

**Enhancing democracy and good governance**  
**A curriculum proposal for information/knowledge**  
**management professionals (IKMPs) in the SCECSAL region**

Isaac M.N. Kigongo-Bukenya

East African School of Library and Information Science,  
College of Computing and Information Sciences (CoCIS), Makerere University,  
Kampala, Uganda, and

Sarah Kaddu

Uganda Christian University, Mukono, Uganda

**Abstract**

**Purpose** – This paper seeks to advance the case for designing an information and knowledge management curriculum (IKMC) to produce information and knowledge management professionals (IKMPs) in the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL) region. It highlights challenges and solutions and proposes a model IKMC.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paper is based on the analysis of literature on Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum design, implementation and review; research findings by renowned LIS curriculum experts; discussions and sharing experiences with colleagues in LIS education institutions – Eastern African School of Library and Information Science and LIS departments at the Uganda Christian University and Kyambogo University in addition to the author's research and publications on curriculum design and management.

**Findings** – The paper posits that the SCECSAL region is already in the Information and Knowledge Society (IKS) and that appropriate information and knowledge (IK) are pre-requisites to the promotion and sustainability of democracy and good governance (Gg). It emphasises that information and knowledge management (IKM) are the corner stones of the IKS, because they constitute the framework of theory and competencies vital in managing information and

knowledge. Furthermore, effective IKM is the pillar of producing the IKMPs themselves, a product of appropriate and well managed IKMC. The paper proposes an IKMC Model capable of producing IKMPs in the SCECSAL region.

**Originality/value** – The proposed curriculum model should be the framework to be adopted by the LIS education and training institutions in the SCECSAL region to produce IKMPs with theory and competencies to manage the IKS towards enhancing democracy and Gg.

**Keywords** Democracy, Governance, Knowledge management, Information management, Uganda Paper type View

## 1. Introduction

The gist of this paper is that delivery of effective information and knowledge services are the basis of nurturing democracy and good governance (Gg). Information and knowledge should enlighten the parties involved in the process to make correct decisions. The assumption is that information and knowledge are pre-requisites to democracy and Gg.

Another assumption is that information and knowledge are not the biblical “manna” falling from heaven. Such information and knowledge should be professionally managed. A requirement to achieve this is a body of well educated and trained corps called “information and knowledge professionals”. Other assumptions are invoked: first, the information and knowledge managers should attain theory, skills and competencies without which effective information and knowledge provision is but a dream. Second, there should be a curriculum well prepared in consultation with stakeholders; its teaching and training should provide appropriate theory and competencies.

The model evolves from the above assumptions (Figure 1).

The MODEL can be translated thus: the information and knowledge management curriculum (IKMC) in the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL) region is required for the education and training of

information and knowledge management professionals (IKMPs) for nurturing and sustaining democracy and Gg.

## **2. Democracy and Gg**

If IKMPs were to be functionally effective, it is imperative the terms applied in the work environment are clearly understood. In pursuance of this truism, the terms democracy and Gg are briefly reviewed.

Democracy and Gg are two sides of the same coin; they co-exist. Democracy is a pre-requisite for Gg. Gg itself promotes democracy. But without democracy, it is a dream in the wilderness to have Gg.

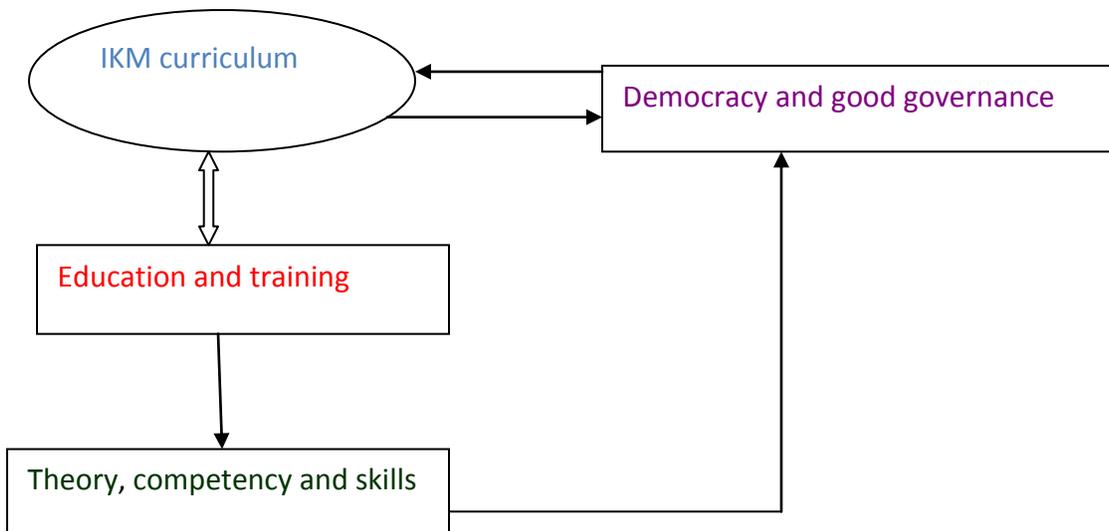
### 2.1 Democracy

Democracy is a political government carried out either directly by the people (direct democracy) or by means of elected representatives of the people (representative democracy). Democracy comes from the Greek word “demokratia” – rule of the people –coined from “demos” – the people and “kparoc” – power – denoting a political system in Athens following the popular uprising in 508 BC.

Democracy includes two principles: “citizens being equal before the law and having equal access to power” and the “freedom of the citizens secured by legitimised rights and liberties generally protected by the National Constitution”.

**Figure 1.**

IKMC model



**Source:** Kigongo-Bukenya (2010)

Characteristic features of democracy include: separation of powers (legislature, executive and judiciary); core freedoms (political expression, freedom of speech and freedom of the press). Others include: political pluralism, fair elections, majority rule, human rights, parliamentary supremacy, etc.

## 2.2 Good governance

Gg generally connotes how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee human rights. Gg is the process of implementing (or not implementing) decisions. It applies to corporate, international, national and local governance. Gg emphasises interaction among people, structures, processes and traditions that support the exercise of legitimate authority, structure, processes and traditions in provision of sound leadership, direction, oversight and control of an entity in order to ensure that its purpose is achieved and that there is proper accounting for the conduct of affairs, the use of resources and the results of the activities. Gg is the corner stone of transparency, integrity, honesty, loyalty, commitment to genuine profit of humanity. Gg is “ethical behaviour” in public and private life.

### **3. Nurturing democracy and Gg**

Knowing what democracy and Gg are (definition and appreciation of these concepts) is much different from nurturing them (making plans and creating conditions of their growth), implementing and maintaining them (ensuring that they are not only put in practice, but are also perpetuated). Each of the above ingredients is as important as the other which means holistic success should mean nurturing all. The following are pre-requisites for the nurturing of democracy and Gg:

- The appreciation of own human rights and those of others by the citizens of a nation; and the determination to enforce them, through sensitisation programmes using several strategies including rallies, seminars, mass media, etc.
- Politically mature corps of citizens capable and willing to manage democracy and Gg. These should include politicians, managers and administrators, and judicial experts, among others.
- Strong infrastructure for democracy and Gg including political parties, the Parliament, the Executive and the Judiciary.
- Regular evaluation and accountability of democracy and Gg, mainly through regular fair elections.

### **4. IKM in nurturing democracy and Gg**

The inter-use of the terms “information” and “knowledge” are sometimes ambiguous and confusing. Often they are interchangeably used: information sometimes may be used in the context of a raw material whose product is knowledge; sometimes ones knowledge may be another’s information – meaning in this context that knowledge is a raw material and information, the product.

The definitions of “information management (IM)” and “knowledge management (KM)”, probably clearly draw the differences. IM is understood as the discipline that analyses information as an organisational resource – embracing uses, value and distribution of all data and information within an organisation and evaluating the kinds of data and information, an organisation requires for it to function effectively.

In short IM is the acquisition, recording, organising, storage, dissemination and retrieval of information – getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time. KM is the process through which an organisation consciously and comprehensively gathers, organises, shares and analyses its knowledge in terms of resources, documents and people skills. KM involves data mining and methods of operation to push information to users.

The above definitions portray two roads leading to the same destination, namely applying information into knowledge for nurturing “democracy” and “Gg” in a nation or society. Democracy and Gg do not happen by themselves – plans must be made, implemented and evaluated towards the realisation of democracy and Gg. In real terms, there should be a programme of instruction, an IKMC directed to produce a corps of IKMPs, taught the theory and competencies required to manage information and knowledge. This is vital because information and knowledge are catalysts of nurturing democracy and good guidance.

Two issues arise here: the process of designing a curriculum with content to produce IKMPs with appropriate knowledge and skills; and the management of such curriculum.

## **5. Designing the IKMC**

Four concerns arise when designing IKMC: the principles of designing the curriculum, the curriculum process, the content, teaching and evaluation of content.

### **5.1 Principles of curriculum development**

The principles of curriculum development are the set guidelines and policies that should direct the partners in the curriculum process – formation, implementation and evaluation. The

principles set the basics that have to be adhered to and specify procedures, rules and regulations to be adhered to in the process.

Examples of principles of curriculum design include:

- Epistemological. What should count as knowledge? As knowing?
- Political. Who shall control the selection and distribution of knowledge? Through what institutions?
- Economic. Who shall control the knowledge linked to the existing and unequal distribution of power, goods and the services of society?
- Ideological. What knowledge is of most worth? Whose knowledge is it?
- Technical. How shall curricular knowledge be made accessible to students?
- Aesthetic. How do we link the curriculum knowledge to the biography and personal meanings of the student?
- Ethical. How shall we treat others responsibly and justly in education? What ideas of moral conduct and community serve as the underpinnings of the ways students and teachers are treated?
- Historical. What traditions in the field already exist to help us answer these questions? What other resources do we need?

## 5.2 Process of curriculum design

Process refers to the series of activities undertaken to consult stakeholders such as: curriculum specialists, educators, students, users, the professional associations, the relevant government bodies, administrators, etc.

Consultation is usually on matters, related to the knowledge and skills to be taught, by whom, to whom, on what level, for how long, through which methods, evaluation and the terminal qualifications. The curriculum process is important so that each and all the vested parties in the profession are consulted since they hold high stakes in the information transfer process.

### 5.3 Curriculum content

Curriculum content is what should be taught (theory and practice). It is from the content that derives the theory that is the foundation of skills or competencies, IKMPs require in their day-to-day operations. For example, there is theory of cataloguing or theory of management, which point to the nature of knowledge in cataloguing or management required. Theory is the basis of the practices – skills and competencies that translates into action or performance of activities to meet the objectives of the library and information organisations.

### 5.4 Teaching

This refers to the managing of the syllabus – the course outlines, preparation of lectures, delivery of lectures, supervising practical and internships, and evaluation (management of the examination process). Teaching is management of the learning process of theory and practices required by the potential IKMPs, who should study the set curriculum (content).

## **6. Challenges in curriculum design, implementation and evaluation**

Challenges are faced in each of the above phases of curriculum – design, implementation and evaluation. However, this paper limits itself to general challenges that have overall impact on the four phases together.

### 6.1 Change – scenery, e.g. ICTs

There are rapid political, economic, scientific and technological changes that affect the Library and Information Science (LIS) Republic by affecting the user habits, consumption quality and quantity rates, information producers, processors and consumers at the same time. The frontline runner of change is ICTs. ICTs have not only revolutionised the mode of information generation, processing, storage, retrieval, etc. but has contributed to the realisation of the

information and knowledge society, has facilitated globalisation and also contributed to the digital divide, and computer crime, among others. These changes must be reflected in curriculum development so that the right knowledge and skills are taught to the information and knowledge management (IKM) professionals.

## 6.2 Government support – policies, legal issues

It is unfortunate that LIS issues cannot be politicised so as to win popularity and consequent election of politicians. Voters would rather elect a person promising to build a hospital, a school and a bank or construct a road than one promising building a resource-centre and library in an area. This has led to lip service promises and consequently loss-out to IKM services.

## 6.3 Funding

Low priority to IKM services has not only led to poor enactment of IKM-related legislation, but also to funding and other type of support budget for development; for instance, the stipulated minimum percentages of budget for example 10 per cent of the overall budget are never implemented. Many countries hardly have specified minimum figures in the national budget for IKM development. Sometimes, where the budget is ever approved for IKM-related purposes, it would be the item to be cancelled if the budget was reduced.

## 6.4 In-adequacy of education and training facilities for the required workforce

There is paucity of IKM education institutions regarding well-equipped laboratories, library and information services, research facilities, space and adequate staff. These affect curriculum design and related aspects. It is interesting to note that in some countries, for example, South Africa and even in Europe and USA, there have been un-viable IKM education institutions which have had to be closed. This, however, is not the situation in the counties in this region, for example, Uganda where new LIS education institutions are being established at the new universities, for example, Uganda Christian University, Ndejje University, etc.

## 6.5 Diminishing LIS education support

In the past library education and training, and library and information services development, had big backing of cultural institutions, such as the British Council, United States Information

Services, CRIT/DSE, IDRC, etc. as well as direct support from foundations such as the Ford Foundation, etc. These are no more, because either they have shifted their priority of support to other areas such as human rights, gender issues, etc. or have closed down because of global economic woes.

## 6.6 Reciprocity of qualifications

Much as, there have been efforts for example in the European Community countries to recognise LIS qualifications from countries within the Union, there is still reluctance among other countries to accept qualified IKMPs from other countries or region. This has created frustration to free mobility of LIS professionals. One way out of this dilemma has been networking among IKM schools, which have not been easy to implement. For example, efforts have been made to create NETLIS-ECSA in Eastern and Central Africa. However, no positive results have been recorded.

## **7. IKMC for the SCECSAL region: a proposal**

Figure 1 shows the proposal of IKMC that could be adopted subject to the circumstances obtaining in a country or LIS education institutions. It is a result of analysis of several IKMC and highlights key features of knowledge and competencies necessary to IKMPs at large. The outline is limited to course content. Other issues such as programme name, rationale, entry qualifications, duration, terminal award, regulations, quality assurance issues, etc. are not tackled.

### 7.1 Targeted intellectual, practical and transferable skills

The content is intended to produce the under mentioned intellectual, practical and transferable skills associated with KM.

Reflection – continuous improvement on how the individuals operate, information literacy, organisational skills, networking with others, research, communication skills, creative skills and collaborative skills.

## **8. Summary of proposed courses**

### 8.1 Topic one

Basic definitions and concepts related to IKM, e.g. IM, KM, etc.

### 8.2 Topic two

KM – roles and responsibilities to be performed to implement the strategies and responsibilities and perform the processes for effective IKM implementation.

### 8.3 Topic three

IKM – processes, methods and tools (evaluating, piloting, designing, improving and implementing work practices, processes, methods, tools and techniques).

### 8.4 Topic four

Information and knowledge competencies – developing and managing new IKM competencies to perform new IKMP roles and responsibilities, processes and methods and use of new tools and knowledge technologies.

### 8.5 Topic five

Information and knowledge networks – developing and participating in effective knowledge networks, communication practices to surface and share valuable tacit knowledge locked away in the heads of individuals.

### 8.6 Topic six

Information and knowledge management technologies – developing and implementing the new hardware and software technologies – knowledge portals, knowledge servers, knowledge bases, collaborative work spaces to support IKM processes, methods and tools, canvassing, knowledge harvesting, content management tools (taxonomy processes and desktop search tools, etc), knowledge logs, e-mail calendars, task managers, online Web Assistants, Wikis – desktop, personal and semantic.

### 8.7 Topic seven

The human factor – recruitment, selection, development, communication, motivation.

### 8.8 Topic eight

IKM measures – planning, organising, budgeting, marketing and PRO, evaluation – measuring the effectiveness of implementing KM and the business benefits derived.

### 9. Methods of teaching

Interactive teaching with student intensive participation: lectures supplemented by reading; preparation and presentation of projects; individual group seminars and presentations; internship and attachment.

### 10. Evaluation

Progressive assessment of course, work; written examinations and research assessment.

## Further reading

Davenport, T.H. and Prusak, L. (2000), *Working Knowledge: How Corporations Manage What They Know*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, available at: [www.amazon.com/working-knowledge-Thomas-H-Davenport/dp/15785130014](http://www.amazon.com/working-knowledge-Thomas-H-Davenport/dp/15785130014) (accessed 25 July 2010).

Jardine, D.W., Clifford, P. and Friesen, S. (2003), *Back to the Basics of Teaching and Learning: Thinking the World Together*, Lawrence-Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, available at: [www.essay411.com/quinntin.html](http://www.essay411.com/quinntin.html) (accessed 25 July 2010).

Knowledge Management (2010), available at: [www.knowledge-management-online.com/knowledgeManagement-Systems.html](http://www.knowledge-management-online.com/knowledgeManagement-Systems.html) (accessed 25 July 2010).

Nonaka and Takeuchi Knowledge Management Cycle (2010), available at: <http://hubpages.com/hub/Nonaka-and-Takeuchi-knowledge-management-cycle> (accessed 23 July 2010).

Palamagamba, J.K. (2010), "Good governance: definitions and implications", Faculty of Law, University of Dar es salaam, available at: [www.fes-tanzania.org/docgood-governance.pdf](http://www.fes-tanzania.org/docgood-governance.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2010).

Pinar, W.F. and Irwin, R.L (2005) in Aoki, T. (Ed.), *Curriculum in a New Key: The Collected Works of Ted*, Lawrence-Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, available at: [www.amazon.ca/CurriculumNew-Key-Collected-Works/dp/0805847421](http://www.amazon.ca/CurriculumNew-Key-Collected-Works/dp/0805847421) (accessed 25 July 2010).

Rees, S. and Jing, Lu (2009), "Innovation and employability in knowledge management curriculum design", Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 1-28, available at: <http://suudl.solent.ac.uk/1053/1/ItalicsVol8iss1Feb2009.pdf> (accessed 24 July 2010).

Titilayo Olademehin – Bamigboye (2006), “Democracy and good governance, peace and conflict”, available at: [www.tigweb.org/youth-media/panaroma/article.html?ContentID¼7107](http://www.tigweb.org/youth-media/panaroma/article.html?ContentID¼7107) (accessed 23 July 2010).

Tyler, R. (1949), “Basic principles of curriculum development and instruction”, available at: <http://coedu.usf.edu//agents/dlewis/publiccations/tyler.htm> (accessed 27 July 2010).