

# **The role of genocide in the development of libraries and librarianship in Rwanda**

## **ABSTRACT:**

### **The role of genocide in the development of libraries and Librarianship in Rwanda**

Human conflict has to a great degree harmed Africa for a very long time. Libraries being living organisms, have always had to bear the impact of the conflict. The 1994 Rwandan genocide can best be characterized as one of the most brutal conflicts in recent memory. It left some librarians imprisoned, others were killed, while others fled into exile. In spite of this tragedy, this genocide seems to have become a turning point for libraries and librarianship in Rwanda. It created the awakening of libraries in Rwanda and several projects have been established, including building the first ever truly public library. However, of great importance is being able to develop human resources to shape the destiny of these libraries that are serving clientele with diverse cultural and linguistic orientation. In 2001, a Library and Information Science program was established and has since strived to produce bilingual and multilingual librarians. The use of French and English in teaching students undertaking Library and Information Science has been a challenge. However, with globalization, being characteristic of our society, the Rwandan Model of educating librarians ought to be given consideration by other library schools. This paper will discuss how the 1994 Rwandan genocide played a role in shaping libraries and the effort to educate bilingual and multilingual librarians in Rwanda.

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## **BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

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## **The role of genocide in the development of libraries and Librarianship in Rwanda**

### **Introduction**

For a long time, Rwandans had existed harmoniously (Repubulika Y'U Rwanda Perezidansi ya Repbulika, 1999). It was during the colonial era under the Belgian rule that conflict between the Tutsi and Hutu started to escalate due to clamor for political power and control over the masses. This led to conflict in 1959, 1964 and 1973. All these conflicts seem not to have been given much attention by the international community which tended to view them as common African tribal barbaric acts that are characteristic of African countries (Newbury, 1998).

Long held grudges, in addition to poor leadership, culminated in the most horrendous acts of violence in 1994 that left approximately one million people massacred and several millions displaced either internally or forced into exile (Republique Rwandaise, Ministere de l'interieur et du Developpement Communal et Ministere du Travail et des Affaires Sociales, 1994). It has also been shown that this genocide did happen in part because of a conducive environment for conflict that started to emerge in 1989 as a result of reduced export earnings from coffee which was Rwanda's main cash crop. This slump in the price of coffee at the world market led to an increase in poverty (Kamola, 2007). This was coupled with famine that had ravaged Rwanda around that time. In the early 1990's, the World Bank was also pushing Rwanda to implement Structural Adjustment Programs which lead to currency devaluation, layoffs, and reduction in government spending (White, 2009). In addition, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) had launched a war with the Rwandan government. Multiparty politics had just been put in place and there were extremist groups that had arisen and wanted to get hold of power. All these events took place between 1989 and 1994 and when critically analyzed, they were a recipe and catalyst for the violence that ensued.

Currently, Rwanda is one of Africa's most densely populated countries with 368 people per square kilometer and a population of 9.7 million (World Bank, 2009). About 60% of the population lives below the poverty line and life expectancy of a Rwandan is just about 46 years. This is coupled with illiteracy which has for a long time dogged the country with approximately 35.1% of the population still being illiterate (UNDP, 2009). The situation is a bit gloomy because the country has very few natural resources that can be exploited as compared to other countries. It therefore means that if Rwanda is to develop, it has to rely more on its human resources. This is the reason why access to information is critical to Rwanda's development. By implication, it means that libraries and archives have to grow if the country has to overcome information famine.

### **Public Libraries**

Rwanda has had several libraries that are open to the public. *Bibliothèque du Centre d'Echanges Culturels Franco Rwandais* was one of the most established libraries in Rwanda and was run by the French embassy in Kigali since its inception in the 1970's. In the 1980's, *Centre d'Echanges Culturels Franco Rwandais* opened centers in Gisenyi and in Butare and each center had a small library. All these

centers continued to be managed by the French Embassy in Kigali and by 1989 the embassy handed over the day to day operations of the Butare and Gisenyi centers to private Rwandan associations. This move proved to have been unwise for the continuity and future of the two libraries in these two centers. Soon after being handed to the local associations, all the books in the Center at Butare were transferred to the university library. The Center at Gisenyi was closed and transferred to Ruhengeri, the home town of the then president. With a government that tended to reward cronies and most of whom came from Ruhengeri, these cronies seemed to be more interested in having their region benefit at the expense of other regions. The reason for the transfer of the center from Gisenyi to Ruhengeri was thus done purely for political reasons and, in part, to help boost the UNR campus at Ruhengeri that had become *Université Nyakinama*.

After the genocide in 1994, the library at *Centre d'Echanges Culturels Franco Rwandais* in Kigali reopened its doors to the public on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1995 and additional services were put in place (Derrien, 1995). The center expanded its services, and it started to provide a bigger space that was dedicated for a children's library which was to help orphans and children who were in especially difficult circumstances. It was particularly intended to provide those children with access to reading materials so as to occupy them in order not to think of their horrendous past.

By 1994, *Bibliothèque du Centre d'Echanges Culturels Franco Rwandais* had four library staff members and only one had a diploma in Library and Information Science, another had undertaken apprenticeship training in a library in France while the others only had secondary school education. All these staff members survived the genocide except one of them who ran into exile and has since never returned to Rwanda.

However, after the 1994 genocide, there was simmering conflict between the French Government and the Rwandan government. The Rwandan government accused the French Government for having a hand in the genocide and for not trying to stop the massacre because their military personnel were present in Rwanda at the time (Republique du Rwanda, 2007). On the other hand, this accusation was denied by the French government. The French courts have been more than eager to prosecute some members of President Kagame's government. They have issued several indictments to members of the Rwandan government over their perceived role in the assassination of the former president of Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana and that of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira. These accusations only further strained the relationship between these two nations. On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006, the Rwandan government expelled the Ambassador of France and severed ties with the French government, thereby leading to the closure of the French embassy in Kigali and any institution in Rwanda that was affiliated to the French government (Nkusi, 2006).

The closure of the embassy also led to the closure of *Bibliothèque du Centre d'Echanges Culturels Franco Rwandais*. It is unfortunate that the government only gave 72 hours for institutions affiliated to the French embassy in Kigali to cease and close down their operations. The abrupt closure left Rwandans and especially people in Kigali not to have a place they considered a public library where they could borrow books. Unfortunately, the embassy did not have time to redistribute the books they had at

*Bibliothèque du Centre d'Echanges Culturels Franco Rwandais*. Since its closure, the books in this library are under lock and key and have never been used ever since.

However, a truly public library is currently under construction. This was a project conceived by Rotary Club Virunga in Kigali. On 11<sup>th</sup> May 2001, Rwanda's Prime Minister laid the cornerstone for this library although its construction started later in the year (Kigali Public Library, 2009). Initially, it had been projected that the library was to open its doors in 2003 but that was never to happen. It is unfortunate that by 2009, the library has not yet been completed and it is now being anticipated that it will open its doors in 2010. Construction has been stalled and has not moved as fast due to the fact that neither the government nor Kigali City's management has allocated money to this project which has greatly relied on donations and goodwill from individual people.

In spite of the initial plan being to have it as a normal public library, there are some people who have been advocating that this new library building should not only house the Rwanda National Library but also the National archives. This is because both the National Library and National Archives have for a long time never had sufficient and conducive working space and this has led these institutions not to effectively and efficiently play their roles.

### **Academic Libraries**

For a long time, there were few institutions of higher learning in Rwanda. *Université Nationale du Rwanda* (National University of Rwanda) is one of them. It was established by an act of parliament, *Loi du 12 Mai 1964 portant création et Organisation de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda* although it had been operational since November 1963. Inasmuch as there were few institutions of higher education in Rwanda, they have always borne the brunt of armed conflict since 1959. These institutions were greatly affected by the 1994 genocide because their staff and students stood out in society as they were not many, thereby, being easily recognized.

This university had the most number of staff who had formal education in Library and Information Science because it had the largest and most developed library in Rwanda since 1960's to date. Qualified library staff were attracted to this library because they were better remunerated than their colleagues in other public institutions, thereby, making this library a prestigious place for those librarians to work.

By 1977, *Université Nationale du Rwanda* library had thirty one employees and only two of the staff members possessed a formal education in Library and Information Science. The two had at least a Bachelors degree in Library and Information Science from Canada, two of the staff members had two years of university education in a non-library science field, twenty had junior secondary school education, three had high school education, and four had primary school education (Bouso, 1980). This is evident that the quality of service was greatly compromised due to the high number of staff with low level of education and no formal education in Library and Information Science (Niyonsenga & Bizimana, 1996). Most of the staff members in this library were taught on the job. Having little or no Library and Information Science Education was therefore the norm in most academic libraries even up to the year 2000.

Being located in a university town, it took a bit of time before people started being massacred at *Université Nationale du Rwanda* and when the massacre started, university employees became the first targets. Several library staff members were killed in 1994. National university of Rwanda had three campuses then and, by 1994, it had 30 library staff members on the main campus. Four of them from the main campus at Butare were massacred, three from the Ruhengeri campus, and about three others from Mburabuturo campus were also massacred. This means that approximately a third of the qualified library workforce in this University was killed. Apart from those who were killed, other were imprisoned for having participated or accused of having participated in the genocide. Two library employees from Butare campus and another one from Ruhengeri campus were imprisoned. Some of those who survived ran into exile and have never come back to Rwanda. Most of them ran to seek asylum in Belgium and France, and they are still there. In spite of their training in Library and Information Science, they do not work in libraries. Unfortunately, they were some of the most educated library staff members.

In a 1972 census carried out by a Belgian librarian, it was found that all the libraries in Rwanda had a total of 125,000 books (D'Orleans, 1973). *Université Nationale du Rwanda* had 72,000 book volumes and was projecting to have 112,000 by 1981 (Bouso, 1980). However, as many as 8,000 books got stolen around 1972/1973 because there was only one librarian (D'Orleans, 1973). The stealing might have also been a result of the ethnic conflict that took place at that time when 220 of the 500 students in the university at that time got chased away. In times of conflict, libraries also tend to bear the brunt of conflict. By 1989, the main campus Library had 120, 000 volumes while the Ruhengeri Campus had 56,000 volumes (Niyonsenga & Bizimana, 1996). The number of titles was lower as most of them were in multiple volumes. This is evident that the collection was growing but at a slow pace.

In 1994, libraries in Rwanda got looted and some books destroyed. Approximately two thirds of the library collection was looted/stolen or destroyed at the National University of Rwanda's Ruhengeri campus library which was then called *Université Nyakinama* while about a sixth of the collection at the Butare campus was either looted or destroyed. As late as 2005, some of the looted books were finding their way into the local second-hand/used book vendors. Librarians occasionally visited these vendors' stalls and whenever they found books with library stamps, they confiscated them and returned them to the respective libraries.

Between 1974 and 1976, statistics show that there was an annual circulation of 16,927 items at *Université Nationale du Rwanda*. This is a small number compared to the fact that it was the main library in the country. For a very long time and as late as 2001, most libraries never used to lend out their resources. They had closed access systems so as to enhance security for the few books that were available. This meant that for one to use the resources, s/he had to go to the library. Unfortunately, most of the libraries were so small and only a few seating spaces were available. This tended to discourage users from visiting libraries. At *Université Nationale du Rwanda*, only staff and faculty could be allowed to browse books on the stacks. Before they could provide a slip showing the book they require to library staff, students were first required to use the card catalog which was not always updated and which also happened to have a lot of misfiled records (Simpson, 1989). This meant that some books went unused particularly if its records were misfiled.

Funding of *Université Nationale du Rwanda* library used to be quite steady and it was always 11% of the total university budget between 1971 and 1981 (Bouso, 1980). In the 1972/1973 academic year, annual

library budget was five million Rwandan Francs. In addition, the library was a depository library of several international organizations and this helped boost the collection. It was a depository library for the United Nations, World Health Organization, Worldbank, Food and Agriculture Organization, International organization of civil aviation among others. This greatly helped in the growth of the collection.

In nearly all countries in Africa, academic libraries have tended to be indicators of the state of libraries in that country. From 1994, there has been a renewed interest in developing libraries Rwanda. Most institutions have already put in place a library or are in the process of putting up one. However, the challenge has always been the ability to secure sufficient funding for those libraries. As a whole, public institutions are putting in a lot of effort to improve their libraries. Funding of libraries has greatly increased in spite of the increase in the number of libraries. Below is the budget in Rwandan Francs allocated to some Libraries in public academic institutions, the national library and archive by the Rwandan government.

**Funding of some of the Libraries and archives in Rwanda**

<b>Institution Library</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
National University of Rwanda (NUR)	51,900,964 <i>\$92,680</i>	34,800,000 <i>\$62,140</i>	67,364,312 <i>\$120,293</i>
Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST)	18,269,864 <i>\$32,624</i>	23,500,000 <i>\$41,964</i>	
Kigali Institute of Education (KIE)	7,502,464 <i>\$13,397</i>	24,316,328 <i>\$43,422</i>	
Kigali Health Institute (KHI)	12,800,000 <i>\$22,851</i>	37,128,000 <i>\$66,300</i>	
Institut Supérieur D'Agriculture et Elevages (ISAE)	10,000,000 <i>\$17,857</i>	45,000,000 <i>\$80,357</i>	
School of Banking and Finance (SBF)	8,500,000 <i>\$15,178</i>	23,115,972 <i>\$41,278</i>	

National Library	1,500,000 \$2,678	119,899,036	80,528,256
National Archives	8,971,256 \$16,020	\$214,105	\$143,800
Parliament	973,500 \$1,738	1,041,644 \$1,860	
Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC)	2,000,000 \$3,571	3,450,000 \$6,160	118,700,000 \$211,939

Source: (Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2009)

Effective 2005, the government started using a cash budget and in most cases, libraries received between 50-75% of the total sum that was indicated in the budget. The reason for using the cash budget is to try and enhance fiscal discipline in government. When compared to the number of Libraries that are funded by the public, there is evidence of strong government commitment to ensure that libraries are better funded compared to what used to take place before 1994. Effective 2006, Kigali Institute of Education started investing heavily in their library. Tuition fees paid by students undertaking evening programs is channelled to the library so that new resources can be acquired. This has enabled the library to have at least an additional \$50,000 annually for acquiring information resources.

Due to the perennial lack of sufficient space, the Canadian government financed the construction of the current library at the *Université Nationale du Rwanda* in 1977/1978 and was able to have sufficient space to house 150,000 books and a seating capacity of 350 people (Bouso, 1980). Previously, the library only had a seating capacity of between 70 to 80 people (D'Orleans, 1973). To date, it is the biggest, most stocked and with the most number of library staff in Rwanda. Unfortunately, most of the books are old and are in a poor physical state. Just like the situation before the genocide, seating space in library is still insufficient due to the increase student and staff population. However, between 1996 and 2000, this library was very instrumental in supporting the information needs of faculty members of the newly established institutions of higher education before libraries in those institutions acquired a substantial amount of information resources.

### **School Libraries**

Approximately 75% of primary and secondary schools were destroyed (Kumar, Tardif-Douglin, Davis, Maynard, Manikas, Sheckler, & Knapp, 1996). Because most people felt insecure in their homes, many ran to seek refuge in schools and most of these people ended up being massacred in the classrooms they were hiding in. Apart from being physically destroyed, learning materials and equipment were

looted, burnt or broken (Obura, 2003). The few books that were available in schools ended up being destroyed with the rest of the equipment. An example is Groupe scolaire Rambula in Gisenyi, which was burnt down. The few books that the school possessed in their small library also got destroyed. This meant that developing a collection of books had to start afresh after the genocide. This fresh start was characteristic of many schools.

By early 1994, there were 19,000 teachers. More than half of them got killed during the genocide while many ran into exile (Kumar, Tardif-Douglin, Davis, Maynard, Manikas, Sheckler, & Knapp, 1996). This meant that most of the teachers who were in charge of small library collections in school were no longer there. By the time schools were opening in March of 1995, there were very few qualified teachers available and the government had to pick on anybody who had completed high school to become a teacher. This was a stop gap measure to have schools start to operate. However, UNICEF provided a \$30 payment per teacher as an incentive to have them restart the schools (Kumar, Tardif-Douglin, Davis, Maynard, Manikas, Sheckler, & Knapp, 1996).

However, the greatest threat to Rwandan education before the 1994 genocide had been the quota system that had been introduced in 1978. In this system, admission to schools and especially higher education was based on ethnicity and not achievement. This was particularly more pronounced in higher education. This policy led to an increase in the number of illiterate people as many parents saw no need of taking their children to school. The system was abolished after 1994. Currently, admission to any education institution is based solely on merit. This new system led to increased student enrolment because more children who had been denied education could now be enrolled into school and child soldiers, who got demobilized, were mandated to enroll in schools.

Most schools, particularly secondary schools have started to develop their own school libraries although they have a long way to go. Among the few schools with an established library and qualified staff are Lycée de Kigali and GreenHills Academy. When the French embassy was forced to close in 2006, the French ran school *Ecole Française Saint Exupéry* which had a good library was forced to close. To date, this school remains closed, so is its library.

### **National Library**

The need for a National library was felt as early as 1971 when on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1971 there was a meeting to discuss the creation of a National Library (D'Orleans, 1973). This objective was realized in 1989 when *Bibliothèque Nationale* (National Library) was established through a (presidential order) *Arrêté présidentiel numero 174/ 06 du 28 mars 1989* and its mission was to act as a legal deposit. Instead of being an independent institution, it was made to be one of the departments of *Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports*.

Slightly before 1994, this library and the national archives were in one building that was located in a very accessible place at the center of Kigali's central business district. Due to the strategic location, the library and archives was briefly converted into an operation center for the secret service. As conflict progressed and the secret service felt that the government was losing the battle, they decided to take away the records they felt were most valuable to them and set on fire the remaining records that were



in the building. This led to part of the building that housed the National library to be burnt. Only a few records were able to be salvaged. Among the records or books they took away, were those that mentioned anything to do with the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), which was by then a guerrilla movement fighting the government. Extremist elements in the then government wanted all Tutsis and moderate Hutus to be exterminated, so was any literature and records that talked about RPF, which was a predominantly Tutsi movement. By destroying the books and records, the secret service was suppressing access to information with the intent of making the masses to believe that RPF was simply a nuisance and ought never to be given any thought.

The salvaged books were temporarily kept in another building that the secret service used to operate from in the central business district while the archival documents were taken to a different building, still in Kigali's central business district. It is after the genocide that the National archives and National library were relocated to offices in Amahoro stadium. This movement led to loss of many books and records. By 2007, this library had a total collection of 6, 000 book titles. It is unfortunate that the library was housed in one of the office spaces at the Amahoro Stadium in Kigali. The reason that the Library was at the stadium is because that is where *Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports* also has its offices.

Unfortunately, very few people are aware of the existence of the national library. This is due to its location and there was also no sign showing where it is located. As a result, not many people made use of the available collection. Most of the collection in this library is composed of theses (*Memoire*) written by undergraduate students because it is a requirement to write one before being awarded a Bachelors degree. In order to enhance its image, this library was relocated from Stade Amahoro in 2009 into new premises located in Gikondo which is a suburb of Kigali. Since moving to this new location, the National Library and National Archive have been merged into one department. However, the library's challenges still remain. Due to lack of being marketed, most people in Rwanda still do not know that it moved out of Stade Amahoro to its new location in Gikondo which is still inaccessible to many people.

### **Special Libraries**

There have been many special libraries. They include the Parliament Library, *Communauté économique des pays des Grands Lacs* (CEPGL), *Organisation pour l'aménagement et le développement du Bassin de la Kagera* (OBK), Libraries in Government ministries, Supreme court library, Prosecutor general's libraries, United Nations Organization Libraries, and Libraries in Diplomatic missions.

In spite of having seen some of these libraries grow, some have actually been closed down. *Organisation du Bassin Kagera* (OBK) and *Institut supérieur des statistiques et d'économie appliqué* (IAMSEA) never became operational after the genocide and most of their library resources were destroyed. However, Kigali Institute of Education, which was established in 1999, inherited a salvaged small collection of books that belonged to IAMSEA.

Immediately after President Habyarimana's plane was shot down, the Parliament building was viciously attacked with bombs and gun fire. This is because there were a few Rwanda patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers who used to camp in the precincts of parliament so as to guard RPF members while peace negotiations were taking place in Tanzania. When the genocide had come to an end, of the three librarians who used to work in the parliament library and archive, one had been killed, and the other two ran into exile, never to come back to Rwanda. Despite that a part of the parliament building was

destroyed, due to being bombed, there was neither looting nor destruction of information resources in the library and archive of the parliament because the area around parliament was easily captured by the RPF and had become a safe zone.

There were sixty four local staff members of United Nations agencies in Rwanda who were massacred. Some of those massacred used to work in the library. Before 1994, UNDP had one of the best organized libraries but due to restructuring, it was closed in 2001. This was a blow to library users because it meant one less library for Rwandans. Unfortunately, most of the documents that used to be in the library were locked in a room in the basement of one of the buildings at UNDP offices in Kigali.

The Supreme Court library and Prosecutor general's office libraries were revived in 2005 when they employed some of the graduates from the Library and Information Science program at Kigali Institute of Education. Graduates from this program were also able to revive libraries at the Curriculum Development center, Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO, and *Office National de la Population (ONAPO)*.

### **Archives**

Rwanda has a rich archival history from the time it was briefly colonized by the Germans and later by the Belgians who colonized it from 1919 to 1962. During the Belgian rule until 1959, Rwanda and Burundi were viewed as one country and it was known as Rwanda-Urundi. The two territories had most services in common such as the official Gazette that was known as *Bulletin Officiel du Rwanda-Urundi*. After independence, each country established its own services. After the split, Kanyange (2009) shows that some of Rwanda's archives were kept by L'institut Pour La Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Central (IRSAC), which was located in Astrida, the then capital city of Rwanda that later changed its name to Butare and in 2005 changed its name to Huye.

The National Archives was officially created through a presidential order, *arrêté présidentiel numero 166/06* of 22 June 1979. In the same year, another presidential order, *arrêté présidentiel numero 167/06* of 22 June 1979 established *Commission Nationale des Archives* (National archival commission) was established. These were major steps in the establishment of a national archive that would oversee the preservation of the country's records. In 1981, as a result of these two presidential orders, archival records held at IRSAC in Butare were transferred to Kigali because the National archives were placed under *Présidence de la République* (Office of the President). The motivation for this transfer was to have the office of the president to be in control of all government records.

Another presidential order *arrêté présidentiel numero 02/06* of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1991 was issued and the National Archives were placed under Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (MINESUPRES) so as to encourage the utilization of the records because very few people were accessible to them when they were under *Présidence de la République* due to excessive security screening. Later *Archive Nationale* was placed under the ministry of youth and sports and was for several years housed at the Amahoro Stadium before being moved to a new location in Gikondo, a

suburb of Kigali. For a long time, apart from lack of space and poor location such as in the precincts of Amahoro stadium, this institution has been plagued by perennial lack of qualified human resources.

Most archival records are still being held by institutions that created them. This is because there is no policy or law that has been put in place to preserve them. There are lots of records that have been destroyed as a result of the wishes of the person who heads the institution in which the records were created. However, some government departments still have intact archival records dating back to 1960's. By 2006, the former *Préfecture de Byumba* had their archival records from 1960's still intact and they were never destroyed during the genocide. A sizeable number of Kigali city archives are stashed away in several trailer containers and most employees of the City are not aware of the existence of those records in those containers.

Before and immediately after the 1994 genocide, most of the archival material particularly in government tended to be locked in a dark room and were rarely used because they were non-current. However, most of these materials survived the genocide because members of the regime at that time had to run away from Kigali and *prefecture* headquarters in a hurry because the Rwanda Patriotic Front was closing in very fast. It is this hurry to run away that made members of the regime not to have the time to destroy most of the government archival documents (Verwimp, 2003). By 1999, archives in *Ministère des Finances et de la Planification (MINIPLAN)* and those in *Ministère d'Agriculture* were available though disorganized and dusty. Verwimp, (2003) was able to retrieve original questionnaires of a survey he was looking for that had been carried out between 1989 and 1992. This disorganization is attributed to the fact that there was no archival policy and neither did the ministries have sufficient qualified staff who could effectively manage the archives.

However, there are records of some government departments that got destroyed during the genocide and among them are archival records of *Commission Nationale de Recensement, Service Nationale de Recensement* which was part of *Ministère du de la planification* (Gatera, 2006). Rwanda had been a closed society and many nations never took notice of the impending catastrophe. However, after the genocide in 1994, many people around the world wanted to know more about pre-genocide Rwanda and this has led to increased interest in archival records in Rwanda. This interest, both by the government and individuals, is helping to create an awareness of the need to organize the records.

Rwanda National Museum (*Musée National Du Rwanda*) maintained a small archival collection. All these documents were either destroyed or looted in 1994. Not only were the documents destroyed by some of the staff members who used to work in the museum, but also by the general public (Janzen, 1995). A total of 420 cassettes that they had recorded what was happening in Rwanda between 1990 up to 1994 got destroyed and almost half of them were destroyed by staff members who used to work in the Museum. The mission was to try and destroy records so that people could not later on have documentation of what was happening in the country at that time.

#### **Library staffing before 1994**

By 1983, there were 53 libraries in Rwanda that were viewed to be well established, and they had a total of 108 personnel (Rözsa, 1983). At that time, only sixteen had at least some training in Library and Information Science. Majority of the staff had no education in Library and Information Science. They tended to be people who had only completed secondary school education and most of them learnt on the job through apprenticeship. A few had undertaken “*formation*” which are short training and workshops.

Most of the libraries were a one-man run library (Rözsa, 1983). Whenever the person was not there, it meant that the library had to be closed. Users thus tended to be inconvenienced and access to information was left at the whims of the person working in the library. The reason why there are very few people with education in Library and Information Science is due to the fact that there was no library school in Rwanda.

It unfortunate that most of the experts who came to study the state of libraries in Rwanda, ended up recommending that librarians should be educated out of Rwanda and especially in developed nations such as France, Belgium, or Canada. This greatly contributed to the perennial lack of staff in libraries and archives because it made administrators believe that library staff can only be best educated out of Rwanda. A few librarians were therefore able to study in Canada courtesy of scholarships provided by the Canadian government. The USSR also provided a handful of cultural exchange scholarships in early 1990’s and only a handful were allocated to those studying Library and Information Science. A few library staff members also went to Belgium for short training while the majority who had Library and Information Science education had studied in Senegal for a two-year associate degree.

### **Library and Information Science**

There is no civilization that endures when it ceases to have qualified people to perform tasks. Rwanda has for a long time not had sufficient human resources. Majority of the people who have been working in most libraries have tended not to have any training whatsoever. This meant that almost all the existing libraries in Rwanda grew by accident and not by design.

After independence in 1962, there were few qualified local staff to run government institutions. This made the Belgian government to immediately establish and manage *Centre Rwandais de Formation des Cadres (CRFC)* which was later handed to the Rwandan government in 1987 (Rwanda Institute of Management, 2008). The mission of CRFC was to offer short training programs to government staff.

Training for staff working in libraries, archives and documentation centres took place only once a year and was mainly provided by Rwandan graduates of the 2-year Diploma program at *École des Bibliothécaires Archivistes et Documentalistes (EBAD)* in Senegal (Olaka, 2008). Because people got promoted on their jobs and got a salary raise, it became an irony that the training meant for library staff was mainly filled with secretaries. This was a clear indicator that the role of librarians and archivists seemed never to have been appreciated by administrators of institutions and such an attitude contributed to many library staff not to be accorded the opportunity to undertake the training. After the 1994 genocide, the centre was never as active until 2001. This is because there was no legal framework

in place regarding short term training of government staff (Rwanda Institute of Management, 2008). Even after becoming active, training of librarians did not take place at this center because a Library and Information Science program had been put in place at Kigali institute of Education.

### Diploma in Library and Information Science

After the genocide, many libraries were not only looted or destroyed. Some staff members were killed; others went into exile and never came back. Most of those who went into exile were the most qualified. The few who had at least a Bachelors degree from Russia ended taking up administrative jobs in government and those jobs were not related to library and information science work. There was one who even became Rwanda’s ambassador. This greatly hampered the development of human resources.

However, due to the high cost of educating librarians out of the country, very few could undertake formal education in Library and Information Science. Most students studying Library and Information Science went to study at Ecole de Bibliothécaire, Archivistes et Documentalistes (EBAD) at L’université Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal. Due to limited sponsorship, most of the students from Rwanda undertook the two-year Diploma program at EBAD which had three specializations, namely: *Diplôme d’Aptitude aux Fonction d’Archivistes* (DAFA); *Diplôme d’Aptitude aux Fonction de Bibliothécaires* (DAFB); *Diplôme d’Aptitude aux Fonction de Documentalistes* (DAFD). From its inception in 1962 upto 1994, only 31 students from Rwanda had been educated in this Library school in Senegal yet it was meant to educate librarians and archivists in Francophone Africa. Of the 31 students, 9 had specialized in DAFA, 18 in DAFB and 4 in DAFD (Olaka, 2008). There seem to have been no Rwandan student who graduated in EBAD after 1992 apart from the nine students who were sponsored by Francophonie in 2008 to complete their third and fourth year so that they could earn a Bachelors degree in Library and information science.

Number of Rwandans who graduated with a 2-year Diploma at EBAD between 1962 and 2008

Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Number of Graduates	2	0	1	1	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	6	3	3	0	0

Source: (Olaka, 2008)

Since the inception of the Library school at Kigali Institute of Education, students who have graduated from the program have been instrumental in setting up new libraries such as the one at Gacaca Jurisdiction Headquarters, opening libraries that had been operational before 1994 but which had remained closed after the genocide. An example of such a library was Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO, Library at Ministry of Infrastructure among others.

The Diploma program has been a blessing to Rwanda because it has enabled more librarians to receive an education. For the short period that the program has been in existence since 2001, it has been able to produce more librarians compared to the number of library staff with library Science education

between 1960 to 1994. The following number of Students have graduated from the Library and Information Science program.

**Library and Information Science graduates from KIE**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Number of graduates</b>
2004	19
2005	32
2006	32
2007	27
2008	46
2009	47*

\*Likely number to graduate.

In order to give each person an equal chance to pursue an education, and in order not to discriminate people by language, the government put in place a bilingual policy in higher education. After the genocide, many Rwandans returned from diaspora and came from both Francophone and Anglophone countries. This policy was also meant to eliminate prejudices that could creep in society and divide them. All students were required to learn in both French and English and were required to master the two languages.

Although implementing a bilingual policy can be a daunting task, library schools all over the world ought to give it some consideration. This is because the world is becoming more diversified and second language skills have always been handy when dealing with users who have low language proficiency in the language predominantly used in the library. The reason for trying to have both Anglophones and Francophones learn in the same classroom was to cut down on the cost of the program, help the government implement its bilingualism policy in order to foster reconciliation, and to give the graduates of the program an opportunity to work in diverse linguistic settings thereby enhancing their employability.

Below is a table showing the number of students and the language they considered to be proficient in at the time of admission.

**Language proficiency on admission at KIE**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Francophone</b>	<b>Anglophone</b>	<b>Total</b>
2004	16	3	19
2005	29	3	32
2006	30	2	32
2007	23	4	27
2008	42	4	46

Due to the increase in globalization and migration, need for bilingual librarians has been on the increase. Some of the library schools are incorporating bilingualism in their programs due to the diversity in linguistic composition in that country while others are doing it so as to have their graduates have a competitive advantage in the job market. Among Library schools incorporating bilingualism include those in Cameron, Puerto Rico, Switzerland among others.

The bilingualism policy was a success, however the government decided to discontinue the use of French as a medium of instruction in October 2008 and opted to use English as the Language of Instruction. In spite of French being the most widely spoken language next to kinyarwanda, it has been fast losing its grip in institutions of higher education. This government decision means that most of the people who had very little proficiency in English are now required to learn English and it is mandatory for all government employees and students in public institutions. The government justified this decision by saying that French is only spoken in very few countries in the world. However, it seems that this decision was political and part of the French and Rwandan government posturing.

### **Continuing Education**

In order to have qualified staff and ensure that the existing library staff are constantly updated in refresher courses, *Commission de Coopération Universitaire au Développement des universités francophones de Belgique* (CUD) established a 4-month training course from the year 2000 (Hellemans, 2004). This training is entitled “Stage à l’Usage des Technologies de l’Information et de la Communication dans les Bibliothèques universitaires” and takes place in Belgium each year from April to July. Its mission is to enable library staff in French speaking universities to be conversant with the use of ICT in Library operations and provision of information. So far, only five librarians from Rwanda have attended the training; yet, there are many more who would wish to undertake such training for skills development.

Starting the year 2008, *La Francophonie*, an intergovernmental organization of French speaking nations provided scholarship funding to four students who had completed their Diploma in Library and Information Science at Kigali Institute of Education to continue with their education. These four are among a group of nine students currently undertaking their last two years of study through an online program that is being offered by *Ecole de Bibliothécaires, Archivistes et documentalistes (EBAD)* in Senegal.

### **Scholarships**

After the genocide, the French government used to provide at least 15 scholarships annually for people working in Rwandan universities to undertake a Masters degree or a PhD in France. It is after 1999 that at least four librarians managed to be awarded one of those French government scholarships to study for a masters degree at *école nationale supérieure des sciences de l’information et des bibliothèques (ENSSIB)* in France. These scholarships were a great boost to enhance the quality of library personnel in Rwanda. They were also helpful in Teaching as part-time staff at Kigali Institute of Education’s Library and Information Science program. Had the genocide never happened, it is doubtful if this number of people working in Libraries could have had any chance of undertaking their masters degrees. Many countries felt obliged to help Rwanda rebuild its human resources and that is why many scholarships were provided by countries such as France, Belgium, Holland, Britain among a host of others. However, following the fallout between the French and Rwandan Government over what transpired during the time of the genocide in 1994, the French government has since ceased to provide scholarships to the Rwandan government.

## **Publishing houses**

The greatest weakness in the information sector in Rwanda is a weak publishing sector. There have been many printing shops but there was no publishing house. This meant that books had to be imported. However, the situation started to change when Bakame Editions was established in 1995 so as to publish children's books which were relevant to the Rwandan culture and to enhance literacy (Bakame Editions, 2009). Publishing in Rwanda is still in its infancy stage and has got a very long way to go.

## **Expansion of education after 1994**

The greatest contributor to the expansion of Libraries in Rwanda was the expansion of education that took place after the 1994 genocide. By 1998, 53% of the population was illiterate and only 3% of the civil servants had tertiary education (Karemera, 1998). Seventy-five percent of staff in the public sector had either been killed, were in exile or in prison as a result of the 1994 genocide (Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, 1998). Education had previously been used as a tool of oppression. In 1978 the government education and employment policy of admitting students into higher education and employing people on a quota system based on ethnicity and regionalism ended up leaving out well deserving students.

The need to open up more new institutions and to revamp some of those that were in existence became the government policy so as to develop the much needed human resource that would help to develop Rwanda. Public institutions that existed before the 1994 genocide such as Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture et d'Élevage (ISAE) which was established in 1989 were revamped, while private institutions including Université Adventiste D'Afrique Centrale established in 1989 reopened in 1996 and Institut Supérieur de Gitwe reopened in 1997. Among the new institutions that were established after the genocide included: Université Libre de Kigali (ULK) established in 1996, Kigali Health Institute established in 1996, Université laïque de Kigali (UNILAK) that opened in 1997, Kigali Institute of Science Technology and Management established in 1997, Kigali Institute of Education was established in 1999, and The School of Banking and Finance established in 2003 (World Bank 2004). Among the public institutions that were revamped include Université National du Rwanda that was established in 1963, and which had been devastated by the genocide.

Apart from the genocide that had claimed the lives of the most qualified people, the education system was set up in a way that very few people graduated with a Bachelors degree (*licence*) from University. Since its inception in 1962 upto 1994, less than four thousand people had graduated with a Bachelors degree from Université National du Rwanda. There was no way Rwanda could develop with such a low manpower output. Even after graduating, most of the graduates ended up in administrative positions in government. This meant that educating library staff could not be a priority as other sectors such as health were given more priority in as much as nearly all the sectors of the economy were staffed with people who had low academic qualifications.



## **The role of the international community**

Rehabilitation and reconstruction of Rwanda has greatly been facilitated by the international community such as Individual countries, United Nations organizations, and non government organization contributed funding for reconstruction and rehabilitation. Great support has come from World Bank, Swiss Cooperation, USAID, UNESCO, German cooperation, French Cooperation, and the Netherlands government. This is not to forget the great role that the Rwanda government has played. By 1996, over \$2 billion had been spent on Rwanda and a bigger chunk of this amount had been used to support refugees both in Rwanda and in neighboring countries (Kumar, Tardif-Douglin, Knapp, Maynard, Manikas, & Sheckler, 1996b). Between 1994 and 2003, ten United Nations organizations spent \$1.9 billion on Rwanda (United Nations, 2004). Some of this funding has had a trickledown effect and became a great boost in supporting acquisition of library resources.

Non-governmental organizations such as Book Aid International and Books for Africa have been instrumental in donating books to Rwanda. Most of these books have been critical in enhancing the collection of most of the public academic institutions. Between 2005 and 2007, Book Aid donated books worth approximately 50,000 British Pounds. In 2005, the Library at Kigali Institute of Education received a total of 7,106 books totaling \$85,524 as donations from organizations and individuals (Kigali Institute Of Education, 2005). Most of the other academic libraries have also heavily relied on book donations. This is because government funding to libraries is small taking into consideration the needs of the library. It is unfortunate that Rwandan government funding has also tended inconsistent and fluctuates a lot.

Libraries of private institutions and schools in Rwanda have tended to lag behind as compared to those in public institutions. It seems that these private institutions have tended to focus more on building infrastructure such as classrooms and libraries seem not to have been high on their list of priorities. Books donations have thus tended to be given to public institutions as opposed to private ones.

## **Digitization efforts**

Most of the information in Rwanda is still in analog format and can be quite challenging to access. Because most people around the world had never heard of Rwanda until the genocide happened, they wanted to have a clearer understanding of the country but had little information available to them about the Rwanda. This led to the establishment of *Reseau documentaire international sur la region des Grand Lacs Africains* which is a database of grey literature mainly on Rwanda and Burundi and to a lesser extend the surrounding countries. Literature that is mainly being digitized includes reports both from government agencies, political parties, civil society, non-governmental organizations and even from individuals. This is because a lot of the critical information in this region is mainly contained in unpublished documents.

A similar project called the E-Documentation Center was established in 2004 at Kigali Institute of Science and Technology through the support of United Nations Development Program. The mission of the project was to establish a gateway for information on development and policy in Rwanda. The Center is

involved in digitizing records related to development and was to specifically focus on how the various sectors in Rwanda are implementing the millennium development goals. It was very active at inception but has since not been as vibrant as it used to be.

## Conclusion

Since the colonial era, growth of effective and efficient libraries, archives and education of Library and Information Science staff in Rwanda had been very slow. The same situation continued even after independence in 1962. However, the genocide of 1994 proved to be a turning point. There has been a mushrooming of libraries in Rwanda as a result of newly established institutions which are geared to train the much needed human resources. All these efforts could not have been feasible had it not been for donations and funding by the international community and non government organizations. Need to have organized records and archives are being recognized and need for qualified library and information science personnel are being felt more than ever before. The future of libraries is bright because of the positive attitude that most administrators are having towards having functional libraries. Graduates from the Library and Information Science program at Kigali Institute of Education are greatly changing the library landscape in Rwanda for the better. Had the genocide never happened, that state of libraries and archives in Rwanda might have been far worse that it is today.

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