

The State of Ghanaian Libraries, Inaugural Meeting of Student Chapter of Libraries Without Borders, Irving K. Barber Learning Center, University of British Columbia, March 17 2008.

#### **SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

As shown under "Examining Committee"  
Dr. Francesca Marini also served on the Supervisory Committee in the earlier stages of the work.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

#### **PROGRAMME**

The Final Oral Examination  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(Library, Archival, and Information Studies)

**EVELYN D. MARKWEI**

MPhil (Library Studies), University of Ghana, 2000  
BSc (Hons) Botany, University of Cape Coast, 1982

Thursday, February 7, 2013 at 12:30 pm  
Room 200, Graduate Student Centre  
*Latecomers will not be admitted*

**"The Everyday Life Information Seeking Behaviour of Urban Homeless Youth"**

#### **EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

Chair:

Prof. Frank Echols (Educational Studies)

Supervisory Committee:

Prof. Edie Rasmussen, Research Supervisor (Library, Archival and Information Studies)

Prof. Judith Saltman (Library, Archival, and Information Studies)

Prof. Lisa Nathan (Library, Archival, and Information Studies)

University Examiners:

Prof. Marlene Asselin (Language and Literacy Education)

Prof. Luanne Freund (Library, Archival, and Information Studies)

External Examiner:

Not to be announced in advance

## ABSTRACT

Youth homelessness, or the issue of street children, is a growing phenomenon in cities across the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa. Homeless youth, like all adolescents, deserve relevant information for successful transition to adulthood and for mastery of the challenges of homelessness. The pre-requisite for efficient provision of quality information services to any group is knowledge and understanding of their everyday life information seeking (ELIS) behaviour.

The main objectives of this study of homeless youth in the market area of Accra, Ghana are to investigate their information needs, sources of information, patterns and problems encountered in information seeking and to determine how libraries and other stakeholders can meet their information needs. The study adopted the interpretive tradition and the ethnographic methodology. The field activities involved recruitment of 41 homeless youth, comprising 22 males and 19 females, ages 15 to 18 years using a snowball sampling procedure, and collection of data using observations, the critical incident technique, and in-depth interviews. Recorded interviews were transcribed, and categories and themes were extracted from participant interviews through content analysis using the NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

The findings revealed eleven categories of information needs which were further categorized as physiological, safety, esteem and self-actualization needs. Preferred sources of information are primarily interpersonal. Other sources are television, radio, print media and libraries. Information seeking patterns include active and passive searching, passive attention, and a heavy reliance on a social network of friends. Barriers to meeting information needs include cost, lack of education, lack of time, lack of access to relevant information and educational infrastructure, information poverty, powerlessness, and lack of confidence.

The study is significant in many ways. The findings of the study increase the limited knowledge base and understanding of youth information seeking behaviour and ELIS of youth, especially homeless youth. They also reveal ELIS behaviour of homeless youth in an environment of limited services and information resources. They have implications for information dissemination and public library after-school programs and policies to facilitate provision of services and information resources for homeless youth in Ghana.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Academic Studies:

MPhil, Library Studies, University of Ghana, 2001  
Post Graduate Diploma, Library Studies, University of Ghana, 1990  
B. Sc. (Hons) Botany, University of Cape Coast, 1982

Current Position:

Lecturer, Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana (since 2002)

## GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study:

Library and Information Studies with specialization in Information seeking behaviour of youth and disadvantaged populations at the [ischool@UBC](mailto:ischool@UBC), School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies.

## Courses

LIBR 600	Advanced Seminar in Research Methods	Instructors Dr. Rick Kopak, Prof. Edie Rasmussen
LIBR 610	Theoretical and Research Foundations	Prof. Edie Rasmussen
LIBR 620	Advanced Study in Major Area	Prof. Edie Rasmussen
LIBR 621	Advanced Study in Minor Area	Prof. Judith Saltman

## AWARDS

Graduate Entrance Scholarship	2006
Ph.D. Tuition Award	2006 to 2009
IDRC Doctoral Research Award	2010
Anne and George Pienrick Student Research Award	2011
Faculty of Arts Graduate Award	2011
The iSchool@UBC Travel Award	2012

## PUBLICATIONS

1. Services, Resources and Benefits of the Internet Available to Academics in Ghana. *Ghana Library Journal*, Vol. 14, 2002, pp. 21-30
2. Internet Awareness and Use in the University of Ghana. *Information Development*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 2005, pp. 260-268.

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

1. The Everyday Life Information Seeking Behaviour of urban Homeless Youth (Poster presentation), ALISE Annual Conference, Seattle Washington, January 22 – 25, 2013.
2. The Everyday Life Information Seeking Behaviour of urban Homeless Youth (Preliminary findings), The Great lakes Information Science Conference, University of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, May 20-21, 2011.