

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES
IN MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA**

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, the government has invested in public libraries with the intention of promoting development, particularly in rural areas. Despite the increasing number of rural public libraries being built throughout Malaysia, providing users with many services, activities and programs, previous research indicates that they are underutilised. The research reported in this thesis aimed to explore relationships between rural public libraries and their communities in both Malaysia and Australia, with particular attention to empowerment and community development processes.

This study adopted a multiple case study methodology with a purposive sample of six rural public libraries, three in Malaysia and three in Australia. Qualitative methods were used, including personal interviews, observations of group meetings, group discussions, and document review.

The research found that in the Malaysian rural public library services included in this study, activities and programs are standardised and limited mostly to children, taking little account of local community information needs. Participants indicated that the materials and resources are frequently out-dated, and they perceived the library services as being mainly for children. The Australian rural public libraries included in this study facilitate greater community participation and involvement and are more responsive to the needs of local communities, providing support and assistance for lifelong learning and access to information literacy.

It is suggested that development activities will have greater impact if local communities are involved and have a sense of ownership of the activities. The thesis proposes a framework for the development of more responsive rural public library services in developing countries such as Malaysia. Particular strategies are suggested, including locally-focussed collection development, consultation regarding local information needs, the development of local partnerships, and the development of Rural Public Library Networks.

Student Declaration

Doctor of Philosophy Declaration

I, Roziya Abu, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Community Development and Rural Public Libraries in Malaysia and Australia* is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

This research was approved by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, approval number HRETH 09/234.

Signature:

Date: 12 November 2012

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List of Publications and Awards

Refereed Article

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Conference Proceedings

Abu, R., M. Grace, et al. (2011). The Vision of the Rural Public Library in Malaysia. The 4th International Conference on Educational Research (ICER) 2011 : Learning Community for Sustainable Development, Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

Abu, R., M. Grace, et al. (2011). Rural Adult Non-Formal Education: Rural Public Library in Malaysia. International Conference on Social Sciences (ICSS), Turkey.

Abu, R., M. Grace, et al. (2010). The Role of Rural Public Libraries in Community Development and Empowerment. 8th International Conference on Book 2010. University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, Common Ground Publication.

Radio interview

Malaysia looking to adopt Australia's rural library model: *Michael Mackenzie*

Wednesday, 23 November 2011; ABC Radio's Bush Telegraph-Producer Keiren McLeonard

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/telegraph/content/2011/s3374133.htm>

Awards

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Victoria University Secomb Conference and Travel Fund, November 2010

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List of Common Abbreviations

Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC)

Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL)

National Library of Malaysia (NLM)

National Library of Australia (NLA)

New Economic Policy (NEP)

State Library of Selangor (SLS)

State Library of Victoria (SLV)

United Nations (UN)

National Information Policy (NIP)

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to the Research

This thesis focuses on rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia and their role in community development. It examines ideas about community development that either currently inform or could inform practice in rural public libraries in developing countries such as Malaysia. It reports on original case study research carried out in rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia. This introductory chapter presents a preliminary overview of some different ideas about community development and discusses further the role of rural public libraries. This research supports the position that community development principles, theory and practices are relevant for rural public libraries and that information is widely accepted as a national economic and social development resource.

Contemporary public libraries are more than shelves of books. They have become a type of social and cultural institution, potentially offering a constantly changing range of resources for the community (Buschman & Leckie 2007). These public libraries have been built to play a role as an inclusive place, offering a broad choice of different media and professional guidance in information searching (Kjekstad 2004). Bundy outlines the twelve key elements of a 'good' library:

1) Libraries inform citizens, 2) libraries break down boundaries, 3) libraries level the playing fields, 4) libraries value the individual, 5) libraries nourish creativity, 6) libraries open kids' minds, 7) libraries return high dividends, 8) libraries build communities, 9) libraries make families friendlier, 10) libraries offend everyone, 11) libraries offer sanctuary and, 12) libraries preserve the past. (Bundy 2003a, p. 8)

Public libraries have enduringly facilitated both the formal and non-formal flow of information in and for society. The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto of 1994 affirmed that:

A public library is a living force for education, culture and information, and an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women. (IFLA/UNESCO 1994)

Libraries and librarianship have contributed significantly to the development of the past and future information society of the world (Gorman 2000; Black et al. 2007; Fisher et al. 2007). Any form of access to information can contribute to the development and empowerment of individuals and the community by assisting people in promoting wellbeing, and, in more advanced societies, an absence of information may lead to poverty and disadvantage. Michael Gorman (2000) explains further:

The purpose of public libraries as they developed historically ... is to support lifelong learning through self-education. In public libraries, the self-education and personal enrichment that people may choose to pursue can come in many different guises, from test preparation materials to cookbooks to legal assistance texts to car repair manuals. (p. 82)

In countries such as Malaysia, development is an important government priority, and is a focus of government initiatives and funding. Understanding of 'development' has changed over time, particularly in response to postcolonial writing (see example McEwan, 2009). Recent Malaysia Plans incorporate quite different ideas about development when compared with early Malaysia Development Plans¹. However, government approaches to development remain more on government action than the more participatory principles of community development that are articulated in the international community development literature (see more examples Ife (2002), Kenny (2006), Connors & McDonald (2010))

In Malaysia, since its independence from Britain in 1957, government has invested in public libraries with the intention of promoting community development, particularly in rural areas. This has been part of Malaysia's overall investment in its rural areas along with infrastructure utilities, social and health amenities and school facilities. These initiatives support economic

¹ The Malaysia Plan is a 5-year Malaysian government national development initiative. The 5-year plan is a legacy from British colonial rule in Malaya after the Second World War. The 5-year plan began with the First Malaya Plan, from 1956 to 1960. This initiative was continued with the Second Malaya Plan from 1961 to 1965. After the formation of Malaysia in 1963, the 5-year plan has been converted to the Malaysia Plan (MP) with the First Malaysia Plan which began in 1966 until 1970, the difference being that the economic plan now included the entire nation. (<http://www.malysiamerdeka.gov.my/v2/en/achievements/economy/121-rancangan-malaysia-1-9>)

development of the country as well as increasing the quality of Malaysia's rural social and economic life. Under the 9th Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) alone, the Malaysian government invested more than RM85 (AUD29.3) million in building rural public libraries (JPM 2006, KPKK 2012). The aim of this development was to provide all rural communities with a welcoming place and a learning centre. The Malaysian government hopes that, with this development, rural societies will enjoy recreational facilities that are comprehensive and complete, and that the literacy rate will be improved among rural communities (Muhammad 2004). Furthermore, the Malaysian government intends that this development will help to reduce the information acquisition gap between rural and city communities (Muhammad 2004). Anne Goulding in her book, *Public Libraries in the 21st Century*, elaborates an important link to ideas about libraries and community development. According to Goulding, public libraries will incorporate change (information technology) and will continue their major focus - 'it is about giving people the access to knowledge so that individuals, families, and communities can reach their potential' (Goulding 2008, p. 340).

Despite the increasing number of rural public libraries being built throughout Malaysia, they are not currently fully utilized (Riss 2006; Farabi 2008; Kushchu 2008). They are used primarily by school students; meanwhile, the rural community's adults and young adults, in particular, are not making full use of them. In her statement to the press, the State of Perlis Public Library Director, Norma Mohd Darus, revealed that only 20 percent of users of rural public library are adults, while 80 percent of the users are school children and school teenagers (Riss 2006; Kushchu 2008). This situation does not seem to be helping the Malaysian government in achieving its aims to provide community, social and economic development opportunities for individuals and communities in these rural areas. It seems that public libraries could play a more significant role, providing services, activities and programs

that will contribute to the local rural community development as a whole, and not just focusing on students (Farabi 2008).

Community development as described by contemporary authors such as Anker (1973), O'Toole and MacGarvey (2003), Kenny (2006), Ife (2002), and Phillips and Pittman (2009) is a tradition that brings together philosophy, theory and practices. According to these authors, community development is an on-going process that consists of a series of tasks, practices and vision for empowering communities to take responsibility for their own development. It is understood as a concept relating to participatory social initiatives that focus on people working together to make changes in their lives, culture and environment, eventually building a better life.

Community development depends on cultural context as well as the aims of a program. Its approach can be useful in different cultural settings worldwide. Additionally, community development is about community empowerment, which is achieved by employing methods of self-help and community participation. As early as 1959, the United Nations provided a useful definition of community development highlighting some of its most important features:

Community development means the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the Government authorities to improve the social, economic and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to nation progress. (Selvaratnam & Tin 2001, p. 4)

The 1959 United Nations definition of community development refers to the efforts of both communities and governments. However, the definition also highlights that these efforts must somehow be integrated into the prosperity of the nation. This is what most governments understand and expect from community development: they expect all of the improvements

and developments provided by the government to the community to somehow be of benefit to the country from an economic point of view, with less thought given to how these services and programs might benefit individuals. Thus many current community development programs and activities within developed and developing countries are planned, organized and imposed by a government. The assumption that the authority knows what is best for the community somehow becomes the basis for developing these programs and activities rather than understanding the needs and wants of the community.

The second part of the UN 1959 definition draws attention to another unique feature of community development programs. That is, community development requires the involvement and acceptance of the local communities:

The distinctive features of community development programs are the participation by the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with reliance as much as possible on their own initiatives, and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiatives, self-help and mutual help and make them more effective. (Selvaratnam & Tin 2001, p. 4)

Unfortunately, on many occasions authorities and governments fail to understand and adopt the second phase of the above definition, with governments often imposing programs on communities. In addition, the local people are frequently blamed for their lack of enthusiasm and complacency towards government community development programs and activities if these programs do not succeed (Samah & Aref 2009; Isa 2010).

As Gorman (2000) states, every community needs public library services for social and individual development, with services, activities and programs that match community needs. According to Evans and Saponaro (2005, p. 328), 'public libraries [in general] have long been known for the studies they conduct to determine the composition of their user community and assess their users' needs'. Library services, activities and programs should

serve all people in the community, in order that those who desire to use such facilities will have convenient access to them. In addition, library services, activities, and programs should ideally be designed to promote users' self-sufficiency, and to provide users with access to delivery of information regardless of place or time (Raja & Saidina 2003).

A public library is one of the few public spaces that is shared by different cultural groups and is seen as a neutral ground for people of all races (Bauer 2009). Public libraries are also essential in developing an educated society. Through their services, activities and programs, public libraries offer opportunities for individuals, particularly in rural and disadvantaged communities, to improve their lives through developing their skills and improving their literacy level. Through these opportunities, these individuals will later develop empowerment abilities within their own community (Buschman & Leckie 2007).

The 2006 Alexandria Proclamation affirms that information literacy is seen as a prerequisite for participation in an information society; it is a part of the basic human right of lifelong learning (IFLA/UNESCO 2006), hence it is also an integral part of education for all (Thompson & Cody 2003). Briefly, information and knowledge supports all types of development and are vital to all activities of a community. Being information literate can lead to promoting community development and eventually improving the conditions and quality of life for community members.

Although many researchers such as Hamzah Isa (2010), Hema Swaminathan and Jill Findeis (2004), and Nigel Curry (2001) have focused their studies and efforts on collecting, investigating and discussing various rural issues that are complex and diverse, not much attention has been given to understanding and recognizing the potential that a public library

could provide, conceptually, practically and environmentally, as a suitable place for community development programs and activities (Gill 2001; Bundy 2003a; SLV 2005, 2006). This role of public libraries often remains unrecognized and the major challenge is how to capitalize on the public library's potential to contribute to communities. According to Alan Bundy, the challenge is:

Just how to convey to decision makers the breadth, depth and potential impact on the whole community of the modern public library. It is a rare challenge because no other agency in society has the breadth of role, the user range and diversity and the potential impact. In an age of specialisation and community silos public libraries are unique. (Bundy 2003b, p. 5)

In numerous countries, including Asian Developing Countries, many government agencies and institutions are involved, both directly and indirectly, in the process of rural development (Isa 2010, p. 6). However, their functions are to solve the more general and wider issues of rural communities. Meanwhile, a more focused and specific approach to suit each rural community is very much needed. Here, the role and place of the rural public library shows significant potential, particularly because it is situated in, rather than apart from, the communities of interest that it serves.

While the value and importance of the rural public library has been acknowledged globally (IFLA-UNESCO 1994; Kjekstad 2004; SLV 2005), there has been very little primary research into its potential as a site for community engagement and/or community development. This research takes up that challenge by investigating the community development and empowerment role and potential of rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia. Specifically, the research responds to the current situation in Malaysia which is not dissimilar to other developing countries.

Under various Malaysian Government Plans (1957–2020), more than MYR535 (AUD184.48 million) has been invested in developing rural facilities and rural programs, particularly library services and programs (JPM 1998; 2006). Despite this investment, there are few research studies identifying the information and service needs of Malaysian rural communities (Zulkefli 1995; Anwar & Supaat 1998; Marhaini & Asiyah 2007), and those that exist are top-down studies, that is, they are conducted from the government's perspective. No studies have focused on understanding the potential of the rural public library as a tool to enhance community development and as a lifelong learning institution. Research has also failed thus far to provide bottom-up studies which would analyse the impact of rural public libraries' existence on the local rural communities from the perspective of the local community and local service providers.

This research aims to contribute to knowledge and analysis in relation to community development and rural public libraries. In addition, some consideration has been given to analysis that may subsequently lead to the development of practices in relation to rural public library usage. In particular, this research may inform the Malaysian Government in relation to enhancing and extending the usage of rural public libraries in Malaysia. Furthermore, this research aims to be applicable and useful in other developing countries.

With rural communities as the focal point, this study explores the relationships and associations that are constructed between a community and its rural public library, with particular attention to the rural community development and empowerment aspects. This thesis examines how local rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia contribute to local community development and empowerment. It explores the expectations and needs of the local communities and the influences of local government. In addition, it examines how the

local communities and service providers perceive the community development role, activities and programs implemented in rural public libraries in Malaysia, along with discussing their views in relation to unmet needs (Heather Nesbitt Planning 2005; SLV 2006; Phillips & Pittman 2009).

This research includes a focus on community development practices in Australian rural public libraries. It is unlikely that these practices could simply be copied in such a different cultural context as Malaysia. However, the researcher's familiarity with Malaysian culture is utilised to analyse Australian practices and discuss how they could inform future practices in Malaysia.

This research will contribute to knowledge about the community development and community empowerment roles of rural public libraries in developing countries. It includes discussion and recommendations about actions, services and programs to improve the Malaysian rural public libraries. Recommendations will also be potentially applicable to other developing countries.

Research Aims

This research aims to explore relationships between rural public libraries and their communities in both Malaysia and Australia, with particular attention to empowerment and community development. The researcher will apply relevant theoretical understandings and her cultural expertise to develop recommendations for Malaysian rural public libraries. These recommendations will draw on successful experience and practices in both Australian and Malaysian public libraries with the aim of improving the community development and

empowerment practices and/or their application in Malaysian rural public library services, activities and programs.

Specific Aims:

1. To investigate local rural community participation in Malaysian and Australian rural public library services and programs.
2. To explore the relationship between local rural communities and their rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia.
3. To investigate the involvement of local rural communities in the decision-making processes related to planning the services, activities and programs in rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia.
4. To investigate relevant unmet information needs in rural communities including attention to gender role barriers.
5. To develop new perspectives on rural public library usage in Malaysia.
6. To propose alternative ways of rural public library management and promotion of products and services to the local rural communities in Malaysia.

Significance of research

Rural communities and their development are important aspects of a country's political and economic stability. At the same time, around the world, the majority of the population in most developing countries live in rural communities and these communities are mostly

economically disadvantaged (Bernard 1995; Isa 2010). With these things in mind, rural development is part and parcel of a nation's development. Although it involves complex issues, it cannot be disregarded.

In countries with emerging and developing economies such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam (IMF 2010), rural populations constitute the majority of citizens. They are generally poorer and more disadvantaged than their urban counterparts. Even in Australia, there is a similar situation between the rural and urban residents. For example, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia in their Federal Budget Submission for the year 2004–2005 stated that:

Australian rural regions have an average income of 30 per cent lower than the inner metropolitan areas and 36 of the 40 poorest areas of Australia are classified as rural or remote. (RDAA 2004, p. 10)

Despite growth in both the number of large cities and mega cities and in their populations, a United Nations (UN) (2003, p. 85) analysis of the distribution of the world population by type of settlement indicates that rural areas are still the home of the majority of the world population. In acknowledging this, the UN stated that in the year 2000, 53 per cent of the world population lived in rural areas, and it was expected that rural settlements would be the home for 46 per cent of the total world population in the year 2015 (United Nations 2003, p. 85). Therefore, for all of the above reasons, rural communities cannot be ignored in government policy or planning processes. For example, in South Africa approximately 70 percent of poor people live in rural areas (Mbeki 2000). Meanwhile, around the world the percentage of rural poor is extremely alarming,

the numbers of rural poor in East Asia (particularly China), is about 120 million poor rural people today; and in South East Asia ... around 80 million. South Asia has by far the largest number of poor rural people (over 500 million), though in sub-Saharan Africa, where the numbers are increasing, there are now some 300 million poor rural people. In Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa there are only 11 and 6 million people respectively living in extreme poverty. (IFAD 2011b, p.48)

Although in many ways, such as economic and business development, rural populations have the potential to become an asset for a country's development, they could also be a potential threat. Loveridge and Schmid (1993) suggest that 'leaving rural people in their depressing situations is a recipe for overall economic disaster' (p. 1163).

The Malaysian government believes that rural public library development is an important strategy for the development of rural communities in Malaysia, and they are committed to providing such facilities to the people. As of 31 December 2009, a total of 1,089 rural libraries were built throughout Malaysia. Rural libraries in Malaysia are considered to be agents of social restructuring as they provide learning and skill support to local communities in areas such as basic skills, family learning and education to the young (NLM, 2010a). However, despite the sheer physical number of new rural libraries in Malaysia, rural communities are not making full use of them. Explanations for this problem may include inadequate self-promotion by the library and poor reading habits among the communities themselves (Farabi 2008). However, Anwar and Supaat (1998) and Ahmed (2010) believe otherwise. They argue that the rural public library service in Malaysia is like most Asian rural public libraries in that it rarely takes the actual needs of the communities into consideration. They also claim that inadequate resources are wasted on materials and services that do not fit the needs of the rural people. Similarly, Abdul Razak (2009), in her research on empowering rural communities via telecentres, stresses the importance of paying attention to the needs of local communities rather than delivering pre-determined services.

Several researchers claim that local rural public libraries in Malaysia have been providing their users with many community development programs and services (Kibat 1991; Anwar

1996; Raja & Saidina 2003; Shaharom 2006). However, other authors claim that these programs deliver only limited economic and social benefits, and draw attention to the need for more knowledge about community development (Riss 2006; UM 2006; Farabi 2008). This research will examine the implementation of community development programs in local rural libraries, particularly in terms of local community participation and empowerment in decision-making processes. This research will develop recommendations for conducting community development programs and services in local rural public libraries in Malaysia.

Political Significance

Social and economic developments are very much related to the political situation of a country. The rural population has a significant influence on a country's political situation because rural communities have the power and influence to build or break the political status of a country. On many occasions rural populations have been restrained and sometimes exploited for political purposes. For example, in Indonesia in 1975, the then Indonesian president, Suharto, forbade all political activities except for Golkar (Suharto's electoral organisation) below the district level and forced all civil servants including village officers to give their support exclusively to Golkar (Antlov 2003, p. 196).

In Malaysia, economic inequality triggered the eruption of the worst ethnic violence ever seen in the country on May 13, 1969. A Malaysian local journalist, Noor Azam Shairi, reported that: '13 May 1969 was a manifestation of the anger and dissatisfaction of Malay people concerning the imbalanced economic situation among races in Malaysia' (Shairi 2004). This event highlighted the crisis which plagued the young nation-state as it struggled

to discover its identity and seek the ‘common social will’ in the midst of the multi-cultural setting of Malaysia².

The May 13 riots dramatically changed the socio-economic setting of Malaysia, coming out of a situation where the rural population was not identified as a primary target of development efforts (Osman Rani et al. 1981). As a consequence of the riots, the new Malay-dominated rightist / right-wing government, under the guidance of Tun Abdul Razak (Malaysia’s Father of Independence and first Prime Minister), introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), an affirmative action based policy as a measure to eradicate poverty among the Malays. The NEP was introduced with the intention of eliminating poverty and getting rid of ‘identification of race based on economic function’ (which refers to the situation where a specific racial group dominates an economic activity; for example, Chinese domination of trading activities in towns, Indians dominating activities on rubber estates, and Malays dominating agricultural activities). The NEP was successful in producing a new generation of middle-class Malays while eradicating poverty at the same time. The level of education among the Malays also improved tremendously. It was reported that between the early 1970s and 1993, middle-class Malays increased from 18 percent to 28 percent of the total Malay population. Additionally, the Malay agricultural population decreased significantly from 65.2 percent to 33.5 percent (Hefner 2001, p. 30).

² The May 13 riots still remain a taboo in Malaysia. Discussions about the riots are avoided because of their highly controversial nature. A recent controversy erupted over a university textbook for a class on Ethnic Relations which blamed the racial riots solely on the DAP (Democratic Action Party). This book was highly controversial because of the way the incident was interpreted and led to the immediate withdrawal of the textbook by Prime Minister Badawi. In withdrawing the book, he said, ‘This book must be seen as an important book because it is a reference for our students, and we need to take into account matters that are sensitive to all the races...I feel that while historical facts should not be changed, we must bear in mind that our interpretation of history is also important, that we should not raise matters that can create unhealthy situations’ (*The Star*, July 20, 2006).

Structure of the Thesis

This first chapter has provided an introduction to the research study topic by presenting an overview of the research statement. The specific research aims were discussed and elaborated on, and these aims were linked to the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the historical and cultural context of Malaysia and Australia, hence chapter 2 also reviews the research literature, exploring research and evidence to further develop an understanding of community development and empowerment. This chapter discusses key terms that are used in this research, including the concept of the public library and ideas related to community development. In addition, the context of the research in relation to the function of public libraries in community development is discussed, and the public library as a tool for supporting development is investigated. Furthermore, this chapter explores the connections between community, development and empowerment, and how these concepts relate to information and public libraries in the context of this research.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the methodology and procedures used in conducting the research. The use of a qualitative multiple case study approach is described and the procedures used to collect and analyse the data are also illustrated in detail. Ethical considerations and limitations of study are clarified in this chapter.

The findings of this study are presented in two chapters, namely Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 presents the findings of six case studies, conducted individually in Malaysia and in Australia. Detailed profiles and reports of each case study are described and illustrated. Chapter 5 reports on cross-case analysis, focusing on a thematic comparison of all six case study communities and their rural public libraries.

Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the research, reflecting on the analysis of the data derived from all the various sources of information, including personal interviews, group participant observations and interviews, and a review of the documents. Recommendations are then put forward based on the findings. Limitations of the study and directions for further research are also discussed.

Chapter 2: Context, Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

This chapter briefly introduces Malaysia and Australia, the two sites of this research. It then discusses the key concepts and terms that are examined in this research including ideas about community development, as well as discussing the free public library and its antecedents. Following this, the context, concepts and key terms are discussed in relation to the role of free public libraries in community development, with a particular focus on Malaysia and Australia. Finally, relevant research is reviewed.

Cultural and Historical Context: Malaysia

Malaysian history dates back to 1401CE when Malaysia was founded by Parameswara, a prince from Temasek (now known as Singapore). Parameswara set up a successful empire called Melaka (known in English as Malacca), and he became the first Sultan of the empire. Under the Sultans' (nine sultans from the year 1400CE to the year 1513CE) rule, Melaka became a trading center as it was situated on the sea trade route between East and West Asia. Melaka established mutual relationships with other great empires such as China, Majapahit (in Java), Pasai (in Sumatra), India and many Islamic countries in the Middle East. The political and trade relationships with these empires turned Melaka into a well-known trade center in the region (Sheppard 1958).

The Melaka Empire fell to the Portuguese in 1511CE and later to the Dutch in the year 1641CE. Finally, in 1824CE, the British and the Dutch signed an agreement called 'The Anglo-Dutch Treaty' that divided the Malay Archipelago region into two: the Malay Peninsula (Malaya/Malaysia) and North Borneo were placed under the British, while Kalimantan, Sumatra, Java and Sulawesi were placed under the Dutch (Zainal Abidin, 1992).

Under the British Government, three administrative units were introduced in Malaya. The first unit was the Straits Settlements, which comprised Singapore, Penang and Melaka, were administered by the Governors (designated by the Queen of England³). The second unit was the Federated Malay States, which comprised Selangor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan and Perak and these three states were considered to be British protectorates which had relationship agreements with Britain and were administered by the Residents⁴ (also designated by the Queen of England). The third unit was the un-federated Malay States which included Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Johor. These states practised a self-governing system but were guided by the British Advisors.

While in power, the British administration laid a strong foundation of a more structured educational system in Malaya (Hussin, 1993). Yet in 1931, the British Malay Reservation Act policies created separate schooling systems for indigenous Malays, Chinese immigrants and Indian immigrants (Milner 2009). This situation changed the demographic pattern from a homogenous society of mainly Malays to a multi-cultural society comprised of Malays, Chinese and Indians. This pattern caused a separation of community economic activities among the major races: the Malays were mainly involved in the traditional agricultural sector in rural areas while the non-Malays were involved in other sectors: the Chinese⁵ immigrants became involved in trade and tin mining activities, and the Indian immigrants worked in rubber plantations (Zainal Abidin 1992). This situation is believed to have led to the 13 May 1969 riot (see Chapter 1).

³ Ruling English Monarch as Governors are not always designated by a Queen through in this instance they were

⁴ Known as Residents, they were in charge of the new British bureaucracies in the Federated Malay States (Milner 2009, p. 105).

⁵ Immigration of foreign labour was brought in by the British to serve the tin and mining industries in Malaya (Milner 2009, p. 109).

After World War Two, the British Government proposed a centralized Malayan Union to replace previous administration arrangements. Tension among the Malays surfaced in this period over the leniency of citizenship towards migrant communities, as there was concern that the influx of migrants would jeopardize the interests of the indigenous people. Strong opposition from the Malay community and the Malay Sultans to the introduction of the Malay Union administration proposal resulted in its cancellation and it was replaced with the Federation of Malaya⁶ in 1948 (Zainal Abidin 1992). The first Federation of Malaya election was held in July 1955. On August 31, 1957, the Federation of Malaya finally gained its independence from the British, and on July 9, 1963, Malaysia was formed through the London Agreement. At this time Malaysia initially consisted of the Federation of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore⁷.

Contemporary Malaysia

Currently, in 2012, the Federation of Malaysia has an area of 329,961.22 square kilometres. The country consists of two regions, Peninsula Malaysia in the west, and the states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo in the east. The two regions are separated by about 540 kilometres of the South China Sea. The Peninsula of Malaysia covers 131,598 square kilometres, and borders Thailand in the north and Singapore in the south, while Sabah and Sarawak covers 198,069,61 square kilometres, and borders the territory of Kalimantan, Indonesia (Ministry of Information Communication and Culture 2011).

⁶ This agreement provided for a high commissioner and a federal legislative council. A considerable degree of authority was restored to the rulers, acting in consultation with their state executive councils, and a form of common citizenship was created for all who acknowledged Malaya as their permanent home and the object of their undivided loyalty. Within this framework the settlements of Penang and Malacca remained British territory, and Singapore became a separate colony under its own governor. (http://unostamps.nl/country_federation_of_malaya.htm).

⁷ In the year 1965 Singapore withdrew from Malaysia and became an independent state (Kamarudin 1979).

The population of Malaysia in 2010 was 28.3 million (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2012); 21.2 million lived in Peninsula Malaysia. Of this population, 5.46 million lived in Selangor [the focus state of this research] or 19.29 percent of the total population of Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2012). The *Bumiputera*⁸ and other indigenous groups in Selangor numbered 2.5 million, the Chinese Malaysian 1.3 million, the Indian Malaysian 650.2 thousand and the remainder made up 65.0 (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2009a). In *Malaysia Facts and Figures: Malaysia People Report* (2011), the UNDP Malaysia stated that 36.8 percent of the Malaysian population was living in rural areas. The Malaysian population today is multiracial and includes many different ethnic groups: the Malays, Chinese Malaysian, Indian Malaysians in Peninsular Malaysia, the Iban, Kadazan, Dayaks, Banjans, Melanau, Kayans and many other indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak (Andaya & Andaya 2001).

Culturally, Malaysian ethnic groups still uphold their traditional ways of living. From annual rituals to their daily activities, Malaysia is well known to be modern yet culturally conscious. One of the many traditions that still exist among Malaysians is the oral narrative culture which includes storytelling. It is believed that the poor reading habits among indigenous Malays is very much linked to this tradition and that ‘there has never been a reading culture so it is difficult to create one when there are no examples or role models’ (Abdul Karim, 2006, p. 289).

⁸ ‘Sons/daughters of the soil’ (Andaya and Andaya 2001, p. 3).



Map 2.1: Map of Malaysia

The Tradition of Storytelling in Malaysia

Oracy and literacy such as storytelling are forms of communication which are meaningful and purposeful (Phillips 1999). According to Ibrahim (2008), ‘storytelling is a powerful way of providing children and adults with life-enhancing mental images and it has been a tradition practised by most cultures throughout the world. It is passed on from one generation to another; stories free the imagination and expand the capacity for such feelings as joy, sorrow, sympathy and hope’.

Storytelling is one of the oldest and most powerful forms of folk art. It is a form of social experience conveyed through oral narratives, incorporating linguistic features. Storytelling has been described as a form of communication that ‘carries people on an enchanting journey

and at the same time instructs them on history, culture and common moral values and it has been practised by almost every culture in the world' (Mukti & Hwa 2004, p. 144).

In the early period of Malay society, the culture of reading was not yet established; instead, information and stories were transmitted orally. Malay storytellers, who are also known as 'penglipurlara' in the local tongue, have existed at least since the Sultan era (Saad 1993). The Malay community transmitted myths, legends and folktales of their ancestors, using storytelling for countless generations. Malay storytelling, as in other cultures with ancestral folk traditions, is primarily an oral activity with a vast array of methods involved in how to tell a good story; apart from traditional contexts, storytelling is also practised in storytelling contests, professional storytelling groups and, now, library storytelling programs (Ibrahim 2008).

This act of storytelling has been more than just a tradition; it is a form of social expression that is closely related to the social values of Malay society. One of the earliest documented accounts of Malay storytelling was provided by W. E. Maxwell in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society-Malaya Branch*, dated May 1886. In his article entitled 'Seri Rama: A Fairy Tale told by a Malay Rhapsodist', Maxwell wrote:

Sitting in the balei of a raja or chief, or in the veranda of a private house, when the sun has gone down and the evening meal is over, the storyteller, very likely a man who can neither read nor write, will commence one of the romances of his repertoire, intoning the words in monotonous chant as if he were reading aloud from a book. He has very likely been placed purposely near a doorway leading to the women's apartment, and the laughter and applause of the male audience without is echoed from behind the curtains, where the women of the household sit eagerly listening to the story. The recitation is perhaps prolonged far into the night, and then postponed, to be continued in the succeeding night. There is no hesitation or failure of memory on the part of the bard; he has been at it from his youth up, and has inherited his romances from his father and ancestors, who told them in days gone by to the forefathers of his present audience. A small reward, a hearty welcome, and a good meal awaits the Malay rhapsodist wherever he goes, and he wanders among Malay villages as Homer did among the Greek cities. (Maxwell 1886, p. 87)

A written tradition did exist in the Malay ‘preliterate’ era. As the Melaka Empire established a close relationship with Islamic countries in the Middle East and neighbouring countries such as Pasai and Aceh in Indonesia, the Melaka Sultan, under the Islamic influence, encouraged mass translation of works on Islamic teaching as well as literary works (Saad 1993), using traditional ‘jawi’⁹ and Arabic writing. However, these early Malay literary works and manuscripts were kept in palaces and were not available to the public; thus, only elites such as the clergy and royalty had access to these works.

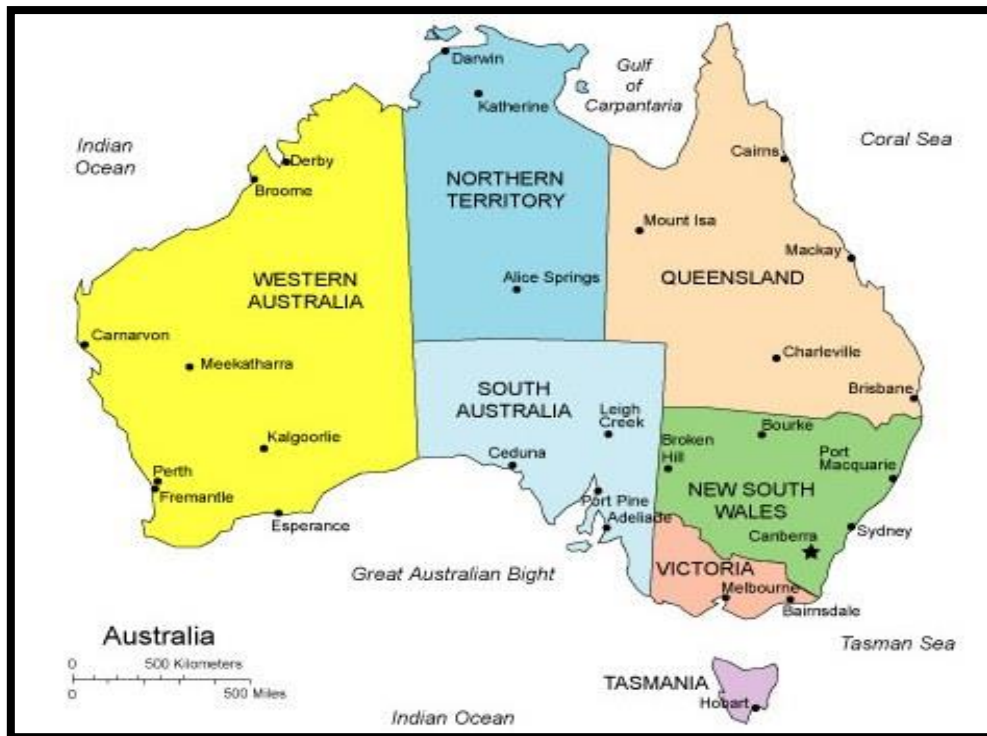
In the 17th century, books and libraries were not widely used in Malaysia because many local residents were not familiar with this form of storing information (Regis, 1997; Mukti & Hwa, 2007). The main way information was communicated was through middle persons or storytellers. Currently, storytelling still exists in some small rural villages in Malaysia; however, the art of oral storytelling by professionals or amateur storytellers is gradually disappearing from Malaysian life.

Geographical and Cultural Context: Australia

Geographically, Australia is the world’s largest island, yet it is the smallest continent in the world. Australia is approximately 4.8 million square kilometres (Jordan-Bychkov 2003, p. 93).

Australia is the driest land with much of the center being desert, yet has rainforests along its coasts, and the north is tropical, with bountiful rivers and vegetation. (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011)

⁹ When Islam arrived in Southeast Asia during the 14th century, the Arabic script was adapted to write the Malay language. In the 17th century, under influence from the Dutch and British, the Arabic script was replaced by the Latin alphabet (<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/malay.htm>).



Map 2.2: Map of Australia

The first trace of the Indigenous Australians dates from as early as 50,000BCE (Lyons et al. 2005). The Indigenous Australian population, upon European colonization in 1788, was estimated at around 750,000 to 1.4 million (Jordan-Bychkov 2003, p. 38; Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009, p. 58). The Indigenous Australians spoke over 2000 different languages and dialects, and their lifestyles and cultural traditions also differed from one region to another. They lived within a complex social system, with highly developed traditions reflecting their deep connection with their surroundings and environment. Asian and Oceanic mariners and traders were in contact with Indigenous Australians for many centuries before the era of European settlement (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011).

European Australia

While the Dutch were said to be the first Europeans to arrive in Australia (Jordan-Bychkov 2003), European invasion can be dated to the arrival of the first British convoy in 1788. This first British fleet of 11 ships carried about 1500 people – half of them British convicts. They arrived in Sydney Harbour (Sydney Cove) on 26 January 1788 (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009, p. 56). Although British colonisation commenced in 1788 in the Sydney region of eastern Australia, it did not reach central Australia until the 1880s. Meanwhile, many Indigenous groups in remote Australian areas were virtually unchanged by European influence until the 1940s (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009).

Between the years 1827 and 1842, Australia witnessed the expansion of European settlement in Tasmania (1803), Western Australia (Albany, 1826 and Perth, 1829) and Queensland (1842). In 1851, the first gold discovery prompted rapid population growth (Jordan-Bychkov 2003), and the non-Indigenous population increased from ‘43,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1870’ (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009, p. 59). By that time, the immigration patterns were not limited to only English, Welsh and Irish settlers but by the year 1854 included Russians, Maltese, Poles, Greeks, Italians and Chinese (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009). In 1860, the Iranians, Egyptians and Turks entered the demographic population of Australia as operators of camel ‘trains’ (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009). The shipments of British convicts to New South Wales ended in 1840, to Tasmania in 1852, and to Western Australia in 1868 and by then, the majority of ex-convicts were already declared free settlers (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009). Similar to the Malaysian

situation of the 19th century, Australia consisted of a number of independent colonies under the administration of the British government, with each colony administered by a governor.

Australia's current political structure was established in 1901 through the federation of six states (New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia) and two territories (Australian Capital Territory-ACT and the Northern Territory-NT) under a single constitution (Jordan-Bychkov 2003; Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009). The Australian Constitution established the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia with a House Representatives and a Senate. Australia is a constitutional monarchy with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of State and the Governor-General acting as the Representative of the Head of State in Australian (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009)¹⁰. The local state and territory governments operate their own constitutions and parliaments which are based in their capital cities. These states are then divided into local government areas called Cities, Shires, Towns or Municipalities. Each area has its own local council that is responsible for planning and delivering services to their local communities.

In 2011, the Australian population was estimated at 22.6 million, of which 5.6 million were reported as living in Victoria (the focus state of this research) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012). The total rural population in Australia in 2010 was reported as 10.9 percent in 2010 (Trading Economics 2012). Currently, the Australian economy depends on natural resources such as coal, iron, gold, copper, liquefied natural gas and mineral sands. Australia is one of the world's major exporters of wheat and wool (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009).

¹⁰ 'In 1999, Australia voted on whether to leave the British Empire, renouncing the royal family, to become a republic, yet the majority voted to keep things as they are' (Jordan-Bychkov 2003, p. 95).

The Australian education system varies among the states and territories. Each state and territory does however follow three general stages: primary education (primary schools), secondary education (secondary schools/high schools) and tertiary education (universities and/or Vocational Education and Training). The general literacy rate in Australia is reported to be very high, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, ‘7 out of 10 people reported reading as their most preferred leisure activity ... reading for enjoyment was the main motivation for people, with 83% of readers reporting this as a reason for the activity. General interest was also a popular reason [68%], followed by relaxation and reducing stress [67%] and to improve knowledge [59%]’ (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009). Nevertheless, one recent report has claimed that there are ‘46% of Australians who can’t read newspapers; follow a recipe; make sense of timetables, or understand the instructions on a medicine bottle’ (The National Year of Reading 2012).

Australian Aboriginal Traditional Literacy

Australia’s Aboriginal culture represents one of the oldest surviving cultures in the world, with the use of stone tool technology and painting with yellow, white and red ochre pigment dating back over 50,000 years. The longest continuing religion in the world is said to belong to the Australian Aborigines, with the Rainbow Serpent mythology recorded in rock shelter paintings in Kakadu National Park region believed to be seven thousand years old (Welch 2011). For thousands of years Australian Indigenous people recorded their stories and culture as rock art. This rock art tradition, mainly as paintings in rock shelters and as engravings on exposed rock, has continued to the present. The art of the Indigenous Australians represents images of the environment, such as the plant and animals, and includes images of animals believed to have become extinct 20,000 to 40,000 years ago. Some of the most ancient paintings, in rock shelters in northern Australia, depict people dressed for ceremony and

dancing, with similar body decoration and accoutrements to those worn in ceremonies to this day, again revealing the great age of Australian Aboriginal culture (Welch 2011).

Currently, although Indigenous Australians are not known to have a formal written language, many researchers have been conducting studies to understand and appreciate Australian Aboriginal ways of communicating and their methods of information sharing. Some of the prominent researchers of Indigenous Australian culture include Kaye Price (1990), Ann Larson, Marisa Gillies, Peter J. Howard and Juli Coffin (2007), and Tripcony (2007). According to these researchers, literacy in traditional Australian Aboriginal culture is more of an idea and art, which is very different to any form of literacy in contemporary society. The form of literacy practised by Indigenous Australians is seen more in the traditional enshrining of history and heritage through bark, body and wall paintings, dance and songs. It has been described as ‘a literacy that privileged information depending on one’s wisdom or maturity’ (Tripcony 2007, p. 6).

In conclusion, this overview of the Malaysian and Australian geographical and cultural contexts has demonstrated that both communities share similarities through being multi-cultural and colonized countries. Both countries were influenced by the British governmental, political and social structure. The diverse, multi-cultural nature of these societies is a fundamental challenge, especially in relation to public library planning and delivery to community members. In this context, this research highlights several major similarities that can be shared by the local Malaysian and Australian library services to enhance their services; in addition, this research discusses several major differences between the two nations in relation to the orientations of the library services. These similarities and differences are discussed in Chapter 6.

The Concept of the Public Library: The Historical Context of Libraries

The ideas underpinning the concept of the free public library as discussed in this research are relatively new ones, yet libraries are said to be as old as the written word and to have existed for almost as long as records have been kept (Lerner 2000). The existence of libraries can be traced to as early as 3000BCE, and libraries are known to have existed in some of the most famous early civilizations including those of ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Sumer. In these early libraries, however, no obvious distinction was made between a 'record room', an archive and a library¹¹ (Weigand 2009; Maidabino 2010).

These early libraries and their collections were mostly associated with civil administration, religion and trade, and they were located in palaces and places of worship. According to Wayne A. Weigand (2009), 'many early libraries were located in temples where scribes recorded information that the governing class considered important, and preserved, classified and arranged it for future reference' (Weigand 2009, p. 532). These early library collections included items such as myths, ritual proverbs, and hymns, manuals of botany, zoology and mineralogy, mathematics, business records, property ownership and medical remedies. Over time, additional documentation was added to these collections including historical documents and literary works, and these 'record rooms' became more like our current concept of a library.

These early libraries were 'exclusive institutions' (Piotrowski & Roger 2007, p. 346), and examples include the library of Alexandria, which was built in the third century BCE and was

¹¹ According to the International Encyclopaedia of Information and Library Science (2003), 'records are documents arising from some transaction that preserves an account of fact of the matter in permanent and discrete form' (p. 546), therefore records are 'live' documents; on the other hand, archives are 'comprised of physical conservation activities' (p. 22), and hence refer to 'dead' documents. Both records and archives stand as a unique institution. However, libraries are not unique because libraries manage published work and material; they are 'collection[s] of material organized for use' (p. 371).

in existence until its destruction in the seventh century CE. The founder, King Ptolemy I, built this royal library with the aim of collecting, editing and authenticating every written work of the Greeks and also to create a comprehensive research library for scholars and intellectuals (Weigand 2009). These early libraries were not public libraries in the sense we understand them today. Libraries, like the library of Alexandria, were built for the purpose of catering to royalty, the clergy, scholars, and other elite members of the community. Despite this, such libraries can be seen as symbols of the importance and power placed by communities on the organization, control and access to knowledge. These private and royal libraries laid the foundations for more contemporary ideas concerning the place of libraries in communities around the world today. The tradition of such 'exclusive' libraries was to continue in the Western world throughout the next centuries, however as early as 500BCE a more contemporary idea of the public library began to emerge.

Public Library Development

In 500BCE, the ancient cities of Athens and Samos were among the earliest ancient cities of the Greek Empire to establish the 'first government-sponsored library for the use of their local public and not just for the ruling elites' (Murray 2009, p.14). Meanwhile in 440BCE, the Romans built libraries; according to Murray, 'Roman public libraries were even placed in public baths, a token of the luxurious lifestyle of the empire's wealthiest citizens who grew up with a love of books and literature' (Murray 2009, p. 20).

Greek and Roman public libraries flourished hand in hand with many private elite and professional libraries, but because of the low literacy rate among the population these public libraries in reality served only a small number and a small part of the population and finally closed down. Murray states that the fall of the Roman Empire brought 'a culture and

intellectual darkness' (2009, p. 21) in the Western world and very few libraries were built in the centuries which followed. What remained of the great libraries fell victim to neglect and war.

Libraries did not disappear altogether in the West, and with the spread of Christianity between 450CE and 1450CE, church and monastic libraries began to grow. These monastic libraries laid the foundation for the concept and organization of today's contemporary libraries. In these religious establishments, Christian monks set up a textual copying system and began copying many classical and ancient manuscripts and church writings. These libraries also supported the building of schools serving local clergy and civil servants. As was the situation in the ancient world, however, these libraries were not open to the public and according to Murray (2009), 'borrowers were usually nobles or government officials or individuals who were benefactors of the monastery' (p. 33). This was as close to a public library as a monastic library ever came in this era (Murray 2009).

While the Western world was plunged into chaos after the fall of the Roman Empire, many of the scholarly traditions remained uninterrupted in the Eastern or Byzantine Empire. The first Islamic Quranic revelations took place in the sixth century from 610 to 632CE in Mecca. These revelations emphasised the importance of reading and learning (literacy) for humanity and creation, as indicated in the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq of the Holy Qur'an:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

(O Beloved!) Read (commencing) with the name of Allah; who has created (everything); He created man from a mass suspended like a leech (in the mother's womb). Read and your Lord is Most Generous; He Who taught man (reading and writing) by the pen. He; who (besides that) taught man (all that) which he did not know. (Al-Quran verses 1-5)

This revelation emphasised the seeking of knowledge and education, and as a result by the seventh century CE, a knowledge tradition was developing rapidly in the Arab Muslim civilization.

The Arab Muslim world

Libraries in the Arab Muslim world (as in medieval Europe) became closely attached to places of worship: mosques. Mosques performed multiple tasks in education, from the facilitation to the dissemination of learning and knowledge (Stam 2001). In the beginning, these mosque libraries were used exclusively by scholars and the clergy. This was also due to the low literacy rates among the public. However, in later years, the libraries of several mosques began to open their doors to public use. Among the most famous of these was ‘the House of Wisdom’ (Murray 2009, p. 55) which was open to the public in 830CE in Baghdad. It was founded by Caliph Harun Al-Rashid (789-809CE) during the Abbasid period (750-1100CE). The House of Wisdom was well known for its many works of astronomy and science that had been translated into the Arabic language. The library lasted only until the Mongols came to Baghdad in 1336CE. Nonetheless, by the 15th century CE, the Arab Islam empire was established in Central Asia, between Eastern and Southern Asia and Europe, and with the fall of Byzantine (Constantinople) to Muslims in 1453, the Arab Muslims had unlimited access to all of the Byzantine Greek and Roman book collections and libraries.

Asia

Many followers of Buddhism, Confucianism and Islam transported various religious texts and manuscripts to Asia (Weigand 2009). In the 6th century BCE, the rise of Jainism, Buddhism and Islam led to the evolution of many religious writings and libraries. Libraries were built to collect, preserve and replicate these religious literatures. In India, for instance, many libraries

were established for preserving Buddhist scripts. However, these libraries were attached to palaces and their local places of worship. The Chinese empire was known to be active in compiling official manuscripts and constructing their official libraries. These Chinese libraries were mostly used by scholars to assist the emperor with advice needed; as Lerner (2000) comments: ‘the libraries of medieval Europe served the glory of God, but those of China were tools of the state’ (p. 40). Under the Han (206BCE to 220CE) dynasty, Chinese literature flourished. The Han founded an imperial training school to educate and produce Chinese scholars. An imperial library was formally established to ‘collect the officially approved classics’ and ‘to control the detail of the Confucian doctrine that justified their claim to rule China’ (Lerner 2000, p. 42). Book production rapidly increased after the invention of paper and the use of woodblock printing. This situation allowed followers of Confucius and Buddha to bring their religious texts to other parts of Asia such as India. According to Weigand (2009), three types of libraries existed in India’s ancient period (3000BCE to 1206CE), ‘some were attached to palaces and courts; others to centres of learning; still others to places of worship’ (Weigand 2009, p. 533). Nonetheless, access to these libraries was still limited to scholars, the clergy and elites.

Western Europe

In the 17th century, the Reformation in Western Europe, along with the growth of printing and the publishing industry, meant that book learning and literacy were no longer exclusive to the aristocrats and the clerical scholars. Libraries became open to public use; however, at that time the concept of public use was not necessarily associated with the current meaning of a public library. According to an English statesman and scholar, Sir Thomas Bodley (who also spent his retirement years and personal fortune on building a library for the Oxford University; the Bodleian Library), public use in this era meant that ‘men could use the library

freely, although no one would be permitted to borrow books' (Murray 2009, p. 126). A public library offered very few books to be borrowed; instead books were chained (for protection from theft) and mostly could be read only in-house. At this time, subscription and social libraries were also considered as public libraries; and with war, politics, economic, scientific and social development issues surrounding the daily life of citizens, printed materials such as newspapers became one of the most popular reading materials available to the public. Soon many started to joined subscription and social libraries. These types of public libraries were provided to the public through local news-stands and stalls (where broadsheets could be put up and sold), and bookshops around the cities.

In the 18th century, various academic libraries around the world developed at a steady pace, along with the emergence of local universities and colleges. Many of these academic libraries were also open to public use, provided that the users were registered members or had subscription registration. Many private libraries were also open to public use but only if the users were registered members or had a form of subscription registration (Lerner 1999, 2000; Harris 1999; Murray 2009).

Contemporary librarians generally divide libraries into four types: 'public, academic, school and special'¹² (Weigand 2009, p. 539)¹³. In a more contemporary understanding, the notion of the public library goes beyond just ownership and use; today, the term 'public library'

¹² This last category constitutes a miscellany, into which are included libraries of many kinds including national libraries (Weigand 2009, p. 539).

¹³ Academic libraries are 'libraries that are attached to academic institutions above the secondary or high school level, serving the teaching and research needs of students and staff' (Feather and Sturges 2003, p. 3). A school library 'supports teachers, other school staff and pupils in all areas of the curriculum – literacy and reading; information skills and independent learning – and gives equality of opportunity for all' (Feather and Sturges 2003, p. 567), and Special libraries are 'information resource centres located in corporations, private businesses, government agencies, museums, colleges, hospitals, associations and other organizations with special information needs. Special libraries collect, monitor, organize, analyse, evaluate, package and disseminate resources material for their parent or client organizations' (Feather and Sturges 2003, p. 616).

refers to ‘the municipal or regional circulating library that is not only publicly owned and tax supported but also open to any citizens who desire to use it’ (Harris 1999, p. 148); that is, it is a free public library.

The ‘Free’ and ‘Public’ Library

The contemporary Western idea of the public library has been said to provide the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Many contemporary Western scholars such as Jennifer McDaniel, Aimee Babcock-Ellis and Jessica Hernandez (2011) and Western organizations such as FOLA would similarly define public libraries as institution that are:

established under state enabling laws or regulations to serve a community, district, or region, and provide at least; an organized collection of printed or other library materials; administration by paid staff; have an established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the public; have the facilities necessary to support collection, staff, and schedule; and being supported in whole or in part with public funds. (IMLS, 2011)

On the other hand, the *International Encyclopaedia of Information and Library Science* describes public libraries as,

provided through public funding for the use and the public good. Public Libraries make use of material in printed, audio-visual and electronic formats in order to collect, preserve, organise, retrieve, disseminate and communicate information, ideas and the creative products of the human imagination. (Feather and Sturges 2003, p. 530)

Both these descriptions of public libraries concur that public libraries are provided to the public through public funding, and they are for the use of the public.

Free Public Libraries

Free public libraries in Western countries, in agreement with Michael Harris’ (1999) definition above, were properly established in the 19th century:

the true public library in the sense that we use the term today, came into existence as a response to the needs of an evolving democratic society and the public library in Western countries has evolved from an instrument of education, intended to uplift the working classes, into a relatively minor cultural and recreational facility for the middle classes (Lerner 1999, p. 138).

The idea of the free public library involves a local library funded by local funding such as taxation. In Britain, before the introduction of free public libraries, there were limited types of libraries available to the public; one that was well known was the subscription library (Drake 2009). These libraries originated in the 17th century and were generally set up by a small group of people within a society, to be used primarily by those who paid a subscription fee. The poor and less fortunate individuals were excluded from the privileges of using these library services. It was only after 1797 that a library became available to the poorer members of the society (Thomas 1966). The introduction of the free public library challenged formal knowledge by monopoly of the elite and of selected groups of individuals. It allowed the lower- and middle-class members of society to participate and develop their knowledge and literacy.

The development of the free public library was closely linked with knowledge and free thinking; it developed along with an understanding of the needs of democracy and the need for educated citizens. There is also a strong link between the public library movement and public education, with the rise of the idea that every citizen has the right to free access to community-owned resources. David H. Stam (2001) emphasises that ‘public library development led to reforms in both England and the United States to abolish slavery, treat the insane more humanely and educate the young’ (Stam 2001, p. 145).

In the mid-19th century, public libraries began to appear in Britain, as a result of the Public Libraries Act, 1850. The Free Library Movement was one of the many groups in the

Victorian period working for the ‘improvement of the public’ through education. Free public libraries became popular and active in both Britain and the United States towards the middle of the nineteenth century, and from the outset these public libraries had a reforming, educational and socializing function. At the same time, other countries around the world had their own local library movements that are responsible for assisting public library development. For example, in Australia the Friends of the Libraries Association was established and in Malaysia the Malayan Public Library Association (MPLA).

Two of the most successful and popular examples related to the free public library were the developing Mechanics’ Institutes and the vast number of public libraries founded by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Many contemporary public libraries around the world were influenced by these ideas. Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more than 2500 Carnegie free public libraries were funded around the world. However, Carnegie funded only the construction of the library buildings, hence the institutions’ expenditure such as administration and management were still the responsibility of the local government (Thomas 2010). The Mechanics’ Institute movement, on the other hand, was originally founded in Scotland and aimed to promote the intellectual and moral improvement of its members (mechanics and others). Each institute provided a library and reading room for this purpose, as well as for the delivery of lectures and resource references such as manuals for workers, and systematic instructions on the scientific principles underlying the operations they were daily called upon to perform (Thomas 1952).

During the British social transformation, starting with the Industrial Revolution in the early nineteenth century, free public libraries¹⁴ became an important asset for the British community. Among popular innovations introduced at this time was the free public access to books, branch libraries, and deposit stations for books in many parts of cities.

Later in the early 20th century, further innovations were introduced in public libraries, particularly travelling libraries or ‘bookmobiles’; this service involved transporting books to readers in rural or outlying areas (Lagemann 1989). Contemporary public library collections are not restricted to books; they have almost always contained many different varieties of materials. In contemporary libraries, collections include both printed and non-printed materials; the materials in library collections include manuscripts, recordings, maps, microfiches, CD-ROMs, computer software, online databases, films and audio visual material. The main mission of a public library is to ‘collect, organize, preserve and provide access to knowledge and information to the users and community surrounding it’ (Orgunsola 2008, p. 43).

In fulfilling the above mission, public libraries preserve many valuable records of cultures and activities that can be passed down to future generations. A library becomes an essential tie in linking the past, present and future of a community and a nation. As stated in the UNESCO Manifesto, ‘the Public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social group’ (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994).

¹⁴ For the purpose of this research, the term ‘public library’ from this point onwards refers to the free public library.

Many early public libraries denied women and children the right to use libraries; thus, they were forced to rely on their male relatives for access to library resources. According to Jolie Valentine, 'in the public libraries of 1876, borrowers were not permitted to wander amid the stacks; children (as well as women, in some places) were not allowed inside libraries at all' (Valentine 2005, p. 53). Currently, many librarians seem to be developing more programs that attract women more than men. This is because they (women and children) have always been enthusiastic and devoted users of public libraries (Cassell & Weibel 2007).

Nevertheless, information technology has shifted the public library to become a more dynamic information institution. Collection development has become more diversified and less physical, and the public library's roles and functions are now extended to not just the storage and gathering of information and knowledge, but also to interacting, communicating and socializing. In many countries around the world, the contemporary public library stands for a community hub: 'Public libraries engage, inspire and inform citizens and help build strong communities' (Bundy 2006). They have also been described as 'the heart of the community' (Goulding 2008, p. 340).

In a dynamic sense, information can be viewed as having a life cycle involving collection, storage, retrieval and dissemination, and within the context of the advancement of technology and the information superhighway, the need for information security and protection has become vital. Nonetheless, whether specific information is meaningful or informative is subject to the information receiver. Protection of information is needed for many reasons. In situations where information is needed for research, planning, education, innovation, management and community development, information becomes 'valuable'; it can also, however, be perceived as a 'threat' to a community, government or country (Henrici 2001).

Malaysian Contemporary Public Library Development

In Malaysia, the establishment of the ‘first non-subscription libraries began with the Carnegie Library in Kota Bharu town, Kelantan in 1938’ (Lincoln Resource Centre 2011, p. 2). This was followed by the Butterworth Library in the State of Penang and in the province of Wellesley (now known as Seberang Perai) in 1954 (Wijayasuria 1985); it later expanded to several other major towns in Malaysia (Lim 1974). Through the colonial period, the Malaysian public libraries were very much influenced by the Western colonial and post-colonial powers (Britain and the United States), yet the local indigenous culture remained intact. This has remained a priority for Malaysian public libraries; the NLM and all state public libraries in Malaysia strive hard to promote and preserve their relevant cultures, namely the indigenous Malay, the Malaysian Indian, the Malaysian Chinese and the Malaysian cultures in general, in spite of the strong Western and other external cultural influences. Nonetheless, funds alone will not ensure a public library’s success.

Post-Colonial Influence

The British, with their first settlement in Penang in 1786, were responsible for introducing the formal concept of the library to Malaysia (Lim 1970). The British established a firm foundation for the Malaysian contemporary educational system (primary, secondary and tertiary) (Hussin 2004), and later this was followed by the development of library institutions within the education system as a learning resource for school children. When the British education system spread throughout Malaysia, more libraries were needed to serve the increasing number of students. As well as being influenced by the British modes of practice, public libraries in Malaysia have benefited greatly from several Western consultants, such as Hedwiq Anuar, Alex Wilson and John Taylor. The contributions of these consultants is described by Wijayasuriya (1998):

Hedwig Anuar, he prepared the Blueprint for Public Library Development in Malaysia (1968); Alex Wilson, he prepared the public library State of Kedah development plan (1978); John Taylor, prepared the ten year development plan for State of Penang Public Library Corporation (1987) and also Stephen Parker, who prepared the public library development plan for the State of Sabah and State of Sarawak. (Wijasuriya 1998, p. 62)

While contemporary public library development and practice in Malaysia was introduced by the British, influences were also brought by the American library model known as the United States Information Service (USIS). USIS was first established in Mexico in April 1942, and was a joint effort of the ALA (American Library Association) and the US Office of Internal Affairs. The USIS libraries initiated the model of an open shelf collection, namely books, magazine subscriptions, newspapers, government materials, and music materials, as well as microfilms, microfiches and audio-visual materials. The USIS libraries opened 48 hours per week, on most evenings and on Saturdays. Some even operated for short periods of time on Sundays (Sussman 1973). This format of USIS libraries continues in the current practices of the contemporary public library in Malaysia. USIS in Malaysia later changed its name to LRC (Lincoln Resource Centre), and currently LRC runs many affiliation programs and activities with local public libraries around Malaysia, such as Kuala Lumpur (City) Library, State of Melaka Public Library, State of Sabah (City) Library, State of Sarawak Library, State of Kedah Public Library, State of Kelantan Public Library and State of Penang Public Library (US Embassy 2011).

By 1955, the Malayan Public Library Association (MPLA) had established 62 public libraries and over the years, this number increased to 257 public libraries around Malaysia. However, after independence in 1957, all independent funding came to a halt. Wijayasuriya (1985) states that:

The MPLA may be considered to be the first attempt to establish a public library service on a national scale. Its [MPLA's] failure emphasises forcibly the undesirability and impracticality of voluntary support in the field of library promotion. It illustrates what the experience of

other countries has already shown, that a national library service can only be provided if supported by public funding. (Wijayasuriya 1985, p. 75)

In 1968, a state-based decentralized network of library services was recommended and adopted based on the 'Blueprint for Public Library Development in Malaysia' prepared by Hedwig Anuar for the Library Association of Malaysia (Persatuan Perpustakaan Malaysia). This blueprint attempted to establish a national standard for the Malaysian public library. It was later used to assess the existing service and it also served as a guideline for evaluating and setting up new goals for future public libraries. On September 1st, 1972, the Malaysian National Library Act (80) was passed, and in 1977, the National Library of Malaysia became a State Government Department (Wijasuriya 1985, p. 77; 1998, p. 62).

National Library of Malaysia (NLM)

In the beginning, the NLM was established as a unit within the National Archive in 1966; however, the NLM became a full federal department under the Ministry of Education of Malaysia. It was established by the National Library Act (Act 80) passed on 1 September 1972. According to the National Library Act 1972, the NLM was established with the purpose and objective to:

Make available for the use of the present and future generations a national collection of library resources; to facilitate nation-wide access to library resources available within the country and abroad; and to provide leadership on matters pertaining to libraries. (Law of Malaysia 2006, p. 6)

In keeping with the development of library and information services in Malaysia, this act was subsequently amended in 1987: the NLM was then placed under the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MCAT) (Wijasuriya 1998; NLM 2011a).

In a multi-ethnic, culturally and linguistically diverse country such as Malaysia, it is a great challenge for a public library to provide services that meet the needs of all Malaysians. As an

information service provider, Malaysian public libraries need to formulate strategic plans that will enable their services to create a knowledge base to meet the needs of all groups of Malaysian society effectively and efficiently. The NLM was established to take up this challenge.

Currently, the NLM's role is to coordinate the development of public libraries in all states of Malaysia. The NLM is directly involved in the development of Bahasa Malaysia as the Malaysian National Language, and provides support for research activities at a national level. At the same time, the NLM provides facilities that contribute to the society's prosperity, and that assist in establishing cultural relations with other countries, while maintaining activities and services related to librarianship as ordered by the Minister (NLM 2001; 2011a).

In 1987, the NLM extended its responsibility (in accordance with the 1987 amended act) to the establishment of the National Depository Centre to preserve library materials; hence, they act as the National Bibliographic Centre that is in charge of coordinating the national bibliographic network and establishing a national bibliographic database that is accessible to users both locally and abroad. The NLM also operates as the National Centre for conservation, acquisition and documentation of Malay manuscripts; facilitates national standards for public and special libraries; facilitates library cooperation in resource sharing; provides courses to upgrade professionalism in librarianship; and establishes cooperation with national and international professional bodies for the development of libraries (Wijasuriya 1998; NLM 2001; 2011a).

Despite its expanded responsibilities, the NLM is still accountable for the development of state public libraries, for they are directly linked to the Federal Government¹⁵. The 9th Schedule of the Federal Constitution (Act A704 Constitution (Amendment) Act 1988) states that libraries are the responsibility of both State and Federal governments. This amendment enables the Director General of the NLM to sit in all state public library board meetings in order to assist in the planning and coordinating of public library structures in the states¹⁶. The NLM organizes biannual meetings with librarians of state public libraries to coordinate professional matters and monitor development projects (Wijasuriya 1998; NLM 2001; NLM 2010a). Furthermore, through its Research and Training division, the NLM are responsible for providing courses and examinations for sub-professional staff serving under the Common User Service (CUS), and for providing leadership training and programs to all library staff on matters pertaining to libraries in Malaysia (Abu Bakar 2010a, 2010b); they are also responsible for staff confirmation of service and promotion (NLM 2001, p. 34). In 2009, the total collection of the NLM stood at 3,009,017 including printed and non-printed materials, manuscripts and digital materials. In 2011, there were more than 1,129 public libraries throughout Malaysia including 14 state public libraries (NLM 2011a).

¹⁵ According to the Incorporation (State Legislatures Competency) Act 1962, public libraries are a state government responsibility.

¹⁶ 'The annual federal grant to the states, which is channeled through the NLM, assists in the construction of new library buildings, the renovation of library premises, as well as the purchase of mobile libraries, equipment, and print and non-print materials for the library's collection' (Law of Malaysia 2006).



Picture 1: National Library of Malaysia (NLM) Building



Picture 2: NLM Front Entrance

Malaysian State Public Libraries

Public libraries in Malaysia are run primarily by the State Public Library Corporation in Peninsular Malaysia and the State Library Departments in Sabah and Sarawak. There are 1,408 public libraries in Malaysia; these public libraries are categorized into 14 State Public libraries¹⁷ six Provincial libraries, 124 Branch or District Libraries, 84 Town Libraries, 1,089 Rural Libraries and 91 Mobile Libraries. State public libraries in Malaysia are overseen by a director and supported by professional and non-professional staff (NLM 2010a).

According to the 1st Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL) XV Executive Board Meeting Report, the establishment of public libraries in Malaysia is provided for by the Malaysian Federal laws as well as the State Library Enactments (NLM 2009). Additionally, the Local Government Act provides the administrative structure for the setting up of public libraries by State Local Authorities. This report also states that the Director General of the NLM is represented on the State Public Library Corporation Boards and is required to give advice pertaining to the development of the state public libraries. In addition, under the Malaysian Federal laws, the Federal Government allocates funds according to a five-year development budget as well as being responsible for annual operating expenditures for the state public libraries (NLM 2009, 2010c).

Australian Contemporary Public Library Development

Public libraries were established in Australia as early as the 1850s, and their development was strongly influenced by British library movements. Historically, the first Australian printed materials were brought to Australia by British convict ships in 1788. These

¹⁷ namely the State Public Library of Melaka; State Public Library of Johor; State Public Library of Perlis; State Public Library of Selangor; State Public Library of Kedah; State Public Library of Pahang; State Public Library of Terengganu; State Public Library of Sabah; State Public Library of Pulau Pinang; State Public Library of Kelantan; State Public Library of Perak; State Public Library of Negeri Sembilan; State Public Library of Sarawak and Memorial Library of Kuala Lumpur.

collections were small in number and belonged to individuals and to the British government officials. According to Peter Biskup,

The first fleet which arrived at Botany Bay in January 1788 brought with it in its cargo holds Australia's first literature: the treatises and manuals of the surgeon, navigators, surveyors and the judge advocate, the bibles and the prayer books of the chaplain and the collection of special selected books from the Propagation of the Gospel ... More importantly, it also brought with it as part of its cultural cargo, the notion of library (Biskup 1994, p. 2).

In the 1830s, the introduction of schools of arts, mechanics' institutes, and literary institutes added to the number of libraries accessible to the people of the colony. Peter Biskup (1994) explains further that 'in 1821 a catalogue of the libraries held by private citizens in the colony was compiled, and from these private collections a number of libraries began to emerge' (Biskup 1994, p. 7). The Australian free local public libraries were first established in late 1901 (Jones et al. 2009, p. 221).

Contemporary Public Libraries

In Australia, the public library generally refers to the range of community libraries that provide free library and information services within their local government jurisdiction (Jones et al. 2009). The results of the 1934 Munn-Pitt survey of Australian libraries, funded by the US Carnegie Corporation, found that:

As a whole Australia was better provided with local libraries in 1880 than it is today; almost every city and large town contains a decadent institute or school of arts, many of which give evidence of having had a former period of usefulness. It is pathetic to observe the pride and complacency with which local committees exhibit wretched little institutes which have long since become cemeteries of old and forgotten books. (Munn & Pitt 1935, p. 23)

This report is important because it has greatly influenced the cause of the free libraries movement in Australia and led the sharing of library services development responsibilities between state and local governments.

The National Library of Australia originated from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library. Most state libraries in Australia emerged from early public libraries around the country. For instance, the State Library of Victoria was established out of the first state-supported public reference library in 1856 and was known as the Melbourne Public Library (Biskup 1994, p. 41), and the State Library of New South Wales evolved from the Free Public Library of Sydney, which was founded in 1869 (Missingham 2009). While the National Library of Australia was committed to working with the state and territory libraries in ensuring that significant Australian records were collected and safeguarded, the state libraries gained the mandated role of supporting their communities and of providing legal deposits. In South Australia, for example, Libraries Act 1982, Section 7 clearly maintains that the role of the state library is to:

Achieve and maintain a coordinated system of libraries and library services that adequately meets the needs of the whole community; to promote and facilitate the establishment and maintenance of library and library services by council and other appropriate bodies, to promote a cooperative approach to the provision of library service, to ensure that the community has available to it adequate research and information services providing access to library materials and information stored in libraries and other institutions both within and outside the State (Libraries Act 1982, Section 7)

Australian state libraries (except Tasmania) do not manage public libraries; instead they provide support through partnership and cooperation arrangements (Jones et al. 2009). Australia has a long tradition of cooperation between libraries. For example, in Victoria, the Victorian Public Library Service, Library Board of Victoria and the State Library of Victoria worked collaboratively to develop a framework which proposed a ‘new focus for Victoria’s public libraries’ collaboration to increase community and government understanding and engagement with libraries and create greater efficiency and effectiveness of library services’ (Missingham & Cameron 2007, p. 82).

Currently, Australian public libraries are much more than repositories for books. New technologies such as CD-ROMs and the Internet were introduced. The internet also makes the national library heritage – the vast collection of books, manuscripts, photographs and so on – more accessible to a great number of Australians. There are approximately 4,850 libraries in Australia (this includes all types except primary and secondary school libraries) and according to the 2003-04 Public Libraries Survey there were 532 public libraries funded by local governments and eight national and state libraries operating in Australia at the end of June 2004. The local government libraries operated from 1,716 locations, while the national and state libraries had a total of 17 locations (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2004). The collections are in high demand, with around 193 million loans per year or approximately 9.65 loans per Australian per year (Jones et al. 2009).

State Library of Victoria (SLV)

Australian public libraries such as the SLV have now become a major community asset and strength for the country (SLV 2006); rather than simply providing passive access to resources, they offer a variety of activities and programs.

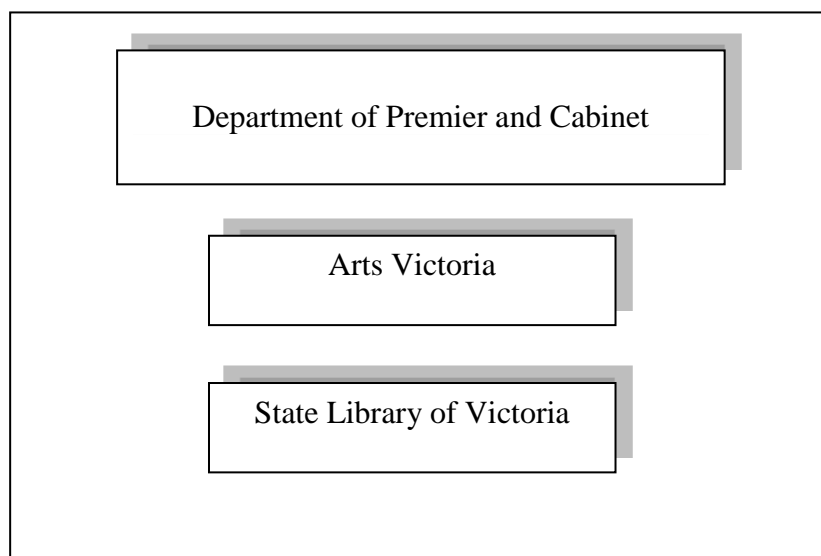


Chart 2.1: State Library of Victoria

The SLV does not manage Victorian public libraries directly; instead it plays its role through partnership and cooperation arrangements between public libraries (Jones et al. 2009). The SLV's essential role is to provide leadership programs in the library sector, promoting cooperation and access to a high standard of resources. Even though the SLV has no official responsibility for public libraries in pursuing these goals, it does nevertheless have a strong partnership with the public library network (SLV 2005, 2006; Rosenfeldt 2008). According to the researcher's interview with the Manager of the State Public Library Victoria (SLV), Debra Rosenfeldt, the responsibility for operating and managing the local public libraries throughout Victoria is administered by each local government and council.

The way the Victorian public library system operates, we also have Local Government. There are 79 local government areas in Victoria¹⁸ and all operate a library service. They are primarily responsible to their library services. They provide 80 percent of the funding for the public libraries in the community; meanwhile 20 percent of funding for public libraries comes from the state government but it doesn't come from the state library. It comes from the Minister of Local Government Office which is the Local Government of Victoria. (Rosenfeldt 2010)

In a presentation on 'SLV and PLVN: Working Together To Deliver Improved Library Services To Victoria's Communities' in November 2008, Debra Rosenfeldt explained that the SLV works collaboratively with local public libraries in a variety of ways. They have a framework for collaborative action and they undertake research projects relating to library services. With public libraries, the SLV has completed a research project called 'Libraries Building Community', which is about the roles that libraries play in the community. The SLV contributes to the leadership of the public library network by providing a range of professional development opportunities, supporting scholarships for public library staff, and by running leadership programs for library staff (Rosenfeldt 2008).

¹⁸ In Australia, the local government are also the councils.

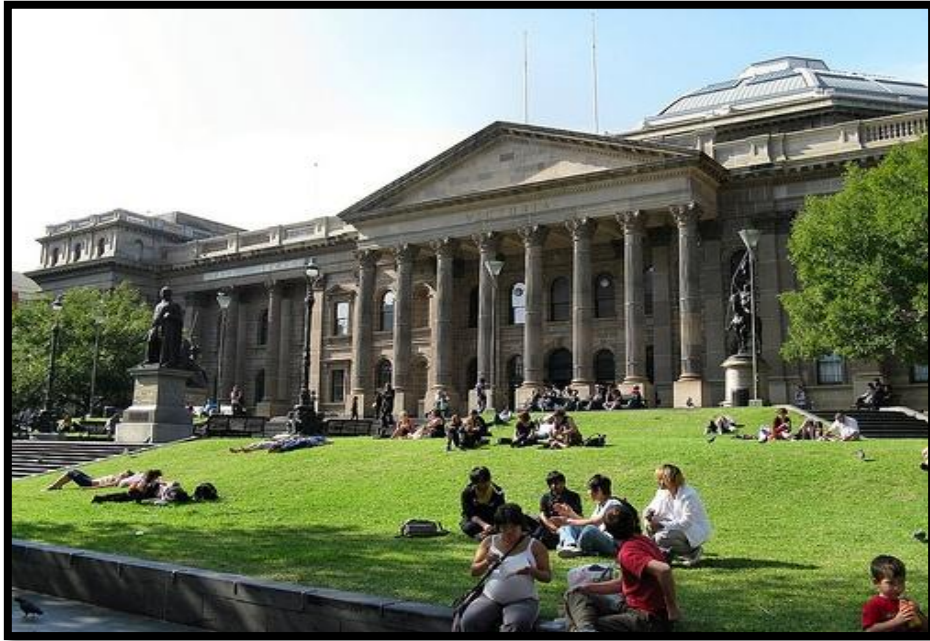
The SLV's role is to work collaboratively with the Victorian public library network to deliver and improve library services in Victorian communities (SLV 2011b, p. 4), in addition it runs an actual public library in Melbourne City. The SLV assists the Advisory Committees¹⁹ by providing a facilitator if required (SLV 2011b, p. 6). The SLV also delivers many practical projects to communities, such as exhibitions that travel around to public libraries, and newspaper digitalization projects with local public libraries. Furthermore, the SLV has developed a framework for public libraries to help them to self-evaluate and to develop continuous improvement plans (PLVN 2008; Rosenfeldt 2008). According to the Libraries Act 1988, the SLV are responsible 'to oversee cooperation in programs with libraries and information organizations to promote access to library and information resources, to exercise leadership and promote high standards in the provision of library and information services and to provide advice and information to the Minister on any matter concerning libraries and information organizations' (Government of Australia 2008, p. 10).

Currently, Victorian public libraries are seeing an increasing number of users. According to Debra Rosenfeldt, the SLV research and annual report to the local government of Victoria indicates that '50 percent of the community are registered members of libraries and another 10 percent did not register because they don't want to borrow but they do use the library. We believe that there are quite a lot of people who actually use the library but are not members. Like homeless people, for example' (Rosenfeldt 2010).

In Australia, public libraries are considered to be places in the public realm and hence they contribute to community structure. A public library is a 'resource that holds and provides

¹⁹ The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries, the body responsible for directly linking the Library Board of Victoria with the Victorian public library network, was established in July 2003. The Advisory Committee consists of the following members: up to two members of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer of the State Library of Victoria, four representatives of Public Libraries Victoria Network Incorporated, one representative from the Municipal Association of Victoria (SLV 2011b, p. 6).

access to people to explore, promote and learn. It is also deemed as a civic building that people are encouraged to enter at no cost, and with few expectations, they symbolize the relation of individuals to society' (Harris & Dudley 2005, p. 15).



Picture 3: State Library of Victoria (SLV) Building



Picture 4: SLV Front Entrance

Victoria Regional Library Corporation

The Australian Public Library Statistics Report 2009/2010 reported that there are 44 public library services in Victoria, covering 79 municipalities. There are two types of public library services operating in the State: single service municipalities (30) and regional library corporations (14). A single service refers to public library services run by municipalities and these are mainly located in metropolitan Melbourne. Meanwhile, for Regional libraries, there are two or more councils jointly providing the public library services (Australian Public Library Statistics Report 2009/2010). Altogether there are 261 branch libraries, 26 mobile libraries and 29 other service points actively operating around the state of Victoria (PLVN 2011).

All Regional Library Corporations operate under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989. This states that the Local Government Victoria is responsible for supporting public libraries through a range of grants and other funding, as well as being responsible for governance issues relating to regional library corporations (DPCD 2011). In addition, under the Local Government Act, all regional public libraries operate and report to the Local Government Victoria, in a similar structure to that used by other municipal councils in Victoria. Each corporation has an agreement between its members which has been approved by the Minister for Local Government (DPCD 2011).

The responsibility for operating and managing the local public libraries in the state of Victoria is administrated by each local government and council. According to Debra Rosenfeldt (2010), the Victorian public library system operates through their local government: there are 79 local governments in Victoria and each operates a library service. Rosenfeldt (2010) explains that the local government is primarily responsible for the library

services and provides 80 percent of the funding, while 20 percent of the funding comes from the State Government of Victoria. In Victoria, the State library has no jurisdiction in regards to local branch and rural public libraries in the state.

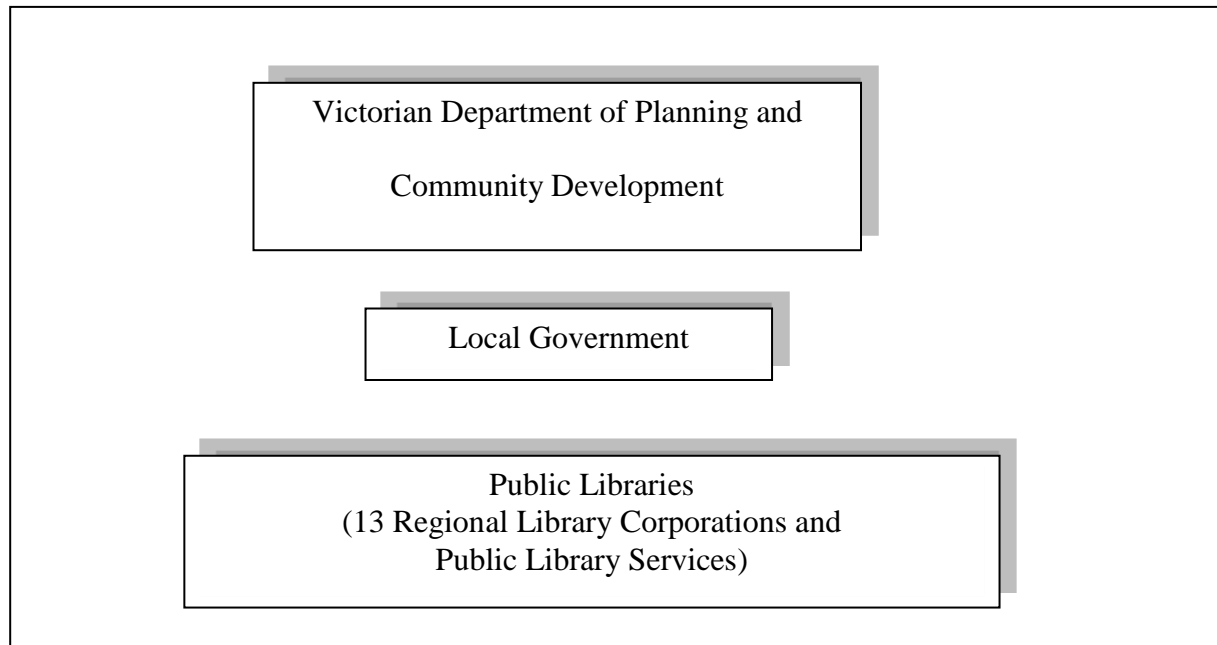


Chart 2.2: Victoria Regional Library

In summary, local public libraries around Victoria, Australia are not under the supervision or direction of the State Library of Victoria (SLV); instead, all public libraries in Victoria (in both urban and rural areas) are under the administration and control of a Regional Library Corporation, which are under the control of local councils. Nonetheless, the SLV and the Municipal Association of Victoria, under a special committee called the ‘Board Advisory Committee’, have created a framework to support collaboration programs between the existing public libraries in Victoria, Australia. This framework is used to develop a shared vision for improving access to public library services: ‘to specify the values and protocols to guide collaborative action and to support cohesive, consistent and confident decision-making; to identify how the collaboration effort will achieve its goals; and to provide a clear definition

of the roles and responsibilities of the collaboration's constituents' (Library Board of Victoria 2011). Furthermore, this framework is reviewed every three years to ensure that it continues to meet the collaboration's requirements.

Contemporary Information Theory and Practice

Public libraries have been established as a crucial element in the life of communities. They provide information that is essential for community knowledge and development needs. They are the special agent that promotes the idea of information dissemination and the concept of universal learning (Islam & Islam 2010). Hence, they offer people and communities access to knowledge and information that are much needed for their 'continuous development of knowledge, personal skills and civic skills and lifelong learning' (Yan & Agnes 2009, p. 4). According to Harrison (1977), a public library should be the intellectual centre of life of the area it serves.

Currently, public libraries have increasingly played a key role in community development and in building more cohesive and inclusive communities. Many developments of innovative partnerships and local engagement have supported outreach programs and activities in various libraries. This leads to better community cohesion and improved community relations for public libraries as community hubs. However, the significance of a public library in a community depends on their success in performing their role in meeting the needs of the community, and also how the community values them as an institution that upholds their self-development and the development of their community (Aabo 2005).

In their research on community engagement in public libraries, Hui-Yun Sung, Mark Hepworth and Gillian Ragsdell (2011) established that the involvement of local communities

and partnerships are the two main strands in the community engagement process. They suggest that a community project should be community-initiated, community-led and self-sustained, and the library service should act as a facilitator. Nonetheless, community engagement and library partnership are best used to improve and encourage community commitment, participation and involvement in meeting the community's information needs. Moreover, this type of engagement and partnership will maximize community awareness in improving their local social, cultural, learning and economic outcomes.

In Australia, the State Library of Victoria maintains that Victorian public libraries are currently playing their part in terms of providing services, activities and programs that benefit their communities (SLV 2005, 2006). They are said to have been inclusively providing Victorians of all ages with a shared place and space to meet; furthermore, they encourage greater tolerance and understanding of diversity, as well as the recognition of both commonalities and differences.

Across Victoria, there is an extensive network of public libraries that consists of '43 public library services and 238 public library branches; and out of these numbers, the services reach up to 820 physical points of delivery in the community and cover over one in four "named communities" in Victoria' (SLV 2006, p. 2). According to the Victorian Public Libraries' report on 'Libraries Building Communities' (SLV 2005, 2006), public libraries have contributed greatly to the development of rural and urban communities by providing them with complete and comprehensive information provision and access. These settings support the growth of the lifelong learning and non-formal education of adults and children across Victoria. Public libraries in Victoria manage to connect people and communities by becoming the 'hub' and expanding the local social network. These libraries have successfully

created ‘a sense of togetherness by bridging the generation gap and acting as a community connector and focal point’ (Library Board of Victoria & Victorian Public Library Network, p. 11).

Many public libraries across Australia have contributed significantly to the understanding and support of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in Australia. The Age Library in Broadmeadows, Victoria, for instance, has successfully established a program called ‘Bilingual story-times in the Community’ that engages parents and children from different ethnic groups around the area in a story-time session. Trained storytellers treat children and parents to stories, songs, rhymes and craft activities using different languages namely Arabic, Turkish, Sinhalese, Tamil, Farsi (Iranian), Assyrian, Dari (Afghani) and Vietnamese. These initiatives purposely cater to the information needs of diverse groups among the Australian community. According to Chris Kelly, Library services, Hume Global Learning Village Library Service:

The ‘Bilingual story-times in the community’ program has a wide range of benefits. The key benefits are that they support language and literacy development, support parents as their child’s first teacher and increase awareness of library services and learning opportunities. The program has had the additional benefit of building a strong partnership between library services and Council departments and a range of other community organizations (ALIA 2006a).

This kind of program is held not only in public libraries, but also in preschools, childcare groups, playgroups, women’s groups and community group meetings (ALIA 2006).

Ideally, through public library services, projects and programs, communities are said to become more educated. The community members will then contribute more to the success of the society, be able to create better social networks, and become more tolerant of cultural, religious and individual differences (SLV 2005, 2006). Hence, by providing a wide range of

innovations through public library services and programs, public libraries can break barriers and bring people together. Offering local people a space to work on personal and community problems can lead to the establishment of ‘community social capital’ (Kranich 2001, p. 4).

Community social capital is about interaction that enables people to build communities, with the sense of belonging and working together, and thus of building a social network. A prominent social researcher, Robert Putnam (2000), states that ‘social capital’ refers to the connections among individuals, their social networks, and their norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. Putnam (2000) claims that, social capital provides ‘informal educators’ with a powerful justification for their services and activities – in this research context, the informal educator refers to the public library service. Public library services make a direct and important contribution to the development of social networks and the strengthening of democracy. They cultivate collaboration and partnerships through information sharing, information literacy and lifelong learning in which people strengthen themselves and develop community social capital.

Public Library Policies

Among limitations and factors which affect the ways in which libraries perform their functions are linked closely to the policies under which they are operated. These policies can and may influence the libraries’ role in serving their communities and their effectiveness in supporting its local community development and empowerment efforts.

A policy describes the desirable state of a situation; it refers to a specific means of the realization of goals, and sets of rules and guidelines regulating the implementation of the meaning of the policy (Henrici, 2001). Policies can be formulated regionally, nationally, or even internationally, and include constitutions, laws, regulations and treaties. Meanwhile,

library policies are also closely linked with information policy. This is because an information policy is a ‘collection of policies and strategies that are designed to promote the development of a better-managed information society’ (Karan 2011, p. 3). Sandra Braman’s definition (2011), on the other hand, is more detailed in its scope: ‘information policy is comprised of laws, regulations, and doctrinal positions – and other decision making involving information creation, processing, flows, access, and use’ (p. 3). John Abdul Kargbo emphasises this connection between libraries and information policies:

Libraries are critical information providers and part of their function is to make information policies. The policies that they adopt on the selection, organization and dissemination of the information they possess determine, in large part, their effectiveness. Information policy is any written or unwritten law, regulation, rule or practice that affects the creation, acquisition, organization, dissemination or evaluation of information. (Abdul Kargbo 2007, p. 323)

Policies which must be considered when discussing the delivery of services to support and contribution to community development and empowerment effort include collection development, staffing, funding, circulation, marketing and promotion, and partnership policies.

Collection Development Policies

A collection development policy is established in order to ensure the library resources meet the needs of its users in a timely, economical and efficient manner. While a good library collection development policy should attempt to correct the weaknesses of the collection and highlight its strengths, a collection development policy should also act as a guide for the selection and acquisition of the library resources (Allison 2011).

Library collection development involves the process of planning and building a beneficial and balanced collection of library material over a period of time, and is based on the on-going assessment of the information needs of the library users (ODLIS 2011). Therefore, all public

libraries have their own individual collection development policies that are shaped to the needs of their patrons and the community they serve. The collection development policies are available in the form of a written statement.

For instance, the National Library of Australia's Collection Development Policy defines the scope and nature of the collection of Australian and overseas materials within the Library with a view to providing:

1) a practical interpretation of the Library's legal obligations under the *National Library Act 1960* with regard to Australian materials; 2) a public statement on its current collecting policies for Australian and overseas materials; 3) a practical guide for the staff of the Library to assist in the selection of library materials; and 4) a guide for other Australian libraries and collecting institutions, to enable a greater degree of cooperation in the development of collections in the national interest (NLA 2008, p. 8).

Another example is the collection development policy of the Corangamite Regional Library Corporation in Victoria, Australia. This policy outlines their purposes in three parts:

Part 1: Brief policy statement in regards to collection, selection, acquisition, review and retention; Part 2: Guidelines for staff for purchasing new material, including operational matters such as price, publisher, accuracy of information and number of copies purchased; and Part 3: Statement for professional bodies such as Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). (CRLC 2006, p. 3)

Collection development policies are typically kept in line with local publishing trends, users' and non-users' expectations, and local socio-economic development, because different community expectations call for different collection development policies. In the current context, library collections include digital multi-media materials to reflect the lifestyles of the new E-Generation as well as multi-media collections. In addition to collection development policies, there are other important policies that also need to be examined, such as acquisition, de-selection and circulation policies.

Acquisition

The ‘process of securing materials for a library collection, whether by purchase, as gifts, or through exchange programs’ (Satapathy 2010, p. 2) is known as acquisition. This task includes the process of paying for or acknowledging receipt and maintaining appropriate records. The acquisition and collection development policies work together to ensure that quality materials are chosen and included in the library collection (Allison 2011). Nonetheless, each study country’s policies of acquisition highlighted a different definition of acquisition. For example, staff of Australian libraries must ‘adhere to the collection development policies covering material and resources that are supported by manuscripts, music, pictorial, marks such as paintings, drawing, photographs and any oral historical sound recordings’ (NLA 2008). Meanwhile in Malaysia, library material can refer to any form of printed, graphic, audio electronics or other media, on or in which information is written, recorded, stored, displayed or produced (Deposit of Library Material Act 1986)

In many countries, acquisition processes in public libraries are done using a centralized purchasing system. The state public libraries of Australia’s Northern Territory, Queensland (in part), South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, use centralized purchasing systems.. In contrast, New South Wales and Victoria have no centralized system; instead, every library service selects and purchases its own resources (AusLib Press 2011). However, in Malaysian public libraries, the Malaysian government has stipulated that ‘all state institutions must buy their books exclusively from the government appointed book suppliers’ (Yeow-Fei 2006, p. 5).

Despite the different approaches to the acquisition of public library materials and collections, the function of any library acquisition process is to acquire the library materials according to

their collection development policy and by obtaining the materials in the most cost-effective way. Hence this acquisition process affects the quality, quantity and value of the resources of a library.

De-selection Policies

Closely associated with resources and collection development policies are the de-selection, or ‘weeding’, policies. This policy is important because it involves a process by which material from the library collection is removed, in situations such as the material has been damaged beyond repair, is out-of-date, or is no longer in use. Choosing an item for removal is an expensive process. The decision-making and record keeping requires intensive labour, and affects the quality, quantity and value of library resources and materials.

Many countries around the world create their own unique de-selection policies that are suited to their country and environment. In Malaysia, any form of disposal of library material must be authorized by the NLM Director General (Deposit of Library Material Act 1986 (Act 331)). Further, according to the NLM Library Resources Disposal Policy (*Dasar Pelupusan Sumber Perpustakaan*), the criteria for disposal and weeding material are:

(1) Physical condition – damaged resources that are still useable but repair cost is higher than replacement cost; most of the resource’s pages are lost or damaged and cannot be repaired anymore. (2) Content/Text Source – the content or source is not suited to the objectives of the NLM’s current policy; inaccurate information or facts; newspapers in their original form and published more than 2 years ago, (3) Edition – Old edition or version that has been replaced with a new edition in print or not in printing format except if the source has been registered in the National Reserve Collection or copy is kept for conservation purposes, (4) Language - Library resources in foreign languages other than Malay ‘clump/cluster’ and English language, (5) Year of publication - Library resources aged more than 20 years from publication date, unless (a) library resources that are characterized as classic or a masterpiece or famous novel; (b) local and international literature award-winning works such as the Pulitzer Prize and other literature prizes; (d) Collection loans that still actively circulate; (e) Local serial publications that are not available in any other formats. (NLM 2011b)

The de-selection process is one of the most controversial aspects of collection improvement. It will vary according to the local needs, local government and the country. According to the IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines, general criteria for weeding and de-selection are ‘materials that receive little or no use; materials that are duplicated elsewhere in the collection; materials that are worn out, damaged or obsolete’. These guidelines stipulate that ‘all discarded material may be disposed of or sold’ (Koontz 2010, p. 74).

Circulation

In any type of library, a clear and visible circulation policy will assist library patrons to understand the rules and regulations concerning issues such as eligibility and registration, loan periods, limits and restrictions, as well as fines and other notices. Therefore, the aim of a Circulation Policy is to facilitate the community in accessing the materials and information contained in their local library collections, and like other public library policies, circulation policies differ from one library to another.

In the State Library of Sarawak, Malaysia, for instance, a policy relating to the circulation of library materials is posted on the official library website to inform visitors and users of their responsibilities:

- 1) Members are allowed to borrow 6 library items for a two-week period; 2) Members are allowed to renew their borrowed materials if no reservations of such library materials have been made; 3) renewal of library materials can be made by phone, in person or online through the personal page account or e-mail. This is allowable if the library materials are not overdue; 4) all overdue materials must be returned to the *Pustaka* [library] and overdue fines must be cleared should users need to re-borrow the materials; 5) members shall bear full responsibility for their borrowed items; 6) members are responsible for paying the replacement value of the borrowed item as a result of loss or damages. (SSL 2011)

In addition to an online version, many public libraries have their circulation policy and regulations in print form such as a brochure or leaflet, and in many situations these details are distributed to visitors and users of the library.

Circulation policies can regulate and control the type and quality of resources that reach patrons and community members. Interlibrary loans between public libraries (locally) for instance can sustain and support the distribution of quality library materials and resources around smaller communities. This has been the practice for many years among local Australian public libraries.

Funding Policies

The monetary support that is used for a public library's daily operation of services, activities and programs is known as library funding. In many countries, funding for public libraries mainly comes from and is supported by revenue generated by taxation or levies. However, secondary funding may also come from donations from funding bodies or private individuals, revenue from commercial activities, customers' fee sponsorship, or even charges to customers or individuals who use the service.

In different countries, different ministries or departments are responsible for the funding of public libraries. However, in Malaysia, the funding of the state's public libraries is controlled and operated by the Director General in accordance with the provisions of the National Library Act 1972 (Act 80):

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Development Funds Act 1966, moneys standing to the credit of the Fund may be applied by the Director General for the following purposes: (a) payment for the cost of site, construction of an extension to building, and equipment for the Library; (b) payment of consultation expenses for library development; (c) payment for the cost of library resources and services acquired for the purposes of library development; (d) any other payment for the purposes of library development. (2) Moneys standing to the credit of the Fund may be invested in accordance with paragraph 8(3) (a) of the Financial Procedure Act 1957. (Law of Malaysia 2006, p. 10)

According to the same Act, each year (within a period determined by the Treasury) the NLM Director General needs to submit a statement, through the Minister to the Treasury, showing

the estimated receipts and payments of the Fund in respect of the following year (Law of Malaysia 2006).

A major investment is always needed in public library access, collections and services development. An adequate level of funding is very important in assisting a library to fulfill its roles and responsibilities as a center of information and knowledge to a community. Without sufficient funding, many small public libraries will not be able to continue. For example, in the United States an annual study reported that in the year 2011, '17 public libraries where closed in the United States; while most states reported the closure of fewer than two library outlets, Pennsylvania and New Jersey reported between five and ten libraries closed' (ALA 2011, p. 11). This crisis shows that it is very important for a public library to have sufficient funding to operate and serve its patrons and the community in general.

Other than the policies related to the library collection, staffing, promotion and community partnership policies are also important. These policies will determine how effectively a public library can serve its community.

Staffing Policies

Public libraries are usually managed and operated under the supervision of professional staff. According to the IFLA/ UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 'library staff expenses are said to account for the highest proportion of a library's budget' (Koontz 2010, p. 85); staff are of course an essential element in any library operation. The four typical categories of staff that can be found in public libraries are:

- 1) Qualified librarians; professional staff who have undertaken a course of study in librarianship and information studies to degree or post-graduate level. They are responsible for planning, administration, information provision, marketing, information organization, evaluation and monitoring, collection development and customer education.
- 2) Library

assistants; employed to carry out routine and operational library tasks such as circulation activities, shelving, processing library material, data entry, filing, clerical support, greeting and directing customers and assisting with children's programs. 3) Specialist staff; they usually have a qualification in their specialty area rather than librarianship and they are employed to carry out specific functions such as computer system management, administrative, financial, facility engineering, training and marketing 4) Support staff; they carry out functions that contribute to the smooth operation of the library service such as caretakers, cleaners, drivers and security staff. (Koontz 2010, p. 85)

Although issues surrounding salary, gender and promotion may vary, the role of the library staff, especially that of the librarians remains the same. They encourage the process of fact finding and information sharing among users and patrons (Limberg 2000). This contributes further to community self-empowerment and development. In addition, the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 states that 'a librarian is an active liaison between users and resources' and that 'professional and continuing education of the librarian is 'indispensable' to ensure adequate service' (UNESCO 2011).

Marketing and Promotion Policies

In a business, marketing is a strategy designed to provide information to the business customers. It is also used for the purpose of attracting buyers and consumers to the business product or service; hence it conveys information about the business service or product. The contemporary public library approach to marketing and promotion policies works in the same way. Through the public library marketing and promotion policies, a library disseminates information, identifies community needs, and promotes the library's services. These marketing and promotion policies start with the identification of customers' needs and wants, and lead to the development and promotion of a product that fulfils those needs and wants. The marketing process can be broken down into five elements: research, products and services, price, place and promotion (MSL 2011). Marketing in a public library service is about creating favourable public opinion and enhancing awareness of the library's benefits, services, resources and programs.

In a larger library system, there will usually be a staff member who specializes in library public relations and this staff member will also be responsible for marketing and promoting the library to the community members. Nonetheless, in small libraries, marketing plans can be used to identify the wants and needs of actual and potential library users.

Partnership/Community Engagement Policies

Public libraries have been described as ‘developers of social capital’ (Kranich 2005), ‘civic agents’ (Budd, 2007) and ‘community organizers’ (Willingham 2008). Nonetheless, no public library in the world can meet all the needs of its customers on its own; ‘but through good partnerships, collaborations and networking between libraries, and the provision of access to other information through local related organizations, public libraries should be able to satisfy the information needs of their users’ (Koontz 2010, p. 28). Therefore, public libraries that have good community engagement practices will gain many benefits (ALIA 2011c); in turn, the public libraries will also benefit the community as they become community hubs, ‘meaning they are focal points in their communities, providing opportunities for connection, inclusion, and community engagement activities’ (PLSA 2009a, p. 2).

Libraries offer people a chance to improve, develop and enhance themselves. They play an important role in promoting the growth of knowledge and information awareness, particularly for disadvantaged societies and groups of people. Although the types, functions and impact of libraries vary from one nation to another and even between communities, the public library is an integral centre of knowledge for humanity.

In addition to the library policies within a public library, strategies and programmes related to the usage of information resources within a country, is also essential. It is intended to provide a framework to assist authorities in processing the allocation of resources for planning and coordinating the development of information resources. In many part of the world, this policy is known as National Information Policy

National Information Policy (NIP)

A NIP includes focus on the freedom and protection of information. It covers the distribution and circulation of information between a government and community and vice versa. This policy sets directions for lifelong learning and information literacy. According to UNESCO, a NIP includes considerations of informatics and telematics, and is a key to coping with the challenges of the Information Society. A complete re-examination of traditional information policies has become necessary in the virtual, interactive, highly volatile reality of cyberspace, particularly in the relation to legal and ethical issues. Many developing countries are now struggling to become industrialized nations. One of the main objectives of a national information policy includes ‘training in information handling and processing skills such as: creating content, managing online information, website management, data management, access and retrieval skills, formatting and processing of information’ (Karan 2011, p. 50). These objectives can be aligned with those of a library service, for libraries are normally responsible for shaping the process of information literacy training.

Both public library policies and NIP are developed with the purpose of creating order. A tailored national information and library policy lets the information and library personnel know what is expected of them and allows the patrons and community to know what services are available for them (Allison 2011). In short, these standards and guidelines are designed to

assist public libraries, information centres, local government and the public in the planning and development of their local library services, tailored to the local community information and literacy needs.

Information literacy

A literate individual often uses libraries to their benefit, and being information literate can lead to improving individual and community living conditions. Information literacy is seen as a part of the basic human right of lifelong learning (The Alexandria Proclamation 2006). It is a prerequisite element in building and shaping an information society. As Todd (1999) points out: ‘information makes a difference to the everyday lives of people and having the knowledge and skills to connect and interact with this information can enable people to solve real world problems and address life concerns’ (p. 30). Information literacy is about being information wise:

Information wise people know that what is true today may not be true tomorrow; that information is not the same as knowledge; information wise people know librarians can be their guides; information wise people create smart communities; information wise people support libraries. (ALIA 2003, p. 7)

Individuals or communities that recognize when information is needed are able to locate and evaluate it, and know how to apply the information to their daily life activities and problem solving are considered to be information literate.

Community Information Literacy

Being information literate, a community member contributes to the general development of the community. Information literacy encompasses the effective use of multiple information technologies and formats, enables individuals to develop skills for learning throughout life, and supports skills for workplace enterprise and for community participation (ALIA 2003).

Community information literacy (CIL) refers to the function of information literacy in a community context and refers to

people who know when they need information, and are then able to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively use that information to address and help resolve personal, family, job-related or broader social issues or problems with which they must cope. (Partridge, Bruce & Tilly 2008, p. 111)

CIL is one of the vital elements of community development; it is supported by the information literacy ability of a community. These complex circumstances underpin different views and understandings of literacy and development in general. Nonetheless, being information literate is a key element to forming an information society and it is a prerequisite for participating in an information society. Most importantly, community information literacy ‘empowers people in all walks of life to see, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupations and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion for all nations’ (Garner 2005, p. 3).

In Malaysia, the literacy rate among Malaysians aged 15 years and above is relatively high, with males at 94.6 percent and females at 90.3 percent (UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2011c). However, in 1982, it was reported that Malaysians on average read only one to two pages a year. The same survey was repeated in 1996 and the number had increased to two books per year. However, in 2005 it was reported that Malaysians still read an average of only two books per year (Abdul Karim & Hasan 2006). Although the attitude of Malaysians towards reading is positive and many agree that a reading habit is an essential life skill, reading habits do not appear to be a prominent feature in the lives of most Malaysians. According to the Malaysian Reading Profile 2005, 43.5 percent of Malaysians agreed that they would prefer to spend their time doing activities other than reading (Ahmad et al. 2005), and their reading activities tend to be limited to only newspapers and magazines (Abdul Karim & Hasan 2006, p. 289).

What currently appears to be the challenge for Malaysians is to be able to transform themselves into an information literate community. Apparently, many more changes and innovations are needed to enhance the reading habits of Malaysians. This is because, despite having a relatively high literacy rate, the reading interests and habits of Malaysians are very limited; in addition, they are currently not fully utilizing their library services (Abdul Karim & Hassan 2006).

Many local researchers (Ambigapathy 1997; Hussin 2004; Mohd Bakri Darus 2004; Mukti & Hwa 2004; Ahmad, Abdul Manaf, et al. 2005; UM 2006). believe that Malaysian communities are still primarily influenced by the traditional form of information sharing, and that they lack a reading culture. Nonetheless, it is difficult to create a reading culture when there are no examples or role models to begin with.

In contrast, according to the Australian Federal Education Minister, Brendan Nelson, at the launch of the National Literacy and Numeracy Week, 'while Australian children have numeracy and literacy skills among the best in the world, some forty-eight per cent of Australian adults have trouble doing everyday tasks such as reading, dealing with bus timetables, or interpreting maps' (ALIA 2003, p. 19). Yet 60 percent of the Australian population uses public libraries; 52 percent are library members; and in June 2000, 10.7 million people were registered as borrowers of local government libraries. In 2007, the Australian Bureau of Statistics stated that the adult literacy rate for those aged 15 to 74 years was approximately 83 percent (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007).

This demonstrates that establishment of a strong reading culture and of reading habits among community members requires investigation and exploration; in particular, suitable programs and activities for promoting literacy skills need to be identified as well as effective ways of cultivating reading at an early age, so that these reading habits will develop into lifelong learning.

Lifelong Learning

Learning itself is an on-going process that can involve individuals or groups of people; it can be classified into formal learning and non-formal learning. Formal learning refers to learning activities that take place in formal educational institutions such as schools and colleges. This form of learning involves individuals or a group of people taking part in activities purposely to gain new skills or knowledge related to their personal needs or personal growth. Most importantly, this form of learning leads to some form of accreditation or qualification. Non-formal learning is a learning process that takes place out of the formal educational context, and this learning may not necessarily lead to a particular qualification or accreditation (Gheblawi et al. 2011).

Lifelong learning is about the combination of both formal and non-formal learning. Most importantly, it involves the establishment of continual learning among society members, with the aim being to enhance their quality of life (Stevens & Campbell 2006). This concept also underpins the inspiration for developing community information literacy, which can lead further towards the establishment of a learning community. The European Commission defines lifelong learning as ‘the key to personal development and economic success because only with essential assets such as knowledge, skills and competence will the individual succeed in the labor market’ (Ferguson 2010, p. 2). Hence, personal development and

economic success are very much related and supported by information literacy and knowledge access.

The essence of lifelong learning is actually the learning process or gaining new knowledge itself. It can either be purposeful or non-purposeful; it can also take place in formal or non-formal settings. But it should be based on the continuing effort of improving one's knowledge, skills or competency (Garner 2006). This definition is supported by UNESCO (2002), which asserts that lifelong learning provides every individual within a community with the conditions for learning further and learning continuously to improve their capabilities. Presently, the concept of lifelong learning is commonly associated with adult education, because there is a need to distinguish adult learning activities from formal institutional learning activities (UNESCO Institute of Learning 2002). Unfortunately, however, in Malaysia, the concept of 'lifelong learning is linked very closely to productivity and employability' (Gheblawi et al. 2011, p. 7). Dr. Mohamed Rashid Navi Bax and Dr. Mohd Nasir Abu Hassan claim that in Malaysia, 'little or no value is attached to informal learning, learning for personal development or active citizenship' (Bax & Abu Hassan 2003, p. 4).

The Alexandria Proclamation (2005) affirms that information literacy is the core of lifelong learning and that it empowers people to achieve their personal goals. While this is a limited, individualistic idea of self-empowerment, information literacy and lifelong learning are the inspiration of an information society; they lead to development, prosperity and freedom and promote social inclusion. While there are different views and understandings of information literacy and lifelong learning, the role of the library and the librarian remains the same: they are 'central to the information literacy agenda'. Public libraries are therefore the best

organizations to support this need because ‘information is a library’s specialty’ (Miller & Fisher 2007, p. 6). Hence, in many contemporary societies, the public library is said to be the most qualified and best suited institution or body that can offer assistance and training for lifelong learning:

In a society of lifelong learning public libraries will be nodes connecting the local learning setting – whether it is of a formal or informal kind – with the global resources of information and knowledge, public libraries can therefore play a role of fundamental importance in the development of future systems of lifelong learning. The development of the information and communication technology (ICT) has already laid the basis for the creation of information networks, giving users even of small local public libraries access to the world wide sources of information. As mentioned before, public libraries offer guidance and training in how to search and use this information and rate the quality of information sources. Thus, public libraries can be said to qualify as important prerequisites for an informed democratic knowledge society. (Kjekstad 2004, p. 3)

Learning communities

There is an overlap between the concepts of learning communities and community development. Both involve a notion of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning supports the establishment of a learning community. In any community, members are viewed as the vital elements of the group. Their collaborations, interactions, and shared understandings will strengthen and connect all members, thus forming an interconnected learning community. A learning community also involves introducing new thinking and suggestions that encourage improvement in the lives of its community members. Hence, community meetings, discussions, dialoguing and strategy sessions offer multiple opportunities for residents to become more involved in community action and community development (Moore & Brooks 2000). Learning communities are developed where groups of people are linked either geographically or by shared interests. Most importantly, learning communities that are facilitated through adult and community education are a powerful tool for ‘social cohesion, community capacity building and social, cultural and economic development’ (Kilpatrick, Barrett & Jones 2003, p. 4).

A learning community starts with relationship building and gradually evolves further to commitments over a period of time. Building relationships is a critical factor that influences the impact of the group members' learning processes. In short, a learning community is all about members' involvement, participation and collaboration in deciding what they want, what they need and what is best for them. It is about commitment to continually improving their efforts and refining their practices (Dietz 2008). A learning community addresses the learning needs of its locality through partnerships and collaborations; 'it uses the strengths of social and institutional relationships to bring about cultural shifts in perceptions of the value of learning' (Yarnit 2000, p. 11). Through the partnerships and collaboration efforts of the members, their shared purposes, objectives or goals are achieved (Kilpatrick, Barrett & Jones 2003).

Summary

Public libraries have often been described as informal learning and information centres and have quietly underpinned education programs in a passive and non-intrusive manner in most Western communities over the past 150 years (Kenneally 2003, p. 7). Currently, many public libraries around the world have been actively participating as partners in local community learning approaches and models. Many public libraries such as those in Australia and Canada have actively been contributing to the regeneration of their local communities and economic development by offering non-formal educational and learning services, activities and programs. In other public libraries, collaboration programs and local networks within the community are also being actively organized. All this internationally public libraries' effort has recognized to be a success in assisting and improving local community development and empowerment processes.

Community Development Theory and Practice: The Concept of Community

‘Community’ is a contested concept. Researchers such as Christenson and Robinson (1989), Chaskin (2001) and Kenny (2006) have classified ‘community’ into two different descriptions: geographically based communities and socially based communities. The geographic classification describes community identification according to a set of attributes such as physical location, a recognized history and specific demographic features: for instance, sex ratio, age, density, culture and religion. According to James Christenson and Jerry Robinson (1989), communities are groups of individuals who are living in a locality and initiating social action processes that can change their economic, social, cultural, or environmental situation. This type of attribution, however, still requires reasonable social interactions with either one or more people within their particular location or society. A socially based community, on the other hand, is defined by the common attributes and shared interests among the collective community. This type of community is described as the ‘result of the sharing of identity and norms’ (Bhattacharyya 2004, p. 12).

Community can also be viewed as an area of social living, an institutional and structural setting, in which people can develop their potential and attain their goals. Within this setting, ‘individuals also work to obtain the necessities of life, raise a family, search for the meaning of life and worship the embodiment of their faith’ (Uhegbu 2001, p. 238).

Despite many sociological definitions of community, according to Jim Ife (2002), the core characteristics of a community are the size of the population, the commonalities among its members, identity and belonging, primary relationships and attachment and local culture. Community can be based on both geographical and sociological attributes. Robert Chaskin (2001) affirms that, ‘a community can be defined dually as a geographic area with a shared

history, and demographic patterns and/or as a collective entity with shared social attributes such as language, custom, class or ethnicity' (p. 8). This duality of classification and description of community acknowledges that the term can have both physical (geographical) and social meanings.

To summarise, a community is a type of social group, which can be illustrated by several characteristics; but, most commonly, community is associated with geographical elements with their own definitions and basic limitations, and the individuals have a sense of recognition and areas of common concern with other community members (Kenny 2006). This thesis adopts both geographical and social understandings of community in discussing and analysing the research findings.

Rural Communities

In most cases, the term 'rural' is used to describe people, places and things that have to do with life outside of a big town or city or 'areas outside the capital cities or large regional centres' (Cheers 1998, p. 27). Rural people are more likely to be 'self-employed and working in the private sector' (Munn & Munn 2002, p. 1). This definition of rural areas is utilised in most of the states of Australia, including Victoria. In some contexts, definitions of rural communities are based on population size and demographic characteristics (Cheers, Darracott & Lonne, 2007). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 1994, p. 24), for instance, defines a community as rural 'if the population density is less than 150 people per square kilometre'. Simultaneously, demographers often cluster people according to population density: defining 'a population or place as rural is based on whether there are few people in a given location or where the number of people is low given the available space' (Small 2000, p. 3).

In Australia, the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification outlined by the Australian Department of Primary Industries and Energy, and the Australian Department of Human Services and Health (1994) indicates that:

Rural is with mixed farming, small villages and towns, and population densities less than those of the metropolitan areas. The term 'rural' is variously used in industry, occupational, locational and settlement contexts. It can be synonymous with agriculture or farming. It can also be synonymous with the 'country'. Or it can be any area which is not a town or city. It often is used to include towns and cities. Sometimes there is a coincidence in the agricultural and geographic usage. (Australian Department of Primary Industries and Energy and Australian Department of Human Services and Health 1994, p. 8)

In Malaysia, rural is defined as a settlement area that does not function as a commercial area or business area (Ngah & Mustafa 1991). In the 1980s, rural areas in Malaysia were defined as all gazetted areas consisting of 999 or less in population and all areas that were not gazetted (Ministry of Rural and Regional Development 2010). However, in December 2010, the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development of Malaysia, classified 'rural' as:

An area that has a population less than 10,000 people by having features of agricultural areas and natural resources in which the population stay whether by gregarious, parallel or spread out. (Ministry of Rural and Regional Development 2010, p. 41)

The Ministry of Rural and Regional Development Malaysia has also categorized rural regions based on the concept of rurality that has been used by the OCED.

For the purpose of this research, the definition of 'rural' reflects the Malaysian usage, so both Malaysian and Australian rural public libraries were selected on the basis that they serve communities outside major cities, have populations of less than 10,000 people, and include people who live on farms.

Community Development

Development is about change. In a social context, development is often seen in ‘a social evolutionary framework and often refers to the notion of a better life and is frequently expressed in economic terms’ (Kenny 2006, p. 11). Commonly, the understanding of the process of development is that it is very closely related to quantification and statistical indications such as income percentages, literacy rates and productivity. These types of measurements are regularly used to demonstrate the extent of the development of a community or a nation. Kenny (2006) describes the ‘key objectives’ of development as:

increasing the availability and widening the distribution of sustaining goods such as food and shelter, as well as raising the standards of living and expanding the range of economic and social choices ... both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic and institutional processes, secured the means of obtaining a better life. (Kenny 2006, p. 11)

The term ‘community development’, however, refers to an approach, a profession, a method or an intervention and is applied in many disciplines including sociology, anthropology, psychology, social work and economics. There is no single view that can define what community development is as community development is about how one interprets it when initiating a development program (Christenson & Robinson 1989).

Community development is a multidisciplinary field that is frequently associated with terms such as community engagement, community capacity building, community vitality, empowerment, rural development and self-reliance. Jim Cavaye explains that:

The basic elements of collective action, ownership and improved circumstances are common to all these ideas. There may be slight differences in emphasis. For example, while community capacity building focuses on enhancing the assets and abilities of the community, the term is essentially synonymous with community development. (Cavaye 2002, p. 4)

Furthermore, a successful community development engagement approach is commonly asset based, internally focused, and relationship driven (Kretzmann et al. 2005). According to

Kretzmann and McKnight, the coordinators of the ABCD 2005 Discovering Community Power project, community development is about developing the people through engaging and empowering them.

Community Development and Community Engagement

Community engagement has emerged as a key strategy for governments and community organisations to develop relevant and coherent policies and programs of development (Evans 2005). Community engagement involves more than just a basic level of interaction with the community members. It is a process of engagement that involves information gathering and dissemination. It moves towards a two-way interactive mode and requires involvement and collaboration among members. According to McCabe, Keast and Brown:

the community engagement complexities of community, community development and community capacity building demonstrate the interrelated and interconnected loop existing between the concepts. Community, community development and community capacity building exist and form through interrelationships (McCabe, Keast & Brown 2006, p. 6)

In relation to the community development needs of a community, community engagement exists as a key driver. The opportunity to develop a community is further facilitated through the processes of active citizenship, working partnerships and social inclusion (Gilchrist 2003). Hence community development incorporates four fundamental principles: engagement, participation, empowerment and ownership

Community development focusses on the development of participatory mechanisms that will further improve the local citizenship. In principle, community development is about human orientation and engagement, involvement and participation, and community empowerment (O'Toole & Macgarvey 2003). Community development is explored as a combination of initiatives designed to engage communities in future decision making processes (McCabe, Keast & Brown 2006)

Researchers such as James Christenson and Jerry Robinson (1989), Jim Ife (2006) and Susan Kenny (2006) claim that community development happens when a group of people is in a locality, and they dynamically initiate a social action process to change their own economic, social, cultural and environmental situation by engaging and working together to analyse the local members' and community needs, and developing strategies to address them. These processes help the communities to become increasingly empowered and developed – through changing their own economic, social, cultural and environmental situation. It is essential for practitioners of community development to have a comprehensive understanding of the community which they are working with, in order to analyse and define the needs and wants of the community suitably.

Community development also involves the improvement of decision-making processes. It is not just about improving the situation of a community economically but also ensuring that the community functions strongly by itself. It is about the overall directions of being in a community. Hence, community development means that 'a community itself engages in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situation of the community' (Cavaye 2001, p. 3).

Taking all the above descriptions and definitions into consideration, emphasis in a community development approach is placed on empowering individuals through education, training and equal opportunities to participate in a wider social, cultural and organisational context, where all sectors of the community can become involved. Nigel Curry explains that,

national community development policies very much rely on the development of partnerships between government and communities, it is to foster community survival and empowerment of individuals that are at risk in society and to help restore a sense of responsibility. (Curry 2001, p. 561)

Helping a community to build its capability for development is the primary goal of community development. Its aim involves building social capital, strengthening the social interaction within the community that is united through geographical location or common interests, and bringing people together and helping them to communicate with each other in a way that can later lead to genuine dialogue, understanding or social action (Talbot & Verrinder 2005; Ife 2006). In brief, community development is about improving the abilities of individuals within a community to collectively make better decisions about the use of local resources and knowledge.

The concept of community development involves increasing individual participation and networking in a community. It is important to recognize participation as a means of strengthening local communities and to build people's skills in community issues, as this is vital to the survival of local communities (Talbot & Verrinder 2010). For this to happen, the community members will also need to be able to engage with each other and find solutions to issues that affect them as a group. Further, community residents are encouraged and allowed to come together to plan, generate solutions and take action. This process develops the evolution of social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of community.

Although there are various definitions, many practitioners view community development as a process of physical, social, and economic improvement in a community. Chart 2.3 shows the processes that lead to community development outcomes that contribute to developing community capacity building as well as economic development in local communities. This chart emphasizes community participation as an important element in community development success.

It is important to see that community development is more than just growing community through participation. It is the key to engaging a community to contribute to and improve its system of values, its structure, as well as the usages through which it functions and is maintained. Community development is often initiated when people become frustrated with their living standards, their ability to make choices and decisions about their living conditions, and they need and desire to create a better situation.

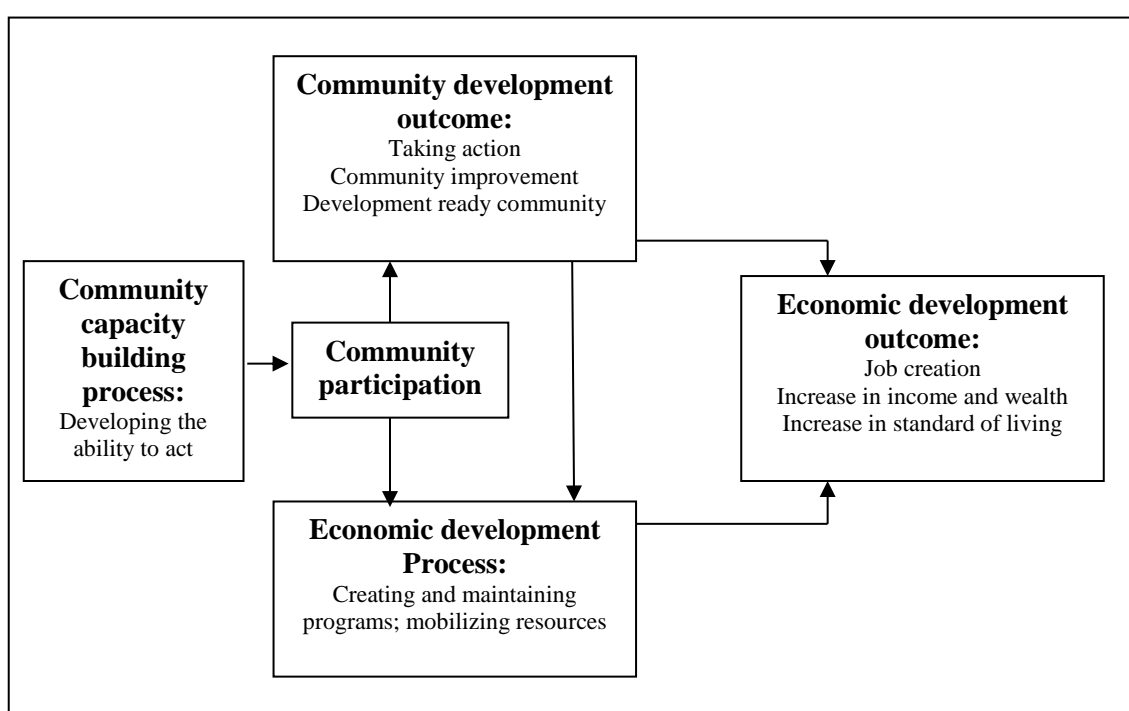


Chart 2.3: Community Development Chain
Source: Adapted from Phillips & Pittman (2009, p.7)

In many countries around the world, especially developing countries such as those in South and Central America, and Asia, agriculture and development are very closely associated. Community development, especially rural community development, has been inextricably linked with agriculture. According to Christian Patermann,

No analysis of rural development and rural development policy can afford to ignore agriculture and agricultural policy. This is particularly true for the European Union, where the common agricultural policy (CAP) has had a significant impact on rural development: agricultural policy is fully integrated at European level and accounts for half of the community budget. (Patermann 2004, p. 7)

The world's agricultural industries, however, are gradually becoming less labour intensive. Farming is no longer considered the main rural economic activity and is declining (Pezzini 2000; Terluin 2003; Deller 2011).

Rurality is no longer synonymous with agriculture ... and the development of rural livelihoods cannot solely be dependent on agricultural funds and policy measures which are allocated predominantly for agricultural producers. (Noponen 2010, p. 24)

Many attempts have been made to foster economic growth through non-farming sectors, such as manufacturing, and service industries like tourism (Drabenstott 2003; Shucksmith 2005). In the United States, for example, factories are the single biggest source of income to rural families, and often offer the highest wages in the area. Mark Drabenstott elaborates on this point, stating that:

Many factories moved to rural America in recent decades in search of inexpensive land, labor, and taxes. The attraction was often enhanced by generous recruitment incentives involving tax subsidies of one form or another. In fact, enticing factories to the edge of town has been the number one rural development strategy of the past half century. (Drabenstott 2002, p. 84)

A community development program's success is primarily determined by participation and involvement. However, the government's role is still necessary in providing the course of the community development plan, especially in a rural setting.

In Malaysia, since the country's independence from Britain in 1957, the government has and still does play a major role in the country's development, especially rural development through infrastructure, agricultural means, land reforms, as well as industrial, tourism and entrepreneurial development. The Malaysian Ministry of Rural and Regional Development's 2010 report clearly supports the infrastructure developments, which still comprise a large portion of the government development programs. All these efforts aim to facilitate the continuing needs of the local population. They support economic development programs as

well as stimulating the development of the economies of the local areas. Unfortunately, this situation has also made the community development programs and activities become ‘effective tools for political gain’ (Isa 2010, p. 175).

Ideally it may be more appropriate to allow people to develop their own construction of what community means for them, in their own context. People identify communities on the basis of their own experience and relations. From this perspective, community development is not about defining and establishing a community, but refers to complex on-going processes, tasks, practices and visions. Most importantly, this perspective aims to help the people concerned to build their own version of community development using their own programs.

Community Empowerment

Power is a complex term that is closely related to ‘the ability to predict, control and participate in an environment’ (Qi & Ding 2008, p. 12). It is very much about having a choice, and being free to choose – so is related to the concept of freedom. Similar to development, empowerment is also a process; it is a process by which ‘individuals and communities are enabled to take such power and act effectively in changing their lives and their environment’ (Eklund 1999, p. 41). Empowerment has the aim of increasing the power of the people; therefore community empowerment is the outcome of an effective community engagement. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2009) explains that community empowerment is more than just involvement, participation or engagement of communities. It is also a process of re-negotiating power in order to gain more control; it is about enabling communities to increase control of their lives.

Empowerment refers to the capabilities of individuals and communities to have control of

their future through participation. In community development, local people attempt to improve their situation and set up a basis for future self-help programs. Empowerment is therefore about allowing communities to have 'less reliance on external forces' (Livingstone 2007, p. 13).

An empowering approach to development puts poor people at the centre of development and views them as the most important resource rather than as the problem ... Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. (Narayan 2002, p.1, 17)

To sum up, community empowerment is about shifting power, influence and responsibility away from the existing centre of power and into the hands of the communities (Kenny 2006; IDeA 2009).

Ideally, the concept of empowerment is very people oriented. It is a concept that is shared by many disciplines, namely community development, psychology, education, economics, social work and many others. According to Page and Czuba (1999),

Similar to community development, community empowerment is understood from various perspectives. It is a multidimensional social process that helps people to gain control over their lives. (Page & Czuba 1999, p. 1)

In the field of social psychology, empowerment is seen as a process of improving the possibilities for individuals to take charge of their lives, to gain control socially, politically economically, and even psychologically through access of their local resources (Allah Nikkkah et al. 2011). This is because empowerment is about 'acknowledging individuals as citizens within a political and social environment' (Rappaport 1987, p. 121). It is only through access to information, knowledge and skills that the empowerment process can cultivate individuals' ownership of a self-sufficient, self-confident, and self-supporting attitude towards social, political, economic and psychological growth (Carr 2011).

It is difficult to define the concept of empowerment succinctly. As Page and Czuba (1999) point out, ‘although it is easy to define empowerment by its absence, it is difficult to define in action, as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts’ (p. 3). Some researchers argue that empowerment is a concept that is concerned with the interrelationship between individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems and proactive behaviours, and their connection to social policy and social change. Others define empowerment simply as a process by which people gain control over their lives through democratic participation in the life of their community and a critical understanding of their environment (Hur 2006; Komla 2009; Carr 2011). Nevertheless, many contemporary researchers agree that community empowerment is an on-going process.

Community Empowerment: an on-going process

Community development is based on a commitment to the empowerment of people to have real options for their future. It is also based on the idea that improving people’s lives includes bottom-up as well as top-down strategies. The empowerment process is about decisions that are made by these people, which involve encouraging the community to free themselves from disadvantage (Yuliani & Tasrif 2006). Community empowerment is not just an event; it is an on-going process that requires participation, commitment and patience.

The process of empowerment can be described in five progressive stages: an existing social disturbance, conscientizing, mobilizing, maximizing, and creating a new order. It is summarized as a personal and collective empowerment; Mann Hyung Hur (2006) explains that:

Each aspect had its own components. A set of four components, including meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, were found in personal empowerment. A set of four components, including collective belonging, involvement in the community, control over organization in the community, and community building, were explored in collective

empowerment. The goal of individual empowerment is to achieve a state of liberation strong enough to impact one's power in life, community, and society. The goal of collective empowerment is to establish community building, so that members of a given community can feel a sense of freedom, belonging, and power that can lead to constructive social change. (Hur 2006, p. 535)

Despite the variations in interpretations and definitions of the empowerment process, the central focus of the concept of community empowerment, more often than not, is on community capacity. This means that the success of an empowerment process very much depends on the community's capacity to nurture and use any transferable knowledge, skills, systems, or resources to make changes that are consistently related to the community's goals and objectives.

In their research on collaborative community empowerment, Seunghyun Yoo et al. (2004) outlined a six-step process that enables community groups to accomplish their short-term community goals. This method was used in a community empowerment project where community members collaborated to increase the capacity of their community. The components are described as follows:

The first component was to rapidly gain entrée into the community group [enter the community]... The second component of the project was to identify issues that affected the community [issue identification]... The third component of the process was to prioritize the issues that surfaced in each of the groups [prioritization] ... The fourth component of the project was to develop strategies for addressing the primary issue [strategy development] ... The fifth component of the process was to implement the strategies [implementation] ... The sixth component, each group had a meeting with its facilitator to bring the facilitators' engagement to closure [transition]. (Yoo et al. 2004, p. 260)

Furthermore, the community empowerment model put forward by Nina Wallerstein (1992) not only included the phases of participation and collaboration, but also added the dimensions of improved self-concept, critical analysis of the world, identification with others as a member of a community, participation with others in organizing for community change, and actual environmental/political change. Wallerstein (1992) defines community empowerment

as ‘a social-action process’ (p. 198), which aims to increase individual, organizational and community participation in achieving control and improving quality of life and social justice. As the concept of empowerment is related to issues of social justice and human rights, it has been argued that it is the disadvantaged, oppressed and exploited groups in particular who should be encouraged and supported in their efforts of community empowerment (Kenny 2006; Ife 2010).

Philosophy of Community Development

In many poor and developing countries such as African and Asian countries, community development programs and activities depend on and are influenced by the government’s social, economic and political policies. These policies are commonly ‘implemented through public administrative structures’ (Kenny 2006, p. 13). In these poor and developing countries, the government and the public administrative agents are the ‘community development practitioners because they have the resources, the capability to respond, and to empower their community to understand and achieve the objectives of the planned community development programs’ (Kenny 2006, p. 235). Ideally, the governments and their agencies can act as facilitators. However, it is the community that needs to mobilise themselves, control the decisions, actions and resources; the government and its agencies can only help by assisting the community at the invitation of the community (Cavaye 2004). This is because the community members themselves are in the best position to recognize and identify their needs and their problem solving solutions.

The role of community development practitioners generally leans more towards facilitating rather than directing, because community development was viewed as a ‘process of helping [the community] to achieve a goal’ (Green 2011, p. 72). Furthermore, in many situations,

community development facilitators and practitioners often help community members to identify the potential resources of the local community that will enhance the community's capacity to address their opportunities. They will organise community efforts and processes that will enable the community to come together and organize themselves to achieve their goals. Many people from community development circles agree that the term 'community development philosophy' includes several key elements; namely, participation, self-help (self-determination), decision-making, leadership and literacy (Christenson & Robinson 1989; Kenny 2006; Green 2011).

Participation and Involvement

Participation and involvement is a widely used concept in community development. It is very closely linked to the notion of human rights. According to many contemporary theorists, participation and involvement place emphasis on people having a role in decision making, particularly the people who are usually excluded from having control over resources and institutions. In community development practice, there is no fine line to distinguish the difference between the terms participation and involvement, thus community participation is seen as involvement and vice versa. Both participation and involvement enable people to influence activities or programs in such a way as to enhance their wellbeing, and they are therefore viewed as integral to the empowerment process.

Participation in community development can be viewed as an outcome or as a process (Ife 2002; Kenny 2011). Chart 2.4, 'The Classic Ladder of Participation', shows participation in the context of policy making; as one ascends the ladder, the communication changes from one-way communication and top-down diffusion of information to two-way communication and a bottom up contribution of information. Power shifts from government-controlled to

citizen-controlled. It refers to individual engagement with a project or activities at different levels (Cavaye 2001; Ife 2002; Kenny 2011). This describes how participation can become a means – a predetermined and short-term process to mobilize and achieve an objective; and also an end – a long-term process, to actively and dynamically empower a community development effort or program (Arnstein 1969; Oakly 1991; Cavaye 2001; Kenny & Clarke 2010).

In the research findings and analysis of this thesis, the definition of participation is based on the lower levels of the ladder – to participate and be engaged in, while involvement refers to the upper levels of the ladder – to be involved and committed. Ideally, a community is expected to participate, be involved in and own local community development programs or activities (Kenny 2010). Encouraging participation is a difficult task and requires hard work. However, it is vital for the community to understand that non-participation is neither natural nor inevitable. They need to know that participation is a critical part of the community development process and currently, participation within intervention has become widely accepted as a minimum requirement for a successful and sustaining community development outcome (Clarke 2010).

Self-Help (Self-Determination)

Self-help is another key concept of community development and is related to the idea that through a sense of self-help, people can work together to improve their quality of life. Self-help assumes that everyone has the potential to improve the quality of their lives according to their choice of action.

Self-help in community development and empowerment is based on the premise that ‘people can, will and should collaborate to solve community problems: self-help builds a stronger sense of community and a strong foundation for future collaboration’ (Christenson 1989, p. 48). The principal role of community development practitioners in introducing a self-help approach to community members is ‘facilitation’ (Green 2011, p. 72); hence the task of a community development practitioner is to promote participatory decision-making among community members.

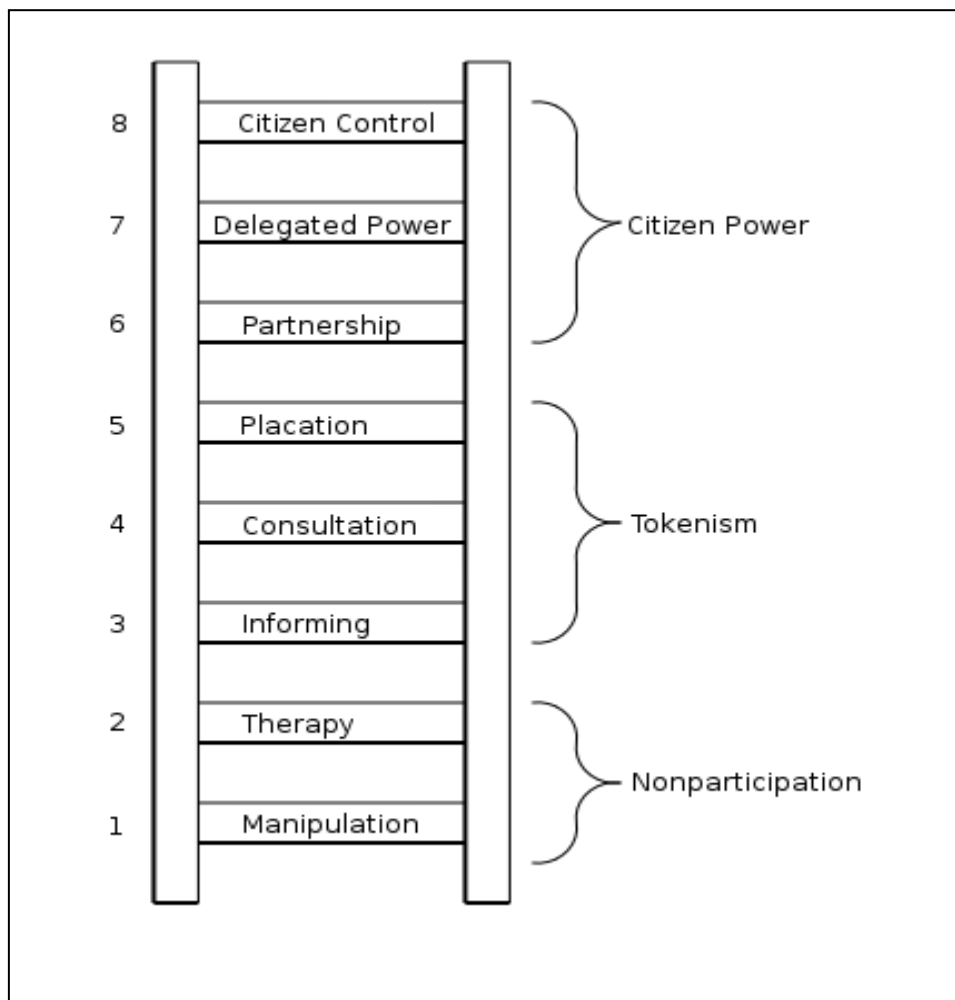


Chart 2.4: The Classic Ladder of Participation (Arnstein 1969)

This approach of facilitating self-help was proven to be a success in the Republic of Korea. Local women of the Ich'on villages were found to be very active in their own self-help community development projects, successfully managing their own local credit union, their own local manufacturing of rice sacks and noodle making, as well as managing many cooperative kitchens; they also helped to keep their village streets clean through the promotion of various sanitation measures (Ajayi & Otuya 2005). Meanwhile in Ndokwa agricultural zone of Delta State, Nigeria, 96.7 percent of the local women initiated their own self-help projects within their communities, and the remaining 3.3 percent of local women initiated self-help projects outside the community (Reuben & Otuya 2005).

These examples demonstrate that through having a sense of self-help, even disadvantaged groups of people such as women living in poor rural communities are capable of developing a better standard of living, identifying their own needs, and deciding how such needs can be met instead of relying on people or organizations external to their community.

Decision-Making

Decision-making is another important element of community development philosophy, yet for a community to come together and make collective and communal decision making is not a straightforward process. In achieving successful community decision-making, the community members must first share basic beliefs and values of the community. According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, successful decision-making requires that,

Every community member has to have strength and concerns about their needs, they must also have the ability to solve their own problems and achieve their own goals accordingly. They have to realize that decision making must suit the area where the challenge exists, and that they must encourage involvement and participation by all those affected at each stage of the process. Most importantly communities need to identify their own needs, set priorities, plan for the future and take responsibility for their own future (OMAFRA 2011).

One benefit of the community decision-making process is that it can contribute to broader knowledge and understanding of an issue. In addition, it can lead to reflection, promoting broader discussion of a problem and enhancing the quality of the decision-making in assisting the local community's social and economic progress.

Leadership

Leadership in the community development process is an important role, because leaders are expected to support and encourage a community towards change. Community leaders are preferably effective at coordinating, as well as demonstrating good communication skills when interacting with other leaders and community members. Leadership is seen as 'a series of behavioural processes that influence the activities of an individual or group, to accomplish goals in a given situation' (Stovall et al. 2011, p. 143).

In summary, a community leader is a person who has the ability to get people to work together in order to achieve particular goals. Community leadership is developed through power and the ability to manipulate the existing conditions to create the desired outcomes. Power within a leader is influenced by at least two factors: personal behaviour and personal connection to resources (Stovall et al. 2011).

It is important for a community practitioner to establish a strong understanding with the local leaders in order to develop clear objectives and aims of a project, program or activity to community members. Community practitioners should ideally be able to relate and work with these leaders because these leaders are local community representatives who have earned the respect of the community, and their position is accepted and acknowledged within the

community. Furthermore, Susan Kenny points out that, 'gatekeepers do exist and local leaders are an important source of information and contact' (2006, p. 245).

Literacy

Literacy is a social practice. It is not just about schooling and teaching. It is about the education, learning and knowledge that individuals gain from daily activities and actions. Literacy is the foundation for any social and economic growth of both individuals and society. Most importantly, literacy plays a significant role in reducing poverty among disadvantaged communities.

Currently, around the world, there are still more than 860 million illiterate adults, 64 percent of whom are women. Some 104 million children are still deprived of their right to receive education. Many children drop out of schools or do not receive adequate education, thus remaining illiterate. Illiteracy is a serious obstacle to the well-being of individuals as well as being an obstacle to development (MOFA 2005).

Around the world, intensive actions and efforts are being undertaken by many governmental and non-governmental organizations to increase literacy. UNESCO is one of the most active organizations taking on this role. For instance, in 2000, under UNESCO's supervision, a literacy and community development program called LCDP was introduced in Vietnam, with the aim of eliminating illiteracy among the remote poor and minority groups through providing literacy classes. This program was reported a success for it had effectively attracted enrolments of between 2500 and 3000 community members per year, and 80 percent of the participants were women. Currently, the program has been expanded into eleven districts across Vietnam, with more help and support from other agencies such as AusAid, German

Development Cooperation, World Vision, World Bank, Caritas, Malteser and Oxfam Hong Kong (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning 2011a).

There is no denying the importance of literacy; it can bring positive changes to many aspects of development. Most importantly, to be able to participate in any form of change, it is necessary to have knowledge and understanding of policy issues and decision-making processes. All this requires literacy and the ability to think independently.

It is evident that community development and empowerment require the combination of participation, self-help, decision-making, leadership and knowledge; however, in some situations, such as in disadvantaged and underprivileged countries, fiscal support, persistence, determination and patience are also necessary from both the community and the government agencies. Currently the population of developing countries is estimated at 5.2 billion people. Approximately '3 billion people in the developing world live in rural areas, with 30 percent of them living on less than a dollar a day' (IFAD 2011b, p. 13). These rural populations are described as 'a part of society that are vulnerable to their situation, aspirations and livelihood strategies' (Isa 2010, p. 65).

Community Development and Empowerment Models in Practice

In many developing and poor countries around the world, local government, local agencies and local institutions appear to be very involved in promoting national development programs and welfare through their administration and policies, especially in fields such as education, health, communications, family planning, nutrition and various forms of production infrastructure. However, although governments play an important role in developing the

social, economic and political aspects of a country, the role of the government is solely as a provider, that is, to support and facilitate (Cavayer 2004; Kenny 2006).

This involvement or intervention by government agencies or institutions can be ideally grouped into three main models: the exogenous development model, the endogenous development model and the mixed development model. The two most common models that are used are the exogenous (top-down) and endogenous (bottom-up) models. The exogenous top-down model involves the use of externally provided professional leadership to plan, implement and evaluate development programs. This means that the changes of perceptions, behaviours, and, eventually, standard of living of a community can occur with the intervention of external control. According to Christopher Larrison (2002), ‘the top-down model has a significant philosophical and practice history, predating the bottom-up model. It is structured around the use of professional leadership provided by external resources that plan, implement, and evaluate development programs’ (p. 3).

Exogenous (Top-down) Development Approach

The exogenous development approach is an approach whereby rural development is considered to be transferred into particular regions and externally forced on a community. The problem with this type of development is that it tends to be ‘exported from other regions and the local values tend to be crushed’ (Terluin & Post 2001, p. 3). The exogenous development approach is also known as a top-down strategy, which indicates a strong national control of economic policy at the local level (Vennesland 2005). According to Ida Terluin and Jaap Post,

Exogenous models are based upon a view that modernization results in a division of economic activities between urban and rural: urban areas become the domain of industries and services and rural areas that of agriculture. The agricultural sector covers several functions in this system: it provides food for the urban areas; it is a source of purchasing

power for commodities of the industrial sector, a source of capital and labour for the industrial sector and a source of foreign earnings to support the development process of the urban areas. (Terluin & Post 2001, p. 3)

The exogenous model has traditionally been the principal model used to describe rural development and to explain its structure. In many European countries, rural development policies have been structured directly towards modernization of the agricultural sector in an effort to improve the rural economy. In the exogenous development model, strategies are also focused on economic growth and industrialisation, namely increasing the centralised planning and control over the distribution of resources (Lowe, Murdoch & Ward 1995).

This strategy is considered as a modernization approach, where the emphasis is placed on the injection of capital inputs and the benefits eventually spread throughout the system.

According to Oakley and Marsden,

development strategies based on this traditional modernization approach emphasize centralized planning and control over the distribution of resources; the focus is on providing infrastructure and institutions, to facilitate the progression towards a Western model and to tackle obstacles on the way. (Oakley & Marsden 1985, p. 5)

In this situation, local development is not actually concerned with the development as a whole, but rather with economic growth; the focus is strictly on new investments and business progress (Isa 2010). Hence, in many cases the community is purely being exploited for the benefit of these private investments, unless the policies are made to be comprehensive and inclusive. Jim Cavaye (2002) claims that growth under the exogenous development approach can mean increased employment and investment in terms of the economy, but it does not necessarily increase people's choices or their ability to manage change.

The basic principles of the exogenous development model add to the understanding that economic development takes place through four principal processes:

1) Modernisation of technology – leading to a change from simple traditional techniques to the application of scientific knowledge; 2) Commercialisation of agriculture – which is characterised by the move from subsistence to commercial farming, leading to a specialisation in cash-crop production and the development of wage labour; 3) Industrialisation process – which features the transition from the use of human and animal power to machine power and, 4) Urbanisation - which consists of changes in the ecological dimension and is the movement from farm and village towards the growth of large urban centres (Isa 2010, p. 50).

The exogenous development approach has been criticised for causing failure in many rural development programs. According to these critiques the exogenous development approach is a failure because it is by nature over-reliant on government support and is dependent on the use of incentives to stimulate the location of exogenous sectors in rural regions (Terluin & Post 2000). This then promotes dependency on subsidies and external policy decisions (Lowe et al 1999). Hence, the standard measurements that are applied in the exogenous development approach commonly fail to take into consideration the community locality or culture (Nemes 2005), and the process often fails to respect local values (Murdoch 2000). This approach leads to the benefits of development being exported to outside the local region (Van der Ploeg 1999), and can also lead to a dependency on large-scale firms operating in single sectors (Terluin & Post 2000). Finally, the dominant role of the government and of external firms in this approach may lead to a disregard of cultural differences, which may in turn result in a situation described as destructive development (Vermeire et al. 2008).

In addition to the reasons outlined above, the exogenous development approach also falls short because it fails to attract participation among community members. In African countries, for example, many development interventions have failed to generate the desired impact among African resource-poor farmers for reasons including lack of active community participation, and over-reliance on external information and technology, delivery strategies and channels (Efa et al. 2010).

In contrast, the endogenous development model focuses on how people within communities can direct their own development process, developing the opportunities to learn, and the sense of empowerment that comes with that knowledge:

Social development theory is considered the conceptual scheme underpinning the bottom-up model. The strategies used included: comprehensive community participation, motivating local communities, expanding learning opportunities, improving local resource management, replicating human development, increasing communication and interchange, and localizing financial access. For practitioners using the bottom-up model as structured by social development theory, participation in community wide discussions, improved opportunities to learn, and the sense of empowerment that comes with knowledge are the necessary precursors to accomplishing the stated and implied goals of community development. (Larrison 2002, p. 3)

For many community development practitioners such as Christopher Larrison, Jim Ife, and Susan Kenny, the endogenous development model provides a preferable structure for community development programs. In his comparative study of exogenous and endogenous community development interventions, Christopher Larrison writes,

the endogenous model was the better approach to accomplish the goals of community development programs in that region. The most important process required in any model of community development is community participation. This participation, indeed, is a vital component of the self-help and empowerment process which is always located within the discussion of community development. (Larrison 2002, p. 67)

Endogenous (Bottom-up) Development Approach

In response to the limitations of the exogenous development approach, the endogenous development model, also known as the bottom up approach, was introduced. In contrast to the exogenous approach, the endogenous development approach focuses more on the strength that rural people have to develop their local area with the capabilities and resources they have within and around themselves.

The endogenous development model is ideally described as ‘local development, produced mainly by local impulses and grounded largely on local resources’ (Terluin & Post 2001, p. 3), with the aim of preserving the local economy and values. Within policy development

(especially development policies related to rural and disadvantaged societies), the emphasis has shifted towards local diversification. This bottom-up approach supports indigenous and local business, and with the provision of suitable training, encourages local initiatives and enterprises (Lowe, Murdoch & Ward 1995).

The endogenous development approach is based on three principles: 'Initially, in endogenous, the development approach is more territorial rather than a sectoral focus; finally, enhancing the needs, capacities and perspectives of local actors is an important focus' (Vermeire et al. 2008, p. 295).

According to contemporary researchers such as Hildreth (2007), Audunson (2007), Dent (2009), Islam and Ahmed (2011) and many more, many rural and disadvantaged populations think of themselves as self-reliant individualists and often prefer engaging with local economic development or strategies such as small business creation, preservation and expansion of existing businesses and home-grown business development. Hence the endogenous development approach implies a 'large role for local institutions in the planning and administration of development programmes, and allows local communities to make their own decisions regarding economic policy' (Vennesland 2005, p. 109). Within the endogenous development approach, the focus is on the internal strength of rural communities. This may include unused rural resources of labour as well as the natural environment of the rural area.

The development that results from the endogenous development approach is said to be more durable than other externally generated growth, because 'communities can expect greater compatibility between local economic development and other important community values'

(Isa 2010, p. 57). The main actors in endogenous development are the people in the communities, villages and towns, with their own self-determined traditional organizations, as well as leadership and civil organizations. In addition, since endogenous development tends to be locally controlled, community welfare will receive a higher degree of consideration in investment decisions (Isa 2010). Furthermore, the endogenous development approach allows local communities to grow independently within their local surroundings. This enables them to make their own decisions, and take personal risks in order to develop and change their own lives.

The Mixed Exogenous/Endogenous Development Approach

The mixed exogenous and endogenous development approach involves the interaction between local and external elements in the control of the development process. Ida Terluin and Jaap Post explain that the mixed exogenous and endogenous development approach relates to,

rural development where the process of increasing globalization, due to rapid technological changes in the communications and information sectors. In this changing global context, actors in rural regions are involved in both local networks and external networks, but the size, direction and intensity of networks vary among regions. (Terluin & Post 2001, p. 4)

Hence rural development is considered a complex interconnected network in which resources are mobilized, and the control of the process consists of the interplay between local and external forces (Lowe, Murdoch & Ward 1995). Phillip Lowe, Jonathan Murdoch and Neil Ward (1995) clarify that from the perspective of the exogenous and endogenous approach of rural development, the analysis focuses upon questions such as: ‘which actors come to exercise power over others within and through networks?’, ‘how are local actors drawn into sets of relations and on what terms?’, ‘what links local actors to external actors?’ and ‘how do external actors effect change and control from a distance?’ (Lowe, Murdoch & Ward 1995, p. 100).

This mixed development approach is said to be the best approach for community development for it allows many local elements, such as regional identity, local cultures and the natural environment, to be a part of the development effort and process; hence these local elements are combined with the rural regional external elements of development, namely globalization and networks (Terluin & Post 2001). The fundamental belief underpinning this mixed development approach is a proactive government policy intervention, including participatory decision-making from the outset, which is believed to accelerate the progress of community development. However, effective planning and development cannot be achieved without the participation of the local community (Neale 1985; Isa 2010).

The social unrest in Malaysia in 1969 was a clear indication that market forces could not be given free rein to enhance the development of the country. In Malaysian heterogeneous society, government intervention is vital in order to keep wide income disparities between sectors (rural and urban) and between ethnic groups under control. The Malaysian government has organized efforts to stimulate national development through three major orientations: output goals, namely to produce physical assistance; cultural goals, which focus on community development by increasing local participation at their own pace; and mixed output cultural goals, which involve an effort to create a new culture, to change the economic or social structure or small parts of it, and to produce some service or amenity (Isa 2010). Currently, 'development' in Malaysia connotes both direct productivity-raising programs and efforts to improve infrastructure and social services for consumption as well as production purposes.

It is vital for the community itself to have good access to knowledge and information about any developments that are planned for their community, their surroundings and their environment, as well as having a thorough understanding of the local social, economic and political background. It is also important to assist in the development of local literacy, and the related aspects of learning, information and knowledge. In this aspect of development, it is libraries that play the most important role.

Overview of Community Development

Community development is a structured intervention that gives communities greater control over the conditions that affect their lives (CDF 2012). The public library's role in community development goes beyond that of an information provider; it stands as a 'local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups' (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994). Furthermore, public libraries offer unbiased and equal access to all of their services and products. This arrangement supports the local community in both formal and non-formal self-education, as well as supporting personal and group development at all levels. Moreover, community members have access to much needed information and knowledge in fostering their social and economic development.

Review of Research on Rural Public Libraries and Community Development

Considerable literature, as discussed earlier in this chapter, identifies the role that rural public libraries play in improving the overall quality of rural community life through enriching the knowledge of community members. This literature comes from both Asian and Western countries. For example, Islam and Ahmed (2011) writing about Bangladesh, state that rural public library services promote, foster and enhance literacy skills among rural community

members. These rural public library services assist their local communities by enriching general knowledge of social problems and solutions, as well as helping to broaden the community's social and economic outlook. Writing from a more Western viewpoint, the State Librarian of California, Susan Hildreth (2007) emphasises that rural libraries are a significant asset to rural communities, offering a government presence in rural areas and serving as a local community centre and gathering place. However, only limited material has linked rural public libraries and community development. The following paragraphs review these studies.

Islam and Ahmed (2011), conducted focus group research, in the Northern district of Bangladesh, with the aim of describing the library service that is available to rural residents. Islam and Ahmed (2011) mention community development, but do not use it as a major theoretical framework in their research. They utilise the concept of empowerment stating that rural public libraries empower their local communities, stimulating and assisting these communities through the provision of their services, activities and programs. Islam and Ahmed (2011, p. 128) found that local rural public libraries often provide informal education, such as literacy instruction, computer training and other extension activities to help empower community members; in addition, they provide day-to-day information and citizen's action information in the form of displays, brochures, and pamphlets, as well as through various cultural programs and oral information. Islam and Ahmed's research (2011, p. 134) demonstrates that rural public libraries contribute to adult learning and education outside a formal classroom setting. Similarly, the case study conducted by Most (2009) in a rural county of North Florida indicates that adult library users utilise their newly built public library buildings as community resources, providing educational support to students and lifelong learners, as well as access to informational and recreational materials via the Internet, print, audio, and video formats. Most (2009) describes libraries as meeting the communities'

needs for modern, comfortable, non-commercial places that support information-related activities, reading, community-supported activities, educational projects, personal growth and development, and community-led discourse.

Influential international author Robert Putnam and his co-authors (2003, p. 35) describe the rural public library as ‘an active and responsive part of the community and an agent of change’. The library has become a successful meeting place and neighbourhood centre where people can build bridges between their communities. Putnam’s research demonstrates a correlation between a high level of community involvement with high participation in membership organizations such as clubs and churches, and a high likelihood of reading the newspaper and voting regularly. Putnam’s et. al (2003, p.62) proposed initiatives to promote a more engaged civic and community life include:

1) providing services to children and young adults that stimulate their civic engagement; 2) using programming to promote a broader worldview among users of all ages; 3) offering venues for participation in artistic and cultural activities; 4) providing the information and public meeting spaces required to help create an informed citizenry; 5) and serving citizens across the generations. (Putnam et. al 2003, p.62)

Utilising Putnam’s et. al (2003) concepts of social capital, Jean Preer (2001) demonstrates ways in which libraries can serve as both indicators and facilitators for creating social capital.

Peer, an associate professor at the Catholic University of America writes that:

Libraries create an informed citizenry and have done so throughout their existence. In the face of steadily increasing privatization of previously public institutions, public libraries remain public, open, and based in neighbourhoods (Preer 2001, p. 61).

Furthermore, Preer (2001) claims that rural public libraries foster tolerance, as they are open to all citizens and to all ideas. Preer (2001) also maintains that public libraries support civic involvement by encouraging volunteerism and offering training in civic advocacy and participatory processes.

Nancy Kranich (2001, p. 16) writes that ‘the primary way libraries build social capital is by providing that public space where citizens can work together on personal and community problems’. Hillenbrand (2005a) who conducted a social capital audit of Australian rural public libraries, affirms that libraries contribute to the social capital of their local communities; in addition, Hillenbrand’s studies indicate that their staff have successfully adopted ‘initiatives which address social exclusion and involve community capacity building’ (2005a, p. 57). Hence, rural public libraries actively contribute towards achieving the goals and objectives of both state and local governments. In addition, referring to the rural public library’s public space as a ‘civic commons’, Kranich (2001) describes rural public libraries as a place where people can speak freely, share concerns, and pursue their interests as well as what they see as community interests. Kranich claims that ‘the resulting discourse among informed citizens assures civil society, the social capital necessary to sovereignty’ (2001, p. 11).

In Australia, rural public libraries function to enhance social interaction and trust, as well as fostering equal access and a sense of equity within the community within which they are placed, which in turn contributes to social capital (Cox 2000). In her research, Cox explored the social value of core and non-core library business which contribute to the well-being of the community and society and focuses on the core function of libraries. She states that rural public libraries contribute to a local community by providing a physical structure: ‘a place which signifies easy access to other users, spaces for reading, and the opportunity to ask for assistance’ (2000, p. 4). Rural public libraries bring people together to share the physical space and the library’s resources, and they meet people from outside their normal social circles. The rural public library is ‘seen as safe space’ (Cox 2000, p. 4). Cox also emphasises

that it is important to continue to value the physical space of public libraries during this online era.

Hillenbrand (2005a, 2005b) refers to the idea of the library as a public space bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to interact, share concerns and work together. She writes that an Australian public library leader described the library as the new ‘village green’ in the sense of being a place where, in addition to borrowing books, people meet to discuss what they read, to hear authors speak and to connect to the world of ideas. These descriptions of the library as the ‘civic commons’ or the ‘village green’ suggest images of people voluntarily gathering for compatible purposes in a publicly owned place.

Hillenbrand’s (2005b) study also identifies new roles for public libraries that fill a social role ‘over and above the function of lending books and other resources’ (p. 56). Social and community benefits of the library experience include functioning as a community meeting place and information centre where people come to be entertained, to meet people, and to socialize with friends and family, and to make new connections (Hillenbrand 2005b, p. 57). Moreover, the library contributes significantly to the sense of health and well-being of many members of the community especially ‘the lonely, the isolated and the elderly’ (Hillenbrand 2005b, p. 57).

Audunson et al. (2007) surveyed three communities in Oslo, Norway. They identify local public libraries as venues that provide communities with ‘public spaces and meeting places filling different functions, for example, meeting places contributing to an undistorted communication, meeting places with a potential for creating a maximum degree of community identity and meeting places promoting social contact, making people go “bowling

together”” (Audunson 2007b, p. 8). Audunson refers to the public library as ‘one of the few remaining cross-cultural meeting places’ in an increasingly fragmented social world (2005, p. 437).

Studies of African rural libraries explicitly utilise the concept of community development. According to various researchers (see Aboyade 1984; Kempson 1986; Dent & Yannotta 2005; Dent 2006; Nyana 2009), the objectives of African rural libraries are to help rural children and adults to maintain their knowledge gained from their local formal education; to assist rural farmers to increase their productivity by providing information on their agricultural activities; to support rural community understanding of nation building efforts namely social, economic and political endeavours; and to assist in creating better lives for rural families by providing materials on health, family planning, women’s rights and human rights. Most importantly, rural libraries in Africa aim to inspire rural communities to read, use information and enjoy these resources for both educational and recreational purposes.

Nyana’s (2009) research conducted in Africa South of the Sahara reflects on the problems facing African rural public libraries in the provision of information and services to rural communities. She highlights that while the idea of delivering library services to rural Africans is well-intentioned; unfortunately it is based on a Western model and fails to fulfil the needs of local rural African communities. This demonstrates that it is important for rural libraries to ensure that their growth is rooted in their own local community; furthermore, it is recommended that the collection development is not solely based on printed material. Nyana (2009) proposes that African libraries should re-formulate their rural library services to incorporate the African oral tradition as well as including both oral and print-based resources. Her research highlights the need to preserve the African oral tradition. Hence, she emphasizes

the importance of building effective collaboration networks with local information agencies, both government and non-government. She claims that these efforts create solutions in providing access to the relevant information and skills taking into account the needs of the diverse local rural population. In addition, she draws attention to the importance of rural library marketing and promotional efforts to address the issue of low use of rural public libraries among community members.

Rural public libraries are an ideal site to support and encourage community development as they assist in enhancing intellectual and social growth at both an individual and community level. In addition, the rural public library is an institution that, while firmly embedded in the local community, provides a bridge to the digital, virtual world. Most importantly, rural public libraries function as a public square in the community where community members can meet and converse with friends and neighbours, and also, to a considerable degree, with people outside their normal social circles. Audunson et al.'s research (2007a) demonstrates that a wide range of types of meetings take place in public libraries: 'informal meetings with friends, unplanned encounters, participation in virtual arenas, organized meetings with politicians and authors'. Their findings indicate that the library is an arena permitting its users to move more or less without friction between different kinds of meetings and different life spheres. Audunson et al. conclude that the provision of low intensive meeting places where people become aware of each other, crossing boundaries of cultural heritages as well as encountering differences in values and perspectives, is a very positive contribution to the community.

In Bangladesh, rural public libraries play an important role in disseminating information about agriculture by providing farmers with relevant books and magazines in their local

language. In addition, Bangladesh rural public libraries provide support to local community agencies by assisting them in organizing seminars, workshops and programs (Islam & Ahmed 2011). Similarly in Botswana, UNESCO (2008) conducted a project that assisted local rural public library to organize group discussion and develop local traditional songs and dance collection.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, it is well established that public libraries are important to local communities. There is considerable literature on contemporary public library practices and there are substantial writings on the development potential of rural public libraries. Some small empirical studies have explored practices and potential of rural public libraries in developing countries such as Bangladesh and African countries. While the research that has been undertaken is valuable, providing some insight into current practices and future possibilities, there is a need for much more research in order to develop a rich understanding of culturally contextualized contemporary practices and possibilities, particularly in relationship to rural public libraries. The research reported in this thesis contributes to the development of this body of knowledge, by focusing in detail on practices in rural public libraries in two quite different cultural contexts – Malaysia and Australia

The next chapter of this thesis elaborates on methodology and procedures used in conducting the research. the research findings in Chapters 4 and 5 provide description and analysis of the current services, activities and programs in a small sample of rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia.

CHAPTER 3: Research Design

This chapter describes the research design of the present study. It explains case study methodology and provides a rationale for the selection of this approach. In addition, it describes how the cases were selected and provides details of data collection and analysis. This research is based on a philosophical approach that combines interpretivist and critical paradigms of social research. The interpretivist approach focuses on understanding the participants' experiences and the meanings of those experiences from their own perspectives (Sarantakos 2005; Henn et al. 2008). This research is critical in the sense that it is motivated by the political intention of bringing about changes that would improve life for disadvantaged people (Henn et al. 2008). This research adopts a multiple case study methodology as described by Yin (2009) and Sarantakos (2005), using the qualitative methods of conducting interviews, making observations and reviewing documents, in order to examine the implementation of community development programs and services in six public libraries: three rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia and three rural public libraries in Victoria, Australia.

Methodology

This study adopts an overall qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a type of social investigation that focuses on the ways people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the surroundings in which they live, with the aim of understanding the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures (Denzin & Lincoln 2004). According to Denzin and Lincoln, 'qualitative approaches display a preference for the interpretation of social phenomena from the point of view of the people being studied' (Denzin & Lincoln 2004, p. 3), for generating rather than testing theories, and for the use of natural rather than artificial settings for the collection of data. In contrast to quantitative methods in which respondents

are limited to choosing between answers already provided by the researcher, a qualitative approach allows people to express their observations in more detail. Mason (2002) explains further that:

You may choose qualitative interviews if your view of the ways in which social explanation and arguments can be constructed lays emphasis on depth, nuance, complexity and roundedness in data, rather than the kind of broad surveys of surface patterns which, for example, questionnaires might provide. (Mason 2002, p. 65)

This qualitative research approach was chosen because it is appropriate for this type of study. As stated by Creswell (2003), ‘if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach’ (Creswell 2003, p. 22).

The qualitative approach used in this research is appropriate because it enables the collection and inclusion of detailed descriptions which are needed for this study to achieve the specific aims as described in Chapter One: to investigate local rural community involvement in Malaysian and Australian rural public library services and programs; to explore the relationship between local rural communities and their rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia; to investigate the participation of the local rural community in the decision-making processes related to planning the services, activities and programs in rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia; and to investigate relevant unmet information needs in rural communities including attention to gender role barriers. Within this qualitative approach, the researcher has specifically selected a multiple case study methodology.

Research Paradigm

In selecting qualitative research, the researcher has made certain assumptions and according to Creswell (2007), these philosophical assumptions consist of a stance toward the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows what she or he knows (epistemology), the role of values in

the research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric) and the methods used in the process (methodology).

In this research, the nature of reality and its characteristics that are being investigated (Creswell, 2007) reflect how people view their world, what they see as reality. It is acknowledged that in this study, there is no single, objective reality, rather it is subjective and multiple; as seen by the participants of the research. This is in contrast to a positivist paradigm where researchers view reality objectively. Also, it is recognised that people view the world differently, each according to his or her own perspective. Hence, in this study, the researcher embraces multiple realities from six rural public libraries, from two different nations and intends to report these multiple realities. Evidence of multiple realities includes the use of multiple quotes based on the actual words of different rural community members and rural libraries staff and presenting the different perspectives from these individuals. In addition, this study is consistent with the constructionist view whereby reality is constructed in three-ways; by the researcher, the participants in this study and the reader or audience interpreting this study (Creswell 2007).

Trustworthiness: Validity and Reliability

The trustworthiness of research is often judged on a number of criteria mainly construct validity, external validity, internal validity and reliability. However, these criteria are applied to quantitative research from a positivistic perspective. Therefore, among qualitative researchers, some authors outline several key works related to constructivist paradigms. This section discusses the articulation of how to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research from a constructivism point of view.

One of the main criticisms of qualitative research is that it is hard to satisfy the criteria of research credibility, namely validity, reliability and trustworthiness. Validity and reliability are familiar concepts in quantitative research. However, according to Sarantakos (2005, p. 89) qualitative research has reinterpreted validity and reliability to strive for rigour by employing different methods to achieve it.

In the majority of cases, qualitative researchers avoid the use of the concept 'reliability'; instead they use concepts such as credibility and applicability or auditability. (Sarantakos 2009, p. 89)

In qualitative research, 'validity' focuses on the question of whether the researcher has interpreted the study's results accurately (Siemens 2007) and it is accepted that understanding is more important than conventional notions of validity. The quality in qualitative research is assessed through the notions of trustworthiness and authenticity - the true value of the study. Qualitative research is considered trustworthy when it reflects the reality and ideas of the participants (Henn et.al 2008). The validity of this research is reflected not only in the quality of the interviewing and documentary analysis, but also in how illuminating the interviews were for the research questions. In the context of this study, the selection of cases from different geographic areas and respondents with a variety of perspectives has increased the validity and overcome the biases typically inherent in a single perspective.

Traditionally, 'reliability' refers to the consistency of results through replication of research, and involves the accuracy of the methods and techniques used by the researchers (Henn et.al 2008). 'Reliability' is the extent to which a technique or procedure will generate the same results regardless of how, when and where the research is carried out, or the extent to which the instrument is consistent (Gorman & Clayton 2005). This notion of 'reliability' is based on the idea of the generalizability of research findings. However, qualitative research of the kind reported here does not aim for generalizability. It could be seen rather as generative. This

means that rather than produce findings that will hold true in other situations, it produces in-depth understanding of particular, contextualised experiences. These understandings contribute in a generative way to understandings of other contextualised situations and experiences that will have some similarities and differences with case studies that are the focus of this research. The issue of reliability is a critical one with qualitative research because, due to its very nature, the research focuses on individuals, their behaviour and unique context, which are always changing. This study uses multiple sources of evidence to support the relevancy and credibility of the research findings (Yin 2009). The researcher's cultural competency and knowledge of Malaysian culture (Mabry 2009) increases the credibility of this research. The cultural competence of the researcher with local culture, language and nationality help with interpretation of the local and subtle meanings suggested by conversation. This multiple case study research relies on analytical generalization where the researcher strives to generalize a particular set of results to a broader theory .

The Multiple Case Study Methodology

Through the use of the case study design, a researcher can promote deep understanding of true-life phenomena (Yin 2009), and can illustrate specific topics within a descriptive mode. This design can also be used to shed more light on situations which have no clear or single set of outcomes, because evidence from single and multiple case studies can be more persuasive, and at times, can also be more forceful. Yin (2009) explains that:

Single and multiple case designs are variations within the same methodological framework, and there is no broad distinction made between a single case study and multiple case studies. The choice is considered as one of research design, with both [single and multiple case studies] being conducted within the case study approach. (Yin 2009, p. 53)

A case study can be conducted and written with many different formats such as multiple case studies and cross-case analyses (Yin 2009). The approach to the multiple case study design for this particular research project is illustrated in Chart 3.1.

Chart 3.1 shows the steps taken in designing this study, which include theory development, case selection, data collection and data analysis. Reporting each of these processes focuses on how a rural public library can contribute to local community development and empowerment through attention to the establishment of relationships between rural public libraries and their communities, participation by the local community in the rural public library services, programs or activities, and the contribution of the local rural community to decision-making processes related to services, programs and activities developed in their own rural public library. Six rural public libraries were selected as the case studies for this research: three in Selangor, Malaysia, namely: **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, and three in Victoria, Australia, namely: **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**.

Rationale for the Multiple Case Study Approach

This study focuses on investigating how the rural public library, information services and programs work within the real life context of rural communities in Malaysia and Australia. The case study approach is most appropriate for gaining an understanding of each individual rural public library with its particular services, activities and programs. While each rural public library is a complex bounded phenomenon, the multiple case study design allows the researcher to search for patterns across cases. The descriptive nature of the study is appropriate for this area of study where little research has previously been conducted (Associates 2001; NLM 2006; Bakri 2007). The case study approach enables the investigator to use multiple data sources (such as documentation, archival records, examination of library collection, observation and interviews) and to collect data from all classes of participants involved in the programs (administrative, librarians, information workers, community members and library service users).

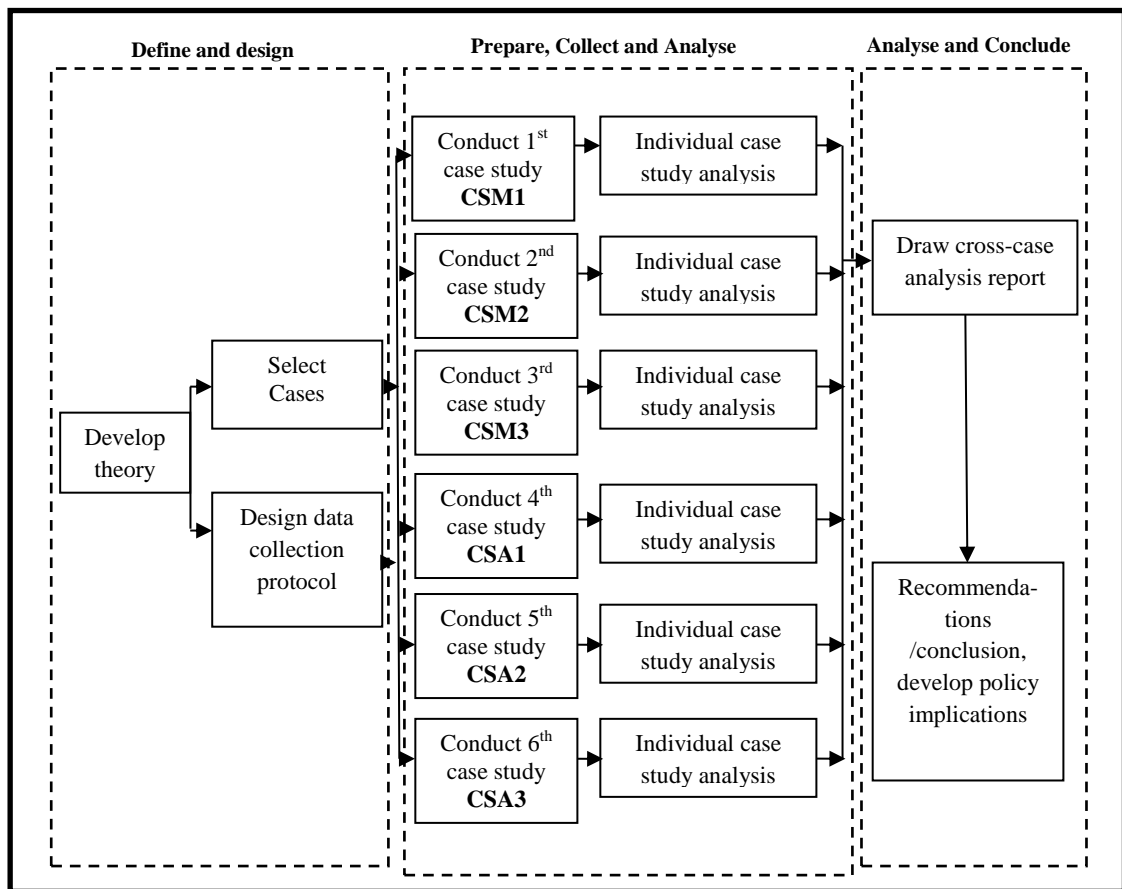


Chart 3.1: Multiple Case Study Method

The multiple case study design allows a focus on the distinctiveness of each case situation, as well as the cross-case analysis in which individual cases can be compared and contrasted, and patterns of similarity and difference emerge to form a general explanation (Yin 200; Creswell 2009). In this study, the researcher's attention is focused on the interaction of aspects of the phenomena, for instance rural public library services, rural public library staff, rural public library service users, the nature of the community, socioeconomic conditions, literacy and culture; these aspects all affect and shape the services, activities and programs in each individual case study. From the analysis of data, new understandings, concepts or patterns of interactions and relationships emerge. Inductive reasoning helped further in refining the

inquiry process as the investigation proceeded, and modifications were made as more information was obtained throughout the study.

Sampling

This study focuses on rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia. The three rural public libraries from each country were chosen using purposive sampling. This is a technique that allows the researcher to ‘choose specific examples that will provide insights into the issues related to the study area’ (Alston & Bowles 2003, p. 207).

The sample was limited to six sites because this provided a range of experience and was appropriate to the size of a PhD project. Only rural public libraries meeting the criteria for being a rural public library as described in Chapter 2 were considered for inclusion. In Malaysia the purpose of the sampling was to choose rural public libraries with a range of practices in relation to community development. In Australia, the purpose of the sampling was to identify rural public libraries that are active in community development.

Justification

The different emphasis between the Malaysian and the Australian rural public library sampling is because in the case of Malaysia, the aim of this project was to investigate the different types of relationship, involvement and participation between rural public libraries and their communities. Meanwhile, in the case of Australia, the aim of this project went beyond investigating the local rural communities’ relationship, involvement and participation in their local rural public library; in addition, it involved gathering as much information as possible about suitable practices to be recommended to the Malaysian rural public libraries.

The organizations

The Australian rural public libraries in this study were selected through consultation with Dr. Mary Carroll, a Teacher in Library and Cultural Studies from the School of Finance and Library, Victoria University; and the three Malaysian libraries were chosen in consultation with Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof, the Assistant Director of the Library Network Division, National Library of Malaysia. However, based on the various structures of management of the rural public libraries, the researcher had to go through different sub-administrations for further permission in relation to conducting the fieldwork.

Process and Criteria for Selection of Cases

In Malaysia, although the researcher had written permission from the directors of the National Library of Malaysia (NLM), she also had to approach the State Library of Selangor (SLS) and request permission from them. The researcher was later asked to sign a contract relating to issues of discretion in regards to both the respondents' feedback and also in relation to the results of the findings. The researcher was also requested not to condemn or criticize but only to recommend and propose improvement.

In Australia, the approach to the permission process was different. The State Library of Victoria (SLV) had no authority to give the researcher permission to run fieldwork in any of the Australian rural public libraries. Instead, the researcher had to approach each Regional Library Service Manager separately in order to gain access and permission before approaching the local Library Branch Manager. Only after the Branch Manager granted consent could the researcher proceed and approach the local librarian directly and later conduct her fieldwork.

The Locations

In accordance with culturally appropriate protocols in both Malaysia and Australia, the researcher approached three rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia, namely **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, and three rural public libraries (or rural public library services) in Victoria, Australia: **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3** (see Map 3: Map of Case Study Locations in Selangor, Malaysia and Map 4: Map of Case Study Locations in Victoria, Australia).

In identifying the three rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia, namely: **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, the researcher had to contact and liaise with both the Head of Directors of the NLM and the Director of the SLS. After permission was given to her by both organizations, the researcher then communicated further with the Assistant Director of Library Network Division in the NLM and the Head of Library Chain Service Section from the SLS, for the process of identifying the suitable rural public libraries for this study. In Malaysia, the rural libraries were identified according to three different criteria of choice: a library that has done well in handling and developing community engagement programs and services; a library that has average success in handling and developing community engagement programs and services; and a library that has been underutilised by its community. Upon identifying the rural public libraries, **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, the researcher later contacted and made further arrangements for interview sessions with respondents, with the assistance of the **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3** rural public library librarians.

The rural public libraries (or rural public library services) in Victoria, Australia were identified because of their active involvement and achievements in conducting community development programs and services. In identifying these three rural public libraries (**CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**), the researcher contacted and liaised with three Regional Library

Corporation Service Managers, namely: the Corangamite Regional Library Corporation, the Central Highland Regional Library Corporation, and the West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation. Only after being granted permission from these three regional Library Service Managers could the researcher then communicate further with the Regional Library Branch Managers of **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**. These Branch Managers then gave the names of the librarians in charge of the **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3** rural public libraries. From there, the researcher then approached each rural public library librarian individually. Upon liaison with these rural public library librarians, interviews in all three rural public libraries in Victoria, Australia were conducted with the assistance and the support of all three rural public library librarians.

Respondents

The following respondents were recruited for involvement in this research: a State Library staff member from Malaysia and Australia, from each case study rural public library, users of the rural public library, non-users of the rural public library, the rural public library librarian (one from each rural public library) and the Malaysian rural public library assistant. In addition, group interviews were conducted and group activities were observed. All types of respondents participating in this study can be clearly identified in Chart 3.2.

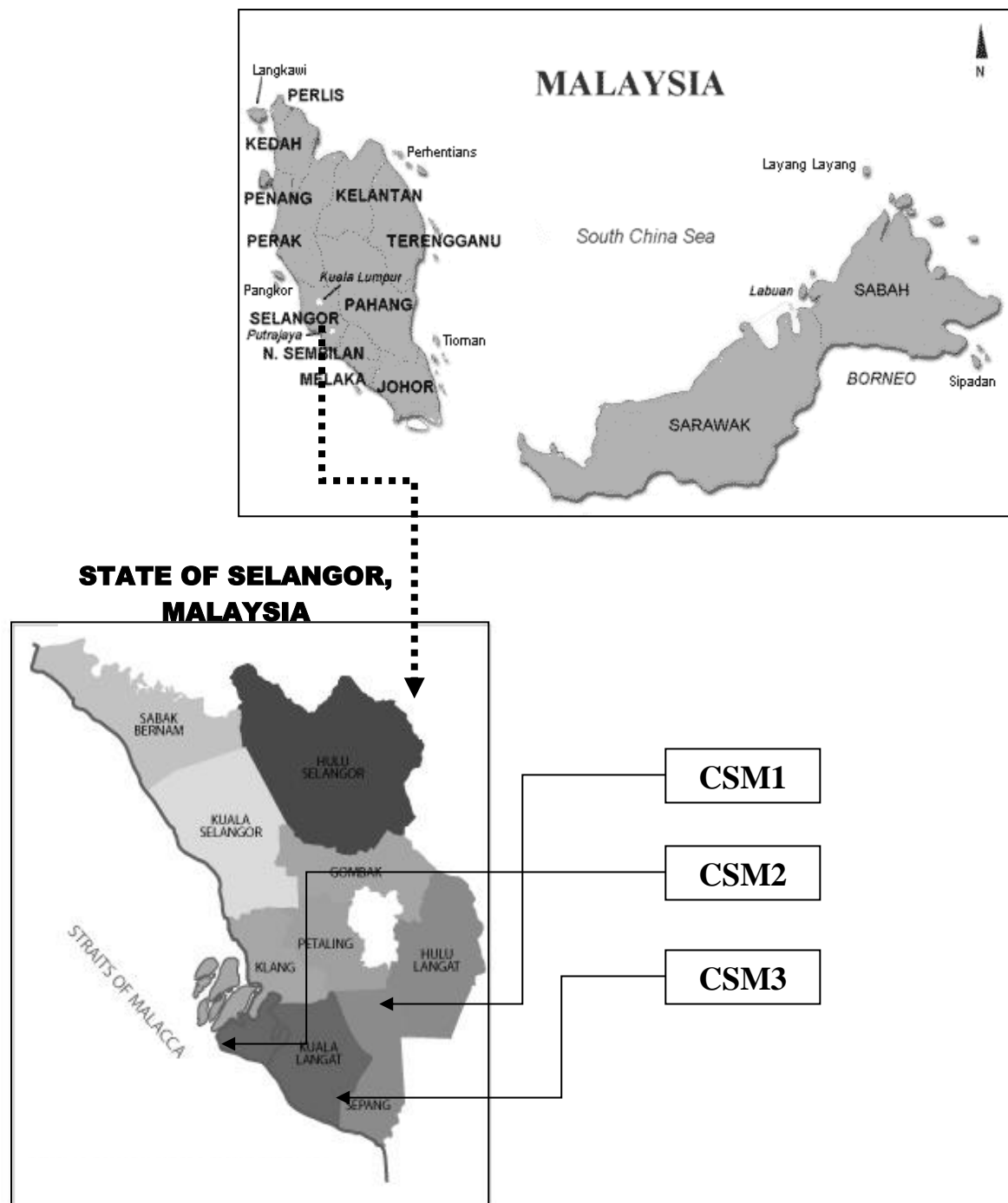
In Selangor, Malaysia, a state library member from the SLS was interviewed and in the **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3** rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia, three users of rural public libraries from each rural public library were interviewed (male and female adults). Three non-users of rural public libraries from each rural public library were also interviewed (male and female adults). From these three rural public libraries, the researcher also interviewed each librarian in charge of each rural public library and their library assistant.

Finally, for group observation and interview, one group from each rural public library was selected.

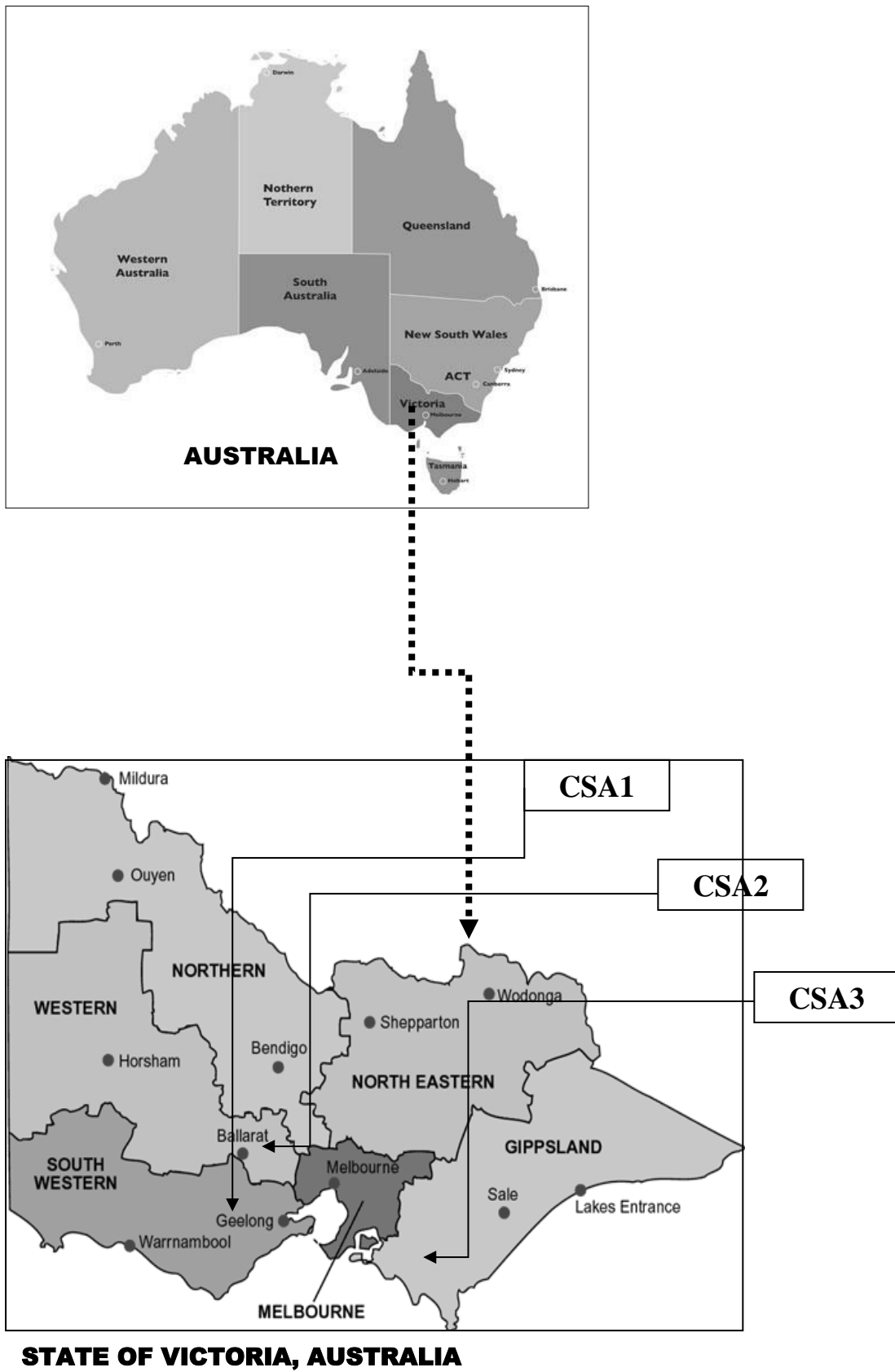
In Victoria, Australia, a state library member from SLV was interviewed, in addition three users of rural public libraries from each rural public library, namely the **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**, were interviewed (both genders). Three non-users of rural public libraries from each rural public library (both genders) were also interviewed. From these three rural public libraries, the researcher also interviewed each librarian in charge of each rural public library. Finally one group of participants from each rural public library was also observed and interviewed. The following section includes details relating to the types of respondents involved in this research.

Rural Public Library User Respondents

For the purpose of this study, rural public library user respondents are both male and female adults, aged above 18 years. These users are made up of registered members of each rural public library (**CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3** in Selangor, Malaysia and **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3** in Victoria, Australia). In this study, three rural public library users were interviewed from **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, and three were interviewed from **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**. All rural public library user respondents both in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia were selected and approached through consultation with and assistance from each local rural public library librarian. All rural public library users were interviewed individually for approximately 30 to 60 minutes per person.



Map 3.1: Map of Case Study Locations in Selangor, Malaysia



Map 3.2: Map of Case Study Locations in Victoria, Australia

Rural Public Library Non-User Respondents

For the purpose of this study, rural public library non-user respondents are both male and female adults, aged above 18 years. In this study, three rural public library non-users were interviewed from **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, and three were interviewed from **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**. For all rural public library non-user respondents interviewed, both in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia, the researcher had to go around each case study area and approach each respondent individually for their consent to be interviewed. All rural public library non-users were interviewed individually for approximately 30 to 60 minutes per person.

Rural Public Library Librarian Respondents

All librarians selected for this research, both in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia are individuals in charge of all administration and management aspects of the selected rural public libraries. These individuals are qualified librarians. They are also responsible for planning programs and activities, and setting up services for the community members.

Rural Public Library Assistant Respondents

All rural public libraries (both in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia) have their own library assistants; these library assistants are also known as library staff members.

In Malaysia, only one full-time library assistant is assigned to each rural public library. These rural public library assistants have formal and recognized qualifications to become library assistants or staff members; however, unlike the librarians, they do not have any specific librarian qualifications, but they do have a tertiary qualification. In all three case studies in Selangor, Malaysia, all three rural public library assistants were interviewed because they are

responsible for serving the community; they have been serving in their respective rural public library longer than the rural public library librarians; hence they have more knowledge than the librarian concerning the community, as well as in relation to the current rules and regulations of the rural public library. Without these library assistants, the librarians would find themselves struggling to learn about the culture and background of the community.

In Australia, rural public libraries may employ more than one library assistant; they are sometimes casually employed rather than permanent staff members. While they do need to have formal and recognized qualifications to become library assistants or staff members, they do not have any special librarian qualifications. Furthermore, these rural public library assistants are not SLV staff members; on the other hand, they are hired and appointed by each local council or the local Regional Library Corporation. For the purpose of this investigation, rural public library assistants in Victoria Australia were not interviewed as they are not viewed as having the additional community expertise, as is the case for the library assistants of the rural public libraries in Malaysia.

State Library Staff Respondents

In this investigation, the opinion of the Malaysian state public library staff members is crucial because of their role in planning and implementing the rural public library policies, designed by the Malaysian governments. Interviewing state library staff therefore assisted the researcher in understanding the needs of the rural public libraries and their role in assisting in the development and empowerment of the community. In order to access this information, in Malaysia a representative who was appointed by the Director of SLS was interviewed, namely the SLS Head of Library Chain Service Section.

Meanwhile in Australia, the situation was different. The State Library Manager representing SLV was interviewed because she was thought to have the same role as the Malaysian state public library staff member. However, during the interview, the researcher was informed that SLV has a very small role in the rural public library planning and program implementation. Instead, rural public libraries in Victoria, Australia are currently under the jurisdiction of the local Regional Library Corporations.

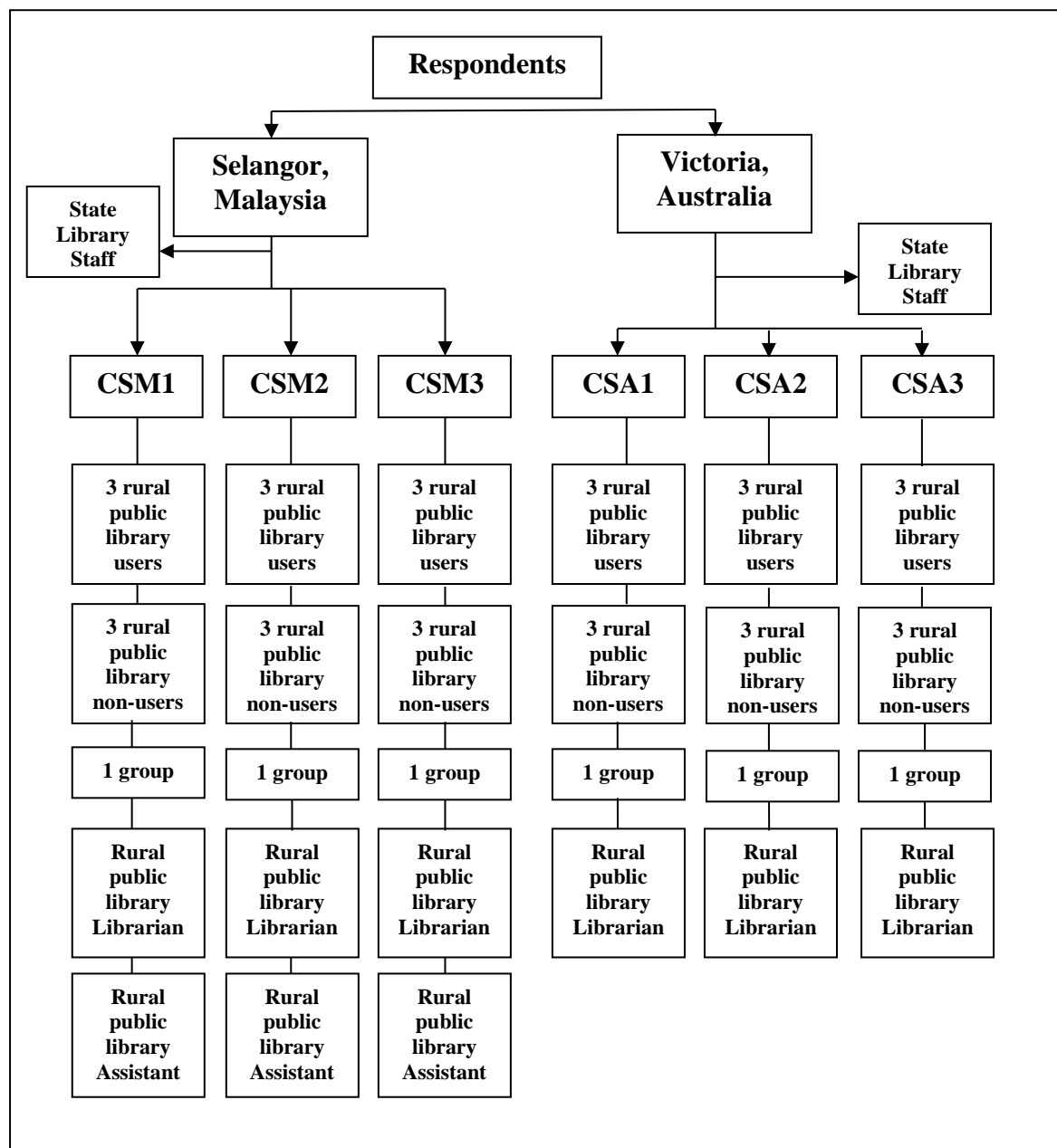


Chart 3.2: Respondents

Rural Public Library Group Respondents

In order to make this investigation more complete, the researcher initiated observation and interview sessions with activity groups in the libraries. Each group was made up of eight to twelve respondents, both male and female adults. All individuals in the selected group are local residents in each case study location.

In Selangor, Malaysia, the researcher found it challenging to get a group of individuals to be observed and interviewed because only one rural public library (**CSM1**) had a weekly group activity currently running. The other two rural public libraries (**CSM2** and **CSM3**) had no such activities in place. For these two rural public libraries, the researcher (while going around the village, interviewing non-users of the library) observed and interviewed two groups of local community members (one in **CSM2** village and one in **CSM3** village), who were undertaking local non-library group activities and were willing to be observed and interviewed as a group.

In Victoria, Australia, all group observation and interview participants were selected and approached in each rural public library namely, **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**. All respondents in the three groups participated actively in their group activity on a weekly basis.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection protocol (see Chart 3.3) for this research included observation, document review, personal interviews, group interviews, and observations of group meetings and activities, and document analysis. The following section describes details of the development and rationale for the data collection procedures that ensured the same range of data was collected from each individual case study site.

Data Collection Protocol

At each case study rural public library, the following data was gathered.

Method	Data Gathered
Observation	Library Layout, library physical location, venues, library collection, group interaction
Online Searching	Community characteristics, documents review
Visits to District Offices (Malaysia)	Community characteristics, documents review
Interviewed State Library Staff	<p>Question 1(<i>general</i>): Could you please tell me a bit about yourself? (Name, Age, Occupations, Any special interests in relation to public library services?)</p> <p>Question 2 (<i>involvement</i>): What is your role in the public library /library service?</p> <p>Question 3(<i>relationship</i>): How would you describe the contribution that public library /library services can make to rural communities?</p> <p>Questions 4 (<i>involvement & relationship</i>): What do you think the relationship should be between a public library /library services and a local community?</p> <p>Questions 5 (<i>participation and involvement</i>): Do you think local public library /library services contribute in any way to the development of local rural communities?</p> <p>Questions 6 (<i>participation and involvement</i>): Do you think the rural communities contribute in any way to the development of local public libraries /library services?</p>

	<p>Questions 7 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – impact</i>): Do you think that the public library /library service (in any way) have failed to serve rural communities? Why?</p> <p>Questions 8 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – impact</i>): Do you think that public library / library services can help to empower and develop a rural community? Why? How?</p>
Interviewed Rural Public Library Librarian	<p>Question 1(<i>general</i>): Could you please tell me a bit about yourself? (Name, Age, Occupations, How long have you been living in this community.....etc?)</p> <p>Question 2 (<i>involvement</i>): How do you perceive your roles as librarian in this library / library service?</p> <p>Question 3(<i>relationship</i>): How would you describe the relationship of the public library with the local community?</p> <p>Questions 4 (<i>involvement & relationship</i>): How has that relationship developed over time?</p> <p>Questions 5 (<i>participation</i>): What is your opinion of the services, programs and activities?</p> <p>Questions 6 (<i>participation</i>): Do you think this local public library contributes in any way to the development of the local community?</p> <p>Questions 7 (<i>participation and involvement</i>): Do you think the community members contribute in any way to the development of the local public library?</p> <p>Questions 8 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – impact</i>): Do you think the library services, program and activities have helped the community in any way?</p> <p>Questions 9 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – unmet needs</i>): Are there any additional services, programs or activities that you think this community needs?</p>
Interviewed Rural Public Library Assistant (Malaysia)	<p>Question 1(<i>general</i>): Could you please tell me a bit about yourself? (Name, Age, Occupations, Any special interests in relation to public library services?)</p> <p>Question 2 (<i>involvement</i>): What is your role in the public library /library service?</p> <p>Question 3(<i>relationship</i>):</p>

	<p>How would you describe the contribution that public library /library services can make to rural communities?</p> <p>Questions 4 (<i>involvement & relationship</i>): What do you think the relationship should be between a public library /library services and a local community?</p> <p>Questions 5 (<i>participation and involvement</i>): Do you think local public library /library services contribute in any way to the development of local rural communities?</p> <p>Questions 6 (<i>participation and involvement</i>): Do you think the rural communities contribute in any way to the development of local public libraries /library services?</p> <p>Questions 7 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – impact</i>): Do you think that the public library /library service (in any way) have failed to serve rural communities? Why?</p> <p>Questions 8 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – impact</i>): Do you think that public library / library services can help to empower and develop a rural community? Why? How?</p>
Interviewed Rural Public Library Users	<p>Question 1(<i>general</i>): Could you please tell me a bit about yourself? (Name, Age, Occupations, How long have you been living in this community.....etc?)</p> <p>Question 2 (<i>involvement</i>): In what ways are you involved in your local public library?</p> <p>Question 3(<i>relationship</i>): How would you describe the relationship of the public library with the local community?</p> <p>Questions 4 (<i>involvement & relationship</i>): How has that relationship developed over time?</p> <p>Questions 5 (<i>participation</i>): What is your opinion of the services, programs and activities?</p> <p>Questions 6 (<i>participation</i>): Do you think this local public library contributes in any way to the development of the local community?</p> <p>Questions 7 (<i>participation and involvement</i>): Do you think the community members contribute in any way to the development of the local public library?</p>

	<p>Questions 8 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – impact</i>): Do you think the library services, program and activities have helped you in any way?</p> <p>Questions 9 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – unmet needs</i>): Are there any additional services, programs or activities that you think this community needs?</p>
Interviewed Rural Public Library Non-Users	<p>Question 1(<i>general</i>): Could you please tell me a bit about yourself? (Name, Age, Occupations, How long have you been living in this community.....etc?)</p> <p>Question 2 (<i>involvement</i>): Have you ever used or participated in any of this library services, programs or activities? If not, could you please tell me about why you have not participated?</p> <p>Question 3(<i>relationship</i>): How would you describe the relationship of the public library with the local community?</p> <p>Questions 4 (<i>participation& involvement</i>): Do you think this local public library contributes in any way to the development of the local community?</p> <p>Questions 5 (<i>participation& involvement</i>): Do you think the community members contribute in any way to the development of the local public library?</p> <p>Questions 6 (<i>new perspective & responsive way – impact & unmet needs</i>): Are there any additional services, programs or activities that you think this community needs?</p>
Interviewed Rural Public Library Group	<p>Question 1(<i>involvement</i>): What do you get out of coming to this group meeting / program / activity?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Personally?</i> 2. <i>What happen after the activity? You know each other well</i> 3. <i>Do you have any extra interaction with your kids or fellow friends?</i> 4. <i>Is the number of program is enough?</i> <p>Question 2 (<i>participation</i>): Are you involved in the decision-making about this group?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Do you actually decide as group to what particular books, subject to be discussed or it is up to cliff?</i> 2. <i>How would you describe the group relationship with the library here?</i>

	<p>3. <i>How about in terms of promotion of the group? Do the library support in terms of that?</i></p> <p>4. <i>Do you have any say in the types of books, songs in this program</i></p> <p>5. <i>Do you suggest anything to the librarian</i></p> <p>Question 3(relationship):</p> <p>How would you describe the contribution that this public library makes in the local community?</p> <p>1. <i>Not to just your group</i></p> <p>2. <i>Is the librarian have been very helpful</i></p> <p>3. <i>Do you think the library give some kind of benefits to the community?Or do you think it is just a library</i></p> <p>4. <i>How about adults program...do you have and join any in this library?</i></p> <p>5. <i>Any suggestion? is there any special program adults that you need?</i></p> <p>6. <i>How's your relationship with the librarian and staff here?</i></p>
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Chart 3.3: Data Collection Protocol

Interviewing

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted in a way which allowed conversations to occur on the respondents' own terms while the interviewer still provided guidance (Hen et al. 2008; Creswell 2009; Yin 2009). In this way, the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee was able to move in new and unexpected directions, thereby adding more depth to the researcher's understanding of the issues involved. Moreover, this technique of interviewing provides a friendlier and more personalised emphasis to the data collection process. This procedure facilitates the collection of a large amount of rich data in a relatively short space of time (Gorman & Clayton 2005, p. 126).

Both in Selangor, Malaysia and in Victoria, Australia, interviews involved both users and non-users of the local rural public libraries (three community members/users – adult male and female and three community members/non-users from each library – adult male and female) and the service providers (one librarian from each library, and one library staff member from the Selangor State Library, Malaysia and one library staff member from the State Library Victoria, Australia).

All interviews with respondents in Selangor, Malaysia and in Victoria, Australia were able to be carried out in a relatively informal style where the researcher had the opportunity to introduce the topics, themes or issues that she wished to cover and at the same time was able to explore any unexpected themes that were brought up in the conversations. On this basis, the interviews for the study were conducted face to face with the respondents and lists of questions or question guides were used as a guideline (refer to Appendices 3, 3A, 4, 4A, 5, 5A, 6, 6A, 7, 7A, 8, 8A, 9, 9A, 10 and 10A). Interviewing offers important advantages for this research project. During a personal interview, the interviewee is encouraged by the use of

open-ended questions or by the non-directive listening to highlight personal self-perceived issues (Rabiee 2004; Yin 2009).

All interviews in this research were conducted solely by the researcher, who is fluent in both Malay and English. The researcher is also a certified translator in Malaysia. All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. Notes were also taken. In Malaysia, all interviews were conducted in the Malay language. This was convenient as all of the respondents are Malaysians and many do not communicate in English. The recorded interviews were later transcribed and translated from Malay into English. In Australia, all interviews were conducted in English and were also recorded using a digital recorder, and later transcribed. All interviews were conducted individually, face to face for between a half to one hour, and recorded with the participants' permission using a digital audio recorder.

Group Observations and Interviews

Group processes are fundamental to human communication and in a group situation many people are prompted to say things or suggest ideas which they would be reluctant to express during individual interviews (Gorman & Clayton 2005). Group observations and interviews in this research project have allowed the researcher to observe the behaviour of group participant respondents in their natural environment. This procedure allowed the researcher to find out more about the group activities in Malaysia and Australia.

Observation techniques have been used in this investigation because this method is very useful in providing additional evidence and information (Yin 2009) regarding the local community participation in the rural public library services, programs and activities. This technique is also useful for collecting more information about the community development

programs conducted by the rural public libraries both in Selangor, Malaysia and in Victoria, Australia, through field visits. In addition, this technique assists in capturing other phenomena, for instance social and economic impacts of community development programs for the local community. Wherever possible and appropriate, the observations of the rural public library group participants were also documented in this research by taking photographs.

In both countries, the researcher used group observation and interview techniques in conducting her study. The researcher participated in group activities or meetings in each rural public library; having been given consent by the group participant respondents, the researcher recorded each session and took photographs. The process for recruitment of respondents and obtaining permission is included in Chart 3.4.

During these observations, the researcher noticed that each group member was very active in participating in the activities or meetings. During the interview sessions, members tended to be very open and cooperative in answering the researcher's questions. They were enthusiastic about giving their opinions and preferences on the local rural public library services, activities and programs. Some interviewees also highlighted what they thought was needed in order to improve the local rural public library services, activities and programs for the community.

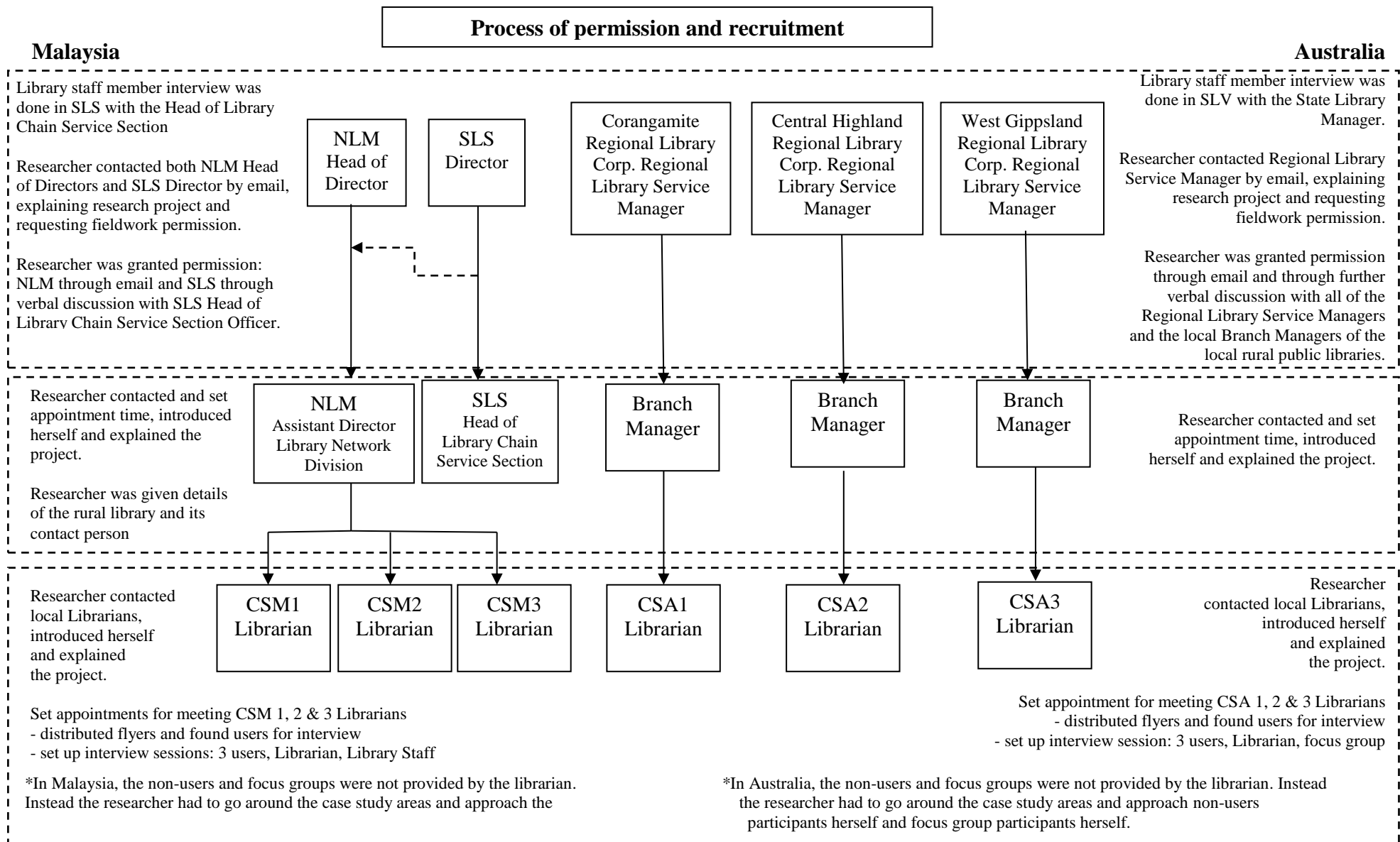


Chart 3.4: Process of recruitment and obtaining informed consent in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia

Review of Documents

In addition to the community members'/respondents' interviews and group observations and interviews both in Malaysia and in Australia, a review of document collections was performed to locate the study in a policy and literature context. Various documents have been used to capture broader information concerning the characteristics and distinctiveness (Yin 2009; Creswell 2007) of each local community and its rural public library; a variety of extant materials were also incorporated in order to gather further information, such as the rural public libraries' annual reports, pamphlets and brochures (both in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia). Media releases, speeches, handbooks, library manuals and regulations, reports and seminar papers were also collected. Samples of these documents are attached in Appendix 11. In this research as suggested by Yin (2009), these documents were treated as social facts that produced data in their own right, and provided information about the identified members of the community and its service providers.

All these documents were obtained from the researcher's fieldwork and rural public library visits in Selangor, Malaysia and in Victoria, Australia. This was undertaken between 2009 and March 2011, concurrent with carrying out the interviews and writing the reports.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was approached as an interactive and interpretive process; data was collected from all sources in a way that involved 'creating, testing and modifying analytic categories' (Saunders & Thornhill 2007, pp. 117). The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to search for meaning in relation to the research purpose or questions. Data analysis always began informally during interviews or observations and later continued during transcription.

All data from the rural public library respondents' interviews in this investigation was transcribed. The transcripts were coded manually, using codes that were developed both deductively and inductively. Some codes were based on the research aims, and others emerged from the data. Memoing was used during coding and data analysis (Punch 2005). In contrast to quantitative research, the data analysis process in a qualitative research approach can be commenced during data collection using memos. According to Saldana:

The purpose of analytic memos is to document and reflect on the coding process, how the process of inquiry takes shape, and what the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts are. (Saldana 2009, p. 246)

Data from all sources was organized and synthesized in order to construct the six individual case studies. The data was organized and interpreted using three concurrent flows of activity – refer Chart 3.5. This was based on Miles and Huberman's model (1994, p. 12): data reduction; data display; and conclusion drawing/verification.

Because of the use of a data collection protocol, the same range of data was collected for each of the six individual case studies. The data were displayed and examined in order to develop a structure for the presentation of each of the individual case studies. The development of the structure was informed by both the aims of the research and the content of the observation and interview data. The data of each case study was organized into this structure (data reduction)

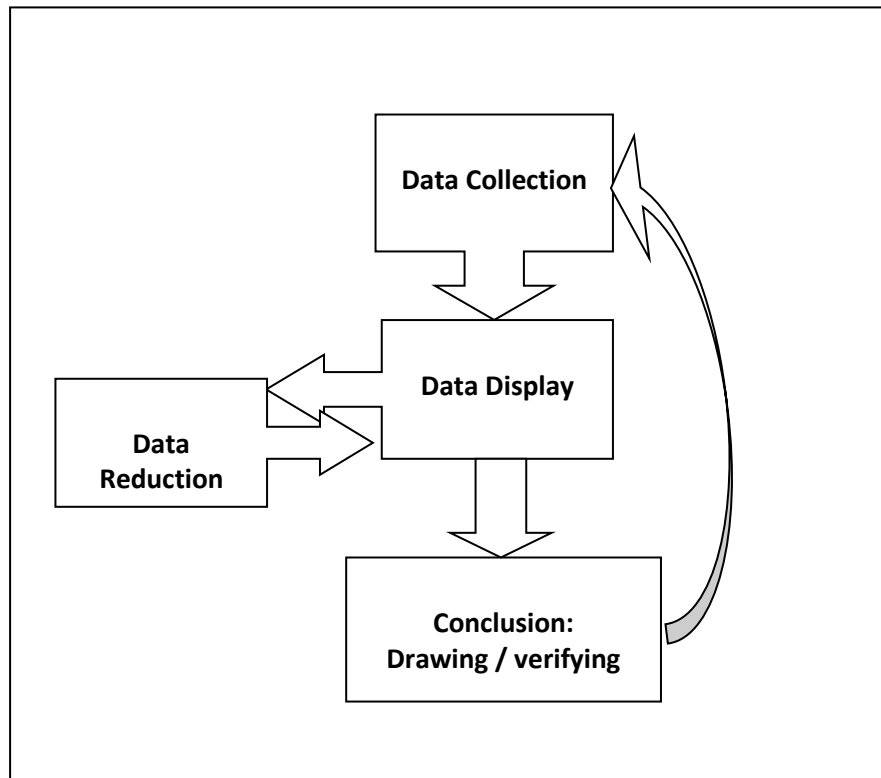


Chart 3.5: Components of data analysis: interactive model
Source: Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 12)

The second stage, data reduction, included the process of focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data that appeared in written-up field notes and transcriptions (Miles & Huberman 1994). The purpose of this process was to allow the data to be more readily understandable and comprehensive. Each case study was examined and written in depth, in order to understand the experiences of the participants. This stage enabled the researcher to draw together various themes and patterns of the investigation across the cases (Berg 2007). Further into this process, various complementary themes established, such as the perspective of the community concerning their relationship with the rural public library. Following this, a data display was created (see Table 1, pg. 253-254) to provide a simpler and more flexible picture of issues emerging from the interviews (McCabe 2008, p. 545). In this study, the individual case studies were both the result of the analysis and formed part of the data display for the cross-case analysis.

A case study can be conducted and written with many different formats such as multiple case studies and cross-case analysis (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) describes a single and multiple case designs to be variations within the same methodological framework, and there is no broad distinction made between a single case study and multiple case studies. Evidence from multiple case studies design is believed to be more compelling and more robust (Herriot and Firestone 1983, Yin 2009). The approach to the single case study analysis and the multiple case study analysis is illustrated in Chart 3.1.

In this study, cross case analysis was conducted by treating each case study as a separate case (Yin 2009). The analysis phase dissected and arrayed the evidence across all six individual case study reports focuses on similarities and differences based on the four stated aims of this research: 1) to investigate local rural community participation in Malaysian and Australian rural public library services, activities and programs; 2) to investigate the involvement of local rural communities in the decision-making processes related to planning the services, activities and programs in rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia; 3) to explore the relationship between local rural communities and their rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia; and 4) to investigate relevant unmet information needs in rural communities. This cross-case analysis report is based on the investigations within the single case studies of the communities' information needs, as well as their participation, involvement and relationship with their local rural public libraries.

The final stage involved drawing conclusions from the study and considering recommendations for action. This process involved matching the analysis to the

recommendations. The matching process in this study uses the thematic analysis procedure as recommended by Boyatzis (1998).

Thematic analysis is an analysis process where the researcher ‘identifies themes and patterns in the interviews through listening to tapes and reading transcripts’ (Boyatzis 1998, p. 4). This method emphasizes what is said rather than how it is said (Bryman 2004). Boyatzis explains further that:

Thematic data analysis is highly inductive, that is, the themes emerge from the data and are not imposed upon it by the researcher. In this type of analysis, the data collection and analysis take place simultaneously. Even background reading can form part of the analysis process, especially if it can help to explain an emerging theme. The aim of the thematic analysis in this investigation is to ‘understand’ rather than ‘know’ the data. (Boyatzis 1998, p. 30)

The process of identifying suitable themes and sub-themes for coding purposes is quite demanding in itself. According to Boyatzis (1998, p. 29), ‘a thematic code can be developed in different ways: theory driven; prior data or prior research driven; and inductive (i.e. from the raw data) or data driven’. In this study, thematic codes were generated deductively from previous research and literature, and generated inductively from the raw data. The research aimed to develop recommendations for Malaysian rural public libraries through investigation of the relationships between rural public libraries and their communities in both Malaysia and Australia, with particular attention to empowerment and community development, which were used as the important concepts. The recommendations draw on successful experience and practices in both Australian and Malaysian public libraries. The analysis was conducted with reference to the themes of participation, involvement and relationship. The views of the local community and the service providers are also discussed in relation to unmet needs, in accordance with the aims of this study

According to many community development theories and experts, participation is an important structure and process of any form of development. It refers to ‘people from a community of place or of interest, participating together in advisory groups, fundraising, attending consultations, planning, or in other activities’ (Preston 2009, p. 2). Based on this definition, the theme of participation in the analysis focuses on local rural community participation in Malaysian and Australian rural public library services, activities and programs.

Involvement in community development is about human contributions, which will then lead to empowerment (O’Toole & Macgarvey 2003). In short, the development of participatory mechanisms can further improve the local contribution in engaging in decision making processes. Involvement is when ‘a community itself engages in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situation of the community’ (Cavaye 2001, p. 3). The involvement theme of this research project is therefore based on an investigation of the level of involvement of the local rural community in the decision-making processes related to the planning of services, activities and programs in their local rural public libraries. Chapter 2 of this study has established that the success of community development programs is primarily determined by a high level of local participation and local involvement.

Finally, the relationship theme in this research project aims to explore the relationships that develop between local rural communities and their rural public libraries. The understanding of the bond that forms between these two important community elements is important because it will lead to a deeper understanding of how this promotes reading, lifelong learning, and a community learning culture among local communities.

Thematic analysis is not a common method used in public library research, however for the purpose of this study, the researcher decided to use thematic analysis because it is an effective way of exploring the community development activities of rural public libraries. At the same time, it enables the researcher to understand the level of the quality and acceptance of the library services, activities and programs provided by the rural public libraries, from the perspective of both the community and the service provider (Boyatzis 1998). The feedback gathered through interviews with respondents provides a range of opinions, which are necessary in order to determine whether the rural public library services, activities and programs match the expectations of the community. Boyatzis (1998, pp. 160-1) explains further that thematic analysis also enables the researcher to use a wide variety of types of information in a systematic manner. This increases the accuracy and sensitivity in understanding and interpreting the respondents in relation to their surroundings.

Ethical Considerations

This study received ethics approval from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. The research was carried out under supervision, with a commitment on the part of the supervisor and the researcher to high standards of ethical conduct in all aspects of the research. Details are provided here of the competence of the researcher, the procedures to ensure informed consent by participants, and the protection of the welfare of the participants.

Ethical standards of the research design and competence of the researcher

The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) (2007) states that research should conform to the highest ethical standards and that the researcher should conduct only research that they are competent to perform (NHMRC 2007).

The ethical standards included in the design of this research were ensured by the Victoria University processes of candidature approval and ethics approval, both of which required a review of the proposed research by a number of academic colleagues. This research activity includes individual interviewing, conducting group observations and document collection.

The researcher is a Bachelor of Mass Communication graduate, with more than two years practice in the communication and service field. As an academic with more than seven years' experience in formal academic research in her local university in Malaysia, she is well qualified to conduct interviews, observations and document reviews. She is a local Malaysian born and very familiar with all local Malaysian multi-traditional customs. In relation to Australian customs, she was guided by her supervisors.

The following paragraphs explain in detail the procedures, forms and methods involved in gathering permission and consent from both organizations and participants involved in this research.

Permission from the Organization

Considering the diversity of background and levels of community development knowledge among respondents, different processes were used to obtain permission to conduct the fieldwork and to obtain informed consent in Malaysia and Australia. In Malaysia, rural public libraries are under the supervision of both the National Library of Malaysia (NLM) and Selangor State Library (SLV). Thus, permission for fieldwork research was obtained from both the NLM through the Head of Directors, Dato' Raslin Abu Bakar, and the SLS Director, Puan Mastura Hj Muhamad. The researcher later contacted the officer in charge for further appointments before arranging appointments with the local rural librarians in the rural public

libraries. The officers are: the Assistant Director Library Network Division, NLM and Head of Library Chain Service Section, SLS. Only after consulting both officers of the NLM and SLS was the researcher allowed to approach local librarians in charge of the selected rural public libraries.

In Australia, permission to conduct fieldwork research was obtained from both the Regional Library Service Manager and the Branch Manager of the local rural public library service. The researcher then set up appointments for interviewing respondents in the local rural public libraries. The process is illustrated in Chart 3.4 in this report. All of the research findings, interpretations and recommendations in this study will be taken back to the librarians, community members and the policy makers for further consideration and possible implementation.

Informed Consent

Social research usually involves the offering of confidentiality and the right of the participant not to be identified in publications (Sarantakos 2005). In Australia, the initial procedural approach to all interviewees/respondents (individuals and groups) included written information about the research, the procedures to be used in the research, and details of how the materials from the interviews would be used in the research (refer to Appendices 1 and 2). The researcher explained the research and how the findings of the research would be used to build recommendations for Malaysian rural public library improvement. Participants then completed the consent form provided (see Appendix 4).

In Malaysia, all initial approach procedures to all interviewees/respondents including information about the research, the procedures to be used in the research, and details of how

the material from the interviews would be used in the research were prepared by the researcher (refer to Appendices 1 and 2). However, the consent form (among interviewed respondents: individually and in groups) was a matter of formality, because all respondents refused to sign the form; instead they agreed verbally to be interviewed. In Malaysian culture, participants are reluctant to sign a form or a document because they need to read and understand what they are signing for. For local Malaysians, signing a form or a document only takes place, normally, in the presence of a higher authority such as a lawyer, a police officer or the head of the community. The local community prefers to be briefed orally and to trust that the truth of what has been explained to them can be relied upon. In this culture, agreement gestures such as hand shaking or head nodding are considered as a mark of trust between parties and as validating the agreement.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted under certain limitations. The actual fieldwork period was six months (1 February 2010 – 31 July, 2010). The fieldwork included: the identification of case study locations (three rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia and three rural public libraries in Victoria, Australia), selecting and interviewing respondents (25 respondents – users, non-users, librarians, library assistants and state library staff in Selangor, Malaysia and 22 respondents – users, non-users, librarian and state library staff in Victoria, Australia) and selecting and participating in group observations and interviews (three groups in Selangor, Malaysia; one library based group activity and two non-library based group activities, and three library based group activities in Victoria, Australia). All arrangements including identifying and collecting relevant documents for conducting fieldwork were very much dependent on permission given by the administrative authority and the availability of the selected rural public libraries. Much of the fieldwork plans and schedules needed to be

adjusted to fit the selected rural public library's timetable, as well as the availability of the respondents and the groups.

The choice of using a qualitative methodology for this study was made in order to focus on understanding and gaining insight into the relationship that a rural public library has with its community, rather than quantifying support for any particular idea. This study therefore provides an in-depth exploration of the view of a limited number of individuals (who use, who do not use and who provide the service) rather than surveying a representative sample of the population. To obtain insight into the views of a larger sample would require a different methodology such as a written questionnaire, but this would lose the possibility of interactive understanding of the needs and expectations of the community and the service providers.

Lack of current and precise data, particularly statistics (in Malaysia especially), is also a challenge in this study. Since no empirical study has been conducted into understanding the role of the rural public library in relation to the community and vice versa in Malaysia (particularly studies of individual rural public libraries), little is known about the capacity and ability of rural public libraries in serving their communities. This study is therefore considered as exploratory research, thus it does not provide complete and comprehensive answers to all the issues surrounding the relationship between the community and the rural public library in Malaysia.

A national investigation of the rural public libraries throughout Malaysia is undeniably needed in order to identify and analyze their capabilities and their potential for enhancing their community. Such a study would assist in the development and empowerment of the individuals in these rural communities.

Conclusion

This research is a qualitative study based on a philosophical approach that combines interpretivist and critical paradigms of social research. Within the multiple case study approach, methods used include interviews, group interviews and observations, and document analysis.

The ideas from the interviews and the responses from the individual respondents and group respondents are analyzed and written in Chapter 4: Case Study Reports and Chapter 5: Cross Case Analysis Report. Chapter 6: Theorising and Developing New Ideas includes a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature and theory identified in earlier chapters, and draws conclusions.

CHAPTER 4: Case Study Reports

The findings of this research are presented in two chapters. This chapter presents the six separate case studies, and the following chapter presents the findings of the cross case analysis.

This report of the six case studies is separated into two main sections: Malaysia and Australia. In each of the rural public library case study reports, the researcher includes a community profile and a description of the local rural public library. Each case study is then discussed using a thematic approach based on the specific aims of this research. The themes are: participation, which examines local community interest in taking part in any of the rural public library services, programs or activities; involvement, which focuses on the contribution of the local rural community to any of the planning and decision-making processes related to services and programs developed in their own rural public library; relationship, which explores the relationships constructed between rural public libraries and their communities and unmet information needs of the local rural communities.

Case Study Reports of Malaysian Rural Public Libraries

The research includes three Malaysian rural public libraries as case studies. The following case studies include a description of the community and of the rural public library, details of the location, information about the respondents, and an analysis of findings in relation to the three themes, namely participation, involvement and relationship.

Case Study Malaysia 1 (CSM1)

Using the North-South Highway (towards the city of Seremban), the **CSM1** village is located about 45km or an hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur. The nearest town to the **CSM1** village is about four kilometres away. This village shares its border with the town of Nilai in the state of Negeri Sembilan. **CSM1** is one of Malaysia's famous fishery villages, and it is well known for its beautiful lakes and scenic views. Many of the **CSM1** community members generate their income through agriculture and farming activities.

Community Profile

CSM1 village was founded around the year 1880 by the Malay people from Linggi and Rembau in the state of Negeri Sembilan. There are approximately 1,300 residents living in **CSM1**. The majority of the residents are Malays, Chinese and Indians. According to the Village Development and Security Committee (JKKK), there are around 200 senior citizens living there. Despite the modernization and transformation surrounding the village, the community still upholds many of their traditional values: one in particular is 'bergotong-royong'³⁶.

This humble 'kampung' (village) living culture is very carefully preserved in many rural and in some urban areas in Malaysia. Most community members will selflessly contribute to events such as childbirth, weddings, funerals and anything that relates to both joy and sadness. The community members help prepare ingredients for dishes and some contribute cooking oils, cooking utensils, and other things that are needed for an activity.

³⁶ In general 'gotong-royong' is a concept of mutual co-operation, socializing and reciprocity. It refers to the idea of doing things together and helping each other in the spirit of goodwill (ANGOC 2008). 'Gotong royong' usually requires cooperation among many people in order to attain a shared goal and it has long functioned in villages and urban areas around Malaysia and Indonesia as a moral conception of the political economy. Within Malaysian society, 'gotong-royong' is a form of volunteerism that is used to promote positive cultural values.

Most of the residents in **CSM1** live in local residential areas while others have built their houses on their own land. The main spoken language is the standard (formal/official) Malay language, although some residents converse in local ‘Negeri Sembilan’ dialect³⁷. Although fairly isolated, **CSM1**’s proximity to several towns enables the residents to experience a contemporary lifestyle.

Some of the **CSM1** residents do some small scale farming, while others work in oil palm plantations and in rubber estates. They also raise cattle, goats, chicken and freshwater fish. The female residents in this village help to generate their families’ income by being involved in various activities such as tailoring and selling traditional cakes. However, being faced by rapid development, many residents, especially the younger generations, prefer to work in private companies and government offices in the nearby towns.

Description of the Public Library

CSM1 rural public library was opened in February 14, 2006, and is located in a building measuring approximately 25x40 square feet. Both the librarian and the library assistant there are female. The **CSM1** rural public library hours of operation are from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, Monday to Friday. On Saturday, the **CSM1** rural public library operates from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. However, the **CSM1** rural public library is closed every second Saturday, every Sunday, and also during public holidays. The **CSM1** rural public library has a total number of 6,778 resources (books and magazines) including 2,336 items for adults, 460 for youth and 3,982 for children.

³⁷ Negeri Sembilan dialect is a way of speaking Malay language that is used only in a particular area or by a particular group of the community, with differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

In the year 2010, the total membership at the **CSM1** rural public library was 831 members: 292 adults, 130 youth and 409 children – 66.2% of the total population (Yusof 2010, pers. comm., 1 July). In an effort to attract more visitors and members to the library, additional activities such as drawing for children are occasionally held here. For other interested residents, computer usage practice as well as internet and computer application lessons are offered, based on request. The layout of the **CSM1** rural public library is provided in Picture 5.

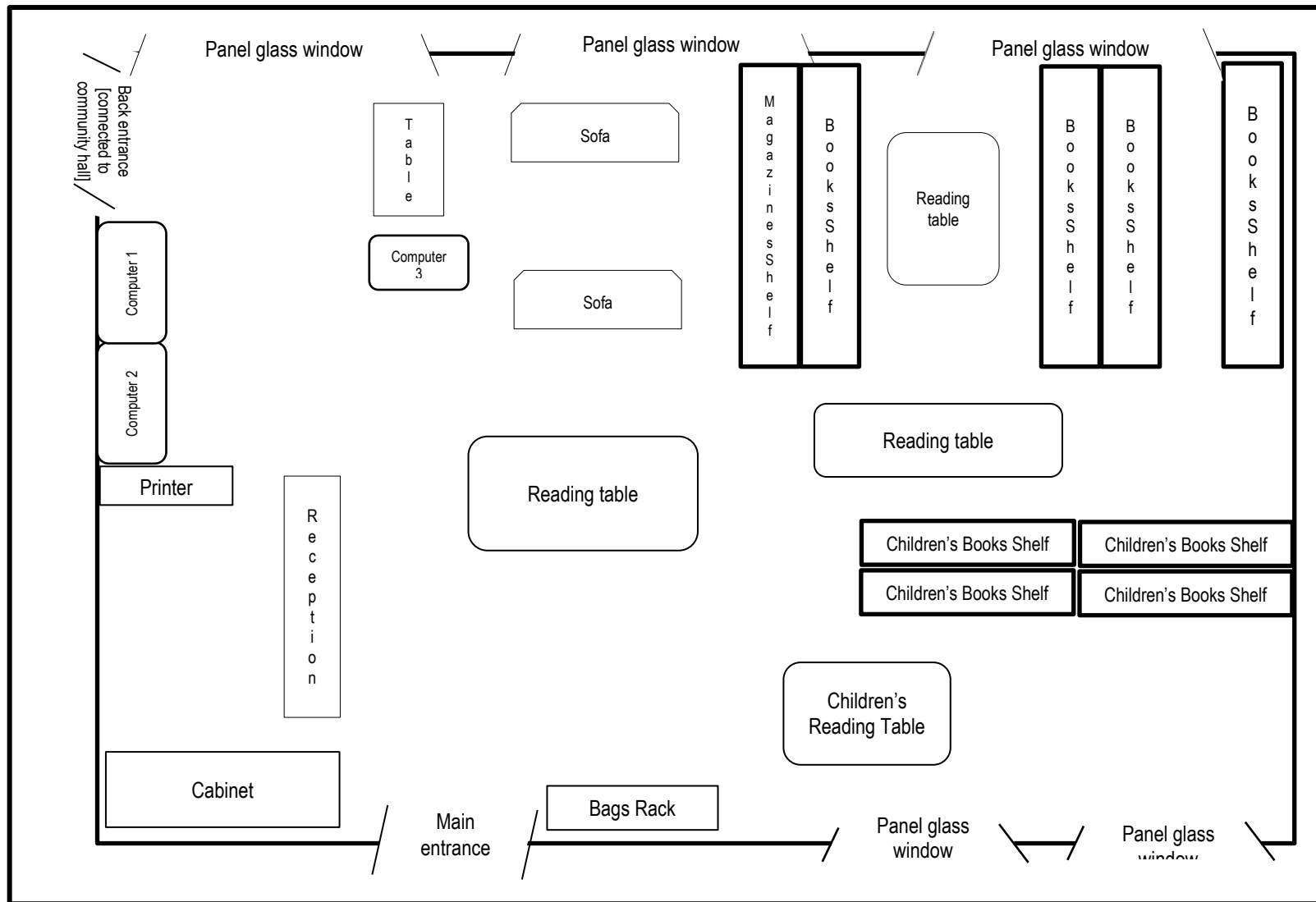
The **CSM1** rural public library is currently one of the most active rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia. This rural library runs many request-based activities for the members, especially women and children. The librarian and staff members have been working very hard to build a good relationship with the local community residents. Their efforts have become an inspiring endeavour for other rural librarians around the state of Selangor.



Picture 5: **CSM1** Rural Public Library Building



Picture 6: **CSM1** Rural Public Library Books



Blueprint 1: CSM1 Rural Public Library Physical Layout

CSM1 Analysis of Case Study Data

The **CSM1** rural public library is one of the 73 rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia, and it is one of the most active libraries in the state. Although records show that this library offers the same standard services as other rural public libraries in Selangor, the librarian and staff in **CSM1** manage to organise many other activities that match the needs of the majority of its patrons.

Background of respondents

User interviews were conducted with three respondents (in this case, female adults); all three are members of the **CSM1** rural public library and all are housewives. One is an active committee member of the local residents' association in the **CSM1** community, while another is a small part-time entrepreneur. One of the respondents is between 40 and 50 years of age, while the other two are between the ages of 29 and 39 years. All three are married with children. They were selected with the help of the **CSM1** librarian and all three respondents' interviews were conducted in the library.

Respondents who are non-users of the **CSM1** rural public library were not selected by the librarian; instead the researcher went around the village to find volunteers who were willing to participate in this research. As a result, the researcher managed to conduct interviews with three respondents, all of whom are male adults. These interviews were carried out in a local coffee shop in the village. All three non-user respondents are not members of the **CSM1** rural public library. One of them is a single young man between the age of 18 and 28 years. This respondent is a high school leaver and also a part-time electrician. The other two non-user respondents were male adults between 40 and 50 years of age, both married with primary school children. One of them owns a small beverage shop in the village and the other is a factory worker and also a part-time freshwater fish breeder.

The librarian in the **CSM1** rural public library is a single young female who is a local university graduate with one year's service experience in this field (librarianship). The library assistant, on the other hand, is a married female adult and has been working in the service for more than four years. Both the librarian and the library assistant are not local residents of **CSM1** village.

Group interviews and observations for the **CSM1** rural public library were conducted with the assistance of the librarian and the library assistant. This **CSM1** group consisted of 14 female participants, aged between 20 and 50 years old. All of the group participants are registered members of the **CSM1** rural public library, and they meet every Thursday at the community hall (which is next door to the **CSM1** rural public library building) for their weekly cooking class. This is a free cooking class, attended and taught by group members alternately. It is a social type of group interaction activity which is organized by the local female JKKK representative with the support and assistance of the **CSM1** librarian and library assistant.

Summary

The interviews with the librarian and library assistant, users and non-users, and the group interview were analysed in relation to the themes of participation, involvement and relationship. In order to analyse the relationship aspect, the interviews were conducted with the purpose of exploring the affiliation formed between the **CSM1** community members and the **CSM1** rural public library. In regards to the participation and involvement themes, the intention was to investigate whether the community is taking part and has any decision-making power involving the planning of rural public library services, activities and programs.

Both **CSM1** community members and the **CSM1** rural public library have shown a very positive response in relation to all three themes that were investigated. **CSM1** community members have shown their strong support of the **CSM1** rural public by actively participating in and using the services, activities and programs. Thus the affiliation, contribution and connection between the **CSM1** rural public library and its community is the strongest among the three Malaysian rural public libraries involved in this research.

Theme 1: Participation

The researcher's field visits to the **CSM1** rural public library revealed that the number of community residents who were registered as members of the **CSM1** rural public library in 2010 were approximately 831, or 63.9 percent of the **CSM1** village residents. However, out of these figures, 49 percent of these registered members were children – kindergarten and primary school children (M Yusof 2010, [pers. comm.](#), 1 July).

According to the **CSM1** rural public library librarian and library assistant, since children are the most active members who come and use the library services, their focus for activity and program development has emphasised children's needs and requirements. They stated that:

I personally see many kindergarten and primary school children come and use the services, participate in the activities and programs here in the library, so we provide them with reading material that they need. (**CSM1** Library Assistant)

Our members are mostly children ... what we have currently are basic services such as book loan, internet service and sometimes small and simple activities for kids and children like drawing and colouring competitions. (**CSM1** Librarian)

The other respondents interviewed share this opinion that children in particular are active participants and gain much benefit from the library. As **CSM1** User 3 explains, 'the ones who are exposed and benefit the most out of the library services and programs here are children, and as pointed out by **CSM1** User 1 and **CSM1** Non-user 3:

They [children] enjoy the service and programs held here in the library. (CSM1 User 1)

As far as I know, they [children] love to go to the library [CSM1 rural library]. (CSM1 Non-user 3)

Nonetheless, the researcher noticed that the **CSM1** rural public library has also managed to attract the attention of a small number of local women. As mentioned above, with the support and assistance of the **CSM1** rural public library librarian and library assistant, this group of women have initiated and organized an interesting activity for themselves. They have established a weekly cooking class, using the small village hall connected to the **CSM1** rural public library building. This weekly activity allows the women from the **CSM1** village to voluntarily share their knowledge about cooking through discussions with each other. All participants (including the library staff) contribute ingredients needed for the cooking class and at the end of each class, food is distributed among the participants. At the same time, the **CSM1** rural public library librarian and library assistant document these recipes and make them available to the public through the library website.

During one interview session, **CSM1** User 3 explained to the researcher that, ‘some of us [the housewives] here were able to arrange this weekly cooking class with the support of the women’s committee of the local residents’ association, the librarian and staff here at the library. We basically come here and share our knowledge about cooking and at the end of the session we share our food’. This respondent (**CSM1** User 3) points out that it is not only children but the local women who also benefit from participating in the library’s services, activities and programs. During a **CSM1** group interview and observation, group members agreed that by organizing and participating in this library activity, they are using their spare time in a productive way. In summary, these women are the backbone of support for the **CSM1** rural public library; the **CSM1** rural public library librarian strongly agrees with this, and states that ‘the community are very supportive, especially the women’s association’.

Unfortunately, this situation has caused some negative responses from male adults. A number of male adults interviewed in the **CSM1** village have mentioned that they are unenthusiastic to use or participate in any of the **CSM1** rural public library services, activities or programs. During the interviews these male respondents, such as **CSM1** Non-user 2 and Non-user 3, gave no particular reason as to why they do not go and participate in the library activities and programs. They instead articulated that the library activities are more suitable for women rather than men.

Yes, local women here are very active. They are always there [**CSM1** rural public library] to do things with the librarian and library assistant. Me? There? I don't think so. It's a women's activity, it has nothing to do with me. (**CSM1** Non-user 2)

It's easy for them, they are housewives. We men need to go to work. Moreover, the housewives here have their own association – an active one too. (**CSM1** Non-user 3)

One respondent confirms this attitude as to why she thinks that the male residents are less interested in coming to the library. With reference to her personal experience, **CSM1** User 1 states, 'I notice that many male residents, including my husband, are a bit reluctant to come and use the library because many activities here are too focused on children and women'. In addition to the perception that the library is a place for women and children, other respondents named a lack of resources as contributing to their reasons for not taking part or using the **CSM1** rural public library.

Many respondents, especially among users of the **CSM1** rural public library, stated that the books in the **CSM1** rural public library are mostly out-of-date and there are very few new books on the shelves. According to **CSM1** User 1, 'lately many complain that there are not many new books around for them. Some even felt reluctant to come by anymore ... the loan service here is quite backward. For those of us who use the library occasionally, we find that the books here are mostly out of date' (**CSM1** User 1). In accordance with **CSM1** User 1's statement, **CSM1** User 2 and User 3 also expressed their disappointment:

Personally I believe they [**CSM1** rural public library] need to bring more new books in. (**CSM1** User 2)

For the past one and a half years my children and myself have seldom borrowed books anymore because there are no more new books for us to read [laugh]. (**CSM1** User 3)

An additional negative response was the comment from a non library user respondent who believes that the **CSM1** rural public library currently fails to offer any specific programs for rural adults. He said that ‘for us [adults], I don’t think there is much that is being offered’ (**CSM1** Non-user 2). These negative personal views and assumptions are likely to be a major setback in the **CSM1** rural public library’s efforts to attract its community members.

During interviews with the non-users of the **CSM1** rural public library, the researcher collected a significant number of negative responses. According to **CSM1** Non-user 1, he never uses the library service or participates in any of its activities and programs because ‘I don’t know much about the library ... personally I don’t use it’. Meanwhile according to another respondent:

I have not participated in any of the library programs or activities because I am not a member. I know that I need to be a registered member to join the programs and use the service. (**CSM1** Non-user 3)

The **CSM1** rural public library librarian expressed her concerns about these negative perceptions of the library. She stated that these perceptions and assumptions are some of the major setbacks and challenges she has to face in her attempts to promote her library (**CSM1** rural public library) as a community information centre.

There are also mindset problems among community members especially the adults. Their perception is always that the library is for kids and for borrowing books, nothing more. It is very difficult to approach them and try to change their perception – that this library can do more to help them for their future undertakings. It is very hard. (**CSM1** Librarian)

Because of the limited participation among community members, most programs and activities organised by the **CSM1** rural public library cannot be developed into annual

programs; instead, most programs are fairly short-lived and temporary. Sometimes the programs tend to be only partially completed.

It is always the same faces, hard to find new people to join. (CSM1 User 3)

They [CSM1 rural public library] sometimes do offer good programs but somehow the programs tend to be halfway because the support and participation always comes from the same people. (CSM1 User 1)

Male adults in particular are very seldom seen participating in any of the library activities or programs. This is confirmed by the CSM1 library assistant's personal observation and comments; she stated that: 'I have to admit, in four years of my service here, I seldom see adults, especially male adults. If there are any, it would always be the same person'.

The CSM1 rural public library seems to have a very closed system, where only a specific group of the community are utilizing its services, activities and programs; in this case it is the women and children. Nonetheless, in this situation, all respondents still agree that the CSM1 rural public library does bring advantages and benefits to the village especially to the local women and children.

This library does help us ... Many of the programs and activities planned and held here are good and beneficial to us [children and women]. (CSM1 User 1)

This library brings a lot of benefits to us [women] and our small children. After school, during school holiday and weekends, at least our children have things to do other than just watching TV and playing computer games. (CSM1 Group participants)

Theme 2: Involvement

Respondents of the CSM1 case study informed the researcher that, during the development of the CSM1 rural public library building in the village, no local community members were consulted for any advice or opinion. It was all decided by the government: the location, the type of building and the size of the building. The community members were not consulted or involved in any of the decision-making concerning the development, administration or planning of the services, activities or programs.

Many respondents believe that there is no need for them to be involved because it is the responsibility of the government to provide the service, and the responsibility of the librarian to think and plan the programs for the community. According to **CSM1** User 2 and **CSM1** Non-user 3,

I doubt I have any say in the type of services, activities or programs that they are planning for us. Isn't it the librarian's job? (**CSM1** User 2)

Well, it is the government's responsibility to provide us with the service. Once it's there, we use it. (**CSM1** Non-user 3)

On the other hand, not all respondents agree with the above assertions. For example, the **CSM1** group members are confident that they are directly involved with the library through their partnership activity. According to them, 'we always communicate with each other [including the library staff] and consult each other as to what type of recipes we want to have in each class. We then allocate the person in charge of buying or preparing the necessary ingredients. The librarian sometimes offers cookbooks for us to use in the class too'.

Nonetheless, throughout the **CSM1** field visits, all respondents expressed their support, contentment and optimism with the **CSM1** rural public library development in their village. They see the rural library as very accommodating and beneficial for the community; many respondents also express their willingness to lend a hand and assist the library if they are needed. According to **CSM1** User 1, who is also an active member of the local women's association, 'everyone was happy when they announced the building of this library and we still are. We – especially the village women – recognize and support its services, activities and programs as much as we can. But it depends on what the library does need from us ... the librarian can always tell us what they need, and we will do what we can'. Similarly, **CSM1** User 3 believes that the **CSM1** rural public library is a place of opportunity and always offers

something for her to do during her spare time; in return, she says: ‘I always offer any helping hand whenever needed’.

In agreement with these statements from respondents, both the **CSM1** rural public library librarian and library assistant explain that although there are no specific administrative affiliation opportunities that can be organized between the community and the library, and although not all of the **CSM1** village residents are members of the library, there are still a small number of community members who willingly offer their support and a helping hand. The **CSM1** rural public library librarian commented that: ‘the communities here are quite supportive and helpful. The local association such as the women’s association and the JKKK has run a number of programs with us [**CSM1** rural public library] here, and we are proud to be able to provide them with the space and input that they need’.

Theme 3: Relationship

The researcher’s observations and interviews with the **CSM1** respondents revealed that a very positive and constructive relationship has been successfully built between the community and the rural public library. A lot of positive feedback was collected from the respondents, expressing their appreciation and support with the development of the **CSM1** rural public library. None of the respondents, especially among library users, denied the importance of and the need to have a library in their community. For example, according to **CSM1** User 1, there was a lot of support given to the building of the **CSM1** rural public library, and many **CSM1** residents are grateful and appreciate the service that has been made available for them (**CSM1** User 3). Others expressed the opinion that the development of the library will provide the community with the knowledge and information support that is much needed (**CSM1** User 2). The librarian also agrees that the **CSM1** rural public library has

built a positive relationship with the community, and states that: ‘This library has managed to fulfil its role as a service provider’ (**CSM1** Librarian).

Ironically, many adult community members of the **CSM1** village are more supporters rather than participants. In addition, the understanding of the concept of a public library among the **CSM1** adults was limited to the idea that a library is for the use and benefit of their children. This perception is reflected in the feedback from all three non-library user respondents in this case study. According to **CSM1** Non-user 1, ‘I don’t use the library [**CSM1** rural public library] but I think it is important and very useful for the children’. Similar feedback was given by the second non library user respondent, who stated that: ‘the library will help the children with their studies’ (**CSM1** Non-user 1). Similarly, **CSM1** Non-user 3 believes that the **CSM1** rural public library contributes more to children’s self-development than to his own.

In addition, both **CSM1** non library users 1 and 2 express their reluctance to come to the **CSM1** rural public library for gender and religious custom⁴⁰ reasons. According to them:

With both of them [the librarian and library assistant] being women, I feel shy to go there. What will people think if I always go there? People will think that I want to ‘tackle’ [charm] them [laugh]. (**CSM1** Non-user 1)

I agree ... that is why many activities are for women ... maybe they can put male staff there. (**CSM1** Non-user 2)

The imbalance between the genders in staffing of the librarianship industry has been noted by many researchers (Kinya 2011; Holland 2007; Piper & Collamer 2002). This is the case not only in Malaysia, but throughout the world. As stated by Paul Goodson, ‘without question the library profession is female-dominated. The ratio of female to male librarians remains

⁴⁰ Islam places restrictions on men meeting strange women privately

roughly 4:1, although the mix is closer to 3:1 in academic libraries' (2008, p. 1). There is a need therefore to introduce different ways to attract more male staff to librarianship. Despite this imbalance of gender in the staffing of libraries, it should not hinder the service capabilities of a library. However, in reference to the responses gathered in the **CSM1** case study, the researcher believes that there is a need to reassess the current staffing policies and distribution of staff in the rural public library services in Malaysia.

The major limitations demonstrated in the **CSM1** case study are that the library is being perceived as a facility for children, and that community member's appear to be conducting themselves as more passive rather than more active users of the library services. While the library has built a positive relationship with the community, its actual usage has been limited primarily to children and a small number of women – the housewives.

Theme 4: Unmet Information Need

Despite this support from the community, there are still issues of unfulfilled information needs which have been highlighted by various respondents. These respondents affirm that there is plenty that still needs to be done on the part of the service provider in relation to trying to increase the membership and involvement of adults and community members in general to the library. Many took the opportunity during their interview with the researcher to put forward some suggestions and recommendations, hoping that these would be passed on to the librarian, NLM or government. Some of the feedback included:

In the future I believe the librarian must think of more activities and programs that are relevant to the community's needs. They need to upgrade better books for us to read. (**CSM1** User 2)

The library needs to run more practical and demonstration based activities rather than just intellectually focused programs and activities. I guess male residents will be more attracted to these kinds of activities. (**CSM1** User 3)

Nevertheless, both the **CSM1** rural public library librarian and library assistant have made an impressive effort to attract the community to come and use the library. To a certain extent, they have actually had to use money from their own pockets to run small programs on their own. They have also tried to focus more on developing activities that will encourage the involvement of local residents and that would suit their interests such as arranging visits from the local media people from KUNTUM (a local children's magazine) as well as local radio and television newscasters. In addition, they have also executed joint venture programs with non-governmental organizations, local higher education institutions and some local figures too.

We [the library] need to bring more additional services and programs that suit the needs of the community, especially for adults. But there are a few setbacks to this arrangement ... the budget – at times we [the library] have to generate our own financial support in order to run small programs, sometimes we use our own pocket money [laugh], the budget is just not enough to help us to run better and bigger programs. (**CSM1** Librarian)

Conclusion

In theory, process and practice, community development demonstrates the importance and need of participation and involvement, and how these lead to decision making, empowerment and self-enhancement (Kenny 2006). In the **CSM1** case study, it is evident that several community development efforts have been initiated and organised as an effort to promote and apply the theory, process and practice of community development. Although the community tends to view the benefits of the library as primarily limited to the children, the library staff members and a small group of women are currently making a significant difference and impact on the community's quality of life through initiating the cooking class. This class can be viewed as a lifelong learning pursuit and can further lead to the future development of a learning community culture. This worthwhile initiative involves connections and partnerships, especially between the local **CSM1** women and the library staff, and sheds new light on the traditional view of a public library. Furthermore, to a certain degree, it increases

the local knowledge and understanding of the significance of the public library in its role of supporting self-empowerment and development of the local community.

Despite the reservations expressed by some community members in relation to the imbalance of genders in the staffing of the library, the current **CSM1** rural public library librarian and the library assistant have shown an impressive amount of effort, creativity and sense of community by trying hard to encourage the involvement of the local residents in the planning of the library activities and programs to ensure that they are related to the community's wants and needs. Although not all members of the community may be aware of these efforts, the initiatives of the current **CSM1** rural public library staff have certainly brought some sense of development and empowerment support to the local community.

Case Study Malaysia 2 (CSM2)

The **CSM2** rural public library is located in a small village, about 75km from Kuala Lumpur city. The **CSM2** village was established in the year 1945. The majority of the residents there speak formal standard Malay language but many of them still use the Javanese dialect⁴¹ in their daily conversations. In travelling to the **CSM2** village, there are several other small villages along the main road. The distance of the **CSM2** village from the main road is about eight kilometres.

Community Profile

There are about 300 families (roughly around 1500 individuals) in the **CSM2** village, with the majority being Malays and a few Indian families. Since most of the **CSM2** residents are farmers, the daily routine activities are very agriculturally oriented. They collect oil palm fruits and do small farming activities such as planting vegetables. However, the main employment here is the cultivation of oil palm and the majority of the residents are directly involved in oil palm plantations as planters, collectors or middlemen. Quite a number of villagers in the **CSM2** village are also involved in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)⁴². There are several female residents in the **CSM2** village who involve themselves in activities such as making/selling ‘kerepek’ (crisps), traditional cakes and ‘tempe’ (Malay Java delicacies). They also participate actively in many religious activities such as ‘Fardhu Ain’ classes and ‘Yassin’ recital at the ‘surau’ (a small village mosque). The **CSM2** village is well known for its orchid nurseries, and their orchids are in high demand both locally and internationally.

⁴¹ Javanese dialect is a way of speaking Malay language influenced by the Javanese Indonesian people. This dialect is used only in a particular area or by a particular group of the community, with differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

⁴² SME is an independent business, managed by its owner or part owners, and has a small market share. In Malaysia, it is based on two criteria, namely the number of people the business is employing and revenue it makes. (NSDC 2011)

Description of the CSM2 Public Library

The **CSM2** rural public library was initially located in a public community hall, but it is now located in its own building, which is next door to the public community hall. The **CSM2** rural public library is located near a main road which is connected to Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). The **CSM2** rural public library was first set up as a village information centre in 1999 and officially became a community public library in 2003. However, in 2005, the NLM took over the management and later renamed it as the **CSM2** rural public library.

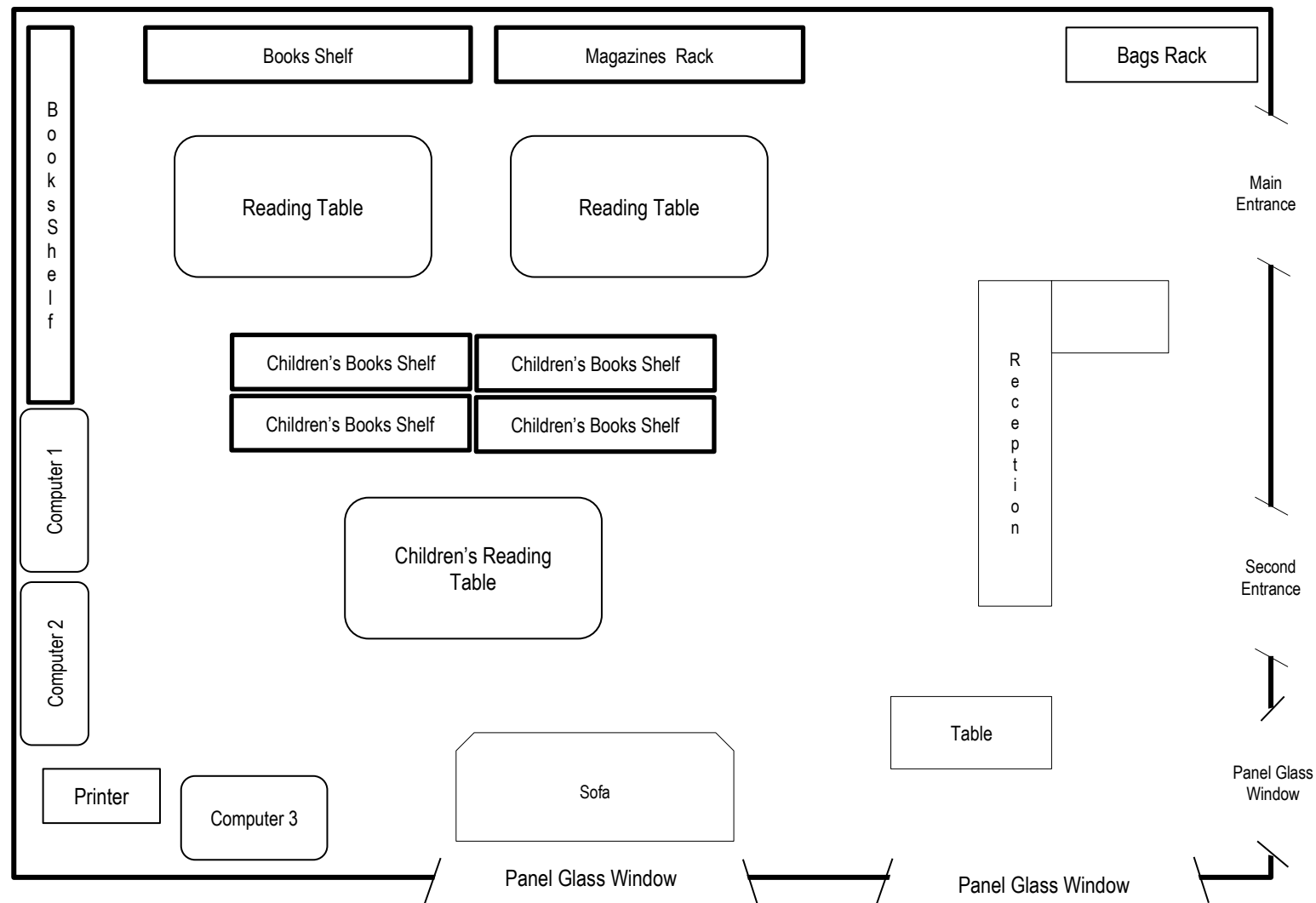
The **CSM2** rural public library offers all standard services such as book and magazine loans. They are equipped with computers and internet services. According to the librarian, about 25 to 30 visitors come to the library on a working day and this number increases to 40 to 50 people on the weekends. These visitors mostly come to the library to read and borrow books or sometimes to use the computer service. The **CSM2** rural public library's hours of operation are from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Tuesday to Saturday. On Sunday, the **CSM2** rural public library is open from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm. However, the **CSM2** rural public library is closed on Mondays and also on public holidays. The **CSM2** rural public library has a total number of 2,355 resources (books and magazines) and the total membership in 2009 at the **CSM2** rural public library was 1161 members (77.4% of the total population). However, library usage does not appear to reflect this high rate of membership.



Picture 7: The **CSM2** Rural Public Library Front Entrance



Picture 8: The **CSM3** Rural Public Library Children's Books Collection



Blueprint 2: **CSM2** Rural Public Library Physical

CSM2 Analysis of Case Study Data

The **CSM2** rural public library has been serving **CSM2** residents for more than seven years. It offers all the standard services that are provided by other rural public libraries in Selangor such as book loans, internet access and reference services. The **CSM2** rural public library has its own building; however the location of the building is slightly isolated, and quite far away from the centre of the village.

While conducting fieldwork in the **CSM2** village, the researcher discovered an unfortunate situation. Throughout the fieldwork investigation, respondents in the **CSM2** village gave the researcher more negative feedback than positive feedback. Many respondents complained that they did not know about the **CSM2** rural public library's existence. This situation will be further elaborated on in the following sections.

Background of the respondents

The library user interviews in **CSM2** included three respondents, one of them a female adult and the other two male adults. All three of the **CSM2** rural public library user respondents are members of the **CSM2** rural public library and they are all aged between 18 and 28 years old. One of the respondents works as a technician, while the other two are unemployed. All of the respondents are young single adults. The reason why these young adult respondents were selected is because after several visits to the **CSM2** rural public library, they were the only age group of adults who were coming to use the library. The researcher did seek and approach other senior community members who are listed as registered members of the library, but most of them were not willing to be interviewed, while others were not available. After consulting the librarian and library assistant, and upon their recommendation, the researcher then decided to interview these young adult user respondents; and again, the

selection of user respondents was based on the availability and willingness of the respondents; these users were in the library on the day the user interview session was scheduled. The selection was not guided by either the **CSM2** librarian or library assistant.

As non-users cannot be found in the library, these respondents were selected by the researcher without the assistance of the library staff. The researcher went around the village to find volunteers who were willing to participate and be interviewed for this research. The researcher managed to conduct interviews with three respondents, one male adult and two female adults. All three non-user respondents are not members of the **CSM2** rural public library. One of them is a single mother aged between 29 to 39 years, another female respondent is aged between 40 and 50 years, and the third non-user respondent is a male aged between 51 and 61 years. One of the non-user respondents is illiterate and unemployed. The two other non-user respondents own small businesses – a grocery shop and a food stall.

The librarian in the **CSM2** rural public library is a young male, who had recently graduated and at the time of this field research, had less than one year of experience working in this field. The library assistant is also a male adult and has been in the service for more than five years. While the librarian is not a **CSM2** village member, the library assistant is a local resident of **CSM2**; he was born and raised here in the **CSM2** village.

For group interviews and observation, the researcher faced difficulties. Since there were no group meetings or group gatherings existing at all in the **CSM2** rural public library, the researcher had to search for a group of people who were willing to be interviewed. This was a great challenge for the researcher as many groups were reluctant to be interviewed and to be recorded as a group. Finally, a group of ten male adults in a local coffee shop (during an

afternoon tea break) agreed to be observed and interviewed. The group participants are between 29 and 50 years of age. All of the group participants are not members of the **CSM2** rural public library. This group of respondents often meet casually during lunch or tea breaks in the same coffee shop daily. This group of men are all local residents who work as farmers and deal with small agricultural activities around the **CSM2** village.

Summary

Data from the interviews of the **CSM2** rural public library respondents – the librarian and library assistant, users and non-users, and the group meeting – was analysed based on the three themes of participation, involvement and relationship. In brief, these three themes have illustrated that the **CSM2** library is an important and beneficial aspect of the community. A lot of support and encouragement was shown by the library users throughout the interviews. However, respondents had reservations concerning some matters, such as the effectiveness of the promotional and marketing efforts of the rural public library, the lack of overall improvement of the development of the services, activities and programs, and the opening hours.

Theme 1: Participation

Library users are always the main concern of a public library service; the Australian Library Information Association maintains that ‘in order to be valued, public libraries must be delivering products and services appropriate to the communities they serve in a way that appeals to library users and is admired by non-users’ (ALIA 2009, p. 5). Hence, library patrons are the main priority of all services, activities and programs being set up, and the number of people who utilise these services, activities or programs are often used as a measurement of the success of a public library. The following paragraphs discuss the **CSM2**

local community members' participation and interest in taking part in the **CSM2** rural public library services, programs and activities.

Upon reviewing the documents collected from the NLM, the **CSM2** rural public library 2010 accumulative number of registered members was 1,161 (Yusof 2010, pers. comm., 28 Oct). Furthermore, in the personal interview with the **CSM2** rural public library librarian, it became evident that the **CSM2** rural public library activities and programs are focused primarily on children and young adults. This is because children and young adults are the community group members who currently regularly use and participate in the **CSM2** rural public library services, activities and programs. The **CSM2** rural public library librarian explains: 'at present activity planning is more focused on the children and the young teenagers. I know that I need to develop more adults' activities and programs, but it is hard to do so because adults here don't normally come to the library'. Despite this focus on children and young teenagers, further interviews with the **CSM2** rural public library users revealed that all three respondents are reasonably content with the standard of services provided here, especially the internet service.

According to **CSM2** User 1, he often goes to the library for the internet service and from time to time he does borrow some reading materials such as books and magazines. He appreciates the internet service a lot and also values the librarian reference service. He says:

Occasionally I use the librarian reference service here. They are like friends to me. I am very much comfortable asking for their recommendations and advice. (**CSM2** User 1)

Similarly, **CSM2** Users 2 and 3 visit the library to make use of the internet service:

I am a member and I always come here at least three times a week ... this library gives us free internet services. I like the internet service. It is a good service. I like surfing the net, I don't have internet at home, so I always come here to check my email and chat with friends. The librarians always help us if we need assistance with the internet service. Other than that I always borrow magazines too. (**CSM2** User 2)

The service here is okay, I always borrow books and magazines ... and I like to surf the internet. (**CSM2** User 3)

In relation to the **CSM2** rural public library non-user respondents, when asked whether they have ever used or participated in any of the **CSM2** rural public library services, activities or programs, all three respondents demonstrated a lack of enthusiasm and gave different reasons as to why they are not using the library. According to the **CSM2** librarian, 'it is hard to attract adults to participate in library activities because they are usually very busy with their work and business'. This claim is supported by the response of **CSM2** Non-user 1, who admits that while she knows about the **CSM2** rural public library's existence, she is too focused on her small business and cannot find the right time to actually go and participate. She states that: 'I know there is a library here; I just don't have the chance to go ... too busy'. However, she did affirm that if the opening hours of the library were to change, or the dates and time of the activities suited her timetable, she would go and participate.

Meanwhile, **CSM2** Non-user 2 was bold enough to admit that he is illiterate and states that the library is for children. In his interview he said that 'I don't need to go to the library; I can't read ... besides the library is for children, they are the ones who need to use it'. As for the **CSM2** Non-user 3, she was simply not interested in going to the library: 'I did pass by the library building before, but I have never been there ... not interested [smile]' (**CSM2** Non-user 3). These responses gathered from the non-users of the library support the **CSM2** rural public library librarian's claim that 'it is hard' to develop adult programs.

Feedback in relation to the quality of the **CSM2** rural public library services, activities and programs tended to be unenthusiastic. **CSM2** User 1 in particular highlighted that for the past two years he has been a registered member, however he has not seen much improvement in

the services, activities or programs of the **CSM2** rural public library during this time. He explains: ‘I never heard about other new activities or programs; are there any? I’ve been a member for two years now, and since then there is not much different that I can see, the same books, the same magazines, the same services and not many activities or programs ... not much different’. The researcher finds **CSM2** User 1’s comments to be accurate as on field visits to the library, the researcher did not see any other types of community group that use the library except the young adults – and more often than not they are same people; namely **CSM2** Users 1, 2 and 3 (this is also the reason why the researcher chose these people as library user respondents for this case study). According to the **CSM2** librarian and library assistant, from time to time there are a small number of other adults who occasionally come and use the library.

During all of the field visit trips to the **CSM2** rural public library, the researcher was unsuccessful in meeting any other library users, except young adults in the library. There were no groups or any local associations that affiliate or run partnership programs with the library, and no literacy or information classes. However, the **CSM2** librarian and library assistant state that they run small budget activities, programs and games for **CSM2** village children and women and their records demonstrate that this does occur. According to the yearly report of the **CSM2** rural public library to NLM and SLS, the total number of registered patrons of the library in 2009 was 129 individuals and 215 in 2010.

The library users interviewed for this research expressed the view that the **CSM2** rural public library could improve its efforts in trying to attract other community members. One respondent suggested that the **CSM2** rural public library could introduce and organize a greater number of new interactive activities and programs. He said, ‘some sport activities can

be fun, and I think people might like to come' (**CSM2** User 1). The respondent explained further that the **CSM2** rural public library needs to be more imaginative and to initiate special sessions with novelists or authors rather than just run an 'information race'⁴³ in the library. There was also a request from one respondent for the **CSM2** rural public library not to be closed so frequently (due to the situation where both the librarian and library assistant have to attend meetings with the SLS or NLM courses or other activities set for them by the SLS and NLM). This respondent explains:

Last week [Saturday] they closed the library because they said that they have to attend a workshop or something ... this week a soccer tournament ... well, if possible, try not to close the library too often ... and maybe they [the librarian and library assistant] can add more activities like inviting book writers to come here and give talks or something (**CSM2** User 2).

In reference to the **CSM2** user's claim, the **CSM2** rural public library librarian explains that there are times when both members of staff are required to be away, but they try not to close the library too often. According to the librarian:

Yes, last week we just had to [close the library], but this week we will try not to. There are only the two of us here and sometimes if there is an important meeting or discussion that requires us to be there, we will try to arrange it in such a way that only one of us goes. (**CSM2** Librarian)

Theme 2: Involvement

In relation to the theme of involvement, the interviews and observation data were used to analyse and explore community involvement in any decision-making processes that are associated with the planning and development of the **CSM2** rural public library's administration, services, activities or programs.

From the **CSM2** rural public library respondents' interviews, the researcher concluded that the **CSM2** community was not consulted about the planning or development of any of the

⁴³ 'Information Race' is also known as 'Info Race'. It is a popular activity among public libraries in Malaysia. It is a simple game of using riddles or clues and players have to find the answers of the riddle using books or resources in the public library.

library's services, activities or programs. When respondents were asked about their involvement in and contribution to the library, and whether they were involved in the selection of any of the activities that were planned or programs that were organized, all respondents answered 'no'. For example, **CSM2** User 1 said, 'do you mean to join the meetings [library formal meetings] and tell them what could be improved? No I don't do that [smile]; I don't think I am allowed to anyway. Look, it is good to have a library service here in the village. I like it, especially the internet service'. Similarly, **CSM2** User 3 states that she was never asked to give ideas or comments; however, she offers to help with keeping the library clean and tidy. She explains:

No, they [the librarian and library assistant] never ask me anything like that [comments or ideas for improvement]. I just like it here; this library gives me a space and a place to spend my time usefully. As a token of my appreciation, I personally help to tidy the library and clean up a bit. I even offer the librarian if they need a weekly cleanup service, I am willing to do it, gladly. (**CSM2** User 3)

While the library users sound content and state that there is no need for their involvement with the current planning of any of the **CSM2** rural public library services, all three non library users on the other hand did express their disappointment in relation to this situation.

The **CSM2** non-user respondents complained about not knowing anything that is happening in the **CSM2** rural public library; they claim that they do not know the types of services, activities or programs offered by the library which might be relevant or enjoyable for them (this is despite the claim and record made by the **CSM2** library assistant that there have been many services, as well as several activities and programs provided to the **CSM2** community). One respondent, **CSM2** Non-user 1, said: 'what is there to contribute and be involved with when many of us don't know about it [**CSM2** rural public library]?'. His argument was later supported by the testimonies of the second and third respondents. They claim that:

We [the community] know we have a library here, but there is not much exposure about the library ... there is not much information about it [**CSM2** rural public library service, activities and programs] ... and I am hearing less about the library nowadays (**CSM2** Non-user 2).

During the **CSM2** group interview and observation, this same claim was highlighted by the group participants. Their contention was that they were not informed about any activities or programs:

Many of us don't know that there are other existing library services, activities and programs here, but we know that we can borrow books from a library (**CSM2** Non-user 3).

We are not sure that this library has been providing good service to us because not everyone knows that the library [**CSM2** rural public library] exists. For some who know it exists, they don't know what services are available, except for borrowing books ... There have been no promotions of any activities, programs or services for us [adults] (**CSM2** Group participants).

These assertions from the community respondents indicate that currently in the **CSM2** village there is no decision-making involvement at all from the community in the planning of any of the **CSM2** rural public library services, activities or programs. Furthermore, these responses highlight another major issue – it seems that the **CSM2** rural public library is a step back compared to the **CMS1** rural public library in terms of their promotional and marketing efforts.

The limited understanding of the concept of a public library among the **CSM2** community members is contributing to the difficulty of involving the local community in any future decision-making processes in the library. When asked why they do not get involved with the library, all three non-users of the **CSM2** rural public library seemed surprised at the suggestion that they might want to be more involved:

We know that we can borrow books from a library; other than borrowing books what else can a library offer? (**CSM2** Non-user 1)

I don't know anything about the library; the kids are the ones who are supposed to use it. (**CSM2** Non-user 2)

I don't know about the whole community though, but I do know children use the library and I guess that is good enough. (**CSM2** Non-user 3)

In addition, during the group interviews and observation, the **CSM2** group participants said, ‘We don’t read books but of course we need a library; our children need it. Our children read books and they are the ones who use it’. From these responses, the researcher concludes that presently there is a very limited understanding and appreciation of the public library among the **CSM2** village people. The **CSM2** residents acknowledge the **CSM2** rural public library to be useful for children and for reading purposes only. There are, however, one or two respondents who maintain their willingness to try to be involved and participate if their time and personal schedules allowed them to do so:

If they asked me to [be a guest and give a talk] I don’t mind sharing my knowledge about electric wiring and stuff. It would be fun. (**CSM2** User 1)

If there are such activities [cooking classes and entrepreneurship workshop] organized, well why not, I would happy to be involved and participate. It sounds interesting but then only if it does not clash with my work schedule [smile]. (**CSM2** Non-user 1)

If they can organize something like a small business improvement workshop or something, yes, I would consider being involved. (**CSM2** Non-user 3)

Theme 3: Relationship

Through the researcher’s interviews and observations, the **CSM2** rural public library appears to have developed a moderately positive relationship with a group of young adults, and the record shows that there are a good number of registered young members such as children and young teenagers within the **CSM2** community (although during two visits to the **CSM2** rural public library, the researcher met and noticed only young adults using the library; no children or senior adults).

During the interview sessions with the users of the **CSM2** rural public library, there were five young adult patrons in the **CSM2** rural public library. During the researcher’s conversation with these patrons, it became known to the researcher that they (the patrons) are all in their early 20s, and at that time, all of them were coming to the library to use the internet service.

Later, the researcher was informed by the **CSM2** librarian and library assistant that these young adults are most likely to use services in the **CSM2** rural public library such as the internet service, as well as reading newspapers and magazines. There are also a few members who come and use the librarian reference service.

When asked how they view the relationship between the **CSM2** community members and the **CSM2** rural public library, **CSM2** User 1 answered that ‘the relationship between this library and community here is good, but I guess it is just good for us [young adults] ... well because I seldom see any other adults here [smile]’. **CSM2** User 2 was positive about the connection he has established with the **CSM2** rural public library staff members: ‘The librarian and library assistant are always there to help us if we need assistance with the internet service, books, anything. They are nice and very helpful. I sometimes see other teenagers asking some kind of assistance from them too’.

The **CSM2** rural public library librarian told the researcher that children (mostly kindergarten and primary school aged) are the main registered members of the **CSM2** rural public library: ‘Local residents who register here as members are mostly children, young teenagers and young adults’. He explained further that children are enthusiastic participants and they are usually the ones who use the services and participate in the activities and programs organized by the **CSM2** rural public library.

The **CSM2** librarian and the library assistant have the same opinion that despite the lack of adult participation, in general, the **CSM2** rural public library manages to build a good relationship with a small number of community residents and they believe that the **CSM2** rural public library is beneficial to the **CSM2** community. Moreover, they believe that the

CSM2 rural public library has developed a fairly good and well-maintained relationship with the local community residents' association, the JKKK. From time to time, according to the librarian, the **CSM2** community members, and in particular the local residents' association, have been supportive of the librarian and offered a helping hand if needed. The librarian states: 'So far the relationship that we have with the community is good. Whenever we ask for a helping hand, they [the community] are not reluctant to help. The local residents' association [JKKK] have been very supportive in assisting us with our programs and activities. As for other community members, I guess they are okay too' (**CSM2** Librarian).

The librarian and library assistant believe that the **CSM2** rural public library has not failed in its objective to serve the community and to assist the community in their self-development and empowerment. The library assistant reiterates this assertion:

We provide many services for the community. Some of the services are book and magazine loans, librarian reference service and internet service. We also used to hold programs and activities for the community. I've been here since the first year this library opened. I would not say this library has failed to serve the community. (**CSM2** Library assistant)

Theme 4: Unmet Information Needs

Through observations in the **CSM2** rural public library, the researcher became aware that there are very few formalised programs currently running in the library: there is no group activity and there is not a single community program planned for the month. The **CSM2** rural public library librarian and the library assistant affirm that **CSM2** rural public library could offer more activities and programs that are related to the needs of the community. However, there are always setbacks in executing these efforts; in the **CSM2** rural public library's situation, the primary setback is the budget. According to the librarian, there is a plan for better activities for the community in the future but it all depends on the money: 'we do plan to use the mini hall next door for more activities and programs in the future, but it all involves money ... everything depends on the budget' (**CSM2** Librarian). The **CSM2** library

assistant agrees that there is more to be done in making sure participation among community members increases:

There is a lot more to be done in making sure this library becomes the centre of community activity. We need new and more resources, more budget – so that we can run more good programs, we also do need more promotion and marketing planning. (CSM2 Library assistant)

Conclusion

Interviews and observations of the respondents during the fieldwork in the **CSM2** rural public library revealed that the **CSM2** rural public library librarian and library assistant need to deal with the difficulty of running, promoting and managing their rural public library within the restrictions of a small budget. As service providers, the librarian and library assistant realize that they need to re-organize and plan activities and programs that are more suited to the needs of their community, and that could also help to support the empowerment and self-enhancement of the community members. However, the financial situation creates further difficulties for them and limits what they can do.

In any type of community, community development efforts require strong participation and involvement from the local community. This leads to another important issue that has been identified in this study, which is that the **CSM2** rural public library needs more promotional or marketing activities to support and build the community's understanding and awareness of the library's function and its relevance to them. There were several respondents who were not aware of the activities or programs organized by the library, and some do not even know of the **CSM2** rural public library's existence in the village. These issues reflect considerable setbacks in the **CSM2** residents' understanding of the significance of the library in supporting the development of their community. In order to change this situation, the library needs to develop an effective promotional and marketing strategy.

Case Study Malaysia 3 (CSM3)

The **CSM3** village is located within Kuala Langat district and is approximately one and a half hours or 86km away from Kuala Lumpur city. **CSM3** village is one of Malaysia's many famous fishing villages. The village has mostly fine and sandy soil. The residents here generate their income in the fishing industry and plantation activities such as oil palms and vegetables. The **CSM3** village is known as one of the most famous training grounds for yachting sports in Malaysia.

Community Profile

There are more than 1,500 residents living in the **CSM3** village. The majority of the residents are Malays (although there are also Chinese and Indian residents). A large number of the **CSM3** village residents live in traditional wooden houses that are built close to one another. Some of the houses were constructed to face the beach. The **CSM3** village residents are well known for their community's harmonious relationships. Their consideration for others and willingness to lend a helping hand are traits that are still practised today.

Although the oil palm plantations and fisheries sector are the **CSM3** residents' main source of income, many other **CSM3** residents are also involved in small economic activities which include making banana chips, '*batik*' painting, and the 'homestay'⁴⁴ program.

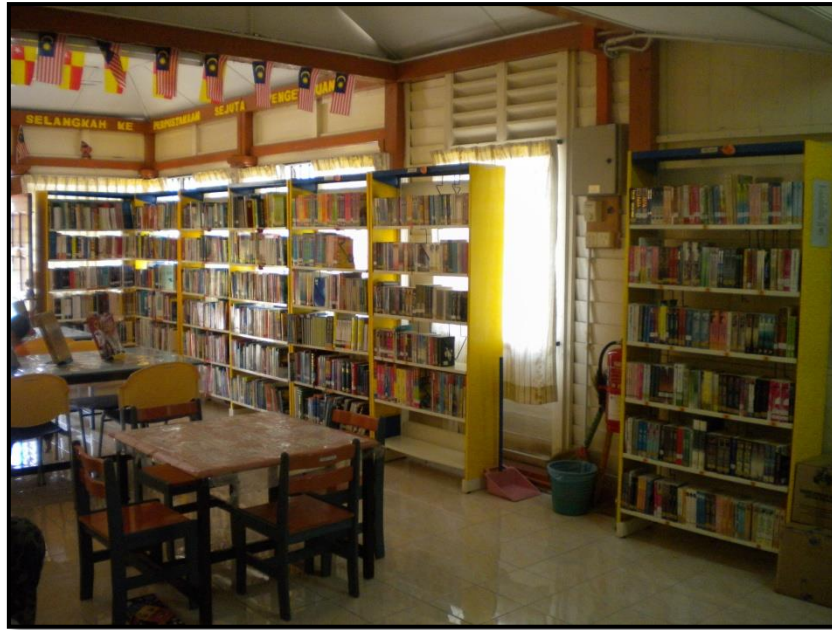
Description of the CSM3 Public Library

In the year 2005, **CSM3** rural public library was an operation room for the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development. In 2006, the **CSM3** rural public library became official, was

⁴⁴ This is a new program introduced by the Malaysian government to boost the tourism industry in Malaysia. While participating in this program, a tourist or a visitor will have the opportunity to stay with local residents and live traditionally. The aim of this program is to introduce the lifestyle of the villagers to tourists and visitors.

given its own building and began operating a full service for the **CSM3** residents. However, in 2009, the **CSM3** rural public library closed for four months due to staff absences. Currently the **CSM3** rural public library operates daily from 9.00 am until 5.30 pm. On every second Saturday, the **CSM3** rural public library operates from 9.00 am until 5.00 pm, but it is closed every first and third week on Saturdays. It is closed on Sundays and also on public holidays.

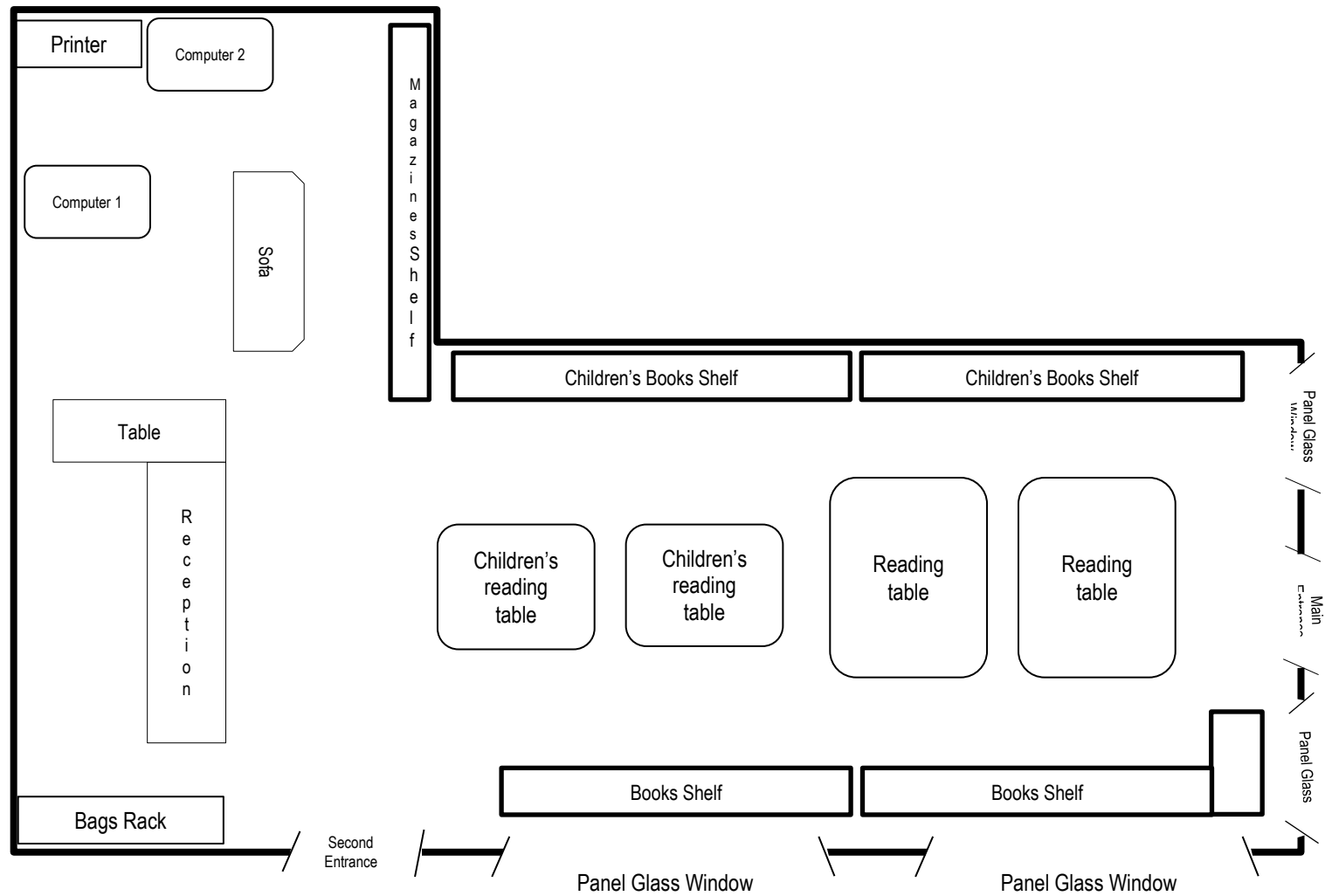
The **CSM3** rural public library is located in a fenced area together with two other buildings: the Community Information Technology Centre and the State Legislative Council Office. However, both the other buildings have been abandoned since the political power transition occurred in the state of Selangor in 2008. Since then only the **CSM3** rural public library still operates. The **CSM3** rural public library at present offers standard services like other rural public libraries around Selangor, Malaysia. These services include book and magazine loans. However, in 2007, the **CSM3** rural public library was equipped with four computers, wireless broadband, a laser scanner and an electronic printer. According to the **CSM3** librarian's report 2009, the total number of members registered with the library in the year 2006 was 1,161 patrons (77.4% of the total population) - (NLM 2010d).



Picture 9: The **CSM3** Rural Public Library Reading Area



Picture 10: **CSM3** Rural Public Library Building



Blueprint 3: **CSM3** Rural Public Library Physical Layout

CSM3 Analysis of Case Study Data

At the time of the fieldwork for this research, the **CSM3** rural public library had only been re-opened for a few months. According to both the librarian and the library assistant, the **CSM3** rural public library was closed due to staff absences. Nevertheless, they are determined to attract more community members to use their services and participate in their activities and programs. Previous records show that the **CSM3** rural public library had managed to organize many activities that suited the majority of its patrons before it closed in 2009.

Background of respondents

The **CSM3** rural public library user interviews included three respondents; one of the respondents is a male adult and the other two are female adults. All three of the respondents are members of the **CSM3** rural public library. One of the respondents is an active committee member of the JKKK – the local residents' association in the **CSM3** community; one owns a restaurant and another works as a shop assistant in the local **CSM3** village. All three respondents are aged between 29 and 61 years. These respondents were selected with the help of the **CSM3** librarian and library assistant, however not all interviews were conducted in the library. Two of the interviews took place in the respondents' work premises at the request of the respondents.

As the non-users must be found outside of the library, the researcher went around the village to find volunteers who were willing to participate in this research. Three non-users agreed to be interviewed: one female and two male adults. All interviews with the non-user respondents were carried out in various local restaurants around the **CSM3** village. All three non-user respondents are not members of the **CSM3** rural public library. One respondent is aged between 29 and 39 years and works as a cashier in a local restaurant; another respondent is

aged between 40 and 50 years and works as a small contractor, and the final respondent is aged between 51 and 61 years and works independently in the village.

The librarian in the **CSM3** rural public library is a young female, who had just started a six months working placement with the **CSM3** rural public library. The **CSM3** library assistant is also female and has been in service with the **CSM3** rural public library for more than one year. Both the librarian and the library assistant are not from the **CSM3** village.

There were no group meetings or group activities at the **CSM3** rural public library. However, the researcher was able to interview and observe a group of six male adults and two female adults in a local restaurant during lunch time. The group participants were aged between 29 and 50 years. All of the group participants are not members of the **CSM3** rural public library. They often meet casually around the village and they know each other as members of the community.

Summary

As with the above case studies, the interviews with the librarian and library assistant, users and non-users, and the group interview were analysed in relation to the themes of participation – the activeness of the community in taking part in the library services, activities and programs; involvement – any form of decision-making power on the community's part in regards to the library's planning and development; and relationship – the kind of affiliation formed between the **CSM3** community and their rural library.

Briefly, an analysis of all three themes demonstrated that community members are very positive in supporting the **CSM3** rural public library, especially the local community

association – the JKKK. Thus the contribution and connection between the **CSM3** rural public library and its community is good. Upon investigating all three themes the researcher was also made aware of a unique situation where from the point of view of the **CSM3** rural residents, using the library is considered to be a contribution. Moreover, respondents did not mind the fact that they are not in any position to be involved in any of the **CSM3** rural public library's management or administration practices. Another discovery in the **CSM3** case study is that the community have a very limited understanding of the role of a library. However, they are very keen for change: they know what they want and they expressed their wishes during their interviews and the observation session with the researcher.

Theme 1: Participation

Interviews and observations were carried out with the intention of investigating the frequency of the respondents' participation in the **CSM3** rural public library's services, activities and programs. All respondents were asked to clarify and elaborate further on their insight and views on issues such as the quality and quantity of the services, activities and programs that were provided by the library for the community.

During the researcher's interviews with the **CSM3** rural public library users, it was evident that all three users (who are registered members of the **CSM3** rural public library) are satisfied with the services currently provided for them. One user noted that there are a few new programs that have been recently introduced and are now actively running in the library. Two programs that she remembers clearly were a computer group and an English day program: 'Once I did attend the computer group, and it was good ... I don't really know what an "English day" is but my daughter told me that it is a day that everyone who comes to the

library will have to speak English ... it was every Wednesday, if I am not mistaken' (**CSM3** User 3).

Meanwhile, **CSM3** User 2 was very enthusiastic when told by the librarian that the researcher wanted to interview her about her active participation with the library. She happily shared her experiences with the researcher and praised the library for having done nothing more than providing her with a good service. She informs the researcher, 'I have been a library member since 2005; I love to borrow books from the library; they have a fairly good collection of books. For the last 2 years I was awarded as an active member ... I was sad that the library closed for a while but now it is better, because now the library offers more activities and programs' (**CSM3** User 2). Another respondent, **CSM3** User 1, agreed with **CSM3** User 2's statement and added that 'as head of this village I personally am aware of this library's progress and I will be sure to invite the librarian to come and join our monthly JKKK meeting to discuss more about how we can together improve this library'.

Once interviews with the **CSM3** librarian and library assistant were completed, the researcher understood why all the respondents praised this library's transformation. It is because both the librarian and library assistant have made a lot of effort and shown initiative in trying to improve the current conditions of the **CSM3** rural public library so that it can better serve the whole community. According to the librarian,

'At the moment many of our services and programs are still very much focused on children. In the future, we will try to develop more activities for adults ... The approach will need to be different though, I might need to take it slow and introduce better programs and services to the adults one at a time. We never conducted any community information needs surveys but there have been many suggestions and requests [verbally] by the users and some community members for other activities such as a cooking class and more adult computer classes. We are planning to do it soon, but for cooking classes, sadly we are not allowed to run those kinds of activities here in the library. We need to rent the mini hall next door for that. We do have budget constraints, but we will work something out' (**CSM3** Librarian).

The library assistant supported the librarian's statement by highlighting some of the successful programs and activities that have been organized before. She explains, 'Previously we did handle a few small free computer classes for teenagers, there were a few adults too. We also used to organize after school homework assistance sessions for primary school children and now we are trying to set up other new programs and activities that suit the community needs like a handcrafts workshop and maybe storytelling. We are also in the process of improving our current services; there will be the "door to door" service soon and a library material exhibition in the local school in the village'.

It is evident from these interviews that both the **CSM3** librarian and library assistant have shown a lot of initiative in making improvements and making sure that the **CSM3** rural public library is relevant to the community. Nonetheless, not everything they plan can be carried out. According to the librarian and library assistant, they need to prepare a solid working paper, get NLM and SLS approval for the activities and programs, and finally there are also financial and budgeting issues that need to be considered.

Theme 2: Involvement

In **CSM3** case study, although the head of village and its committee members offers support and are willing to assist with publicising the library service and encouraging the staff, the decision-making processes involving both the **CSM3** community and **CSM3** rural public library management team appear to be non-existent. The research participants indicate that the community's involvement was limited to only using the services provided to them such as book and magazine loans. None of the **CSM3** community members were involved directly in the **CSM3** rural public library's administration processes or with any of the decision making regarding the services, activities and programs offered to them. Many respondents are content

with this situation and in their opinion simply using the library is a form of involvement and also a form of contribution.

CSM3 User 2's responses during her interviews with the researcher show how accepting the community are of the current arrangement and how they feel about their involvement in the library planning. According to **CSM3** User 2:

No, I don't make any decisions about anything in the library, but I sometimes suggest things to them ... and I think as long as we use it [the **CSM3** rural public library], we are contributing something. (**CSM3** User 2)

Nonetheless, according to the librarian and library assistant, although the community are not involved in any of the **CSM3** rural public library management decision-making about services, activities and programs, their suggestions and recommendations are always welcome and are taken into consideration.

Although they [the users] are not involved directly with library management, they can give suggestions and recommendations, and we will try to fulfil the request. (**CSM3** Library Assistant)

Although the community cannot be involved in our administration and planning, they always tell us what they think and what they want. Besides, for me as long as they use us, it can still be considered as a contribution. (**CSM3** Librarian)

This feedback demonstrates that the community members have a very limited involvement in the decision-making processes. Although several community members are content with this situation, there are still many other respondents who feel unhappy and dissatisfied, not so much with the lack of community involvement with the library but more in relation to other issues such as the promotion of the library.

A few respondents expressed their discontent with the lack of promotional efforts for the **CSM3** rural public library's services, activities and programs. Some even claimed that they do not know what is being offered to them by the **CSM3** rural public library. Library users,

for example, think that only some people are aware of the new improved library activities and programs: ‘I know about it because I participate, but for others I don’t think there is enough promotion about it [services, activities and programs]’ (**CSM3** User 2). **CSM3** User 2’s assertion was supported by **CSM3** User 3, who also thinks that the **CSM3** community residents are not well informed about what is happening in the **CSM3** rural public library: ‘Yes, I do think that many of the residents here are not aware about library services, activities and programs ... but I like it, more opportunity for me’ (**CSM3** User 3).

Other respondents, including the non library users and group participants, concur with this view, stating that other residents are left out due to a lack of information or news about the library. **CSM3** Non-user 1 said that he never uses, participates or is involved in the library because, ‘I didn’t know that there is a library here in the village [smile].’ Furthermore, **CSM3** Non-user 2 indicated that he didn’t know anything about the services or programs offered by the library, and this response was reiterated by the group participants:

We are not sure if there are any activities and programs for us [adults]. We don’t hear much about it. (**CSM3** Group participants)

Generally, most of the **CSM3** community respondents showed their eagerness, enthusiasm and support towards the **CSM3** rural public library during their interviews with the researcher. However, after the researcher went through the transcriptions of the interviews, she realized that many of the **CSM3** community respondents still have very limited insight into and understanding of the concept of a public library. They believe that the **CSM3** rural public library is built exclusively for the use of their children. Some adults do not even see any link or relevance between their daily life activities and going to the library; they see no need to visit the library at all. For example, when asked about their understanding of the term ‘library’, **CSM3** User 1 answered: ‘I see the library as a place for knowledge and learning for

my children'. Moreover, the response of the group participants reveals a very traditional concept of a library. According to these participants, 'We do not want to be interviewed in the library because it is more comfortable here [restaurant]. People don't talk in the library; if we were to meet and chat there we might make a lot of noise and disturb others' (**CSM3** Group participants). The feeling that the library is not relevant to their lives was strongly expressed in the feedback from **CSM3** Non-user 3, who asserted that:

The library is not involved with my life or with my work, so I don't see its contribution. I've never used the library and I don't think I need to (**CSM3** Non-user 3).

The librarian is not surprised that some of the residents do not know about the library's existence or that they fail to participate or be involved in any of the services, activities or programs offered there. This is because, 'you see, most residents here are farmers and are self-employed ... they see the library as something that is not relevant or important to their daily life activities. That is what we are planning to do now ... to approach and get close to them. We want them to realize that this library can offer them something new and relevant to their daily activities ... support their self-development and empower them to take control of their lives' (**CSM3** Librarian).

Theme 3: Relationship

In relation to theme three, the researcher analyzed the data from all interviews, observations and document reviews to examine the kind of relationship that has formed between the **CSM3** community members and their rural public library. Respondents were requested to express and share their views and perceptions on issues such as the type of relationship that they formed with the **CSM3** rural public library and how they have seen this relationship develop over time. Respondents were also asked to explain how they think the **CSM3** rural public library contributes to the community and how it can help to empower the community.

During the interviews and through the research observation, the researcher became aware that the **CSM3** rural public library has effectively built a very positive and constructive relationship with the children in the **CSM3** community. During the researcher's fieldwork visits to the **CSM3** rural public library, many children could be seen sitting and reading books in the library. Some were playing games and others were trying to get the librarian and the library assistant's attention to help them with printing documents and searching the internet. Through conversations with the librarian, the researcher was informed that the children, who consist of kindergarten and primary school children, are the most active members of the **CSM3** rural public library. They are the ones who commonly use the service and are happy to participate in the activities and programs organized by the library. Many other respondents agreed that this is the situation in the **CSM3** rural public library. According to **CSM3** User 1, he notices that children are mostly engaged with the library, hence 'this library contributes a lot to our children's growth' (**CSM3** User 1). Even the non-user respondents and group participants agreed with **CSM3** User 1's statement. According to these respondents:

This library [the **CSM3** rural public library] is very important for school children and high school kids. (**CSM3** Non-user 1)

It is good that the government provides a public library here. Our children need it. My children use it [the **CSM3** rural public library]. (**CSM3** Group participants)

The research participants indicate further that the relationship between the library and the children of the **CSM3** community improved significantly when the **CSM3** librarian decided to develop a greater number of quality activities and programs for children. The **CSM3** rural public library librarian explains, 'I develop plans of activities and programs for the users [children] of this library. I plan based on the needs of my patrons, only then I'll organise other community support services, for instance the librarian reference service. There have

been plenty of activities and programs held for the community but still many of the activities and programs focus on children and teenagers, for example storytelling, posters, colouring and drawing competitions' (**CSM3 Librarian**).

Respondent interviews in the **CSM3** rural public library also reveal that the **CSM3** community members are very supportive of the services, activities and programs run by the library. In particular, the local residents' association (JKKK) has given special attention to the progress of the library.

This library [the **CSM3** rural public library] and our residential committee [JKKK] have been working together and we are trying to make sure that the library becomes beneficial to the residents. We always support good services and programs held for us ... we need this library [the **CSM3** rural public library] and we will support it ... this library is important to us, especially to our children. (**CSM3 User 1**)

Other community members also acknowledge the importance and significance of the library. For example, **CSM3 User 2** believes that the library provides the boost she needs to motivate herself; she said, 'For me, yes, the library does help me. I like to read motivational books and these books are very expensive. I can't afford to buy them, but with the library service available here, I can easily go there and borrow them. Although I will not get the latest version [smile], I can still do some reading' (**CSM3 User 2**). Even a non-user respondent acknowledged the significance of having a rural library in the community: 'the relationship between the library [generally] and its community should be good because it is supposed to help the community that it serves' (**CSM3 Non-user 1**). The librarian believes that this statement is correct and that the library is contributing effectively to local community growth and progress:

I do believe that our services, activities and programs have contributed to the community development ... maybe not to all community members but yes, and our library and community relationship is well maintained so far. (**CSM3 Librarian**)

From the interviews with the respondents, it is apparent that the **CSM3** rural public library receives good support and strong backup from the surrounding community. However, from further detailed analysis of the feedback gathered from the respondents, the researcher realized that the **CSM3** community acts more as supporters rather than participants. The **CSM3** community members seldom participate in any activities or programs, and they also very seldom use current services offered by the **CSM3** rural public library. The **CSM3** community have an understanding that the library is meant primarily for their children's use, to the point where some of the community members take advantage of this situation by leaving their children in the library. This situation is highlighted by the library assistant, who says: 'Sometimes it feels like a child care centre here [laugh]. Whenever we have programs or activities, the parents will drop their small children and come back to pick them up hours after the program is over ... it often happens on normal days too [laugh]' (**CSM3** Library assistant). The **CSM3** librarian did not deny that parents do send their children to the library and expect that she and her assistant will look after the children. However, according to the librarian, thinking positively, there is good in this situation, for at least the children can be introduced to the library services and concepts at an early age: 'Yes it happens, we do have a situation where small children are being dropped off by their parents, but not all parents do that, only a few [smile]. But I think it is quite good, at least we [librarian and library assistant] can introduce them to this library, attract them with the things that they can do here in this library' (**CSM3** Librarian).

Theme 4: Unmet Information Needs

Some respondents raised concerns regarding their unfulfilled needs in terms of the choice of activities, programs and services provided to them. For example, **CSM2** User 2 requested that the programs that had previously been successful be brought back: 'They used to run

programs like a handcrafts class and cooking class. I guess they need to bring back those programs ... they might need to upgrade their resources too'. On the other hand, **CSM3** User 3 recommended that the library arrange a small survey that could help them to know the needs of the community better: 'The library needs to develop more programs that are related to the community's needs. They need to do a small survey and ask the community what they need. Don't just assume everything is suited to the needs of the community'. **CSM3** Non-user 1 expressed his willingness to participate and get involved in organizing a session: 'If they can organise things other than just the book loan service that would be good. Maybe they can organise something like an invitation guest session to talk about current industries, businesses and other things ... me? If they invite me to talk about my involvement in small business entrepreneurship, I would say yes, why not, I'll do it!' The above feedback gathered through respondent interviews shows that some community members want change, they have ideas for change and willingness to participate, not just as passive users of services.

Conclusion

In the **CSM3** case study, the researcher observed firsthand the political influence on public institutions. Upon arriving at the **CSM3** rural public library, the researcher discovered that the library is conveniently located in a fenced area together with two other community activity buildings/centres, namely the Community Information Technology Centre and the State Legislative Council Office. However, except for the **CSM3** rural public library, both the other buildings have been abandoned since the political power transition occurred in the state of Selangor in 2008. This situation is a disadvantage for the **CSM3** rural public library because the location is no longer the hub of community activity. Furthermore, during this fieldwork, the **CSM3** rural public library had just newly reopened after four months of closure due to staff absences. This situation was noted by the community and many expressed

their disappointment about the situation. Many community members recalled the excellent programs, activities and services that were previously provided by the library to the community and hope that the excellent work will be continued. Sadly, this was not the situation evident to the researcher. Working in a newly reopened public library, both the **CSM3** rural public library librarian and library assistant are currently facing challenges and dealing with the hard work of re-organizing and re-planning everything. Nonetheless, both the librarian and assistant librarian have gradually succeeded in running a small number of services and activities with the local primary school and the residents' association, the JKKK, which is supportive of the idea of community development in general.

Case Study Report of Australian Rural Public Library Services

This research includes three Australian rural public libraries as case studies. The following case studies are **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**. This report includes descriptions of the selected communities, their rural public library and details of their locations, and the respondents. It also discusses the findings in relation to the three themes, namely participation, involvement and relationship.

Case Study Australia 1 (CSA1)

The **CSA1** community is located in the south-west of Victoria, about 160 km from Melbourne. **CSA1** is a rural residential and also a resort area. It is located in a main township in the Local Government Area and it serves as an administrative, retail and commercial centre. Much of the rural area around **CSA1** is used for timber and agricultural activities such as farming, cropping and dairying (COS 2006). **CSA1** is a beautiful and tranquil country town that is located on the Geelong–Warnambool railway line and Princes Highway. The **CSA1** town is packed with shopping stores and plenty of small businesses. There are many cafes, restaurants, traditional pubs and **CSA1** is also popular as a wine-making area. Surrounding the **CSA1** area, there are volcanic plains which are some of the largest in the world and many small lakes and swamps (COS 2006).

Community Profile

CSA1 is home to about 10,000 residents and the first European settlement started in this area as early as 1837. These settlers arrived as timber-getting and sawmill production was established in **CSA1**. The development of **CSA1** was slow in the beginning but was enhanced by the opening of the Princes Highway and the railway line from Melbourne after the year 1880 (COS 2006). An analysis of the **CSA1** community age structure in 2006 shows the

larger proportion of people living in **CSA1** area are predominantly people in the older age group (50 and above), 35.7 percent. On the other hand, the proportion of adults and young adults aged between 18 to 34 years old was only 17.8 percent (COS 2006, p. 6).

Currently, the major manufacturing activities in **CSA1** are still closely linked to agriculture and forestry. Some of its famous manufactured products include powdered milk, cheese, ice-cream, packed meat, timber and timber based products. Although much of the rural area around **CSA1** is used for timber and agricultural activities such as farming, cropping and dairying, many community members in **CSA1** run small family businesses.

Description of the CSA1 Public Library

The **CSA1** rural public library service offers a variety of services to the **CSA1** community such as access to online resources, after hours return chute, bulk loans to institutions, home library services, public internet PCs, Web OPACs (Database), lending services, local and family history resources, newspapers, photocopying and printing facilities, school and group visits, story-time sessions and audio newspapers. The **CSA1** rural public library operation hours are from 10 am until 5.30 pm every Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 7 pm every Friday, 10 am to 12 noon every Saturday, and closed every Sunday. In 2011, the number of registered library members was 9,572 (88.1% of the total population).

The **CSA1** rural public library service has set several strategic objectives aimed at achieving two key results: to provide services that meet the community's needs and to ensure efficient management. Their main goal is to provide convenient access to services and facilities which meet community requirements (CRLC 2009). According to the researcher's interview with the librarian, the **CSA1** rural public library has a clear intention of community development

through their services, activities and programs. The researcher was informed that many formats for accessing information were developed intentionally to support residents' requirements. In addition the technological competency and skills of all library staff is also enhanced to support the development of the technology for delivery of online resources to library members. The **CSA1** librarian elaborates further, 'We are aspiring to deliver all relevant, friendly format information by competent staff by enhancing our technology of delivering online resources. We also intend to provide more programs to support our reader development, literacy and lifelong learning efforts through the use of our library services'.

Analysis of Case Study Data (CSA1)

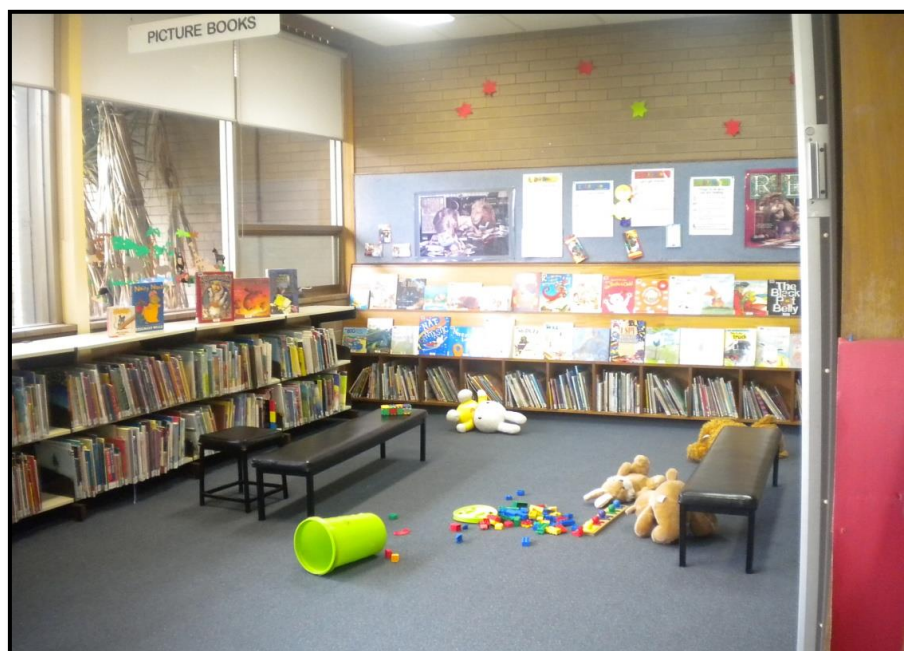
The **CSA1** rural public library is one of the many branches of the Corangamite Regional Library Corporation. This regional library provides services to four municipalities, with more than 12 branches and outreach library services, for more than 34, 000 residents (CRLC 2011). The **CSA1** rural public library has a strategic location, being close to the local amenities such as council offices, shopping complexes, shops, and banks, and is easily accessible by public transport. During this fieldwork investigation, an issue was being widely debated among the **CSA1** community. The **CSA1** local council were in the process of relocating the **CSA1** rural public library to a new building attached to the local primary school, a few kilometres further away from the **CSA1** town centre and from the current location of the **CSA1** rural public library. This relocation plan by the council is an attempt to make the new location a community hub for information and educational resources, but has divided the **CSA1** community. Groups such as 'Friends of the Library'⁴⁵ have strongly opposed the plan. They wanted the current location to remain due to the convenient access for most of the community

⁴⁵ Friends of Libraries Australia Inc (FOLA) was launched at SLV on 9 December 1994. FOLA's purpose is to support the establishment, promotion and support of FOLA groups throughout Australia, to encourage the use and improvement of library and information services (FOLA 2011).

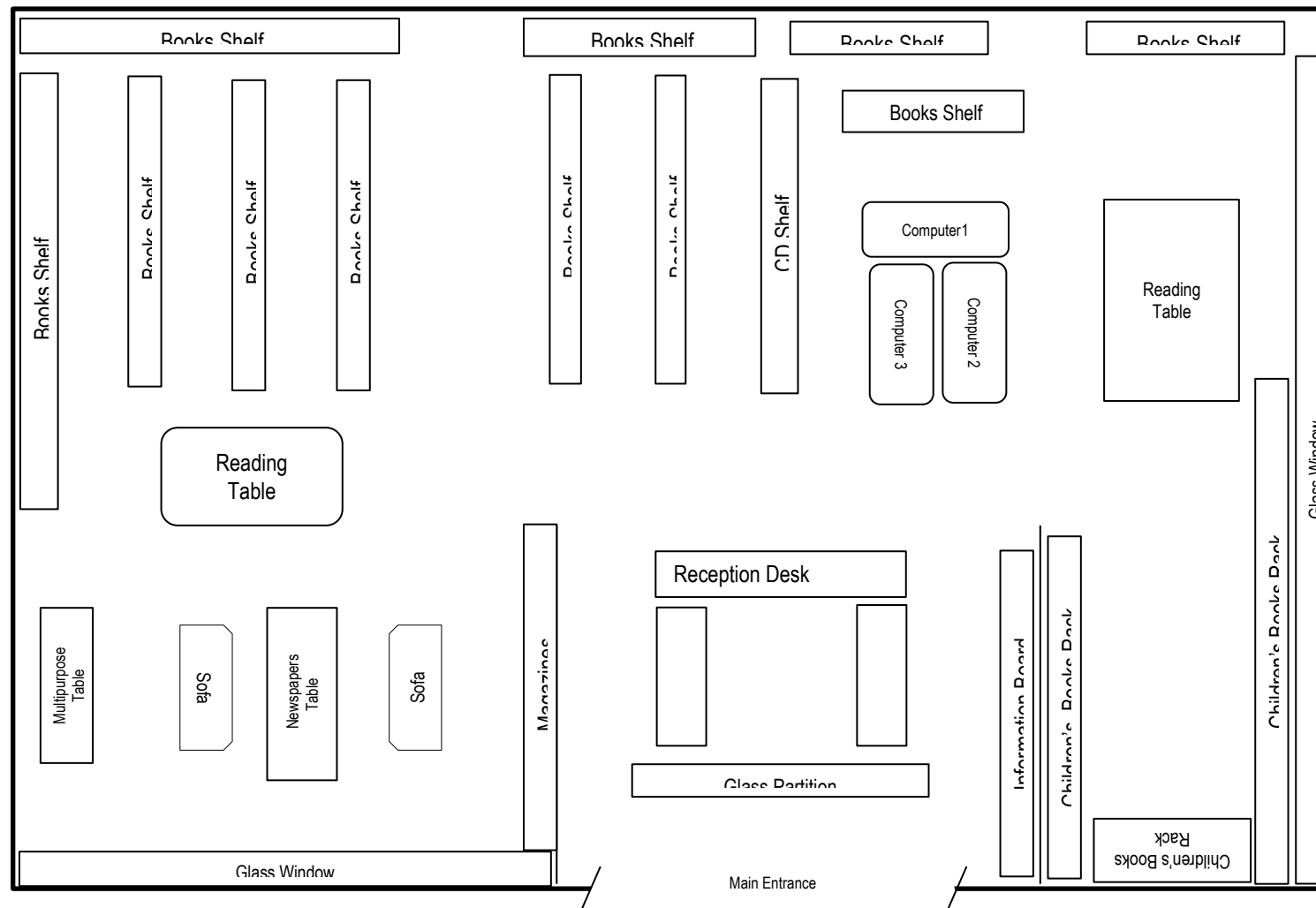
members. There is also concern for school children's safety. In October 2010, despite the objections, the **CSA1** rural public library was moved as planned. Nevertheless, the **CSA1** rural public library is currently still in service and being used by the community except that it has been downgraded to branch library status and is no longer the main town library. This reflects a significant level of influence on the part of the community in relation to decision-making about library services.



Picture 11: Book Collection of the **CSA1** Rural Public Library



Picture 12: Children's Reading Area in the **CSA1** Rural Public Library



Blueprint 4: CSA1 Rural Public Library Physical Layout

Background of respondents

During the fieldwork in the **CSA1** rural public library, the researcher interviewed three library users: one senior male adult and two senior female adults. All three respondents are active senior members of the **CSA1** rural public library. They are also local residents who have lived in **CSA1** all their lives. One of the respondents is aged between 51 and 61 years, while the other two are aged 62 years and above. All three user respondents were selected with the help of the **CSA1** librarian and all interviews were conducted in the library.

The researcher also interviewed three female non-users of the library. All three interviews with the non-users of the **CSA1** rural public library were carried out in local shops and businesses around the **CSA1** town centre. Although all three non-user respondents acknowledge that they are currently not active members of the **CSA1** rural public library, all three respondents had used the **CSA1** rural public library services before. One respondent, aged between 18 and 28 years, who worked as a baker in a local bakery shop, has not been to the library for a few years. She, however, admits that she is still a registered member of the **CSA1** rural public library and intends to go back and engage with some of the services and activities on offer. Another respondent aged between 40 and 50 years has been a registered member of the **CSA1** rural public library for the past 30 years, but has not been active in participating or using the public library services and activities due to her work requirements. Nevertheless, she does drop off her aunt and her children at the **CSA1** rural public library from time to time. The third respondent, aged over 62 years, is currently running her own boutique business. She had not been to the **CSA1** rural public library for more than 10 years due to a clash between her business hours and the opening hours of the library; instead, she purchases her own reading material.

The librarian in the **CSA1** rural public library is a senior female with 21 years of experience in librarianship. She has been serving the **CSA1** rural public library for more than six years. The **CSA1** rural public library librarian is not a local resident and she travels back and forth from her home town every day. She is responsible for the planning and coordination of staff work schedules, budgeting, programs and activities.

Since the **CSA1** rural public library has several active groups engaging and running activities in the public library, finding a group to be interviewed and observed was not difficult. The researcher chose to observe and interview a group of ten adults consisting of two male and eight female participants. These participants come to the **CSA1** rural public library on a weekly basis to attend a literature class. All of the group participants are members of the library and they are also members of the University of the Third Age group (U3A). In **CSA1** the U3A group is an active group consisting of senior adults and pensioners who are also local residents in the **CSA1** area. This group has organized a weekly literature class for free to all members or anyone who is interested in participating. During the interview the researcher was told that the group used the **CSA1** rural public library as their weekly class location and the library supported them by providing the materials needed such as reference books; furthermore, the library takes responsibility for promoting the group activity. Besides meeting weekly in the library, the group sometimes meets casually around the town and they know each other as members of the community.

Summary

The interview with the librarian and library assistant, users and non-users, and the group interview were analysed in relation to three themes: participation, involvement and relationship. Within all three themes in the **CSA1** case study, the respondents have shown a

positive and constructive connection with the rural public library. The community are actively participating in the library services, activities and programs. Moreover, the community are indirectly very involved with the development of the library and their relationship with the library is strong. These aspects can be clearly seen throughout the interviews and observations between the researcher and the respondents.

Theme 1: Participation

The number of library users of the public library services, activities and programs will determine the success of a public library. Through interviews and observations, the researcher investigated the **CSA1** local community members' participation and interest in taking part in the **CSA1** rural public library services, programs and activities.

For the **CSA1** community members, whether they are users or non-users of the **CSA1** rural public library, they are somehow connected to the library. Users are obviously also current members, and in the **CSA1** rural public library the members interviewed for this research were active and very enthusiastic to talk about their participation and commitment in using the library. All three user respondents, namely **CSA1** User 1, **CSA1** User 2 and **CSA1** User 3, are long-term members of the library. They acknowledge that reading and the library have been a part of their life activity for many years. For example, **CSA1** User 1 has been a member of the **CSA1** rural public library since 2001 and he makes it his commitment to come to the library regularly. **CSA1** User 2 comes to do more than just borrowing books; he also comes to the library to do his personal research and uses the computer and internet services in the library. In addition, he is a member of the **CSA1** book club group. He describes his participation with the **CSA1** rural public library as 'strong and very attached'. He says, 'I do a lot of stuff here. The service is good. I borrow books, I do my research; I also joined the

library book club. I am very attached to this library'. **CSA1** User 3 indicates that her participation with **CSA1** rural public library is 'active and on-going'. She explains further, 'I am a member and I always use the services here. I am also active in participating in activities and programs run by the library' (**CSA1** User 3).

The **CSA1** rural public library non-users also convey some connection with the library. Most of them are still registered members and previously utilized the **CSA1** rural public library services, or are still connected with the library in some way. According to **CSA1** Non-user 1, she has not been to the **CSA1** rural public library for more than ten years. However, she admits that she used to be an active member. She states that: 'It would be about over 10 years ago [since she last used the **CSA1** rural public library]. I used to go and get history books or something that I want to look up and a few books to read too' (**CSA1** Non-user 1). As for **CSA1** Non-user 2, she has been a registered member for at least 30 years but currently she is more comfortable with her own private library that she has set up at home. She says: 'I've been a member ... at least 30 years. I know that they have reading sessions for smaller children and things like that. Currently, I have a lot of books and stuff at home which I bought myself. But I have an auntie in her 70s who still actively goes there weekly' (**CSA1** Non-user 2). **CSA1** Non-user 3 acknowledges that she used to go to the library with her children, but she became less active after her children grew up and once she started her own business, she found it difficult to find time to go to the library: 'I used to be a member but I haven't been there for years. We [family] used to hire a book each week. Well now ... I don't know, I don't really read that many books anymore. If I want to, I will buy. Now I am working and I don't have the time to go there' (**CSA1** Non-user 3).

Another finding from the **CSA1** case study field trip was that at the end of the three interviews, all three non-users of the **CSA1** rural public library stated the reason they stopped going to the library was that they were busy with work and so it became difficult to find time to go to the library. This is despite the fairly extensive operating hours of the **CSA1** rural public library.

According to the librarian, the **CSA1** rural public library is currently able to provide the venue and materials to support many community engagement programs such as their own library book club, toddler's and children's nursery rhyme sessions and also their collaborative program with the U3A – the adult literature class. The activities program of the Friends of the Library Group allows participation, involvement and interaction between the local community members and the service provider, supporting community self-enhancement, decision making and self-empowerment. Moreover, throughout the interviews, many respondents acknowledged that the services, activities and programs which are offered to them by the library do support and meet their needs.

Many believe and have personally witnessed the ways that the **CSA1** rural public library has functioned as a centre of information for the **CSA1** community. The library has successfully developed and run many partnership programs and activities such as National Reading campaigns with the SLV and other local associations. The **CSA1** rural public library is seen as a hub of action and interaction for community members, both formally and informally. Some of the members use the library as an entertainment venue; they do light reading and enjoy many relaxing activities such as reading newspapers, or doing crosswords and other puzzles. According to the **CSA1** group participants, 'The majority of the people here look at this library as part of their family. I think quite a reasonable amount of people who have not

used the library at the moment have in the past, and will again. The library does listen to our needs; they'll buy us the books that we need. Yes indeed they have' (**CSA1** Group participants). **CSA1** Non-user 2 agrees with this situation and explains further that 'they have been contributing to the community over the years ... when I was first there, there was no computer or anything like that, now it is just amazing. I've heard plenty of good stuff about the library around the community' (**CSA1** Non-user 2).

In the **CSA1** case study, the researcher was introduced to middle management roles and functions of a librarian. Librarians are conventionally associated with the collections of books; contemporary librarians are experts in the organization and retrieval of information in any format. However, in the **CSA1** rural public library, the reality of the function of a librarian goes further than just recognizing, locating, evaluating and using information; the librarian is the 'middle person' who connects the community and the top management (regional library corporation). The **CSA1** librarian clearly explains her understanding of her role as a librarian:

I am probably really middle management, that's what I do, just for this region. I manage the **CSA1** rural public library within the policies and procedures of the regional library corporation. I do the rosters and I do the program coordination, very basic stuff within the regional library corporation's requirements, that's as far as I go. We are employed by the regional library corporation. We are overseen by the state library; we don't have any real attachment to them [the state library]. We [however] are supported by the state library in running programs, activities and they expect us to run these activities for them. But we don't really acquire financial support from them, and they don't oversee our staff. Salary, financial support, payment come from the local council. (**CSA1** Librarian)

Theme 2: Involvement

To be involved and able to make decisions are essential elements of self-development and empowerment. In relation to theme 2, the researcher explored **CSA1** respondents' needs and contributions to any type of decision-making processes related to the library services and to the development of programs that the **CSA1** rural public library offers the community.

In the **CSA1** rural public library community, the researcher discovered that the community involvement was traditionally limited to only using the service. None of the community members there are involved directly with the **CSA1** rural public library administration or with any of the selection of services, activities or programs provided for them. The **CSA1** community, however, do give suggestions and offer a helping hand. According to the **CSA1** Librarian, ‘We do have volunteers. We have a group called “Friends of the Library” that contribute to funding the library’ (**CSA1** Librarian).

This rather passive approach to involvement changed dramatically once the local council decided to relocate the library and set it up as a joint facility with the local school in the **CSA1** area. Many residents were against the proposal and voiced their opinion, hoping their views would be taken into account. According to the **CSA1** Librarian, ‘in 2006 when the local council proposed to close this library and open a joint facility with the school, the Friends of the Library group and around 60 local people got together to go against it, and since then, they became a small group of the hardcore’ (**CSA1** Librarian). Other respondents such as **CSA1** Users 1 and 2 as well as Non-users 1 and 2 all expressed their strong personal views about the relocation of the **CSA1** rural public library. Each response was unique as they gave their different reasons for their feelings about the relocation:

The only disappointing thing is that they are moving the library to right the other side of the town. That’s a terrible thing to do. This is a very convenient location; it is like having a shop front. It is very, very sad because this is the most beautiful building, warm in winter, cool in summer, close to the shopping centre. (**CSA1** User 1)

I know many residents were involved to go against relocating this library. Many wanted to keep the library here rather than moving to another area. For me, well sometimes change is a good thing. (**CSA1** User 2)

The location of the library is so convenient ... you can just drive up the street, go to the library, do your things and go home. No I don’t agree with the plan of relocating the **CSA1** rural public library, I did sign the petition to go against it you know. (**CSA1** Non-user 1)

Well, I believe the library is very accommodating to us, its service, its location and all. Why move? (**CSA1** Non-user 2)

Despite the objections and reservations of some community members in relation to the relocation, the **CSA1** Librarian is convinced that with the new larger space, the **CSA1** rural public library will be able to offer better services, and more activities and programs for the community. She remarks that, ‘looking at the new library blueprint, this new big wonderful space that we are going to move into, which is three times the size of this library and has meeting rooms in it. We hope to put a toy library there; we have a volunteer toy library that runs every Saturday morning and we are hoping to have space in the library. With that we hope to generate more interest from the people ... it will be like a new more complete community hub’ (**CSA1** Librarian).

In 2012, the protests and disputes between the local community members and the local council over the issue of the library’s relocation in fact resulted in something positive. Currently, the **CSA1** community has two libraries: one is the new joint use library with the school and community centre, and another is a branch library – originally known as the **CSA1** rural public library.

Theme 3: Relationship

The **CSA1** interview and observation data was analyzed to explore the types of relationship created between the **CSA1** rural public library and its community members. All respondents were asked to illustrate, from their point of view, how they see the relationship between themselves and the library and how it has developed over time.

Throughout the researcher's interviews with both users and non-users of the **CSA1** rural public library, many of the respondents praised the effectiveness, efficiency and hard work of both the librarian and the staff members in providing the **CSA1** community with a good, informative and knowledgeable service. For example, **CSA1** User 1 describes his relationship with the library and library staff as 'outstandingly wonderful'. According to him, although he lives 30 km away from the library, he visits there at least once a week. He expressed his satisfaction with the service provided by the library and acknowledges all new programs and resources that have been put in place by the librarian and other staff members.

CSA1 User 2 was similarly positive, and stated that the library has been very useful and helpful with her social life activities. As a pensioner and an active member of the U3A group, she described the situation as very convenient and easy: 'They are just very helpful ... they help us in providing the material that me and my group [U3A] need and they even suggest material to all library visitors ... and over time it [the relationship] is getting better' (**CSA1** User 2).

CSA1 User 1 said that the library and the community have managed to build a very strong relationship and that this has strengthened over time: 'They are just very helpful ... the staff have been very, very helpful! ... and over time it [the relationship] is getting better' (**CSA1** User 1).

Surprisingly, the non-users of the **CSA1** rural public library have also conveyed a lot of positive feedback in response to describing their relationship with the library. According to **CSA1** Non-user 2, 'The location is excellent, near to all amenities and shops and I think there are always people here using it. So it's not like it sits there and is not being used ... it is

beneficial for the community' (**CSA1** Non-user 2). **CSA1** Non-user 3 supported **CSA1** Non-user 2's statement by adding that 'lots of people here in **CSA1** are attached to the library somehow ... the relationship has always been very strong. For elderly people especially, they use the library a lot. My aunt loves to go there' (**CSA1** Non-user 3).

The **CSA1** Librarian proudly admits that currently one third of **CSA1** community population uses her library; and according to her, the bond between the **CSA1** community and the **CSA1** rural public library has never been better. It is always strong and powerful:

I think they [the **CSA1** rural public library and the community] have a positive relationship. I have to say that probably one third of the population uses the library. It's strong ... there is active involvement. (**CSA1** Librarian)

The **CSA1** rural public library's relationship with the **CSA1** community is undoubtedly very positive and goes beyond just providing book loans and internet services. The **CSA1** rural public library has been recognized as an essential entity and institution within the community: it has become the 'hub' for the community to gather information, share knowledge, to relax and even to socialize. During the fieldwork, the researcher collected a lot of feedback and comments from residents about how they view the library as supporting the community's lifelong learning and knowledge sharing. For instance, the **CSA1** rural public library is currently providing discussion and meeting areas for the small community groups such as the Friends of the Library group and the University of the 3rd Age group (U3A). In addition, this library supplies materials and information to support many community programs such as the U3A weekly literacy programs. The support also includes promotional and marketing efforts, where the **CSA1** library voluntarily makes on-going announcements to the local residents, informing them about the group's weekly activities. Moreover, they also put up flyers, as well as printing and distributing brochures for free. Additionally, the **CSA1**

rural public library runs nursery rhyme and story-time sessions for children and toddlers once a week as well as school holiday activities.

The **CSA1** rural public library's initiatives and support has promoted it in a very positive way within the community and a very strong partnership has been established with local residents. **CSA1** User 1 claims that the good relationship between the library and the community is essentially due to the library personnel: 'I believe the staff here promote the library in every possible way; they have things for the young children, and they encourage groups to meet in here. I think that the staff here have always provided a service and promote anything to help the community' (**CSA1** User1). The **CSA1** rural public library is also described as 'a good place for socializing' (**CSA1** User 1), and so far the library has successfully maintained a positive and supportive relationship with the **CSA1** community members.

Theme 4: Unmet Information Needs

Although many respondents expressed their disappointment and concerns about the plan of moving the library to a new location, in relation to the services and activities most residents in **CSA1** believe that their information and knowledge needs have been fulfilled by the current rural public library. Most of the respondents are therefore currently content and happy with the services provided and activities run by their public library.

Respondents such as **CSA1** User 1 stated that he cannot think of anything else that is needed from the **CSA1** rural public library and he is very happy with the current services. As for **CSA1** User 2, she was very positive about the library and said that the library has done an amazing job in supporting the community's needs. She also expressed her satisfaction with the current services and programs organized by the library. Although she is not currently an

active member, even **CSA1** Non-user 1 expressed very positive views about the library, saying ‘I think if I didn’t have the shop ... I would most probably be there, but still I have friends that go to the library, and one in particular is actively involved with the library. Our library is a lovely library’ (**CSA1** Non-user 1).

Respondents were asked for their opinion of the quality and value of the current services, programs and activities provided to them. **CSA1** User 1 stated that he occasionally uses the internet connection in the library and he likes the service, but one particular innovation that he loves in the library is that ‘when they have new books, they display them prominently, excellent innovation! Because chances are you could be going through the shelves and find stuff that you’ve read’ (**CSA1** User 1). **CSA1** User 2 also has the same opinion. Since she is an active borrower, these prominent displays make a huge difference to her. In contrast, for **CSA1** User 3, technology services and materials interest her the most. Although she is a pensioner and seldom uses computers, she still thinks that the technology in the library makes the library more relevant to the current community needs: ‘I think the development of the DVD [service] and that kind of thing and certainly computers is very good. So it is very important to keep the library in the community’ (**CSA1** User 3).

The **CSA1** Librarian insists that, like most public libraries in Australia, the **CSA1** rural public library tries very hard to develop activities and programs that suit the local community; she explains, ‘All public libraries try to run as many programs, activities and services as they can, and people in the public expect that too. We, on the other hand, try very hard to run many services, activities and programs that suit the residents’ needs here’ (**CSA1** Librarian).

Conclusion

Throughout the researcher's observations in the **CSA1** rural public library, the researcher noticed many strong personal bonds existing between the community members (especially the current users) and the library. Users in this community are primarily children and senior adults; they visit the library for information assistance, light reading, to borrow books, participate in programs, and sometimes simply to relax. During the interviews, the researcher observed that the respondents are very enthusiastic when talking about their library. The **CSA1** community seems to have a good understanding of the role of the library; they have a very strong appreciation of the value of their library as a community institution.

During the interviews, many community members expressed their discontent concerning the plan to move the existing **CSA1** rural public library to a new location, which is 1.2 km away from the existing location and would be established as a joint library with the local school. The **CSA1** community members have protested in the streets, highlighting issues of safety as well as privacy issues of setting up a joint library. However, despite the strong objections from many community members, the **CSA1** rural public library was relocated in October 2010. The new public library building has a huge space (1,500 sqm), with five meeting rooms (with after-hours access). This new building also has a 150-seat seminar room, a student area, IT hub and a larger children's activity area. Most importantly, the new **CSA1** rural public library is open 48.5 hours per week (seven hours more than the former **CSA1** rural public library's service hours).

Regardless of the initial reservations from community members, many still believe that the architectural design of this new public library building will boost the number of users of the rural public library services, and that more community members will participate and be

involved in the library's activities and programs. Furthermore, out of respect to the community's appeal and request, the original **CSA1** rural public library is currently still in service as a branch library, and is therefore still being used by the community.

Case Study Australia 2 (CSA2)

According to its local history association, the **CSA2** township's development was boosted following the discovery of gold in 1851, receiving a large contingent of people from Anglo-Saxon, German, Hungarian, Danish, Greek and Italian backgrounds (DDHS2011). This diversity of culture and ethnicity can still be found in the **CSA2** area today (DDHS 2011), with the addition of people from Asian and African backgrounds. There are many tourist attractions in the **CSA2** township (Victoria 2011), and it is well known for its mineral waters and for its health and leisure industry. With approximately 7,610 residents, **CSA2** is located just 90 minutes or 114km away from Melbourne; although **CSA2** is within reach of Melbourne city, it is far enough away to retain its rural qualities (Walmsley & Dunn 2007).

Community Profile

According to the Australia Bureau of Statistics (2006), the total number of residents in **CSA2** is 3,073 people. Tourism appears to play an important role in the **CSA2** community's economic growth. Many of the community's economic activities are based on the natural beauty and historical sites of the surrounding areas. This circumstance offers an 'alternative lifestyle' to many people who are interested in services such as aromatherapy, massage, acupuncture and spiritual healing. The growing tourism industry, adds to other economic sectors such as art, retail, education, health and community services. Currently the **CSA2** town is famous for its festivals, one of the most prominent and being 'Australia's largest lesbian and gay rural festival' (HSC 2011).

Description of the CSA2 Public Library

The **CSA2** rural public library service offers a variety of services to the local community such as internet access, lending services, inter-library loan services, home library services, newspapers and magazines, photocopying and printing facilities, school and group visits, and also bulk loans to institutions. The **CSA2** rural public library operates every Monday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm, and every Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm.

The **CSA2** rural public library is a very popular institution among **CSA2** community members. In 2010 the number of registered members was 4,850 (63.7% of total area population). The library provides valuable services to community members and is connected with the community by responding to their needs and providing an accessible collection. The **CSA2** librarian and staff members work hard in promoting, encouraging and persuading their community members to love reading, learning and sharing ideas and knowledge. In addition, the **CSA2** rural public library is currently planning to boost the Indigenous knowledge and to promote an understanding of cultural identities.

Many new services and creative marketing have been developed. Some of the services involve engaging the community in library planning and service delivery; extending partnerships across government, business and the community; and sharing and preserving the memories and history of the town for future generations. Some of the most successful activities to date include the sessions with the dinosaur specialist during Education Week, visits from guest authors, the children's book club, and wireless internet services. According to the CHRL report (2010), the total number of registered members in the **CSA2** rural public library is up to 4,890 people, and the total number of reading materials borrowed by residents

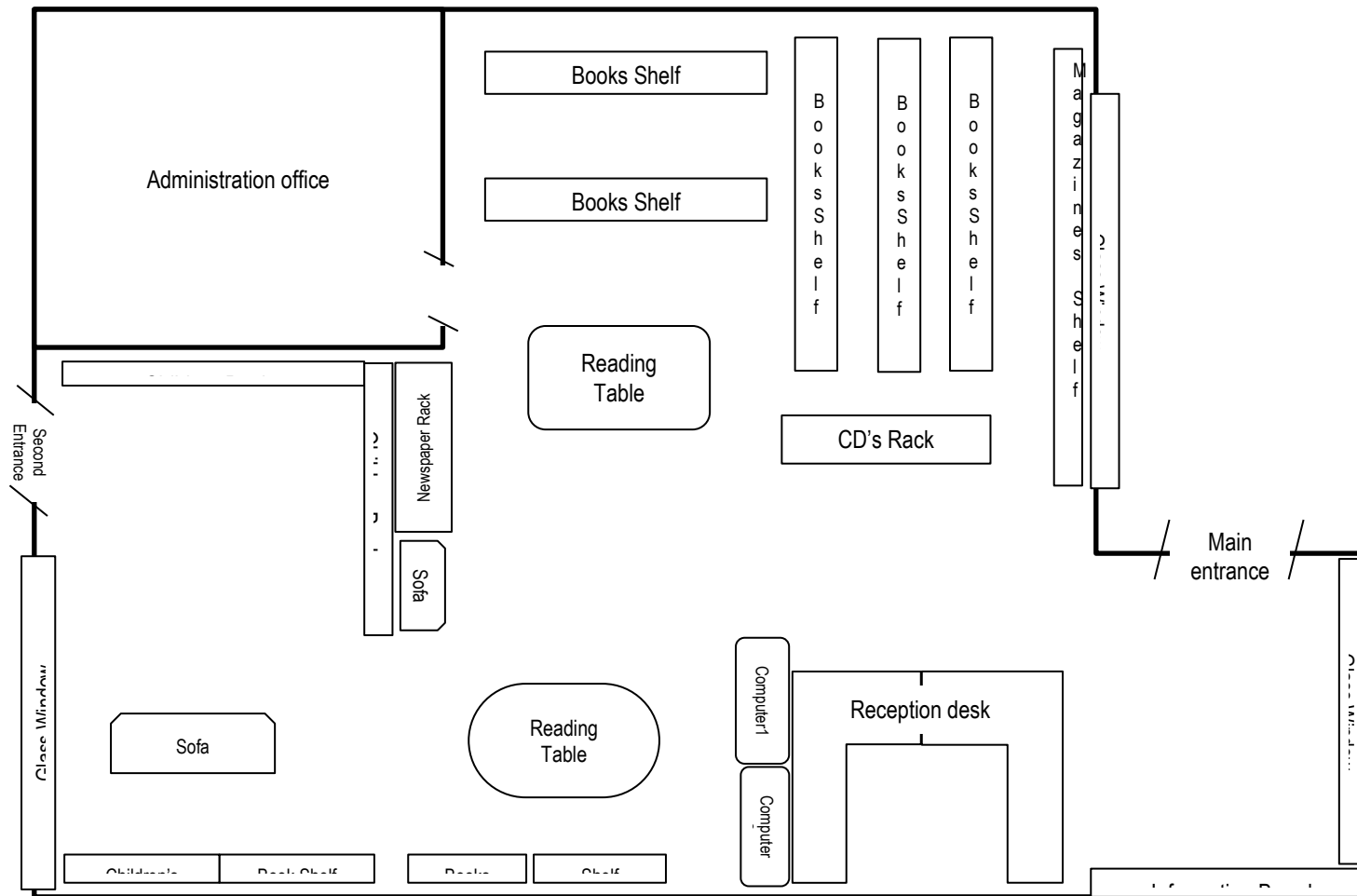
and members increased to 85, 324 in the year 2010, an increase of 10.4 percent compare with 2009



Picture 13: The **CSA2** Rural Public Library Reading Material



Picture 14: The **CSA2** Rural Public Library Main Entrance



Blueprint 5: **CSA2** Rural Public Library Physical

Analysis of Case Study Data – CSA2

The **CSA2** rural public library is one of many branches of the Central Highland Regional Library Corporation. The library is located at a walking distance to the local shops and businesses; the **CSA2** rural public library building is situated at the end of a shopping strip, with plenty of parking space and surrounded by well-maintained fruit trees and gardens.

Background of respondents

The **CSA2** rural public library user interviews included three respondents: one female adult and two male adults. All three respondents are local residents of **CSA2** and they are also members of the **CSA2** rural public library. One respondent is aged between 40 and 50 years old, while the other two are between 29 and 39 years of age. All three respondents were selected with the help of the **CSA2** librarian and all interviews were conducted in the library.

The non-user respondents were one male and two female adults. All interviews with the non-users of the **CSA2** rural public library were conducted in local shops and businesses around the **CSA2** town centre. Two respondents, aged between 18 and 28 years, worked as shop assistants in local businesses. The third respondent, aged between 40 and 50 years, works as a supervisor in a local shopping complex. All three respondents admitted that the last time they used the **CSA2** rural public library was during their school days and since then they have never used or participated in any of the library services, activities or programs.

The **CSA2** rural public library has a female librarian with more than 10 years of experience in librarianship. She is not a local resident and she travels back and forth from her home town to **CSA2** three times a week. She holds another administrative position in the local regional library corporation. In the **CSA2** rural public library, she is responsible for planning and

coordinating the **CSA2** staff member work schedule, budgeting, and programs and activities. The staff members of the **CSA2** rural public library are employed by the local regional library corporation. During the fieldwork, there were three staff members (including the librarian) employed in the library.

Since the **CSA2** rural public library has several active groups engaged and running activities, finding a group to be interviewed and observed was not difficult. The researcher chose to observe and interview a group of ten adults: three males and seven females aged between 29 and 38 years. These participants are parents who come to the **CSA2** rural public library on a weekly basis to attend a baby rhyme session with their babies and toddlers. All of the group participants are also registered members of the **CSA2** rural public library. They sometimes meet casually around the **CSA2** area; they know each other and some of them are friends.

Summary

Data gathered from interviews with the librarian, users, non-users and group participants was analysed in relation to the three themes of participation, involvement and relationship. In the **CSA2** case study, the results of the analysis of all three themes were positive and optimistic in terms of support given to the rural public library by the community members. Thus the library shows an impressive affiliation with the community, particularly the local parents and their children. The **CSA2** rural public library is one of the most active (in terms of running activities and programs for local community) among the three Australian rural public libraries involved in this research. The contribution and connection between the **CSA2** rural public library and its community in general is very strong.

Theme 1: Participation

In a library, active participation in its services, activities or programs has long been used as a measurement to determine the achievements of the library. Hence a library must deliver its product and services to the value expected by its patrons (users). In addition, the activities and programs must also be able to attract and be accepted by the non-users (ALIA 2009). In relation to theme 1, respondents were required to speak about their experiences in participating with any of the **CSA2** rural public library services, programs and activities. In addition, respondents were also asked to discuss their opinion of the quality and quantity of the services, activities and programs offered.

Upon interviewing the respondents of **CSA2**, an active and positive participation among respondents and the community in general was notable. Many respondents, such as users of the library and even the non-users of the library, were able to describe their engagement, commitment and satisfaction with the services, activities and programs organized by the library. The respondents praised the efficiency and hard work of both the librarian and the other staff members. All user respondents unanimously agreed that the **CSA2** library is very community oriented, has a very friendly staff; and most importantly, it is a very active library. The library provides community members with on-going self-development activities and programs such as nursery rhyme and story-time sessions for children including toddlers once a week, homework assistance for school children, and also guest author sessions.

According to **CSA2** User 2, he can personally see how the community supports the library, and he believes that almost everybody in the **CSA2** area that he knows visits the **CSA2** rural public library. He explains, 'I can see the community here is very supportive and uses the library as another part of their daily activities' (**CSA2** User 2). **CSA2** User 3 sees the library

being used not only by children but by many adults and senior adults too. ‘Sometimes I can see them [adults] reading books on the table. There are lots of old people too’ (**CSA2** User 3). The researcher’s observation of the physical layout of the library shows that the **CSA2** rural public library is an active library and almost all the time is packed with visitors and users. The **CSA2** Librarian admits to the situation and would like a bigger space for her users: ‘It would be great to have a bigger area for these children and their parents, proper cushions and maybe toys and things like that ... the fact that we have such a well attended program, to me it’s an indicator that we need better facilities’ (**CSA2** Librarian).

According to **CSA2** User 1, ‘the image of the **CSA2** community without the library is pretty unimaginable’. As for **CSA2** Non-user 3, although she does not go and participate with the library activities or programs, she believes that all activities run by the library are appreciated by the children and others around the **CSA2** township: ‘I think the reading activities, story sessions and things like that are very well organised and accepted by all residents here. Especially the little ones ... they enjoy those programs’ (**CSA2** Non-user 3).

When asked about their individual connection with the library, all **CSA2** user respondents were very enthusiastic, and talked about their engagement with the **CSA2** rural public library services, activities and programs. For example, **CSA2** User 1 commented that he and his family borrow many books from the library: ‘My children and myself come here quite a lot, so the staff know us quite well, and we borrow so many books, probably 40 a week [laugh]. This is because of the kids, they love it; my son reads a lot. There are also after school activities here, where they have a learning theme, if I am not mistaken, there might be one tomorrow on myths and legends of ancient Egypt’ (**CSA2** User 1). As for **CSA2** User 2, he is more involved with the baby session and he explains that it is a great time for him to be

spending with his daughter. He explains, ‘Well I’ve been just doing the baby one, you know, the rhyme times on Wednesday like today. It has been great, it has been a great way to spend my time with my daughter, meet new parents and new friends too ... for me it’s just a great resource’ (CSA2 User 2).

CSA2 User 3 and her family come to the library for more than just borrowing books; she describes the library’s relaxing atmosphere: ‘We come here at least once a week, sometimes two or three times a week. We borrow books, DVDs or sometimes just wander around. This library is a nice place to be, you know. I can unwind here; do light reading while my children join the playtime and things like that’ (CSA2 User 3).

After this very positive feedback, the researcher was quite interested to know why, if the programs and services at CSA2 rural public library are so good, there are still those who do not use the library. The non-user respondents explained that they used to be active members of the CSA2 rural public library, but work commitments had affected their ability to go to the library.

I was a member, but not now. My kids are still members and they go there. I am too busy with work. (CSA2 Non-user 1)

I really wish I could go to the library again, but currently I am working in shifts, so I just have no time to go there. (CSA2 Non-user 2)

I used to go to the library ... with my children and the family. But I haven’t used it for quite some time now. All my children have grown up and I am currently working. It is hard to find time to go to the library again. (CSA2 Non-user 3)

Nonetheless, all non-users did acknowledge that even though they did not go to the library, they still do light reading on their own, and buy their own reading material.

Theme 2: Involvement

In order to examine theme 2, the researcher conducted interviews and observations in relation to the local **CSA2** community needs and their contribution to decision-making processes related to the services and programs created for them in their rural public library.

The researcher observed that none of the respondents are involved directly in any decision-making processes of the **CSA2** rural public library's planning and administration. The community involvement is limited to using the service. According to **CSA2** User 1, he only sees himself as a library user; apart from that he does not see the need to be involved with the library planning let alone with the library's administrative activities. **CSA2** User 3 expresses a similar viewpoint about this situation. She thinks that by coming to the library, she is making the place 'livelier'; she views this in terms of involvement and contribution. **CSA2** User 2, on the other hand, has another idea of involvement: 'Well, maybe I am not involved on the personal level, but I suppose in a group, we the parents do come together, socializing is a form of involvement ... as you may have heard, some of us go out afterwards for drinks, grab something to eat, go shopping for the mums ... I did that myself with some people that I met here, in the nursery rhymes session; usually we just hang out and have some adult time ... which is important' (**CSA2** User 2).

Building Connections among People in the Local Community

According to the **CSA2** Librarian, financial funding of the **CSA2** rural public library is largely from the local council and ultimately, anyone who pays tax is actually funding the library. However, there are various special events that require involvement from the community such as donations and volunteering. The **CSA2** Librarian explains further: 'We have got one program up and running; that is combining the home health visitor and library

services. So here volunteering can actually come into the picture, and we do have Friends of the Library who actually maintain our garden, yeah and the fruit trees ... apple trees, here that's a community thing ... it has been maintained by the community' (**CSA2** Librarian). The researcher noted from her observations that the **CSA2** Librarian is more aware of the community involvement than the users who were interviewed. Furthermore, the librarian also explained that anyone who comes to the **CSA2** rural public library is involved indirectly by giving suggestions and expressing their opinions to the library.

Theme 3: Relationship

To investigate the relationship theme, the researcher analyzed the data from all interviews and observations and reviewed relevant documents to examine the kind of relationship that has been established between the **CSA3** community members and its rural public library. Respondents were encouraged to share their views on the type of connection they feel has been formed between them and the **CSM3** rural public library and how they have seen this relationship develop over time.

In the **CSA2** case study, the researcher became aware that the relationship built between the **CSA2** rural public library and the **CSA2** community goes beyond just providing an information service. The library is a landmark and attraction for the community in general. According to **CSA2** Non-user 2, 'We do get a lot of people coming in the shop, asking where the library is and where they can get the internet and stuff. I just direct them to the library building [pointing to the **CSA2** rural public library building in front of the shop]' (**CSA2** Non-user 2). In relation to how they view the relationship to have developed over time, all three users answered that 'the relationship is getting better every day'.

Given that the **CSA2** rural public library is well recognized and appreciated by its community, the researcher asked the respondents to describe the form of contribution that the library brings to the development of the individuals and the community in the **CSA2** area. All respondents (users and non-users) believe that the current rural public library plays a large role in helping the community. **CSA2** Users 1 and 3 noted the improvement and believe that the **CSA2** rural public library and staff members have successfully supported the educational, employment and workplace aspects of community development, especially through early childhood education and literacy development. As for all three **CSA2** Non-users, although they are not currently using the library services, none of them deny the positive impact that the library has on the community. According to **CSA2** Non-user 1, 'I know many people spend their time there. I believe the library does benefit the community'.

As for the group members, participating in weekly activities in the **CSA2** rural public library has made them feel that the **CSA2** rural public library has not only helped them gain new knowledge, but has also given them (and their children) the chance to socialize informally and get to know other community members better. One group member mentioned that she and her family went away for a three-week working holiday and once she came back to **CSA2**, the first thing she did was track down the library activities. According to the **CSA2** Group participants, 'A library is a public space, we think it's fantastic. The children tend to socialize with each other after the session informally. I suppose it gives you a break from having to do it yourself at home [reading stories to their children]. It's a bit of an occasion for us [adults] too [laugh]; we'll come here and have group drinks afterwards; get to know each other better. Because guess what, we have this one common thing: children [laugh], we socialise easier with them around' (**CSA2** Group participants).

The **CSA2** Librarian thinks that the **CSA2** rural public library has currently been doing an excellent job in providing services and supporting the community's needs. She (like other librarians in this research, namely **CSM1**, **CSM2**, **CSM3**, **CSA1** and **CSA3**), personally puts forward ideas and is involved in the development of many of the library programs and activities. Hence she stated that there is more to come, and they are planning more activities and programs in the future. 'I think we do serve the community well. I think although this community has quite high expectations of what a library should provide, I am convinced that we are here to provide most of it. We maybe are not as good as this community deserves. But we try our best, we do have many informal programs planned; for example, this Friday we have an author who will be here for an hour. We have occasional computer classes; we tend to hook up with community events, like in August we run the big crossword challenge, things like that' (**CSA2** Librarian).

In the **CSA2** rural public library, the function and relationship of a librarian with the community members goes further than just recognizing, locating, evaluating and using information. The librarian is the 'middle person' who connects the community and the library management (regional library corporation). The **CSA2** librarian clearly explains her understanding of her role as a librarian: 'Being a librarian here is quite hands-on, because you just have to be [smile], and because there are only two staff. So it is very much about you doing the circulation, you do shelving and almost everything. Luckily, marketing and promotion is done between here and the marketing and promotion officer in the regional centre, so there is someone there to help. Personally I would like to be more interactive and deal with only patrons and users' (**CSA2** Librarian).

Theme 4: Unmet Information Needs

The researcher inquired further about the opinions and views of the respondents on the quality and the quantity of the services, programs and activities that were provided and set up for them by the **CSA2** rural public library. In general, all users are very happy and content with the programs and activities. The variety of programs and activities organized for all age levels is also good and adequate. According to **CSA2** User 1, ‘I think the library do a number of story times like for different young kids. My son, he’s nine years old. He’ll come here once a month because they have after school activities. They also have a homework assistance service. It is just great’ (**CSA2** User 1). In the meantime, **CSA2** User 2 sees his participation with the library as an opportunity to socialize and to get to know more residents around the area. Furthermore, **CSA2** User 3 thinks that at the moment all programs are suitable and they are the right length for the age group: ‘I think all the activities and program sessions are plenty long enough because kids don’t have good long concentration’ (**CSA2** User 3).

In relation to the question of whether the **CSA2** rural public library needs more activities or programs, or any extra services, most of the **CSA2** respondents are very happy with the current arrangement of things. They believe that their information and knowledge needs have been fulfilled by what is currently offered at the rural public library. Their comments include the following:

I think that everyone I know seems to have joined and been here. I don’t come here to get more information on how to raise a child you know, just more books for her [daughter]. Like the cardboard books, or the colourful ones and the touching feeling ones ... texture and stuff you know... all those sorts of books you don’t really want to buy for loads [of money] you know ... but you can just come every four weeks and change it over so that she doesn’t get bored you know ... and it has been really great, she loves it, I love it too [laugh]. (**CSA2** User 2)

This story time once a week thing is enough for me. It is very good. If there are too many things to choose from too it becomes very hard for the staff to organize. (**CSA2** User 3)

The librarian and staff members seem to be doing a great job. We are happy with the books and song selection. (**CSA2** Group participants)

Despite the positive responses, the **CSA2** librarian is convinced that there are many programs they could be offering to the community, but at the moment staffing and facilities are major setbacks for the library: ‘There is actually heaps that we do here and there are also heaps that we can do, you can be assured that once we get the staff and extra facilities, we will have our game on’ (**CSA2** Librarian).

Conclusion

The **CSA2** rural public library is currently located in a small end lot shop building, connected to several commercial shops, and is in the heart of the town centre. Upon observation the researcher also realized that the **CSA2** rural public library is the smallest venue of the three Australian rural public libraries involved in this study. Nonetheless, the library has effectively built a solid bond with the adults and children of the **CSA2** community.

The researcher personally witnessed the good communication and connections between parents, their children, and the library staff members who participate in the nursery rhymes session. For a physically small library with a very limited number of staff, the **CSA2** rural public library has managed to run several programs targeting all age groups of the community. Some of the up and running programs are the nursery rhymes and storytelling sessions for children and parents, homework assistance and school holiday theme programs for school children and teenagers, visiting authors and book club for adults, and home visitor and library service for senior adults.

In general the **CSA2** librarian is aware of each community member's involvement, and despite financial limitations, the librarian and her staff members have successfully organized and run many formal and informal activities that have suited their community.

Case Study Australia 3 (CSA3)

According to the South Gippsland Shire Council (2006), the **CSA3** country town was founded in the 1800s, right after the discovery of vast coal resources. The township of **CSA3** once flourished as an important mining town, of which evidence is all around, from an abundance of antique merchants to the architecture. In the 1840s the land was used mainly for pastoral purposes. Growth of the **CSA3** town took place from the 1890s into the early 1900s with black coal mining and the construction of the railway line. The last mine closed in 1958 and the population has increased slightly since the mid 1990s as a result of new dwellings being added to the area. Rural land is used mainly for dairy, beef and farming (SGSC 2011).

Community Profile

The **CSA3** township distance from Melbourne City is approximately 103km or about two hours' drive from the city. In 2006, the population of **CSA3** consisted of 4,465 community members. Analysis of age structure in **CSA3** shows that 25.1 percent of the population in **CSA3** are in the younger age group (0-17 years old); adults, however, aged between 50 and above, comprise 39.7 percent of the total number of community members (SGSC 2006, p. 5). In reference to the percentage of adults in **CSA3** (that is 39.7 percent), it was not surprising to the researcher that the statistics of adult membership in the **CSA3** rural public library in 2010 was very high: 1,610 individuals, almost one third of the total number of the **CSA3** community population.

Description of the Public Library

The **CSA3** rural public library is located at the entry point to the **CSA3** small town. The **CSA3** rural public library is situated in a building attached to the **CSA3** Community Art Gallery. The **CSA3** rural public library delivers relevant information to its community in

many formats by library staff members and through its reliable technology of delivering online resources on or off-site. The **CSA3** rural public library service provides many programs to support reader development, literacy and lifelong learning efforts. Currently, the total number of memberships in the **CSA3** rural public library services is 2,082 members (46.6 % of total population). The breakdown of membership is 1,610 adults, 101 teenagers, 358 juniors and 13 others. The **CSA3** rural public library offers a variety of services to the local community such as internet access, lending services, inter-library loan services, home library services, newspapers and magazines, photocopying and printing facilities, school and group visits, and also bulk loans to institutions. The **CSA3** rural public library operates every Monday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm, every Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm, and is closed on Sundays.



Picture 15: The **CSA3** Rural Public Library Children's Reading Area



Picture 16: The CSA3 Rural Public Library Reading Material Display



Picture 17: The CSA3 Rural Public Library's Display of a Reading Theme

Analysis of Case Study Data – CSA3

The **CSA3** rural public library is located at the entry point of the **CSA3** town and is one of the many branches of the Victoria South Western Regional Library Corporation. The **CSA3** rural public library has a very strategic location by being near to the local shopping complexes, as well as individual shops and public transport including the train station. The **CSA3** rural public library offers plenty of standard library services and also special services such as home library services, local and family history resources, and talking newspapers.

Background of respondents

The **CSA3** rural public library user interviews were conducted with three respondents: one a male adult and the other two, female adults. All three of the respondents are active members of the **CSA3** rural public library. They are also local residents who have lived in **CSA3** all their lives. One of the respondents is aged between 18 and 28 years, another is aged between 40 and 50 years and the last respondent is aged 61 years and above. All three user respondents were selected with the help of the **CSA3** librarian and all interviews were conducted in the library.

The non-users of the **CSA3** rural public library respondents included one male and two female respondents. All interviews with the non-users of the **CSA3** rural public library were conducted in local shops and businesses around the **CSA3** town centre. Two non-user respondents were aged between 18 and 28 years old and work as shop assistants in local businesses. The other respondent was aged between 29 and 39 years, and owns a cafe in the centre of the **CSA3** town. Two of the non-user respondents are still registered members of the **CSA3** rural public library; however, both of them have not used the **CSA3** rural public library services nor participated in

any of the **CSA3** rural public library activities and programs for quite some time. On the other hand, the other non-user respondent admits that she has never registered herself as a member with the **CSA3** rural public library. All three respondents explain that they have not been to the **CSA3** rural public library because their working schedule clashes with the opening hours of the library but they do buy their own reading material.

The **CSA3** librarian, a woman, has been in the position for 40 years: the same amount of time that the **CSA3** rural public library has been open and actively serving its community. Since she was born and brought up locally in **CSA3**, she is known to almost everyone in the **CSA3** area.

Since the **CSA3** rural public library has several active groups engaging and running activities in the public library, finding a group to be interviewed and observed was not difficult. The researcher chose to observe and interview a group of seven adults, all female participants. These participants come to the **CSA3** rural public library on a weekly basis with their babies to attend a story-time session. All of the group participants are members of the **CSA3** rural public library. They sometimes meet casually around the village and they know each other as members of the community.

Summary

The interviews with the librarian and library assistant, users and non-users, and the group interview were analysed in relation to the themes of participation, involvement and relationship. In summary, an analysis of all three themes shows much positive feeling in terms of the support given to the rural public library by the community members. Through her personal observations,

the researcher believes that the **CSA3** rural public library is one of the most organized, warm, friendly and attractive rural public libraries she has been to. The location of the **CSA3** rural public library is strategic; the library environment is cosy and warm; and the physical layout of the library is well planned and organized, as well as very clean and attractive. The bond between the **CSA3** rural public library and its community, especially the local council, is very strong and positive. Upon interviewing respondents, as well as speaking with other community members that the researcher met by chance, it was evident that most community members are familiar with the **CSA3** rural public library and its librarian.

Theme 1: Participation

In researching theme 1, the researcher conducted interviews and observations to examine the **CSA3** local community members' participation with any of the **CSA3** rural public services, programs or activities. All respondents were asked to clarify and elaborate further on their insights and views on issues such as the quality and quantity of the services, activities and programs that are provided by the library for the community.

For a small rural community library, the **CSA3** rural public library has a surprisingly high number of registered members. According to the **CSA3** Librarian's report, out of 4,466 residents of the **CSA3** area, 2,082 residents are registered as members of the **CSA3** rural public library. The total number of adults with membership is 1,610 people. The researcher also discovered that many of the **CSA3** rural public library users are very active in participating in the library's services, programs and activities.

Most members registered themselves together with other family members and they use their time in the library as part of a family activity. According to **CSA3** User 1, his family often go to the library not only to borrow books but also to borrow DVDs and games, and sometimes to find out about anything new in the library like books and magazines. He explains that ‘the library is very good at changing their book collection; so they’ll share it around with the different libraries, so that you don’t see the same books all the time. And that is important because if you keep going in and it had the same books all the time, especially kids, they’ll got bored. They have to get different books all the time’ (**CSA3** User 1).

CSA3 User 2 was formerly a member of the Friends of the Library group in the **CSA3** rural public library, and remains a registered library member and actively comes to the library with her husband to borrow books. She recalls her activeness during the time she was a member of the Friends of the Library group: ‘My husband and I come here very frequently. We are members to this library. I was a member of Friends of the Library too, years ago. There was a time when the region decided to supply all the books, and Friends of the Library started raising money to buy books and help make the library to become better. I was a strong supporter of this library and still am’ (**CSA3** User 2).

As for **CSA3** User 3, her participation with the library has long been positive and enjoyable. She is now furthering her study, and finds herself bringing her child to the library just as she was brought by her own parents: ‘I’ve been a member of this library since I was a child. Now I bring my children to the toddler activities, I borrow books but I don’t use the internet, because I have my own at home. I am still studying, so I do use some reference services from this library. I’ll

get on the library website and the librarian helps me out. They are very friendly too' (CSA3 User 3).

Theme 2: Involvement

The interviews and observations carried out by the researcher in the **CSA3** community revealed that the community did not have any involvement in the decision-making processes of the planning and management of the library services, activities or programs. Their involvement is limited to only using the service. Some of the **CSA3** community, however, are involved with some local fundraising activities for the **CSA3** rural public library and they give suggestions and ideas for new activities to both the librarian and other staff members.

The **CSA3** Librarian explained that while not all community members are involved with the library, there is always the Friends of the Library group, which consists of individuals who support and do volunteering activities and programs for the library. According to the librarian, 'We have the Friends of the Library. They are active in handling the additional fundraising; and the council members at the moment are quite supportive in supporting our program and everything. But if there is anything additional that we think we would really love to have, well Friends of the Library provide that and have done over the years. They bought various things for the library, TV and computer, it wasn't in the budget' (CSA3 Librarian). The **CSA3** User 2 concurs with the **CSA3** Librarian's statement and said that 'Friends of the Library does volunteer work here and they raise money. We used to do book sales, we still occasionally have book sales' (CSA3 User 2).

According to **CSA3** User 1, while he is not involved in any of decision-making related to the library, he views his contribution more in terms of using the service. He explains, ‘We use the services, but we don’t actively contribute in any other way. Well, we pay for the service through our rates; and I guess, we are making good use of that’ (**CSA3** User 1).

Theme 3: Relationship

Through her interviews and observations, the researcher studied the types of relationships formed between the **CSA3** rural public library and its community members by asking the respondents to illustrate, from their point of view, how they observe the relationship between the **CSA3** rural public library and the local community, and how it has developed over the years.

Many of the users and non-users of the **CSA3** rural public library express their satisfaction about the effectiveness and efficiency of the work done by both the librarian and the staff members in providing the **CSA3** community with an informative and knowledgeable service. Many also think that the relationship between the community and the library has never been stronger. All feedback from the respondents shows that the relationship established between the **CSA3** rural public library and its community is very positive. The library is regarded as an important institution within the community. Many residents use the library for information and knowledge, as well as to socialize.

According to **CSA3** User 1, as an active member, he thinks that the personal bond between himself and the library has grown stronger, especially with the development of internet and email, which helps him to communicate with the librarian and the library staff better. He can

now reserve any reading material online, ask the librarian for reading suggestions and also be well informed of the due dates for returning the books. He claims these types of services make it easy and trouble-free for him and his family members. Furthermore, according to CSA3 User 2, her relationship with the library started while she was a member of the Friends of the Library group. She finds it very rewarding when she does volunteering work for the library and she has a very close and good relationship with the librarian too. She describes further, ‘Over the past few years, we’d have casual afternoon teas ... or something just to try and encourage people to come, which is very good. We get to know new people and get acquainted with the old ones’ (CSA3 User 2).

Nonetheless, the CSA3 rural public library librarian believes that what the library is doing currently is more than just building good relationships; it is ‘a family affair’. She explains, ‘I have always treated everyone, every visitor, as family members. I have always interacted and treated everyone that I know the same way ... I think this approach is important because as a service provider I serve the community and this is what a community expects from me; a good service’ (CSA3 Librarian).

As central to the atmosphere of the CSA3 rural public library, the CSA3 librarian has shown the researcher that she sees herself as more than just a librarian. She is willing to serve the community to the best of her ability. She explains her view of her role in the CSA3 rural public library in more detail:

This is not something that I take lightly [being a librarian]. I just feel that it [communicating with community] is a part of the outreach and extension within the walls of the library. Even the people that come through the door, I will go like, have you read a good book lately? Or can you recommend something? And I’ll do that 100 times a day, recommend things. It’s not mandatory, some of the newest staff ... they don’t do that ... they don’t have the same rapport with the people; they feel that’s not necessary. They are not passionate about their role ... some of them

cannot be bothered. When you are in a community you need to be within the community, especially in a smaller community (**CSA3** Librarian).

Of all the interviews about the relationship and affiliation between the **CSA3** rural public library and the **CSA3** community, one particular interview surprised the researcher. The **CSA3** rural public library librarian has a very personable idea of her role as a service provider. Her active willingness to become friends and acquaintances with her community members is definitely something impressive. The **CSA3** librarian explains her understanding of her role as a librarian clearly and how she sees her relationship with the **CSM3** community:

I have been a librarian here for 40 years and yes I was involved directly in setting up this library [**CSA3** rural public library]. I see the borrowers as my friends. They join the library and they become your friend, you become involved. Not in great depth but on the surface. I tend to create informal relations with them. You have a little talk with them when they come in, you know ... that's just evolved ... and I suppose because I am a people person I suppose, I enjoy that, I enjoy interacting like that. Oh yes, I do take my role as a librarian beyond library hours, definitely I do. Somebody says I can't get in today, my car broke down or I am in bed sick today, can you drop some book ... and I'll do it. On my way home from work ... volunteering ... yeah ... I just do it. Not everybody will ask that [smile] but probably only the ones that I've known for a while. They are comfortable asking me and I am happy enough to do it. And going to the kindergarten, they ask me if I go out there and read some stories ... well that is volunteering too. On my way to work ... I'll just pop in while on my way to work ... for half an hour, I just read stories for kinder kids (**CSA3** Librarian)

In **CSA3**, when asked further about the contribution of the library to community development, all respondents stated that the rural public library has played its role effectively and successfully. It is evident that the **CSA3** rural public library and staff members support the educational, employment and workplace needs of the community, especially through early childhood education and literacy development.

CSA3 User 1 explains in detail his opinion of how he sees the **CSA3** rural public library as contributing to the community's development. He thinks that the **CSA3** rural public library service makes the town a far more attractive place for people to be actively involved. He said,

I think by having the library service here, it tends to keep the people in the town and using the services of the town rather than making it a satellite town of a larger population ... many residents here are using the library. This area is not a rich people town at all; the incomes are not very high. Not everyone can afford to go and buy books. I think that a library in this kind of demographic is probably more important. (**CSA3** User 1)

In addition, **CSA3** Users 2 and 3 agree that many more residents – not just children but also adults – will become attracted to the library through the introduction of new technology and technology activities such as computers, internet, DVDs and many more. According to these users, this will have a positive impact and be beneficial to the town and community in general. According to **CSA3** User 3, this situation will also draw residents indirectly to love reading and books all over again. As for **CSA3** Non-user 2, the fact that he does not use the library himself does not mean that the library is not an important resource for the community. He explains, ‘They [children and young adults] definitely do use it, so the library is needed to be there for them. Otherwise, what else are they going to do? Jump on the computer again and spend more time in front of the screen’ (**CSA3** Non-user 2).

The **CSA3** Group participants, who are all young mothers, also agree that their involvement with the group weekly program has helped them in many ways: ‘It’s just great; there are a variety of children’s activities here. Many of these activities allow us parents to be involved and participate ... it’s good. They [librarian and staff] are all very nice and very helpful. We socialize after the program; we are going out for a coffee later. We usually have more informal gatherings after this formal gathering. We share baby experiences, recipes, at times even just sharing stories. It has just been great; we benefit a lot from attending this program’ (**CSA3** Group participants).

For the **CSA3** rural community, having a library provides them with more than just an information centre but also a recreational place. The **CSA3** Librarian explains, ‘Oh yes, I think without this library, life here for community members would be brief [short-lived] [laugh], because there is not much else recreationally for them to do. Here we provide them with both information and some fun. Like this Baby Rhymes Times, it’s free. The programs’ expenses will all come from the library budget, very educational, both mother and baby are happy mingling around. It is just convenient. The next closest library that you can find in this area is 100km away. Now, that is not convenient at all’ (**CSA3** Librarian).

Theme 4: Unmet Information Needs

In **CSA3**, the residents interviewed for this research believe that their information and knowledge needs are fulfilled by the current rural public library. Most of the respondents are satisfied with the services provided and activities organized by their public library. Nevertheless, there are still some concerns about the middle age group who are reportedly missing from the membership grid. **CSA3** User 1 explains:

There are many young people here, but there are also many elderly people too. I know that there are a lot of working middle aged people like myself that don’t have lot of time to read. I was going to say maybe if they have a book reading club or something but again I don’t know if that will attract the working people and it depends on the funding ... again I think it will probably attract more the elderly people (**CSA3** User 1).

Moreover, **CSA3** User 2 suggested extending the operation hours of the library. She thinks this will attract and allow the middle age group people, who work up to 6 o’clock during the week, to be able to be more involved and participate with the library services and activities.

The researcher also inquired about the opinions and views of the respondents in relation to the quality and quantity of the services, programs and activities that were provided and set up for them by the **CSA3** rural public library. All three users are very content and satisfied for various reasons. For example, **CSA3** User 1 finds the library services satisfactory because they keep a good circulation of reading material and resources. According to him, the library often brings in new materials. As for **CSA3** User 2, she likes the library environment and reading has been her long-term passion. **CSA3** User 3, on the other hand, appreciates the library for the many interesting activities that are provided for children such as story-time, nursery rhyme sessions and even craft sessions. She explains that it is a good way for her to introduce reading and books to her child. Even the non-users of the library have their own opinions regarding this issue. According to them, the library is much needed because residents need ‘to read, borrow books, use the internet and do other things’ (**CSA3** Non-user 1) and that ‘just because I don’t use it is irrelevant. The library needs to be here, it certainly helps a lot of people, students especially’ (**CSA3** Non-user 2).

Conclusion

What made the greatest impression on the researcher from her fieldwork and observation of the **CSA3** rural public library was the friendly and accommodating nature of the librarian and the other staff members. Located in a small town area, about an hour and a half’s drive from Melbourne, everyone in this community seems to know each other well.

In addition, for a small library, the **CSA3** rural public library building is (out of all three Australian rural public libraries) the most well-arranged library, with a calm and welcoming

atmosphere. The librarian (who has more than 40 years' experience) manages the library with her staff members (two staff members only), and has an excellent understanding of the concept of volunteering. In fact the concept of volunteering among users and the whole community in general is very inspiring. The users and library staff members know each other well and in the **CSA3** area, going to the library somehow is a family affair.

Local children are introduced to the library at a young age, and grow up with an understanding that the library is beneficial to them. The **CSA3** rural public library staff members are very dedicated to providing the best services and programs to the community; they are even willing to go a step further by sending the resources to the users if requested and needed by the residents. Nonetheless, the **CSA3** rural public library, like other rural public libraries in Australia, is currently facing its own challenges, namely finances and number of staff. At present, programs run by the library involve a very small number of participants yet they are very well organized. Some of the programs running at the library are nursery rhymes and storytelling sessions, and art and craft classes.

Table 1 provides a summary of the data from the six case studies discussed in this chapter. Following this, Chapter 6 provides a cross case analysis report; this utilises the method of thematic comparison and is based on the research aims outlined in Chapter 1. The cross case analysis explores how each of the case study communities becomes a learning community and the extent to which they are supported by the rural public library to develop the partnership necessary to address the needs of their communities in a knowledge society environment.

Table 1: Data Summary: Individual Case Studies

Case Study Context	CSM1	CSM2	CSM3	CSA1	CSA2	CSA3
Distance from Main City	45km	75km	86km	160km	114km	103km
Economic activity	Agriculture and farming	Agriculture and SME*	Fishing, Plantation, 'homestay'*** and SME*	Retail, commercial, Timber, Farming, Forestry and resort industry	Retail, commercial and Tourism	Dairy, Beef, Farming and Historical Tourism industry
Community Ethnicity	Malays	Malays and Indians	Malays, Chinese and Indians	Anglo-Saxon, German, Hungarian, Danish, Greek and Italian	Anglo-Saxon, German, Hungarian, Danish, Greek, Italian and Asian	Anglo-Saxon, German, Hungarian, Danish, Greek and Italian
Population	1,300 (roughly around)	300 families (roughly around 1500 individuals)	1,500 (roughly around)	10,857 (2010)	7,610 (2007)	4,465 (2006)
Total Members	831 (2009)	1161 (2009)	1,161 (2009)	9,572*** (2011)	4,850 (2010)	2,082 (2009)
Date Library Opened	14 February 2006	2003	2006 (closed for 4 months in 2009)	1996	1997	1997
Librarian's work experience	1 year	1 year	1 year	21 years	10 years	40 years
Library location	In the centre of the village. No public transport access.	At the end of the village (far away from the village centre). No public transport access.	In the centre of the village. At the road side and have public transport access.	At the heart of the town centre (walking distance to public amenities such as railway station, shopping complex and local council office)	At the end of a shopping strip (walking distance to public amenities such as local shops and local businesses)	At the entry point of the town (next to the community arts gallery and walking distance to public amenities such as train station, local shops and local businesses)
Library opening hours	9am-5.30pm (Mon-Fri), 9am-5pm (Sat)	9am-6pm (Tues-Sat), 9am-5.30pm (Sun)	9am-5.30pm (Mon-Fri), 9am-5pm (Sat)	10am-5.30pm (Mon-Thurs), 10am-7pm (Fri), 10am-12noon (Sat)	10am-6pm (Mon-Fri), 10am-1pm (Sat)	10am-6pm (Mon-Fri), 10am-1pm (Sat)
Library opening days	Monday to Saturday	Tuesday to Sunday	Monday to Saturday	Monday to Saturday	Monday to Saturday	Monday to Saturday
Library Closing days	Every 2nd Saturday, every Sunday and National/ state public holidays	Every Monday and during National/state Public holidays	Every 2nd and 3rd Saturday, every Sunday and National/ state public holidays	Sundays and during public holidays	Sundays and during public holidays	Sundays and during public holidays

Case Study Context	CSM1	CSM2	CSM3	CSA1	CSA2	CSA3
IT Equipment	4 computers (one for staff use), Internet access and an electronic printer	4 computers (one for staff use), Internet access and an electronic printer	4 computers (two for staff use), Wireless Broadband, a laser scanner and an electronic printer	3 public computers, Internet access, printer	2 public computers, Internet access, printer, wireless internet service	2 public computers, Internet access, printer, wireless internet service
Community Library Services	Lending services, Reference services, Printing service Request based activities such as children's drawing and women's cooking class	Lending services, Reference services, Printing service	Lending services, Reference services, Printing service Request based activities such as children's drawing and computer classes	Interlibrary Lending services, Online resources, After hours chute, Bulk loan, home library services, Web OPAC, Local and family history resources, Photocopy and printing service, School and group visits service, Story-time session, Newspapers and audio newspapers, Adult literature session, Multi games, Book club, Nursery rhymes for toddlers and children	Interlibrary Lending services, Online resources, After hours chute, Bulk loan, Web OPAC, Local and family history resources, Photocopy and printing service, School and group visits service, Story-time session, Newspapers, Book clubs – children, teenager and adult, Homework assistance, Guest author session, Nursery rhymes for toddlers and children	Interlibrary Lending services, Online resources, After hours chute, Bulk loan, Home library services, Web OPAC, Local and family history resources, Photocopy and printing service, School and group visits service, Story-time session, Book club, Nursery rhymes for toddlers and children

*Small and Medium Enterprises

** A part of Malaysian Tourist Industry Program

*** Including Home Service

CHAPTER 5: Cross-Case Analysis Report

Chapter 4 presented the six case studies, separated into two main sections: Malaysia and Australia. Each of the rural public library case study reports included a community profile and a description of the local rural public library. The case studies were analysed using a thematic approach based on the specific aims of this research. This current chapter presents the cross-case analysis of the six rural public library case studies. The cross case analysis focuses on similarities and differences across all six rural public libraries based on the four stated aims of this thesis: 1) to investigate local rural community participation in Malaysian and Australian rural public library services, activities and programs; 2) to investigate the involvement of local rural communities in the decision-making processes related to planning the services, activities and programs in rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia; 3) to explore the relationship between local rural communities and their rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia; and 4) to investigate relevant unmet information needs in rural communities.

This cross-case analysis explores how each studied community becomes a learning community. It shows the extent to which they are supported by the rural public library to develop the partnerships necessary to address the needs of their communities in a knowledge society environment. This cross-case analysis report is based on the investigations within the single case studies of the communities' information needs, as well as their participation, involvement and relationship with their local rural public libraries.

The different recruitment criteria in rural public library case studies in Malaysia and Australia mean that there is no intention to make direct comparisons between the two groups. In Malaysia

the purpose of sampling was to choose rural public libraries with a range of practices in relation to community development. In Australia the purpose of the sampling was to identify rural public libraries that are active in community development.

Some overall differences emerged between the Malaysian rural public libraries and the Australian rural public libraries:

- The rural public libraries in Australia had generally been established for much longer periods of time than the Malaysian rural public libraries.
- The rural public libraries in Australia are physically bigger in size than the Malaysian rural public libraries.
- The rural public libraries in Malaysia served a smaller number of community members than the Australian rural public libraries.
- The rural public libraries in Australia have CD and electronic materials and resources while there is none in the Malaysian rural public libraries.
- The rural public libraries' librarians in Australia have much more experience in library management than the librarians in the Malaysian rural public libraries.

Participation

This section focuses on local community participation in Malaysian and Australian rural public library services, activities and programs. Participation is a complex concept that varies in definition according to the purpose and functions at hand. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is no 'fine line' to distinguish the difference between participation and involvement, for in community development participation may be seen in terms of involvement and vice versa.

In this research, ‘participation’ is used to refer to participation in activities, as well as engagement and usage of rural public library services. Meanwhile, ‘involvement’ is used to refer to commitment to making some contribution to rural public library service development. Thus ‘involvement’ connotes making a contribution to the rural public library activities, services and programs, whereas ‘participation’ connotes a more passive engagement as a recipient of the services.

Findings and Analysis

In both Malaysia and Australia, the rural public library is a widely recognised institution that offers a variety of information resources to the local members and the local community. Furthermore, in both countries, the intervention of state governments and local municipalities in providing rural public library services to rural areas has for the most part been accepted by rural community members. Patterns of usage, however, were fairly different in each of the six rural public libraries studied. Differences include the age group of members, level of participation in programs, and the types of service usage including the kinds of activities members were involved in.

In Victoria, Australia, 50 percent of the total number of rural residents are reported to register as members of their local libraries (Rosenfeldt 2010); out of this 50 percent, 28 percent are children and 22 percent are senior adults/pensioners. The service usage of these members extends beyond just borrowing books and magazines. Many use their local rural public library resources to do personal research, to engage in information and technology skill classes, and to take part in many

other activities and programs such as children's story times, baby nursery rhyme sessions and adult book clubs. Moreover, many members have a sense of social activism, and offer various levels of assistance, including helping to raise funds for their library. Similarly, in Selangor, Malaysia, the current number of users of rural public libraries is also high at 40.5 percent (PNM & KPKK 2009, p. 34). In Selangor, Malaysia, however, members mostly limit their engagement to simple and conventional library activities such as borrowing books and magazines, and using the internet connection.

Across all six case studies, each community has shown a considerably high level of enthusiasm towards promoting their local rural public library as a centre of education and learning for their children. The difference is that in rural communities in Australia, the concept of lifelong learning has widespread acceptance and is effectively promoted, however this is not yet the case in Malaysia.

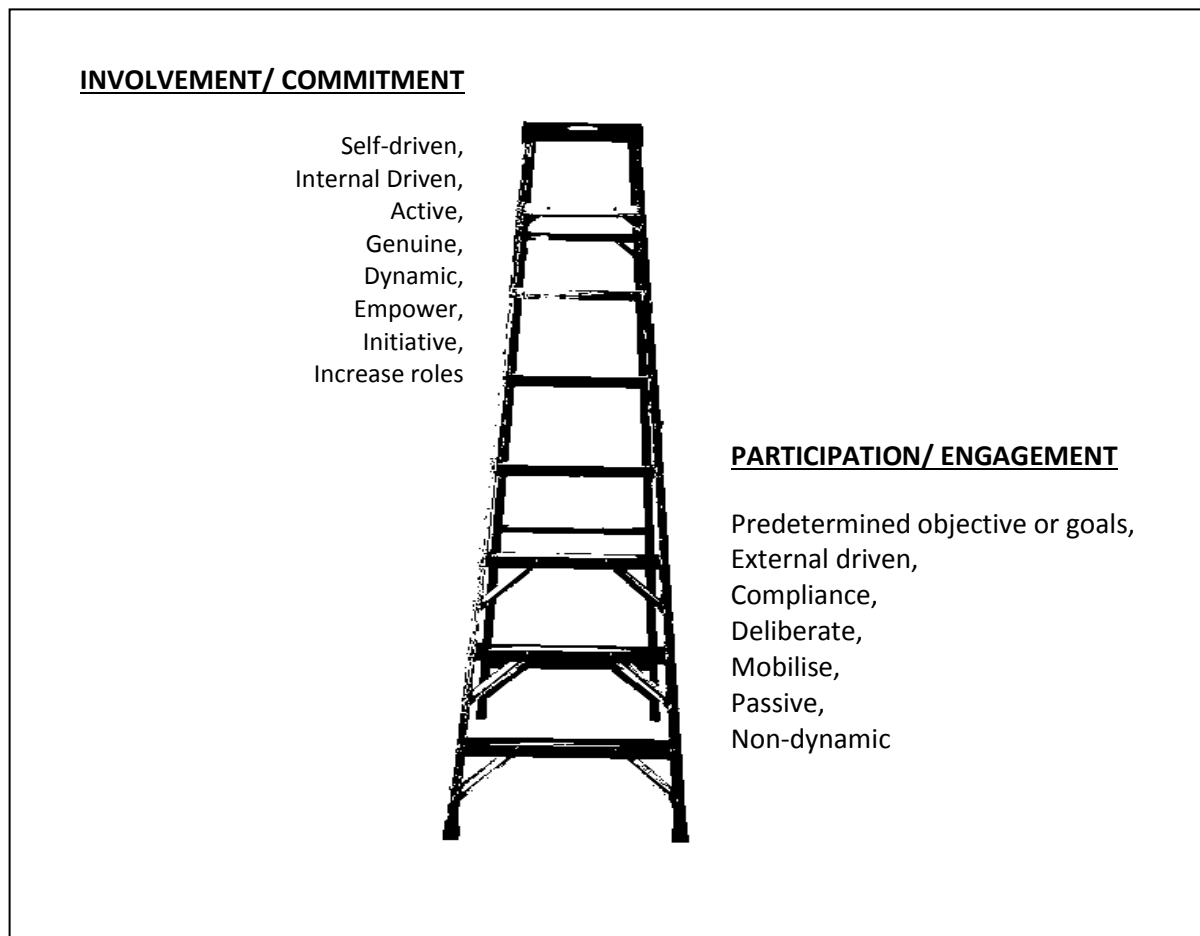


Chart 5.1: Ladder of Community Participation and Involvement (adapted from Oakley 1991; Cavaye 2001)

In the Australian case studies, both registered members and non-members, with the assistance and support of their local rural public library, engage in many community needs based programs and activities such as literature classes, computer classes, book clubs for teenagers and adults and many other informal educational activities. This situation is in contrast to the situation in Selangor, Malaysia. Out of the three Malaysian case studies, only one case studied library (CSM1) has successfully organized and engaged the community with their community based programs; however, in this case the participants are restricted to female adults.

To achieve active participation, it is very important for the rural public library's existence to be noticed and acknowledged. Most importantly, there needs to be an existing desire to use the library services, and also to take part and engage with the library activities and programs. In Australia, throughout all three cases, the rural community members who were interviewed (both registered members of the library and non-members of the library) are aware of their current rural public library's existence and acknowledge that the library is an important institution in their community. In contrast, many members of the community in rural Selangor, Malaysia admit that they did not know that a rural public library existed in their community, 'I am not a member and have never been to the library here in this village ... is there a library here?' (**CSM3** Non-user 1). As for other community members, they do not see the importance and relevance of using a library in their daily activities; 'I have never used the library and I don't need to use it' (**CSM3** Non-user 3). In both Malaysia and Australia, the most common reasons given by non-users of the library for not participating and engaging in their current rural public library service, activities and programs were that they were too busy with work or their working schedule clashed with the library's opening hours:

'I always wanted to go there but I just don't have the chance. I have no assistant to look after my shop if I am away' (**CSM2** Non-User1).

'I don't have time to go around the library; we are here [in the shop] longer than the library opening hours' (**CSA3** Non-User 2).

The research conducted in this study demonstrates that while in Malaysia active participation has been successfully achieved, it is not comprehensive enough as participation is primarily limited to children, and in some cases a small group of young adults (in **CSM2**) and female adults (in **CSM1**). Furthermore, the children's programs and activities organized by these rural public

libraries are aimed exclusively at children, with parents only attending as observers, whereas in Australia parents take part in the programs and activities.

The case studies of Victoria, Australia have revealed a similar scenario, with children being the most active users participating in the rural public library services, activities and programs. However, the difference evident in Australian rural public libraries is that there is still a relatively high rate of participation among adults and senior adults despite the fact that many activities and programs are organized for children, such as baby nursery rhymes, toddler story times and children's reading sessions. Parents show interest and can still be seen participating in these sessions. In many cases, such as in the **CSA2** and **CSA3** rural public libraries, these parents meet informally at the end of their children's formal activities in the library. This gives them the advantage of social unity and communal bonding with other community members.

In summary, both countries have shown less than comprehensive participation and usage among members of the rural community. However, the main difference in terms of participation is that in Australia, the rural public library services, activities and programs are better known among non-users of the library.

Involvement

This section focuses on the involvement of the local rural community in the decision-making processes related to planning the services, activities and programs in rural public libraries. In this research, 'involvement' is used to refer to commitment to make some contribution to rural public library service development. It therefore connotes a more active engagement with the rural

public library activities, services and programs than participation. According to Chang and Hsieh (1997), involvement in public libraries services can be categorised into three levels: high involvement, medium involvement and low involvement. These levels of involvement further influence the individual decision-making processes and patterns of attitudes towards specific services, activities or programs run by the rural public library. At the higher levels of involvement, it is said that individuals will tend to give more careful consideration to information that is relevant to their particular needs, and will engage in more extended decision-making processes. As the involvement level decreases, people will tend to engage in more routine types of activities, such as reading newspapers and magazines.

Community involvement in this research represents the situation where the local rural community members influence and provide insights about their local rural public library service, activities and programs. In this situation, community members feel free to express their thoughts on the services, activities and programs provided by the rural public library. The success of building this form of involvement among community members will then lead to better connections and relationships between the service and the community, making the library more relevant to the needs of the local community and improving the quality and delivery of information services through collaborative decision-making.

Findings and Analysis

The selected Malaysian rural communities in this study, namely **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, were not consulted in advance for any preferences, advice or opinion on the types of information, resources, services, activities or programs that they desire to have in their village. It was all

decided by the government: the resources, the location, the type of building, and the size of the building. The community members were not consulted or involved in any of the decision-making processes concerning the development, administration or planning of the services, activities or programs that were planned for them. Furthermore, in the three Malaysian case studies, all research participants indicated that the community's involvement was limited to only using the services provided to them such as book and magazine loans. None of the **CSM** community members were involved directly with the **CSM** rural public libraries' administration or with any of the decision-making regarding the services, activities and programs offered to them. For instance, when asked about their involvement and contribution to the library, and their involvement in the selection of any of the activities planned and programs organized, the respondents answered that they were not involved. For example, **CSM2** User 1 answered, 'Do you mean to join the meetings [library formal meetings] and tell them what to be improved? No I don't do that [smile]; I don't think I am allowed to anyway'.

Additionally, many respondents believe that there is no need for them to be involved because it is the responsibility of the government to provide the service and the librarian to think about and plan the programs for the community. According to **CSM1** Non-user 3, 'Well it is the government's responsibility to provide us with the service. Once it's there, we use it' (**CSM1** Non-user 3).

These findings demonstrate that currently in Malaysia, rural public library development and progress does not involve the local rural residents. In addition, this study has highlighted another major issue with the rural public libraries in Malaysia: it seems that all of the **CSM** rural public

libraries have fallen short in promoting and marketing their library, as well as their services, activities and programs. The **CSM2** non-user respondents, for example, complain that they do not know about anything that is happening in the **CSM2** rural public library; they claim that they do not know the type of services, activities or programs offered by the library for them. As for the library users, many of them think that, except for themselves, there are not many people who are aware of the rural public library's activities and programs. **CSM3** User 2 stated, 'I know about it because I participate, but for others I don't think there is enough promotion about it [services, activities and programs]'. Similarly, the **CSM3** group participants expressed the view that other residents have been left behind and not provided with information or news about the library.

In contrast to the **CSM2** and **CSM3** case studies, throughout the **CSM1** case study field visits, respondents expressed their support and satisfaction with the **CSM1** rural public library's development in their village. They describe the **CSM1** rural public library as accommodating and obliging, and as beneficial to the community. Moreover, many respondents expressed their willingness to lend a hand and assist the library if they are needed.

In Australia, the researcher discovered that the rural community involvement was also limited to mainly using the service. None of the community members are directly involved with the rural public library administration or with the selection of the services, activities and programs provided for them. The only difference was that despite not being involved with the formal administration and planning of services, activities and programs, many residents still do volunteer work and offer their services for free.

Across all three rural public library case studies in Victoria, Australia, there was a strong connection with a group called ‘Friends of the Library’. This group supports library activities and development in their local residential area. According to the **CSA1** Librarian,

‘We do have volunteers. We have a group called “Friends of the Library” that contribute to funding the library. In 2006 when the local council proposed to close this library and open a joint facility with the school, the Friends of the Library group and around 60 local people got together to go against it, and since then, they became a small group of the hardcore’.

Similarly, for **CSA2**, the people involved in their Friends of the Library group ‘maintain our garden, yeah and the fruit trees ... apple trees, here that’s a community thing ... it has been maintained by the community’ (**CSA2** Librarian). According to the **CSA3** librarian,

‘We have the Friends of the Library, they are active in handling the additional fundraising; if there is anything additional that we think we would really love to have, well Friends of the Library provide that and have done over the years. They bought various things for the library, TVs and computers, it wasn’t in the budget’.

CSA3 User 2 agrees with the **CSA3** Librarian’s statement and notes that ‘Friends of the Library does volunteer work here and they raise money. We used to do books sales, we still occasionally have book sales’.

In contrast, rather than the fundraising activities of the Friends of the Library group, **CSA2** User 3 has a more informal form of involvement. She explains,

‘Well, maybe I am not involved on the personal level, but I suppose in a group, we the parents do come together, socializing is a form involvement ... as you may have heard, some of us go out afterwards for drinks, grab something to eat, go shopping for the mums. I did that myself with some people that I met here in the nursery rhymes session; usually we just hang out and have some adult time ... which is important’

In addition, the group participant interviews illustrate that the relationship between the community members and the rural public library primarily involves participating in and showing support for the library. As a **CSA2** Group participant points out, ‘She [**CSA2** library staff member] seems to be doing a great job; we are happy with the books and songs selection’ (**CSA2** Group participants). Furthermore, according to a **CSA3** Group participant, ‘We just go with the flow. The librarian has done such a good job, I am not complaining. We probably could give suggestions, but we are happy with things the way they are. It suits us, me, I am not so sure about everybody else ... so we left it as it is’. In contrast, the **CSM1** case study community group participants and the rural public library are far more collaborative with the planning of their group activities. Their weekly activities are selected based on collective decision-making and planning between members and the library: ‘This is a cooperative program, we decide together. We plan things to be brought in and we make things together out of it, the librarian and library assistant take part too [smiling]’ (**CSM1** Group participants).

In reference to the Ladder of Participation and involvement Chart 5.1, encouraging local community involvement in any rural public library planning and decision-making is significant because communities that are involved and well informed have a greater likelihood of having an impact on the planning processes that will affect their futures. Indeed, according to Sweeting and Clark (2000), ‘community members who are informed and involved in a project can become project proponents, reducing the potential for future conflict and reducing the risk of investment’ (p. 8). This is a subtle but important empowerment process. It builds the capacity of the community to influence the library, make it more relevant and reap more benefit from participating in contemporary information practices.

Relationship

People connect and relate to their libraries in various ways, including the use of their resources, material, media or technology. The library has become a productive institution for learning and relationship building. In accordance with the third aim of this research, this section focuses on the relationship between the local rural communities and their rural public libraries in Malaysia and Australia.

In a public library, librarians help transfer a wealth of services and reference experience to their communities. Everyone can use their local library to enrich their lives, both socially and/or economically. The nature of this relationship between a community and its library, according to David McMenemy, 'is straightforward; the librarian selects and provides materials for their user community based on their professional analysis of user needs; as a result the user can trust that the materials selected for them are free from bias and interference' (2008, p. 313).

The performance of a public library is often measured in terms of how well it is meeting the needs of its users (and non-users). This is also one of the most meaningful ways of judging the quality and effectiveness of a library's services. In marketing, the concept of relationship very much refers to client relationship management (Buttle 2012). This has assumed greater importance in contemporary public libraries, as these libraries are now entering into the commercial world which emphasises the connection between customer satisfaction and service quality (McGregor 2004, p. 9).

Upon investigating the relationship between a rural community and their rural public library, it is important to first understand how these rural communities (in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia) have described and distinguished their affiliation with their rural public library over the years. It is also important to remember that the strength of this relationship will determine the effectiveness of the services, programs and activities that have been set up by the local rural public library for their community.

Findings and Analysis

In all six case studies, the majority of the respondents – both users and non-users of the library – revealed that they believe the existence of the rural public library (with its services, activities and programs) in their community has been very positive. Most respondents also acknowledge the importance of having a public library in a small community that can provide material and information to all rural community members.

Many rural community members agree that the local rural public library in some way has succeeded in fulfilling that need. According to **CSM3** User 1,

‘This library and the community association [JKKK] have been working together well in making sure the library becomes beneficial to the local community, especially to our children; and as the new Head of this Village I intend to maintain the good relationship and am looking forward to expanding it further’.

Meanwhile for respondents such as **CSM1** User 2, **CSM1** User 3 and **CSA2** User 2, they are grateful and very happy with their local rural public library for its ability to build a good relationship with the local community and with the fact that the rural public library is very community orientated in delivering its services, programs and activities. According to **CSM1** User 2 and User 3, they are appreciative of the government’s effort in building the **CSM1** rural

public library in their village and they maintain that in general the relationship between the community members and the library has improved over time. They are also grateful to the librarian and the staff members for making it easy for them to benefit from the library: ‘We are all very grateful with the building of this library, and over time the relationship is getting better ... because the librarian is very helpful and friendly’ (**CSM1** User 2).

In the case studies of Victoria, Australia (**CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**), most community members expressed satisfaction with the relationship that has formed between the community and their library. Many praised the current services, programs and activities provided by their local rural public library. This situation generally makes partnership between rural community members and the library positive and long-lasting.

‘[There is] a very good partnership ... they [**CSA2** rural public library] are very community orientated ... they built a very good relationship with the community around ... lately I can see the community here is being more supportive and uses the library as another part of their daily activities’ (**CSA2** User 2).

Despite the positive feedback from users of the rural public libraries, in all three rural community case studies in Selangor, Malaysia, namely **CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**, a relatively low level of relationship and affiliation has developed between rural adults and their local rural public libraries. This may be due to a lack of variety in the services that the public libraries are currently offering. According to many of the responses during the research respondent interviews, currently the rural public library services, activities and programs appear to be focussed more on children’s and teenagers’ needs, especially in Selangor, Malaysia. According to **CSM1** User 3, ‘yes it is beneficial to us but generally, the children gain more benefits from this library’ (**CSM1** User 3).

This phenomenon produces a misconception that public libraries exist mainly for children, rather than serving the informational needs of the general public. In Selangor, Malaysia, almost all of the library users interviewed were not satisfied with the quality of the services in terms of the public library collection, and the library's activities and programs. For example, **CSM1** User 1 observed that many users become reluctant to come to the library because, 'many complain that there are not many new books around for them' (**CSM1** User 1). Similarly, **CSM2** User 1 states, 'Please don't get me wrong, there are many services and activities that are good for us [young people] but I don't think the older people will enjoy it'. **CSM3** User 3 shares this opinion. According to her, 'for the kids and children this library offers good services [activities and programs], but for others [adults] I don't think so'. These findings reveal that the services and functions of rural public libraries in all three locations in Selangor, Malaysia are not fully understood by the general community, and, more importantly, that the quality of services provided by the rural public libraries does not meet community requirements. This has clearly affected the relationship between the rural community and the library in general.

During interviews with the non-users of the rural public library, respondents were asked to describe their relationship with the rural public library. However, many respondents in Selangor, Malaysia were unable to illustrate this relationship clearly because they have particular perceptions of how a correct relationship is supposed to be constructed between a rural public library and its community. This situation is a phenomenon that has occurred for a long time in relation to public libraries, with one author stating that 'misconceptions and negative stereotypes of the image of public libraries still prevail today despite libraries diversifying and offering a range of services to their local community' (Hariff 2011, p. 346).

In all three case studies of rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia, the major understanding of the relationship and affiliation between the libraries and their users as described by the respondents was that it is limited to children. Responses included: ‘Library is good for the children ... they need to use it’ (**CSM2** Non-user 2), and ‘I know many children go there’ (**CSM3** Non-user 2). These responses demonstrate the limitations in the current perceptions and understandings of what a library is and which members of the community it is useful for.

In Victoria, Australia the same question was asked, but the feedback was slightly different. Here the focus of the relationship built between the rural public libraries and their communities expanded to include not only children, but also senior adult users and other community members in general. **CSA1** Non-user 1, for example, believes strongly that her community benefits a lot from the library, despite the fact that she does not use the library herself. She said,

‘Well the relationship has been very, very, very strong. I know, there are a lot of older people using the library and it is very convenient for them because they [senior adults] park here and they just wander through to the library and come back, put their books in their car and do their shopping’ (**CSA1** Non-user 1).

The same feedback was gathered from other non-users such as **CSA1** Non-user 2, **CSA1** Non-user 3 and **CSA2** Non-user 2. These non-users state that their rural public libraries have an excellent connection with their community and that they view the library as very beneficial to their community,

From a librarian’s point of view, it is very important for them to build a good relationship with the community because they are the frontline person, making sure this service is well accepted

by the community. When asked to describe the relationship of the rural public library with the community and how it has developed over time, the answers from the librarians both in Selangor, Malaysia and Victoria, Australia were quite similar. They all insisted that their role is to serve the community.

According to all three rural public library librarians in Selangor, Malaysia (**CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**), their main role is as a service provider to their rural community. For example, the **CSM1** Librarian states, ‘This library and myself have managed to provide the role of service provider to the community very well – especially to kids and children’. The librarians also believe that it is their responsibility to develop better partnerships in terms of planning and executing better services, activities and programs for the rural community, especially for children:

‘We’ve started developing more cooperative programs with the nearby primary school. The aim is to make local people realise our existence and try to attract them to come here. You see, most villagers here are farmers or self-employed, they see the library as something that is not relevant or important in their life’ (**CSM3** Librarian).

The roles and responsibilities described by these rural public library librarians in Selangor, Malaysia tend to be academic and fixed (as taught to them in the universities). This is understandable because all three librarians are young graduates, who have not been in the position for more than a year. In contrast, all three rural public library librarians in the case study communities in Victoria, Australia, namely **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**, are more senior in both experience and practice. Their descriptions of roles and of building relationships are wider and more personal, as the following quotation from the **CSA3** librarian illustrates:

This [building relationship with community members] is not something that I take lightly. If it is not possible I am happy enough to say ‘no I can’t do that’, but I just feel that it is a part of the outreach and extension within the wall of the library. Even the people that come through the door,

they will go like, have you read a good book lately? Or can you recommend something? It's not mandatory [smile]. Some of the newest staff, they don't do that. They don't have the same rapport with the people; they feel that's not necessary. They are not passionate about their role [role as librarian] ... some of them don't come to be bothered. When you are in a community you need to be within the community, especially in a smaller community. It's hard to say really ... I have always done what I've done before. I have always interacted the same way with the people. At the moment we have a very pro library council. I think the relationship is better nowadays. (CSA3 Librarian)

In summary, all six case studies have shown that a rural public library is important for the members of these communities. The case studies illustrate that these rural public libraries have built relationships with their communities. The librarians and staff members of the library see themselves as service providers who are there to serve the community. Rural public libraries in Australia have a level of responsiveness to community needs, whereas in Malaysia there are more oriented towards providing standard services.

Community Information Needs

Community information refers to a wide variety of information systems, sources and materials that are relevant to a particular group of people. It is important to understand the potential and the contribution that information has for empowerment of individuals and groups. The access to a range of information that is relevant to the needs of individuals, groups or communities can increase the choice of options available to them; in addition, it will increase their awareness, understanding, social responsibility and community ownership (WCL 2011). In accordance with the fourth aim of this research, this section focuses on investigation of relevant unmet information needs in the case study rural communities in Malaysia and Australia.

In order to deliver a successful rural public library service, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the needs and expectations of the community members that it serves. However,

the aim should not just be to meet the needs and expectations of the community members; it must go beyond that. Users or community members need to be satisfied with the services, activities, or programs developed for them. It is important for library staff to attempt to understand their users' behavioural needs, their overall attitudes, and their environment.

Findings and Analysis

In Malaysia, the vision of the rural public library developments is to provide all rural communities with a place of engagement and a learning centre regardless of the age and interests of the members of the community (NLM 2010d). Furthermore, the aim of rural public libraries is to contribute towards the development of rural societies not only through increasing the rural literacy rate among rural communities (Muhammad 2004), but also by increasing community information literacy altogether.

Throughout this study, Malaysian rural respondents highlighted their unmet information needs. They pointed out the need for new and more up-to-date books and resources. As **CSM1** User 1 states, 'They need to upgrade better books to read. In future the librarian must think of more programs and activities that are relevant to the community's needs. Currently, the book loan service is quite behind. For users that come to the library regularly, they find that the books are out of date'. There are also requests for interactive activities for the rural community members: 'it would be better if the library held more practical programs and activities rather than just having an intellectual focus. Like demonstrations maybe' (**CSM1** User 3), while according to **CSM3** User 3, 'They should just maintain the current services and go on with the previous programs and activities ... they used to offer programs like handcrafts and cooking'.

Most importantly, community members need information that is relevant to their needs and expectations. According to Md. Anwarul Islam and Muhammad Mezbah-ul-Islamy (2010), a public library cannot continue to attract users without tailoring information and resources to meet the needs of the community;

one of the most difficult but necessary processes in providing community information is the evaluation of information needs, which must be done as often as possible for libraries and information centers to remain relevant. (Islam & Islamy 2010, p. 5).

In supporting community self-development and empowerment, the rural public library librarians were asked what additional services, activities and programs are needed by their local community. Moreover, **CSM3** User 3 states, ‘Much is needed to be improved here ... they need to conduct some small surveys, ask the community, not just assume everything is to the needs of the community’.

The user respondents of the rural public libraries in Victoria, Australia said that they were satisfied with most of the services, activities, and programs developed for them. They praised the prominent displays of new books and information by the library staff. As **CSA1** User 1 explains, ‘One of the innovations that I like is that when they have new books they display them prominently’. Respondents also pointed out that not only do they benefit from having access to new information and resources, but coming to the library has social benefits for them too.

It has been great; it has been a great way to meet new parents and new friends too. Everyone I know seems to participate and has been here. I don’t come here to get more information on how to raise a child you know, just more books for her [respondent’s baby]... and it has been really great she [respondent’s baby] loves it. (**CSA2** User 2).

Moreover, all of the **CSA** respondents also endorse and approve of the information and resources circulation method used by the rural public libraries in Victoria, Australia: ‘Yes, it’s [**CSA3** rural public library services, activities and programs] quite good, and they keep the circulation going among the libraries, and they buy new material, and once it hasn’t been borrowed for a long time, they sell it off’ (**CSA3** User 1).

In reference to the current situation in which many rural public library services, activities and programs are only partially utilized by community members, the library assistants of the three rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia acknowledge the difficulties and challenges faced by their rural public libraries in trying to fulfil the needs and expectations of their local community residents. According to these library assistants, there are a lot of changes and improvements that need to be done from both parties (the government and the community) in order to develop the rural library as the hub of community life activities. As the **CSM2** library assistant points out, ‘There is more needed to be done in making sure this library becomes the centre of the community life activity ... plenty more’. However, it is something that many are looking forward to: ‘Well, we are trying very hard towards that vision [satisfying users’ needs and expectations]’ (**CSM3** Library Assistant).

While investigating the theme of unmet community information needs, the researcher noticed that in Malaysia no special library reference policy has been developed in any of the rural public libraries; furthermore, there is no information or material describing the local communities that the libraries serve. Moreover, there was no discussion or policy development that took into consideration the kinds of information the library users want and expect from the library.

However, in contrast to Malaysian rural public libraries, in Australia, most rural public libraries do have special collections that reflect the local community history, background or social setting. These types of collections are very important because they reflect the unique economic and social background of each local community, as well as revealing the particular information needs of the communities.

Summary

This cross case analysis has discussed the similarities and differences of current usage, perceptions and observations of the individuals who engage directly and indirectly with the services, activities and programs provided by the rural public library to its local residents. However, upon conducting this investigation and while formulating this cross case report, the researcher came across many issues that would benefit from greater attention by the government and service providers in regard to the development of rural public libraries. Some of these issues include: rural public library special collection development policy; rural public library acquisition, marketing and promotion policies; and the role of the librarians and the library support staff in a small community. In addition, this cross case analysis also illustrates the misconceptions among community members about what a rural public library is, as well as its function and role in a small rural community, especially in Malaysia.

The most important insight that was gained through this research was that although community participation and involvement are achievable, further contributions are required from both the community members and the service providers, especially in a small community. Commitment and dedication are also required, particularly when the rural community is traditionally very

conservative in its aspirations. The researcher, however, believes that it is possible to develop new perspectives and to propose innovative ways of developing the rural public library usage, management and promotional efforts in Malaysia. The researcher also thinks that it is possible to shape current rural public libraries to support community information literacy progress, to transform the community into a learning community, and finally to support rural community self-development and empowerment in the future.

CHAPTER 6: Implications of the Research

This final chapter draws together the main findings of the research and reflects on the analysis of the data which was derived from various sources, including personal interviews, group observations and interviews, and the review of documents. These research findings are synthesized and addressed in relation to the research aim posed in Chapter 1: to explore relationships between rural public libraries and their communities in both Malaysia and Australia, with particular attention to empowerment and community development. The researcher has applied relevant theoretical understandings and her cultural expertise to develop recommendations. In addition, she proposes a framework for the development of more responsive rural public library services in developing countries such as Malaysia. The framework includes the dimensions of cultural relevance, responsiveness to local information needs, appropriate policies, and community development.

Discussion

In any effort to develop and empower a community, it is important for the community to be exposed as much as possible to information and knowledge about their surroundings; in other words, it is important for the members of the community to be information literate. Being information literate means that the individual needs to be able to identify their information needs and the location of the information required, and to know how to use the information effectively in dealing with their daily personal and non-personal issues (Partridge 2008). Communities that are literate are powerful because they are able to see, to evaluate, to use and to create information and knowledge to achieve their goals.

The public library is recognized as a centre of information and knowledge; it supports individual and community development and enhancement efforts through its on-going services, collections, technology, activities and programs. For many years, the function of the public library has been as ‘the local gateway to knowledge, providing a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of an individual and social group’ (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994).

A learning community operates through partnership and collaborations; it addresses the learning needs of its locality through affiliation and association between community members and a local institution. It uses the strengths of social and institutional relationships to bring about cultural shifts in perceptions of the value of learning (Yarnit 2000). Within this partnership and collaboration, shared purposes, objectives or goals are achieved through working together and building new knowledge (Kilpatrick et. al 2003). The establishment of a learning community can be facilitated through enhancing community lifelong learning processes. Lifelong learning is ‘a powerful tool for social cohesion, community capacity building and social, cultural and economic development’ (Kilpatrick et al. 2003, p. 4).

For small rural communities such as those discussed in the Malaysian case studies, being an information literate community means that the community members will gain a lifelong learning advantage and they will be able to experience life as a learning community. Currently, there are over 1,089 rural public libraries operating in rural villages in Malaysia which have been built with the purpose of serving the information needs of the rural population and to support their self-development, community development, and empowerment requirements.

Originally, the intention behind rural public libraries establishment in Malaysia was to assist rural communities to have comprehensive and complete information and recreational facilities and to improve the rural literacy rate. The Malaysian government expects this development to reduce the information acquisition gap between rural and city communities (Muhammad 2004). However, previous research has found that rural public libraries in Malaysia are underutilised (Riss 2006; Farabi 2008; Kushchu 2008). The research reported in this thesis found that rural public libraries in Malaysia focus on delivering pre-determined services rather than responding to community needs.

In 2002, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in his speech at the launch of the opening of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative International Conference on Lifelong Learning, emphasized that the Malaysian government has recognized the importance of lifelong learning in their 3rd Outline Perspective Plan. Furthermore, he explained that 'lifelong learning will and is becoming increasingly important in the knowledge-based economy where knowledge and skills need to be continuously updated and upgraded' (Ali 2005, p. 3).

More recently, in 2011 the Malaysian government continued this effort to encourage lifelong learning with the launch of the 'Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia 2011-2020' by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. With the ambitious goal of attaining a participation rate of 50 percent in adult education and lifelong learning by 2020, the Deputy Prime Minister stressed that this blueprint will become a strategic tool to move Malaysia from a middle-income to a high-income country by the year 2020 (UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning 2011c). All these efforts, added to the existing ministries and agencies promoting

lifelong learning skills and building learning communities, no doubt demonstrate that in Malaysia there is an emergent recognition of the need to encourage lifelong learning, especially informal and non-formal learning among adults (Ali 2005; Lee 2005).

Despite the commitment of political leaders, lifelong learning endeavours in Malaysia still have a long way to go. Currently, it is still considered by Malaysians to be an area that is marginal and trivial. The NLM Director General, Dato' Raslin Abu Bakar, clearly described the situation at the 5th Meeting of Asia Pacific Information Network (APIN). According to Bakar, 'lifelong learning is one of the areas that tend to be sidelined among Malaysians' (2010a, p. 12). There are still many challenges surrounding the idea of lifelong learning and learning in general among Malaysians. According to Gan Siowck Lee (2005), Malaysians must acquire the skills to learn how to learn at an early age and must realize that lifelong learning can become a mechanism for inclusion. In addition, Malaysians must rely less on traditional institutions and become more self-directed in learning, and they need to effectively shift away from over-dependence on traditional classrooms.

These rural public libraries' relationships with their communities are consistent with an exogenous or top-down model of community development. Community development theory suggests that development activities will have greater impact if local communities are involved and have a sense of ownership of the activities in keeping with the endogenous or bottom-up model. This study suggests that a mix of exogenous and endogenous approaches is needed to bring together government commitment to establishing and resourcing rural public libraries and the ideas of community development and information literacy. The mix of exogenous and

endogenous approaches will strengthen collaborations and partnerships between rural communities and rural public libraries.

Through conducting this research, the researcher has become convinced that Malaysian rural public libraries can assist with shifting the Malaysian over-independence on traditional and examination oriented forms of learning to a more informal yet on-going effort of learning and gaining knowledge, especially for Malaysian rural residents. Malaysian rural public libraries are equipped with the resources, services, technology, staffing and physical structures to run small and community focussed learning activities and programs. With changes and improvements including those recommended in the next part of this chapter, it is argued that rural public libraries in Malaysia could offer an excellent platform for Malaysian lifelong learning efforts and for developing information literacy and learning communities.

Implications for Theory, Policy, and Practices

This section proposes innovative ways of rural public library management, and the promotion of products and services to the local rural communities in Malaysia and similar contexts. It discusses the key concepts of community lifelong learning, information literacy and learning communities that were outlined earlier in this thesis, and relates these concepts to the analysis that has been performed.

In many poor and developing countries in the world such as Asian and African countries, the government and the administrative structures may be seen as community development practitioners (Kenny 2006) because they have the capability to respond to, and have the

resources to contribute to the empowerment of the community as well as to understand the objectives, attitudes and approaches that are required for community development. Rural public libraries are one of many examples of government initiatives to provide and facilitate rural communities with the resources and means for development and empowerment.

In Malaysia, as in most developing countries around the world, local government and local institutions appear to be very involved in promoting rural development services and programs through their administration and policies. Some of the services and programs include education, health and communication, as well as the rural public library service. In this situation, it is fair to state that the Malaysian government, NLM, state libraries, librarians and library assistants are community development practitioners. They are involved directly in providing rural public library services, programs and activities to the local rural communities.

In the Australian rural public libraries, participation and involvement among community members is widespread and the libraries that participated in this research engaged almost all parties of the community. There is no doubt that, like their Malaysian counterparts, Australian rural public libraries also focus on babies, toddlers and school children in developing and delivering their services, activities and programs. However, in addition they offer many formalised and non-formalised services, activities and programs for adults. In his paper, 'The Modern Public Library: the best investment your community can make', Dr. Alan Bundy, president of the Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA), states that 'public libraries are a requirement for a literate, educated, civilized and connected society ... people often do not know what constitutes a good library' (2003, p. 4).

The following section discusses the research findings and provides recommendations to specific parties involved directly and indirectly with the development of rural public library services, programs and activities in countries such as Malaysia. It also recommends an approach to community development through rural public libraries and explains how this can lead to community empowerment.

Collection Development

Public library collections are about bringing ‘people and ideas and knowledge together to meet an individual’s and communities recreational, learning and information needs’ (Strong 2006, p. 333). Hence, it is important for any library collection to be developed purposefully on an on-going basis, to ensure that the users and the community members in general have a choice of new and appropriate material to meet their demands (Koontz & Gubbin 2010). According to IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994, collections should include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society. In addition, in developing library collections, librarians need to consider the manifesto principles which state that collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor commercial pressures. The library service must be adapted to the different needs of communities in rural and urban areas (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994).

Failing to ensure a good library collection will result in low library usage among members. However, there are other conditions too. According to Sharpe and Stierman (2008, p. 2), the

reason for the decrease in local community businesses' and residents' use of public libraries is that a lot of local business directories and other information sources are already too old by the time they appear on the library shelves. In many Malaysian rural public libraries, there are no subscriptions to business journals or newsletters, and in many cases, there is not much information on local, governmental or private service companies. Currently, this situation is widespread among rural public libraries in Malaysia, and therefore small rural businesses and entrepreneurs see no information or materials - printed or electronic, that are relevant to their needs. These community members therefore assume that the library has nothing to offer them on either a personal level, or in relation to their businesses.

Age of the Material

Feedback from rural public library users in Malaysia indicated that the main materials and resources in the rural public libraries, namely books (fiction and non-fiction), materials and resources such as magazines and newspapers, pamphlets and brochures, are too old and out-of-date to be of use. Although there is a borrowing service available in all Malaysian rural public libraries, there is no sharing of books or any other types of materials or resources among the local rural public libraries – there is no collection rotation service. The books and resources each rural public library has will stay there indefinitely without re-evaluation. There are ways to address this issue, namely through a better and a more responsive acquisition of materials, creating a suggestion box for members and community to recommend resources, and responding to special requests by members.

Collection Sharing

Australian rural public libraries have collection rotation and interlibrary loans to give members access to a greater range of resources. Rural communities have easy and convenient access to a variety of types of reading materials from other communities and locations. Malaysian rural public libraries should consider replacing old catalogue systems with an online database system, to allow easy access among users of the local libraries and other local rural public libraries around Malaysia.

Activity based Collection Development

In some rural public libraries in Malaysia, there are efforts to develop a mixture of verbal and non-verbal activity-based resources. One in particular is the cooking class in **CSM1** rural public library. The cooking class was developed through collaboration between the local women's association and the local rural public library staff members in **CSM1**. These cooking classes were attended by the **CSM1** housewives and are an excellent example of verbal information sharing. These weekly sessions provide a space for the women in the community to share their knowledge about cooking, orally and voluntarily, and at the end of each class they also share the food, and their recipes are documented and collected for future reference, becoming an electronic resource. This type of activity is a community development effort. It will not only help the community to develop their personal skills, but will also allow this group of people to empower themselves to generate new knowledge.

Acquisition

In Malaysian rural public libraries, despite the user feedback documented in this research regarding out-dated and old collection materials and resources, there are efforts by both state and national library to provide new books, using a centralised purchasing system.

Many public libraries around the world have a centralised purchasing system. A centralised acquisition or purchasing system reduces costs due to trade and quantity discounts. However, a centralised acquisition or purchasing method creates delay and collection materials are not responsive to local community information needs.

This study found that Malaysian rural public library acquisition processes affect quality, quantity and value of the resources of their rural public libraries. The collection development policies of obtaining the materials in the most cost-effective way (centralized purchasing) result in the mismatch of collection and resources to the needs of the community. For example, the **CSM2** community members whose economic activities are based on farming and agricultural industries have no books, resources or references on agricultural industries in their **CSM2** rural public library. In this situation a service provider could develop its services based on the demography and background of its local community. Moreover, the local rural public library librarian needs to understand his/her community conditions and surroundings in order that they can search for and provide the most suitable resources to be available through their library.

Weeding

Clearing of library resources and materials is referred to as disposal and weeding. The Malaysian Disposal of Library Resources, National Library Act (amendment) 1987 (Act A667) Section 4(2) P, clearly states that: to ‘borrow, sell or other disposal of library resources which became part of the library’ (USM 2005) comes under the NLM’s responsibility. The disposal and weeding of library resources and materials involves either shredding or selling (as stated in the Malaysia National Archive Act 2003 (Act 629)). Despite this attention to keeping collections up-to-date, this research indicates that Malaysian rural public library users require access to more up to date materials. Strategies other than weeding are required for example more frequent new acquisitions and publicising online resources.

Promoting Services, Activities and Programs

Public libraries bring benefits to local communities through their activities and programs. They act to collect, preserve and promote local culture in all its diversity. An example of how the rural public library resources benefit communities can be seen in Botswana. Here, the library organized local community discussion groups; hence they developed a traditional song collection and documented dance practices in their effort to promote the local traditional Setswana language (UNESCO 2008). Similarly, in the **CSA3** Australian case study of this research, the rural public library expanded their collection beyond standard materials such as books and magazines and activities such as children coloring competitions. They provided a mixture of verbal collections (such as recordings and CDs) and non-verbal collections (such as newsletters, reports, pictures and other materials) about the local history of their community. Such strategies can be employed by rural public libraries in Malaysia to enhance and engage with the community.

Considering the tradition of storytelling and its significance to Malaysian culture, as well as the difficulties in cultivating interest in reading activities in Malaysian society, integrating an oral form of transmission and sharing of information in rural areas would be an effective way to attract rural community members, especially senior adults. The **CSM1** rural public library cooking class and collection of recipes can be seen as an example of this type of engagement. Like the UNESCO (2008) project in Botswana, CSM1 indicates that libraries and library staff work with the assets – skills and knowledge, of local people to improve the community engagement with the library

In the Malaysian case study libraries, there was only one example of an activity provided for adults which was the cooking class for the local women. In rural public libraries in Australia, some of the activities for adults included the book clubs for adults in **CSA1**, senior literature classes in **CSA2**, and volunteering programs in **CSA3**. Adults' activities and programs based on a lifelong learning approach could be organized and run in Malaysian rural public libraries with their current capacity and capabilities: for instance, the introduction of language classes for the adult community members – perhaps U3A Malaysia could offer some kind of assistance or build collaboration programs with the rural public libraries (similar to what is happening in the **CSA1** rural public library in Australia). Since Malaysian people are often very religious minded and it is a multicultural society, language classes such as Jawi⁵⁴, Mandarin, Urdu, Arabic and Al-Quran reading sessions might interest and suit the senior adults. As for children, it would be good to introduce a story-time session in which a library staff member could tell the children stories

⁵⁴ The Arabic script that was adapted to write the Malay language.

instead of the children always reading for themselves. It is recommended that this activity should not be seasonal⁵⁵ as successfully running these activities and programs on a regular basis will bring great benefits to the local community. Other verbal information sharing activities could take the form of group discussions, workshops and person-to-person interactions.

The Malaysian rural public library librarians and the library assistants are often unable to promote new books and information materials prominently. The reasons for this were highlighted by the librarians and assistant librarians during the interviews and included: outside demands including requirements to attend regular NLM and SLS meetings, and training sessions. While this is essential, these demands limit the ability of librarians and staff members to proactively promote collection and services. The failure to display new materials and resources is not only a loss for the community and library users in particular, but it will also affect the general perception that the community has of the library. The NLM and SLS could provide some assistance to rural public library staff in relation to materials display and promotional activities.

Strategies suggested by the community to enhance and promote community participation include expert and author talks as appropriate activities. Internet training for rural adult community members could empower them to access a wealth of information resources. Another suggestion is that Malaysian rural public libraries ensure that other types of resources are made accessible to the community such as digital collections; interlibrary loans; national information database

⁵⁵ Currently many activities and programs held in public libraries in Malaysia depend on the season; for example, in celebration of Malaysia Independence Day on 31 August every year, for the whole month of August, almost all public libraries will hold activities such as essay writing, poem sessions, colouring contests and storytelling competitions for children. However, these activities are only available in that month.

access; the compilation of localized publications such as newsletters, magazines or information sheets; and the development of local historical collections.

From time to time, marketing through the media and in print or on radio and/or television programs is also an effective approach. It would also be advisable to use the conventional tools of marketing to help increase popular acceptance of the local rural public libraries: for instance, developing a market research plan and report for each rural public library. This would allow the local rural public library librarians to investigate their library market and user segmentations, and these could be compared with the library collections and circulation data. The librarians could also develop their own promotion plan which might include small in-house exhibitions and campaigns; book fairs; local community directories and listings; and in-house Friends of the Library groups. In case studies **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3** there were many specific services, programs and activities organized by the libraries based on the individual community backgrounds and surroundings. For example, **CSA1** organized a local novelist to come and do reading sessions with the local residents, **CSA2** organized a homework assistant service for school children, and **CSA3** organized a small in-house local historical exhibition for their local community. These kinds of approaches are more likely to be accepted and accessible to the local and neighboring communities compared with only focusing on nationally based campaigns and programs.

These recommendations do not deny the importance of printed material resources, namely books; rather, the researcher suggests that a combination of both verbal and written information should be taken into consideration.

Staffing the Rural Public Library Service

The expertise and availability and number of staff in rural public libraries is a key factor in their ability to deliver rural public library services, activities and programs. The skills of public library staff members are often traditionally related to the library procedures and practices; however, currently these skills and expertise have expanded to include customer service, interpersonal skills and most importantly, technological skills. The Australian Library Information Association (ALIA) lists twelve fundamental qualities and skills required by public library staff:

(1)The ability to communicate positively with people; (2) the ability to understand the needs of customers; (3) the ability to cooperate with individuals and groups in a community; (4) have knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity; (5) have knowledge of material that forms the library collection and how to access them; (6) have understanding of and sympathy with the principles of public service; (7) have the ability to work with others in providing an effective library service; (8) have organizational skills with flexibility to identify and implement change; (9) teamwork and leadership skills; (10) imagination, vision and openness to new ideas and practices; (11) readiness to change methods or working to meet new situations; and (12) knowledge of information and communication technology. (ALIA 2011b)

During the fieldwork observations in the three rural public libraries in Selangor, Malaysia, the researcher became aware that it was not just these twelve skills that affected the active members' participation in the rural public library; moreover, it was the gender and age of the librarian and the library assistant that also influenced the types of users who participated in each rural public library. For instance, in **CSM1** and **CSM3**, participation among children and women (housewives) was double in comparison to **CSM2**, presumably because both librarians and library assistants in **CSM1** and **CSM3** are young females. Through meetings and conversations with the librarian, the library assistant and community members, the researcher observed that the female community members and children were comfortable with a female librarian and library assistant, and they found it easy to establish a connection in this context. Some of the male

community members, on the other hand, found it difficult when both the librarian and library assistant were female. In **CSM2**, however, where both the librarian and library assistant were male, the users of the rural public library were more likely to be teenagers and young males.

During the research observations in rural public libraries in Australia, staffing was observed to be more varied in terms of gender. Although all three librarians in the rural public libraries visited by the researcher (namely **CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**) were female, the other staff members were a mixture of males and females.

It is customary and expected for Malaysians to have social boundaries between genders⁵⁶. Nonetheless, service providers might want to change their approach to staffing personnel. The researcher believes that it is unproductive and unbeneficial for the rural public library to have personnel of only one gender. As an alternative, collaboration and partnerships between rural public libraries in running their programs and activities could be used to change this situation and hopefully this would alter the types of participation and involvement among community members. For example in all three rural public libraries visited and observed by the researcher in Australia, it was apparent that the librarians have many years of experience in the librarianship industry and are very committed to their work. They work for long hours and sometimes after hours to serve their community. In contrast, all three librarians in the rural public libraries visited

⁵⁶ The Malaysian constitution defines Malay as “a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, and conforms to Malay customs” (Malaysia: Federal Constitution, 160(2)). Islam has functional primacy in Malay society but does not exclude traditional practices known as ‘*adat*’. In effect, Malays have incorporated patriarchal elements of Islam into their traditional bilateral kinship system. Islamic elements, that is, the patrilineal hierarchy of authority and succession, predominate in areas such as guardianship, property devolution, political leadership and social control; such social control includes that it is against the ‘*adat*’ to have a male and a female together in a closed room without a ‘*mahram*’ [refer to males who a woman cannot marry at any time of her life such as her father and brother].

and observed by the researcher in Malaysia are young graduates with very limited experience in handling and administrating a library. Nonetheless, this is a very common situation faced in the librarianship industry, even in Australia. In Malaysia, although there are many young information and library science graduates, most of them leave the industry after serving for only a couple of years (Yusof 2011). This indicates a need for a better salary, promotion and advancement scheme in the library profession.

Currently, in rural public libraries in both Malaysia and Australia, the promotion of services, programs and activities depends on the librarian and the library assistant/staff members; hence these staff members need to seek out the most suitable methods for attracting their community members. In many rural public libraries in Australia, the librarians and staff members are very innovative and creative in promoting and diversifying their services, activities and programs. Rather than relying solely on pamphlets and brochures, they use many forms of personal and electronic communications such as emails, telephone calls, faxes and verbal / face to face communication. In all three **CSA** case studies (**CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**), the library websites were used actively: in informing and communicating with members; informing about return loan dates, planned programs, new books and material availability in the library; and registration and suggestion forms were also available on the rural public library webpages.

On the other hand, based on the findings of this study, of the three rural public libraries in Malaysia, only **CSM1** rural public library has successfully run and organized programs and activities using methods similar to those used by the Australian rural public libraries. They actively use Facebook, email, Twitter and verbal communication to help promote their activities

and to inform the community about their services and programs. It is highly recommended that these initiatives employed by the **CSM1** rural public library are used by other rural public libraries around Malaysia.

At the same time, the number of staff and the educational background among rural librarians and library assistants in local rural public libraries around Malaysia need to be enhanced. Furthermore, their formal and non-formal skills need to be improved, including management proficiency skills, technical skills, cataloguing, report writing skills, budgeting and especially communication skills. In Malaysia, both the NLM and state library are responsible for providing staff development and enhancement courses to the rural public library librarians and library assistants. The same situation occurs in Australia, where the SLV provides opportunities for staff development and enhancement courses to all library staff members. This process of staff enhancement and enrichment must not interrupt the daily work activities of the staff, or alter their effectiveness as service providers to their community. During the research investigation and observation in the **CSM2** rural public library, several respondents (users and non-users) commented on the opening hours of their rural public library. They claimed that there were many occasions when they found that the **CSM2** rural public library was closed because there was no staff to run the library due to meetings, courses or other activities that required the attendance of both the librarian and library assistant.

On several occasions, the researcher was confronted by respondents' questions as to why there was no inquiry done by either the government or the rural public library about their community information and service needs. Hence, it is strongly recommended that the rural public library

librarians and library assistants need to be supported to conduct their own small and simple research investigations into serving their communities. This will facilitate the staff members to better understand the needs of their community, in order that they can then plan and implement relevant services, activities and programs.

Partnership with Community Organizations

One of many important roles of a public library is to ‘provide a focus for local community cultural and economic development and this can be achieved by working in partnership with suitable and appropriate local and regional organizations’ (Koontz & Gubbin 2010, p. 8).

Malaysia has a reputation for having too many associations in a village (from socially to politically based associations): there is the Village Association (*Persatuan Penduduk*), the Village Progress and Safety Committee (*Jawatan Kuasa Kemajuan Dan Keselamatan Kampung – JKKK*), the neighbourhood association (*Rukun Tetangga - RT*), the public security association (*Ikatan Relawan Rakyat - RELA*), the community progress centre (*Pusat Kemajuan Masyarakat - KEMAS*), the medium and small enterprises (*Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana - PKS*), the Islamic group (*Kariah*), and the small settlement centre (*Pusat Petempatan Kecil - PPK*), to name a few.

Partnership, cooperation and sharing resources with these associations and organizations are essential in promoting the rural public library as a hub for community information and as a knowledge centre. Existing rural public libraries have the ability to provide these associations and organizations with the information, location and space to develop programs and activities.

Furthermore, the rural public libraries could also affiliate with these local associations and organizations to develop programs or activities. The librarians could support these affiliations further by providing, for example, monthly workshops, practical programs or any activities that are relevant to the needs of both the association members and other members of the rural community. The need for this type of support to be provided by the library was highlighted by some respondents:

For my business I sometimes need advice in terms of financial and business opportunities, it would be good if the rural public library could help me with that (**CSM3** Non-user 1).

I do fish breeding as my sideline income, do you reckon the library could help me with this? (**CSM1** Non-user 1)

Introducing a base for a volunteer program and collaborating with individuals from these local associations could become a way of promoting integration and partnership between the community members and their rural public library (Kretzmann et al. 2005, Rans, Altman & Erlander 2002).

In case studies in Australia (**CSA1**, **CSA2** and **CSA3**), all three rural public libraries have at least one effective collaboration program involving a local community association; for example, **CSA1** works closely with the local U3A group and local council in running programs and activities in their library; in the **CSA2** rural public library, the local community association voluntarily helps to maintain the area surrounding the library including doing the gardening and planting fruit trees; and in **CSA3**, the rural public library has a long-standing and positive relationship and runs many collaborative activities with the local historical association such as organizing local exhibitions on local history and inviting local authors to speak.

Upon developing partnerships and collaborative programs with other organizations, all Malaysian local rural public libraries could approach and design joint programs with U3A Malaysia⁵⁷. This would be similar to the situation occurring in Australia, where several of the U3A groups have branched out their learning and educational activities to include rural areas. This group creates informal activities such as the one running actively in the **CSA1** rural public library. The **CSA1** U3A group organizes literature classes for adults with the assistance and support of the local rural public library staff members and the local library's existing resources. These programs run weekly and on a voluntary basis. In addition, the researcher also believes that there is a need to create a special rural public library task group (something similar to 'Friends of the Library' in Australia). This task group could:

1. be comprised of local residents or local community members (because most rural public library librarians and library assistants are not local residents);
2. function to help promote the library among local community residents;
3. support and be involved in the development and planning of all rural public library activities and programs;
4. be recognized by the NLM or state library as a mechanism for enhancing rural public library promotion and usage among rural residents.

This recommended approach will help to introduce and enhance empowerment among the communities through participation, decision-making and involvement in the rural public library, thus promoting community development (Kenny 2006). This will also support lifelong learning among rural communities and will assist in promoting a learning culture among rural residents,

⁵⁷ The University of the Third Age, Malaysia is a program under the "Lifelong Learning for Older Malaysians" project led by Professor Dr. Tengku Aizan Hamid, Director, Institute of Gerontology, Universiti Putra Malaysia. The project is currently supported by the Government of Malaysia and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) [Country Programme Cycle 2008 - 2012]. It began in 2007 when the Institute of Gerontology developed a pilot program known as the Lifelong Learning Initiative for the Elderly (LLIFE). The enthusiastic response of senior citizens under the program led to the establishment of the University of the Third Age Malaysia, a hybrid of the British and French models internationally (U3A Malaysia, <http://u3amalaysia.wordpress.com/about/>).

especially rural adults. This would hopefully be an effective method as local people are more likely to trust and respond positively when approached by a member of their own community.

Meeting Community Information Needs

Koontz and Gubbin (2010) emphasise that a qualified librarian should know and understand the community they serve, and they need to have regular contact with the community. A librarian is an advocate of a library, and they are therefore responsible for developing marketing and promotional activities for their library and for developing services that meet the needs of their community. Existing rural public libraries in Malaysia operate as separate individual institutes. This means that each rural public library librarian needs to market and promote their rural public library locally. This study revealed that the role of rural public libraries in Malaysia is not well understood in many of the rural communities.

Marketing is a driving force of a business and this is also the case for a library. The major tools of marketing are marketing research; marketing segmentation; marketing strategies (the 4P's – product, price, place and promotion); and marketing evaluation (Gupta & Savard 2010). These tools could assist in shaping new and innovative approaches for promoting library services and programs.

In the context of the Malaysian rural public libraries, 'word of mouth' marketing and promotional efforts are the best method to be used to advertise rural public library services, programs and activities, because the Malaysian context involves a smaller number of community members (in comparison to rural areas in Australia) and a very traditional-minded group of

people. Malaysian culture values the spirit of neighborliness, and this type of community group in particular adheres to the values of respect, trust, closeness and friendship. Furthermore, since all three of the rural public library librarians (**CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**) in this case study are young graduates and not local residents of the village, it is advisable that they approach the community members face-to-face, especially the community adults. In marketing terms, this face-to-face approach is referred to as relationship marketing. In the library context, this involves encouraging recognition of the mutual interests of the libraries and the clients they serve (Besant & Sharp 2004). It is important for Malaysian rural public library librarians and library assistants to remember that marketing is directly linked to the clients' perceptions of the services the library offers and the library's interpretation of the clients' needs (Weingand 2001).

Professional Association and Co-operation

In relation to these recommendations for improvements and enhancements for rural public libraries in Malaysia, the researcher proposes that there is a need to develop a special network for these local rural communities to assist and support their lifelong learning practices. Such a network could be called a Rural Community Learning Network (RCLN) and should be based on the information and knowledge needs and wants of each rural community. RCLN associates should include the local rural public library staff members, the local rural public library users, and community members including non-users, local community associations, entrepreneurs and business representatives. RCLN could be established innovatively and creatively in a way that is suited to the unique demographics, environment and lifestyle of each community.

Development of a Rural Community Learning Network (RCLN)

RCLN is proposed as a type of learning network using and based on local resources, material and knowledge. For instance, using local industries through partnership programs, local associations through affiliation activities, and government and non-government organizations through collaboration events and campaigns. The focus should be on local people supporting local people.

The rural public library support in relation to the RCLN would be in the form of providing the physical location and setting, providing and assisting with material and resource needs, and most importantly, organising the establishment of the network. In doing so, rural public libraries could improve their collection by adding and developing in-house local resources such as local business and industry directories, local documents and historical manuscripts.

Rural Public Libraries and Community Development in Malaysia

In the Malaysian context, the Malaysian government, NLM, state libraries, librarians and library assistants are involved directly in providing rural public library services, programs and activities to their local rural communities. These parties are therefore the community development practitioners. As community development practitioners, there is no doubt that the Malaysian government, NLM and State library have worked hard in promoting reading, literacy, information literacy and public library services to the Malaysian population.

Numerous campaigns and programs have been run nation-wide including the *'Program Mari Membaca Satu Malaysia'* (Come Read 1 Malaysia program); Well Lit. Program; *'Seronoknya ke*

Perpustakaan’ (It is Fun to Go to the Library); and *‘Jauh Perjalanan Luas Pengetahuan*’ (Long Journey, well-read), to name a few. Unfortunately, these programs and campaigns are usually seasonal and seldom on-going, and are often only conducted in libraries in urban and town areas, so they do not reach the rural communities. Sometimes the campaigns are extended to target rural areas, but this has only been the case for a few libraries that were fortunate enough to be selected. Nonetheless, the Malaysian community needs to understand that the government, NLM and state library’s role is solely to provide, support and facilitate. They cannot build community competency or empower people without the people themselves being willing to participate.

It is generally understood that for a community to become empowered, they must first have the capability and the ability to develop themselves (Kenny 2006). Community development and other related concepts such as community engagement and community control are some of the many on-going strategies of empowerment. Empowerment is a process of helping or supporting a group of people to change and improve their economic, social, cultural or environmental situation. In order to have the power to change a community, community members need to be aware of some of the most important elements of community development: participation, self-help and self-determination, decision-making and leadership. The following section is a discussion of the importance for Malaysian rural communities of enhancing the four aspects of community development: participation, self-help and determination, decision-making and leadership. In addition, a framework for rural public library community development is proposed.

Participation

This research found that participation in rural public library services, programs and activities among Malaysian rural communities is low and is mainly school children, small groups of women and small groups of young adults (for details, refer to Chapter 4). Malaysian rural communities need to see the rural public library as more than just a library. They need to see and value the rural public library as a hub for self and community development; a place where they can learn, grow and gain knowledge (formally and informally); a space where they can interact and communicate (in ways as simple as meeting each other); and they need to participate and involve themselves with their rural public libraries. Rural community involvement is a process that prioritises services, programs and activities based on what a community really needs.

Self-help and Determination

Empowerment is about being in control or about having power. Power in community development refers to the ability to influence change rather than the power to exploit or dominate others (Ife 2002). Although there is some concern as to the difference between having ‘power over’ and having ‘power with’⁵⁸, self-empowerment is very important for a community to become developed and to sustain the development. To be able to have self-empowerment, one must first have a sense of self-help and self-determination. Self-help and self-determination are related to the idea that helping one’s self will create collaboration and improve one’s quality of life (Christenson, 1989). This is an action of choice. It is a vital element of community

⁵⁸ The difference between these two terms is that ‘power over’ is about individuals, groups or institutions assuming the right to make decisions for others, while ‘power with’ involves a commitment to self-determination or capacity of people to determine their own affairs.

development because if the community does not see the need to help themselves, there will be no success in delivering any programs or activities.

Through this study, which included investigations and field visits to Malaysian rural public libraries and their communities, it was evident that rural residents were very accepting of the current arrangements of information access and services provided to them. In all three case studies (**CSM1**, **CSM2** and **CSM3**), all respondents (users and non-users) were more concerned about whether the library was supporting their children's development rather than their own self-enhancement. These circumstances hindered their understanding and acceptance of the concept of lifelong learning, which consequently failed to enhance the development of their community as a learning community as well as the development of community information literacy.

Ideally, the Malaysian rural community needs to value, to understand and recognize the significance of rural public libraries as a mechanism for them to gain lifelong education. Only by using this tool will they be able to change their lives for the better and actively participate in a sustainable form of community development. This research proposes that a form of community education program on 'revisiting the library' is introduced to rural residents, especially among the adult community members. It is important to assist them to understand that in order to develop themselves, they need to have appropriate information access and adequate information literacy skills.

Decision-Making

A community needs to have successfully constructed a strong sense of participation and involvement, and an awareness of their own needs, in order to have the ability to solve their problems and achieve their goals. This community participation and involvement will lead them further towards better decision-making, for they will know what they want and need, and be better equipped to achieve their goals.

Unfortunately, current Malaysian communities are very much adapted to the ‘approximately’ (*lebih kurang*) (Harian 2010), ‘as long as it is there’ (*asalkan ada*) and ‘slipshod’ (*cincai*) (Muhammad 2011) attitudes. To start taking control of their lives and start making decisions about what is best for them and for their future requires change. Having a say in selecting and determining the types of services, programs and activities offered by the rural public libraries would be an excellent starting point. The government has spent millions of Ringgit Malaysia on constructing the rural public libraries in a physical sense, and they have also provided the basic resources needed in the libraries such as books and internet connections. Now it is up to the community to take charge and further develop the rural public libraries based on their own needs.

Leadership

Leadership is a subjective term, which is commonly defined as effectively providing direction through the skills of communicating, managing and delegating (Stovall et al. 2011). These skills are combined in organizing and accomplishing a goal. Hence, in relation to community leadership, the concept refers to a person or a group of people who are willing to lead and guide by effectively defining, communicating and implementing common goals for the benefit of the

group as a whole. It is about establishing good connections and rapport with local government or institutions and taking the needs of community members into account (Mohamad et al 2008). According to Madinah Mohamad (2008), as Malaysia is a multiracial society, leadership characteristics in Malaysia need to be identified and ranked based on the most acceptable characteristics by all races or groups: ‘the leader of the people must be accepted by people of other religions and races; a leader must not be a one-track leader – but for all groups’ (Mohamad et al. 2008, p. 152).

This study agrees with this claim and notes that Malaysian rural communities have many community leaders. There is the head of the village (*Penghulu*), there is the ‘Imam’ – leader of the local community Islamic religion, there is the RELA (neighborhood watch) and there is also the youth leader (*ketua pemuda*). In Malaysia, leadership among communities both urban and rural is very much influenced by political associations (Mohamad et al. 2008, pp. 147-159). In the personal observations and interviews with rural community members, many expressed their disappointment and dissatisfaction with the current situation. The community leaders need to be encouraged towards an understanding of the full worth of public libraries, in order that they in turn can communicate this to the local community.

It is important that leaders in the community understand that the rural public libraries could fill the gap and provide rural communities with the skills and understanding that they require. Public libraries, which are acknowledged as centres of knowledge and information, can offer non-biased educational and scholastic services, activities and programs; these could include events and

programs appropriate for community leaders such as programs on communication, leadership talks, and workshops.

Development of Rural Public Libraries

The findings of this research have implications for the future development of rural public libraries particularly in developing countries. The following Rural Public Library Development Framework has been developed specifically from the findings of the research and is presented as a kind of summary of the findings, but is in a format that is potentially quite useful, in a practical way, for practitioners who wish to develop rural public libraries in ways that draw on community development principles.

Rural Public Library Development Framework

This *Rural Public Library Development Framework* is proposed as a guideline for rural public libraries in any country to build and maintain their physical and resources relevance, significance and prominence to the community. It is intended to serve as a support or guide for the building of the rural public library that expands its structure and resources into something more fruitful.

Rural Community Public Library Development Framework: Rationale

A rural public library has an important role in development. Bauer (2009) points out that it is one of the few public spaces shared by different cultural groups and is seen as a neutral ground for people of all races in a small and disadvantaged community. The rural public library offers participatory opportunities to the community members within its delivery of services, and activities in ways that the local people prefer.

A rural public library is essential in developing an educated society. It responds to the local rural community members' information needs through services, activities and programs. Rural public libraries offer opportunities for individuals to improve their lives through developing their skills in information acquisition and improving their literacy level. Through these opportunities, individuals will later develop and share empowerment and relevant abilities within their own community.

In short, rural public libraries facilitate learning and change in a rural communities by facilitating the process of accessing and acquiring new knowledge, skills and values. They promote lifelong learning among adult rural community members. Hence rural public libraries become influential (Millar, Pat & Kilpatrick 2005) in rural community development efforts. The following framework provides a basis for the planning of rural public library services to small local rural and disadvantaged communities. It summarises important strategies of cultural relevancy, the importance of responsiveness to local information needs and the appropriateness of policies that will further support community development work.

Rural Public Library Community Development Framework

Cultural Relevance:

Rationale:

Community development efforts require local expertise; such as the experience of local institutions, associations and individuals who live or have lived for a long time in an area, district and region. Characteristically it takes time before local people will accept newcomers to an area. Local cultural experts who [belong and are](#) familiar with the [characteristics of a particular locality or neighbourhood are a significant resource](#); [local customs](#), even a [local point of](#) view will assist a rural public library in offering the best suited services, programs and activities.

Principles:

Consultation and Engagement

Strategies:

Work with people who have relevant cultural knowledge

1. seek information on policies and procedures from the National Library
2. seek information on policies and procedures from the State Library
3. consult local library staff
4. engage with the local associations, groups and businesses
5. approach local community members (individuals)

Special Recommendation: Rural Public Libraries in Malaysia

It is necessary for rural public libraries to develop good partnerships with local community businesses and associations; these alliances will strengthen the understanding between both the service provider and the community members. Most significantly, rural public libraries in Malaysia must be familiar with the [characteristics of a particular locality or neighbourhood](#), [local customs](#), even a [local point of](#) view for this will assist a rural public library in offering the best suited services, programs and activities.

Responsive to Local Information Needs:***Rationale:***

It is important for rural public libraries to identify, manage and organize the growing information needs among community members. Hence it is essential for each rural public library to reach out to discover and engage with local information needs and information preferences in order to develop relevant services, activities or programs. Through local small scale research, partnerships and collaborations, the rural public library administrator can develop customized information services, activities, and strategies for the particular community and locality

Principles:

Partnerships and Collaborations

Strategies:

Reach out to the local community

1. Seek information on local community interests
2. Identify local community information needs
3. Develop local partnerships
4. Develop local marketing strategies

Special Recommendation: Rural Public Libraries in Malaysia

It is recommended that each Malaysian rural public library should conduct a small survey in order to learn about and assess the local information needs.

Appropriate Policies:

Rationale:

Policy making has long been recognised as an essential aspect of library management. Policies serve as the basis of rules and regulation governing rural public libraries' operations. They support the development and implementation of effective library community development work. Hence, based on cultural relevance and suitable engagement principles, plans and guidelines can be developed around the three focal concerns of a rural public library 1) funding 2) collection development and, 3) staffing

Principles:

Research and Development

Strategies:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Funding | d. Mixture of verbal and non-verbal |
| a. Sufficient | |
| 2. Collection development | 3. Staff members |
| a. Current | a. Number of staff |
| b. Purposeful | b. Knowledge |
| c. Locally Relevant | c. Skills |

Special Recommendation: Rural Public Libraries in Malaysia

Funding: It is recommended that Malaysian rural public libraries should have sufficient funding to support yearly services, activities and programs.

Collection Development: It is essential for the Malaysian rural public libraries to develop a mixture of verbal and non-verbal services, activities and programs to cater for the information needs of both the children and adults in the community. The rural public library resources and materials should be developed on an on-going basis; should ideally be regularly up-graded in terms of their quality, quantity and volume; should be purposeful; the collection should be highly relevant to the socio-economic background of the community and it is essential that it meets the needs of the community, and localized; hence it should be relevant to the local area, and should include newsletters, local papers and information related to local businesses.

Staff Members: Malaysian rural public libraries need to have more staff members with the necessary library management and information skills. Gender issues should be taken into account

Community Development:

Rationale:

Rural public libraries' contribution is essential in achieving local development goals, hence rural public libraries should take into consideration the elements of community development principles while developing services, activities and programs for their community. Elements of participation, self-help, involvement and leadership should be incorporated and fused. This incorporation and infusement will allow local community members to build their local, individual and group self-empowerment, it will further support lifelong learning and acquisition of knowledge among rural community members

Principles:

Development and Empowerment

Strategies:

Contribute to local community development

1. Participation
2. Self-help
3. Decision Making (involvement)
4. Leadership

Special Recommendation: Rural Public Libraries in Malaysia

Malaysian rural public libraries should take into consideration, the elements of community development principles while developing their services, activities and programs for their community. Elements of community development should be incorporated and fused to allow local community members to build their local, individual and group self-empowerment. The elements are:

Participation: improve Malaysian rural public library as a hub for self and community development; to learn, grow and gain knowledge (formally and informally); as a space for interaction and communicating among community members

Self-help and Determination: create Malaysian rural public library collaboration programs with local businesses and associations in delivery of library services, programs and activities that will enhance community members' empowerment ability.

Decision-Making: Malaysian rural public library services, programs and activities are recommended to be constructed to develop a strong sense of involvement, and an awareness among community members. This will assist them to be able to solve their problems and to achieve their future goals.

Leadership: Malaysian rural public libraries should provide practical programs and activities, such as communication, managing and delegating skills, workshops and non-biased educational and scholastic services, programs and activities.

Conclusion

This research aimed to contribute to knowledge and analysis in relation to community development and rural public libraries. In addition, some consideration has been given to analysis that may subsequently lead to the development of practices in relation to improvement of rural public library usage.

The conclusions to this inquiry are drawn from the findings of the investigation of the local community involvement in Malaysian and Australian rural public library services and programs; through exploring the relationship between the rural public library and the local rural community in Malaysia and Australia; from investigating the participation of the local rural community in the decision-making processes related to planning the services, activities and programs; and by exploring relevant unmet needs in rural communities in Malaysia and Australia.

Through the investigation and exploration, new perspectives on rural public library usage in Malaysia were developed. In particular, this research may inform the Malaysian Government in relation to enhancing and extending the usage of rural public libraries in Malaysia. Furthermore, this research aims to be applicable and useful in other developing countries. Several propositions for innovative changes to rural public library management and the promotion of products and services in rural communities were also put forward.

In many countries around the world (including Australia), local public libraries have become a major resource for disadvantaged communities. Members of these communities can take advantage of the technology services available at libraries and obtain assistance from library staff

in fulfilling their information and knowledge needs. At the same time, many public libraries also offer informal activities and programs to engage their communities in discussions, such as literature classes, cultural programs and events to celebrate special moments in history. These are just a few of the ways public libraries work to foster relationships with their communities. But most importantly, public libraries assist with the community development and empowerment process by providing the community with much-needed support for lifelong learning and access to information literacy. Although the cultural, economic and social basis of each community around the world varies, this is still something that is achievable as demonstrated in the case studies of the rural public libraries in Victoria, Australia. These Australian libraries offer an example of opportunities that Malaysian rural public libraries could take to develop and empower their rural communities. Hence particular strategies are suggested, including locally-focused collection development, consultation regarding local information needs, and the development of local partnerships that are useful to rural public libraries around the world.

Overall limitations of the study

This multiple case study research is restricted to analyzing the opinions and views of rural adult community members who were physically present at the three rural public library locations in Selangor, Malaysia and the three rural public library locations in Victoria, Australia. These rural public libraries (three rural public libraries in Malaysia and three rural public libraries in Australia) represent only a small part of the rural public library systems of their respective countries. The findings from this study cannot therefore be generalized to other rural public libraries; however, they can provide useful illustrations of how rural communities perceive and use their rural public libraries.

A relatively small number of participants were included in this study. However, gathering the views of a large sample would require a different methodological approach such as a survey, and this would lose the possibility of the interactive development of understandings and ideas that has been vital to the qualitative methodology of this study. While the small number of participants means the research was limited to interacting with only a restricted segment of the residents, nonetheless efforts were made to seek diversity within the respondents.

This qualitative research study focused on people's experiences, and making sense of their experiences in the surroundings in which they live. In pursuing this research aim of understanding the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures (Denzin & Lincoln 2004), the researcher investigated and described all relevant ideas and feedback from community members and service providers in Selangor, Malaysia and in Victoria, Australia. For the purpose of this research, the researcher chose a qualitative method combined with interpretive and critical paradigms of social research to conduct an in-depth investigation of the views of a limited number of respondents.

This research aims to contribute to the understanding of current issues concerning the underutilization of Malaysian rural public libraries and to recommend improvements in the management and administration of rural public libraries in Malaysia. It proposes a framework for the development of more responsive rural public library services in Malaysia and other developing countries. However, further work is required to document the material conditions of

Malaysian rural public libraries and to test support for ideas for improvements locally and internationally.

Future Research

Findings indicate that the rural communities consider their rural public library as an important institution in their community. The rural Malaysian communities perceive rural public libraries as a formal institution of learning for young children and school children. The community members view their local public library as an important component of education for their children and as a significant aspect of their children's self-development. The adults, however, have a narrow perspective on the contributions that the rural public library could offer them personally. They do not see the relevance of the rural public library to their lives and daily activities.

In relation to this issue, there is a slight similarity of perception among the rural Australian communities. However, there are community members who believe rural public libraries support and assist their self-development and self-improvement activities. Other than the children, the senior adults come to the rural public libraries for more than just reading – they meet, they talk, they share, and they form connections with each other.

Fisher et al. (2007, p. 153) put forward the concept of public libraries as informational places where people come when they have an information-related need. Public libraries also provide an environment with an atmosphere that supports the fulfillment of these information related needs, whether for educational, business, or recreational purposes 'comprising all themes regarding

information finding and seeking, reading, life-long learning, learning resources, and learning environment' (Fisher et al. 2007, p. 153). For future research in the Malaysian context, it would be very encouraging to take a step further in testing Fisher et al.'s (2007) theory of libraries as informational places and spaces among rural Malaysian communities. Furthermore, research of this kind would enable us to better understand and identify types and forms of information needed in order to support the development and empowerment of each rural community.

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Appendix 1:

Process of obtaining information and participant consent
(Australia)



Australia: Process of recruitment and obtaining informed consent:

Considering the differences of background and levels of community development knowledge from informants, different processes will be used for obtaining informed consent:

Procedure 1: User Participants

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Regional Library Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact Regional Library Service Manager to consult which library and librarian can be approach.
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact the local Librarian<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Set appointment for meeting▶ Researcher will ask the local Librarian help in distributing the Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3) to all of the local library users.
3	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Participants who are interested in participating will contact researcher (directly through email or through informing the local librarian).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the local librarian will be consulted in finalising the list of people to be interviewed.• The interested participants will be contacted and dates, times and place of appointment will be discuss and set.▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, at this stage, researcher will introduce herself to the participants and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing.▶ If the participant agrees to participate, the participant will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher and the participants will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the participants agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form)
4	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the participants▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process; the researcher will ask series of questions to the participants. (Appendix 5)

**Procedure 2: Non-User Participants**

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Regional Library Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact Regional Library Service Manager to consult which library and librarian can be approach.
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact the local Librarian<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Set appointment for meeting▶ Researcher will consult the local Librarian in finding ways to contact non-users of the local public library to participate in the interview session. Alternatively:-<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researcher will ask for the local librarian to help in distributing the 'Information to Participants Involved in Research' flyers (Appendix 3) to members of the local communities.• If this approach does not work, researcher will put up notice in the local community centre or shopping centre, to attract the non-user of the local public library among the community member to participate in the research.• If this approach does not work, the researcher will approach the community members directly.
3	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Participants who are interested in participating will contact researcher (directly through email or through informing the local librarian).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the local librarian will be consulted in finalising the list of people to be interviewed.• The interested participants will be contacted and dates, times and place of appointment will be discussed and set.▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, the researcher will introduce herself to the participants and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing and answer any questions that the participants may have.▶ If the participant agrees to participate, the participant will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher and the participants will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the participants agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form)
4	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the participants▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process, the researcher will ask series of questions to the participants (Appendix 6)

**Procedure 3: Librarian**

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Regional Library Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact Regional Library Service Manager to consult which library and librarian can be approach.
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact the local Librarian<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Set appointment for meeting / interview▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, at this stage, the researcher will introduce herself to the librarian and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing - Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3)▶ If the librarian agrees to participate, he/she will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher and the librarian will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the librarian agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form)
3	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the librarian.▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process, the researcher will ask series of questions to the librarian (Appendix 7)

**Procedure 4: State Library Staff**

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Dr Mary Carroll (School of Finance and Library, Victoria University, Footscray Nicholson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will consult Dr Mary Carroll on which staff library can be approach.▶ Dr Mary Carroll, will make the initial contact to the Library Staff.
2	Library Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will email the Library Staff<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Email the information for Participants forms (Appendix 3)• Set appointment for meeting / interview▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, at this stage, the researcher will introduce herself to the library staff and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing.▶ If the library staff agrees to participate, he/she will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher and the library staff will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the library staff agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form)
3	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the library staff.▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process, the researcher will ask series of questions to the library staff (Appendix 8)

**Procedure 5: Group Observation – observation Schedule**

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Regional Library Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact Regional Library Service Manager to consult which library and librarian can be approach.
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact the local Librarian<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Set appointment for meeting▶ Researcher will ask the local Librarian help in identifying any group meetings or activities that can be attended by the researcher.▶ Researcher will ask the local Librarian to help in distributing the Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3) to the group meeting /activities members.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At a meeting of the group, the librarian will ask if all group members are willing to have the researcher attend and observe the group. If any members are not happy for this observation for to take place, it will not take place.
3	Group Meetings / Activities members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Group Meetings / Activities members who are interested in participating will contact researcher (directly through email or through informing the local librarian).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the local librarian will be consulted• Group Meetings / Activities members will be contacted and dates, times and place of appointment will be discuss and set.▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the observation, the researcher will answer any questions and ask group members to sign consent forms (Appendix 4) before the meeting or activity commences.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher will observe the meeting or activity and take notes.▶ Before the meeting or activity ends, the researcher will request permission from the Group Meetings / Activities members for few minutes to ask a few questions (depending on whether the Group Meetings / Activities members allows it or not).
4	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form.▶ In this process, the researcher will ask series of questions to all of the Group Meeting / Activity members (Appendix 9 and 10)

Appendix 2:

Process of obtaining information and participant consent
(Malaysia)

**Malaysia: Process of recruitment and obtaining informed consent:**

Considering the differences of background and levels of community development knowledge from informants, different processes will be used for obtaining informed consent:

Procedure 1: User Participants

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher has already contacted Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, in the National Library of Malaysia, to inform and consult on the project process.▶ Ms Fadhilah has assigned Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman* and Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud**, to advise which library and librarian can be approached. <p>* Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman -(Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p> <p>**Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud - (Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p>
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact the identified local Librarian<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Set appointment for meeting▶ Researcher will ask the local Librarian help in distributing the Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3A) to all of the local library users.
3	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, the researcher will introduce herself to the participants and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing and answer any questions that the participants may have.▶ If the participant agrees to participate, the participant will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4A)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher and the participants will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the participants agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form).
4	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the participants▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process; the researcher will ask series of questions to the participants. (Appendix 5A)



Procedure 2: Non-User Participants

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Researcher has already contacted Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, in the National Library of Malaysia, to inform and consult on the project process. ▶ Ms Fadhilah has assigned Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman* and Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud**, to advise which library and librarian can be approached. <p>* Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman -(Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p> <p>**Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud - (Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p>
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Researcher will contact the identified local Librarian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce herself • Explain the project • Set appointment for meeting ▶ Researcher will consult the local Librarian in finding ways to contact non-users of the local public library to participate in the interview session. Alternatively:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher will ask for the help of local librarian to distribute the Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3A) to members of the local communities. • If this approach does not work, researcher will put up notice in the local community centre or shopping centre, to attract the non-user of the local public library among the community member to participate in the research. • If this approach does not work, the researcher will approach the community members directly.
3	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Participants who are interested in participating will contact researcher (directly through email or through informing the local librarian). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage, the local librarian will be consulted in finalising the list of people to be interviewed. • The interested participants will be contacted and dates, times and place of appointment will be discussed and set. ▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, the researcher will introduce herself to the participants and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing and answer any questions that the participants may have. ▶ If the participant agrees to participate, the participant will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4A). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure. ▶ The researcher and the participants will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the participants agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form)
4	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the participants ▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process, the researcher will ask series of questions to the participants (Appendix 6A)

**Procedure 3: Librarian**

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher has already contacted Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, in the National Library of Malaysia, to inform and consult on the project process. <p>Ms Fadhilah has assigned Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman* and Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud**, to advise which library and librarian can be approached.</p> <p>* Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman -(Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p> <p>**Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud - (Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p>
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact the local Librarian<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Set appointment for meeting / interview▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, at this stage, researcher will introduce herself to the librarian and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing - Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3A)▶ If the librarian agrees to participate, he/she will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4A).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher and the librarian will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the librarian agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form).
3	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the librarian.▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process, the researcher will ask series of questions to the librarian (Appendix 7A)

**Procedure 4: State Library Staff**

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher has already contacted Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, in the National Library of Malaysia, to inform and consult on the project process.▶ Ms Fadhilah has assigned Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman* and Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud**, to advise which library and librarian can be approached. <p>* Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman -(Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p> <p>**Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud - (Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p>
2	Library Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Researcher will contact the Library Staff<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce herself• Explain the project• Set appointment for meeting / interview▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the interview, at this stage, researcher will introduce herself to the library staff and explain further about the project and the process of interviewing- Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3A)▶ If the library staff agrees to participate, he/she will be asked to sign Participants Involved in Research Consent Form (Appendix 4A).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure.▶ The researcher and the library staff will then set appointment to meet for the interview (if the library staff agree, the interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form)
3	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The interview session will run on the date, time and location as agreed by the library staff.▶ Researcher will again introduce herself and explain the project and the interview process, the researcher will ask series of questions to the library staff (Appendix 8A)



Procedure 5: Group Observation Schedule

Step	Activities	Elaboration of Steps and Activities
1	Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Researcher has already contacted Ms. Fadhilah Aini Yusof (Assistant Director) Library Network Division, in the National Library of Malaysia, to inform and consult on the project process. ▶ Ms Fadhilah has assigned Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman* and Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud**, to advise which library and librarian can be approached. <p>* Ms. Suhaila Abd. Rahman -(Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p> <p>**Mr. Mahazatfitri Mahmud - (Officer) Library Network Division, The National Library of Malaysia</p>
2	Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Researcher will contact the local Librarian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce herself • Explain the project • Set appointment for meeting ▶ Researcher will ask the local Librarian to help in identifying any group meetings or activities that can be attended by the researcher. ▶ Researcher will ask the local Librarian to help in distributing the Information to Participants Involved in Research flyers (Appendix 3A) to the group meeting /activities members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a meeting of the group, the librarian will ask if all group members are willing to have the researcher attend and observe the group. If any members are not happy for this observation for to take place, it will not take place.
3	Group Meetings / Activities members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Group Meetings / Activities members who are interested in participating will contact researcher (directly through email or through informing the local librarian). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage, the local librarian will be consulted • Group Meetings / Activities members will be contacted and dates, times and place of appointment will be discuss and set. ▶ On the agreed date, time and location for the observation, the researcher will answer any questions and ask group members to sign consent forms (Appendix 4A) before the meeting or activity commences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage, the photograph and the audio tapping will be discussed, and if the participant does not consent to the process it will be crossed out of the procedure. ▶ The researcher will observe the meeting or activity and take notes. ▶ Before the meeting or activity ends, the researcher will request permission from the Group Meetings / Activities members for few minutes to ask a few questions (depending on whether the Group Meetings / Activities members allows it or not).
4	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The interview session will take place immediately after the signing of the consent form. ▶ In this process, the researcher will ask series of questions to all of the Group Meetings / Activities members (Appendix 9A and 10A)

Appendix 3:

Participants' Information sheet

(English)



INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled the **Community Development and Empowerment in Malaysia: A Case Study of Rural Public Libraries**. This project is being conducted by a student researcher **Ms. Roziya Abu** as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of **Assoc. Prof. Dr Marty Grace**, from School of Social Sciences and Psychology and **Dr. Mary Carroll**, from School of Finance and Library

Project explanation

This study will examine how community development programs are implemented by local rural public libraries in Malaysia and in Australia. This material will inform conclusions and recommendations for further actions, programs and services to improve the development of the Malaysian rural public libraries. Findings will be potentially applicable to other developing countries as well.

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to participate in individual interviews and/or group meetings and activities observation. Each of the individual interview session will be held for approximately 30 minutes to one hour. In group meetings and activities observation, you and others in the group will be asked to comment (give opinion) on the rural public library services, programs and activities. You will be asked if you will consent to being audio taped and photographed for the purpose of the research report.

How will the information I give be used?

Since this project is part of my study, I will keep notes on our discussions, ideas and evaluations and will write them up in my research thesis. This research will provide important analysis that may lead to the development of innovative practices in relation to rural public library usage in Malaysia. It is intended to become a transportable model that is useful in other developing countries as well.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

Social risk is not anticipated but could potentially include such things as disclosure of personal information in a group setting or conflict with another member in the group.

Further information and contact details:

If you would like to participate or have any queries about participating in this project please direct it to the researcher listed below.

Roziya Abu

or

Please contact your local librarian.

Who is conducting the study?

Assoc. Prof. Dr Marty Grace: School of Social Sciences and Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Education & Human Development, Victoria University, St Albans Campus, McKechnie Street, St Albans, PO Box 14428, Melbourne Victoria, 8001 Australia.

Dr Mary Carroll: School of Finance and Library, Faculty of Arts, Education & Human Development, Victoria University, Footscray Nicholson Campus, PO Box 14428, Melbourne Victoria, 8001 Australia. Phone:

Ms. Roziya Abu: School of Social Sciences & Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Education & Human Development, Victoria University, St Albans Campus, McKechnie Street, St Albans, PO Box 14428, Melbourne Victoria, 8001 Australia

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics and Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 Phone: (+603) 9919 4148.

Appendix 3A:
Participants' Information sheet
(Malay)



MAKLUMAT UNTUK PESERTA TERLIBAT DALAM KAJIAN

Anda adalah dijemput untuk menyertai

Anda dijemput untuk menyertai projek penyelidikan bertajuk 'Pembangunan dan Pemerkasaan Komuniti di Malaysia: Satu Kajian Kes Terhadap Perpustakaan Awam Luar Bandar. Projek ini sedang dijalankan oleh pelajar penyelidik **Cik Roziya Abu** sebagai sebahagian daripada satu kajian PhD di Victoria Universiti di bawah penyeliaan **Prof. Madya Dr. Marty Grace**, dari Sekolah Sains Sosial dan Psikologi dan **Dr. Mary Carroll**, dari Sekolah Kewangan dan Perpustakaan.

Penerangan Projek

Kajian ini akan mengkaji bagaimana pengaplikasian program-program pembangunan komuniti dijalankan oleh perpustakaan awam luar bandar di Malaysia dan di Australia. Bahan-bahan ini, akan menghasilkan kesimpulan dan cadangan-cadangan untuk tindakan lanjut, penghasilan program-program dan pelbagai perkhidmatan untuk meningkatkan pembangunan perpustakaan awam luar bandar di Malaysia. Penemuan-penemuan ini juga akan berpotensi untuk digunapakai oleh lain-lain negara yang sedang membangun.

Apa yang akan saya perlu lakukan?

Anda adalah dijemput untuk menyertai selaku peserta dalam temuduga individu dan /atau pemerhatian perjumpaan kumpulan dan aktiviti. Setiap sesi temubual akan berlangsung selama kira-kira 30 minit hingga satu jam. Dalam pemerhatian perjumpaan berkumpulan dan aktiviti, anda dan semua ahli dalam kumpulan akan diminta untuk mengulas (beri pendapat) tentang perkhidmatan, program dan aktiviti perpustakaan luar bandar. Anda akan diminta memberikan kebenaran untuk diambil gambar dan dirakam secara audio bagi keperluan laporan penyelidikan.

Bagaimana informasi yang saya berikan akan digunapakai?

Memandangkan projek ini adalah sebahagian daripada kajian saya, saya akan menyimpan segala catatan tentang perbincangan, idea dan penilaian-penilaian dan akan disertakan dalam laporan tesis penyelidikan. Kajian ini akan menghasilkan analisis penting yang akan menjurus kepada pembangunan amalan inovatif berhubung dengan penggunaan perpustakaan luar bandar di Malaysia. Segala penemuan ini juga dimaksudkan untuk menjadi model berubah (transportable model) yang boleh digunapakai oleh mana-mana negara yang sedang membangun.

Apakah potensi risiko menyertai projek ini?

Tiada risiko sosial yang dijangkakan tetapi berpotensi memerlukan pendedahan maklumat peribadi dalam persekitaran berkumpulan atau konflik dengan ahli lain dalam kumpulan.

Untuk maklumat lanjut:

Sekiranya anda berminat untuk menyertai atau mempunyai soalan tentang penyertaan dalam projek ini sila hubungi:
Roziya Abu **or** Please contact your local librarian.

Siapa yang menjalankan kajian ini?

Prof. Madya Dr. Marty Grace: Sekolah Sains Sosial dan Psikologi, Fakulti Sastera, Pendidikan dan Pembangunan Manusia, Victoria Universiti, Kampus St Albans, McKechnie Street, St Albans, PO Box 14428, Melbourne Victoria, 8001 Australia. Tel: +603 99192920

Dr Mary Carroll: Sekolah Kewangan dan Perpustakaan, Fakulti Sastera, Pendidikan dan Pembangunan Manusia, Victoria Universiti, Kampus Footscray Nicholson, Sekolah Kewangan dan Perpustakaan, Victoria Universiti, Kampus Footscray Nicholson

Ms. Roziya Abu: Sekolah Sains Sosial dan Psikologi, Fakulti Sastera, Pendidikan dan Pembangunan Manusia, Victoria Universiti, Kampus St Albans, McKechnie Street, St Albans, PO Box 14428, Melbourne Victoria, 8001 Australia.

Jika anda mempunyai sebarang pertanyaan atau aduan-aduan tentang cara anda telah diperlakukan, anda boleh menghubungi Ethics dan Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 telefon (+603) 9919 4148.

Appendix 4:
Participants' Consent form
(English)



CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a research project examining community development and empowerment through rural public library services, programs and activities.

As a participant in this study, the researcher will ask you a series of questions and with your consent this interview will be photographed and audio taped. Everything you say will be treated privately and confidentially. Your comments will be reported anonymously.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, _____ (participant's name)

of _____ (participant's village / location)

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: Community Development and Empowerment in Malaysia: A Case Study of Rural Public Libraries, being conducted at Victoria University by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Marty Grace, Dr. Mary Carroll and Ms. Roziya Abu

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by Ms. Roziya Abu and I voluntarily agree to participate any of the procedures mentioned below (please tick in the appropriate box):

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| • An in-depth interview | - Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | • Photograph | - Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Group observation | - Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | • Audio tape | - Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher: Ms. Roziya Abu, email: roziya.abu@live.vu.edu.au. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics & Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4148.

Appendix 4A:
Participants' Consent form
(Malay)



BORANG KESEDIAN PENYERTAAN DALAM KAJIAN

INFORMASI KEPADA PESERTA:

Kami ingin menjemput anda untuk menyertai kajian tentang pembangunan dan pemeraksanaan komuniti melalui program dan perkhidmatan perpustakaan awam luar bandar.

Selaku peserta dalam kajian ini, satu siri soalan akan diajukan kepada anda sebagai sebahagian daripada perbualan dengan penyelidik, dan dengan keizinan anda temubual dan perbualan ini akan diambil gambar dan dirakam dengan pita audio visual. Semua yang diperkatakan akan dilayan secara peribadi dan sulit. Komen anda akan catat tanpa nama.

PERNYATAAN PERSETUJUAN:

Saya, _____ (nama peserta)

dari _____ (lokasi / kampung peserta)

mengesahkan yang saya adalah sekurang-kurangnya 18 tahun dan saya dengan sukarela memberi persetujuan saya bagi menyertai penyelidikan: Pembangunan dan Pemeraksanaan komuniti di Malaysia: Satu kajian kes Perpustakaan Awam Luar Bandar, yang dijalankan di Universiti Victoria oleh: Prof. Madya Dr. Marty Grace, Dr. Mary Carroll dan Cik Roziya Abu

Saya mengesahkan bahawa objektif kajian, bersama dengan mana-mana risikonya dan perlindungan berkaitan dengan prosedur yang tersenarai untuk dijayakan dalam penyelidikan, telah dijelaskan sepenuhnya kepada saya oleh Cik Roziya Abu dan saya secara sukarela bersetuju untuk menyertai mana-mana prosedur yang disebut dibawah (sila tanda mana yang bersesuaian):

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Temubual Mendalam - Ya <input type="checkbox"/> Tidak <input type="checkbox"/> | • Gambar Foto - Ya <input type="checkbox"/> Tidak <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Pemerhatian Kumpulan- Ya <input type="checkbox"/> Tidak <input type="checkbox"/> | • Pita Audio - Ya <input type="checkbox"/> Tidak <input type="checkbox"/> |

Saya mengesahkan bahawa saya telah berpeluang mendapatkan jawapan kepada mana-mana soalan saya dan saya faham bahawa yang saya boleh menarik diri daripada kajian ini pada bila-bila masa; dan penarikan diri ini tidak akan membahayakan saya dalam apa cara sekalipun.

Saya telah dimaklumkan bahawa maklumat yang saya beri akan disimpan rahsia.

Tandatangan: _____

Tarikh: _____

Sebarang pertanyaan tentang penyertaan anda dalam projek ini boleh ditujukan kepada : Prof. Madya. Dr Marty Grace. No. telefon +61399192920. Jika anda mempunyai sebarang pertanyaan atau aduan tentang cara anda telah diperlakukan, anda boleh menghubungi Ethics & Biosafety Coordinator, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 no. telefon (03) 9919 4148.

Appendix 5:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(User/English)

Participant Interview Schedule:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Library Users Interviews

Thank you very much for being willing to speak with me today. In this interview I will be asking you a series of questions and with your consent this interview will be photographed and audio taped. Everything you say will be treated privately and confidentially.

Question 1(*general*):

Could you please tell me a bit about yourself?

(Name, Age, Occupations, How long have you been living in this community.....etc?)

Question 2 (*involvement*):

In what ways are you involved in your local public library?

Question 3(*relationship*):

How would you describe the relationship of the public library with the local community?

Questions 4 (*involvement & relationship*):

How has that relationship developed over time?

Questions 5 (*participation*):

What is your opinion of the services, programs and activities?

Questions 6 (*participation*):

Do you think this local public library contributes in any way to the development of the local community?

Questions 7 (*participation and involvement*):

Do you think the community members contribute in any way to the development of the local public library?

Questions 8 (*new perspective & responsive way – impact*):

Do you think the library services, program and activities have helped you in any way?

Questions 9 (*new perspective & responsive way – unmet needs*):

Are there any additional services, programs or activities that you think this community needs?

That's all the questions for this interview.

Thank you again for being willing to participate

Appendix 5A:

Participants' Interview Question sheet
(User/Malay)

Jadual Temubual Peserta:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Temubual Pengguna Perpustakaan

Jutaan terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk bercakap dengan saya pada hari ini. Dalam temubual ini saya akan bertanyakan beberapa soalan dan dengan kebenaran anda temubual ini akan diambil gambar dan dirakamkan melalui pita audio. Segala yang anda perkatakan akan dilayan selaku peribadi dan sulit.

Soalan 1 (*umum*):

Bolehkah anda sila beritahu saya serba sedikit tentang diri anda?

(Nama, umur, pekerjaan, Telah berapa lamakah anda bermastautin dalam komuniti ini.....dll?)

Soalan 2 (*penglibatan*):

Dalam cara manakah anda terlibat dengan perpustakaan awam setempat anda?

Soalan 3 (*hubungan*):

Bagaimana anda gambarkan hubungan diantara perpustakaan awam dengan komuniti setempat?

Soalan 4 (*penglibatan & hubungan*):

Bagaimana dengan perkembangan hubungan tersebut berkembang setakad ini?

Soalan 5 (*penyertaan*):

Apakah pendapat anda tentang perkhidmatan, program dan aktivitinya?

Soalan 6 (*penyertaan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah perpustakaan ini menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan komuniti setempat?

Soalan 7 (*penyertaan & penglibatan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah ahli komuniti ini menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan perpustakaan awam setempat?

Soalan 8 (*perspektif baru & kaedah reponsif – kesan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah perkhidmatan, program dan aktiviti dalam perpustakaan ini membantu anda dalam apa cara sekalipun?

Soalan 9 (*perspektif baru & kaedah reponsif – keinginan tidak dipenuhi*):

Adakah sebarang bentuk perkhidmatan, program atau aktiviti tambahan yang anda rasa diperlukan oleh komuniti ini?

Demikian sahaja soalan-soalan untuk temubual kali ini. Terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk mengambil bahagian

Appendix 6:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(Non-user/English)

Participant Interview Schedule:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Library Non-Users Interviews

Thank you very much for being willing to speak with me today. In this interview I will be asking you a series of questions and with your consent this interview will be photographed and audio taped. Everything you say will be treated privately and confidentially.

Question 1(*general*):

Could you please tell me a bit about yourself?

(Name, Age, Occupations, How long have you been living in this community.....etc?)

Question 2 (*involvement*):

Have you ever used or participated in any of this library services, programs or activities?

If not, could you please tell me about why you have not participated?

Question 3(*relationship*):

How would you describe the relationship of the public library with the local community?

Questions 4 (*participation& involvement*):

Do you think this local public library contributes in any way to the development of the local community?

Questions 5 (*participation& involvement*):

Do you think the community members contribute in any way to the development of the local public library?

Questions 6 (*new perspective & responsive way – impact & unmet needs*):

Are there any additional services, programs or activities that you think this community needs?

That's all the questions for this interview.

Thank you again for being willing to participate.

Appendix 6A:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(Non- user/Malay)



Temubual Bukan Pengguna Perpustakaan

Jutaan terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk bercakap dengan saya pada hari ini. Dalam temubual ini saya akan bertanyakan beberapa soalan dan dengan kebenaran anda temubual ini akan diambil gambar dan dirakamkan melalui pita audio. Segala yang anda perkatakan akan dilayan selaku peribadi dan sulit.

Soalan 1 (*umum*):

Bolehkah anda sila beritahu saya serba sedikit tentang diri anda?

(Nama, umur, pekerjaan, Telah berapa lamakah anda bermastautin dalam komuniti ini.....dll?)

Soalan 2 (*penglibatan*):

Pernakah anda menggunakan atau terlibat dalam apa jua bentuk perkhidmatan, program atau aktiviti didalam perpustakaan ini? Jika tidak pernah, sila terangkan kenapa and tidak pernah terlibat?

Soalan 3 (*hubungan*):

Bagaimana anda gambarkan hubungan diantara perpustakaan awam dengan komuniti setempat?

Soalan 4 (*penglibatan & hubungan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah perpustakaan ini menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan komuniti setempat?

Soalan 5 (*penyertaan & penglibatan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah komuniti setempat menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan perpustakaan ini?

Soalan 6 (*perspektif baru & kaedah responsive – impak & keperluan tidak dipenuhi*):

Adakah sebarang bentuk perkhidmatan, program atau aktiviti tambahan yang anda rasa diperlukan oleh komuniti ini?

Demikian sahaja soalan-soalan untuk temubual kali ini.

Terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk mengambil bahagian.

Appendix 7:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(Librarian/English)

Participant Interview Schedule:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Library Librarian Interviews

Thank you very much for being willing to speak with me today. In this interview I'll be asking you a series of questions and with your consent this interview will be photographed and audio taped. Everything you say will be treated privately and confidentially.

Question 1 (*general*):

Could you please tell me a bit about yourself?

(Name, Age, Occupations, How long have you been living in this community.....etc?)

Question 2 (*involvement*):

How do you perceive your roles as librarian in this library / library service?

Question 3 (*relationship*):

How would you describe the relationship of the public library with the local community?

Questions 4 (*involvement & relationship*):

How has that relationship developed over time?

Questions 5 (*participation*):

What is your opinion of the services, programs and activities?

Questions 6 (*participation*):

Do you think this local public library contributes in any way to the development of the local community?

Questions 7 (*participation and involvement*):

Do you think the community members contribute in any way to the development of the local public library?

Questions 8 (*new perspective & responsive way – impact*):

Do you think the library services, program and activities have helped the community in any way?

Questions 9 (*new perspective & responsive way – unmet needs*):

Are there any additional services, programs or activities that you think this community needs?

That's all the questions for this interview.

Thank you again for being willing to participate.

Appendix 7A:

Participants' Interview Question sheet
(Librarian/Malay)

Jadual Temubual Peserta:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Temubual Pustakawan

Jutaan terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk bercakap dengan saya pada hari ini. Dalam temubual ini saya akan bertanyakan beberapa soalan dan dengan kebenaran anda temubual ini akan diambil gambar dan dirakamkan melalui pita audio. Segala yang anda perkatakan akan dilayan selaku peribadi dan sulit.

Soalan 1 (*umum*):

Bolehkah anda sila beritahu saya serba sedikit tentang diri anda?

(Nama, umur, pekerjaan, Telah berapa lamakah anda bermastautin dalam komuniti ini.....dll?)

Soalan 2 (*penglibatan*):

Bagaimana anda melihat peranan anda sebagai seorang pustakawan di perpustakaan / perkhidmatan perpustakaan ini?

Soalan 3 (*hubungan*):

Bagaimana anda gambarkan hubungan diantara perpustakaan awam dengan komuniti setempat?

Soalan 4 (*penglibatan & hubungan*):

Bagaimana dengan perkembangan hubungan tersebut berkembang setakad ini?

Soalan 5 (*penyertaan*):

Apakah pendapat anda tentang perkhidmatan, program dan aktiviti nya?

Soalan 6 (*penyertaan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah perpustakaan ini menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan komuniti setempat?

Soalan 7 (*penyertaan & penglibatan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah ahli komuniti ini menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan perpustakaan awam setempat?

Soalan 8 (*perspektif baru & kaedah reponsif – kesan*):

Pada pendapat anda, adakah perkhidmatan, program dan aktiviti dalam perpustakaan ini membantu anda dalam apa cara sekalipun?

Soalan 9 (*perspektif baru & kaedah reponsif – keinginan tidak dipenuhi*):

Adakah sebarang bentuk perkhidmatan, program atau aktiviti tambahan yang anda rasa diperlukan oleh komuniti ini?

Demikian sahaja soalan-soalan untuk temubual kali ini.

Terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk mengambil bahagian.

Appendix 8:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(Library staff/English)

Participant Interview Schedule:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

State / National Library Staff Interviews

Thank you very much for being willing to speak with me today. In this interview I will be asking you a series of questions and with your consent this interview will be photographed and audio taped. Everything you say will be treated privately and confidentially.

Question 1(*general*):

Could you please tell me a bit about yourself?

(Name, Age, Occupations, Any special interests in relation to public library services?)

Question 2 (*involvement*):

What is your role in the public library /library service?

Question 3(*relationship*):

How would you describe the contribution that public library /library services can make to rural communities?

Questions 4 (*involvement & relationship*):

What do you think the relationship should be between a public library /library services and a local community?

Questions 5 (*participation and involvement*):

Do you think local public library /library services contribute in any way to the development of local rural communities?

Questions 6 (*participation and involvement*):

Do you think the rural communities contribute in any way to the development of local public libraries /library services?

Questions 7 (*new perspective & responsive way – impact*):

Do you think that the public library /library service (in any way) have failed to serve rural communities? Why?

Questions 8 (*new perspective & responsive way – impact*):

Do you think that public library / library services can help to empower and develop a rural community? Why? How?

That's all the questions for this interview.

Thank you again for being willing to participate.



Appendix 8A:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(Library staff/Malay)

Jadual Temubual Peserta:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Temubual Kakitangan Perpustakaan Negeri / Negara

Jutaan terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk bercakap dengan saya pada hari ini. Dalam temubual ini saya akan bertanyakan beberapa soalan dan dengan kebenaran anda temubual ini akan diambil gambar dan dirakamkan melalui pita audio. Segala yang anda perkatakan akan dilayan selaku peribadi dan sulit.

Soalan 1 (*umum*):

Bolehkah anda sila beritahu saya serba sedikit tentang diri anda?

(Nama, umur, pekerjaan, Telah berapa lamakah anda bermastautin dalam komuniti ini.....dll?)

Soalan 2 (*penglibatan*):

Apakah peranan anda dalam perpustakaan awam / perkhidmatan perpustakaan?

Soalan 3 (*hubungan*):

Bagaimana anda gambarkan sumbangan yang boleh diberikan oleh perpustakaan awam /perkhidmatan perpustakaan kepada komuniti luar bandar?

Soalan 4 (*penglibatan & hubungan*):

Pada pendapat anda, apakah hubungan yang sepatutnya terjalin diantara sebuah perpustakaan awam /perkhidmatan perpustakaan dengan sebuah komuniti?

Soalan 5 (*penglibatan & hubungan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah perpustakaan / perkhidmatan perpustakaan ini menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan komuniti luar bandar?

Soalan 6 (*penglibatan & hubungan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah ahli komuniti luar bandar menyumbang dalam apa bentuk sekalipun kepada pembangunan perpustakaan awam?

Soalan 7 (*perspektif baru & kaedah reponsif – kesan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah perpustakaan awam / perkhidmatan perpustakaan ini (dalam apa jua cara) telah gagal memenuhi keperluan komuniti luar Bandar ini? Kenapa?

Soalan 8 (*perspektif baru & kaedah reponsif – kesan*):

Pada pendapat anda adakah perpustakaan awam / perkhidmatan perpustakaan boleh membantu memperkasa dan membangunkan komuniti luar bandar? Kenapa? Bagimana?

Demikian sahaja soalan-soalan untuk temubual kali ini.

Terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk mengambil bah

Appendix 9:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(Group Meeting/English)

Participant Interview Schedule:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Library Group Meeting / Activities Members Interviews

Thank you very much for having me in this meeting / program / activity. Now that the activity/meeting is finished, I would like to ask you a few questions. With your consent this conversation will be photographed and audio taped. Everything you say will be treated privately and confidentially. In my research report, your comments will be anonymous.

Question 1*(involvement):*

What do you get out of coming to this group meeting / program / activity?

Question 2 *(participation):*

Are you involved in the decision-making about this group?

Question 3*(relationship):*

How would you describe the contribution that this public library makes in the local community?

That's all the questions for this session.

Thank you again for being willing to participate.

Appendix 9A:

Participants' Interview Question sheet

(Group Meeting/Malay)



Temubual Ahli Kumpulan Perjumpaan / Aktiviti

Jutaan terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk bercakap dengan saya pada hari ini. Memandangkan aktiviti dan perjumpaan ini telah selesai, saya akan bertanyakan beberapa soalan dan dengan kebenaran anda temubual ini akan diambil gambar dan dirakamkan melalui pita audio. Segala yang anda perkatakan akan dilayan selaku peribadi dan sulit. Dalam laporan kajian ini, komen anda akan dilabel tanpa nama.

Soalan 1*(penglibatan):*

Apa yang anda perolehi daripada penyertaan anda dalam kumpulan perjumpaa / aktiviti ini?

Soalan 2 *(penyertaan):*

Adakah anda terlibat dalam membuat sebarang keputusan berkaitan kumpulan ini?

Soalan 3*(hubungan):*

Bagaimana akan anda gambarkan sumbangan yang telah perpustakaan awam ini berikan kepada komuniti setempat?

Demikian sahaja soalan-soalan untuk temubual kali ini.

Terima kasih diatas kesudian untuk mengambil bahagian

Appendix 10:

Group Meeting Schedule sheet

(Group Meeting/English)

GROUP MEETINGS / ACTIVITIES
OBSERVATION:



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

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THOUGHT**

Name of meeting/ activity : _____

Venue : _____

Date : _____

Number of attendance : (total number) Male Female

Group Age : (18-27)
 (29-38)
 (39-48)
 (49-58)
 (59 above)

Role of the librarian :

Observation notes :

(Add pages if necessary)

Appendix 10A:

Group Meeting Schedule sheet

(Group Meeting/Malay)

PEMANTAUAN PERJUMPAAN
KUMPULAN / AKTIVITI:



**VICTORIA
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THOUGHT**

Nama perjumpaan /aktiviti : _____

Lokasi : _____

Tarikh : _____

Jumlah kehadiran : (Jumlah) Lelaki Wanita

Kumpulan Umur : (18-27)
 (29-38)
 (39-48)
 (49-58)
 (59 keatas)

Peranan pustakawan :

Nota pemantauan :

(tambah muka surat sekiranya perlu)

Appendix 11:

Flyer: Invitation to Participate

(English)



INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a Victoria University research project examining:

THE ROLE OF RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The research is being conducted by Ms. Roziya Abu, PhD student, under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr. Marty Grace and Dr. Mary Carroll.

Please see the attached Information to Participants, and if you would like to participate, please contact:

Roziya Abu

Email: xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Appendix 11A:

Flyer: Invitation to Participate
(Malay)

JEMPUTAN UNTUK MENYERTAI KAJIAN PENYELIDIKAN



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

Anda adalah dijemput untuk terlibat dalam satu kajian penyelidikan oleh Victoria University untuk meneliti:

PERANAN PERPUSTAKAAN AWAM LUAR BANDAR DALAM PEMBANGUNAN DAN PEMERKASAAN KOMUNITI LUAR BANDAR

Kajian ini dijalankan oleh Cik Roziya Abu, pelajar Sarjana Lanjutan PhD, dibawah penyeliaan Professor Madya Dr. Marty Grace dan Dr. Mary Carroll.

Sila rujuk lampiran Maklumat untuk Peserta Terlibat dalam Kajian, dan sekiranya anda berminat untuk melibatkan diri, sila hubungi :

Roziya Abu

Email:xxxxxxx