



Community Based Library in Zambia

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Community Based Library (CBL) is an offshoot project of the Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS). CBMS is a cost-effective and sustainable approach to confront the multi dimensional aspects of poverty, as has been evidenced by its successful implementation by the Zambia Research and Development Centre (ZRDC).

In order to provide library services to distance learning students, the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) and CBMS Zambia partnered to pilot the CBL in Mungule, Central Zambia. The project involved digitisation of library material at the NAZ library and the Provision of content for the benefit of the university students in outlying communities. After needs assessment and stakeholder analysis, a centre at Mutakwa Basic School in Mungule was established to serve as a Library with internet access.

This paper looks at the CBL project and its future perspective in the provision of library services in rural Zambia in as far as distance learning is concerned. It discusses suitable IT infrastructure in knowledge acquisition, storage, transfer, and management. Further it reaffirms the widely acclaimed thought that the community library should identify the needs of the community, provide for those needs in a way that is best suited to the users. Participatory approaches are cardinal in the management of the CBL.