

*Sam Jonah Library*

# DIGEST



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VOLUME 3 (April 2024)

Brief History of the  
University Gallery

Nurturing your Scholarly  
Identity: A Path to Success

Human Library Service in the  
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The Renaissance of the Sam Jonah  
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Transformative Horizons: Redefining The Sam  
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The Human Library Initiatives: Analysing Impact  
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*and many more...*

*getting up and personal with*

**Mrs. Paulina  
AFFUL-ARTHUR**

EXTERNAL EDITORS: Prof. Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantanka and Mr Theophilus Nartey



# MESSAGE FROM THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

## Mac-Anthony Cobblah (PhD)



Libraries worldwide are going through major changes as a result of technological advancement, information explosion, and changes in clients' needs as well as transformation in teaching, learning and research. The Sam Jonah Library is committed to its vision and mission to build a university library system comparable to any world class university library. It is the mandate of the university library to provide scholarly information resources, learning space and services to support the university's business of teaching, learning and research. The Library shall play a highly supportive role in the university's research, community outreach and global visibility agenda. The emphasis is on giving people more access to information and helping them to use information effectively by providing tools, spaces and expertise. Libraries are also playing increasing role in the research lifecycle including open publishing and using metrics to measure the impact of published research works. The University at this stage needs a well-built and well-equipped library system.

The University of Cape Coast Library System (UCCLS) is positioned not only to deploy new strategies for effective service delivery, but to roll out innovations to serve the

diverse segments of clients (faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students and outside communities) using the appropriate measures and platforms. Sam Jonah Library will expand its efforts to reduce to the barest minimum the spate of fake news, improve information literacy and the branding of competitive choice. Sam Jonah library's resources, facilities and services are underutilised; The Sam Jonah Library Digest will bridge the gap between the Library and its users as far as information is concerned. We need to double our efforts in order that we can compete at the global stage. The Sam Jonah Library will keep library clients abreast with developments in the university library system as well as other partner libraries.

The Sam Jonah Library Digest was established to ensure a timely communication of our resources, facilities and services to the university community for user access. The Digest is our humble addition to the university's quest to improve its visibility, branding and internationalisation. The Library Digest is a must read for the library staff and users as it offers an outlook into the innovations and upcoming events, trending issues and scholarly outputs of the University of Cape Coast Library System (UCCLS). The Digest again aims to engender a concerted approach to service delivery and hone the writing, publishing and communication skills of key constituents of the UCCLS.

Our doors are widely opened to you and our staff stand ready to assist you break down ethically, all barriers to information access.

# INTERVIEW WITH Mrs. Paulina Afful-Arthur

Former Deputy University Librarian, University of Cape Coast

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Good morning, Madam, first of all, let me thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to host Sam Jonah Library Digest (SJLD) Editorial Team. Once again, congratulations for a successful career at the Sam Jonah Library and hope you are enjoying your pension?

**MADAM:** Thank you. Yes, I am, and I am doing other things. So I am fine

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** We are glad to hear that. Madam, I believe our readers will be interested to know something about your personal life, i.e. your childhood, education, early career life, experiences, positions held, awards and hobbies. If you can please go through these one after the other.

**MADAM:** (laughs) hm! My childhood days, woow hmm, my childhood days were not exciting at all. Because at that point, I didn't even know what life was all about, so, before I could know that I was a human being, I was in Cape Coast and that was at age four (4). Because I remember I went to class one at 4 years. That time you just needed to be able to cross your hand over your head to touch the other ear and you were matured for class one. I was tall and was causing a lot of trouble in the house.

*(Laughter from both)*

**MADAM:** My parents were most of the time not in the house, and we lived in a compound house. My mother was somebody who used to go round to buy foodstuffs and sell, so she was mostly at home during weekends, but the rest of the week, she would be going round sometimes coming on Wednesdays and then going back. So, most of the time we were left with our father who took very good care of us. *(Early Education)*

And so, I went to Mensah Sarbah Primary School. Mensah Sarbah is near Dance Paradise, (where the ICGC main church is) and around Ayeko Ayeko Sarbah road.

**Editorial Team:** So does it mean you were born in Cape Coast?

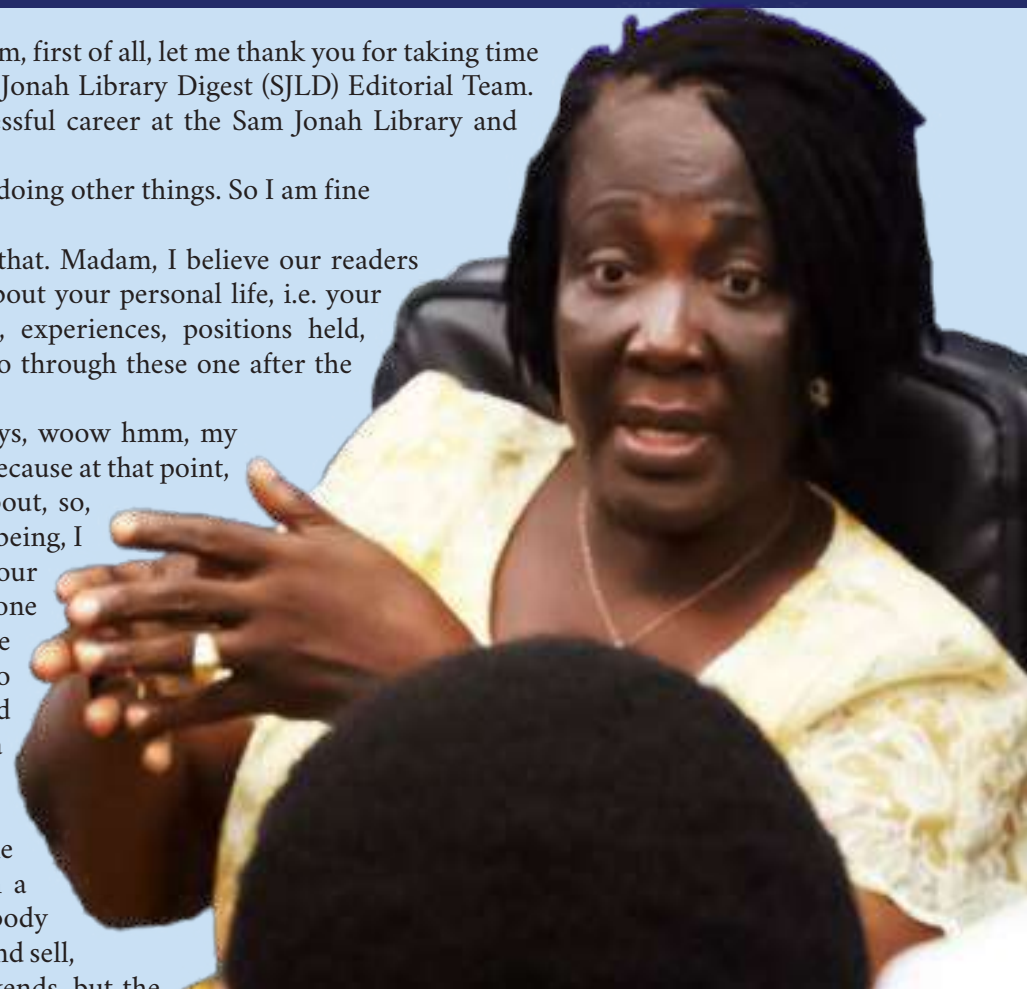
**MADAM:** I was born in Swedru; that's where my parents were, but I don't even know when I came to Cape Coast. I think my father was transferred to Cape Coast. He worked at the Central Bureau of Statistics, now Statistical Service. We are six and I am the third.

When I got to Form Three, I sat for the Common Entrance Examination and I was privileged to have been admitted to Holy Child School. Honestly, I wanted to go to Wesley

Girls Secondary School, a Methodist school and I am a born Presbyterian so, I wanted to go there. Wesley Girls was far from where we lived and my father didn't have money to take me to the boarding house because my elder brother was in a boarding house. So, it was one at a time and so I was convinced to go to Holy Child, where I could walk from home. We lived around Ayeko Ayeko at that time.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** So it was a walking distance?

**MADAM:** Yes, so I could walk and sometimes my father would walk with me there if I was tired just to encourage me. So from Forms 1 and 2, I was a day student. Then when my brother completed form 5, I went to the boarding house in Form 3. I started in 1975 and then in 1980, I completed the 'O' Level; that time it was 'O' Level and 'A' Level. And I continued from 1980 to 1982 all at Holy Child, so I did both 'O' and 'A' at Holy Child. I completed in June, 1982





and gained admission to the University of Cape Coast in November, 1982. There again, I was a non-resident student through no fault of mine but because I lived in Cape Coast,

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Was that the policy of the University?

**MADAM:** Yes, but fortunately for me, I had some mates who came from outside Cape Coast so, I was a non-resident but lived in the Atlantic Hall with friends for two years. I was affiliated to Adehye anyway. I joined a Cultural Group and I was very active so I earned myself a single room in the final year at Adehye Hall. And instead of four years we spent five years. Somewhere along the line, there was water crisis so we went home for ten months, and at that time we were doing four major subjects as we were made to do Education for a Diploma. It was compulsory. I did Arts; that is Religion and History and Education. I did Classics too. So, for my National Service because we had stayed at home for ten months, National Service became two years so that the others could finish. So I did two years' National Service at the Department of Classics as a Teaching Assistant (early career).

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Please was it a policy then?

**MADAM:** Yes, it became a government policy at that time because there was a backlog and so I lived in Adehye again. There was a block for National Service personnel. It was the late Mr. Addoduagye who taught us Library Studies, as a liberal Course and I think he did it so well that I was very much interested and so when I was about to finish my National Service I met Mr. A.K Koranteng, the then Acting University Librarian in front of the Old Administration Block. Immediately he saw me, he asked me what I was doing and I said I was about to finish my National Service. He asked if I would like to teach and I said No, because I didn't like the Classics, because at that time, if you wanted to be in the Department you would have to do Greek and Latin and I was not interested, so he asked if I would like to work in the Library, I said sure. Then he asked why? I said because of Mr. Addoduagye (laughter from both). He asked me to bring an application letter. And the first person I met after that was Mr. Johny Bansah. I knew Mr. Johny Bansah (we use to call him Uncle Johny) so I told; Uncle Johny that the Librarian had asked me to bring an application, but I am in a hurry, so, please write it for me. So, it was Uncle Johny who wrote my application letter and I just signed and took it to Mr. Koranteng at the library. That time, we were at the Old Site, and even before I completed my National Service, I was called for an interview. Many people attended the interview. For whatever reasons unknown to me, I think I was the only one who was offered an appointment at that time, and on the 9th of November, 1989, I started working as a Junior Assistant Librarian-in-training.



Editorial

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Oh ok

**MADAM:** Yes, there was a rank like that in those days. I was supposed to undergo in house training, because I didn't have any librarianship background

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Ok

**MADAM:** Yes, so I did that for two years because it was a Senior Member position after which, I was confirmed and I became a Junior Assistant Librarian, In the library, I was moved from one Department to another, I remember, I worked at Periodicals section and it was Ms Anita Quansah who was there, so she started teaching me the rudiments of Librarianship, but then in the evening when I was on duty, I would go to where we used to call the Counter (now the Clients Services Section) and attend to students and staff. A time came I had to go to school because in the library it was a policy you just could not work in the library and expect that you could be promoted to a higher rank, if you did not have any background in librarianship.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** So it didn't start from now?

**MADAM:** No, but at that time, you had the choice to do any other post graduate course, so I went to the Library School first to do Post Graduate Diploma in Library Studies, because there was no MA and no MPhil. And I was promoted and then it got to a point I had to upgrade from the Graduate Diploma to do the MPhil. But at that time, I remember, Prof Boafo was the Pro-VC and Mr. Agyenimn-Boateng was the Registrar in charge of Academic Affairs and so, I did Counselling because at that time I was married and I did not want to leave the house. Again my husband told me he can't cook and also look after the home, so I felt that I could just do the Counselling on part time bases. I did Guidance and Counselling for three years instead of the two years because it was on part-time bases.

I completed this programme only to be told



that, the Certificate in Guidance and Counselling would not qualify me to be promoted in the library, so, I had to go to the Library School. Fortunately, I had a niece who promised to take care of the house for me. Because I had done the Graduate Diploma, I knew the challenges at the University of Ghana, Legon campus, but I embraced it. And at that time, I had been made the Senior Hall Tutor for Valco Hall, and I didn't want to lose the allowances I was getting. So I didn't ask for study leave to pursue the course (laughter).

Mr. Asamoah was the Ag. Deputy Librarian at that time so, I spoke with him and he agreed that I could use my accumulated annual leave. So I used my leave for the first year. That time, the Master of Philosophy was not just one year; you needed to go for lectures for a year. I went with Mr. Kwame Boohene. I think he had just finished his National Service at the library, and we managed to sail through.

Just when I was coming back from school the library was moved from the Old Site to the New Site (Science) I can't remember the exact year, but it is about 24 or 25 years ago. I moved in and became the Humanities Librarian. I was up there with Franklin Fiagbe and he was a very good Assistant. After some time, I was moved to the Education Library to head till about 2006. After some time, I was brought back to the Main Library to be at the then Reader's Services as the Readers Services Librarian. I asked to be moved to the Cataloguing Section because, I realized that I had forgotten about all the cataloguing skills and I thought I needed to be abreast with the skills. And that time, it was Mr. Baiden who really helped me. He was very good at cataloguing. But, I didn't even stay too long at the Cataloguing section and I went back to the Readers' Service where I started my training on Customer Care. Mr. Kofi was then occupying the Acting Deputy Librarian position and in 2015 when he asked for leave of absence to go to UHAS. I was asked to be the Deputy Librarian. Mr. Entsuh-Mensah was the substantive University Librarian, so, I became the Acting Deputy Librarian from 2015 to 2017. I was a Senior

Assistant Librarian at that time and I had applied for a Deputy Librarian position. For some reason, my form got lost.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Wooow!

**MADAM:** hmm, the kind of things I went through in the University is a different story. For two years they kept telling me they were working on it, only for me to be told that they couldn't even find my application form. I filled fresh forms again and Mr. Entsuh-Mensah did a lot of following ups. So I think in February 2017, I became the substantive Deputy Librarian. All Deputy Librarians had been acting so I was the first Deputy Librarian and the first female Deputy Librarian until I retired in July, 2022.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** So from what you are saying, it means that, at a point you had to combine family life with career and education. How was the experience like?

**MADAM:** It wasn't easy, but I had a niece who had just completed Polytechnic and she was the one who managed the house for me. Because as for my husband, he told me he wouldn't stop me from going to school but he couldn't take care of the house. I remember, the last time I was going to school, I wanted to take my daughter to OLA boarding and my younger brother and I had made all the arrangements so I needed to talk to her to understand. But the first question she asked was "Why, don't you love me again"?

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Oooh, that's heartbreaking

**MADAM:** Yes, so that was it, I just forgot about it. She didn't understand why I should take her to the boarding house. My brother told me I shouldn't take her there since it could have an effect on her. But fortunately Abeiku (my son) was doing his Masters. So, he promised that since there was a car in the house, every morning, he would take her to school. We were staying at the new site near University Practice SHS and taxis did not pass there because the road had not been constructed.

Fortunately, too we had lectures from Mondays to Wednesdays and if the week would extend at all it went to Thursday mornings. So every weekends, I was coming home. Sometimes I get home after 10pm, do whatever I had to do and return on Sundays. After church I would just join STC bus back to Accra. I went with Mr. Biney so that was how I was able to go through the MPhil. Even that one I was managing a shop at Valco Hall too. Even in school, if I got a free time I would rush to Makola to buy a few goods and send them through a car coming to Cape Coast to bring the things home. I am somebody who likes trading. That's the kind of training I had when I was young.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Can we call that a hobby.

**MADAM:** Yes, it is. Because even at this time that, I am not trading, I don't feel comfortable.





**EDITORIAL TEAM:** oh, oh

**MADAM:** And because of that, I always have money on me.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Ok

**MADAM:** When we were young, we all did hawking; it didn't matter whether you were a boy or girl. And I was good at selling anything you give me and sometimes I could go about four times. Even at that time, my father made sure I studied after that. Even if you didn't understand what you were learning, he would sit by you to encourage you. That was one good thing about my father.

When we were kids, we lived with our parents in a chamber and a hall and so we the children slept in the hall, and when there were visitors, we were in trouble. Because we had to wait for the visitor to leave before we lay our mats. By 2am, when you opened your eyes, you would see my father using cloths to cover all of us. And then by 3am or 4am you would see him sitting in his chair waiting for us to wake up for our morning devotion.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Aww

**MADAM:** Oh yes, we all had to do our morning devotion, and we took turns. That's the reason why I can read the Twi bible and I can write Twi. Because my father was an Akuapem and he never spoke one Fante word. And so he made us speak the language, he was a very caring person. God bless his soul.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** It looks like you had a packed life.

**MADAM:** Oh yes, I still miss my father because, he nurtured us so well. The only thing he knew was prayer and it helped us. As I speak, we have lawyers in the family, and we are all doing well. All of us have our own houses, but the interesting thing is he didn't build a house himself. Before

he retired he bought a house at Suhum; he said he wanted to live there after retirement with my mother, but we realized that because of hard work, he was getting weak and he was diabetic too. We didn't allow him to go so he stayed here. And when things became good for us, we always remembered what he did for us, and I single-handedly built a house for my parents. I just wanted to show appreciation for what they had done for us. And I really worked hard. I remember during the long vacations, I would go and do Peace Corps programmes, which gave me a lot of money. I went to the villages with the Peace Corps people and taught them Fanti and Twi languages. I went for language training and that was how I was able to do it. Indeed, it was not easy but it looks like I have even forgotten all the stress I went through.

In school, my father made sure that whatever the situation was, we studied hard. I remember in Form 5, I was not good at Maths, and I remember there was a teacher in Holy Child who agreed to teach me Maths. In those days there were no extra classes, so my father would sometimes go with me just to be with me and to bring me back home after class, and fortunately, I was able to pass my Maths, and that was why I was able to do the Sixth Form. Even the pass, was grade 6, so it was a borderline.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** It was still a pass (with laughter).

**MADAM:** Yes, it was a pass.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Can we say, you were Daddy's girl?

**MADAM:** Oh yes! I was very close to him and when he died, it was a big problem for me. Everybody was thinking about me and not even my mother or other siblings. Maybe it was also because I was named after his mother and he didn't have sisters. They were nine boys and even among his siblings he was the only one who had three girls.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Ok, Madam, I will be grateful if you could share with us three phrases that could best be used to describe you.

**MADAM:** Hmoooo, three phrases to describe myself, woooooow. I think I'm firm and I try to respect everybody and em, I know what God can do, so I rely on God.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Ok, so as children have a lot of dreams, growing up, did you have a dream of where you wanted to be?

**MADAM:** Yes, growing up, I wanted to be a nurse. Once, there was an accident directly in front of our house; a school girl was knocked down by a car and she died on the spot. There was blood all over the place. Since that day, I decided never to pursue that dream of becoming a nurse because I knew they were taking her to the hospital and I was asking my father, what would the nurses do? And that was it. From

that time, I didn't even know what I wanted to be, and the interesting thing was that even when I was going to school, I thought I was doing that for my father. And so, when my friends were joining these Christian groups to pray, I never joined them. I told them my father would pray for me, and my father was praying for me.

I went to Holy Child for seven (7) years and almost every Thursday, my father came to the school just to see how I was faring. It was a Catholic Girls' school and when the Roman sisters realized that, he didn't mean any harm, they allowed my father to visit me. Whenever he came, they would only announce that I should come to the administration block. Even in Adehye Hall, though males were not allowed to enter after 10pm, my father will come to visit me, and when it was exams, he would ask which subject was difficult and early morning he would be there just to encourage and pray for me. So me, I didn't care. The only thing I would do was to pick my books and go and study. Daddy's prayers were working for me.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** (laughter from both)

**MADAM:** And I think I was the only one he did that for.

**Editorial Team:** Wooooow! Were your siblings not jealous?

**Madam:** Honestly, I didn't know until my 60th birthday. When they spoke about it and that they all knew I was Daddy's favourite and they didn't like it, but there was nothing they could do. And so, when I am not around they would discuss it and even try to put me into trouble. Even on his hospital bed my father's last prayer was for us and for his unborn generations.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Madam, let me take you back to your teenage years. We all know teenage years come with its own challenges.

**MADAM:** We lived in a very big compound house and as I said, most of the time my mother was not around and the women in the house would feed us. Those days we could eat from any pot. And I realized that their food came in varieties, but we were eating just fufu and ampesi and on Sundays rice. So I remember I asked my mother why but

she didn't say anything, but thank God that we even had food to eat. And we also realized that during Christmas, that was when parents bought our clothes and panties and shoes. For me I was wearing only sandals and the first time I wore shoes was in the university. But because I lived with my siblings everything was ok. The challenges were not too many. I remember when I was in the secondary school and boys started coming around me, my father told me that, all the boys coming around me don't have anything and that whatever a man could buy, a woman could also buy. He said through hard work, one would do so with one's own money. So, I didn't know how to ask men for money and even when I married it became a problem. And because I was trading I had money, and my mother made us render accounts on our sales. She taught us how to save and I remember we had post office savings books. Those days you could save at the post office so everybody had one. And I remember I had a lot of money in my passbook. I remember those days too, workers were paid physical cash so anytime my father had a promotion, he would take all of us to the office to see his salary. So at every point in time, we knew our father's salary. My mother couldn't read, so we would come back and tell our mother so that when we were making any demands we would make a list of our needs. I think it helped me right from childhood, I knew I could do things on my own. And that has been me throughout.

**MADAM:** At a point I stayed with my parents and didn't want to leave them. Every Tuesday, I went home to see them and every Sunday I went to see them after church and spent the rest of the day with them. Anytime I wanted to go to Accra, I could go but I didn't want to stay there. I also realized that Cape Coast was calm at that time and anything I wanted I could do. I think I was also comfortable with my salary and I could do other things and I was ok.

But at a point I wanted to move to Kasoa because a cousin of mine gave me a land as a gift and encouraged me to build there so at age 30, I had started building.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Obviously there has been vast changes from your time as a student in UCC, through your working







years to now, can you comment briefly on these changes, especially in the Library and in the information profession?

**MADAM:** Yes, the first thing is we were doing things manually. And the library was in two parts.

The Science and Arts libraries. There was one at the science block and we called it the science library. I worked basically at the Old Site and during school times too, we were walking from Science to the Old Site using the Apewosika road. There were not taxis and no trotros, even the lecturers most of them were not having cars for you to ask for lift. When we came at first, there were buses we could join and go to town and in the evening when it was sending staff home or to town, we could join; we called it “Somma ride” but I think it didn’t take us two years before that thing stopped. And we were also eating from the dining hall. In my first year, because I was non-resident, I was given non-resident allowance. Non-residence students were given allowances every Friday, we would go and queue at the old administration block and sign for our money. That was why I could get people to host me, because I was contributing.

In UCC, things started changing and you needed to publish before you get promoted but it wasn’t as hectic as it is now. And the professors were not as many as they are now. And that time too, it was individual publication with typewriter and somebody typing.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Ok.

**MADAM:** But I think this time around, its ok. If you are ready to work a little bit harder, things will be ok. Those times, there were no joint publications and you publish and sometimes it took two years. Sometimes the response came and you were so shattered because of the kind of comments given. And even getting literature was also not easy, because you needed to go through books. But now it is easier, so that is the difference.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Madam, we know you have been very influential and contributed to the development of the Sam Jonah Library. Could you please share your contribution to the library profession in Ghana? We know you were a staunch executive member of the Ghana Library Association; can you briefly comment on this?

**MADAM:** Yes. The Association was good, because then we were attending workshops. The senior members at the library too were not many so every year we were going for workshops and annual conferences. So it was a learning platform for most of us. And we could get into contact with other people so it was very good until I became an executive member I have enjoyed being a member.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Madam, please let me take you a bit around GLA activities in the Central Region. At a point, they were a bit visible but it looks like now you don’t even hear about them. Can you comment on what has accounted for that?

**MADAM:** I remember when I was an Executive member, we were still having few meetings and some workshops. Just when I was exiting with Bright Akwetey, that is when the gap came. I will just encourage you because it looks like everything is dark round here, which should never be the case. Because whatever it is, we are still members. And we should all try to be members because it’s important. AFLIA too came up and I know the Librarian is an executive member of AFLIA. Dr. Helena Asamoah Hassan, started AFLIA in Ghana and it is working well and there is IFLA too. Some of these groups/platforms are opportunities so let’s try and revive Ghana Library Association (GLA), Central Region branch. We are ready to help.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** I also know you are a staunch Presbyterian, and you served for years as the Women Fellowship President. Can you share your experiences in this capacity?

**MADAM:** Yes, I started as a local member. In our church now, you need to be 40 years before you can join the Women’s Fellowship, but that time, when I joined, it wasn’t like that. I was supposed to join the Youth Fellowship. I went for one or two meetings and I left. The simple reason was that at the time the few university students were just trying to bluff and personally I didn’t like that. (Laughter from both). They would come and be speaking big English to most of these people who had not even been to secondary school, so I stopped and decided to join the Women’s Fellowship, thinking that it was just a church group so I could join. And before I realized, I was the Local Secretary, so we continued from there. I didn’t finish my work as a Local Secretary, but I was made the District President.

As the District President, that one too I could not complete my term of office. It was supposed to be six years but after my first term of 3 years, those who were executives of the



Presbytery had finished their term and I just drove my colleagues from here to Takoradi to go and vote for people to lead at the Presbytery level only to get there to find out that I had been nominated. I said No because, they didn't ask of my concern. They knew that if they had asked me, I wouldn't have agreed. And truly if I had known that, they had nominated me, I wouldn't have gone there. I realized the former President had done her own background work such that, everybody wanted me. It was the time I was getting ready to go and do my MPhil. So I decided to use that as an excuse and the Reverend Minister who was in-charge of the election said I should wait till they had finished with the election and lo and behold, I was elected as the President and I started crying. (Laughter from both)

I started crying because, I thought it was a position I couldn't handle so I didn't want any trouble since leading women is not easy. From there, we had a Director of CLAN (Church Life and Nurture) who was in Sekondi so from there I drove to Sekondi. When I got there he had gone for Evangelism at Dabose. When I went, Papa Karikari said, Paulina, no problem. Go and write a letter to me that you don't want to be the President so that I can put it on my file and take action. I was very happy. I thought that it could work.

*(Laughter from both)*

I got home that afternoon very sad and my younger brother came from Accra and I told him, and he said "God is good. If I were God, I would kill you today". I said Why? He said God allowed me to go anywhere I wanted to go. You go for CoDE invigilation, and when you have to go and do God's work, you are running away. There and then, I decided not to write the letter so I became the President; that was in 2007. So in 2008, I started my work as a Presbytery President of the Western Presbytery Womens' Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The area starts from some parts of Central Region and the whole of Western so I had my induction at Dadieso in 2008.

Fortunately for me, the Secretary was an elderly person who really encouraged me and said she would help me. I was happy. That very day after the induction, the former executives told us that there was a meeting at Abokobi, that's at the Women's Centre for the church. So the secretary opted to go for the meeting because I couldn't go. The second meeting was to be in June. This woman, before I realized had bought clothes for me and we agreed on what to wear. But she had a little baby grandchild so she said she was going to give the baby to the mother. So I went to Abokobi straight. We heard that she was involved in an accident around Komenda and she died.

As for the baby, they found her very fit in the bush, sleeping so the mother came for her. She's now a big girl. Once a while I check up on her, so I had another Secretary who was a bit younger but very helpful and hard working. So we started this work, and there is no part of Western Region

that I don't know. When I presided over my first conference at Tarkwa in 2009. It just dawned on me that the women needed a lot of prayers. I instituted what we called the Prayer Festival on Saturdays, and that won the heart of the women. So the ministry started growing and everything started changing.

Honestly, I was very vocal, I knew what I was about because I was reading a lot about the Church. So Western Presbytery started coming up and I finished my work after six years in 2014. I was supposed to go for a Conference, but by that time I had just become the Deputy Librarian and there was a conference in Malawi for women leaders. So I couldn't go for the church conference. In 2014, the National President called me and told me she wanted to nominate me as the National President; I said no, that one is too much for me. This whole idea started way back in Tamale in 2014 when we went for a conference and the President who was supposed to lead the Thanksgiving Service fell sick and asked me to lead. I didn't see myself worthy of that so, I called somebody else and told her that Mama Priscilla (the President) was sick. She wanted me to do the liturgy, but I cannot do it. So, can you do it for me, she said yes. So I just sent her all my documents. Saturday night, I was in the dormitory, when another person came and said, Mama Priscilla says, she knew that lady was there and she wanted me to do it. So I just picked it and did the liturgy. After the liturgy, I started having attacks and complaints that the time had not come for elections but the woman was projecting me.

So in 2016, I went for a conference at Oda and lo and behold, we did the vetting. At the vetting they told me we were four people vying for the Presidency, but I didn't mind because I was not interested. When it was time for election, it was only me. Apparently, all the others withdrew when they got to know I was part. So out of the 600 people, only 16 did not vote for me. I then became the National President of the Women's Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG). We did not even end the conference at Oda and the Ga Presbytery sent a message





to me that, it is not certificates that qualify one to do church work.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Wooow!

**MADAM:** Oh, yes so I also sent a message that they should realize that when I was coming I didn't carry my certificates. So we started in November 2016, I became the National President with an amount of three hundred and nineteen cedis (GH¢319) in the Fellowship's accounts. No materials, nothing. It was very disappointing. I went straight to the National Office, to the Clan Director, Papa Bio Kyeame.

Papa told me we should pray and see what God would do, so we started praying. The first materials we bought cost me Three Thousand, five hundred cedis (GH¢3,500) and my Financial Secretary also brought One Thousand five hundred cedis (GH¢1,500) to buy a half bail of women's fellowship cloth. And people just started buying and started selling scarf and shoes among others. The long and short is that everything went well. Our first Conference was at Swedru, we started this Prayer Festival and the women liked it so much. In 2018, the church took me to Rwanda for a meeting of members of African Communion of Reformed Churches (ACRC) and we had an election and I became the West Africa Coordinator.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Wooooow!

**MADAM:** So that was when the travelling started and I believe I was able to serve well. The Women's Fellowship in the United States of America (USA) also decided to invite me to the US in 2019, and it was wonderful. What I also did was that, every year, I made sure we visited all the former Executives. In 2022, when we were about to end our term of office, the Americans said, I had done a good job so they invited me to visit them again. We were doing a lot of travels across Africa for meetings until COVID came. After the COVID, last year June, I went for about three to four days. The good thing was I never used a pesewa of my own

money.

The Americans also invited me in October 2022 to supervise their election. I am finishing this ACRC thing in November. I have to be in Nigeria. Last year too, the church took me to Calabaha in Nigeria. God has been very wonderful. After our first term in office, we gave the church one hundred thousand Ghana cedis (GHC 100,000.00). By the grace of God, I was re-elected as the West Africa Coordinator for ACRC for another five years (2023-2028).

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** You mean, the fellowship you met with just three hundred and nineteen cedis.

**MADAM:** Yes, we were also able to convince the church to allow us to negotiate for Printex to make a special cloth for us, thought it was very difficult for the council to approve it. Within three weeks, Printex was able to print the cloth, so now we all have a common black and white cloth for the women. And that brought us a lot of money and when I was handing over, we had 1.2 million Ghana cedis. Now we are also helping the men to sell their clothes and T-shirts, but the men are difficult to deal with.

*(Laughter from both)*

**MADAM:** So I am now an ex-officio member. So this is how far the lord has brought me.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Obviously, God chosen you for the work and you've been very successful.

**MADAM:** Honestly sometimes, I am even amazed and my husband and my heads of department in the office were very supportive. In the first place, he is not even a Presbyterian. He is a Catholic, but anywhere I went, if he could, he would even take me there. And most of the times, he would do my packing for me. Sometimes, I leave the house for weeks. When I was working, I was taking the days from my annual leave. So on my file, there was always a sheet to record my days of travel, I am going for five says we deduct it. They



have all been helpful and everything has been to the glory of God.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Madam, can we say that, the support system, the prayer support and your business spirit accounted for your success?

**MADAM:** Yes, the business spirit came in because we had only the fellowship materials. But now, we have scarfs, mufflers, sandals and shoes. And the women like them and they buy them. And when I became President, I made sure that every November, we went to Patmos Retreat Centre at Akropong Akwapim for three days to pray. And at the beginning of every year, the executives go for a retreat and the Papa Abboah Offei always had time for us, it really helped. Anything about the church, I'm interested (Laughter from both).

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** If you are to write a book about your life (autobiography) what would be the title of that book and why?

**MADAM:** Hmmmm, I've not thought about it but maybe, all you need to know about me" or "how far the Lord has brought me" because everything about me is God. If I sit and reflect and I remember where I was... because I can still remember so many things. So I always tell the men in church anytime I get the opportunity, that if they can't do anything for their children, they should, at least pray for them.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** How does the future look like after your retirement?

**MADAM:** When I was going on retirement, I thought I would be called back for post-retirement contract, but I am somebody who never depends on anything until I get it. So I didn't bank my hope on it, and it didn't happen. Since I can't be home doing nothing, I have my shop I am working on. But anything about the church, I will go. I have also

been voted for again as a Presbyterian in fact Senior Presbyterian for my local assembly. I am just waiting for the induction and I will start my work as a Presbyterian again, which is very demanding if one want to be committed to it. The re-election on the ACRC Executive will also keep me very busy

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Ok

**MADAM:** So I will still continue to do God's work, and what I love to see is when I go to church and I see the young men dancing.

*(Laughter from all)*

**MADAM:** And in my church, everybody knows I love to see marriage ceremonies.

*(Laughter from all)* I am also in charge of a new Children's Service Ministry which really excites me

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Oh yes, so I was about to ask for one thing we will remember you for and the "Ayefer" came to mind.

**MADAM:** Oh yes, and my Children Service members provide service to people too. Grandma Paulina. At every point in time, I want to see the children happy, So, I always have something for them to work on. I am a Marriage Counsellor too; the church does not organize post marital counselling but I do. Immediately it is one year I would call them, usually the woman first, then I call them together and we try to do some repair works because marriage is not easy.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Madam, in terms of career, mentorship and leadership, we can say proudly you've made a mark in the library profession and in UCC. We would like you to give a short word or advice to your mentees, admirers and members of the university community, especially the young women.

**MADAM:** I think that, they should know what they want, be it in marriage or at work. And then the people we take as our friends, because whether we like it or not, our friends have impact on us. And then we need to be focused. They should also watch out on buying. Sometimes we buy things we don't even need. And then you need to be content with what you have. I always tell people, somebody is walking, so if you have a bicycle, you are ahead.

Then we should also take God seriously, because the kind of things we see and go through these days, it is only God who can see us through and we should pray too. Because God watches over us and does a lot of things for us we don't see.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** Wooow, congratulations Madam.

**MADAM:** Thank you.





# IN JUST 48 HOURS

by Lyna



I couldn't hear the sounds of honking cars and sirens, or the traffic hawkers selling various goods from tissue to washing powder. I couldn't hear the loud music that was coming from a bar somewhere on this street, the music I was actually enjoying just moments ago. I couldn't even hear the troski mates calling for passengers to various towns in the city. And, I definitely couldn't remember where I dropped my phone after receiving that call.

The call that has made the world around me go quiet. And, it isn't that kind of quiet one feels after finishing a heavy task or closing a deal. This quietness is coupled with some sort of foreboding, the kind that makes one's life flash before their very eyes. "Are you okay, miss?" I felt a finger on my face, wiping away tears I had no idea when they got there. A blurry face of the person stood before me. But I couldn't focus on him to get the details of his face; I couldn't focus on anything. So, I simply gave the person a small nod, hoping that was enough to send him on his way and away from me. I think it was, or he just realized minding his business was a much better option, because he said something else, I couldn't hear, then he went on his way. Frankly, I don't know how or when I managed to get home. And I didn't know whether to convince myself or be sure I heard it well. I repeated monotonously the words from the doctor at Newton hospital.

Hello Miss Akins,

The laboratory results for the test we did are out.

We are sorry to inform you that the test came out positive.

We therefore ask that you kindly come to the hospital for us to decide on the available management options.

"How come?", I asked myself. How can having sex with someone just once destroy my entire life like this? Being on the pill, I thought myself safe. How could I be so stupid! I was more concerned about not getting pregnant than protecting myself from STDs. Again, how would I have known that Collins, the guy I met at the fair on my 24th birthday had HIV? He looked too polished and gentle to have anything, right? I was tired of being called old fashioned, that's why I chose my 24th birthday to break my virginity. I wanted someone I wouldn't have to see again, a one-night stand. Now I see how stupid that was. I mean, how do I know the medical record of a total stranger?

After crying myself out for hours, I decided. No more feeling sorry for myself. Collins knew he had HIV, but he slept with me without protection anyway. I needed to lash out somehow. I needed to punish someone for this. I was young and just out of school. I mean, I studied hard, attended all the church programmes, and kept good company while on campus. Just this once I wanted to do something a little adventurous, this happens! I sure don't



deserve this!

Decision made, I wore the sluttiest dress in my closet and found myself at skyless pub. After 5 or was it 7? Shots of straight vodka, I stopped feeling. I liked the fact that I couldn't feel anything. The anger, disappointment, self-pity and hate were all shoved down the bottle of whatever drink it was I held in my hand currently. Having a great time on the dance floor, I felt a hand slide up my waist. "How about we get out of here and have a really good time?" The guy who had slid up to me asked. For a moment, I almost said no. But what was there to lose? I already had HIV. I might as well punish someone else. I don't deserve to die alone while men like him think it's okay to pick up just anyone to use.

"Your place or mine?", I asked slurring. "How about King's hotel?", he asked. And then we danced some more. I had 3 more shots and we were on our way to Mr-what's-his-name's hotel room.

I woke up feeling like a loser and alone in bed. I was almost done dressing when I heard my phone ringing. I

answered on the 3rd ring without checking the caller ID.

"Hello?" I said groggily

"Hello Miss Akins, this is Dr. Bonny from Newton hospital ""I'm calling to inform you that there was a mistake in the lab results earlier, and that your actual results came back negative. So sorry for the inconveniences caused. The hospital will compensate you for the emotional trauma cost."

I couldn't believe my ears. Here I was, throwing my life away and I didn't even have the virus. I dressed as quickly as possible, checked out and was on my way to the bus terminal to wait for an Uber. I didn't see it coming. I could hear people shouting when I turned and collided with a speeding vehicle. Lying down in a pool of blood with people gathered around me, my life flashed before my eyes. And tears mixed with my blood on my face. I guess HIV wasn't what was going to kill me after all. My poor decisions would do the job. And everything went black.

# JUST FOR LAUGHS

by Saarah Otsibu



## *A BOY WENT TO A GIRL SITTING IN THE LIBRARY*

**Boy said:** Can I sit next to you.

**Girl replied (loudly):** I don't want to spend a night with you.

Everybody stared at the boy and he felt embarrassed and went to sit on another seat.

**Then the girl came to the boy and said:** I am a Psychology student and I know that you are feeling embarrassed.

**The boy replied loudly:** \$300 a night that's too much

Everyone was now staring at the girl.

This time the girl felt embarrassed

**The boy said:** I am a Law student and I know how to make someone feel guilty.

## *I'M HUNGARY*

**Timmy:** I'm Hungary

**Mum:** Why don't you Czech the fridge

**Timmy:** Ok, I'm Russian to the kitchen

**Mum:** hmmm- maybe you'll find some Turkey

**Timmy:** Yeah, but it's all covered in Greece. Yuck!

**Mum:** There is Norway. You can eat that

**Timmy:** I know; I guess I'll just have a can of CHILE

**Mum:** Denmark your name on the can!

**Timmy:** Kenya do it for me?

**Mum:** Ok, I'm Ghana do it

**Timmy:** Thanks, I'm tired Iran for an hour today.

**Mum:** It Tokyo long enough.

**Timmy:** Yeah, Israelly hard sometimes - - -

# THE HUMAN LIBRARY INITIATIVES: ANALYSING IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

by Gloria Tachie-Donkoh (PhD): HOD, Clients Services Department, Sam Jonah Library;  
Vida Mensah: Reference and Student Support Librarian, Sam Jonah Library



The Human Library Service in academic institutions is an intriguing and evolving field that involves using people as "books" to facilitate dialogues, understanding and knowledge transfer. The Human Library is a concept that originated in Denmark in the early 2000s and has since spread to various countries around the world. It is a unique approach to learning and understanding by allowing people to "borrow" other individuals for a conversation, much like borrowing a book from a library. The "human books" are usually volunteers who share their personal experiences, knowledge, and perspectives on various topics, often related to their own identities, beliefs, or life experiences (Watkins, 2014; Amudha, Kumar & Raj, 2019).

The Human Library Services fall within the larger scope of community knowledge sharing by libraries and involve organizing events or programs where people, often referred to as "living books," share their personal experiences, knowledge, and expertise with others in a structured and interactive manner. The aim of the Human Library concept is to challenge stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination by providing a platform for meaningful dialogue and understanding between people from different backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences. It promotes empathy, tolerance, and a broader perspective on various issues (Kwan, 2020). The concept is similar to checking out

a book from a library, but instead of reading a printed page, patrons have conversations with human beings who have unique stories and perspectives.

Human Library Service in the University of Cape Coast Library.

In 2023, the Clients Services Department of the University of Cape Coast Library System introduced this service in Ghana, as part of their mandates to introduce innovative services to meet diverse user needs (Amanquah, Attafuah & Owusu-Ansah, 2023). The service was first launched on 7th March 2023 at the Social Learning Commons of the Sam Jonah Library. Two seasoned "human books" were lent to a group of students for two hours on the topic: "Balancing academic lives with relationships". On the 26th and 27th July, 2023, DRIC and D-Hub organised an Academia-Industry Research and Innovation Fair to exhibit products, services and identify potential solutions to societal progress. The University of Cape Coast Library took the opportunity to introduce the Human Library Service to the larger university community and had successful human library sessions for a number of individuals and groups of students. Seasoned "human books" from the university community and beyond volunteered to discuss with participants topics relating to Business, Academic, Relationship, Employment, Family life, Career choices among others.



### **Impact of the human library service**

In a typical academic environment, the Human Library Services aim to promote dialogue, understanding, and appreciation of diversity by providing a platform for individuals to share their stories and perspectives. Academic libraries can therefore use this approach to enhance learning experiences, foster inclusivity, and encourage critical thinking and open-mindedness among students and the academic community. It can also help members of the university community to mentor, share and transfer rich work knowledge and experiences to the younger working groups. As identified by Dobreski and Huang (2016), the major impacts of this service to the University community may include: helping others, teaching, making connections, learning, self-expression, reflection, therapeutic and personal enjoyment.

A key impact of the Human Library Service is that it promotes interaction, and there are few restrictions on the dialogue, allowing more creativity. The dialogic nature of the Human Library Service generates positive effects. Participants and organisers of the Human Library Service, consider the dialogic nature of the human library to be essential to facilitating better interaction, making room for creativity. Experiencing a discussion with a “human book” creates an opportunity for constructive interpersonal dialogue and learning between people who may normally not interact. People who volunteer to participate as ‘books’ in Human Libraries represent various cultures



and identities, may have experienced or witnessed social exclusion or indifference at some time in their lives, or are those who have participated in unique life experiences. The Human Library therefore offers a comfortable environment for diverse people to meet, ask questions, and learn from each other (Kwan, 2020).

Another impact is that, The Human Library creates a new mode of individual tacit knowledge management in the library. The Human Library gives members of the University community the chance to make a difference in someone's life. It provides readers with access to the knowledge and lived experiences of their fellow community members. It therefore helps remove the barriers between people in academia and offers community members the opportunity to transfer tacit knowledge to the younger generation easily (Dobreski & Huang, 2016).

The Human Library Initiative at the University of Cape Coast though new, has demonstrated significant impact in fostering understanding, empathy, and inclusiveness within the university community and beyond. One key impact of the Human Library Service is the promotion of diversity and inclusion. By bringing together individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences, the initiative has facilitated meaningful conversations that challenge prejudices and biases. Students, faculty, and the broader community have had the opportunity to engage with “human books” who share their stories, promoting understanding and tolerance.

Moreover, the initiative has proven to enhance interpersonal skills and communication abilities among participants. The interactive nature of the Human Library encourages active listening, empathy, and the development of critical thinking. Students and participants learn to appreciate different perspectives and effectively communicate across diverse groups essential skills in today's globalised society.

### **How does the Human Library Concept work in an academic library?**

Usually, participants who wish to have a two-way, interpersonal discussion with a “Human Book” can schedule a 30–45-minute session with a specific “Book” or register at the library on the day of the event or on a specified date. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. “Librarians” are available to assure scheduling goes smoothly, and “Books” are returned in good condition.

Here's a breakdown of how the Human Library Services typically operate in academic libraries:



1. **Selection of Human Books:** Academic libraries collaborate with various individuals, often from diverse backgrounds, cultures, or experiences, to become "human books." These individuals have specific expertise, experiences, or stories to share related to their lives, careers, academic fields, or cultural backgrounds.
2. **Cataloging and Descriptions:** Each "Human Book" is catalogued with a title (representing their expertise or story) and a description of what readers can expect to learn or discuss during a conversation. This information is made available to patrons to help them choose which "books" they want to "check out."
3. **Event Organisation:** The library organises scheduled events where patrons can interact with the "human books". These events can take various formats, such as themed panels, one-on-one conversations, or group discussions. Each "human book" is assigned a specific time slot or station.
4. **Reserving Conversations:** Patrons can "reserve" a conversation or time slot with a particular "human book", similar to checking out a traditional library book. Reservations may be made in advance or on the day of the event, depending on the library's policies.
5. **Conversations:** During the event, patrons engage in conversations with the "human books", asking questions and learning from their experiences and expertise. These conversations can be enlightening and educational, and can promote understanding and empathy.
6. **Feedback and Evaluation:** After the conversation, patrons may provide feedback on their experience, which helps the library improve future human library events. It also allows the library to understand the impact of the program on the community.
7. **Privacy and Respect:** Libraries ensure that the privacy and dignity of the human books are maintained. Conversations should be respectful, and boundaries set by the "human books" should be honoured.

### **Sustainability of the Human Library Service in the University of Cape Coast.**

Sustainable practices are widely adopted amongst citizens, corporations, political parties, and governments globally. This is because the ideals of sustainability have become the twenty-first-century beacon for securing any uncertain future (Jochumsen, Johnston & Vårheim, 2023). According to Mangemba (2017), sustainability is "an ability or capacity of something to be maintained or to sustain itself. It is about taking what we need to live now, without jeopardising the potential for people in the future to meet their needs." Basically, the concept of sustainability and sustainable libraries has gained popularity in its usage to refer to the manner libraries are adopting certain measures in their operations that conform to the three E's – economy, environment and equity (American Library Association (ALA), n.d). Sustainability is meeting current needs without compromising the opportunities of the future (Hopper, 2013), and libraries talk about sustainability in a variety of ways, most often through discussing how to make specific services sustainable (Pionke, 2016). The Human Library Service is a new concept in the University of Cape Coast Library and in Ghana for that matter, but it has come to stay, therefore, there should be systematic models to sustain it in the academic library systems in Ghana. When considering the sustainability of the Human Library Service in an academic environment, several key factors need to be taken into account:

### **Long-Term Vision and Strategic Planning:**

The library involved should develop a clear long-term vision



for the Human Library Service and create a strategic plan outlining goals, targets, and measures of success. Regular review and update of the plan to adapt to the changing needs and priorities of the academic community will also be helpful (Hallmark 2007).

### **Sustainability Initiatives:**

Academic libraries should align the Human Library program with the institution's sustainability initiatives, demonstrating a commitment to social and environmental responsibility. This alignment can attract additional support and funding from sustainability-focused organisations (Tooey, 2019).

### **Integration into the Extra Curriculum Activities:**

To ensure sustainability, the Human Library should be integrated into the extra academic curriculum activities like the SRC week celebrations and sport activities, making it a regular and recognised part of the educational experience. The library can liaise with the students' executives and incorporate Human Library sessions into relevant extra curriculum semester activities, providing students with a structured opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives.

### **Institutional Support and Funding:**

Sustainable funding and institutional support are essential for the long-term success of the Human Library. Libraries should allocate budget and resources to organise and promote Human Library events, including training, logistics, marketing and follow up activities (Adekoya, 2020).

### **Volunteer Involvement:**

Utilising volunteers effectively is key to sustainability. Engaging volunteers in various roles, including organising events, recruiting "human books," promoting the service, and managing logistics, can significantly reduce operational costs.

### **Partnerships and Collaboration:**

Collaboration with various campus departments, student organisations, and community partners can enhance the sustainability of the Human Library. Engagement with other libraries, faculty members, student groups and other stakeholders can help expand the impact of the program.

### **Diverse Book Selection:**

Ensuring a diverse range of "human books" representing various backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives is crucial. Academic libraries should continuously update and diversify the pool of available human books to reflect the evolving demographics and interests of the academic community. Thus, continuous efforts to involve a diverse range of "human books" and readers can help sustain the

relevance and impact of the Human Library.

### **Training and Preparation:**

Proper training for "human books" is essential to ensure they can effectively share their stories and engage with readers in a meaningful and constructive manner. Workshops on communication skills, cultural sensitivity, and understanding the goals of the Human Library can enhance the quality of interactions.

### **Promotion and Outreach:**

Effective marketing and outreach strategies are vital for sustainability (Palaniammal, 2019). Regularly educating the campus community about the Human Library's purpose, benefits, and impact is essential for sustainability. Awareness of the service can be created through workshops, seminars, media coverage, and social media to attract more readers and encourage repeat visits. Libraries can utilise various communication channels, such as social media, campus newsletters, and academic portals to promote upcoming Human Library events and encourage participation.

### **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:**

Gathering feedback from both "books" and readers will help improve the Human Library Service. This will help monitor the impact on participants' attitudes, behavior, and community relations in order to provide valuable data for adapting and refining the program (Dian-jia, 2009). Libraries involve the need to establish a system for collecting feedback from both "human books" and readers after each event and use the feedback to evaluate the impact of the Human Library, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to enhance future events. Remaining flexible and adapting to changing societal attitudes and

*Continue on page 19*













needs is also crucial for long-term sustainability. Regularly reviewing the program's structure, themes, and approach can also help ensure that it remains relevant and resonates with the target audience (Budzise-Weaver, 2015; Lima, 2016).

### **Incorporation of Technology:**

Leveraging technology, such as online platforms or virtual events, can enhance the accessibility and reach of the Human Library. Integrating virtual components can accommodate a broader audience and adapt to changing circumstances, such as when the "human book" is not available on campus. Digital platforms can be used for reservations, event notifications, and online engagement to enhance accessibility and broaden the Human Library's reach. Technology can also facilitate data collection and analysis for continual improvement (Bower, 2010; Kumar 2018).

### **Conclusion**

The Human Library Service at the University of Cape Coast has proven to be an effective tool in promoting diversity, understanding, mentorship, inclusivity and knowledge transfer within the university community. Sustainability is another crucial aspect of the initiative's success. The continued involvement and support from the university administration, faculty, and student body reflect the sustained interest and commitment to the service's goals. Regularly scheduled Human Library events and ongoing recruitment of new "human books" to ensure the longevity and growth of the service, will sustain its impact over time.

Continued support and expansion of the Human Library will contribute to a more harmonious and understanding university environment.

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# NURTURING YOUR SCHOLARLY IDENTITY: A PATH TO SUCCESS

by Isaac Nii Noi Northey



Establishing and maintaining your scholarly identity is crucial in the fast-paced world of academia. It not only improves your professional standing, but it also significantly influences the course of your career. In this article, we explore the idea of controlling one's scholarly identity, its importance, practical methods for doing so, and possible repercussions if one chooses not to. So, fasten your seatbelts as we set out on a quest to discover the keys to developing a strong intellectual identity.

## What is Scholarly Identity Management?

Scholarly Identity Management can be understood as the conscious and proactive effort to shape and cultivate one's academic persona. It includes a range of activities including your involvement in research, teamwork, publishing, teaching, and general involvement in the academic community. It entails crafting an engaging story that highlights your knowledge, passions, and effect to establish you as a reputable and significant figure in your industry.

## The Need for Scholarly Identity Management

A strong scholarly identity is more crucial than ever in today's hyper connected digital society when information is plentiful, and competition is severe. Here are some major arguments why it's essential to maintain academic identities well:

1. **Visibility and Recognition:** Managing your scholarly identity allows you to increase your visibility and gain recognition within your academic community and beyond. It helps you establish a unique brand that distinguishes you from your peers, attracting attention from collaborators, funding

agencies, and potential employers.

2. **Career Advancement:** A well-managed scholarly identity can open doors to new opportunities, such as research grants, prestigious fellowships, and tenure-track positions. It showcases your expertise, which may open doors to speaking engagements, conference appearances, and powerful positions within business associations.
3. **Collaboration Opportunities:** Taking control of your scholarly identity opens the door to international research and scholarly partnership opportunities. You increase your visibility and attractiveness to potential collaborators by demonstrating your knowledge, research interests, and accomplishments. In addition to enhancing your personal work, collaborative research initiatives can result in greater impact, more citations, and improved professional connections.

There are several venues available for scholars to actively maintain their identity in the digital age. Researchers may demonstrate their knowledge, interact with colleagues, and promote partnerships by carefully using these venues. Here are some examples of websites where you may maintain your academic identity well.

1. **Personal website:** Having a personal website gives you a central location to highlight your publications, research, teaching experience, and contact details. It enables you to establish a credible online profile and manage the story that surrounds your intellectual identity.
2. **Researcher Profiles:** Researchers may construct detailed profiles that highlight their publications, citations, and partnerships on websites like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and ORCID. These profiles promote networking among colleagues and raise awareness within the academic community.
3. **Social media:** Use websites like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Academia.edu to connect with experts in your area, communicate with other academics, and share your research discoveries. These platforms offer chances for significant exchanges, teamwork, and networking outside of conventional academic contexts. Academic networking websites like Mendeley and Zotero also offer ways to discuss and

find research papers, get in touch with academics in your area of expertise, and keep up with the most recent advancements.

#### **Strategies for Scholarly Identity Management:**

1. **Create Your Narrative:** Begin by outlining your primary areas of competence and areas of interest in study. Use your own website, online personas, and social media channels to successfully communicate them. Present your research accomplishments, partnerships, and effects in an interesting and approachable way.
2. **Participate actively in academic conferences, workshops, and seminars to network:** Participate in conversations, share your work, and establish connections with other academics who share your interests. To remain up to date on the most recent advancements in your profession, participate in online forums and join pertinent mailing groups.
3. **Disseminate and Publish:** Regularly publish the results of your study in recognised publications and conferences. Think about open access publishing to broaden the audience for the effect of your writing. Create captivating descriptions of your findings for audiences outside of your field of expertise via blog articles, videos, or infographics.

#### **Consequences of Failing to Manage Scholarly Identity:**

The management of your scholarly identity should not be neglected as it may negatively impact your academic career.

Here are a few possible outcomes:

1. **Limited Visibility:** Without an active and well-managed scholarly identity, you risk remaining unnoticed in your field. Opportunities for collaboration, funding, and recognition may be hampered as a result.
2. **Missed Opportunities for job growth:** Not managing your scholarly identity may lead to missed chances for job growth. A person's internet presence is frequently used by prospective employers and funding organisations to determine if they are a good fit for employment or grants.
3. **Lack of impact:** In the networked academic environment of today, impact is essential. Your research's capacity to impact and develop your area may be restricted if it cannot find its intended audience due to ineffective scholarly identity management.

A crucial component of academic achievement is managing one's scholarly identity. You may increase your exposure, acknowledgment, and overall influence by thoughtfully developing your story, interacting with your community, and efficiently spreading your findings. Failure to control your scholarly identity might impede job advancement and limit your room for improvement. Take advantage of scholarly identity management to advance your academic career and fill it with success.

# NEWS

At its 39th meeting held in the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) at Ho, from 6th December, 2023 to 9th December, 2023, the Committee of University Librarians and their Deputies (CULD) agreed that the University of Cape Coast Library should host the operations and activities of CULD during the next two years. This means that the current Chairperson of CULD is Dr Mac-Anthony Cobblah. Congratulations!







# THE MAGIC LIBRARY ADVENTURE

Once upon a time, in a quaint little town, there stood a magnificent library called Enchantia. It was rumoured to hold a vast collection of magical books that could transport readers to extraordinary worlds. The librarian, Mrs. Willow Dale, had a sparkle in her eyes and a mischievous grin that hinted at the library's secrets.

One sunny afternoon, a curious young girl named Lily skipped through the library doors. She was a bookworm with an insatiable thirst for adventure. With her trusty backpack and an open mind, Lily entered Enchantia Library, ready to embark on a new journey.

As Lily combed through the shelves, her fingers traced the spines of books, whispering promises of wonder and excitement. Suddenly, a tattered volume caught her attention. It was titled "The Key to Imagination." Intrigued, she pulled it from the shelf, and to her astonishment, a small, golden key fell out.

Without thinking twice, Lily inserted the key into an ornate lock on a nearby bookshelf. To her amazement, the bookshelf shifted, revealing a hidden doorway. A rush of excitement filled her as she stepped through, finding herself in a lush, enchanted forest.

The trees whispered secrets, and colourful butterflies danced around her. A playful breeze nudged Lily forward, leading her deeper into the forest. As she explored, she stumbled upon a charming village inhabited by talking animals, each with their own magical abilities.

A wise owl named Oliver offered guidance, while a mischievous squirrel named Hazel played pranks. The village was filled with laughter and joy, and Lily couldn't help but join in the fun. She helped a timid rabbit regain his confidence and challenged a talented fox to a riddle contest.

After a day of laughter and adventure, Lily discovered a shimmering portal that would take her back to the library. Reluctantly, she bid farewell to her newfound friends, promising to return one day.

Back in the library, Lily realized that time had stood still while she explored the magical forest. It felt as if only minutes had passed. Mrs. Willow Dale, with her knowing smile, welcomed Lily back and encouraged her to continue her adventures within the pages of the books.

From that day, Lily became a regular visitor to Enchantia Library, where she embarked on countless magical journeys. Each book she opened revealed new realms to explore, lessons to learn, and friends to meet.

And so, the magic of Enchantia Library weaved its spell on Lily, reminding her that within the pages of a book, anything was possible, and the joy of imagination knew no bounds.

*The End.*



# THE RENAISSANCE OF THE SAM JONAH LIBRARY FOR 21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS

**L**ibraries have long been the heartbeat of academic institutions serving as repositories of knowledge and hubs of learning. However, with the advent of technology and the changing dynamics of education, libraries have evolved to encompass not only traditional print resources but also digital repositories, collaborative learning spaces, and video conferencing facilities. The establishment of Research Commons (RC), Knowledge Commons (KC), Social Learning Commons (SLC), and Video Conferencing Rooms (VCR) in the Sam Jonah Library plays crucial roles in facilitating scholarship, fostering intellectual growth and promoting the dissemination of knowledge. All services provided in these commons are free with the exception of printing and photocopying services which users pay a small token.

## **Research Commons and Knowledge Commons**

The Research Commons and Knowledge Commons at the Sam Jonah Library were inaugurated on 21st October 2019 and 25th March, 2021 respectively. They have brought a pivotal shift from a traditional repository of books to a dynamic hub for research, interaction and collaborative learning. These commons are characterized by extensive collection of digital resources, high Internet



connectivity, computers, printers, photocopiers, scanners, seminar rooms and discussion rooms. The wealth of digital resources offered in the Research and Knowledge Commons provides students and researchers access to a vast array of information. This includes academic databases, e-journals, and e-books, enabling users to explore the latest research and scholarly publications. The commons provide laptop spaces as well as Internet enabled workstations that allow library users to conduct research online regarding their assignments or theses.

In addition, the commons provide a conducive collaborative environment that encourages group discussions and interdisciplinary interactions. The Research and Knowledge Commons further provides research support to both undergraduate students and faculty regarding literature searches, citation management, and research methodology. The Commons are also used for training and workshops to enhance the research skills of students and faculty on topics such as e-resources, information literacy, data analysis, reference management, and scholarly communication.







### Social Learning Commons

The purpose for the establishment of the Social Learning Commons (SLC) within the Sam Jonah Library is to redefine the traditional notion of libraries as quiet study areas. It acknowledges that learning is a social activity, often enhanced by engagement with peers and instructors. The SLC is designed to facilitate collaboration, group discussions, and innovative thinking. The Social Learning Commons has flexible furniture and adaptable layouts that can be easily reconfigured to suit the evolving needs of groups and individuals. It is also designed with the intention of accommodating a variety of activities, from group study sessions to interactive presentations which enhance the efficiency and productivity of group work. It is said that “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”, so the Social Learning Commons is equipped with educational games and Smart TVs that allows users to take a break from studying to relax by playing games or watching educative programs and news broadcasts from across the globe. The presence of a Social Learning Commons in the library acknowledges the educational benefits of group collaboration which aligns with modern pedagogical strategies, recognizing that students learn not only from instructors but also from their peers.

### Video Conferencing Room

The establishment of the Video Conferencing Room in the Sam Jonah Library stems from the Library’s mandate of providing world class facilities and professional

services that are responsive to the needs of the University community in a world where geographical location is no longer a hindrance to scholarly collaborations. The VCR was instituted to facilitate virtual meetings of members of the University community and their local and foreign partners, collaborators and funders. Particularly, it provides convenient and technologically advanced platforms with high-quality audio and video which ensures that interactions are meaningful and productive for faculty and students to connect with peers, researchers, and experts worldwide, thereby expanding the horizons of academia.





# MAJOR DONATIONS RECEIVED IN 2023

On Wednesday, 16 August 2023, the Deputy Head of Mission of the Japanese Embassy in Ghana, Mr Mitori Naoki handed over 158 books worth forty-three thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 43,000.00) to the University of Cape Coast Library System (UCCLS). The books were originally donated to the Japanese Embassy by the Read Japan Project. The aim of the donation is to expose readers of the books to the precise image of Japan through the books.

The books written in English cover subjects like education, religion, language, culture, history, philosophy, politics, science and technology and contemporary Japan. Receiving the donation, the Pro Vice Chancellor, Prof Mrs Rosemond Boohene, expressed the university's appreciation for the kind gesture from the Read Japan Project. She was confident that the books would serve the purpose of enlightening readers about Japan and be an avenue to further deepen the relations between Ghana and Japan. Also present at the handing over were the University Librarian, Dr Mac-Anthony Cobblah, as well as Deans, Directors, lectures and staff of UCC.

Other major donations received are indicated in the Table below



No	Name	Quantity of Books	Estimated Cost per unit price	Total Worth of books
1	Ruth A Hodges	29	GHC 120.00	GHC 3,480.00
2	Sir Dr Sam Esson Jonah	284	GHC 100.00	GHC 28,400.00
4	Mr C.A Kwakye, Mr D.A. Agyei, Mr R.D., Mensah, Mr C.B. Awah and Mr A.K. Annan	2	GHC 300.00	GHC 600.00
5	Adverts Students of UCC	30	GHC 50.00	GHC 1,500.00
6	Samuel Adiku	2	GHC 150.00	GHC 300.00.00
7	Alison K. Deima	2	GHC 150.00	GHC 300.00.00



# BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY GALLERY

by Frankline Fiagbe



The idea of the University Gallery at the University of Cape Coast was birthed by Rev. Prof. Samuel Kwasi Adjepong during his tenure of office as a Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast in the year 2000. However, the actual implementation of the idea took off under the administration of Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Addow-Obeng in the year 2001 when Dr and Mrs K. N. Gyaba who were alumni of the University donated an amount of money towards its establishment. This could be the reason why the Gallery was first named Alumni Gallery. Also, during that same period, the Barclays Bank Ghana Limited donated twenty million cedis (20,000,000.00) (now GHC 2,000.00) towards the setting up of the Alumni Gallery.

The initial collection of photographs and memorabilia was housed at the old Photographic Unit of the administration block and the University administration was responsible for the management of the Gallery until the collections were brought to the present setting (Main Library) when Mr. Richard Arkaifie was the Acting University Librarian (1992-2002). The University Gallery which is found within the Sam Jonah Library is located on the left-wing of the ground floor.

The Gallery showcases the pictures of past and present National Heroes, past and present principal officers of the University as well as the pictures of the Provosts and

Deans of the various schools and colleges of the University chronologically. Also, on display are the names of various heads of departments of the University, Students Representative Council Past Presidents embossed on banners and galvanized plates respectively. The pictures of past and present librarians and hall masters/wardens are also captured. The souvenirs of various halls, special collections of reference materials and trophies won by UCC are well arranged in showcases. The Gallery also has space for visitors to relax and watch documentaries such as matriculation, graduation, memorial lectures and open day celebrations of the University. The University Gallery also has different stocks of resources ranging from pictures of Principal Officers of the University, pictures of some National Heroes and special collections of books and other important resources.

Inadequate exhibition spaces is one of the major challenges the Management of the University Library System envisages and in view of this, the Management has decided that the Gallery should be restructured to establish an art gallery that will showcase the history, scholarly works, inventions, drawings, prints, sculptures, photographs and other works of the University that will ensure that visitors are given first-class treatment whenever they visit the Gallery.

# TRANSFORMATIVE HORIZONS: REDEFINING THE SAM JONAH LIBRARY FOR A MODERN ACADEMIC ODYSSEY

The Sam Jonah Library is an iconic hub in the vibrant tapestry of academic life at the University of Cape Coast, echoing the pursuits of knowledge, research, and innovation. As we look to the future, a trilogy of ground-breaking projects are set to redefine the very essence of our beloved library.

## **PROJECT NO. 1: EMBRACING THE DIGITAL DAWN - THE LEARNING RESOURCE LABORATORY**

Patrons of the library can now step into a world of limitless learning with the Sam Jonah Library's future Learning Resource Laboratory (LRL), a dynamic environment geared for collaborative inquiry. This 50-seat laboratory, outfitted with cutting-edge technology, welcomes you to participate in computer-assisted learning programmes, study language skills, and utilise multimedia wonders for creative expression.

Imagine an area within the LRL where the lines between conventional and modern learning are blurred. Immerse yourself in Microsoft Office, SPSS, Python, R, and other programmes, with language competency classes taking centre stage. Learning is transformed into a dynamic, participatory experience by the LRL's multimedia arsenal, which includes headphones, speakers, microphones, cameras, and projectors. As a digital literacy beacon, the LRL provides access to a rich tapestry of electronic resources, supporting inclusion with assistive technology for people with special needs. The Learning Resource Laboratory, directed by a committed staff, is ready to reshape the landscape of academic exploration—a location where knowledge has no limits and learning is an ever-evolving adventure.

## **PROJECT NO. 2: CRAFTING A SECURE HAVEN - ELECTRONIC ACCESS CONTROL AND RFID BOOK SYSTEM**

Consider a disruptive solution that goes beyond traditional library administration, protecting not just the Sam Jonah Library's resources, facilities, patrons, and staff, but also revolutionising borrowing and return

procedures for unparalleled efficiency. The Electronic Access Control and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Book System emerges as a light of innovation, ready to alter our library.

This cutting-edge technology, Innovating Library Dynamics, is more than just a technological improvement; it represents a paradigm shift in how we engage with the library's vast resources. By seamlessly integrating electronic access control with RFID tags implanted in library books, the system strengthens security by discouraging unauthorised access, while also reinventing the borrowing and return procedures to make them faster, simpler, and more user-friendly.

## **PROJECT NO. 3: SPACES THAT INSPIRE - REORGANIZING THE LEFT WING**

Step into a transformative space within the Sam Jonah Library—the Multiple Learning and Discussion Rooms, where the traditional boundaries between independent study and collaborative innovation fade away. These technology-enhanced rooms, strategically, positioned on the left wing of the third floor, with capacities varying from 10 to 20 seats, reinvent the library experience. These dynamic hubs serve as incubators for collaboration, allowing learners to participate in group projects, presentations, and assignments while supporting different user demands with modern learning amenities required of a 21st-century Academic Library.

A symphony of resources is embodied in these rooms, which have multimedia amenities such as headphones, speakers, microphones, cameras, and projectors. They are more than just physical locations; they are portals to a world where cooperation drives creativity and technical competency is refined. Beyond its architectural characteristics, the Multiple Learning and Discussion Rooms represent a vision of Empowering Tomorrow's Innovators, in which cooperation fosters skills, knowledge, and confidence in the use of technology and information resources. Learners not only fulfil



their immediate learning and research objectives here, but they also develop an attitude of persistent inquiry, cooperation, and invention. Welcome to the Multiple Learning and Discussion Rooms, where your ideas may take flight and the future of education is being reinvented.

#### THE SYMPHONY OF TRANSFORMATION

The Learning Resource Laboratory invites students to embark on a digital journey, the Electronic Access Control and RFID Book System guards knowledge, and the renovated Left Wing serves as a canvas for a variety of learning activities.

The Sam Jonah Library develops beyond its physical boundaries in this symphony of metamorphosis, becoming a tribute to our commitment to innovation, diversity, and the tireless quest of knowledge. As these developments take shape, we welcome the whole University of Cape Coast community to join us on this exciting journey into the future.

Let the pages of our academic story turn and may the Sam Jonah Library continue to be the beating heart of intellectual exploration and discovery at the Sam Jonah Library.



## 2023 RETIREES



**MAD. PAULINA NANA  
YAA KWAFUA**



**MR. LAWRENCE  
GYEKYE**



**MR. JOSEPH  
AMOO**



**MRS. ROSE  
PERPETUAL HAIZEL**



**MR. PATRICK  
OWUSU-ANSAH**



**MR. ANDERSON  
KPORSHIEBU**





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