

Information Futures Series – Uganda

Topic: Skills, Education & Professional Development: Preparing Information Workers for the Future of Work, Learning, and Knowledge

Ref:

1. IFLA Trend Report 2024, Contextualized for Uganda: Dezuanni, M., Osman, K., & Heck, E. (2024). IFLA Trend Report 2024: Facing the future of information with confidence. <https://repository.ifla.org/handle/20.500.14598/3496>
2. American Library Association (ALA), STEEPED Framework, (Society, Technology, Education, the Environment, Politics (and Government), Economics, and Demographics), Library of the Future, Center for the Future of Libraries, <https://www.ala.org/future/trends>

Speaker Notes for All Slides

Slide 1: Title Slide

Time: ~1 minute

Good afternoon, Dear Colleagues in the profession. My name is Dr. Fredrick Kiwuwa Lugya, and I am honored to be with you today as part of the Information Futures Series here in Uganda.

We are going to talk about something that keeps every leader awake every single day: Are we preparing our people—our librarians, our archivists, our information officers—for a world that is changing faster than ever before?

This presentation is called *Skills, Education & Professional Development*. It is based on the IFLA Trend Report 2024, but we are going to bring it home. We are going to look at what this means for you, for your communities, and for Uganda's future. Let's begin.

Slide 2: The Quiet Crisis

Time: ~2 minutes

Let me start with a story that I think many of you have seen with your own eyes.

Picture a secondary student in Kampala. She has a smartphone. She is on TikTok for three hours a day. She sees a video claiming that a new herbal mixture cures malaria faster than hospital drugs. She believes it. She shares it with her family WhatsApp group. Her grandmother tries it.

Now, ask yourself: Is this student *stupid*? No. She is *unprepared*. No one taught her how to verify health information online. No one showed her how an algorithm works.

At the same time, a rural extension officer needs to file a land application through the new e-government portal. But he cannot navigate the website on his small phone. He gives up.

So here is our **quiet crisis**: Information is exploding all around us, but our ability to verify, manage, and use that information is not keeping pace. And the question we have to ask ourselves is this: Are we training Ugandan information workers for the library of 1995? Or for the knowledge economy of 2035 (2050)?

Slide 3: The Ugandan Context

Time: ~2 minutes

Now, let's make this real. These are not global problems—these are *our* problems.

First, Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world. Seventy-seven percent of us are under 25 years old. These are digital natives. They have never known a world without the internet. But being a 'digital native' does not mean being a *critical thinker*. In fact, young people are often the most vulnerable to misinformation because they trust what they see online.

Second, we are a mobile-first nation. Most Ugandans access the internet through a smartphone, not a laptop. That means our digital skills training must be optimized for small screens, for low bandwidth, for WhatsApp and YouTube. A PDF manual from Harvard is useless if it takes ten minutes to download.

Third, there is a trust gap. People are increasingly skeptical of government announcements and mainstream media. But here is our advantage: libraries are still one of the most trusted public spaces in Uganda. People come to you when they don't know who else to trust.

That is not a burden. That is an opportunity.

Slide 4: **Introducing STEEPED – Seven Lenses for the Future**

Time: ~2 minutes

Before we dive deeper into the IFLA trends, I want to give you a tool. A framework that will help you not just for this presentation, but for the rest of your career.

It is called **STEEPED** by the **American Library Association (ALA)**. Seven lenses for scanning the future: **S**ociety, **T**echnology, **E**ducation, **E**nvironment, **P**olitics, **E**conomics, and **D**emographics.

Why do we need this? Because the future is noisy. Every day, someone tells you about a new 'game-changing' trend. Blockchain. Metaverse. Quantum computing. It is overwhelming.

STEEPED helps you organize the noise. It helps you ask: *Which trends actually matter for my library? For my community? For Uganda?*

Over the next few slides, we are going to look at specific trends inside each category. But remember this framework. You will use it again and again.

Slide 5: The STEEPED Wheel at a Glance

Time: ~1.5 minutes

Here is the full STEEPED wheel. I am not going to read every word. But I want you to notice something.

Look at **Society**. Trends like 'unplugged' – people wanting to escape constant connectivity. 'Anonymity' – users wanting control over their data.

Look at **Technology**. AI, voice control, virtual reality. These are not science fiction. They are in your pocket right now.

Look at **Economics**. Subscription boxes. The sharing economy. These change how people expect to access information – curated, convenient, delivered to their door.

And **Demographics**. Urbanization. Digital natives. Uganda is one of the youngest countries in the world. That is not just a statistic. That is a design constraint for every service we build.

Keep this wheel in your mind. We will come back to it.

Slide 6: Trend Spotlight – AI as Do Engine (ALA)

Time: ~2 minutes

Now let us go deeper into one trend you already know: Artificial Intelligence.

The American Library Association – ALA – has a brilliant way of framing this. They say AI is moving from a **search engine** to a **'do engine'**.

A search engine finds information. You ask 'What is the capital of Uganda?' and Google gives you an answer.

A do engine *acts*. Siri books a meeting. Alexa orders groceries. Copilot writes your email.

Here is the problem for librarians: AI has not mastered information literacy. It makes mistakes. Confidently. It hallucinates. It invents sources that do not exist.

So what does this mean for us? **Hybrid information organization.** AI for speed. Human professionals for ethics, for verification, for context.

The question for Uganda is not 'Should we use AI?' The question is: **Who teaches prompt literacy? Who audits AI outputs?** That is our job now.

Slide 7: The Seven Shifts – Complexity & AI

Time: ~2 minutes

The IFLA Trend Report identifies seven major shifts. I am going to focus on two that are urgent for Uganda.

Trend 2: AI and other technologies are transforming society. Generative AI—ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot—is changing how we create, share, and use information. It can write an essay, summarize a report, or generate a fake news article in seconds. This is not coming in ten years. It is here now.

Trend 4: Skills and abilities are becoming more complex. Basic ICT—knowing how to turn on a computer or send an email—is no longer enough. The World Economic Forum says that critical thinking, creativity, and data analysis are the top skills for the future.

So here is the local question: If a farmer in Gulu asks you, 'Is this voice note on WhatsApp real or AI-generated?'—can you answer? And more importantly, can you teach them how to answer for themselves?

Slide 8: Trend Spotlight – Voice Control (ALA)

Time: ~2 minutes

Let me give you a number. Fifty percent. Fifty percent of all searches will be voice-based within four years. That is from Mary Meeker, a famous internet analyst.

Think about that. Half of your users will not type a question. They will *speak* it.

'Hey Google, what are the library hours?'

'Alexa, how do I renew my book?'

'WhatsApp voice note – is this health advice true?'

This changes everything for reference services. How do we teach **voice search literacy**? How do we help a user evaluate authority when the answer comes from a smart speaker, not a screen?

But here is the opportunity. In Uganda, where bandwidth is limited and literacy levels vary, voice is actually more accessible than text. We can use WhatsApp voice to deliver library hours, FAQs, even open science guides.

Try this at home. Ask your phone: 'What is the capital of Uganda?' Then ask: 'What are the library hours?' Compare how the assistant handles authority. The first answer is easy. The second? That is where librarians add value.

Slide 9: The Seven Shifts – Knowledge & Trust

Time: ~2 minutes

Trend 1: Knowledge practices are changing. There is a growing demand for diverse voices—local languages, local stories, indigenous knowledge. But at the same time, misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation are everywhere. The COVID-19 pandemic showed us that health misinformation kills.

Trend 3: Trust is being renegotiated. People no longer automatically trust government, media, or even science. Trust has to be earned, every single day.

So where do Ugandans turn when they don't trust the news? They turn to libraries. They turn to *you*. You are not just bookkeepers anymore. You are the last line of defense against a society that no longer knows what is true.

Slide 10: Two More Trends – Unplugged + Subscription Boxes

Time: ~2.5 minutes

Two more trends. Very different from each other. Both relevant.

First: Unplugged. This is a Society trend. Constant connectivity causes cognitive overload. We are tired. Our users are tired. 'Digital escape spaces' – places with no Wi-Fi, no phones – are becoming premium. People will pay for quiet.

For Ugandan libraries, this is a gift. We already have quiet reading areas. But we have never marketed them as **digital escape zones**. Train your staff to facilitate 'slow reading' sessions. Device-free story hours for adults. Two hours of silence. No notifications. No doomscrolling.

Second: Subscription boxes. This is an Economics trend. Birchbox. Amazon Book Box. People pay monthly for curated, personalized experiences delivered to their door.

Libraries can do this. Create **knowledge subscription boxes** for rural users. A box with a USB drive of open access resources, a printed fact-checking guide, a STEM kit for a child. Deliver it monthly to a community center.

The skills here are curation, personalization, and logistics. Do not wait for someone else to invent this. Your library already knows how to curate.

Slide 11: Data Everywhere + Virtual Reality

Time: ~2 minutes

Before we go to the AI Scalper scenario, two more technology trends.

First: Data Everywhere. Data flows from your phone, your watch, your car, your voice assistant. Every subscription creates data. Every click is tracked.

This means new roles for librarians. **Research Data Management – RDM** – is not just for big universities anymore. Small institutions need to manage data ethically. Teach FAIR principles: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. Teach data curation. Teach privacy-by-design.

Second: Virtual Reality. VR is for immersive storytelling and training. Yes, expensive VR headsets exist. But also low-cost options. Google Cardboard costs almost nothing.

In Uganda, you could use a smartphone and cardboard to create a **virtual tour of your special collections**. Or simulate a reference interview for LIS students. Or take a rural user on a virtual walk through the National Archives.

The skill is not buying expensive equipment. The skill is creating 360-degree content using a smartphone. Anyone can learn that.

Slide 12: The AI Scalper Scenario

Time: ~2.5 minutes

Let me read you a scenario from the IFLA report. It is fictional, but it is plausible.

Imagine it is 2028. The Ugandan government has moved most public services online—hospital appointments, exam registration, land office queues. To manage demand, they use an AI system called 'Aicue.' The system automatically books slots based on priority.

Now, imagine that someone creates a personal AI bot. This bot can book appointments instantly, 24 hours a day. Wealthy families use it to reserve all the good hospital slots, all the exam seats at top schools, all the land office appointments.

Then they resell those slots. A free hospital visit now costs a 'booking fee' of 50,000 shillings. The people who cannot afford an AI bot—or do not know how to use one—are locked out of public services entirely.

This is called 'AI scalping.' It is already happening with concert tickets in Europe. It could happen here.

Now ask yourself: Does your community have the skills to navigate an AI-mediated system? Or will they be the ones left behind?

Slide 13: The Curriculum Gap – Diagnosed

Time: ~2.5 minutes

That AI Scalper scenario was uncomfortable. Let me make it more uncomfortable by asking a direct question.

What is taught in most LIS curricula today? Cataloging rules. Basic ICT. Collection management. All important. But is it enough?

What is missing? Look at this list:

- Prompt engineering (how to talk to AI)
- Voice search literacy

- Research Data Management (RDM)
- Unplugged programming
- Data ethics and privacy-by-design
- AI output verification

The gap is widening. Every year that we do not update our curricula, our students graduate less prepared than the year before.

So here is my question for LIS faculty in the room – and for every manager who hires graduates: **When will your students graduate with a badge in AI literacy?** Not a whole degree. A badge. A verified skill. If the answer is 'not this year,' we have work to do.

Slide 14: The Librarian Reimagined

Time: ~1.5 minutes

So if the world is changing this fast, what does it mean for you?

The old librarian was a custodian. Quiet. Shelving books. Shushing people. Protecting the collection.

The new librarian is a *facilitator*. A digital navigator. A trust anchor. A community learning facilitator.

Does that mean you stop cataloging? No. Does that mean you stop preserving indigenous knowledge? Absolutely not. Traditional skills still matter.

But you add new layers. You become the person who helps a small business owner verify an online supplier. You become the person who teaches a grandmother how to spot a deepfake video. You become the person who leads a scenario planning workshop for your local government.

The title on your door may still say 'Librarian.' But your job description just expanded.

Slide 15: Badging & Micro-Credentials (TVET-Aligned)

Time: ~2 minutes

So how do we close that curriculum gap without waiting for a full degree redesign? **Badging and micro-credentials.**

This is an ALA trend. Badging recognizes specific competencies outside traditional degrees. You do not need a four-year degree to prove you can verify AI-generated content. You need a badge.

For Uganda, this aligns perfectly with our TVET system – Technical and Vocational Education and Training. TVET is about practical, job-ready skills. Exactly what badges offer.

What badges should LIS schools offer? Let me suggest four:

1. **Open Science Guide Creation** – how to find, use, and share open access resources.
2. **AI Literacy for Reference** – prompt engineering, verification, ethics.
3. **Research Data Management for Small Institutions** – FAIR principles, data curation, basic tools.
4. **Voice Search Reference** – delivering information services by voice.

Imagine a librarian earning a badge for 'Hybrid Reference – AI + Human.' That is not a threat to our profession. That is an upgrade.

Slide 16: Three Core Competencies for 2030

Time: ~2 minutes

So what do you actually need to learn? Let me give you three competencies that are non-negotiable.

Number one: Digital and AI literacy. This is not just 'how to use Word.' This is prompt engineering—knowing how to ask ChatGPT the right question. This is verifying AI-generated content. This is understanding that an AI can be confidently wrong.

Number two: Media and Information Literacy—MIL. This is fact-checking. This is source evaluation. This is the SIFT method: Stop, Investigate, Find, Trace. This is teaching a teenager to ask, 'Who created this? Why? Who benefits if I believe it?'

Number three: Adaptive and futures thinking. This is the ability to imagine multiple futures—not just one. To run scenarios. To ask, 'What if AI scalping happens here? What if a cyberattack takes down our systems? What if a flood destroys our archive?'

These are not soft skills. These are survival skills for the information profession.

Slide 17: Flipped Learning + Worker Activism

****Time:** ~2 minutes

Two final trends before we get to action. One about *how* we teach. One about *who* we are as workers.

First: Flipped Learning. This is an Education trend. Students consume content at home – watch a lecture, read a chapter. Then they come to class to *practice*. To create. To solve problems.

For LIS curricula, this is powerful. Record your lectures on information ethics. Use class time to co-create open science guides using AI tools. Students learn by doing, not by listening.

This also addresses a real constraint: limited staff. Flipped learning maximizes face-to-face time because you are not lecturing. You are facilitating.

Second: Worker Activism. This is a Politics trend. Tech workers are protesting. They refuse to build facial recognition for authoritarian regimes. They walk out over climate contracts.

For LIS, this means our own profession may demand ethical AI, privacy protections, fair pay. We need to teach **information ethics as active, not passive**. Not just 'here is the code of ethics.' But 'here is how you advocate for ethical systems in your workplace.'

The quiet librarian who never speaks up? That model is fading. The future librarian is an informed, ethical advocate.

Slide 18: Libraries as Learning Ecosystems

Time: ~2 minutes

Now, where does this learning happen? Not just in universities. Not just in expensive training courses.

It happens in three overlapping spaces.

Informal learning: You run a weekly 'What's True?' corner at your library. You invite market women, youth groups, local leaders. You look at one viral WhatsApp forward and you fact-check it together. No certificates. No exams. Just practical skills.

Non-formal learning: You partner with a TVET institution. They offer digital badges in data management or e-governance. Your library becomes a testing center. People get certified without going to university.

Formal learning: You work with LIS faculty to update the curriculum. You say, 'Our students need prompt engineering, not just cataloging rules.' You bring IFLA's MIL guidelines into the classroom.

And for yourself? There are free resources. Google's Skillshop. LinkedIn Learning through public libraries. IFLA's own Media and Information Literacy resources, EIFL learning resources, MOOCs, Edx, etc.

You do not need a million-dollar budget. You need intention.

Slide 19: A Day in the Life – Kampala, 2030

Time: ~2 minutes

Let me paint you a picture. It is 2030. You are a librarian in Kampala. What does your day look like?

7am: You arrive at the library. Before opening, you review an AI-generated community health alert that was automatically sent to your phone. You verify the sources. It is accurate, so you approve it for public display.

10am: You facilitate a hybrid workshop. Twelve secondary students are in the room. Twenty more are on Zoom from their phones. The topic: 'Spot a Deepfake.' You show them a video of a politician saying something outrageous. They use a free verification tool to prove it is fake.

2pm: A small business owner comes to you. She sells shea butter online. She needs market price data. You show her how to use an open-access dashboard from UBOS. She is amazed. 'I thought this was only for government,' she says.

4pm: You log into a national LIS webinar. The topic: 'Digitizing Indigenous Knowledge with Ethical Protocols.' You share what you learned from your community's elders. You learn from a colleague in Gulu.

This is not fantasy. This is a completely achievable future. But only if we start preparing now.

Slide 20: Collective Impact – Uganda Cross-Sector Model

****Time: ~2 minutes**

We are almost at action steps. But one more idea before you leave.

ALA calls it **collective impact**. A fancy phrase for a simple truth: No single institution can solve complex problems alone.

The skills gap we have been discussing – AI literacy, RDM, voice search – is too big for any one library, any one LIS school, any one ministry.

So what does collective impact look like in Uganda?

- **Libraries** bring the space and the trust.
- **TVET institutions** bring the certification framework.
- **NGOs** (like EIFL, like UNESCO) bring the training resources.
- **Tech hubs** (like Innovation Village, like Hive Colab) bring the tools and the developers.
- **Government** brings the policy environment.

Imagine a shared 'AI Literacy for Librarians' workshop delivered across five Ugandan universities. The same curriculum. The same badge. Shared costs. Shared expertise.

Your role today is simple: **Identify one potential partner this week.** Send one email. Say: 'I read about collective impact. Can we have a coffee (or a call) to discuss one small collaboration?'

Start with one partner. That is how collective impact begins.

Slide 21: Your First Step – No Budget Needed

Time: ~1.5 minutes

Now, I know what some of you are thinking. 'This sounds expensive. My library has no budget for training. My director doesn't understand AI.'

So let me give you four actions you can take on Monday morning. Zero shillings required.

One: Start a 'What's True?' weekly corner. Pick one piece of misinformation you saw on WhatsApp that week. Fact-check it publicly. Put the results on a poster. Do it every week. Consistency matters more than scale.

Two: Join IFLA's Media and Information Literacy Alliance. It is free. They give you lesson plans, toolkits, and a global network of peers.

Three: Map one local skills gap. What do your users struggle with the most? Is it e-tax filing? Is it verifying health information? Is it applying for a passport online? Pick one gap. Focus on it for one month.

Four: Partner with one edtech developer. There are young Ugandans building educational apps who need real-world testing. Invite them to your library. Co-host a 'Digital Literacy Hour' together. You bring the space and the trust. They bring the tech.

Start small. But start now.

Slide 22: The Future is Built One Skill at a Time

Time: ~1.5 minutes

So let me leave you with this.

The IFLA Trend Report says something that I want you to remember: *The future is not predetermined. It is negotiated.*

It is negotiated through every fact you verify. Through every young person you teach. Through every community member who walks out of your library saying, 'I didn't know I could do that.'

Uganda has an advantage that few countries have. We are young. We are adaptable. We are mobile-first. We are not burdened by old infrastructure. But that advantage will mean nothing if we do not invest in skills. Not just for students. For *us*. For information workers.

So here is my challenge to you. Before you leave today, commit to one thing. One skill you will learn this quarter. Maybe it is prompt engineering. Maybe it is how to use the SIFT method.

Maybe it is just how to run a 'What's True?' corner.

Then, teach one other person. That is how we build a movement. One conversation. One skill. One person at a time.

The future of information work in Uganda is bright. But it depends on you. Thank you.

Slide 23: Activity Slide: Individual Commitment Card

Time: ~3 minutes (including quiet reflection and sharing)

Note: A structured closing activity.

Before we finish, I am going to ask you to do something. Not just listen. Not just nod. But *commit*.

I am going to ask the moderator to share a commitment card template. Since you're online, you will type your commitment into the chat – or write it down on a piece of paper right now.

Share Commitment template:

'I, [your name], commit to piloting one trend-based initiative by [deadline].'

Choose one from this list:

- Unplugged reading hour
- Voice-activated library FAQ (WhatsApp voice)
- Badging program for RDM
- AI literacy workshop for staff
- Collective impact partnership email
- Other: _____

I am accountable to:

A colleague A supervisor A friend

Send them this commitment.

Deadline

Now take 60 seconds of quiet. Fill out your card.

Then write a deadline. Be specific. 'By August 31, 2026.' Not 'sometime.'

Finally, write one person you will hold yourself accountable with. A colleague. A supervisor. A friend. Send them this commitment.

Now take 60 seconds of quiet. Fill out your card.

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Now, if you are willing, share one commitment in the chat or raise your hand. Let us hear what you are going to do.

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Thank you. These commitments – small, specific, personal – are how we build the future. Not through grand plans. Through one librarian, one skill, one community at a time.

You have my respect. You have my gratitude. And you have my commitment to support you. Let us go build.