

# Library Collection Development and its Social Responsibility: Case Study of Kanal Ilmu Library

**Ike Iswary Lawanda**

Department of Library Science and Information  
Faculty of Cultural Science (FIB) University of Indonesia  
Kampus Baru UI Depok 16424, Indonesia  
e-mail: iswari@ui.edu; lawanda62@yahoo.com

## Abstract

*Library collection development is the process of identifying the strength and the weakness of a collection as well as concerning the needs of users, community sources and attempting to correct the existing weakness in a collection. This paper describes the Kanal Ilmu Library, which is in the process of developing its collection to serve the information needs of its population whom are special people in the context of Indonesian society. Kanal Ilmu Library's objective is to educate homeless children, street cigarette sales kids, street singer kids and shoe-polishing kids, by providing a collection that meets the need of these kids. In order to understanding the goal of both the library and its users, librarians need to be proactive and appropriate in ascertaining their needs for information. The library needs to undertake in-depth-interview, participant observation and documents analysis in order to obtain the needed information for such patrons as they are so unique in manners and habits. This approach helps in the development of a realistic collection and a library which caters for grass root needs.*

**Keywords:** Management policy; Selection policy; Community library; Collection development; Kanal Ilmu Library

## 1. Introduction

Collection development is concerned with the formulation of a systematic plan to build a library collection which will meet the needs of its users. It encompasses a number of activities related to the development of the library's collection including the determination and coordination of selection policy, assessment of current and potential user needs, collection use studies, collection evaluation, identification of collection needs, selection of materials, planning of resource sharing, collection maintenance and weeding (Gorman and Howes, 1989; Clayton and Gorman, 2001). A systematic plan will be implemented at the Kanal Ilmu Library, which is a library catering to the needs of the poor marginalized community such as children of bus ticket sellers, children who collect recycled materials from garbage bins and dumps, boys who are shoe polishers, homeless children as well as jobless ex-prisoners. These groups of people are termed as marginalised people because of their poverty level and they are normally stigmatized. Thus, it is the social responsibility of practicing librarians or library scholars to support the development of a library collection for this group of users.

Library collection can be understood as an assembly of information resources both available physically combined with those on virtual access. A collection development policy is therefore needed that delineates the purpose and contents of a collection relevant to its users as a whole (Evans, 2000; Futas, 1984). Users need become priority in order to fulfill and to gain full advantage from documents and information provided. As a volunteer-based working project, Kanal Ilmu Library is limited in term of not being able to justify user needs which should be followed by systematic collection development, selection, acquisition, provision of access, maintenance, evaluation, preservation and weeding. Seeking information about Kanal Ilmu Library users' needs requires interviewing users directly.

This paper describes firstly, the library collection development and management specifically for Kanal Ilmu Library and factors elated to making the run effectively. Secondly, the paper describes the selection of resources to achieve balance between materials needed and wanted by users and materials constrained by the parent organization imposed by censorship and intellectual freedom.

## **2. Collection Management and Development in Kanal Ilmu Library**

A library has requirements for accountability to be able to justify decisions especially concerning budget spent. Thus, a library is expected to be able to state broadly that collection decisions are made based upon requirements. In the case of Kanal Ilmu Library, the biggest problem faced is equipment availability and infrastructure. This problem is solved by using separated spaces around the central area. For short term needs collection development is the first step undertaken to serve its users. This is followed by a more active role once the needs of community members of the Kanal Ilmu Library have already recognized. The parent institution of the Kanal Ilmu Library is Bina Insan Mandiri institute. Bina Insan Mandiri is an institution based on Islamic teachings but its community users are various in faith and ethnicity.

It is a challenge to identify and understand the needed information in this context comprising library resources both educational and recreational. The library resources includes primary, secondary publication (abstract, index and monograph) as well as textbooks and encyclopedias. Every level of users will be differentiated in accordance to their needs. Librarians should ask users about their needs in order to satisfy the user need of information. Kanal Ilmu Library is part of Bina Insan Mandiri Institution and the services provided emerged from the motivation and practices of community members who live in the area. It is therefore categorized as a community library.

The first step of this study involves seeking to know users by profiling them formally and informally so that it is easier to predict their diversity in skill, knowledge, and needs. Informal way to approach members of community borrowed from method in ethnography which elicits information directly from users and persons from the parent institution. Users of this community library are highly motivated information consumers but have very low access to availability information.

The goal and objective of an institution and its existing users need to become the focus of collection management. Collection management is a concept beyond material acquisition policy, preservation, storage, weeding and discard of stock. It emphasizes the systematic management of library existing materials: the systematic management of planning, composition, funding, evaluation and use of library collection over extended periods of time in order to meet specific institutional objectives (Jenkins, 1999).

## **3. Collection Social Responsibility to Kanal Ilmu Library**

Kanal Ilmu Library is supposed to be a community library in Indonesia or sometimes referred to as "Taman Bacaan". It is located in a marginalized district of the suburban metropolitan city of Jakarta. The library is situated behind the bus depot and the terminal mosque and could hardly be found unless a user asks someone who lives around or near the terminal mosque. There lives around 1000 people classified in more than 100 family units. These people are categorized as poor and marginalized. They are garbage organizers, recycled waste pickers, in bus fee pickers, shoe polishing kids, street singer lads, and jobless ex-prisoners with their families who lived around this inhibited area which is fact outlawed under the constitution. I have to describe thess outrageous settings for a library not in order to get sympathy or mercy from readers but to provide

the real scenario. This community need a library so that they could read printed materials free of charge and have fun reading as well as they could see other worlds outside the world in which they are trapped right now. They are living in the streets, which are problematic, tough and fierce.

The Kanal Ilmu “library” or “Taman bacaan” was going to be founded under its institution called Yayasan Bina Insan Mandiri. Kanal Ilmu library was initially proposed by a group of youths who wanted to voluntarily build a library. They have managed to collect around 100 used books for the Taman Bacaan itself and have gathered 200 used books from 1001 Taman Bacaan Network Indonesia. Before Kanal Ilmu (its meaning: Canal of Knowledge) came in plan Taman Bacaan Bina Insan Mandiri has already provided the most minimal standard operational library services. It was a spontaneous effort and derived from ideas of persons from the institution who are aware that books could provide hopes and dreams. The group started to lend books to be read and borrowed on a piece of land in front of the mosque. It was reportedly well received based on the information I have collected from persons of the institution and some community members.

#### **4. Method of Information Gathering**

It is realized that users of the library have their own need and in order to provide accordingly interviews were conducted. The first stage involves carrying out conversation interviews in order to get knowledge of the overall situation. Subsequently, a dialogue was carried out to ascertain users’ vision and needs. The next stage involves questionnaire interviews to establish the objectives and the information relevant to collection development. The last step involves consultation interviews in order to convey collection development that meets the vision of the institution. This is necessary as the users do have knowledge, belief, dignity and skills of their own and refused to be pitied even though poverty surrounds them (Lawanda, 2006).

#### **5. Method of Transferring Knowledge of Library and its Functions**

In order to internalize a nice, cozy and friendly library image setting and function the researcher decided to transfer knowledge using the film media. Through this media users are shown the conceptual-based library image, the prospective infrastructure, some alternative views including the existing condition of collection and the setting of the Kanal Ilmu Library. The presentation informs them of the proposed conceptual framework of the policy and steps of collection management and library development.

After obtaining the inputs from the setting itself the next step taken was processing the inputs. In this process an integrated approach of information resource management was taken so that the process could be well coordinated and executed. Communal library requires the person in charge (consultant librarian) to take into account stakeholders opinions when making decision.

Collection development for this particular communal library for marginalised people considers the following (Clayton and Gorman, 2001):

- The goals, objectives and priorities.
- To analyse the materials already available and methods to relate them to community users.
- To establish policies for collection selection, acquisition, discard, maintainance and evaluation.
- To emphasize the important of user need for collection in connection with what and how collection is to be selected.

- To establish the procedures of evaluation and revising policies.

To develop a community library particularly related to the marginalised group need a culturally strategic approach in order for a library's existence to be welcomed. Therefore, collection management policy is informed beforehand to lead development collection policies.

The collection management policy presented in this context consists of:

- (a) Library collection and access policy reflecting needs of users and the goal of institution Bina Insan Mandiri.
- (b) Policy function explained to the institution encompassing building collection to;
  - Enable identification of the strength and weakness of the collection
  - Inform stakeholders of the collection management policy.
  - Internalize responsibility in the librarian in charge towards collecting and assisting users develop their needs and set priorities.
  - Communicate with other libraries to develop and to maintain collection development and resources (for example becoming a member of *taman bacaan* 1001).
  - Meet users' needs.
  - Provide efficient collection retrieval: technique which are not time consuming.
  - Categorise collection in the form of media, objective reasoning, and resources.
  - Budget for the future.
  - Establish the principles and practices for selection identifying the person in charge, selection control, and the principles.
  - Establish policy regarding special collection such as confidential materials.
  - Determine physical collection preservation policy.
  - Establish a weeding identifying the person in charge, process criteria, time, weeded materials.
  - Conducting annually policy review.

It did not work smoothly as we have predicted when it was presented but on the other hand the community indicated willingness to support every ideas and application necessary in a process of establishing their library. The next step was the presentation of a planning policy.

Steps which are taken in the process of planning policies are as follows (Evans, 2000; Curley and Broderick, 1985):

- Setting guidelines: the musts in the policy, appointing consultants, decision making procedures.
- Analyzing users needs: interviewing users to get input for the process of development policy.
- Preparing draft document, to notice controversial area.
- Distributing documents to the institution Bina Insan Mandiri representative, librarian in charge, community person and user representatives to gain inputs.
- To adopt revised documents and distribute it to those persons mentioned above and for publicity.
- Reviewing this policy.

The list of the process is useful to determine clearly about the existence of persons involved in the library, that is the consultants for this terminal, the community library

users, the librarian in charge and representatives from the institution. The policy has to be in a written form in order enabling the idea to function effectively and achieve cooperation and contact amongst persons involved in the library as an organization.

Policies are made to bind users, persons in charge of the library and institution persons. The result of interview indicated that person representing the institution have their own library collection policy. In that case, library collection set up has to be socialized to those people concerned with the library – and not compared against standard or benchmark. This kind of policy enables institution to move along together with person in charge as librarian and users – in a flexible state.

The library collection policy consists of :

- (a) Library willingly to think about library objectives and to do it in commitment in order to meet users needs in short term and long term program.
- (b) The library aims to serve the whole of community members.
- (c) To reduce subjective bias of selectors and balancing selection criteria.
- (d) To provide information to assist in making budgeting.
- (e) To perform operational efficiency such as helping junior staff.
- (f) Handling complaint.

This policy is legitimized or accepted in the institution policy and readily applied to technical library work.

Technical works in the library are undertaken by student volunteers, who are willing to assist and to perform the work so willingly. They process existing collection in accordance to the most simplified way, using relevant classification and bibliographical standard and most of all applicable to the skill and ability of the person in charge. One person in the community is elected to be in charge to bear the work of processing and circulation. The person started to be involved in processing works trained and applied under supervision. From the beginning the person has been introduced with policies of management and collection development. The knowledge received would hopefully result in an awareness and willingness to perform works that create skill and service to its users needs.

Selection is done under an agreement as provided by the institution's vision, which states that within the collection, materials which contain austerity, ruggedness, bleakness, unkindness and cruelty should be discarded. This is one of the challenges whereby there is a need to convince them gradually that there are also useful and relevant translated imported comics. Similarly, the types of romantic novels are also a matter of concern since the institution's personnel are also judging them. These issues are slowly being addressed through lobbying but the main priority is for the library to operate promptly and within a flexible arrangement.

The library has to be able to operate its circulation system with rather loose restrictions for its users but on the other hand, users have to be responsible for the materials that they borrow. This has to be the operational circulation system since the working hours is not restricted but has to be adapted to the life cycle of the users. It is also operated by volunteers who are there the whole day and the opening hours are in the mornings, afternoon and at night for the elementary, junior and secondary school levels. This cannot be avoided since we need to consider the goals the users are trying to achieve through the library collection.

This service is provided within the space provided for the library, which is supposed to be properly built up in an appropriate space. In reality, the condition is far from the ideal, and adoption and adaptation has to be taken in concern. There are three spaces

separately provided by the institution within an area of the mosque. I mention the mosque again as it is the centre of community living and the spaces available are huts form structure next to the mosque. The library serves collection occupying three separated spaces even though it only needs not more than 10 steps to enter each space from a point. Collection are set in the mosque, a school room and *balai remaja* (resident hall).

Collection then need to be classified and divided into: collection of textbooks and children story and tales position in classroom; hobby books including novel and religious books arranged in the resident hall; and in the mosque lay inspiring religious light content books. It does not use any particular scientific judgment to decide what collection goes to which location. It only needs moral judgment to define and understand their hopes. The reason for spreading the library spaces in three is to allow users to easily access the collection in the middle of their leisure or learning time. A system of circulation in trial is based on trust to users to declare themselves as borrowers by writing their names on an inventory books provided in each room. This method is available when there is no one in charge at any one time.

Community member users and *Bina Insan Mandiri* personnel put their hopes in the collection in terms of providing users with the options to improve their lives to be better. Users are mostly self supporting persons regardless of their sex, age and status. The books provide them with experiences of conditions contrary to their own, acquaintances with heroic figure, innovating and motivating conditions. Users actually wish that through the collection they read they would get hopes and dreams (again) in their life. They perfectly comprehend that this is hardly enough for them to reach certain level of reading. For them, it would be just enough to be able to survive in everyday life with having hopes and dreams would help overcome a part of their living struggles.

## 6. Conclusion

The objective of this paper is to break the image of the library as a cellar (ivory tower) or a *menara gading* in the context of Indonesia by establishing a community library of and by its community members. It is indeed a challenge for scholars of library science in Indonesia particularly, to keep up with technological development alone as well as serving the grass root communities. The latter is seen as the social responsibility of the profession.

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