



**A Report For
The Professional Study Visit in Germany from 30th November to 6th
December 2024**



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Acknowledgement

Our visit to Germany to participate in the professional study visit was made possible by **Bibliothek & Information International (BII)** which is the Standing Committee of **Bibliothek & Information Deutschland**.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Ms. Jacqueline Banford of BI International and Ms. Hella Klauser of the Germany Library Association who assisted us in coordinating this professional study tour. In addition to our hosts who warmly welcomed us at the various libraries; Mr. Helmut Obst of Nationalbibliothek Library of the "Stiftung Pfennigparade" (Munich), Ms. Jana Lorenz of the German Central Library for the Blind, Leipzig, and Dr. Caroline Leiss of the Technical University of Munich Library.

The delegation comprised; Dr. Nekesa Winny Akullo (National Social Security Fund), Dr. Robert Buwule (Mbarara University of Science and Technology), Robert Kayiki (Kampala Capital City Authority) and Ms. Cissy Akello (Law Development Centre). The delegation was especially interested in learning about digitization and other library initiatives of the German host institutions. The delegation arrived in Munich, Germany on 30th November 2024.

1.0 Introduction

Bibliothek & Information International (BI-International) is the Standing Committee of Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID), the Federal Association of German Library and Information Associations which promotes international professional exchange. It promotes the creation and development of knowledge and experience through International Cooperation and maintenance contacts. The growth of Information Technology puts challenges to Library and Information Professionals. Therefore, to address this, BII supports foreign library and information professionals including those from developing countries. We are beneficiaries of

a grant from BI-International to participate in a professional study visit in Germany from 30th November – 6th December 2024.

The world is currently very dynamic with ever-new innovations in the field of library and information science. Information professionals are expected to keep abreast with the new changes in modern library and information management. It is on this basis that a team of four (4) information professionals from diverse government institutions embarked on a professional/study visit to Germany to undertake a study and also acquire hands-on and practical skills in the different library and information science spheres such as; digitization, long-term preservation, records management, data management, open science, infopreneurship, disability information services, diversity, sustainability, public-private partnerships, information advocacy, inventory management and community engagement among others

2.0 Institutions Visited

The delegation visited institutions that included; the library of the Pfennigparade Foundation, the Technical University of Munich Library, the German Central Library for the Blind, the German Library Association and the Berlin Central and Regional Library.

2.1 Library of the Pfennigparade Foundation

The delegation was hosted by Mr. Helmut Obst, the Head of the Library at the Foundation. He shared with the delegation a brief overview of the foundation, its services and the library innovations. The library caters for mostly physically handicapped children. Innovations at the Library of Pfennigparade Foundation include the acquisition of adaptive gaming controllers for Microsoft Xbox to enable inclusive gaming for users with disabilities. Digitisation initiatives include; joining the eMedia Network BiblioLoad in 2020 – www.biblioload.de, promotion of eMedia through QR codes on signs in the library; publication of the Media at the Margins (*Practical handbook: Media at the Margins – Dealing with controversial Works in Libraries*, Annette Fichtner, Helmut Obst, Christina Mesko (Editors)).



Group Photo from Left to Right: Buwule, Akello, Nekesa, Kayiki, and Obst



The delegation had a guided tour of the library facilities by Helmut Obst.

2.2 Technical University of Munich Library

On the second day of the professional/study tour, the delegation visited the Technical University of Munich Library. The delegation was welcomed by the University Librarian, Dr. Caroline Leiss and Ms Lea Neubauer. The team had a guided tour by Ms Hedwig Backer of the library's main campus. A presentation was made by Dr Veronika Diem on the overview of library management and innovations. Some of the library services include; **media and information** – they acquire and curate large media collections and make them available free of charge - [dokumenTUM | TUM University Library](https://www.dokumen.tum.de); **study space** for student to meet and study, **support researchers** throughout the entire research life cycle, from early planning of data management to data publication and archiving, **publication support** to provide expert guidance to TUM members on all aspects of the publication process, helping to navigate key decisions and optimise publication strategies and infrastructure for electronic publishing and management of digital collections, **bibliometrics** – visibility and research impact support researchers and university management in utilising methods to analyse publication output and research impact, training and consultations – information literacy for students, researchers and staff. **Data Management** at TUM library; the library provides research Data Services; TUM Research Data Hub with cooperation between the University Library and Munich Data Science Institute (MDSI) with goals such as; Increasing the efficiency and quality of research data support, Pooling complementary expertise of MDSI and University Library under one roof, Optimising contact and visibility of support services, Embedding data stewards in the Hub and accessed on Website: <https://www.researchdata.tum.de>.

Training in Research Data Management Basics for PhD students and researchers, Data Steward Training for data managers, Lectures for students and Workshops on demand. **Consultations** in RDM strategy for projects, chairs, schools; suitable infrastructure, legal aspects, metadata and documentation and guidelines and policies. **Training:** literature Research 1 Tools for Studying; Literature Research 2 Search Strategies for Seminar Papers and Theses, Library Tours, Citavi Introductory Course, Citavi Advanced Course, Visibility and Research Impact Fast, Route to Library Materials, Citing for Scientists, Research Data Management Basics, Data Steward Training, Compact Course Literature Research for Your Dissertation, Zotero Basics, EndNote Advanced Course, Copyright in teaching, Citation Lab, Predatory Journals and conferences, Cite It right among others

Social Connection. The professional visit at TUM was crowned with a sumptuous lunch at a nearby Italian Restaurant. TUM hosted the visiting team for a delicious lunch where both the

host and the visiting team relaxed and had a deeper connection on both professional and personal issues.



Group photo from Left: Robert Buwule, Winny Nekesa Akullo, Dr. Caroline Leiss, Lea, Cissy Akello and Robert Kayiki



2.3 German Central Library for the Blind

The German Central Library for the Blind (German: *Deutsche Zentralbücherei für Blinde*) was founded in 1894 and, is the oldest library for the blind in Germany. It is a public library for the visually impaired located in the city of Leipzig, Germany. The library makes literature accessible and offers braille audiobooks and films as well as sheet music for loan and purchase. It was interesting to note that using the library is free of charge and personal support is a priority. Audiobooks are available via a personal user account in an app and website. The Blind, visually impaired, and print-disabled booklovers can register as users and freely browse the library catalogues and find literature for their reading requirements. The library participates in book fairs, exhibitions and online events.



Group photo from Left: Nekesa , Akello, Buwule, Prof. Dr. Kahlisch, Lorenz, and Kayiki,



Ms. Lorenzi, explaining to the participants the printing process of the braille Meeting with Ms Nina-Kathrin, the library Manager

2.3 German Library Association

The team was hosted by Ms. Hella Klauser in charge of international cooperation at the German Library Association (GLA). Ms. Klauser shared with the delegation about the Association and the services it provides. She also informed the delegation about the 16 regional chapters representing the 16 federal states of Germany. She indicated that many regional chapters offer comprehensive education and training programmes. The Library Association finances its core activities exclusively from member fees but also collects extensive third-party funds. In doing so, it can offer a broad range of additional services. The association publishes an annual ***“Report on the State of Libraries”*** to keep political decision-makers and the media abreast of current library topics and issues. The association members, represented by the library directors, are reached through an internal information system. A bi-monthly newsletter and website information is dedicated to sharing information not only with library staff but also politicians

and journalists. The Association has several projects which include; the nationwide provision of library services to the entire population, digitization and digital media services, questions regarding copyright issues in the digital society, as well as the promotion of key skills such as reading and the systematic use of information and media.

2.5 Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin (Berlin Central and Regional Library)

The Berlin Central and Regional Library is tasked with collecting everything that is published locally in print, and all data and audio recordings released in Berlin. The ZLB is a foundation that is entirely publicly funded; its current general director is Mr Volker Heller. The library has two branches: the America Memorial Library (AGB) in Berlin-Kreuzberg and the Berlin Public Library (BStB) in Berlin-Mitte. The ZLB makes it possible for everyone to access knowledge, education and culture for free. It is a community hub and place for sharing. The library provides media information, technologies and spaces. People meet for conversations and discussions.



Group Photo Left to Right: *Buwule, Fendius, Nekesa, Akello and Kayiki*



3.0 Lessons Learnt/Observations

- i. At the Pfennigparade Foundation, observed several digital initiatives shared by the Head, library, which included; Microsoft Xbox adaptive gaming controller game controller to enable inclusive gaming for users with disabilities, eMedia Network BiblioLoad, and promotion of eMedia through QR codes on signs in the library;
- ii. The GLA has a person in charge of International Cooperation who is responsible for international professional exchanges of German librarians and foreign librarians in addition to finding opportunities for the librarians, the Uganda Library and Information Association could also adopt this.
- iii. The GLA also has a Programme Officer who monitors government-funded projects.
- iv. To minimise space, the Technical University of Munich library uses automated mobile shelves that can be adopted by the university libraries.
- v. The night of libraries is a fantastic concept that can encourage young readers to come to the library and gain knowledge instead of going to other night activities which sometimes may be destructive.
- vi. The digital transformation embraced by the German library fraternity has also been outburst by the copyright regime. There is still a huge limitation to the digitization of content by the copyright legislation of the land. This situation is no different in the Ugandan landscape.
- vii. The egg-like seats at TUM were a fascinating innovation which not only created a relaxing environment in a library but also made libraries not only spaces for study but also for deep learning and reflections
- viii. Long gone is the culture of not allowing bags and eats in the library. At the Berlin Central Library, the team was amazed by the fact that the library allows patrons to come with their bags, eats and even provides a safe place for the homeless and disadvantaged person in society. Through all this, the library is seen to be directly improving the quality of life of its patrons.
- ix. The Central Library for the Blind makes deliveries to their patrons at home
- x. A lot of effort is being made to purchase books in digital format reducing physical visits to the library

4.0 Challenges

It is no secret that this professional visit was a great success. There were however some challenges the visiting team faced. The first challenge was the process of applying for the German Visas. The process was prolonged for almost a month and led to the adjustment of the original program by one week. This abrupt change led to the cancellation of some visits to Hannover and Frankfurt. Furthermore, two of our colleagues were dropped in the process and could not come. Probably there is a need to plan and allow around six months between the approval of the grant and processing of the visas. The other challenge was the seasonal shock. Most of the team members, it was their first time to visit Europe during the winter and they struggled to adjust to the very cold weather. Probably the visit would have been more enjoyable if it had been scheduled in summer, autumn or spring but not winter.

5.0 Conclusion

All in all, the professional study visit met our objectives as anticipated. With the various services that the libraries visited to the number of innovations by the institutions visited, we hope to implement some of the services and innovations in the library and information sector in Uganda and have another visit in the future in summer.