From the perspective of one senior librarian, new hires take time to develop new skills, and in the meantime a library section cannot move forward with its plans to improve upon its services:

Since the inception of this library, [in this] section we had close to four people that have gone, so we [recruited more and] after a year or so they're gone, we recruit again, they're gone.... It affects me in that each year you come up with a plan, introduce it to staff and, just in the middle, staff are gone.

At least one key informant recognized this, discussing that outreach and relationship-building with schools, universities, and community organizations could not happen to the extent they had hoped for as long as the regional libraries remained understaffed.

Otherwise, staff turnover did not appear to be the pressing issue for key informants that it was for staff respondents. For instance:

The staff turnover at that library for me personally has been a little bit not critically high.... People are moving in and out and that is not unusual. People want to go for chances and green pastures and so on.

Actions

Staff and key informants did not expect the shortage of library professionals in the country to change any time soon. Instead, the RSRCs employed a few strategies to offer continuous service despite staffing challenges.

- *Relaxed requirements for library assistants.* allowing the RSRCs to hire people with various degrees and then train them on the job. (KI-05)
- *Role flexibility.* Staff worked across sections of the RSRC to help fill in staffing gaps as needed. This was noted by at least one staff person at each library. For example, when speaking about being short-staffed in the business section, one staff person said: “We can get another staff from another section to assist us with what we’re doing. We always find solutions to it.”
- *Volunteer recruitment.* Three interview participants mentioned the potential to work with volunteers. For a staff person and a key informant, the RSRCs were places where library science students could develop their technical skills and gain practical experience working in a library. Such seems to be the case in Oshana, where 20 or so UNAM students have interned on cataloguing and classification projects. (SI-13, KI-02). Further, one key informant spoke of the potential for volunteers to share their existing expertise:

If we can fill all our portfolios on our establishment. If we can have volunteers that can come and volunteer and say, ‘I have two hours per day I want to come and help you in my area of specialization that I can improve the library services.’

- *Reassessed staffing needs.* One key informant had participated in conversations where colleagues were reconsidering the meaning of “fully staffed.” Although 34 positions had been approved, it seemed possible to some that going forward, the library could be considered fully staffed with only 20 positions filled, or 40% less than had been initially planned for. [Note: stakeholders cautioned that reducing staff would make it much harder for the RSRCs to fulfill their objectives, as staff were already working under pressure.]

5.5.2.2 Staff skills and attitudes

Background

- The Implementing Partner Agreement that outlined the terms for the RSRC sub-activity, established that the Ministry of Education would provide training to some library staff, allowing them to develop expertise “*in administering quality programs and resource acquisition*” and “*in income generation for rural communities.*”
- In regard to training conducted before the RSRCs opened to the public, the Component 1 key informant interviews revealed that a lot of progress had been made with training staff in Oshana and Ohangwena, yet less so in Omaheke, as few staff members had been hired at that time, and so they were not available to attend IREX’s trainings on community information needs assessment, customer service training, or the core modules.
- After the Compact ended, plans were in place to conduct more staff trainings, including professional development. The Information Training and Outreach Center for Africa (ITOCA) was planned to lead a “Core competencies” training, and the Mortensen Center was planned to provide additional leadership trainings.
- In addition to staff skills, staff attitudes were seen as critical to the success of the RSRCs. Two-thirds of respondents said the RSRCs must have engaged staff to succeed. Nearly half of respondents spoke of the importance of staff qualities and capabilities, from being happy about their work and demonstrating a commitment to service, to being trained and experts at what they do.

Discussion

The status of staff skills and attitudes is a mostly subjective matter, and respondents expressed a variety of views about the extent to which staff were currently meeting the needs of library patrons.

Skills

According to the patron survey, most patrons were aware that librarians could provide help, advice, or consultation, and of those who were aware, the vast majority had indeed asked for help at some point. Among learners and students, 86% were aware they could ask a librarian for help, advice, or consultation, and of those, 94% had previously done so. Business section patrons responded similarly, with 84% aware of the help librarians could provide, and 97% of those had indeed sought out assistance at least once.

During focus group discussions, patrons raised very few questions about staff qualifications. The main concern about staff skills that emerged was about computer skills: a few patrons were not able to obtain the computer help they wanted, leading to the question to what extent the staff’s lack of help was based on skill-level or attitude. For example:

Some staff members also don’t know how to assist the users basically because they don’t know how to use the computer themselves and we are left unattended.

The staffs have no interest in helping first timers, so it is expected of an individual to know how to use a computer.

[Note: Stakeholders responded that library staff are thought to possess basic computer skills. Patrons have mistaken a cleaner for a librarian or library assistant, which has been known to happen on occasion.]

Many staff and key informants considered staff skills to be adequate. Very few respondents questioned the qualifications of senior librarians, who came to the library with library science degrees. As for library assistants, few met the qualifications listed in the job description, yet most staff believed that those with university degrees were easy to train on the job and could quickly pick up the needed skills despite their lack of experience with public libraries, as long as the hires were genuinely interested in their work. Not all library assistants had earned a university degree, however, and some staff questioned if that was appropriate.

Yes, if it's a hands-on thing that you are doing, you show them, 'Do this, try it,' then he tries.... If you keep on doing it especially on a daily basis, you end up getting it. So they're not really giving a problem. They are catching up.

Several key informants, however, spoke about a strong need for the RSRCs to employ more qualified personnel, not only to satisfy the needs of library patrons, but also to advance the RSRC's mission to support local communities and influence the library profession in Namibia.

What is needed is the training – well-qualified personnel that will be able to drive the agenda of library in information services to the full.

It needs qualified staff who really see library services differently. It's not just like work where you wake up and go work. It's somebody who's really interested in working in the community, interested in coming up with new services as the needs of the community change, so somebody who can really go an extra mile to provide what is not really available at their disposal.

Skills that were said to be lacking by at least one staff respondent included the following: IT skills, library promotion skills, customer service skills, information analysis skills, planning and executive skills, and also classic library technical service skills, including cataloging, classification, and indexing. Additionally, one staff member emphasized the need to have more staff who are multilingual, and a few wanted to see staff improve at their ability to design innovative programs.

Professional development

Despite budgetary and staffing constraints, the RSRCs continued to provide professional development opportunities to staff in a few different ways.

External training

Across the RSRCs, some staff had attended trainings with the goal of developing their own skills while bringing information back to share with the rest of staff. In these cases, just two or three staff participated in the trainings, such as those provided by the Namibian Institute of Public Management, the U.S. Embassy, UNICEF, and the Mortensen Center.

In-house trainings

Some of the professional development activities in the library were staff-led and in response to specific gaps in staff knowledge: for example, staff who offered other staff training on Excel, and a capacity-building workshop where staff presenting an aspect of librarianship to other staff. Some libraries had also recently received or looked forward to customer care training. These types of training opportunities were less impacted by budget cuts and could be offered to a larger number of staff.

Advanced education

The RSRCs were supporting several staff members to obtain university degrees in librarianship. The support came in various forms: one librarian was studying in a different country and would work at the RSRC over the holidays, but most others appeared to be taking distance courses, presumably with some amount of financial support from NLAS.

Some of them got bursaries for the first year. The second year they are paying for themselves from their salaries, but they are managing now and more are encouraged.

Desired training

Staff were asked what type of professional development opportunities they would like to pursue given the opportunities. Most often, the items staff respondents would like to receive training on in the future were specific to the sections they worked in: in the children's section, some staff would like to learn more about childhood development and how to plan lessons; a staff member from the user services and outreach section wanted staff to have the program design skills to come up with activities for the type of users they serve; and in the business section, more than one senior librarian mentioned how they would like to see staff obtain more knowledge with business plans, marketing, and other services. In short, specializing would help patrons in those sections, while also setting the library up to attract more visitors as their expertise in needed areas grew.

Attitudes

Compared to staff skills, the more prominent issue discussed was around the attitudes of staff. All three groups -- key informants, library patrons, and staff -- talked about the prime importance of engaged, service-oriented, friendly staff members. [Note: this discussion on staff attitudes provides more quotes than other sections to directly convey the feelings of respondents.]

Key informants and staff emphasized one trait most of all: dedication to their role. Succinctly said, when asked about the issue of RSRC sustainability, one key informant said:

When you have the right staff, there is no doubt. The right staff with the right attitude will make it.

Staff who managed the RSRCs tended to feel that while individuals could be trained on the job with library skills, attitudes could not be trained, and it was critical that RSRC staff have a service-orientation to find fulfillment in their work and provide better service:

I believe that the ethics that you should have as a librarian are different from someone who is from another profession. My job is to see people looking and finding what they want. I get joy, but I'm not so sure if it means anything to someone who does not have that passion. Many times I see people... I stop what I'm doing... I go there and say, 'What are you looking for? How can I help you?'...and when I go through EBSCOhost with them and they get what they want, oh to tell the truth, I go back home happy.

Patrons had much more to say about staff attitudes than about staff skills, and their responses were mixed -- both positive and negative. Learners and students seemed to be much less satisfied than business section patrons.

When survey respondents were asked to rate the three services they were most and least satisfied with at the RSRCs, the helpfulness of staff came up in both categories: 19% of learners/students and 26% of business section patrons reported being most satisfied with the helpfulness of staff compared to other library services, but 14% of both groups reported staff assistance was one of the three least satisfying services provided at the RSRC.

Perceptions of staff friendliness fared worse. Among learners and students, more ranked staff friendliness as an area they were most dissatisfied (18%) with rather than most satisfied with (11%). For business section patrons, perceptions of friendliness were more favorable than not (16% satisfied, 10% dissatisfied).

Patrons' positive views about staff attitudes often focused on staff friendliness and a willingness to help. These positive views extended to all three RSRCs during the panel interviews and focus groups.

The library workers are very commendable; they know how to help people. They all are friendly. I have not come across anyone who was harsh towards me until now.

Very satisfied, friendly and very helpful staff; they always help you when asking for their help.

Employees work well, even if you are struggling with finding a book, there is someone who will come direct you to the books that we want.

Specifically, patrons mentioned how staff assist them on computer use, printing, and making copies:

Another thing I want to add is that when I used to go to internet cafes, the people that work there are always too busy and they will never teach you how to use a computer, they just assume that you know how to operate it. Unlike here at the library where they actually work you through to see if you know how to use the computer.

When you need help, for example when we need to go print or search something from the internet they are always open to help, or you have to print something and you don't know how to do it they are willing to help.

The staff also help me to download the application that I can use to study Mathematics. It really help[ed] me.

Also, some focus group participants mentioned how staffs are strongly committed to their work:

Very satisfied, because they are committed to their work and everything in the library is well organized.

At the study room there is someone who is responsible to keep order, so one study in peace and when I have to write a test I pass very well. Those who make noise are reprimanded, so we are having a quiet place. It is really important for me to do well in school.

These positive views were not shared by all patrons, however. Some library patrons at Omaheke and Oshana felt the staff made them feel uncomfortable and, in some instances, were dismissive or hostile toward patrons:

The staff members at the entrance are also impolite and because of that, there was a time I was afraid to ask whether I should use my old library card or not.

I remember one day I witness an incident of an argument, where the librarian argued with a client. They had to call someone, which I don't know if it was the supervisor. The librarian just said, 'I will not help these client' the supervisor had to assist the client)

Employees must know how to treat the people visiting the library, they shouldn't look angry all the time.

The staff at the entrance doesn't know how to approach people. They are always talking with patrons in a bad way. Staff at the entrance always shout at patrons and rudely respond to their questions.

The staff does not warn people using the computer that their time is almost up, or that it is time to knock off. They will just switch the computer off, even if you did not save your

work. In addition, if you ask them for an additional five minutes on the computer, then they respond rudely or not respond at all. When a certain library user wanted to enter the building, the guard ended up scolding her because she was unaware of the fact that we aren't allowed to enter with our belonging, so the lady just left the building instead.

I didn't know how to type a cv and needed assistance however the time to use the computer is little and when you ask the staff to add some minutes, they will only answer you in a bad manner instead of helping you.

There were also reports of staff being unwilling to help patrons:

I am really, really not satisfied with the staff here because when I came to make copies the staff members were arguing about who should help me while I was standing there the whole time. In the first 2 years when I started coming here, it happened over and over when I was looking for help, so I decided that I won't ask for help again. The staff members are on Facebook most of the time and do not give the required attention to the library users.

Very dissatisfied. The staff does not like to help those using the library. If you ask them to help you, they will answer you in a bad way or in a way that make you feel embarrassed of yourself or answer you very loudly for everyone to hear that you can't do certain things. One day I asked them to help me print out my document, but one staff member started talking loudly for everyone to hear that I don't know how to print and I was so embarrassed because everyone was just looking at me.

When you approach them (staffs) in Oshiwambo knowing that maybe is because you are unable to express yourself very well in English, they will keep speaking in English while they are able to communicate in the home language.

Actions

Management at the RSRCs expressed a strong desire to continue supporting skill development of staff through on the job training and professional development opportunities, but less was said about plans to improve the attitudes and service orientation of staff. Customer care training had been (or was in the process of being) provided at the three RSRCs, but it was unclear the extent to which the training had succeeded in improving library service for patrons.

Given the anticipated budget cuts for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, some staff expected that professional development opportunities would be suspended: without funding for sustenance and travel, staff would not be able to attend external trainings, and without funds for food and other refreshments during in-house training, one senior staff person questioned if any staff would show up for in-house training. Regardless, at least one staff member was unconcerned with the budget cuts, expressing the view that as long as staff can work together to continue finding potential areas of growth and teaching each other, a lot of learning opportunities would still be possible.

5.5.3 Facilities

Top findings

- Most visitors are very satisfied with the condition of the library, noting that it is kept clean and appears well maintained.
- For patrons, noise level and lack of refreshments were the most frequently mentioned areas of dissatisfaction about the space.
- RSRC staff generally appreciated the condition of the facilities and believed the Ministry of Works was maintaining them sufficiently. However, several issues still needed to be addressed, including: HVAC systems, power outages and surges, unused generators, untapped solar power, broken toilets, water pressure and pipes, and a leaking roof.

5.5.3.1 Functionality of space

Background

- The Component 1 report found that the majority of key informants were satisfied with the RSRC buildings and infrastructure. Several stressed that the facilities were impressive and quite beautiful. Most also thought the quality of the buildings were suitable.
- Key informants who spent the most time inside the RSRC buildings expressed concerns about design choices that resulted in excess noise and dust. Some also questioned the adequacy of office desks and bookshelves that could not be moved, and no one was happy with the size of the lockers patrons used to hold their bags while they went inside the library. Additionally, the Oshana RSRC was said to not have a defined business space conducive to business section patrons and that the children's section was too small. A couple also spoke about how the RSRC offices got too much sun.

Discussion

Staff attitudes about the functionality of the space were largely the same as those expressed by key informants during Component 1, as described above.

Most patron respondents expressed positive views of the library space, including the structure, furnishings, and the feelings evoked when spending time in the library.

Overall, patrons appear to be very satisfied with the design of the regional libraries. The libraries made a strong first impression, as respondents often spoke about how the buildings' facade attracted them to the library.

The architecture of the building was something new. It was different. It really made us curious to see what kind of a library this was.

Yes, the architecture; the solar panels really impressed me. I wanted to see what was inside.

Inside the library, patrons generally felt the library was a welcoming environment, were satisfied with the availability of seats, were able to relax. The table below shows patrons' responses when

asked to identify only three elements of the library they are most satisfied and most dissatisfied with.

*Table 20: RSRC aspects patrons are most satisfied and dissatisfied with
RSRC space (patron survey)*

h	Most satisfied (in top 3)		Most dissatisfied (in top 3)	
	Learners and students	Business section patrons	Learners and students	Business section patrons
Availability of seats	19%	24%	4%	6%
Ability to relax	12%	12%	8%	5%
Welcoming environment	11%	11%	2%	3%

Staff tended to agree that the facilities provided a conducive environment for patrons (aside from the concerns that surfaced during Component 1):

The top accomplishment I can say for user services is the facility. The first one is the facility – the atmosphere where people can come, sit and read... The library every time is full, people are coming in. I think the environment is good that they're coming to.

However, for some patrons the comfort and functionality of the library space was adversely affected by the noise level, safety concerns, and the absence of drinking water and food for purchase.

Noise level

The level of noise at the RSRCs varied by location and time of day. Many patrons appreciated having a quiet environment at the library, while others disliked how loud the venues could become.

During focus group sessions, many patrons—particularly learners—expressed how they valued having a quiet space to study and concentrate.

When it comes to subjects like Biology and Mathematics, one really needs to sit down and concentrate -- and I can never study at home as there are always kids playing everywhere and bars nearby -- so I come to the library in order for me to pay more attention and concentrate... this honestly seems to be working well.

It really brought a lot of change as we never had a library before and we could never study nicely at home because there are too many distractions... Here at the library it's really nice and quiet and this makes studying easier.

I now I have a place to study because even when I want to study at home, I need to be doing house chores which really affects my studying.

At home I can always study but there is a lot of noise, since I am studying for my learner driver test and there is a bar next to our house and there is always a lot of noise but at the library it is very quiet and I feel that I achieved what I came for at the library.

Despite the general positive comments about having quiet space, approximately one-third of survey respondents ranked noise as one of the three aspects of the library they were most dissatisfied with (31% students and 36% business section patrons). Most often, focus group participants attributed the noise level to children or young learners. (This was less so the case for Ohangwena, where they shut the large sliding door at the entrance of the children's section.)

I am not satisfied with the noise level; when the primary school children arrive, it is very noisy inside the library, even the study area is not quiet when the kids are there.

Kids should not be allowed upstairs so that the study area is very quiet throughout the day for the older learners to concentrate when they study.

Safety concerns

Most patrons perceived the RSRCs as a safe place to visit. Indeed, over one-fifth of survey respondents said safety was one of the three aspects of the library they were most satisfied with (24% of learners/students, 21% of business section patrons). The focus group discussions also showed that many patrons perceive the RSRCs as a safe place:

The area where the library, is very safe although there is no yard but danger does not come here.

Yet not everyone felt safe at the RSRCs: 5% of learners/students and 3% of business section patrons ranked safety as one element of the library they were most dissatisfied with. Focus group participants who voiced concerns about the venues recommended the following changes to the grounds outside of the library:

- Clearing bushes around the RSRC for safety
- Making it safer to use a parking lot that is located far from an RSRC's entrance
- Building a fence around the library (several respondents)

For instance, one focus group participant said:

We sit outside the library after hours to be on social media on our phones and laptops, and it is very dangerous. It is easier for crooks to come and rob us without a fence around it.

Availability of refreshments

Absence of drinking water and food at the RSRCs is a pervasive source of discontent for library visitors. When asked to note the three aspects of the library they are most dissatisfied with, 34%

of learners and students identified the lack of availability of refreshments. This sentiment was shared by business section patrons (32% of respondents most dissatisfied).

Focus group participants mentioned that drinking water was not readily available at the RSRCs in Omaheke and Ohangwena, which they found to be very problematic:

The library should have a water container or something similar for us to refresh ourselves after long hours of studying and sometimes the last time one drinks is at home hours ago so and we don't have money to be buying drinks such as cool drinks at mini markets and even when we do have money the library has a tuck shop but it's never open. So, we are always forced to go drink water in the toilet which is not good. The library should really improve on this error as we can't be drinking toilet water.

Although situations vary across venues, some focus group respondents also shared their concerns with access to places where they can buy food. In Ohangwena, they mentioned that there is no cafeteria in the RSRC or place to find food nearby. In Omaheke, a cafeteria/kiosk was available, but they found the items too expensive.

Access

Survey respondents (who were using the RSRCs when invited to participate) appeared very satisfied with the location of the RSRCs. Among business section patrons, half of respondents (50%) ranked location as one of the three library services they were most satisfied with (3% were the most dissatisfied). Satisfaction was also high among learners and students: 43% were most satisfied with the location (3% were most dissatisfied).

However, views on the accessibility of the building, such as for people with disabilities, was mixed. For learners/students, 8% rated disabled access as one of the three RSRC services for which they were the most satisfied (5%) or most dissatisfied (3%). For business section patrons, 12% rated disability access as a top concern, although more were more satisfied with RSRC accessibility (9%) than most dissatisfied (4%). During focus group discussions, one patron described how accessibility was a challenge at the Oshana RSRC for people with disabilities:

For disabled people, going upstairs, it is too slippery. It is good for those using wheelchairs, but not those who have another type of disability. Some disabled people can't use the upstairs section, because of this problem.

(Observation data concurred the ramp leading up to the second floor of the Oshana RSRC is slick. Staff explained that the floor was cleaned and polished nearly every day to combat the amount of dust that came in through the windows.)

Actions

The evaluation team did not learn of any actions being taken to mitigate patrons' concerns about noise, availability of refreshments, safety, or accessibility for persons with disabilities at the RSRCs. Given how patrons' perspectives on these issues differed across the venues, management at these venues have an opportunity to speak with one another to learn strategies to address these challenges.

5.5.3.2 Maintenance and repairs

Background

The Component 1 report found that the RSRC facilities had been fully completed -- designed, constructed, and furnished -- prior to opening to the public. Yet the report also recommended that the MOEAC closely monitor the status of RSRC infrastructure, and be prepared for frequent maintenance and repairs, despite the low-maintenance goals built into the RSRC design.

Component 1 key informants identified facilities maintenance as a primary area of concern for several reasons:

- Program partners had not produced a clear and sustainable plan to maintain the facilities after the Compact closed in September 2014.
- Due to construction delays and MCA-N dissolving at the end of the Compact, it was unclear to what extent contractors would continue supporting the RSRCs after September 2014, despite the fact that some were only six months into 12-month and 18-month contracts.
- RSRC staffing did not include a facilities maintenance position.
- Some respondents doubted that regular RSRC staff would be prepared to troubleshoot facility maintenance issues.
- The Ministry of Works would be technically responsible for the maintenance and renovation of the RSRCs, yet key informants worried that the Ministry would be, in practice, too overburdened servicing other government projects to respond reliably to the regional libraries, which could be seen as of lower priority.
- Key informants were unclear on who would cover the costs of future repairs.

Within a few months of opening, key informants discovered several problems with facilities including leaking during the rainy season, book shelves with termites, the too-small size of lockers for patrons, and windows that wouldn't close properly.

Discussion

The status of RSRC maintenance and repair was mixed. On the positive side, staff and key informants agreed that the Ministry of Works had been very responsive to maintenance requests, which may help allay the concerns of Component 1 key informants. In Omaheke, the Ministry of Works seems to be particularly effective where, when they cannot make a repair themselves, they handle the selection of a contractor who can:

When something breaks, we immediately just call the Ministry of Works, so then they come and assess the situation... They will never say, 'it's your problem to solve,' no. They will tell you what the problem is. If they can fix it, they fix it. If they can't fix it they will always tell you... this is how much it's going to cost.

The Ministry of Works could not repair every issue at the RSRCs, however. New issues had emerged. Most notably:

- **The HVAC system.** The air conditioner system at all three locations had required repairs at some point over the prior two years. Although Omaheke and Oshana had their systems fixed, Ohangwena continued to operate without any air conditioning due to a variety of complications involving the advanced design of the system, which was unfamiliar to the Ministry of Works, and problems dealing with the contractors who had designed and installed the system.
- During the focus groups, a working air conditioner was mentioned as a real benefit to patrons.

I'm really happy with the venue, as it is nice and big and the temperatures inside is nice and cool. It's so nice in the library with aircon to the point where I don't mind staying at the library the whole day. It's nice and cool inside.

- **A leaking roof.** Although roofs of the RSRCs in Oshana and Ohangwena had been sufficiently repaired, leaking remained a significant issue at Omaheke:

The Ministry of Works has no plan to fix it because the extra additional cost has to come from the library... The quotation which they provided us... it's going to cost half a million to fix it... and we don't have such kind of money for now or even the next two years to come. From the onset, the way it was built, they are saying....

- **Power outages and surges.** Power outages were a problem, particularly at Ohangwena, where subsequent power surges damaged electrical equipment, including several computers. Also, during focus group discussions, patrons raised the issue that sometimes the electricity goes off at the RSRC in Ohangwena despite the venue having a generator.
- **The generators.** The power generators had no effect at Omaheke and Ohangwena: Omaheke never received a generator during project implementation and could not afford to buy one after; Ohangwena received a generator but it was not set up during the implementation phase and remains unused because the venue cannot afford to have it connected. In Oshana, staff had different opinions as to whether the generator was functioning or not.

- **Solar power.** According to one participant, the solar panels at the Omaheke RSRC seemed not to be working. The Oshana RSRC was the only venue that spoke about the solar panels running well – and well enough that they created a large surplus of energy the rest of the community used.
- **Toilets.** Patrons noted during focus group discussions that the toilets at Omaheke were not functioning properly (and the restrooms lacked hand soap). As one patron said:

I hardly make use of the toilets and I guess the reason for it being closed most of the times is that they don't clean it and most of the toilet pots in the ladies are broken.

With only a few toilets still working, a staff member at the Omaheke RSRC had found that fixing the issue would be quite costly:

The last time [the Ministry of Works] said we need to replace the sewage system and all that... so it's going to cost a lot of money and we don't know whose responsibility it should be. As it looks, it's our responsibility but we don't know if contractors have to be called back... It's just substandard work from the contractors and the people who built the library so now it's going to cost us a lot of money to maintain it. But we are trying.

- **Water pressure and pipes.** The Oshana and Ohangwena RSRCs reported water pressure problems. At Oshana, weak water pressure at certain times in the day meant toilets did not work properly, and the problem was attributed to growing water demands in the area surrounding the RSRC. At Ohangwena, bursting water pipes in the back courtyard had been an ongoing problem, and although always fixed by the Ministry of Works, the brick courtyard was left uprooted and uneven in several places, as observation data confirms. Also, a water pressure issue appeared to affect the operation of the HVAC system, although that may have related to the water pressure within the system itself.
- **Cleaning.** Apart from feeling the libraries could get too dusty, patrons and staff had only good things to say about the cleanliness of the RSRCs, particularly at Ohangwena. To illustrate:

The library is always kept clean and in order, which make it so easy for us to search books.

Like the one, the one who cleans, you won't find the place dirty. She cleans all the time, even if there are people, but usually that time of the morning when there are no so many people. [Note: observation data concurs that the cleaning staff in Ohangwena appeared active all day.]

One key informant was concerned that the RSRCs may not be able to maintain the same level of cleanliness during the fiscal crisis:

With the budget cut now the people want to clean but then sometimes you find that maybe there is no money for us to be buying like the cleaning materials.

Key informants were familiar with the facilities maintenance concerns brought up by staff, yet felt challenged to make changes due to budget constraints. The concerns were expressed in several areas, including not enough money to buy cleaning materials, fix lockers, install and operate the generator, replace the security fence with a brick wall, or fix the ventilation system.

Right now we have a challenge of the fence, the wired one is okay, the steel one, but there was a small one also... where people are stealing bit by bit. Maybe if you have seen, they've started clearing there so that we replace again. Yes, those are the challenges. I just hope that if we had money we could have gone for the option of the brick wall, and maybe at the front we make it now see-through so that it still attracts people.

We have also the issue of ventilation, the ecosystem. It's also a bit complicated. There's only one company that is able to do that because now part of the building does not have the system working. But it is costly...Yes, it is a cost and also the company wants to be paid upfront and that is not the government system. The government system they do their work and then we pay once the job is finished but knowing that they're the only people who are able to do that, then it is a problem. But we're working around it so that by the time the summer comes at least we have it sorted out.

Key informants mentioned they could reach out to building and maintenance personnel at the ministerial level, but the budget issue would remain.

We have building and maintenance people...they're the ones who have the technical knowhow on how to maybe help us, where we should go. But then at the end of the day still, are the funds there?

Actions

Interviews revealed key informants were pursuing financial options to support facility improvements, such as by making requests to the government and undertaking fundraising activities.

Just last week we were discussing about fundraising activities in order to try and raise funds through different activities, in order to start that fencing of the yard in order to create some sense of ownership and so on.

We even wrote to NLAS for some financial backup from the money that we are depositing there because they say it is for emergency. So I have already written for requests for some funds so that we repair where, here and there on the electricity.

5.5.4 Information and communication technologies

Top findings

- Among patrons, overall demand for and satisfaction with the RSRCs' computers are high, although many patrons were disappointed with the internet speed and time limits imposed on their computer usage.
- IT staff were able to keep most of the computers in good working order, although some computer equipment in Ohangwena had been irreparably damaged by power surges.
- Some copy machines and printers had fallen into disrepair or had become too expensive to operate given their limited budget for ink cartridges.
- Video-conferencing equipment was not being used at any of the three RSRCs, such that staff did not virtually connect with each other across venues.
- After-hours Wi-Fi access was seen as a valuable service for the community but was not offered at all RSRCs.
- The cost of high-quality internet access was considered to be unsustainable, especially in light of the expected budget cuts.
- There was no plan or budget in place for computer replacement at the RSRCs.

5.5.4.1 Demand for public computers

Background

- During the implementation phase, installation of computer hardware, software, peripherals, and internet connection had been completed in time for the grand openings of the RSRCs.
- Component 1 stakeholders did not set expectations around computer usage at the RSRCs.

Notes about data on computer usage

- This section focuses on the usage of and demand for public computers at the RSRCs. The statistics presented include computer usage throughout the RSRCs, including in the children's section, where computers are only used by children.
- As discussed later in this section, the RSRCs have different policies that limit the number of computer users at any given time, such that demand is not always the driving factor for computer usage. For instance, in the children's section, children's time on computers is limited in different ways across the three RSRCs to ensure the children engage in a range of activities, such as homework, quiet reading, games, and story time.
- The three RSRCs may have different procedures for signing-up to use a computer, such that their data may not be directly comparable.
- The evaluation did not engage patrons below the age of 15, so their experience is not represented in this report.

Discussion

Administrative data show that from January to December 2016, in the RSRCs' second year of operation, there were 60,046 reported uses of the public computers, with 76% of the reported uses from computers in the general areas of the RSRC. (This number for 2016 undercounts actual computer usage because, over the 12-month period, Omaheke reported data for nine months, Ohangwena for 10 months, and Oshana for 11 months.)

Together, the three RSRCs averaged 4,313 uses per month between January 2016 and July 2017. (This average only accounts for months in which data was available and does not include children's usage.) Computer usage at Oshana made up 70% of the total number of computer uses.

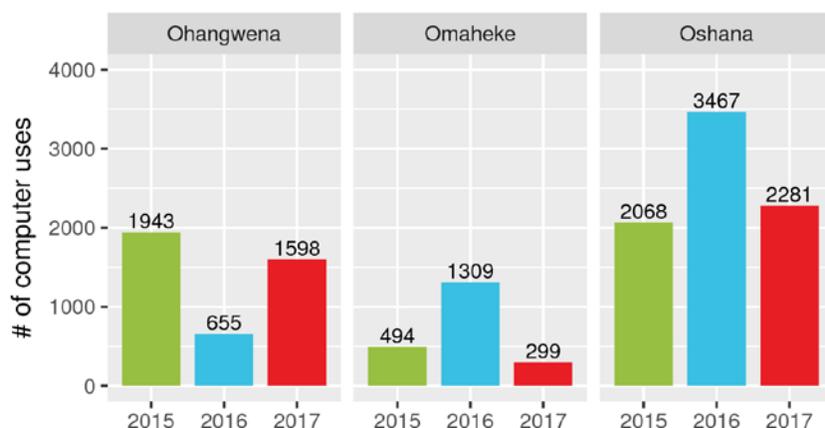
Average number of monthly computer uses (January
2016 - July 2017)

Ohangwena: 931 uses
Omaheke: 646 uses
Oshana: 3,818 uses

To show changes in monthly computer usage 2015 to 2017, the evaluation team calculated the average number of monthly visitors over a two-month period for each RSRC. The period of February through March was chosen because those were the months for which the most complete data existed for all three RSRCs in 2015, 2016, and 2017, and it overlapped with the time period used in other places of this report to calculate changes in use over time (i.e., number of visits, number of items borrowed).

Looking at the number of computer uses over time, we see a good deal of change from year to year. In Ohangwena, computer usage fell by 66% from 2015 to 2016 but then rose by 69% in 2016 to 2017. Computer usage at Omaheke had the opposite pattern, with computer uses increasing by 60% in 2015 to 2016, but then falling by 77% the following year. Meanwhile, the number of computer uses at Oshana increased by 68% in the first year and decreased by 34% in the second year.

Figure 28: Number of computer uses in a month (administrative data, calculated as the average month using data from February and March)



At this time, it is unclear to the evaluation team why computer usage changed so dramatically at the three RSRCs, particularly when the number of visitors to the RSRCs remained relatively stable during this time frame. Based on staff interviews, the evaluation team can conjecture multiple factors played a role: computers out of service, IT staff positions unfilled, challenges with internet connection, and changes to the way data was collected, as the dataset on computer usage across the RSRCs is highly variable. Library policies may play a role: for instance, if sessions are limited to 30 minutes versus 60 minutes in length, or if patrons need to sign in repeatedly for multiple consecutive sessions.

Demand for the computers appeared to be high: 100% of survey respondents reported being aware that computers were available for use at the RSRC, and 88% of business section patrons and 84% of learners/students indicated they had used a computer at some point in the past.

Satisfaction with the computers available was also quite high: nearly half of business section patrons (48%) indicated that the availability of computers at the library was one of the three aspects of the library they were most satisfied with. For learners and students, the figure was 39%. Second only to “convenience of location,” computer availability was the aspect of the library both groups were most satisfied with. Yet on the contrary, a still sizeable proportion of respondents were most dissatisfied with computer availability: 9% of business section patrons and 15% of learners/students.

Patrons perceived computer use as very important. Internet/Wi-Fi and study rooms were the services most commonly brought up by learner panel interviewees as most important (50% and 43%, respectively). Computers were seen as a valuable resource for studying, searching and applying for jobs, teaching, and also preparing children for future opportunities.

I now use this when marketing my business to potential clients or investors.

Whenever we [teachers] give [learners] projects, they also make use of the computers to complete the projects.

Since this library was opened small children come to library and use the computers in their area, preparing them for future opportunities because it is available here....

Patrons' dissatisfaction with computer availability was primarily due to time limits and an insufficient number of computers. In the panel interviews, 8% of learners and nearly 12% of business section patron respondents mentioned their dissatisfaction with time allocated for computer use and around 7% of learners/students and about 8% of business section patrons stated that there were not enough computers.

The RSRCs limit the amount of time a patron can use a computer before yielding their seat to another patron. During busy periods, staff stated that patrons get a maximum 60 minutes of time at a computer, with the exception of youth at Oshana, who only get 30 minutes per computer session during busy periods. A sign-in sheet/waitlist is managed by IT staff.

Across the three venues, users expressed dissatisfaction with the time limits on usage.

When I came wanting to download videos on YouTube and I wanted to get the best ones, my time runs out before I get what I want because of the insufficient time we get to use the computers and I feel that I don't achieve what I came to do.

Students wanted exceptions so that they would have more time to get their work done.

And if you were using the computer, and you have your things on computer and did not save it on a USB or memory stick, you will just receive a message that you have five minutes left; save your work. Sometimes the things [are] a lot, by the time you want to save, the minutes are finished, and you did not manage to save all your work.

Business section patrons also mentioned how limited time allocated for computer use restrict them from finishing their work.

They give us 30 minutes to be on a computer and then it's switched off and sometimes you do not finish what you are supposed to do. They should at least give us an hour per computer.

Some patrons made specific suggestions of differentiating time allocation for different purposes of computer use, or restricting computer use only to educational related activities.

The time allocation to use the computers should be increased to at most three hours per person or as follows, for instance entertainment use at least just 1 hour and for research findings two hours.

The library should block all other sites on the computer and install only educational programs so that students only do educational related stuff in the library and not spent time on entertainment activities.

From the perspective of staff, the time limits seem to work well. They have heard complaints from users, but generally feel that they can best serve the community by allowing a range of people to use the library computers instead of privileging some patrons over others. Exceptions are made, however. Staff reported that they relax the time limit for individuals with important, time-consuming tasks, like completing homework, and that the three to six computers in the business and research sections make exceptions for patrons, too.

Actions

- Interview respondents did not articulate plans to purchase more computers, especially given the fiscal crisis. However, a few mentioned that when speaking with stakeholders, they emphasize the need to replace existing computers and purchase additional ones, including laptops.
- No changes to the computer usage policies were expected.

5.5.4.2 Condition of computers, copiers, and other equipment

Background

- During the implementation phase, installation of computers, copiers, printers, and other equipment had been completed in time for the RSRCs' grand openings.
- When describing challenges anticipated at the RSRCs, Component 1 key informants often mentioned the costs required to maintain IT services, including maintaining and replacing computers and did not express expectations around computer usage at the RSRC.

Discussion

Most computers remained in good working condition. Staff at Oshana reported that all of the computers procured by MCA-N were functioning well. The library reported having nearly 100 computers, including 30 laptops. At Omaheke, all but two of the general computers were reportedly working well, but most of the children's computers were in storage. (Staff provided conflicting accounts as to why: either the computers ports were no longer working, or the ports had been fixed by IT staff but the computers were put in storage regardless). Staff at the Ohangwena RSRC reported that approximately 40 of their 50 or so computers were working, with the others too expensive to fix given the extent of damage to their components during power surges.

There was general consensus among staff and key informants that IT staff at the three RSRCs were doing a good job at actively maintaining the computers: *"most of the time you'll find that they are trying also to see what they can do."* IT staff members themselves discussed the importance of computer and internet access for patrons and appeared to view computer maintenance as an important responsibility. IT staff seemed to spend much of their time troubleshooting for the RSRC computers, as well the computers at nearby MCA-N funded schools, and, on occasion, laptops brought in to the library by patrons.

Even before the fiscal crisis, the budget at the RSRCs made it difficult for them to purchase software and renew licenses. For instance, at least one RSRC relied on free, open source anti-virus software. Another IT staff person mentioned he installed software on the library's public computers using a license he had purchased for himself. The firewall had also presented a problem at Ohangwena – staff were not aware they had a license that needed renewing, and after their license expired, internet access slowed to a crawl throughout the library, as is discussed more in the next section of this report.

Regarding computers, a few staff members and key informants mentioned how the libraries could better meet the needs of patrons with more computers:

However, you know ICT is becoming a need and we will never say we have enough of them... That's why normally we strive for stakeholders to provide and so on but it's not always enough Because we allocate time ...that if a person come in to any computer and they're using it, when their time is up they are locked out and then we give an opportunity to the next person.

Printing, photocopying, and scanning are popular services. In addition to the popularity of computers at the RSRCs, as described in the previous section of this report, photocopying, printing, and scanning also appeared to be well-used services. According to the patron survey, the vast majority of patrons were aware of these services (96% of business section patrons, 95% of learners/students), and of those who were aware of them, over-three quarters had used them (81% of business section patrons, 75% of learners/students). Faxing appeared to be a popular service as well: the majority of patrons were aware of the service (76% of business section patrons, 56% of learners/students). Of those aware of the service, more than one in three business section patrons had used the faxing machine (40%) and one in four students (26%).

Yet maintaining copiers and printers was becoming increasingly difficult. In contrast to computers, which can be maintained in-house to some extent, malfunctioning copy machines and printers presented a larger hurdle. At Ohangwena, eight of nine copiers and printers were not working. At Oshana, two or three copiers were not working. Staff explained that MCA-N had not set up a service agreement with the companies that should perform routine maintenance on the equipment, and so when the machines broke, if IT staff could not troubleshoot the problem, the company that could ostensibly fix the machines could not always be depended on to provide support, either due to the prices quoted or the contractor having other priorities.

For example the printers, they are really the ones that are really giving us problems... Because there has been a problem with the people who are supposed to support us. Their cooperation has not been very forthcoming... But even countrywide that support is very much limited and the person who's supposed to give out that report—I mean the company (who made the printers), is also not really helpful in that regard.

Printers in Ohangwena and Omaheke had also fallen into disrepair and had not been fixed due to lack of funds to work with the manufacturers (e.g., HP).

Additionally, staff at all three RSRCs indicated that printing cartridges were expensive, and probably too expensive to replace in the next fiscal year. One staff person described how the libraries should charge more for copies but were unable to due to a national law that was over two decades old. Another staff person said that charging more would not help the RSRCs because all of the money earned goes to a fund managed by NLAS rather than staying at the RSRCs to fund operations. At Omaheke, black and white copies were available for \$.50 (NAD) per page and computer print outs for \$1. Printing in color cost \$1.50 per page.

Video-conferencing equipment not used. Despite installing video-conferencing equipment at all three RSRCs, only Ohangwena was able to get the system working and, despite paying a monthly fee for the service, they never used it because they felt they had no one to communicate with. The intention was for the three RSRCs to hold videoconferences together to do capacity-building activities. At Oshana and Omaheke, there appeared to be some ambiguity as to what the problem was exactly: it the system had never worked, or if it was perhaps functional but staff lacked the technical assistance to get it working. Regardless, as a staff person at Omaheke opined, they hoped to use the video-conferencing equipment someday, but for now it was not a priority, particularly given that it would be quite expensive to work with a contractor to have it tested and fixed.

Actions

- IT staff would continue fixing what they could at the three RSRCs.
- At Ohangwena, staff found that it would be more cost-effective to replace than fix the broken computers. Management intended to buy new computers when funds became available.
- Staff at Oshana were trying to determine how they would replace their 100 or so computers as they become obsolete in a few years, with their sights set on outside donations.
- One library was phasing out color printing for patrons, as they could no longer cover the cost of replacement color cartridges.

5.5-4.3 Quality of internet connection

Background

- The Compact's implementation partners succeeded in connecting all of the RSRCs to the internet, including having fiber cables extended to the venues to meet high demands for bandwidth.
- When describing challenges anticipated at the RSRCs, Component 1 key informants often mentioned the costs required to maintain IT services, including the cost of sustained internet service.

Discussion

At the time of data collection, all three RSRCs were providing internet service to patrons via networked computers and Wi-Fi. As covered in other sections of this report, computer/internet use was a popular activity for patrons.

Internet access also appeared to be a meaningful activity for patrons. During focus group discussions, when patrons were asked how the library had supported them in achieving their goals, many responses mentioned internet use, whether as a source to find information, study, apply for jobs, or save money. For example:

I can now send many application letters to different companies because I do not have to pay anything. In the past, money is a problem; when I did not have anything to use at the internet café, then I will not be able to apply.

Because some books that we have can be found on the Internet, you don't need to go and borrow them, plus it always saves money. Some of the booklets can be found on the NAMCOL site and just download them and put them in my USB stick and look at them later at home.

The RSRCs faced considerable challenges to sustaining high-quality internet connection, however. Staff and key informants often spoke about their concerns, particularly with the looming budget cuts. No one wanted the internet to be shut off. As a staff member stated simply: “*The library is different when the internet is out.*”

Internet connection/speed. Patrons, staff, and key informants held mixed views on the quality of the internet connection at all three RSRCs. Some people were largely satisfied with the internet speed, while others were disappointed.

It [the Internet connection] has been stable and really functioning so well because once you come to the library maybe your Internet service is just the best here. That is why you find a lot of people are sitting there...The service is good, people are happy, they are used to it, they come here, it's free, it's fast.

The Internet was reported to be a little bit slow at times... One would not expect it to be that slow because even the fiber cable that was pulled to the library, we expected the whole thing to be super fast. And even the amount of money that we pay monthly is a lot of money.

Yes, that is quite expensive and the complaints are coming in now and then about the network is too slow but we as a ministry itself cannot afford for the stronger bandwidth so our users currently are struggling through that one...All the three libraries and especially once the schools are out. They suffer because the network is just slow.

Across the venues, internet speed was said to be mostly stable at Oshana, but slower in the afternoons. At Ohangwena, the connectivity for the networked computers and the main Wi-Fi networks had reportedly been very slow for years. After investigating, staff found the issue had

been a firewall that expired in 2014 and, after some frustration working with the supplier, was planning to pay to have a new firewall installed. At Omaheke, Business Connections fixed a problem with the routers at one point, yet the internet continued to run very slowly and staff members did not have a clear idea why, except perhaps that they did not pay for the fastest connection. As a result, the Omaheke RSRC instituted policies to restrict certain types of internet use throughout the week:

[The internet is] extremely slow especially in the afternoon because in the afternoon there are a lot of people who want to use computers. So what we have done, Mondays to Thursdays, we don't allow the school kids to use the computer unless they have homework or research from school. We only allow them to use a computer without any reason on Fridays... But for the adults or those ones who don't go to school, they can use any time.

So like what I've improvised these days, when the Internet becomes slow... I block Facebook on [most of] the computers... When it's working better then we open everything again.

Many patrons used Wi-Fi at the RSRCs -- and outside of the RSRCs. Over three-quarters of survey respondents had reported using the internet on a personal device while at the library. Among business section patrons, 100% were aware of service, and 88% had used the internet on their own device. Among learners/students, 96% had been aware of the service, and of that 96%, 81% had used Wi-Fi.

Wi-Fi access was widely known to be available beyond the walls of the RSRC, even after closing hours at Oshana and Omaheke.

We have continuous 24-hour Internet connectivity provision... you can even find sometimes people after 5:00 or even on weekends... We normally don't operate on those days but then you will find people sitting outside the library, they do their assignments, they have their own on laptops and so on.

Wi-Fi was not offered after hours at the Ohangwena RSRC. The server room was shut down every evening to avoid overheating, a preventative measure in response to the air conditioner not working.

The high cost of connectivity. As respondents spoke about the high demand among patrons for Internet access, even after operating hours, many also discussed the enormous challenge the RSRCs faced sustaining internet service. In Ohangwena and Oshana, internet connectivity was said to have cost at least N\$ 100,000 per month. The issue was particularly pressing in light of expected budget cuts:

You can see here the monthly charge [for Telecom] is already N\$ 127,000... Last year it was only N\$ 2.1 million that we got for the [entire] library budget. This year just N\$ 474,000... If it's not paid, it will be cut off. There was no planned budget for this. [Note: another respondent put the monthly internet bill at over N\$ 300,000]

The Internet is working as well, but I think [it is] the challenge that is going to come up, because we have an economic problem country-wide and we have put the fastest Internet on this library which is also costly. So far, we have managed to pay for the Internet connectivity, I don't know how long that's going to be because we're really kind of in a problem right now. But I'm assuming that we'll pull through.

Actions

In Oshana, one staff person explained that the regional directorate of the MOEAC had begun negotiating with Telecom to find a way to reduce the cost of internet service, such as by reducing the speed. Some staff had also discussed restricting the hours internet connectivity is offered.

At this time, we have a contract and we have to honor that contract until it expires but once it expires we will look into better avenues on how we can serve the community. The community will be very much disappointed once we have cut off but we cannot sustain the current Internet provision.

5.5.5 Collections

Top findings

- Overall circulation was well below the targets established in the Compact.
- Despite this, nearly one-third of learners and students, and nearly one-fifth of business section patrons said books were the most valuable resource available at the RSRC.
- Although learners and students were mostly satisfied with the availability and range of books available, business sections patrons were mostly dissatisfied. The majority of both groups were dissatisfied with the length of the book lending period.
- Educators and learners wanted the RSRC to obtain more textbooks, examination books, and NAMCOL pamphlets.
- Staff believed low circulation could be attributed to the limitations of the collections, a lack of relevant resources, and the library's online catalogue not functioning.
- Digital resources have also been underutilized.

5.5.5.1 Condition and selection of library collections

Background

- The Millennium Challenge Compact (2008, Annex 3, p 7) established two indicators to measure the achievement of the RSRC Activity. One of these was "Resource and learning materials loaned out per year," measured as the "total number of library books loaned out per year in the MCA assisted libraries." The baseline was set at 33,921. A five-year target was set at 84,406, based on an annual increase of 20%.

- The Implementing Partner Agreement indicated that the MOEAC would provide “all necessary study resources (e.g., books, CDs, DVDs)” prior to the planned completion of the RSRCs (IPA, p. 23). Desired materials included:
 - Non-fiction sensitive to community needs and languages
 - Study materials for all levels, all documentation published in and about Namibia and the region [including] policies, consultancy reports, legislation, statistics, monographs and periodicals)
 - Materials for self-help skills development and micro-enterprise development

- By the end of the implementation period, the RSRCs had obtained a core collection of books, CDs, and other materials. MCA-N dedicated substantially more funds to collection development than was initially planned, but a setback from a failed book order left major gaps within the collection. During the Component 1 interviews, key informants differed on their view of the size and selection of the RSRCs’ collections. While some saw the empty bookshelves as “room to grow,” others believed the libraries needed to procure more books very soon, as a shortage of books available for patrons would prevent the library from reaching its goals.

- The Component 1 report found that the limited availability of specialized materials could hinder outreach programs, school library programs, and distance education programs, as well as the experience of RSRC visitors.

Discussion

Administrative data show that from January to December 2016, 5,322 items were borrowed from the RSRCs. (This number for 2016 may undercount actual borrowing because, over the twelve-month period, Oshana reported data for eight months, Ohangwena for nine months, and Omaheke for eleven months.) The 2016 figure, although in the RSRCs’ second year of operation, accounts for just 16% of the annual baseline set in the Compact for the number of items borrowed.

Together, the three RSRCs averaged 579 items borrowed per month between January 2016 and July 2017. (This average only accounts for months in which data was provided.)

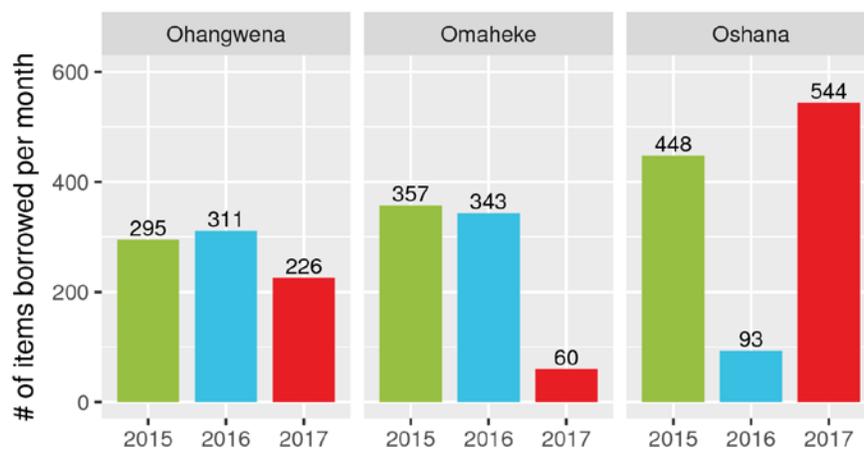
<p>Average number of items borrowed monthly (January 2016 - July 2017)</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Ohangwena: 162 items Omaheke: 220 items Oshana: 196 items</p>
--

To show changes in RSRC the number of items borrowed from 2015 to 2017, the evaluation team calculated the average number of items borrowed over a three-month period for each RSRC. The period of February through April was chosen because this period matched the time

period used in other places of this report to calculate changes in use over time (e.g., number of visits) and because data existed for all three RSRCs in 2015, 2016, and 2017. (The one exception was for Oshana in March 2016, and so the average was calculated excluding that month). Furthermore, those months do not coincide with the December to January lull in usage described by library staff.

Looking at the number of items borrowed over time, we see some substantial changes from year to year. In Ohangwena and Omaheke, the number of items borrowed remained fairly consistent from 2015 to 2016 (i.e., increased by 6% at Ohangwena and decreased by 4% at Omaheke), before dropping at both locations in 2017 (i.e., a decrease of 27% at Ohangwena and of 82% at Omaheke). The number of items borrowed at Oshana is difficult to interpret, showing that the number decreased by 79% in 2016 and then increased by 488% in 2017.

Figure 29: Number of items borrowed per month (administrative data, calculated as the average month using data from February through April)



The low circulation numbers cannot be attributed to low awareness among patrons. Most patrons were aware that they could borrow books from the library: 97% of learners/students and 87% of business section patrons indicated as much. Of these, most reported having borrowed books: 75% of learners/students and 55% of business section patrons. In contrast, only one-third of patrons were aware that they could borrow CDs or DVDs from the library (37% of learners/students and 31% of business section patrons). And among those who were aware of this service, only one-third had ever made use of it (35% of learners/students, 33% of business section patrons).

During staff interviews, several respondents discussed how circulation statistics were lower than they would have liked and described some of the limitations of their collections:

- The online open access catalogue (OPAC) was not working at any of the RSRCs, which meant patrons were unable to look up which books were in a library's collection and where to find them.
- A few staff members discussed how they would like to have their collections better

satisfy the needs of library visitors from nearby institutions. In Oshana, the RSRC lacked many of the books requested by university students. In Omaheke, they did not have the materials to support visitors from the nearby vocational training center.

- A couple staff members explained how the RSRCs needed to provide more reading materials in local languages, but those materials were difficult to obtain.

When we had a little budget, we tried to go to the bookshop to buy. Those books are not even available in the bookshop. They're out of print and that's the problem especially with the local language books.

Patrons also had mixed views on the quality of library collections. When asked in the survey which three aspects of the library they were most satisfied with and most dissatisfied with, collections were frequently mentioned for both. For instance, although 29% of learners/students reported being most satisfied with the range of books available at the library, 22% reported being most dissatisfied. Similarly for business section patrons, 12% were most satisfied, but 15% were most dissatisfied. Survey results suggested that library patrons were unhappy with the length of the book lending period at the RSRCs. One staff member also speculated that patrons were not borrowing materials due to the fines for overdue books and for replacing lost books; however this was not substantiated by patron data.

Table 21: RSRC aspects learners and students are most satisfied and dissatisfied with -- Collections (patron survey)

	Most satisfied (in top 3)		Most dissatisfied (in top 3)	
	Learners and students	Business section patrons	Learners and students	Business section patrons
Availability of books of interest	30%	19%	12%	15%
Range of books	29%	12%	22%	15%
Length of book lending period	3%	3%	12%	6%

On the positive side, books were regarded as valuable resources for a significant number of respondents. In panel interviews, around 32% of learners and about 18% of business section patrons mentioned that they valued books (including booklets, storybooks, books in local language) the most in the RSRC.

Patrons in focus groups expressed their satisfaction towards different types of collections provided by the library. They specifically mentioned storybooks, dictionaries, and NAMCOL booklets. One focus group participant mentioned how he/she valued NAMCOL booklets: *“There are also NAMCOL booklets here which are very expensive for us to buy but now we get them at the library to use for free.”* Some pointed out that the libraries provide books that are not often found at schools, such as storybooks, books with photos and pictures for younger learners, and reference materials.

Yet several learners and patrons in the focus groups also explained that the RSRCs needed more of these valuable resources:

The books are not enough especial during exams you have to fight for you to get the booklet, and most book are outdated meaning we cannot get new fresh information.

They should increase the number of excellent books and booklet; they are very few as it's always better to be studying from more than one source as you can get an idea of how the information will be asked in the examination and how you should answer it. These excellent books are really helpful and it would be great if they had a lot of there as the ones that are here re really few and we can't obtain as much information as we want.

Educators concurred:

If the government of Namibia can keep up with development and stock up with new books that are needed, then the use of the library will surely increase. What we need for our [school] library [that are] also lacking at the regional library are school textbooks for different subjects; books that can assist the learners in preparations for exams. A good example is the NAMCOL books with past exam questions. Although we don't have a lot of resources, whatever we have, have been helpful (the story books and the Wi-Fi to download different educational clips).

Despite the general satisfaction with the types of collections offered, several focus group participants believed the libraries lacked books. The participants mentioned the following types of books they would like to see more of, in terms of numbers and variety.

- Ohangwena: Need more books in general; books on law, on agriculture, on poultry, books with poems, encyclopedias, Oxford dictionaries, constitutions, books in Portuguese (for Angolans), in Oshikwanyama and English, non-fiction books in general, school textbooks for different subjects, books for exam preparations, NAMCOL books with past exam questions;
- Omaheke: Need more variety of books in general; books on engineering and technology, school books, latest textbooks, subject books that are up-to-date with syllabus, more diverse range of storybooks, books translated in different languages from English;
- Oshana: Need more variety in general; books and booklets for preparing exams, latest editions of books used in schools, books on jobs, teacher resource books.

One of the services that is offered through the computers but has not been actively used by patrons was access to electronic journals. A key informant mentioned the issue during the interview:

We have brought in electronic data, very expensive ones which if one looks at, we are at least able to monitor from here the access of users to these electronic journals is very

low. So for the amount spent on electronic journals, the usage is very low which could be it is a gap created because of maybe poor marketing...[I]f sometimes we do not educate our users properly then it becomes much easier to Google on the Internet and take any reference material without looking at how reliable these sources are. And I think there is also this gap: As much as our Ministry of Information is availing access to Internet, the challenge that we have is also to educate our users that here we've got reliable electronic journals that could be maybe for further studies also.

Some library staff concurred that the library's electronic journals were underutilized, and two staff described how they have made efforts to introduce the resources to patrons. One librarian described how the electronic resources were particularly helpful for covering gaps in the collection:

There were like four people who came to me with the same query, then I just went to EBSCOhost and downloaded articles on the topic that they wanted... Although [one] was looking for a specific book... he said it's helped him.

Actions

- Library staff and key informants talked about the need to better market library books, online databases, CDs, and other materials. Some library staff were planning strategies on how to market more effectively. One RSRC was planning to organize a training on how to use electronic resources and databases and market it to patrons enrolled in basic computer training classes.
- Although most staff respondents felt in the past NLAS had an effective job of selecting and purchasing new books, going forward, interview respondents expected that the budget cuts would severely curtail or freeze book procurement. One staff interviewee talked about the need to apply for grants to continue building their collection regardless.

5.5.6 Service delivery

Top findings

- The three RSRCs provided both one-on-one assistance and group training aimed to develop patrons' skills in areas related to education, job-search, and entrepreneurship, as they had planned for in the Compact.
- Staff and patrons viewed basic computer training as a highly valued service that supported the goals of learners, students, and business patrons. Among panel interview respondents, one-fifth of learners and around one-third of business section patrons said they have received ICT/computer training at the library.
- Survey responses suggested that awareness of library training programs was high, but usage somewhat less so. Three in four patrons were aware that the RSRCs offered trainings and workshops, but of those aware of these activities, just over one-third had ever participated in a training or workshop.

- Nevertheless, patrons were eager to see the RSRCs offer more activities or courses. For business section patrons, the libraries' limited offering of activities and courses was a main source of dissatisfaction, second only to noise level. Many learners and students felt similarly.
- Among business section patrons, only half were aware that the library provided access to job vacancy announcements, career guidance, and assistance preparing job applications.
- Learners and students were universally aware of the availability of study rooms at the RSRCs, and the vast majority made use of them. Yet just over half of learners and students were aware of the reference materials available.

Notes about service delivery

- This section focuses on four types of services provided at the RSRCs. Although the libraries offer many types of services, these services were chosen to better understand the experiences of learners/students and business section patrons: services for learners and students, services for SMEs and entrepreneurs, and services for job-seekers. A fourth service is also highlighted because it featured prominently in evaluation data: basic computer classes.
- Important services not highlighted in this report include those provided by other sections of the library, including the user services and outreach section (e.g., programs targeting health issues and current events), the children's section (e.g., programs involving storytelling, reading mentors, and computer games), and the school libraries section (e.g., activities focused on developing school libraries).
- The next section of this report (5.5.7) examines outreach activities at the RSRCs. In some instances, outreach activities and service delivery overlap (e.g., outreach to secondary schools).
- The Component 1 overview ("background") for this section appears at a higher-level (i.e., 5.5.6. Service delivery) than other sections of the report because Component 1 covered only the implementation phase of the project, before any of the RSRCs had begun providing services to patrons.

Background

- In Component 1, when key informants were asked to describe characteristics of successful RSRCs, most said they would like to see all types of users visiting the RSRCs, which would require venues to accurately identify community information needs, develop appropriate resources and programs, and also promote their services to attract the people who need them.

- When asked about anticipated challenges, some Component 1 key informants discussed possible hurdles related to effective service provision. Firstly, some warned that RSRC leadership must be pragmatic about managing expectations, being sure to prioritize some services over others over time. Secondly, some noted that it may be difficult to attract visitors other than learners.

Discussion

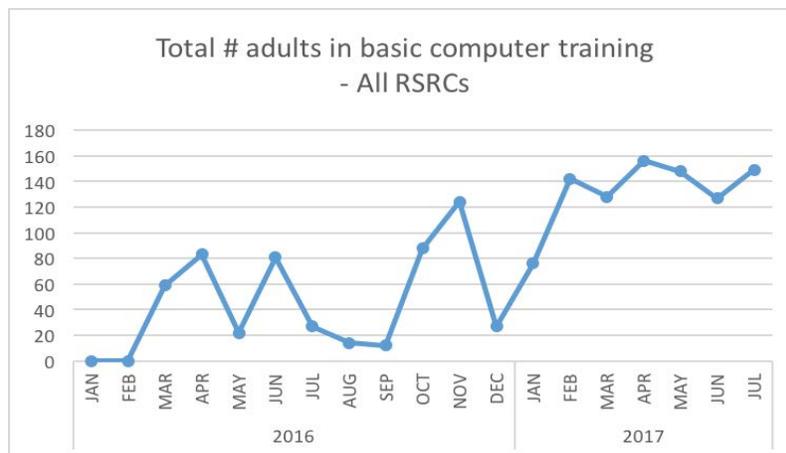
Service delivery in each section of the library included a combination of ongoing services (such as one-on-one help from library staff and access to the collection) and programs targeting specific groups of people or topics of interest, such as trainings and workshops.

Survey responses suggested that awareness of such library programs was high, and usage somewhat less so. Three in four patrons were aware that the RSRCs offered trainings and workshops (80% of business section patrons, 78% of learners/students), but of those aware of these activities, just over one-third had ever participated in a training or workshop.

5.5.6.1 Basic computer training

In 2016, from January through December, 537 patrons had participated in basic computer training across the three RSRCs. In 2017, 926 patrons had participated between January and July.

Figure 30: Total number of adults in basic computer training -- All RSRCs (administrative data)



The number of participants in basic computer classes increased substantially in 2017. This was largely due to the IT section at Omaheke, which hadn't offered ICT classes for most of 2016 (most likely due to staffing issues), but in 2017 had begun to train many people each month. Ohangwena was also training many patrons on ICT skills by training two cohorts (a morning class and an afternoon class) every day, Monday through Friday, most weeks of the year. Both locations had waitlists for the class.

Average number of individuals participating in
basic computer training
(January 2017 - July 2017)

Ohangwena: 34 participants

Omaheke: 79 participants

Oshana: 19 participants

Multiple staff and key informants described the ICT classes as a service they were proud to offer. The courses were seen as very valuable to patrons, particularly in light of feedback they had received from patrons. From the perspective of a staff member at Ohangwena:

At the library the service that I would say was most successful is the basic computer training. Why do I say so? It's because one of the days I saw two ladies coming to my office they were crying with joy and they said, 'You know what...? I did not finish my grade 10. I don't have any certificate. This is my first certificate in life. Thank you. This is a wonderful thing you have done in my life. Now where I was working (as whatever), I can go and tell them now I can type.' They were very excited, and I'm saying that's why, you see, this is a reality of a [library] service, where you have given a service and someone takes it so seriously and someone assures you, 'This service has improved me. This service, I am going to use it in my life.' And I think that is all about library service. You want to see someone changed. You want to see a service being useful.

From the perspective of instructors at Oshana and Omaheke:

I used to tell them that, 'Look this [course content] will help you this way and that way,' and then it seems they started encouraging other people in the community about that. Because most people the things that I will do in class, most of them would say, 'Wow I didn't know a computer could do this...'. It's not only computers that we teach them, though. Even basic stuff like operating a smart phone we also teach them... The other time I was showing them how to reset a phone if your phone is stuck or if it's freezing. They were like, 'Wow. I just paid \$300 for someone to do this for me in town.' The other time I showed them how to use Team Viewer... those things, it seems they amuse them. They have started telling their pals in the community, so more people are coming to register. Like if you see the names right now, the list that we have, you'll be amused. It's a lot of people that want to get this training.

For some of them that we trained, they come [back] and they come to say thank you. Some will bring a basket of things just to say thank you because they got a job, and apparently when they got a job they were told, 'Because you have knowledge on how to use a computer and all that the job is yours.'

Among panel interview respondents, 20% of learners and around 38% of business section patrons mentioned that they have received ICT/computer training.

Some patrons in focus groups mentioned how they improved their computer skills through training and also how they started to like computers as they learned that it is not as complicated as one expected it would be.

For me computers were just too complicated as no one ever taught me on how to use a computer and when you don't know how to use something, you will start disliking it just because you don't have an idea of what is going on. Now that the people that work in the library have shown me on how to operate a computer I really started liking computers and they aren't as complicated as I thought.

Also, for job-seekers, learning computers was seen as important in improving job prospects. For employed business section patrons, computer trainings offered them opportunities to enhance their skills at work.

You might find that there is a job, but it requires someone with computer skills or background. I have my computer certificate that I obtained from here. I also have a good knowledge of the internet.

I knew there was presentations, but I didn't know how it works really, I was taught before just a bit, just the introduction, but did not do it in depth. Now I did the course of computer here, it went in deep and did it practically. Which is a good thing.

However, focus group discussion revealed that computer software needed to be updated (Ohangwena) and not everyone who wanted to take computer training could because all the spots had been filled by the time they tried to register (Oshana), or because they had gotten a job since signing up and class times conflicted with their work schedule.

5.5.6.2 Programs and services for SMEs and entrepreneurs

The RSRCs offered a handful of programs catering to SMEs and entrepreneurs. Relationships with local government offices and business associations were important to the success of the programs. Many of the workshops and trainings were led by outside experts, such as those from the SME bank, the Namibian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, and the Ministry of Trade. Workshops like these tended to happen only occasionally, for instance, perhaps one to three events per quarter.

The business section also provided basic computer help to patrons working on business- or research-related matters. The business and outreach section of each RSRC offered between three and six computers for public use. Additionally, library staff in the business and research section provided patrons with referrals to other government agencies when they had questions.

Staff at Ohangwena talked about how more promotion and advertising was essential to extending business services to more people, particularly because for many of the people they would like to

target, like small farmers, the RSRC “is a bit out of the community,” and people may not know about the library or may feel as if it is not for them.

Interviews with staff and key informants showed the RSRCs have led several activities designed to serve SMEs and entrepreneurs. These included holding information sessions, leading SME workshops, and establishing connections with organizations that are intermediaries in buying/selling goods. RSRC staff also described how they had been instrumental in helping entrepreneurs develop their computer skills:

On the business section... it really to some extent helps and it helped a number of small business enterprises because initially they are not only providing information on how to start businesses, they are also showcasing examples of small businesses. Librarians also go to the extent of showing users as to how to formulate business plans and that's why appointing a librarian in this division, the expectation is that a person should go to the level to also instruct the users with his basics of ICT, and I think that we've been doing well.

At times [the business section] will organize people who will be coming to talk to a group ...[and] give them information maybe where they could access funds to fund their businesses. Or some of them, for example, they will also get people from agriculture so that they can talk to the people about how they could take care of their animals.

We had another workshop, SME workshop, Small and Medium Enterprises. From that workshop I learnt that there were many people who were having some open markets there but they also wanted to know how to use a computer. But it became a challenge, how we were going to train them because they don't understand English. So what we did is we approached the colleagues in adult education and they said, 'We can teach in Oshiwambo.' So we had classes here which were being taught. I don't know how she was teaching but she taught computers in Oshiwambo, and I could see old ladies holding a mouse, clicking and typing and I thought it was wonderful.

Key informants mentioned challenges in providing business services, believed more should be done to attract more business section patrons and entrepreneurs, and wanted to see more books and staff in the section. Moreover, it seems that the RSRCs need a strategy to be more responsive to the demands of business section patrons looking for quick solutions:

We are probably not reaching out more the business people. Because we expect more to come to the library and do whatever it is that they're doing but I would want to see somebody go out there, get business people in whatever platform. Sometimes maybe they meet them at trade fairs when they go there when they're marketing but I still feel like more needs to be done in that area.

The only problem again is some of them (entrepreneurs) don't have time but also farmers. Things are happening but personally I would want them to do more than what they're doing at the moment.

For the business section, maybe the challenge that one has is some of the users when they come in they want quick solutions and in successful businesses there are no quick solutions and I think this maybe where the impatience and really whether it is a trustworthy service question comes in... Some of the users are quick at trying to get a quick solution to it which is not always the case.

Additionally, one staff member wanted to see library staff develop specialized skills for helping business section patrons instead of relying so heavily on outside expertise:

I would want them to know how to do business plans, financial management... how to do proper marketing... And also how to do business cards... If they are equipped with those skills, then they can always go and train [patrons], even if it's five people per week... That would be really helpful. Because we want to help users to be able to make proper decisions to uplift their standards... If you come to a library you receive maybe the procedures of how to acquire maybe a home loan... So if the staff members have those skills, I think they'll be able to execute a better service to do with business.

From the perspective of business section patrons, it appeared the RSRCs still had a lot of room to grow and improve their services. For instance, among business section patrons, when asked which three aspects of the library they were most dissatisfied with, 33% cited the availability of activities or courses offered by the RSRCs. Only 2% indicated they were most satisfied with the activities or courses offered. Among the business section patrons who took part in panel interviews, only 3% responded that they took business entrepreneurship training.

However, it seems like a noticeable number of business section patrons may not have been aware of the range of business services offered at the RSRCs. In patron surveys, only 20% of business section patron respondents answered that they knew they can receive assistance with online activities, such as e-government and e-banking, and 60% of those who are aware of the services actually used them. The figures were higher for the awareness of space dedicated for business and research activities—79% of business section patron respondents were aware of the space, and 72% of them had actually used the space.

From the surveys, the most common response from business section patrons on outcomes from using the RSRC was being more connected to what is happening locally and around the world as a result of using the library (71%). Additionally, 62% indicated they developed/improved computer skills and 56% said they developed other new skills or learned something new. For entrepreneurs specifically, 57% of entrepreneurs completed tasks in their current job, and 57% also gained skills to be better in your current job and get information that helped them contribute in work discussions.

Some focus group participants mentioned how they learned valuable skills that can be readily applied in making business decisions:

When we attended courses here on business, our minds opened, that what we are pushing in the business is not working, then we can change and sell something else.

In my business, I just used to sell one sort of item but I learned that one should have a lot of various things.

Finally, the regional directorate of the MOEAC, although typically focused on achieving educational outcomes from learners, understood that business services were important services to offer to patrons:

Traditionally we thought that library is just for reading... But the notion of having the computers, especially the business, that's one also thing that people think it doesn't belong there. But when you talk about community development and people develop when they have money. So I think that is the major thing... bringing the development of people, not only academically by reading and relaxing, but also equipping them, empowering them with skills.

5.5.6.3 Programs and services for job-seekers

At the three RSRCs, interview participants and patrons confirmed that the library provides some amount of one-on-one assistance to job-seekers, helping them with searching and applying for jobs online, preparing CVs, and setting up email accounts. This was seen as a primary role of the Business and Research Section, and the job-seeking services were particularly well-used in Ohangwena and Omaheke. Staff also posted job vacancy announcements on a noticeboard and had begun considering other ways to share job postings, such as a WhatsApp group at Ohangwena.

Staff had also organized trainings for job-seekers, such as a classes to help youth prepare CVs, both out-of-school youth and learners. For learners, such trainings also supported their schoolwork.

I think most of the services are the programs that we have had for the learners. Like for the CV workshops that we've had, because they are having that CV training under life skills, the teachers have come back even giving feedback to say it has also really helped them with the subject because of the training that we have offered.

Patron survey data revealed that fewer than half of business section patron respondents were aware of the services available to job-seekers, such as assistance preparing job applications (42% of the respondents were aware, 74% of whom have actually done it), career guidance (46% were aware, 59% of whom have actually done it), and access to job vacancy announcements (54% were aware, 94% of whom have actually used them).

Responses to panel interviews showed that patrons have been using job-seeking related services in the RSRCs—half of business panel interview respondents answered that they visit the RSRCs to search or apply for a job or to prepare a CV. During focus group discussions, it was found that the use of various library resources allowed job-seekers to do a range of different activities including: searching job vacancy information, writing CVs, scanning documents, receiving assistance from staff to check if there are any errors in job applications, sending applications, and receiving interview results. The respondents also described how they benefit from the free computer use in the RSRCs, as it allows sending multiple applications.

Even to look for work on the internet, you can use the computer to search forms to apply to institutions...like NIMT have their forms on the Internet. If you read in the newspaper you will see where there are job advertisements, there will be websites, and then you go on the internet to check out what type of work it is.

By saying, when newspapers advertise some vacancies...they advertise saying, no application will be accepted if you don't apply via Internet. Only if you apply online, will you be accepted. You can also scan your documents on a cheaper price here. We time to time to utilize the services at the library. The library helps us.

I can now send many application letters to different companies because I do not have to pay anything. In the past, money is a problem; when I did not have anything to use at the internet café, then I will not be able to apply.

However, several focus group discussants pointed out limitations in the RSRC's services for job-seekers pertaining to insufficient amount of time allocated for computer use to obtain information about jobs and outdated newspapers. Also, as noted elsewhere in the report, job-seekers were more dissatisfied with the range of books available than they were satisfied (15% ranked as a top-three area of dissatisfaction, 12% as a top-three area of satisfaction).

I would like to read some books about the job I want, but such books are not available in the library or download a book online but it's expensive. It is not possible to search the Internet, because the allocated time on the Internet is insufficient to look through all the information. More time on the computer is needed.

Sometimes the newspapers in the library are outdated and you might not get a job for a long-time due to delayed vacancy posts which means that you have missed out on another job opportunity.

When newspapers are found then job advertisements are cut out by other people already. [Note: Staff interviewees explained that they cut job advertisements out of the newspapers and put them on a job noticeboard so they are more easily accessible to all job-seekers.]

5.5.6.4 Programs and services for learners

RSRC staff described several programs and services targeted at learners, including one-on-one help (e.g., with homework or at the computer) and classes (e.g. on research skills, study skills).

The RSRCs conducted library orientations at the RSRCs and in schools to publicize the study resources and support available, including study rooms for group work. Staff in the children's section also helped organize programs for younger learners (under the age of 15), including an annual reading competition for nearby schools. The RSRCs had had mixed success offering extracurricular activities, such as a debate club and screenings of historical films, due to low-attendance, yet had continued to move forward with book clubs. Youth would also sometimes gather for games of chess at the Oshana library, according to observation data.

In the patron survey, learners and students indicated they would like to have more activities or courses targeted to them. When asked what top three aspects of the library they were most dissatisfied with, 16% indicated the availability of activities of courses, compared with only 6% who were most satisfied with these services.

However, the most popular service for learners and students was clearly the study hall. Learners and students at the RSRCs were universally aware of the quiet rooms available for study, and 92% of learners/students reported using them. Yet they were much less aware of the availability of reference materials like encyclopedias: just over half (58%) indicated they knew about the library's reference materials, and of those who did, just half had used them (56%).

Focus group participants mentioned usefulness of RSRCs in terms of: providing a good environment and atmosphere for studying (good facilities in general, quiet study room), being equipped with good resources for studying and doing projects/assignments (books, NAMCOL booklets, copying machine, computers, and Wi-Fi access), assisting with schoolwork, and providing a place to interact with other users for studying purpose.

It really brought a lot of change as we never had a library before and we could never study nicely at home because there are too many distractions at home such as children. Here at the library it's really nice and quiet and this makes studying easier.

There are also NAMCOL booklets here which are very expensive for us to buy but now we get them at the library to use for free. Going through old questions papers, it helps to achieve better grades.

At the library I also meet of people and we became friends and we get to help and assist each other with things like school work and we get to do projects together as well and it's always exciting, meeting new people as you could always learn a thing or two from them.

However, discussants in focus groups also shared areas that needed to be addressed for the RSRCs to provide better service. For example, learners, students, and educators described a lack of school textbooks, an insufficient number of booklets to prepare for exams, inconvenient operating hours, and insufficient time allocated for computer use. Two educators also said that the books needed for studying and research were outdated.

Interviews with key informants revealed that children (younger learners) make use of various resources and services including benefiting from electricity and space, receiving help on their homework, using computers, and reading books. The RSRC also provides a safe place for learners to visit and stay after school.

You find that the children come—some of them are stay at locations, they don't have electricity so at least they will come here, they will sit in the library, there are also people who are helping them with their homework, and then there are also computers that they will be able to access at least to get some information and to read books.

From our reports, also, they say really children who are regular visitors have managed to acquire the computer skills. And I think to me is a major mere accomplishment because these are people who could have either way otherwise not have seen a face of the computer.

Storytelling, basic computer literacy for the young ones, writing of assignments, it is really—[in] one center...after 1:00 or 2:00 they are already sitting there. They are pushing one another just get first there so the schools and more especially the neighboring schools have benefit tremendously from the centers.

Some of the learners were also on the street after school but after the center was built, they're coming from school straight to the library. So now the library also from the parents' side of view...the library also become a safe place...They come and pick them up from library. So they're not any more on street, they come to the libraries and every time in the afternoon, the centers are full.

However, key informants mentioned the challenges in programs and services for learners. These included limited space, lack of staff relative to the number of patrons, and limited resources and services that can be offered.

There's open space also for them to go play but this place also is becoming so small because it's full. So there is also we got a bigger place but still there is another issue also.

At times even those librarians are unable to handle them because after school they come in in big numbers especially from the school which is nearby the library.

It is really very well utilized and it is all the time occupied but we want to say also it is getting smaller in size because we cannot accommodate all the children from the different schools, those who want to come for story time, those who want to come and use the computers. So every child when they come there they come with their own needs but if we could have money we want to expand on those ones.

Ultimately, however, patron surveys of learners and students illuminated positive views toward RSRC use. As a result of RSRC use, a significant number of learner respondents mentioned that they received better grades (both on school assignments and tests/quizzes, 75% and 70%,

respectively). 69% of respondents also indicated they developed other new skills or learned something new and 66% indicated they completed school assignments. 64% indicated they found books to read for pleasure and 61% read more than otherwise.

Panel interviews supported the value of the RSRC for improving grades, with the majority of learners indicating their performance or skills improved. Of note also is that just over one third of learner respondents also indicated that the RSRC supported them having better concentration or motivation to study. This was mirrored in the learner student focus group discussions:

My life has been impacted in a positive way by this library, because I have met influential people that motivate me to study.

I feel that I am more serious when it comes to studying at the library than at home.

Responses also illustrated that RSRC use supported better understanding of the school subjects.

I do understand things better that we learn at school compare to the time when I was not using library. I can always come to the library to do further research on the things that I don't understand especially topics that were discussed in class, topics that are long and complicated like those discussed in science.

5.5.7 Outreach

Top findings

- Fewer than half of library patrons knew anything about the RSRC's mobile library units (MLUs).
- The MLUs were not reaching remote communities.
- Operational challenges have negatively impacted mobile library activity (budget, maintenance, etc.).
- The RSRCs are finding ways to conduct outreach without using the mobile library units.

Notes about outreach

- The Component 1 overview ("background") for this section appears at a higher-level (i.e., 5.5.9. Outreach) than other sections of the report because Component 1 covered only the implementation phase of the project, before any of the RSRCs had opened or their services had begun. The overview on "actions" is also included at the front of this section rather than within each subsection.
- The three RSRCs may capture outreach data in different ways, such that their data is not directly comparable.

Background

- During the time of Component 1 report, key informants shared concerns that the RSRCs would be challenged to conduct outreach, particularly in regard to attracting visitors other than learners, working with visitors with limited literacy or computer experience, and covering a wide geographic area with the MLUs. They had also anticipated the MLUs would be difficult to keep in operation given the requirements for preventative and scheduled maintenance, running them effectively, and responding to future demand increases.
- The report suggested the MLUs needed to operate to meet the outreach goals. There were major concerns around the stability of MLU operations, as it was found that MLU at each RSRC had broken down after, in most cases, only a single trip. Also, it was expected that maintenance and petrol can be costly.

5.5.7.1 Operation of the mobile library units

Administrative data show that from January to December 2016, in the RSRCs' second year of operation, the mobile library units extended outreach services to 11,551 individuals. Over the twelve-month period, Omaheke and Oshana provided mobile library usage for four months, and Ohangwena for seven months.

According to administrative data, in the months when the mobile library units visited communities, many community members were reached.

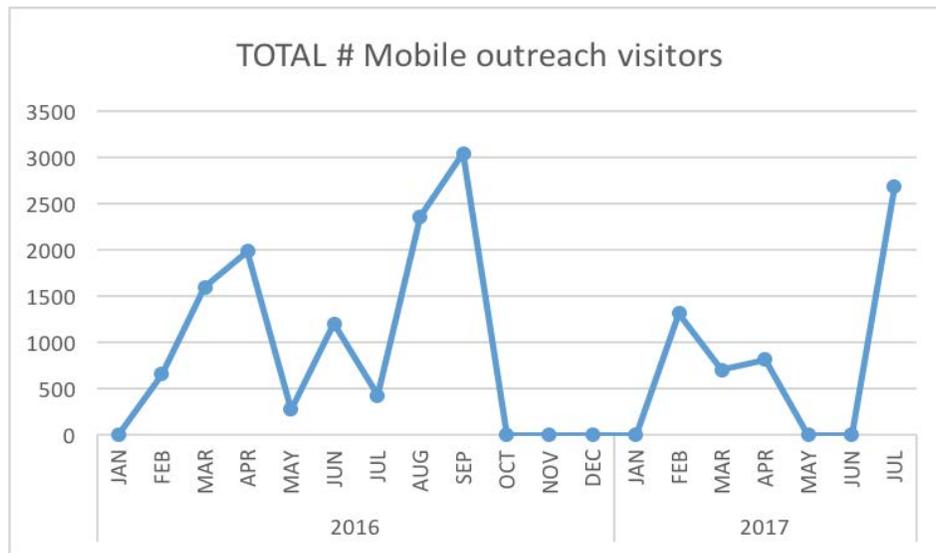
Average number of community members who used a mobile library unit --
in the months the mobile library went out into the community
(January 2016 - July 2017)

Ohangwena: 953 individuals

Omaheke: 866 individuals

Oshana: 659 individuals

Figure 31: Total number of mobile outreach visitors -- All RSRCs (administrative data)



As of July 2017, only one of the three mobile library units was in working condition. At Oshana, the mobile library was in use, but it did not go out frequently due to high operating costs. Staff had worked with the regional counselor to identify the 44 focus points, four in each of 11 constituencies in the region. One staff member described the RSRC’s outreach capacity at about 40% of where it could be. The library also lacks a full-time driver, relying on a regional driver to take the mobile library unit out to communities.

The mobile library units were not operating in Ohangwena or Omaheke. At Ohangwena, the vehicle had failed road tests and required maintenance work. Yet funds had been allocated and they expected to have it back operating again. Before being sent to the shop, the vehicle had been only traveling short distances to reduce operating costs – as the subsistence and travel costs required to staff on longer trips were beyond what the RSRC could budget for. For instance, it had cost the library \$N 7,000 to travel for one week, when the total operating budget for the vehicle in one year was \$N 30,000-35,000. The RSRC had plans to take the MLU to a local informal settlement nearby.

At Omaheke, the mobile library had not been running for approximately a year and a half. Staff explained that the vehicle was not roadworthy – too large for the region’s roads and too heavy for its own wheels. Staff speculated that even if it had been working, they would not be able to use it due to the high fuel and maintenance costs required. However, the Omaheke RSRC has carried on with outreach activities using a sedan and driving on the main road to nearby towns like Witwlei. They found that demand for outreach was very high, user turnout was strong, and the outreach was making a difference for people at a hospital, prison, and other destinations.

A minority of patron survey respondents mentioned that they were either aware of or have used mobile library unit—35% of business section patrons respondents were aware of MLUs and 25% of those had used an MLU; 28% of learner patron respondents were aware of MLUs and 38% of them had used MLUs once.

Key informants also mentioned that MLUs attracted noticeable number of patrons. They also expressed positive views towards MLUs' influence, in terms of providing access to library services for those who otherwise cannot visit the library, empowering communities, benefiting adults who have recently become literate, and increasing people's awareness of why library services are important.

At the communities where they didn't go, the nearby communities, they are asking, "When are you visiting us?" So you find that going there did create awareness of libraries.

Bringing information closer even to rural communities, it's an achievement when we talk about addressing poverty. So bringing information that could help the community members to help themselves, it's an achievement.

The mobile library's main success is bringing the service to the people and they appreciate that service because on that villagers also have this adult learning literacy programs and they also are in the process to start reading.

The reaching out to marginalized communities has happened quite a lot in the past with our modern library to ensure that these people also understand what is the importance of a library, why should I go to the library. 'Why should I take half an hour of my time when I'm in town just to pop in there and see what is going on there?' I think that awareness has been created.

Key informant interviews confirm that MLUs operated for at least some time. However, some mentioned that they were currently inactive (at the time of interviews). The reasons were mostly related to car maintenance (which was affected by budget constraints).

Those panels like the ones that are outside, we only came to realize that some of them are wooden panels and the weather is killing them. And even inside, the shelves inside, they're detaching maybe because of the heat or something so at one stage I think very soon it will need to be revamped, although the funding is not there.

Because the testing center is here, we took it for the road worthiness and it failed. Every year when we have to renew the license disc it has to go for a road worthy testing. It failed. I understand it was wipers and the break system maybe it was not okay so we took it to the dealer, professional dealer, to adjust the breaks and also to put wipers, but I understand again it failed. For now I don't know the reason so I'm yet to get the report on why it failed this second time but it has not been running for some time.

Key informant interviews also revealed other significant challenges in operating the MLUs. These included lack of budget to cover the costs of running mobile libraries, understaffing at the RSRC when library service staff leave to conduct outreach, difficulty in hiring a driver, lack of a dedicated collection for the MLU, difficulty (and sometimes impossibility) of driving on less-developed roadways, significant challenges in maintenance, problems resulting from poor quality design and construction, and lack of awareness of the significance of the MLUs.

For this year because of the budget problem there has not been movements for mobile libraries so they couldn't go. Because when they go to other areas overnight then we have to pay for them but then that provision unfortunately we are unable to carry out this year. So I think once the situation improves, then they'll start.

One can also say that staffing is also a problem at times. You don't really have so many staff members that can go out.

The library was supposed to have its own stock but then we have to take books from the library to be used in the mobile library.

But they also mentioned that community needs to be –I don't know sensitized, or some of them are not really aware of the benefits of a library. So you might come in there and get the ordinary users that come that it doesn't look back, everybody knows that 'I need to benefit from this service.' So I think some mobilization and we need to do that.

Stakeholders also provided feedback on the mobile library units:

- If you don't start the mobile library unit for a while, the battery dies.
- The wood and metal panels inside the mobile library unit are not stable.
- Gravel roads pose travel challenges.
- The MLU constantly need jumps, which scares staff from going to communities.
- The mobile libraries were delivered by contractors at the last-minute, and not enough time was dedicated to viewing and testing the MLUs.
- Staff needed more training on how to conduct outreach with the MLUs, yet there was not enough time for such training.
- The vehicles are not strong enough for the weight. (e.g. drivers often need to remove the spare wheel when traveling.)

One stakeholder was also concerned that all of the challenges they have had with the mobile library units creates a negative perception of the library since the vehicles do not work well or adequately serve communities.

5.5.7.2 Additional outreach activities

Key informants mentioned RSRC's outreach activities such as participating in local exhibitions and visiting places such as hospitals, prisons, and schools. The responses showed the RSRC's alternative strategies to reach out to communities, in the absence of mobile library unit operations.

They go out to like the local exhibitions, trade fairs. They also set up the stalls there and they are running these activities so the awareness campaign continues.

They are very involved in the community outreach and they're also going out to places like the hospitals, pension, old age homes, prisoners, where they're going to visit them to educate them also. They're also having a lending system where they're taking out books as well. On advocacy, that is also one of the things, what they're going to do, what they're busy with because now currently we don't have a lot of librarians and we as librarians should go out and advocate for our field, for our profession. So what they do is they go out to the schools, to the secondary schools and we started last year so that they can go and talk with the learners for them to see what librarianship is for and so that they can also start.

[N]ow that we don't have the bus, normally people talk to community members, maybe to the schools, the principals. And then recently like this year there was a program that was organized together with the other divisions in the region where now people from adult education, people from libraries, they were going to have meetings now with the principals, inspectors, and some community members so that way the information got to the intended recipients.

6. Summary of findings and conclusions

This section synthesizes the major findings from the evaluation, along with some suggestions for how Namibia may want to use these findings to improve the RSRCs. The table below is organized by evaluation question. For each question, we provide an overarching conclusion, list the top findings, and offer our suggestions moving forward. The suggestions are based on the evaluation team's experience in the field and are intended to provoke discussion in areas that we believe are fruitful for future action. As such, they are not recommendations in the strict sense. The issues this evaluation uncovered – both the successes that can be expanded upon, and the challenges that should be addressed – are for NLAS and the RSRCs to further discuss, prioritize, and develop appropriate steps.

6.1 Summary of findings

The interim evaluation findings are summarized below in Tables 22 (*Who uses the RSRCs and what do they do?*) and 23 (*Are the RSRCs adequately developing the resources necessary to ensure efficient operations and high-quality service*).

Table 22. Who uses the RSRC and what do they do? Summary of findings

SUMMARY	TOP FINDINGS	SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE
<p>Who uses the RSRCs? (5.1)</p> <p>Overall, our findings show that the RSRCs serve targeted population groups – learners and business section patrons, which was a goal stated in the Compact -- without attracting as many other community members (e.g., pensioners, homemakers). The RSRCs are used by many individuals who lack comparable resources at home, such as home internet access and electrification.</p>	<p><u>RSRC patrons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of RSRC patrons over the age 15 are learners and students. • Large numbers of business section patrons also frequent the RSRCs (i.e., job-seekers, wage-earners, and entrepreneurs). • It appears there are very few community members outside of learners, students, and business section patrons who use the RSRCs. <p><u>Demographics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many learners, students, and business section patrons have low household wealth and limited home internet. One in four lack electricity at home, and nine out of ten lack home internet access. • Nearly all patrons, male and female, own a mobile phone. • Half of business section patrons are unemployed, looking for a job. And more than half of all job-seekers live in homes without electrification. • Entrepreneurs have the most wealth and access to home internet. • The vast majority of both learners and business section patrons walk to the RSRCs. • One-third of business section patrons are also taking classes. 	<p><i>Define your own target population goals. Reflect on which community groups are well-represented and under-represented among RSRC patrons. Who would you like to target better? Define these groups and your goals to help you strengthen the library services that would best reach them.</i></p> <p><i>Perform your own assessment to truly understand who is using the library. Our survey was restricted to patrons aged 15 and over and selected types of patrons who could use the RSRC for education or income-related purposes.</i></p>

<p>How and why do people use the RSRCs? (5.2 and 5.3)</p> <p>Patrons use the RSRCs for a variety of purposes, including studying, schoolwork, searching, and applying for jobs, entertainment, and relaxation.</p> <p>Many who visit the RSRC for education-related and work-related purposes also engage in personal/social or entertainment use.</p> <p>Strong usage patterns suggest RSRCs are meeting the needs of patrons (i.e., high frequency of use, increased use over time, and voluntary use).</p> <p>Overall, the RSRCs appear to serve an important role in the community by providing services that patrons cannot find elsewhere.</p>	<p><u>Why learners and students use the RSRCs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RSRCs provide resources and services that four out of five learners and students cannot get elsewhere. • Learners and students overwhelmingly use the RSRCs for studying and schoolwork. • Teachers play an important role in sparking initial RSRC usage, after which learners go on their own. • Entertainment also drives usage for one-fifth of learners and students. • Books and NAMCOL pamphlets are valuable to learners for studying for exams and completing schoolwork. • Male and female learners and students use the RSRC for the same reasons. <p><u>Why business section patrons use the RSRCs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The RSRCs provide resources and services that four out of five business section patrons cannot get elsewhere.</i> • Business section patrons use the RSRCs for a wide range of purposes, including applying for jobs, fun and entertainment, and studying. • Male and female business section patrons use the RSRC differently. Females are nearly twice as likely than males to visit the RSRC for job search purposes and three times as likely to use library resources to obtain information for educational needs. Yet males are twice as likely as females to visit the RSRC for work-related activities or to use library resources for entertainment or pleasure. • <i>Nearly two-thirds of business section patrons reported visiting the RSRCs to use Wi-Fi, but this was much more common among males than females (73% of males, 47% of females).</i> <p><u>How patrons use the RSRCs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSRC visitation is relatively high - about nine times per month for learners/students and eight times for business section patrons. • A majority of learners and students have increased their use of the RSRCs over time. • There is little difference between the frequency learners use the RSRCs for entertainment and education-related activities. Business section patrons' use was mixed between personal and work-related activities. • Help from librarians, computer use, quiet rooms/spaces for study, and Wi-Fi use are the top resources/services used by both learners/students and business section patrons. Learners also frequently used social areas, while 	<p><i>Continue conducting community information needs assessment. Our results don't reflect the views, needs, or expectations of people who do not visit the libraries. If you want to expand the scope of who uses the libraries, you will need to identify which library services, programs, policies, and practices will attract them.</i></p> <p><i>Encourage activities that promote exploration, entertainment, and relaxation. Many patrons who visit the RSRC for serious purposes also make time for enjoyable activities. Library services and policies that promote enjoyment can complement, rather than compete with, more instrumental uses like studying.</i></p>
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	<p>business section patrons also frequently used job announcements and public notice boards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many business section patrons took ICT classes at the RSRCs, with limited time the most common factor prohibiting participation in RSRC trainings.• Among learners and students, more males attended trainings at the RSRC than females; but among business section patrons, more females participated in trainings. <p><u>How patrons use the RSRC on behalf of someone else</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nearly one-quarter of learners/students and business section patrons indicated that they use the RSRC on behalf of others. This was true amongst both male and female patrons.• Learners tended to use the RSRC on behalf of another mainly for education needs, while business section patrons used it nearly equally for education needs and employment needs.• Youth learners who used the RSRC on behalf of someone else tended to do it for education needs while adult learners and students tended to use it for economic or employment needs.	
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<p>How satisfied are patrons with the RSRCs? (5.4)</p> <p>Most patrons are satisfied with the RSRCs, and particularly the resources offered: the availability of computers, books, Wi-Fi, and the space itself.</p> <p>Patrons are less satisfied with policies that limit their usage of those resources: current operating hours, computer time limits, noise levels, and the unavailability of water and food.</p>	<p><u>All patrons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All patron types tended to be very satisfied with the RSRCs: four out of five survey respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied. • There are some significant differences in satisfaction/dissatisfaction trends across RSRC locations, particularly in regard to safety, noise-level, friendliness of staff, and availability of refreshments. • Compared to learners and students, more business section patrons were dissatisfied with the availability of courses and books <p><u>Learners and students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction is very high among learners and students: four out of five indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the RSRC. • Satisfaction was highest for convenience of location, availability of computers, availability of books, and range of books. • Hours of operation are a hindrance to increased use, and availability of refreshments and noise levels were also reported as dissatisfaction areas • For learners and students, males and females, reported the same areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction <p><u>Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction is also high among business section patrons: four out of five indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the RSRC • Satisfaction was highest for convenience of location, availability of computers, range of books, and helpfulness of staff. • Business section patrons tend to be very satisfied with the RSRCs • Areas to improve are hours of operation, adding more business courses/job-related support, and changing computer use rules. Noise and lack of refreshments were also common concerns. • Males were twice as likely as females to report that hours of operation were a barrier to using the RSRC. 	<p><i>Share best practices across the RSRCs.</i> After identifying areas of highest and lowest satisfaction at each RSRC, lead a discussion across the RSRCs to find out which strategies are working best and how to apply them across settings.</p> <p><i>Listen to the minority opinion.</i> Although it can be tempting to judge the quality of library services based on majority opinions, the minority opinion may have more experience with the issue at hand or feel its effects more deeply. In particular, listening to those who are least satisfied can help move the library from good to great.</p> <p><i>Tout your successes.</i> As you make improvements to increase satisfaction at the RSRC, spread the word to the outside community. People who have stopped visiting the library may return.</p>
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Table 23: Are the RSRCs adequately developing the resources necessary to ensure efficient operations and high-quality service?

Summary	Top findings	Suggestions for the future
<p>Operations (5.5.1)</p> <p>The RSRCs have far exceeded Compact expectations on the number of monthly visitors.</p> <p>Looming budget cuts are likely to hamper the quantity and quality of public library services in the near future.</p> <p>Library usage could be increased by extending RSRC operating hours, in line with the expectations stated in the Compact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For fiscal year 2017-2018, the RSRCs expected operating budgets to shrink to less than 25% of what it had been the year prior. • Extended operating hours (weeknights, weekends) had been an explicit expectation of the RSRC sub-activity since the project’s inception, yet the RSRCs were only open during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. The RSRCs were pursuing plans to change this. <p>Unannounced changes in operating hours were a source of frustration among some patrons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the second year of operation, the RSRCs had achieved double the number of annual visits targeted in the Compact by year five. • Although survey respondents reported increased use over time, the overall number of visitors appears to have fallen in Ohangwena and Oshana since 2016. 	<p><i>Advocate for improved operating hours.</i> Share the results of this evaluation with government officials and library staff to build support for new library hours. If library hours can be extended on a trial-basis, document changes at the library. E.g., How many and what types of people are visiting during extended hours? What services and programs the library has offered during these hours?</p> <p><i>Advocate for renewed library funding.</i> In addition to advocating for a stronger operating budget overall, make the case for specific services that are integral to the needs of your community and the success of the library.</p> <p><i>Adjust visitor count methodology.</i> Oshana should adjust the formula it uses to account for patrons who go in and out of the building during a single visit.</p>

Staffing (5.5.2)

The RSRCs continue to be understaffed, with fewer than three-quarters of positions filled. The hardest position to fill and retain has been mid-level librarians.

- The proportion of staff positions filled has hovered around 75% for the regional libraries, except for Omaheke, where staffing levels have fallen to just 56% since March 2015.
- The position of mid-level librarian had the highest vacancy rate, with 71% of positions unfilled across the three libraries as of August 2017.

The regional libraries seemed to have grown accustomed to operating with fewer staff than planned. At least one key informant was reconsidering the meaning of “fully staffed,” possibly bringing the number down from 34 staff positions to 20 positions, or 40% less than the RSRCs had been approved for.

- Staff shortages were said to have curbed outreach activities across the three RSRCs, as outreach requires staff to work in two locations concurrently.
- The RSRCs had provided a number of professional development opportunities to staff through in-house and external trainings, as well as supporting several staff members pursuing degrees in higher education.
- Staff were most interested in professional development opportunities on topics specific to the sections they worked in. For instance, some staff in the children’s section were interested in learning more about childhood development and how to plan lessons for children of different ages.

Provide a wider range of professional development opportunities to staff. Professional development should not be limited to all-staff trainings. Opportunities can also include free online courses, in-person visits to shadow another organization, or setting up a video call across the three RSRCs with outside professionals to discuss a common issue.

Reward soft skills. Qualifications for mid-level library staff are built on MLS-specific educational requirements and library experience that few Namibians possess. To address the shortage in mid-level librarians, consider promoting library assistants who demonstrate strengths critical to the success of the RSRCs. E.g.: Skill and enthusiasm for creating new programs, for conducting outreach to target communities, for helping patrons navigate information resources, or for training or teaching in areas related to ICTs or business section services.

Summary	Top findings	Suggestions for the future
<p>Facilities (5.5.3)</p> <p>Patrons are satisfied with the condition of the facilities but would benefit from having easier access to food, water, and quieter space in the afternoon.</p> <p>Several issues that surfaced during the rushed end of the Compact period have persisted, particularly those involving water and power systems, as well as not having a dedicated maintenance staff who understood how those systems operated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most visitors are very satisfied with the condition of the library, noting that it is kept clean and appears well maintained. • For patrons, noise level and lack of refreshments were the most frequently mentioned areas of dissatisfaction about the space. <p>RSRC staff generally appreciated the condition of the facilities and believed the Ministry of Works was maintaining them sufficiently. However, several issues still needed to be addressed, including: HVAC systems, power outages and surges, unused generators, untapped solar power, broken toilets, water pressure and pipes, and a leaking roof.</p>	<p><i>Research ways to confine noise to the space within the children’s section.</i> One RSRC managed this simply by keeping the door to the main entrance closed. Other options could involve creating white noise in the library (e.g., fans), installing installation in the areas where sound travels the most (e.g., attaching foam to Omaheke’s metal stairwell), or moving the business and research section further from the children’s section.</p> <p><i>Provide refreshments.</i> Reserve one SME kiosk for a business that can sell low-cost snacks. Patrons may also benefit if a large jug of water could be available to thirsty patrons.</p> <p><i>Bring in a professional.</i> The RSRCs need a definitive answer on if the generators, solar power equipment, and surge protectors are working at their libraries. The cost of having any of these items fixed could conceivably³ be less expensive than the costs of not fixing them. Some RSRC staff may also benefit from training on how to monitor these systems themselves.</p>

ICTs and equipment (5.5.4)

ICT services are highly valued by users and one of the most important services the RSRCs offer. Copy and printing services are also well-used.

Yet there remains significant potential to improve and maintain services by addressing challenges around internet reliability/speed, internet usage policies, and equipment maintenance and replacement.

- Among patrons, overall demand for and satisfaction with the RSRCs' computers are high, although many patrons were disappointed with the internet speed and time limits imposed on their computer usage.
- IT staff were able to keep most of the computers in good working order, although some computer equipment in Ohangwena had been irreparably damaged by power surges.
- Some copy machines and printers had fallen into disrepair or had become too expensive to operate given their limited budget for ink cartridges.
- Video-conferencing equipment was not being used at any of the three RSRCs, such that staff did not virtually connect with each other across venues.
- After-hours Wi-Fi access was seen as a valuable service for the community but was not offered at all RSRCs.
- The cost of high-quality internet access was considered to be unsustainable, especially in light of the expected budget cuts.
- There was no plan or budget in place for computer replacement at the RSRCs.

Develop a long-term plan for computer replacement across the three RSRCs.

Create a sustainable strategy for ensuring printing and copy services. Solutions could apply across all of the RSRCs (e.g., allowing the libraries to purchase ink cartridges from the revenue earned) or be venue-specific (e.g., addressing teachers' need for copiers at school).

Revisit the computer and internet usage policies. For instance, consider dedicating a proportion of computers to schoolwork use at certain times of the day or putting up visual reminders for patrons to save their work before reaching their time limit.

Create a simpler set up for videoconferencing. Videoconferencing can be accomplished using a laptop, a simple camera, a microphone, a screen, and a free VoIP service or app (e.g. Zoom, Skype). Repurpose or sell the unused conferencing system equipment.

Negotiate a more affordable internet package across the three RSRCs. [Note: This may have been accomplished in the time between the interviews and the release of this report.]

Summary	Top findings	Suggestions for the future
<p>Collections (5.5.5)</p> <p>Library books and resources were valued by patrons, yet many would like to see the collections improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall circulation was well below the targets established in the Compact. • Despite this, nearly one-third of learners and students, and nearly one-fifth of business section patrons said books were the most valuable resource available at the RSRC. • Although learners and students were mostly satisfied with the availability and range of books available, business sections patrons were mostly dissatisfied. Both groups were likely to be dissatisfied with the length of the book lending period. • Educators and learners wanted the RSRC to obtain more textbooks, examination books, and NAMCOL pamphlets. • Staff believed low circulation could be attributed to the limitations of the collections, a lack of relevant resources, and the library's online catalogue not functioning. • Digital resources have also been underutilized. 	<p><i>Establish a long-term plan for developing the library collections.</i> The RSRC lacks the budget to expand its collections in every direction at once. Instead, it may help to make a five-year or ten-year plan in order to strategize how to build their collections out overtime. E.g., building partnerships inside and outside of Namibia to acquire older editions of books, videos, and CDs after they are replaced by the partner organization.</p>

Service delivery (5.5.6)

The RSRCs have provided a range of services targeted to learners and business section patrons.

- The three RSRCs provided both one-on-one assistance and group training aimed to develop patrons' skills in areas related to education, job-search, and entrepreneurship, as had been planned for in the Compact.
- Staff and patrons viewed basic computer training as a highly valued service that supported the goals of learners, students, and business patrons. Among panel interview respondents, one-fifth of learners and one-third of business section patrons said they have received ICT/computer training at the library.
- Survey responses suggested that awareness of library training programs was high, but usage somewhat less so. Three in four patrons were aware that the RSRCs offered trainings and workshops, but of those aware of these activities, just over one-third had ever participated in a training or workshop.
- Nevertheless, patrons were eager to see the RSRCs offer more activities or courses. For business section patrons, the libraries' limited offering of activities and courses was a main source of dissatisfaction, second only to noise level. Many learners and students felt similarly.
- Among business section patrons, only half were aware that the library provided access to job vacancy announcements, career guidance, and assistance preparing job applications.
- Learners and students were universally aware of the availability of study rooms at the RSRCs, and the vast majority made use of them. Yet just over half of learners and students were aware of the reference materials available.

Provide more programming for business section patrons. It was clear from interviews that staff are proud of the services they have offered to SMEs, job-seekers, and farmers, and business section patrons would like to see more targeted programs offered.

Promote the RSRCs' services for job-seekers to a broader audience. It appears these services are not familiar to library patrons who are not actively seeking employment, yet employment status can change for these individuals and those in their networks, or they may be interested in transitioning between jobs.

Summary	Top findings	Suggestions for the future
<p>Outreach (5.5.7)</p> <p>The mobile library units have been underutilized for several reasons, including the high costs of maintaining and operating them, particularly given the vehicles' design problems.</p> <p>Yet library staff and key informants recognize the importance of outreach activities and are strategizing how to keep meeting communities where they are despite a new round of budget cuts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than half of library patrons knew anything about the RSRC's mobile library units (MLUs). • The MLUs were not reaching remote communities. • Operational challenges have negatively impacted mobile library activity (budget, maintenance, etc.). • The RSRCs are finding ways to conduct outreach without using the mobile library units. 	<p><i>Identify cost-effective ways to deliver outreach services.</i> Until the RSRC can increase its capacity to target more remote areas, consider organizing outreach in areas library staff have easy access to or would be visiting anyway, such as nearby residential areas, and schools. For instance, staff could stop by on their commute to work, visiting communities in the morning, which are often the slowest hours at the library. Other cost-effective ways to deliver services could involve using a phone to provide a Wi-Fi signal or offering one-on-one job-search assistance.</p> <p><i>Assess the feasibility of using the mobile library units.</i> Consider the costs of running the mobile libraries against the benefits, while taking into account the opportunities afforded by alternative modes of outreach. If the costs are too high, repurpose or sell the MLUs.</p>

6.2 Conclusions

The RSRCs are serving a valuable function in the communities they serve. This evaluation has illuminated numerous ways in which the RSRCs are supporting learning and community development. Secondary school learners and adult learners and students are taking full advantage of the range of resources and services offered by the RSRCs. Business section patrons, consisting of job-seekers as well as wage earners and entrepreneurs, are taking classes, using the computers, and receiving support for their activities. The facilities are unmatched in this regard; community members do not have access to comparable resources elsewhere.

During this evaluation period, the first round of data collection, the RSRCs were operating under severe budgetary limitations. This was due to a nation-wide budget crisis that has impacted all of government. In this context, the achievements of the RSRCs are commendable. The library staff did the best they could under the circumstances, making do with less, striving to continue offering popular services.

The evaluation also surfaced numerous areas for improvement. Some of these have budgetary implications that will require prioritization. Others may require a change in policy or practice, or some other creative solution. Indeed, the April 2018 stakeholder workshop proved to be a valuable opportunity for RSRC leaders and NLAS to both raise and discuss some of the more systemic challenges, and exchange practical ideas that they could begin to implement immediately.

Ultimately, sustainability is an area of concern. While the RSRCs have been able to navigate the budgetary crisis as well as could be expected, at some point the cracks will widen and there will be more serious consequences. The RSRCs are understaffed, computers are beginning to show their age, the mobile library units are in disrepair, among others. In short, the RSRCs won't be able to sustain achievements to date unless these underlying issues are addressed. Sustainability will be a major focus of the evaluation's final report in 2019.

6.3 Final report

This interim evaluation report focused on two overarching questions: who uses the RSRCs and what do they do, and are the RSRCs adequately developing the resources necessary to ensure efficient operations and high-quality service? The final report, in addition to examining changes in these two areas, will cover outcomes and sustainability. The assessment of outcomes focuses on the individual patrons in the evaluation's two primary target groups—learners and business section users. That is, the evaluation will attempt to gauge to what extent the RSRCs have contributed to better learning and business outcomes among these populations. We also hope to report on Namibia's broader goal of fostering a reading culture.

The assessment of sustainability will delve deeper into the issues raised in Component 1 and the interim evaluation report, the aim being to both report on sustainability issues that have been resolved and highlight issues that still need a solution.

Data collection for the final report is taking place July through October 2018. As we did for the interim evaluation report, there will be a stakeholder meeting to share and discuss a draft of the final report in early 2019, with the final report disseminated by mid-2019.

Appendix 1: Literature review

Introduction

This literature review was prepared to provide context for a performance evaluation of Regional Study and Resource Centers (RSRCs) in Namibia. It presents an overview of monitoring and evaluation approaches used in the public library sector. This review will be used to inform research design in conjunction with the results of TASCHA's inception mission.

This review is grouped into three categories:

1. Practitioner guides
2. Evaluation reports
3. Studies

Resources were selected on the basis of relevancy, currency (for the purposes of this report, published in or after 2000), influence, and focus on public libraries. Resources were assessed on the following:

- Type of evaluation/assessment – e.g., process evaluation, outcome evaluation, or, in some instances, needs assessment, perception study, etc.
- Subject focus – e.g., the quality of a library service, the impact of services on a domain, accessibility for a population group, etc.
- Country – e.g., developed and developing countries, or an international approach
- Usefulness for this performance evaluation.

The literature reviewed includes multiple evaluations types and approaches, including:

- Formative and summative evaluations – i.e., supporting program improvement versus assessing if expectations were met
- Traditional and results-based – i.e., assessment of inputs, activities and outputs versus outcomes and impacts
- Focus on at least one of five domains: (1) the need for the program, (2) the design of the program, (3) program implementation and service delivery, (4) program impact or outcomes, and (5) program efficiency (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004, p. 18).

This review also includes literature on monitoring, or performance measurement, an approach closely related to evaluation. According to experienced evaluator, Michael Quinn Patton, “In developing countries, the standard reference is to ‘M&E’—monitoring and evaluation. These are close siblings, always together” (Patton, 2008, p. 127). Performance monitoring assesses program implementation and outcomes without in-depth examination, while evaluations provide in-depth information that answers questions and is considerably more valuable to policymakers and program decision-makers (Hatry, 2004). As stated by performance measurement expert

Harry Hatry, “We believe these processes are complementary. We believe that performance monitoring can and should be considered a subset of program evaluation” (p. 676).

This review does not discuss shifts in library M&E practices over time. However, it is worth noting that in the past twenty years, the field has increasingly stressed the importance of measuring the benefits received by library users and communities at large – in the form of outcomes and impacts – in addition to standard measures on library activities and outputs. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) summarized the changing tide in its call for papers for a satellite meeting of its 2012 Helsinki conference:

The radical change in the operational environment of libraries has set new challenges for library leadership and management. The traditional method for libraries has been collecting a substantial amount of statistical data. This is no longer enough for modern management. New ways of analyzing efficiency, impact, and outcomes measurement are needed to obtain better data and information for marketing and managing as well as demonstrating the impact of libraries. In addition to the quantitative data, one also needs qualitative data and methods of identifying users’ needs. Finally, combining different types of results and data will provide new possibilities in fighting for the library’s resources and meeting the users’ service needs (IFLA, 2012).

Evaluation is, in essence, a systematic method for collecting and interpreting information to answer questions. The types of questions asked determine the evidence and approaches needed. This review begins with a focus on questions asked by library practitioners—administrators, managers, and staff—and then large-scale funders, and finally with the inquiries of social-science researchers.

Practitioner guides on how to conduct an evaluation

There are currently dozens of practitioner guides designed to help public libraries evaluate their services. A few of the most notable resources are mentioned below. All were published in the US or UK.

In *Measuring Library Performance: Principles and Techniques* (2006), Peter Brophy reviews dozens of assessment strategies. Brophy highlights effectiveness, outcome, and impact measurers, then discusses ways to evaluate the resources, processes, and products that comprise a library’s services, including staffing, technology, and infrastructure.

Like Brophy, Joseph Matthews emphasizes the importance of internal and customer-centric approaches to evaluation using process and outcome indicators in *The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services* (2007). Because Matthews organized his book by library services and resources, it is a helpful resource for evaluating specific programs. Chapters include: the physical collection, electronic resources, reference services, technical services, interlibrary loan, online systems, instruction/information literacy, customer service, and broader outcomes.

Other resources focus specifically on outcome measurement. Rhea Joyce Rubin offers *Demonstrating Results: Using outcome management in your library*, written for the Public

Library Association (2006). It is a workbook designed to introduce library managers to measuring the outcomes of their programs, and it contains worksheets to help draw up a data plan.

Sharon Markless and David Streatfield offer an impact evaluation framework and guide in their book, *Evaluating the Impact of Your Library* (2013). The book's international approach distinguishes it from similar guides, and is informed by the authors' experience evaluating library programs internationally for IFLA and the Global Libraries Initiative at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The book includes a chapter on conducting international evaluations. Markless and Streatfield's approach concentrates on the impact of library services on people, community and organizations – which is a more external-focus than most evaluation guides, particularly by introducing organizations to the arena.

While practitioner guides on outcomes and impact date are relatively recent, guides on performance measurement go back to the 1970s (De Prosopo, et. al., 1973; Ramsden, 1978). One modern classic is *Measuring Quality: Performance Measurement in Libraries*, 2nd ed, by Roswitha Poll and Peter te Boekhorst for IFLA (2007). The first edition, written for academic libraries, was published in 1996 and has been released in six languages. The scope of the second edition was expanded to include public libraries, and sections on electronic services and cost-effectiveness were added. Most of the book is dedicated to detailing 40 process and efficiency indicators. Because of this, *Measuring Quality* is well grounded and may be more accessible for practitioners than guides that do to operationalize their assessment framework as clearly.

The monitoring and evaluation guides mentioned above focus on library services and do not pay much heed to financial indicators. Two common performance frameworks that use financial data along with output and outcome data are the balanced scorecard (for monitoring) and cost-benefit analysis (for assessing social returns on investment). Cost-benefit analysis, and related assessment, will be discussed in the following section. The balanced scorecard, designed by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton in the early 1990s, is one of the most well-known performance measurement systems in the private and public sectors. Although a few of the books mentioned above include a short discussion on the relevancy of the balanced scorecard system for libraries, Joseph Matthews expanded on the subject, releasing a workbook, *Scorecards for Results*, in 2008. The balanced scorecard incorporates four perspectives that reflect the vision and strategies of a library: financial, customer, internal business processes, and learning and growth. Each perspective includes three to five indicators. The system can be expanded to include performance targets and strategy maps. Matthew's workbook includes sample indicators and worksheets.

The guides reviewed above represent a small sample of the work on library M&E for practitioners. In particular, there are numerous guides designed to help practitioners assess performance, but the number of resources for assessing user outcomes is growing. Additionally, there are evaluation frameworks, assessment tools, and indicator sets published for individual library services, including reference services, electronic services, youth services, information literacy, staff training, and several others that have not been reviewed here. There are also training resources available in the form of interactive, online formats that have likewise not been reviewed.

Benchmarks

Like practitioner guides, national benchmarks support self-assessment in libraries, but they do so by revealing libraries' relative strengths and weaknesses against a group of peer libraries (e.g., libraries with similar budgets or servicing similarly sized populations). Public library benchmarks are sometimes publicly available, such that funders, policymakers, and the general public can also assess a library's outputs.

Public library benchmarks and indexes are typically organized and assembled at the national level. In the US, this data generally comes from the Public Library Survey, conducted by the US Census Bureau, which collects data from over 9000 libraries (or about 17,000 library outlets). The indicators are entirely quantitative, and include information on library visits, circulation, size of collections, public service hours, staffing, electronic resources, operating revenues, and expenditures and number of service outlets (IMLS PLS, n.d.).

The Library Journal Index uses the PLS to rank public libraries on four outputs, which are measured per capita: library visits, circulation, program attendance, and public internet computer use. The index recognizes its limited approach:

“By definition, service outputs do not reflect quality, excellence, effectiveness, or value of services to the library's community. National-level data required to measure these aspects of library performance, even in a limited fashion, do not exist.” (LJ Index FAQ, 2013)

Other national and international organizations apply similar benchmarks. The library Index BIX is a benchmarking program for public libraries in Germany that has been running since 1999. Their system provides 18 indicators in the areas of services, usage, efficiency, and development. Like the Library Journal Index, BIX recognizes the usefulness and shortcomings of benchmarking systems, which “cannot reflect local profiles, basic conditions, or specialized services” (BIX, 2013).

Benchmarking systems are becoming more sophisticated, however, with heightened efforts to measure service quality and value. The Edge benchmarks library technology provision, use, and impact. The system was recently developed by the Urban Libraries Council and 12 other organizations in the US with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Edge Assessment Workbook (Edge, 2013) is a self-assessment tool for libraries to measure themselves against other libraries. The benchmarks measures public technology services in three areas:

1. Community value: External practices that connect the library to the community.
2. Engaging the community & decision makers: Specific programs, services, and supports that enable people to get value from technology use.
3. Organizational management: Internal management, infrastructure, and policies.

Clearly, benchmark indicators alone are not robust enough to capture the performance quality, effectiveness, and impact of a library system. However, benchmarks are standard, industry-wide performance measures that have achieved some level of acceptance and familiarity.

Evaluation reports

Evaluation reports released by public agencies, private foundations, and nonprofits are generally more summative than formative. They are also more external-facing than practitioner guides, as their aim is to influence public policy and public perception, often at the national level. These reports usually assess whether or not a funder's expectations were met, however simple or complex those goals might have been. Libraries and funders usually agree on at least a few output targets during the grantmaking process. Increasingly, outcome targets are required as well (for example, see IMLS, n.d.) but this is not always the case. Other evaluation reports are more focused on examining the success of weaknesses of a funder's strategic agenda than program goals.

The following evaluations have a national or state focus and are based in Myanmar, the UK, Australia, and the US. Other national studies on the perceived benefits of libraries have been based in Finland (Vakkari and Serola, 2010) and Canada (Fitch and Warner, 1998). Two multi-country studies are also discussed, as well as reports on economic outcomes and return on investment.

National approaches

The *Myanmar Library Survey* was commissioned by the Asia Foundation and the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation (2014) to obtain holistic understanding of the country's public library system and contribute to information architecture improvement and community initiatives. Methods used included semi-structured questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The participants were diverse: librarians, township officers of the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) under the Ministry of Information, village and ward administrators, and library users and non-users. The study gathered information in various areas such as "library infrastructure and operations," "library management and operations," "library usage," "expectations towards the library," "Internet usage and potential," and "impact of libraries on the community" (Asia Foundation and Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation, 2014: a-b). One of the notable findings was that although public libraries in Myanmar suffered from budget constraints, lack of well-trained staff, poor facilities, and lack of collections and computer availability, many citizens perceived community libraries as central to village life. In terms of specific outcomes, villagers responded that "the opening of a library creates a better atmosphere and that people gain moral values, improve their thinking skills and behave better thanks to reading" (Asia Foundation and Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation, 2014: 40).

In the UK, evaluators assessed the effectiveness of *Big Lottery Fund's Community Libraries Programme* (MLA, 2011). The £80 million program funded 58 authorities to refurbish 77 libraries. Although the program involved mostly capital funding, evaluators focused on a main provision of the program: a requirement for libraries to actively involve communities in the design, delivery and management of the funded libraries. The final updated evaluation (prepared by Renaisi in 2011) examines program delivery – how well the community engagement approach was implemented by participating libraries – and the impacts of libraries' approaches, as well as their sustainability efforts and best practices. Earlier evaluation reports (baseline and interim) acknowledged that measuring "community engagement" across multiple sites was a

challenging exercise, given the term is very context-specific and hard to define. And yet, the researchers ultimately settled on six dimensions of community engagement: volunteering, partnership working, workforce development, learning/skills, health/well-being, and sustaining/advancing community engagement. Their methodology included document review (for all participants) and two levels of case study – intermediate case study via phone interviews (with 16 libraries), and intensive case study using field visits, interviews, and focus groups with community groups (for six libraries). The evaluation applied a theory of change model. The evaluation framework, survey instrument, and theory of change model are available in the report’s appendices.

The first comprehensive study on the value public libraries in Australia was based in the State of Victoria (State Library of Victoria, 2005). *Libraries Building Communities* recorded the views of 10,000 people – users, non-users, library staff, and community leaders – using surveys (online and telephone), focus groups, and interviews. The study measured public libraries’ contribution to their communities, and the findings were published in four reports: research background and key concepts, the community perceptions of libraries, user and non-user profiles, and examples of excellence and innovation in libraries. The findings were grouped into four themes: overcoming the digital divide, creating informed communities, convenient and comfortable places of learning, and building social capital. The study also surfaced new questions. One question, regarding how to better serve “hard to reach” groups, spawning a follow-up study, *Connecting with the Community* (State Library of Victoria, 2008). For that study, researchers investigated the characteristics and barriers to participation for five groups: Indigenous Australians; disadvantaged young people; Horn of Africa communities; low-income families and vulnerable learners. Qualitative information was gathered through literature review, interviews with community stakeholders, and focus groups with targeted groups. Taken together, *Libraries Building Communities* and *Connecting with the Community* helped libraries in Victoria identify their greatest assets to the community and ensure that a widening circle of users could share in the benefits.

Also in Australia, the Library Council of New South Wales sponsored *Enriching Communities*, a study examining the perceived economic, social, and environmental outcomes of public libraries across their state (LCNSW, 2008). “Environmental” was defined, very broadly; the category included the library atmosphere, availability of information on environmental issues, and personal satisfaction derived from sharing resources. Data came from a survey of library managers across the state and ten case studies. Data for each case study was collected from 200 in-library user surveys and 200 mailed household surveys (with a 19% response rate). Unfortunately, the household survey responses were largely skewed toward library users: although the researchers had hoped for a balanced response, only one-sixth of returned surveys were from non-users.

International approaches

Although most large-scale evaluation reports examine library systems in Europe, North America, and Oceania, EIFL’s focus on Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) in *Perception of Libraries in Africa* is a notable exception (EIFL, 2012). The study used outcome and impact indicators to identify the opinions of national-level and local stakeholders, including library users, non-users, government officials, and media representatives.

Researchers examines ten subjects: education, economic development, health, communication, social relationships, culture, social inclusion/community development, citizen empowerment/democracy/e-government, agriculture, and the information society/digital divide. The project's survey instruments are readily available on the project website.

Another international study on perceptions of libraries was the *Cross-European survey to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries*, prepared by TNS (2013). That study surveyed people in 17 countries across Europe, both library users and those who use public access computers at other locations. Overall, the study found the most commonly reported benefit for people who used computers in libraries was saving time and money, but positive educational, government, and occupational outcomes were also important for many respondents.

The Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technologies is a large-scale study of public libraries and similar places where people can use public computers, led by Dr. Araba Sey at the University of Washington. The five-year project examined the social and economic impacts, and the magnitude of those impacts, of public technology use on users and non-users. The study's final report, *Connecting People for Development*, describes how both groups report positive impacts, both social and economic, from having greater access to technology. Like the EIFL study, impacts were aligned with key development domains: communications and leisure, culture and language, education, employment and income, governance, and health. However, the Global Impact Study used a three-tiered research design to not only collect perceptions, but to test the magnitude and assumptions at a national level. This included (1) national inventories of the venues that provide technology for the public, (2) surveys of users, non-users, and staff, and (3) several semi-independent in-depth studies.

Economic approaches

Another method for assessing the value of libraries involves weighing the benefits of services against the costs of providing them. Since the late 1990s, multiple studies have used cost-benefit analyses, return on investment calculations, and econometric modeling to capture libraries' value in financial terms. Although the calculations required for these studies are typically outside the scope of performance evaluations, cost-benefit analyses can offer alternative ways to capture direct and indirect benefits, although some rely entirely on conventional output measures (e.g., number of visitors, number of books circulated, etc.).

Glen Holt, Donald Elliott, and Leslie Holt brought cost-benefit analysis to the attention of library practitioners in the US in the late 1990s through their analyses of library systems in Baltimore County, Birmingham County, King County, Phoenix, and St. Louis (Holt, et. al., 2001). Their approach measured service use by classes of patrons (i.e., households, teachers, business, and caregivers) and the relative value of different services (i.e., youth services versus technology services), and the relationship between funding for library programs and the economic value placed on them. (Elliott, Holt, and Holt, along with Sterling Hayden, published a practitioner guide for conducting these types of analyses. See Elliott, et. al., 2007). National economic studies have also come out of the UK (British Library, 2004), Norway (Aabo, 2005), and Latvia (Strode, et. al., 2012).

Studies

Studies published in journals are much more diverse than practitioner guides or evaluation reports in regard to the types of questions asked and approaches used. Studies aim to fill a gap or extend a body of academic research, and so at times they can be too technical or abstract, too context-specific or esoteric for general readers. Yet studies can also have far reaching influence, providing evidence and experimental approaches that practitioners and funders can draw from.

Evaluators draw from studies strategically, depending on the questions they seek to answer. Studies can be particularly helpful when listing and testing assumptions using an evaluator's theory of change model. The aim of this section is to show (1) research on library outcomes and (2) the most popular nooks of social science research on the topic of public libraries and evaluation.

Outcomes across users

There have been studies which have examined outcomes of public library use, but they mostly took place in the Global North. Compared to the number of researches and reports on public library usage pattern or service provision, not many studies focus on analyzing the outcomes of public library use on learners, students, or the group we call business section patrons.

Vakkari and Serola (2012) examined individuals' perceived outcomes of using public libraries. The participants were 1000 Finnish adults in age of 15 to 79, well representing age, marital status, and geographic region of the overall population. They used mailed questionnaire as study instrument. In general, it was found that respondents perceived major benefits from reading fiction and nonfiction and from self-education. Public libraries were most used for "literary recreation and experience, and self-development during leisure time" (Vakkari and Serola, 2012: 41). There were some notable differences among gender, educational level, and age. For example, it was found that females, compared to males, saw more benefits from library services in terms of cultural interests² and career matters³. Library visitors with low- or mid- education level benefited more in everyday activities from library use⁴, compared to the more-educated, who used library more for cultural interests and career related benefits. Compared to younger Finnish individuals, older patrons obtained less benefits in terms of cultural interests and careers but more in everyday activities.

A few years later, the same study model was extended to compare and contrast five culturally different countries (Vakkari et al., 2016) – Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, South Korea, and the U.S. Each country had different number of respondents, ranging from 538 to 887. It was found that the level of benefits from public library use was perceived differently across countries. Finns and Americans saw more benefits than South Koreans. After South Koreans, Norwegians and the Dutch perceived less level of benefits. In particular, the study revealed that

²Benefits in cultural interests included: e.g. reading fiction or non-fiction, cultural activities, interest in history, self-education, travel, and creative activities.

³ Career benefits included: e.g. finding jobs, executing work tasks, and developing job skills.

⁴Benefits in everyday activities related to: e.g. household, childcare, housing, consumer issues, health, social relations, outdoor activities, interest in nature, and societal discussion.

U.S. patrons perceived more benefits throughout the 19 areas assessed⁵, compared to patrons in the other four countries. Moreover, across the five countries, fun in reading and self-education were perceived as the two most significant benefits from public libraries use. Top three perceived benefits (among the 19 areas assessed) in each of the five countries are listed in the table below.

Table 24: Top three perceived benefits

Country	Top three benefits
Finland	1. Fun in reading 2. Self-education 3. Travel and vacation
Norway	1. Fun in reading 2. Self-education 3. History and society
The Netherlands	1. Fun in reading 2. Travel and vacation 3. Self-education
South Korea	1. Fun in reading 2. Educational opportunities 3. Self-education
U.S.A.	1. Fun in reading 2. Self-education 3. History and society

Reference: Adapted from Vakkari et al. (2016: 354)

Pabērza and Rutkauskiene (2010) assessed the outcomes of public access computing (PAC) in public libraries of Lithuania and Latvia. The study used quantitative and qualitative methods, with instruments such as questionnaires, interview scenarios, and focus group scenarios. The study surveyed nationwide samples of library directors/managers, librarians, library users, library non-users, and children. 60% of Lithuanian users responded that they saved resources by using the Internet at libraries – they do not have to pay for the Internet connection, newspapers, or journals. Also, by accessing the Internet in public libraries, the Lithuanian users were able to save time, access a wider range of publications, use e-banking, download films, and communicate with friends with no cost. 64% of Lithuanian respondents mentioned that library Internet access led to improved performance at work. In Latvia, perceived benefits of library PAC users included receiving support in studying, using e-services, contacting state or municipal institutions, saving financial resources, earning money, finding a job, and meeting shopping

⁵The 19 areas were categorized into four broad categories: work (finding jobs; executing specific work tasks; developing job skills); education (finding educational opportunities; completing formal education (acquiring a degree); self-education during leisure time); everyday activities (household; childcare and schooling; housing including home repairs; consumer issues; health; travel and vacation; social relations); and leisure activities (fun in reading (combined reading fiction and reading non-fiction), cultural activities, creative activities, outdoor activities, interest in history or society, participating in and following current events).

needs. Lithuanian and Latvian users perceived social outcomes of library Internet access in terms of having more meaningful leisure and communicating better with friends and close ones.

Outcomes for learners

Bhatt (2010) explored the impact of public library use on reading, television, and academic outcomes in the U.S. The author utilizes data gathered from the Current Population Survey, American Time Use Survey, and National Household Education Survey. In particular, the National Household Education Survey (NHES) gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics was implemented in 1996, covering over 15000 households with children of age 3 to grade 12. NHES collected information on “demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic characteristics of the household, as well as whether or not anyone in the household used the library in the month prior to the survey..., and the household’s distance to the library (coded in mile categories)” and “information about household reading behavior with children (for children age 3–10), and children’s school experience (for those enrolled in elementary or secondary school), such as misbehavior problems, average grades, homework completion, and grade retention.” (Bhatt, 2010: 151) Analyzing the NHES data illuminated association between library use and a 16 percentage point rise in the probability of a child doing more homework compared to their peers’ average, and nearly the same degree of decrease was found in chances of misbehavior.

Nielsen and Borlund (2011: 106) interviewed 12 Danish high school students and examined how they viewed the role of public libraries in “learning, user education, information literacy, and librarians’ information competencies.” The students mentioned how they see public library as “a place for independent learning” (Nielsen and Borlund, 2011: 113) – one student responded that learning experience at the library is better (compared to that in school), because it implies that one has actively taken the initiative to visit the venue and learn something. Moreover, the interviewees’ comments suggested that the supportive environment of public libraries for independent learning generated a sense of freedom to do or learn things at their comfortable pace, and enabled them to explore a topic of interest in-depth.

Dent and Goodman (2015) conducted a mixed methods study in the Kitengesa Community Library in Uganda to explore possible associations between secondary school students’ academic outcomes (in terms of overall grade average (OGA)) and several factors such as reading frequency, library access, and presence and type of reading materials in the home. One of the researchers’ assumptions was that “students who have access to and use a rural village library would have higher OGAs than students who do not.” (Dent and Goodman, 2015: 57). However, conducting an independent-samples t-test comparing means of OGAs for library users and non-library users did not show any significant difference between the two groups.

Antell (2004) examined the reasons why college students go to public libraries rather than university libraries when doing school assignments. Although the study was not focused on revealing outcomes of using public libraries by the students, it did so indirectly. The participants were 17 students from five different colleges located in three different cities. The responses included that public library provides a better environment and has a better set of collection that are supportive for studying (“It is easier to concentrate at the public library;” “There are a lot of books but not necessarily a lot of helpful books [at the campus library]” and “It [the public

library] usually has sources that are simpler that I can understand better. That gives me somewhere to start.”).

Outcomes for business section patrons

Roy et al. (2010) examined the outcome of computer classes for job-seekers. The classes were run by a team of students from the University of Texas at Austin’s School of Information (iSchool) and librarians at the Austin Public Library. The five classes covered topics including “job searching on the Internet,” “cover letter writing,” “resume writing,” “interviewing skills and tips,” and “social networking and managing [one’s] online identity” (Roy et al., 2010: 198). The patron participants of the classes were described as “older [than the traditional profile of a job seeker], or employed at one place for over 20 years or from a foreign country” (Roy et al., 2010: 202). Most of the patrons completed an evaluation form after each class, resulting in 28 evaluation forms collected. The evaluations were done in 5-point scale, covering a range of areas such as: satisfaction on workshop content, materials, facilities, and time length; perception towards the instructors (i.e. the iSchool students); and contribution of class to job performance improvement. One of the lowest-ranked aspects in the evaluation was the impact of the workshop on job performance enhancement. The authors predicted that this perhaps was because the attendees did not actually have an opportunity to apply what they learned from the training, as they might had been unemployed or underemployed. The program also generated positive outcomes for the library and the iSchool students – the library saw an increase in number of participants in other computer classes and the iSchool students learned practical teaching skills.

Gichohi et al.’s (2017) study explored how information needs of small-scale business enterprises (SBEs) were addressed by public libraries in Meru County, Kenya. The study used survey instrument and collected data from 296 SBE traders and 20 staffs from three public libraries in the region. Although the study was not directly measuring outcomes experienced by business section patrons from public library use, of important to note is that the “most SBE users were not submitting formal business information requests” (Gichohi et al., 2017: 427). It was also found that their level of awareness of public or community library as a source of business information was lower compared to alternative channels, such as suppliers, fellow businessmen/women, customers, the Internet, social media groups, college or university business libraries, and church. This implies that, before one examines the outcomes of business patrons’ public library use, it might be necessary to assess the level of their awareness of public library as a provider of business information.

Related areas of research

The following list of studies was generated in 2014 via searches in Library and Information Abstracts (LISA), an abstracting and indexing tool that draws from research published in more than 68 countries (CSA, n.d.). Search terms included “public libraries” and “evaluation” as keywords and subject terms. Over 800 results were culled to a list of 100 studies. Based on a review of abstracts, the research was grouped into the following topics: monitoring and evaluation methods, technology and electronic services, staffing, targeted populations, collections, social and economic value, and public perception.

Evaluation

- Benchmarking and best practices – Filho, de Aquino, Soares & Lyra, 2004 Brazil;

Berghaus, 2001 Germany; Lobina, 2006 Italy/international; Suaiden, 2001 Brazil; Rasinkangas, 2008 Finland; Lynch & Yang, 2004 China; Mihocic, 2011 Croatia; Lu, 2006 Taiwan.

- Library self-assessment – Hansen 2000 Denmark; Bertot, 2006 USA; Jones, Kinnell & Usherwood, 2000 UK; Ikeuchi, 2002 Japan; Borbely, 2011 Hungary.
- Developing evaluations/indicators – Kortelainen, Rasinkangas & Hakala, 2001 Finland; Kaczmarek, 2012 Poland; de Jager & Nassimbeni, 2005 South Africa; Preiser & Wang, 2006 USA.
- Secret shoppers – Burkamp & Virbick, 2002 USA; Clark, 2005 UK; Calvert, 2005 New Zealand.

Population groups/inclusion/exclusion

- People with disabilities –Lilly & Van Fleet, 2000 USA (websites).
- Children information needs, collections and services – YALSA, 2001 USA; Shiu & Huang, 2000 China; Maynard & Davies, 2005 UK; Graham & Gagnon, 2013 Canada; Kanazawa & Maruyama, 2008 Japan.
- Adolescents – Bamise & Oyedapo, 2012, Nigeria.
- Equity and social inclusion – Usherwood & Linley, 2000 UK; Pateman, 2006 UK; Jue, Koontz & Lance, 2005 USA.
- Distance learners -- Mcharazo, 2004 Tanzania.
- LGBTQ – McKenzie & Pecoskie, 2004 Canada; Moss, 2008 USA; Curry, 2005.

Library staffing

- Staff training – Stephens & Cheetham, 2012; Australia; Dalston & Turner, 2011 USA.
- Knowledge/competencies/credentials – Houston, 2000 USA; Dali & Dilevko, 2009 Canada.
- Well-being – Juniper, Bellamy & White, 2012 UK.
- Attitudes about technology -- Goulding, Murray & Spacey, R. 2004 UK.
- Volunteers -- Hewitt & Eve, 2012 Canada.

Technology/electronic services delivery

- Public access computers and Internet – Kendall & Craven, 2005 UK; Eve, 2000 UK.
- Websites – Marcucci, 2004 Italy; Hildebrand, 2003 Australia; Aitta, Kaleva & Kortelainen, 2008 Finland; Shen, Li & Hu, 2006 Taiwan; Welch, 2005 USA.

- Online reference – Carter & Janes, 200 USA; Breidenbaugh, 2006 USA; McCrea, 2004 UK; Gilbert, Liu, Matoush & Whitlatch, 2006 USA.
- Digital services – Galluzzi, 2001 Italy.
- Longitudinal assessment – Craven, 2002 UK.

Social and economic value

- Outcomes/impacts-- Kostiak, 2002 Canada; Mac Eachern, 2001 New Zealand; Halper, 2004 UK; Streatfield & Markless, 2011 UK.
- Cost-benefit analysis – Elliott & Holt, 2003 USA; Aabo, 2005 Norway.
- Socio-cultural function -- Klopfer & Nagata, 2011 Japan.

Collections/acquisition/circulation

- Collection development – Sullivan, 2004 USA; Pogorelec, 2006 Slovenia; Walia & Gupta, 2012 India.
- Collection quality – Revelli, 2000 Italy/international; Bell, 2000 UK/international; Dilevko, 2003 UK.
- Circulation/borrowing -- Van & Parrott, 2012 Canada.

General library or other services

- General – Saleh & Lasisi, 2011 Nigeria; Heitzman & Asundi, 2000 India; Nishino, Nozue, Oshima, Yamashige & Nikami, 2002 Japan; Tseng & Lu, 2007 Taiwan.
- Health information – Oh & Noh, 2013 South Korea; Smith, 2011 USA; Furness, & Casselden, 2012 UK; Hoffman-Goetz, Friedman & Celestine, 2006 Canada.

Conclusion

As this review shows, there are many ways to evaluate a library. Books for practitioners, performance measurement systems, benchmarks, evaluation reports, and academic studies demonstrate various approaches for designing a framework, creating indicators, collecting evidence, and sharing findings. The evaluation approach used ultimately depends on one's questions and audience.

This review does have gaps. Despite searching, the following types of documents were particularly difficult to locate, presumably because they tend to be kept as internal documents or were challenging to cull from the body of literature:

- Baseline and interim evaluation reports
- Formative/process evaluation reports

- A survey of performance measurement systems used by public libraries
- Practitioner guides written outside of the US, UK, and Australia
- Longitudinal studies of library users

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Appendix 2: Revisions

Draft 2 revisions following stakeholder feedback workshop in April 2018

Feedback: The names used for the evaluation target groups confused stakeholders. They suggested names that better align with their understandings of those groups.

- Response: The following names of the target groups were updated for increased clarity and accuracy:
- “Business patrons/people” was changed to “business section patrons,” primarily to be more inclusive of job-seekers who they didn’t consider “business people” since they are unemployed by definition.
- “Adult learners” was a misnomer, as demographic data revealed that this group was largely comprised of adult tertiary students. As such, the name was revised to “adult learners and students.”
- The word “traditional” was removed from all learner and student categories.
Feedback: Three stakeholders requested the report address issues from the Compact period (aka implementation phase, aka Component 1) that have had ongoing implications for the RSRCs. This includes actions that were not completed prior to the RSRCs opening, items from the implementing partner agreement that have went unfulfilled, and how sustainability issues can be linked back to this.
- Response: Draft 1 addressed this concern throughout section 5.5 for specific operations and services. Draft 2 now summarizes points made throughout 5.5 as a conclusion. A fuller examination of sustainability will appear after Phase 2 data collection in the final report of the evaluation.

Feedback: One RSRC stakeholder mentioned he submits library statistics to NLAS each month that was not used in this report.

- Response: The authors believe Draft 1 made good use of the administrative data available to them (e.g., number of computer users, number of visitors), but Draft 2 was revised to include more library data in the service delivery section (e.g., program data, public event data) when available.

Feedback: Not all libraries are opened at the same time.

- Response: Draft 1 stated that all of the RSRCs were open from 9:00 to 17:00 M-F, which was not entirely accurate. Draft 2 was revised to state that the three RSRCs were open during “typical business hours (e.g., from 9:00-17:00), Monday through Friday.” See 5.5.1.2.

Feedback: Data are not collected in the same way at each RSRC. That needs to be made clear.

- Response: Draft 1 included a paragraph, “notes on the administrative data,” that preceded the “number of visitors” metric, to address this point directly. After reviewing the report, a similar note has been added to the sections on computer usage and RSRC outreach. See 5.5.4.1 and 5.5.7.1. Additionally, Draft 2 reiterates this in the conclusion: “The three RSRCs capture visit data in different ways, such that their data may not be directly comparable.”

Feedback: Three stakeholders mentioned that the FGD statement on staff not being skilled with computers may not be accurate. They contend staff should know the basics. The comment may be linked to a cleaner who was mistaken for a librarian or library assistant.

- Response: Draft 2 was revised to acknowledge this possibility. See 5.5.2.2. “[Note: Stakeholders responded that library staff are thought to possess basic computer skills. Patrons have mistaken a cleaner for a librarian or library assistant, which has been known to happen on occasion.]”

Feedback: Stakeholders believed that one interview participant’s belief that operating hours cannot be extended due to national laws was not accurate.

- Response: Following this text from Draft 1 -- “The library cannot operate outside of the 8:00 to 17:00 window, Monday through Friday, without approval from the National Assembly” a note was added to Draft 2 -- “[Note: There was consensus among stakeholders that this interview response was incorrect.]” See 5.5.1.2.

Feedback: Stakeholders provided updated information on the cost and speed of internet at the time of the interviews (July/August 2017) and the stakeholder workshop (April 2018).

- Response: Added this detail: “In Ohangwena and Oshana, internet connectivity was said to have cost at least N\$ \$100,000 per month.” See 5.5.4.3. Information about internet speed and cost as of April 2018, as well as relevant information about the process of renegotiation, will appear in the final report.

Feedback: The last action listed in the “Staffing levels” discussion describes how an interview participant had been in a conversation where those in the room were considering libraries to be fully staffed with 20 staff, rather than the traditional 34 staff. Stakeholders explained that such low staffing would be dangerous for the RSRCs.

- Response: Edited the action item to more clearly reflect that this was the position of one interview participant, not the view of the Evaluators. A note was also added to recognize stakeholders’ concerns. See 5.5.2.1. The new paragraph reads as such:
- “Reassessed staffing needs. One key informant had participated in conversations where colleagues were reconsidering the meaning of “fully staffed.” Although 34 positions had

been approved, it seemed possible to some that going forward, the library could be considered fully staffed with only 20 positions filled, or 40% less than had been initially planned for. [Note: stakeholders cautioned that reducing staff would make it much harder for the RSRCs to fulfill their objectives, as staff were already working under pressure.]”

Feedback: One stakeholder asked for more information on why patrons believe library books and other resources are seen as outdated or insufficient, as he disagreed.

- Response: More learners and students were satisfied with the collections than dissatisfied, with “availability of books” as the third highest ranked library service in terms of satisfaction, as shown in Section 5.4.1., yet the report referenced dissatisfaction among learners prominently in three places in the report. Consequently, we revisited the focus group discussion data to be able to provide more detail on dissatisfaction with the collections, and in particular, the issue of currency. We found that only a few learners and educators stated that books and booklets were outdated and that we had likely overstated the issue in the report. Section 5.5.6.4. was edited to make this distinction, revised to say:
- “A few learners and educators also said that the books needed for studying and research were outdated.” Likewise, the concluding sentence for that section (5.2.1) was modified: the statement *“Issues pertaining to outdated resources, a lack of school textbooks in the RSRC, and insufficient number of booklets to meet every learner’s needs”* was modified by deleting *“outdated resources,”* by clarifying this was the view of *“some focus group participants and interview participants,”* and by indicating that more detail would be provided in a later section (Section 5.5.5.). Since the primary concern around collections appears to be that resources were limited, the above sentence in 5.2.1. also added an issue: *“and other gaps in the libraries’ collections.”* The sentence now reads as such:
- However, some focus group participants and interview participants noted issues pertaining to a lack of school textbooks in the RSRC, and insufficient number of booklets to meet every learner’s needs, and other gaps in the libraries’ collections, as described in Section 5.5.5
- Finally, a main finding on learners and students in Section 5.2.1 was revised, so that the statement *“Books are also valuable, especially for homework assignments and NAMCOL, but lack of resources in a source of frustration”* no longer includes the final sentence fragment, as the issue was not addressed with Section 5.2.1, but instead is expounded on in Section 5.5.5.

Feedback: Stakeholders provided more detail on their experience with and perceptions of the mobile library units. The discussion focused on two options, either re-committing to the MLUs and the resources it would require to make them road worthy, or cutting the losses and re-directing resources to another solution that would allow the RSRCs to reach remote areas.

- Response: Stakeholder feedback was incorporated into Section 5.5.7.1. on the mobile library units.