



What role for parliamentary libraries and research services in shaping how citizens will engage with parliaments in the future to participate in debating important issues or shaping legislation

Traore Nassa Diallo

Director of Documentation and Archives

National Assembly

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

E-mail: traorenassa@yahoo.fr

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Abstract:

The establishment of parliamentary democracy has enriched the parliamentary debates and contributed to the involvement of citizens in the political arena. The parliamentarians have realized the important role of a documentary structure within the parliamentary institution. So all parliaments have a minimum service of documentation and / or archives.

A library and a parliamentary research service are a source of information for policymakers, researchers, actors in the political arena and citizens.

Through the actions below, libraries and research services parliamentarians can arouse the citizens a taste of democracy, that is to say a special interest in public affairs, currency policy or important issues (such legislation) related to the life of the nation, and to engage citizens in discussing these issues with parliaments:

By the communication by performing the role of upward communication (from citizens to the Parliament) and downlink communication (from Parliament to citizens) through guided tours, radio plays with themes for the discovery of parliament, open houses , Exhibits and documentaries kits;

- *With the help of information technology and communication (ICT) through the establishment of digital libraries and the training of citizens and / or members of the search;*
- *With the participation of citizens in the parliamentary practice of democracy in the work of committees and proposed legislation.*

A library and a parliamentary research service should facilitate public access to government building democracy and civil information concerning the government, through society in the country through greater visibility of 'parliamentary institution.

It is they who must make the citizens the role of the elected and the work done by members.

So should it develop a new strategy to approach the information monitoring and remote access to information.

They should therefore develop a new strategy to approach the information monitoring and remote access to information.

Introduction

Parliamentary democracy was introduced in many African countries in the 60s that is to say after their independence. These parliaments, long ruled by single parties, are now open to multiparty system mostly in 1990 following the Baule Summit, anything that enriches the parliamentary debates and involvement of citizens in the political arena.

Since independences, each institution has established a documentary unit in order to preserve his memory. For example, the archives of Burkina Faso were kept at Senegal, capital of French West Africa (FWA).

Nowadays, members of parliament have realized how important the role of a documentary structure within their parliamentary institutions to help them and accomplish their legislative role, so much so that there is no parliament which is equipped with minimal structure of records and /or documentation.

But what can be meant by the term library and research service in a parliamentary institution? It is in this context, an information structure that collects, processes and provides elected officials all sources of information and knowledge that can assist them in performing their function.

In sum, it is a place of memory, a source of documentation and information for policymakers, researchers, actors in the political arena and citizens.

How then can libraries foster in citizens a taste of democracy, that is to say a special interest in public affairs, currency policy, or topics related to the life of the nation?

What role, then how libraries and research services parliamentary can they inspire, develop a liking in people for democracy, that is to say a special interest in public affairs, currency policy or important issues and topics (such legislation) related the life of the nation, and to engage citizens in discussing these issues at parliaments' side?

First: Communication

It is imperative for any democratic parliament to make a report on its activities to the citizens. And the library should play this role as a window of visibility of parliamentary institutions.

In effect, Parliament must remain constantly in touch with society, to listen to this society that we talk now so insistently, to be able to provide its essential function: to vote law, grant tax and control government action.

The library must play the role of upward communication (from citizens to the Parliament) and downward communication (from Parliament to citizens). It's her job to discover the parliament, parliamentary work and the role of deputy.

This communication may be done in several ways:

- Guided tours: a participatory approach will be initiated by the library to invite schools to organize visits to better discover the parliamentary institution. This approach can extend to different political groups or any organization that manifest this need. (In the National Assembly of Burkina Faso the number of tours is important. Leaflets or any other form of information available is given to visitors after the visit);
- Radio play: the library will animate games radio (such questions for a champion, the cracks) for young people with themes for the discovery, the knowledge of the parliamentary institution and the work of the member Parliament. These games have themes the discovery and the knowledge of parliamentary institution. (These games will be possible in the near future in our Parliament, that of Burkina Faso that is activated to create a radio Parliament);
- Open houses held by the library with exhibitions to discover more parliamentary Institution and its functioning;
- Documentary kits: brochures or leaflets about the Parliament, the members of parliament work, the documentary collection, etc. will be developed and distributed free to the public.

Their mission is to provide high visibility of parliament and services that are available to any citizen who comes to the parliament.

Secondly: The information technology and communication

Libraries should take advantage of new technologies of information and communication for greater participatory approach of the citizen, enabling him to obtain information or participate in political debate without moving until Parliament. The library can already design and implement:

- A digital library: all applicable laws and voted on the national territory scanned and put online with direct access to the document text;
- Training citizens and deputies to the retrieval on the Internet.
(In Burkina Faso a cyber space is housed in the reading room of the library and training sessions to the digital library or research information on the Internet are organized);
- Creating a forum for discussion of the Parliamentary Web site to enable all citizens to express themselves in relation to current policy or on a topic relevant;
 - Organization of video conference sessions for the faculty of law or any other college on topical issues;
- Creating a hyperlink questions and answers on the Parliament website for greater visibility of the parliamentary institution;

Thirdly: The participation of citizens

Today, the parliamentary institution still seems surrounded by an impenetrable wall. The doors are carefully guarded by the police, which create a scare to approach it.

The Library must break this wall opaque raising:

- The involvement of citizens in the parliamentary and practice of democracy by providing the means to better interact with Parliament. (In Burkina Faso, our 1991 Constitution describes the conditions under which citizens can initiate legislation). All these conditions are described in the documentary kits developed by the library;
- Participation in the work of committees: in addition to the right of petition, citizens can contact the National Assembly during consultations held by the committees. It is the role of the library know citizens;
- Enhancing the role of members of parliament: the library in a prospectus will describe the role and work of the member to increase voter confidence in the place of electors and generate interest for their work in parliament,
- Suggestions for proposed legislation: very often people are unaware that they may contribute to proposed laws. The library must then develop a web documentary on the themes in order to generate interest of citizens in political matters.

Conclusion

The primary mission of a library and a parliamentary research service is to help establish democracy and the rule of law in creating, managing and disseminating reliable information and / or relevant and authoritative for Parliament.

Indeed, they should facilitate:

- The public access? to government information and on government,
- The building of democracy and civil society in the country through greater visibility of the parliamentary institution, the role of the elected and the work of members of parliament.,
- The information monitoring.