

The Need for a Professional Librarian: The Cyprus Development Bank Ltd's experience

**By Jill R. Kakoullis
Librarian/Information Officer,
Cyprus Development Bank Ltd, Nicosia**

The Cyprus Development Bank Ltd., (CDB) is one of the few organisations in Cyprus that employs a professionally qualified librarian.

This paper describes how the CDB's library came into existence, why the bank decided to appoint a professional librarian and the developments that have taken place since then.

The history of the library is relevant, as the library gradually evolved from a growing collection of publications held by the bank. It is, unfortunately, rare in commerce and industry for an organisation to establish a library by first appointing a professional librarian and then physically setting up the library. Usually an organisation has a collection of library materials and as the collection grows the need for someone to organise and look after it becomes apparent. This is in fact what happened at the CDB.

The Cyprus Development Bank Ltd. was originally established in 1963. There are now managers, consultants and analysts working there: accountants, economists, engineers, marketing and computer experts carrying out feasibility studies, consultancy assignments and granting loans to industry and tourism in Cyprus.

In 1963 there was no library at the bank. When statistics, books or reports were needed each member of staff had to find out on his own what existed and order them individually. By 1978 the CDB had a room with shelving containing books, statistics and reports. There was no classification scheme for organising the publications and there was no author or classified catalogue. An analyst would join the CDB, carry out research, purchase related publications and then perhaps several years later move to a post in government or industry and leave the statistics, books and reports behind. There was no properly organised catalogue so nobody knew exactly what was in the room or if anything was missing.

In 1979 the staff realised the need to start organising the statistical publications: Each analyst or manager looked after one set of statistics in his or her office. So, for example, if a member of staff wanted to consult import statistics he would go in to one office and then to another office to consult production statistics. The books and reports were still not in any classified order, they were still not properly catalogued.

In 1980 the CDB was computerising many of its operations and asked a systems analyst to design a subject classification system for the publications so that they could be properly organised. A systems analyst usually designs systems for computers. The classification scheme designed was not based on any of the major, internationally used schemes such as the Universal Decimal Classification Scheme ("UDC") or the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme ("Dewey"). It was an individual subject arrangement of the publications that the bank had at that time. The bank then assigned a part-time member of the clerical staff to arrange the books, start a card catalogue and keep the periodicals tidy.

In Cyprus we often have the problem that although there is a need for a library there is no funding available or there is not enough interest - nobody cares. Now at the CDB there was funding available and more importantly there was a keen awareness of the value of a well-organised, properly-run library. CDB staff had studied abroad at universities in the U.K. and U.S.A., staff had worked at the World Bank and attended courses at Harvard Business School - so they knew what professionally - run libraries could offer. They knew that they needed not just periodicals but current - awareness services, indexes, abstracts and access to international information databases. Not just books but author and classified catalogues, subject indexes, bibliographies and preferably a computerised system to organise and exploit the materials to the full.

In the light of this knowledge the CDB made the decision to recruit a professional librarian and in 1985 appointed a fulltime Librarian/Information Officer. The Librarian/Information Officer found, at the stage, a library with the bookstock shelved, some of it classified and part of it with a typed card catalogue. Many of the books, however, were not accurately classified as it takes professional training and experience to classify complex subject material. Many of the publications were still in offices around the bank and not classified or catalogued at all and the accessions register was incomplete. The periodicals were mostly stacked on the floor, there were items missing and again many periodicals were kept in individual offices. The statistics were in sets but they were not catalogued. Most important of all there was no reference or enquiry service to fully exploit the information there. The Librarian/Information Officer then started to implement a professionally managed library and information system: The accessions register was updated and the Library now has a complete author and classified catalogue with a subject index. The periodicals are now accessioned, circulated to staff and properly stored. There is centralised selection and purchasing of books, reports, computer software, cassettes and videos. The Librarian/Information Officer has contact with publishing houses and information centres overseas and advises the staff on what is being published in

their subject areas. A library bulletin is published and subject bibliographies and other lists of material compiled so that staff know what is currently available in the library. There is also a daily "presscuttings" service covering the Cypriot press and the Financial Times. The most important service introduced is the enquiry service which the Librarian/Information Officer provides to save the analysts' time. The economists, engineers and other professional staff are engaged on research and other projects and do not want to spend unnecessary time literature searching or trying to find out what statistics are available on a certain subject. The Librarian/Information Officer carries out literature searches and when statistics are needed locates the relevant sources or publications and extracts the required figures and carries out preliminary analyses on computer.

Further improvements to the library and information service are shortly to be implemented. A system has been designed by the Librarian/Information Officer, in conjunction with the CDB's Computing staff, to computerise all the library systems: ordering, accessioning, cataloguing and subject searching of the library's stock. Very soon every book, report, periodical, cassette or video that comes into the bank will be recorded on computer. This computerised bibliographic database will make subject searches of material more accurate thus enabling staff to fully exploit the materials available. It will also free the Librarian/Information Officer from some routine record-keeping thus providing more time for selection of library materials and enquiry work.

Finally I shall mention a few of the problems that occurred because the Library was set up before a professional librarian was appointed or before professional advice was available: The Library has a classification Scheme that was designed not by a librarian but by a system analyst. The scheme does not meet professional criteria regarding auxiliary schedules, notation, revision and expansion. It has thus not organised the Library's stock as well as one of the internationally used schemes such as the Universal Decimal Classification, Dewey Decimal Classification or the London Business Classification could have done. To completely re-classify a library, however, is expensive and time-consuming. Another problem that arose through lack of professional advice was the purchase of unsuitable fixed wooden shelving instead of adjustable library shelving with modules for book, periodical, video and disc storage. A further problem encountered by the Librarian/Information Officer was that there had been no formal retention policy for different categories material. This had resulted in a mass of old or out of date publications being kept. With the "Information explosion" experienced in recent decades it is essential that every library has such a policy so that different categories of material are displayed, later removed to a stack and then

either archived or disposed of according to their usefulness and value.

The experience of the Cyprus Development Bank Ltd. illustrates the need for professional librarians that is currently being felt in Cyprus. It also demonstrates the improvements in management and quality of service that they can implement when funds and backing are available.



Συζήτηση - Discussion

Πρόεδρος: Όποιος θέλει μπορεί να υποβάλει ερώτηση προς τους δυο ομιλητές για να κάμει είτε οποιαδήποτε παρατήρηση είτε συμπλήρωση.

Σύνεδρος: Ήθελα ακριβώς να επαινέσω τη συμμετοχή της κυρίας Κακουλλή και του κ. Γκλάβερ και ακόμη να συγχαρώ τους οργανισμούς τους, δηλαδή την Κυπριακή Τράπεζα Αναπτυξεως και το Κέντρο Ερευνων Μέσης Ανατολής που έχουν δημιουργήσει τέτοιες βιβλιοθήκες και ιδιαίτερα - και ίσως εδώ να οφείλεται η επιτυχία τους - που έχουν εργοδοτήσει προσοντούχους βιβλιοθηκονόμους. Αναφέρω ιδιαίτερα το παράδειγμα της Κυπριακής Τράπεζας Αναπτυξεως η οποία εργοδότησε την κυρία Σούζαν Οικονομίδου, πτυχιούχο βιβλιοθηκονόμο, η οποία, όπως μας ανέφερε η Κυρία Κακουλλή, οργάνωσε τη βιβλιοθήκη της πάνω σε επαγγελματικό επίπεδο. Περισσότερο ακόμα θέλω να εξάρω το μεγάλο ενδιαφέρον της Τράπεζας για τη βιβλιοθήκη που καταφαινεται από το γεγονός ότι όταν η κυρία Οικονομίδου αναγκάστηκε ν'απουσιάσει από τη βιβλιοθήκη της για δυο μήνες λόγω τοκετού η τράπεζα εργοδότησε αμέσως άλλη προσοντούχο βιβλιοθηκονόμο, την κυρία Κακουλλή, για ν'αντικαταστήσει αυτή τη βιβλιοθηκονόμο για όσο χρόνο θ'απουσιάζει. Αυτό πιστεύω πως είναι ενδεικτικό του πόσο χρειάζεται μια βιβλιοθήκη σ'ένα τέτοιο οργανισμό και πόσο έχουν πεισθεί οι ιθύνοντες της Τράπεζας πως χρειάζονται οι υπηρεσίες προσοντούχων βιβλιοθηκονόμων.

Mr. Glover: I just wanted to add something on the trials and tribulations of a person trying to manage a library because Mrs Kakoullis mentioned most of them. My problems are basically the same and one important thing she said was knowing when to throw away material. Because not all libraries are national libraries and you don't want to keep everything that comes in the front door. If you do that eventually you are going to end up in a very crowded, cramped space. You have to know when to discard material. This was something I wanted to emphasize.