

## Financing Libraries and Information Centres for Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: The Bakassi Case

Aniebiet Inyang Ntui\*<sup>1</sup>  
ntuinju@yahoo.com

### ABSTRACT

In February 2008 a unique community library and information centre was established in Ikang - a rural area designated as a camp for persons displaced by the ceding of Bakassi. This paper summarizes and analyzes sources and trends of funds ensued to the centre and provides suggestions on ways of sustaining the funds. There has been a decline in frequency of funds ensued to the centre over the years and government funding has been precarious. The centre is tapping into all areas of private funding sources ranging from endowment, NGOs, donation, gifts to fund raising activities. The latter has become a mainstay in the budget mix of the centre. Through these integrated creative approach the centre has been able to provide superior services to its community of users

**Keywords:** Nigeria. Bakassi, internally displaced persons, information centre, library, funding

### INTRODUCTION

Bakassi Peninsula, located on the Gulf of Guinea, had been the subject of intense and sometimes violent disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon for decades until the two neighbouring countries agreed to an UN-backed settlement (Onah, 2007). Following the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on the matter in 2002, an agreement was signed in June 2006 by which Nigeria recognized Cameroonian sovereignty over the area, paving way for the eventual ceding of the peninsula to Cameroon in 2008. Nigerians who have lived in the peninsula for decades have been forced to uproot their lives and flee their homes (Eguzozie, 2008). As at the end of 2008, there were over 300, 000 persons in various resettlement camps in Nigeria displaced by the ceding of Bakassi (National Commission for Refugees in Nigeria (NCFR), 2008).

In Cross River State, many of the displaced people from Bakassi are yet to be resettled, as most of them are still contending with make-shift houses, with scant clothing and inadequate provision for feeding and medicaments in Ikang resettlement camp. Attempts have been made at the federal and state level of Nigerian government to resettle the Bakassi people. The federal government gave a billion naira and has built few housing units for the resettlement of the Bakassi indigenes in Cross River State (Ochigbo, 2008). Unfortunately these efforts are insufficient. Preliminary observations and informal discussions with community members suggested inadequate resettlement information as part of underlying problems. This a priori finding motivated researchers who have been working in the area since 2006, saw the need for internally displaced persons to have access to information.

In this effort, the Bakassi Community library and Information centre (**BACLIC**) was established in January, 2008, **BACLIC** functions as a community centre where everyone in the camp can come to share ideas and learn together, thus the centre has quickly becomes a bastion of learning. **BACLIC** benefits the adults, youth, and young children who visit the library stacks, use the reading room, and enrol in centre's activities. In 2009, statistics show that 97% of the camp residents use the centre (BACLIC Annual report, 2009). **BACLIC** has continued to play a vital role in the lives of camp residents. To ensure the continuous survival of **BACLIC**, prompted the researcher to identify the various sources, frequency and trends of funds supporting the centre.

### Profile of Bakassi Community library and Information Centre (BACLIC)

Bakassi Community Library and Information centre (**BACLIC**), using the Ikang village hall was incorporated on 14 January 2008. **BACLIC** is a non profit centre established by individuals concerned with the social and economic situation of internally displaced persons from Bakassi resettled in Cross River State.

It is a thriving centre of information resources and activities and is open to all residents of the Ikang resettlement Camp (BACLIC Annual Report, 2008). The mission of the centre is to equip displaced persons with the information they need to prepare for their successful integration into the society. This is achieved by repackaging information in local language \_ through academic inquiry, practical engagement, and professional development for the community. **BACLIC** also trains the Bakassi youths as information corps and upon completion of their training, trainees typically work to distribute information in the camp. By dispatching current information about resettlement activities, the centre helps clear up misinformation about government activities. The centre stacks over 500 titles in Efik and English ranging from novels to reference documents to books on

<sup>1</sup> **Dr Aniebiet Inyang Ntui** is a Senior Librarian in the University of Calabar Library. She holds a B.Sc. (Botany) from the University of Cross River State, MEd (Guidance & counseling) from University of Calabar, MLS from the University of Ibadan, and a PhD from the University of Uyo. Her research interest centers on the promotion of access to information.

geography, history and science. **BACLIC** also offers the chance to listen to over 20 compact disc recordings of African artists on portable CD players within the centre. Magazines, newspapers and games are available for centre visitors to use in the reading room. During the week, librarians offer basic literacy classes for those who are hoping to learn to read and write. On weekends the librarians host a storytelling hour for children and youth reading competitions to encourage the habit of reading in young people. Monitoring is conducted monthly in the centre. The attendants keep a daily record of the number of users, titles of books that were read aloud, any cultural activities held, and any problems or successes. Storytelling and other cultural activities are observed and suggestions are offered for improvement. Many different problems are recorded, such as loss or damage to books, too many children visiting the centre and failure of some people to return books (BACLIC Annual report, 2009). Evaluation is conducted every six months. At the latest evaluation held in July 2010, it became clear that an average of 2800 camp residents participates in the centre program every month. Ninety percent of children using the centre, however, had already read all the children titles in stock, indicating that new titles were needed (BACLIC News Letter, 2010).

### **The Current Scenario in the Ikang Resettlement Camp**

The Cross River state government had designated Ikang - area of Akpabuyo Local Government Council - as the resettlement camp for the Bakassi indigenes in August 2007 (Akpan, 2007). A total of 3,000 people are now residing in the camp. Health, sanitation, food supply, and shelter are being provided through the cooperation of various aid organizations. However, many of the internally displaced persons face daunting challenges (Onah, 2007). The people are having difficulties adjusting to a new environment and a new way of life. Essentially a riverside group, they are now compelled to learn a new mode of survival on land. Uprooted from their homes, having lost access to their accustomed livelihoods and have been torn from their established environment and their economic resources, they have lost their means of generating an independent income (Aluko, 2007).

The camp residents are resented by their host's community. Internal squabbles are going on between the returnee Bakassi people and the people of Ikang due to the inability to harmonize political interests and the sharing of the public offices between the new arrivals from Bakassi and the original residents of Ikang. The camp residents can not lay claim to any definite portion or parcel of land they could call their own despite the clear constitutional evidence of existence of Bakassi in Cross River state, Nigeria, thus can not engage in any type of farming.

Outside of basic primary education, Bakassi Community library and Information centre (**BACLIC**) is the only place that provides camp residents with the resources and space to enable displaced persons of all ages to continue learning, improve their literacy, and explore the subjects that interest them. For example, camp residents had no access to books until 2008 when the Bakassi Community library and Information centre (**BACLIC**) was established

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the past two decades, an alarming number of people worldwide have had to abandon their homes and livelihoods in the face of forced relocation, as they do not cross an international border, they are considered 'Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Figures show that the number of IDPs has risen to about 25 million people world wide (Phuong 2004). The National Commission for Refugees in Nigeria estimated that there are more than 500,000 internally displaced persons in the country as at December 2008 (National Commission for Refugees in Nigeria (NCFR), 2008).

Ralston (2010) reported that Refugees Read, Inc. [a non-profit (pending approval) organization that establishes libraries in refugee and IDPs communities] dedicated her first library on July 28, 2009 in Kiryandongo resettlement camp in Uganda through tremendous funds from Hamilton Community, Northeast Indiana. Kiryandongo is home to a number of internally displaced people from the war in northern Uganda and refugee camp to Kenyans, Sudanese, and Rwandese. . Currently the organization is working on collecting books and money to build a second library in Kyangwali resettlement camp in western Uganda (<http://refugeesread.org/>).

Similarly, Book Wish Foundation, [a new non-profit devoted to providing reading relief for people in crisis], is currently fundraising for the construction of libraries in the Treguine, Bredjing, and Gaga refugees and IDPs camps in Eastern Chad. Eastern Chad shares a long border with Sudan's troubled Darfur region and the level of displacement in Eastern Chad continues to be very high. The region is home to more than 20,000 IDPS in 12 different camps spread out along the length of the Chad/Darfur border (CORD, 2010)

(<http://www.bookwish.org/projects/darfur-refugees-and-locals-eastern-chad>).

In the same vein, in January 2010 the Entraide-Solidarity Association funded a library dedicated to a Colombian population displaced by conflict (<http://www.coe.int/t/solidarity/Activities>).

Also in January 2010, UNICEF, along with its partners, supported the Government of Pakistan with tin trunk libraries services for up to 40,000 persons displaced due to a massive mountain landslide that blocked the natural course of the Hunza River. Kanere (2009) reported that a library was established in 1991 in Walden

refugee and IDPs camp, 125 km from the Ethiopian border with Kenya at Moyale. In 1993, the IDPs at Walden Camp were relocated to Kakuma, and the library migrated with them. Lutheran World Federation (LWF) funded its construction with materials and labour in 1994. Don Bosco, another NGO in Kakuma, supported the library with shelves, benches, and chairs. However, the building established by LWF was a mud-brick structure and could not cope with service demands. In the year 2000, the Japanese Government visited Kakuma Camp with the Wakaohiat Project and donated 1.5 million Ksh for the construction of a more suitable library building.

Kenya's post-election violence had displaced more than 600,000 persons within the country since December 2007. In response to the massive displacement, the Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS) and other relief organizations established about 200 camps and provided libraries services for approximately half of the IDPs (Mwiandi.(2008).

On 24 February 2006, UNHCR teamed up with the pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) to deliver Nursing Library Project to health professionals working with refugees and IDPs in Tanzania and Zambia, countries which together hosted 770,000 refugees and IDPs. In a pilot project that provided 12 of the libraries to IDPs' camps- in north-west Tanzania – Each library unit consisted of a sturdy, transportable trunk that is resistant to moisture and insects. Each contains about 80 titles, covering topics ranging from family to community health and included the latest nursing and health care information to better meet refugee and IDPs health needs. (Caux, 2010) In 2002, Takafumi carried out a survey of libraries for refugees and IDP camps in Thailand. The findings showed that Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) with support of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided the financial support for eight libraries in three different camps.

Despite the increasing recognition of funding libraries for IDPs, literature in the Nigerian context is limited. The recent study on funding library by Okojie (2010) examined alternative sources of funding outside government grants but was limited in terms representativity of community libraries for IDPs. Emojorho (2004) studied budgets and budgeting in selected Nigerian university libraries. Okiy (2005) conducted a study on sources of funding Nigerian libraries in the 21st century and there was also no inclusion of libraries for IDPS. In 2005, Akporhonor undertook a study on library funding in Nigeria: past, present and future and no aspect mentioned libraries for IDPS. A perusal of the literature on funding of libraries in Nigeria indicated that the studies have concentrated on either academic or public libraries without mention of community libraries for IDPs. Despite the fact that there are over 500,000 internally displaced persons in Nigeria, their plight on accessing information is still little known. It has been observed by the researcher that there is currently no research work addressing issues on funding library for internally displaced persons with particular focus on Bakassi, Nigeria. The findings of this study will fill this gap and may provide stakeholders dealing with internally displaced persons with insights into strategies for funding libraries

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the study is to look at current state of financial support of Bakassi Community Library and Information centre (BACLIC) for the past six years (January 2008- 2014). In specific terms the study has the following objectives:

- i. To identify the sources and frequency of funding Bakassi Community Library and Information centre (BACLIC).
- ii. To identify the trend of funds ensued to Bakassi Community Library and Information centre (BACLIC)
- iii. To determine ways financial support receive by Bakassi Community Library and Information centre (BACLIC) could be sustained.

## METHODOLOGY

Purposive sampling techniques was adopted to collect data using interviews, observation, examination of diary record of activities/ functions/ events maintained by the staff and volunteers of the centre. The staff and volunteers were purposively selected because they were in a better position to provide information on funds ensued to the centre. .

## FINDINGS

Summarized below are findings gleaned from examination of diary, record of activities/ functions and events maintained by the staff and volunteers of the centre.

### Sources and Frequency of Funds

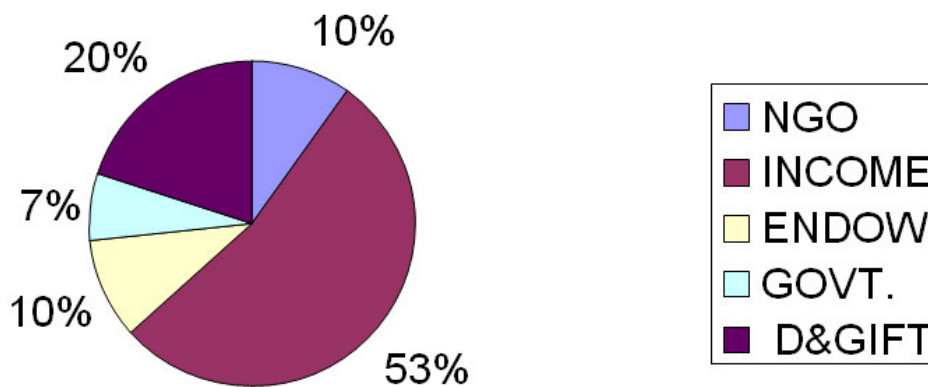
On sources of fund, Table 1 shows that more than half (53%) of the funds came from 'fund raising activities', followed distantly by, donations and gifts (20%), and yet more distantly by endowment and NGOs (10%), and then government grants (7%). Figure 1 indicates the sources of fund while Figure 2 charts the relative frequencies with which the different sources of fund were seen

**Table 1: Sources and Frequency of Funding**

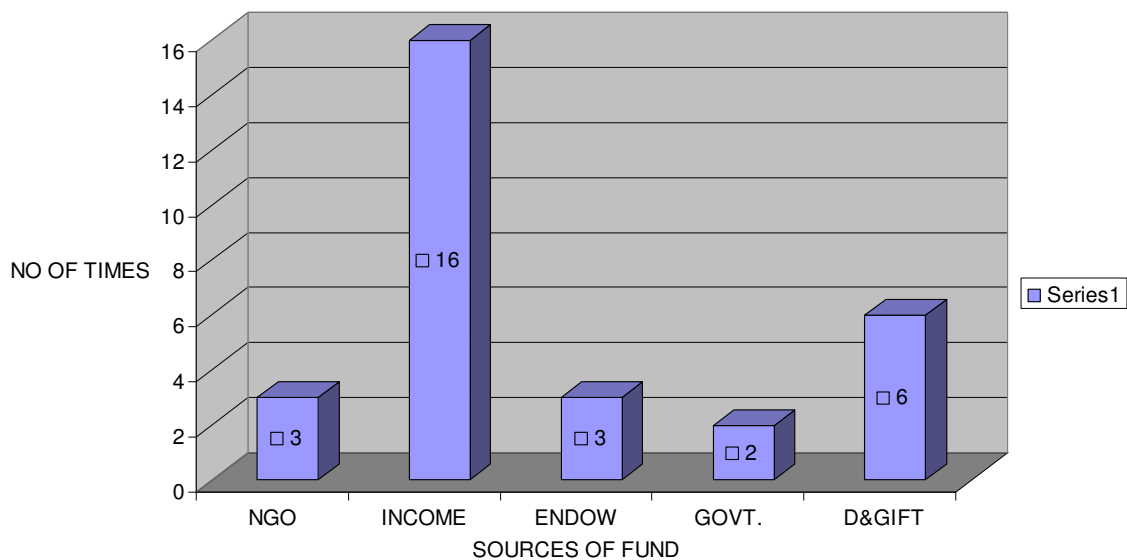
S/No	Sources of fund	frequency	(%)
1	NGOs	3	10
2	FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES	16	53
3	DONATIONS & GIFTS	6	20
4	GOVERNMENT GRANTS	2	7
5	ENDOWMENT FUNDS	3	10
TOTAL		30	100

Source: Field Data (2010)

**FIG 1: SOURCES OF FUND**



**FIG 2: FREQUENCY OF SOURCES OF FUND**



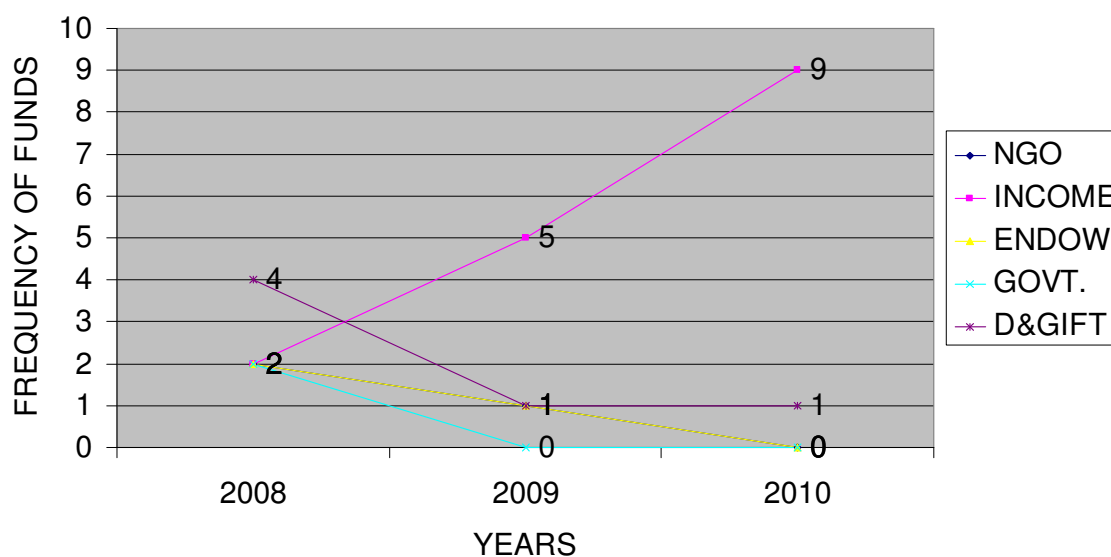
**Trend in funding the centre**

Table 2 summarizes the funds ensued to centre from January 2008 to July 2010 while Fig 3 shows the trend in funding over past two and half years. There was a decline in funds between 2008 and 2010 except for funds from fund raising activities, where there was an increase.

**Table 2: Funds ensued to centre from January 2008 to July 2010**

Year	Sources of fund				
	NGOs	Income Generating Activities	Donations & Gifts	Government Grants	Endowment Funds
2008	2	2	4	2	2
2009	1	5	1	0	1
2010	1	9	1	0	1

**FIG: 3 TREND IN FUNDING**



**Ways financial support received could be sustained.**

Unstructured interviews conducted with staff and volunteers during the bi-yearly evaluation meeting of the centre made to identify suggestions on ways financial support could be sustained. The librarians interviewed suggested the ways shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Ways financial support could be sustained**

S/No.	Ways of sustaining financial support
1	Paste account statement on centre’s notice board, Audit report sent to funding bodies
2	Advertising, Publicizing, collaborating with mass media to help create awareness of the value, contribution, of the centre
3	Involving government officials in all activities of the centre
4	creating a website for the centre

**DISCUSSION**

The study revealed that the main sources of fund for the centre were government grants, endowment, NGOs, donation, gifts and funds from income generating activities in increasing order. Funds from government were the least (7%) and were last received in 2008. These findings were similar to Sheketoff’s (2004) observation that libraries in nearly every state in America reported a decline in government funds. Friesen (2004) echoed the same point that the situation concerning funding for public libraries in the USA mirrors that of the United Kingdom (UK). Thus government funding for public libraries has been inadequate. Issak (2000) in her analysis of the literature on public libraries in Africa found that in the public library sector “there is declining government (financial) support or even its total absence.” Analogous findings of decline in government funding were also observed in a survey of the libraries in East Africa (Nawe, 2004). Similarly, in South Africa, Leach (1998) observed that libraries are under financial pressure owing, in large part, to a decline in government funding. In Hungary, parallel findings were observed by Pröhle, (2005) that government no longer finance libraries rather they were supposed to find sponsors who would be willing to invest in information materials Also, Wood-Lamont (1996) in her study of the self-financing experience of the Cluj Medical Library, Romania found that

government grants cover mostly book and periodical acquisitions while other expenses, were borne by the library itself. In the same vein, Çelik, (2009) reported that government funding for libraries in Turkey have been poor, requiring libraries to look for alternative sources of income in order to meet the increasingly sophisticated demand of library users.

The low financial support of Nigerian government to libraries could be due to high budget deficits and economic "meltdown" in Nigeria (Okiy, 2005). There has been a decline in government funding of libraries as competition becomes stiffer in the face of other equally demanding government responsibilities. The current economic crisis has negated the activities of Nigerian government and has affected many sectors of the economies such as funds granted to libraries and information centres.

The study observed that funds from endowments and NGOs have continued to flow to the centre, however, more and more sparsely declining through the years. Direct proceeds from the endowment funds have been a stabilizing force in the centre's future, helping the centre to weather economic downturns since 2009 without funds from government.

Endowments were permanent fund that have provided income each year to support the centre. The centre endowment was incorporated in February 2008 and has pursued its original vision of generating support to provide a stable source of funding for the centre. This income has supplemented ongoing purchase and also enhanced programs and services.

Similar findings were reported in Princeton Public Library (1997) in which income from the endowment represented a powerful and stable source of fund and has helped to ensure the library long-term success. (<http://foundation.princetonlibrary.org/about/index.php>)

In the same vein, River Forest Public Library, Illinois reported that Liebner endowment funds provided a permanent source of financial stability and had facilitated strategic planning in the library. (<http://www.rflib.org/support-your-library/liebner-endowment-fund>) Miller (2004) in the study of endowment funding in libraries reported that fiscal support from endowments has been a longstanding tradition and in some libraries endowment supplied the total budgetary allocation for acquisition. In J. H. Robbins Memorial Library, Lincoln, endowment fund which was established for the library in 1996 have made new additions possible and have improved the library collections and services. (<http://www.skyways.org/towns/Ellsworth/library/libendow.html>)

The study observed that another source of fund for the centre was donations and gift. Donors have enriched the centre through gifts of library materials and have contributed time through volunteer projects. Donors had options and several choices that aligned with their personal interests. Donations were usually in the form of cash, marketable appreciated securities. Donation cans were set up in various locations in the centre. Similar observations were seen in South Africa, that significant funding interventions that have taken place in nation's libraries came in the form of donations from International Corporation such as - the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The funds were being used to "enhance the capacity of the systems to deliver services, strengthen infrastructures and in some cases, develop exemplary centres of learning and communications" (Carnegie Corporation 2001). Analogous observations were seen in Harare municipal library Zimbabwe, where money received as donations sustained the children's and youth departments of the Harare municipal library - a boon to the local young library users. Valentine (2004) reported that for a large part of library history, donations had always played a significant role in both the establishment and/or maintenance of libraries.

This study also revealed that centre forged a wide range of partnerships, and has developed fund raising activities which acted as an anchor whenever library resources and funding were stretched to the limit and the sustainability of the centre was threatened. The centre formed "friends group" a non-profit association, which have worked to support programs and projects that have benefited the community by supporting, mentoring and convening fundraisers which have been a significant source of funds. The group have certainly contributed to this growth, evolving their fiscal development activities from simple stationery shop to sophisticated corporate partnerships. The "friends group" have supported exhibitions, sponsored monthly lecture series, conducted book sales, and published an annual magazine and a tri-annual newsletter. The membership cost is modest and is considered a contribution. The 'friends group' are engaged in some form of entrepreneurial venture -including consultancy and operating stationery stores. Also the group has sent out a mass mailing asking the corporations operating in Niger delta regions of Nigeria for support. The centre experienced its most lucrative fundraiser ever in April 2010 when it organized a foot ball tournament that brought in nearly 30,000 (\$200) Naira for the centre. The "friends group" is always honing more creative ways to raise the money needed to keep the centre updated and fresh. Similar finding was observed in Fairfax County Public Library Virginia which has successfully developed an innovative fundraising that has aided in the establishment of a number of programs ([www.co.fairfax.va.us/library](http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/library)). A suggestion echoed later by Bawa et al (1998) who, in the light of financial constraints experienced by public libraries in KwaZulu-Natal, stated that it was "imperative that fund raising were explored to ensure that libraries survived

. Also, same observations were made by Evenden (1991) who suggested that, in the context of limited financial support, libraries needed to consider “raising money from other sources. Bogart, (1999) reported that fund-raising have been the main stay in the budget of many libraries.

The study identified advertising, publicizing, collaborating with mass media as suggestions of ways financial support could be sustained. Advertising is a good medium for ongoing image or awareness-building. It is an ideal vehicle to encourage support for the centre. Advertisement builds interest and motivates people to take action. Advertising could be employed by centre to draw attention of the public to their services. Occasional free press release may be partially helpful, when it is not possible to publish paid advertisements in newspapers or magazines, Web site could be developed to help communicates the centre’s development needs to a wider universe of users than just those who visit the centre. The website could contain news, alerts and appeals, as well as centre’s organizational information

Findings indicated that pasting account statement on centre’s notice board, and audit report sent to funding bodies could help sustained financial support. In Nigeria’s environment of distrust of organization and government, there are demands for accountability of publicly funded institutions. The coordinator could display the account statement on the centre’s notice board which will help enhance credibility for would-be philanthropists. Donors want to be sure their resources are utilized effectively and as efficiently as possible for the cause. One strategy identified by the study is to send quarterly audit and progress report to donors. This could help the donors 'see' the impact of their monies in the community. At the end of the day, the centre may have a clear record of being reputable and credible.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is patently evident that on the basis of current and past experiences of BACLIC that government funding is never going to be sufficient for the centre. BACLIC is tapping into all areas of private funding sources ranging from endowment, NGOs, donation, gifts to fund raising activities. The latter has become a mainstay in the budget mix of the centre and are engaged in some form of entrepreneurial venture –including consultancy and operating stationery stores. Through these integrated creative approach the centre has been able that provide superior services to its community of users. There is a decline in frequency of funds ensued to the centre over the years except for fund raising activities, a trend that could threaten the sustainability of the centre. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations that will result in increase in sources and frequency of funds ensued to the centre are suggested:

- The centre should train and assign staff specifically for the task of exploring financial resources and public relations.
- The centre should lobby government to acquire extra-budgetary resources. Lobbying should take place not only in the Parliament, but also at institutions, and with persons who could influence government decisions
- Given the current serious economic meltdown globally and coupled with the spiralling costs of library materials even before the meltdown, the centre should maximize her procurement, processing by using inter-library cooperation power so as to offer more efficient and timely services to their users at the minimum cost possible
- Donors want to be sure their resources are utilized effectively and as efficiently as possible for the cause. The centre should try to understand prospective donors, focus on what drives the donor (e.g. their vision, mission statement, etc.) and how the centre can tap into this and flow together to meet mutually fulfilling goals.

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