

## ESTABLISHMENT OF MOBILE LIBRARY IN THE RURAL AREA: THE STEPS AND THE CHALLENGES

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### ABSTRACT

*In promoting literacy and improving access to books and educational materials, establishing a mobile library in a rural location may also improve the general quality of education in underprivileged areas. The study assessed the establishment of mobile library in the rural area, the steps and the challenges. The benefits of setting up mobile libraries in remote locations are enormous, but the path to success is one of perseverance and thorough assessment of these obstacles. The mobility of the library may be hampered by infrastructural constraints that are common in rural areas, such as inadequate road networks and accessibility problems. Since that most rural communities have low financial resources, financial resources and sustainable funding are also important considerations. Strategic planning and cooperation with neighborhood associations, educational institutions, and governmental entities are needed to address these issues. The study concluded that setting up a mobile library in a remote location is a commendable initiative that might revolutionize local communities by removing obstacles to education and encouraging reading. Mobile libraries have the potential to provide those who might not have access to regular libraries with the world of information and reading at their doorstep through a methodical and community-driven procedure. One of the recommendations made was that during the planning and execution phases, the local community should be included. The services and materials offered by the mobile library should be determined by their preferences and insights.*

**KEYWORDS:** Mobile Library, The Steps, The Challenges and Rural Area.

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## INTRODUCTION

A ground-breaking project that can close the achievement gap in education and advance literacy in marginalized areas is the installation of a mobile library in a remote location. Books and educational materials are brought to the doorsteps of those who would not have access to typical libraries via mobile libraries, which are a source of information and opportunity. This attempt, which tries to solve the particular obstacles presented by rural areas, entails a number of carefully thought-out phases, from requirements assessment to resource procurement. Amiri, S. (2023) defines a library as an organized collection of materials made available for reference or borrowing to a certain community. The term comes from the French "librairie" (from Latin "liber" = book). It offers digital or physical access to content and might be a virtual environment, a real building or room, or both. Books, magazines, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, e-books, audiobooks, databases, and other formats can all be found in a library's collection. The process of starting a mobile library starts with a thorough needs analysis that explores the rural community's educational needs and literacy levels. Following the identification of the particular needs, a thorough strategy is created that outlines the goals and tactics to be used. To make sure that the mobile library is in line with the tastes and interests of the community, a thorough planning process and community interaction are necessary. Nonetheless, there are obstacles involved in setting up mobile libraries in remote locations. The mobility of the library may be hampered by infrastructural constraints that are common in rural areas, such as inadequate road networks and accessibility problems. Since that most rural communities have low financial resources, financial resources and sustainable funding are also important considerations. Strategic planning and cooperation with neighborhood associations, educational institutions, and governmental entities are needed to address these issues. The benefits of setting up mobile libraries in remote locations are enormous, but the path to success is one of perseverance and thorough assessment of these obstacles. A mobile library, according to Lisendunetwork (2016), is a special and dynamic library service that uses a mobile car or unit to provide books, movies, and educational materials straight to communities. It is intended to reach those who might have little or no access to traditional library services by overcoming barriers related to geography, society, and economic status. Numerous demographics are serviced by mobile libraries, including underserved areas, schools, jails, hospitals, elder centers, and distant and rural towns.

We may learn more about the process and difficulties of setting up mobile libraries in remote locations by consulting references in the fields of community development, library science, and educational outreach. These resources emphasize the effects of such initiatives on educational access and literacy while providing helpful advice on the creation of mobile libraries in remote areas. Todorović, M. (2020) defines a rural area as any piece of land outside of a town or city's heavily populated urban regions, which is important to note as we emphasize rural areas. Traditionally, rural regions have not been included in the definition of an urban area. They are often broad, open spaces with fewer dwellings and people than metropolitan areas, which have higher population densities. The separation between neighbors and the distances between residences and places of commerce are larger in rural regions.

## CONCEPT OF LIBRARY

A library is a collection of books, along with maybe other materials and media that is available for use by members of the library as well as members of affiliated institutions, according to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2023). Libraries can be actual places, virtual spaces, or both that offer digital (soft copies) or physical (hard copies) contents. A library's collection often consists of both loanable printed books and a reference section containing publications that are only available for viewing inside the library and are not allowed to leave. Amiri, S. (2023) defines a library as an organized collection of materials made available for reference or borrowing to a certain community. The term comes from the French "librairie" (from Latin "liber" = book). It offers digital or physical access to content and might be a virtual environment, a real building or room, or both. Books, magazines, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, e-books, audiobooks, databases, and other formats can all be found in a library's collection. According to Francis et al. (2023), a library is customarily defined as a structure or room that houses a collection of books that are utilized for reading or study. The term comes from the Latin liber, which means "book," whereas the German, Russian, and Romance words for library come from a Latinized Greek word called bibliotheca. These days, it seems that the term "library" is employed in a wide range of contexts, from digital libraries to physical public libraries. All libraries, including public ones, are dynamic, ever-evolving spaces where librarians assist patrons in locating the most reliable source of information, whether it a book, website, or database entry (Eberhart, G. 2022). Libraries come in a broad range of sizes and might be run by a government agency, a private citizen, and a company, an institution like a school or museum, or another public entity. Libraries offer more than just materials; they also give gives services of a librarian, who have received specialized training in the discovery, selection, circulation, and organization of information as well as the interpretation, navigation, and analysis of extremely vast volumes of information using a range of resources.

A library is a collection of books, periodicals, newspapers, and other resources that are made available for individuals to check out or use as a source of information, according to Lisedunetwork (2023). Since they give everyone, regardless of background or means of support, access to knowledge and information, libraries have been an integral element of society for thousands of years. They act as a center for learning, study, and recreation, giving individuals the chance to meet new people, broaden their horizons, and connect with interests in common. Libraries provide more than simply book loans; they also host community gatherings, educational initiatives, and computer access. They are essential tools for people on an individual, community, and societal level and play a critical role in advancing literacy, intellectual freedom, and cultural variety. An infinite source of information and exploration may be found in a library. A library's doors open to reveal shelves upon shelves of books, periodicals, and newspapers just waiting to be discovered. The air is filled with the aroma of paper and ink, and the quiet quietness makes for the ideal setting for reading, studying, or unwinding (Lisedunetwork 2014). A library is defined by UNESCO (2020) as "an organization, or part of an organization, whose main aims are to build and maintain a collection and to facilitate the use of such information resources and facilities as are required to meet the informational, research, educational, cultural, or recreational needs of its users;

these are the basic requirements for a library and do not exclude any additional resources and services incidental to its main purpose."

## CONCEPT OF MOBILE LIBRARY

A mobile library, according to Lisendunetwork (2016), is a special and dynamic library service that uses a mobile car or unit to provide books, movies, and educational materials straight to communities. It is intended to reach those who might have little or no access to traditional library services by overcoming barriers related to geography, society, and economic status. Numerous demographics are serviced by mobile libraries, including underserved areas, schools, jails, hospitals, elder centers, and distant and rural towns. A car intended for use as a library is called a bookmobile or mobile library. Throughout history, they have been referred to by a variety of titles, such as book wagon, book truck, traveling library, library wagon, and book vehicle service (Encyclopedia, the Free Dictionary, 2023). These mobile libraries provide individuals the chance to peruse, check out, and return books and other resources. They are stocked with a wide range of library resources, and their committed staff makes regular stops or visits. Mobile libraries make information accessible to everyone, encourage literacy, and create a love of reading by bringing the library experience right to their doorsteps. A mobile library is a special kind of dynamic library service that uses a movable van or unit to provide books, movies, and instructional materials straight to communities.

A mobile library, sometimes referred to as a bookmobile or a library on wheels, is a novel and inventive way to expand library services outside of the standard brick-and-mortar library, claim Shaffer & Mills (2017). It entails delivering library resources, services, and materials to other locations especially those with restricted access to conventional library facilities—using a vehicle, usually a van, bus, or trailer. The idea behind a mobile library is to solve accessibility concerns, promote literacy, and cultivate a culture of reading while delivering the advantages of library services right to communities' doorsteps. Mobile library may be used for a variety of things, such as encouraging community involvement and supporting educational programs. To meet the needs and interests of the people they serve, they provide a vast range of resources, including as books, magazines, multimedia materials, and even digital collections. To further improve their usefulness, these libraries might provide places to sit and read as well as internet access (Case, 2012).

The value of providing reading materials and information to everyone, regardless of geography or socioeconomic background, is emphasized by mobile libraries. Communities are enhanced socially and culturally by mobile libraries, which also support literacy and education. The advantages of regular libraries are extended to underprivileged and difficult-to-reach populations through mobile libraries, which are vibrant, diverse services. They act as stimulants for literacy, community growth, and education. Mobile libraries will surely continue to change as society does, and they will play an important part in making sure that library services are relevant and accessible to a wide range of people. Because of their adaptability, mobile libraries have the power to improve underprivileged areas by boosting education, expanding access to information, and encouraging a lifelong love of reading. They demonstrate the flexibility of library services and their dedication to connecting with a wide range of people, regardless of their location or financial situation (Powell, 2013).

## CONCEPT OF RURAL AREA

A rural area, as defined by the National Geographic Society (2023), is an open region with few houses or other buildings and a low population. Less people live in rural areas, and those who do are spread out across large distances in their homes and places of work. The term "rural" is ambiguous and can refer to different things to different groups of people, institutions, and governments. In a country where the definition of "rural" is always evolving due to its diverse topography, it might be difficult to define. For individuals who are interested in rural concerns, it is crucial to define rural precisely. Funders, service providers, academics, and federal and state officials require a precise definition that is up to date in its interpretation. A geographical area that is situated outside of towns and cities is generally referred to as a rural area, or countryside (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2023). A rural area is any piece of land outside of a town or city's heavily populated urban regions, according to Todorović, M. (2020). Traditionally excluded from the urban definition, rural regions are often vast, open spaces with very few dwellings and inhabitants compared to urban areas, which have higher densities. People live farther apart in rural regions, and there are bigger gaps between their residences and places of commerce. The majority of people live or work on farms or ranches, and agriculture is the main industry in most rural communities. Rural regions frequently encircle tiny communities, such as hamlets, villages, or small cities. Because there are fewer people and structures in rural regions, wildlife is also considerably more frequent there (Janalta Interactive 2017). A rural area, as defined by BYJU's (2023), is an open area with few houses or other buildings and a low population. Living in a city or other urban region is common. They live and work in close proximity to one another. An urban area is the territory that encircles a city. A rural area is a place that is not a town or city. Communities are sparsely inhabited and smaller in size. The primary employment is in agriculture. Their living standards will differ. There is uniformity in the language, culture, customs, etc. of the population. A number of government agencies have developed comprehensive and complex definitions of rural to support research, policies, and initiatives that are relevant to the rural area. Some definitions of rural are quite general, or just what remains after urban is defined. These criteria also allow for some flexibility, for example, letting users choose between several levels of ruralness. Organizations providing rural health care will keep revising their definitions in an effort to better meet the requirements of the rural populace. In order to assist users in selecting the proper rural definition for program planning, policymaking, and research, this guide primarily identifies and describes the numerous federal definitions and categorization systems for rural that are currently in use.



## STEPS TO ESTABLISH MOBILE LIBRARY IN THE RURAL AREA

- In promoting literacy and improving access to books and educational materials, establishing a mobile library in a rural location may also improve the general quality of education in underprivileged areas. Although there might not be a single source that covers every step involved in setting up a mobile library in a remote location, the following procedures are generally accepted as best practices and are based on community development and educational concepts. A variety of materials pertaining to community outreach and library development might provide you with advice on this subject (Safford 2016).
- **Needs Assessment and Planning:** To determine the precise needs of the target population, do a needs assessment. Determine the literacy level and the resources for schooling that are available. Create a detailed strategy including the strategies, aims, and objectives for the mobile library. Choose the kinds of resources you'll offer, including instructional materials, periodicals, and books.
- **Secure Funding and Resources:** Look for financial support from NGOs, small companies, private donations, and government grants. Think about forming alliances with institutions that promote learning programs. Obtain the required materials, such as books, shelves, a car, and, if relevant, devices like computers.
- **Select a Suitable Vehicle:** Select a suitable vehicle to carry the library contents, such a bus, van, or trailer. Make sure the car is fitted to hold and show the books and is kept in good condition.
- **Collection Development:** Assist the community's needs and interests by curating a library of books and educational resources. Think about several topic areas, age groupings, and language groups. Books might be sourced by collaborations with publishers and booksellers, purchases, or contributions.
- **Library Management System:** To keep track of things that are borrowed and returned, put in place a basic library management system. Either hand labor or simple software can be used for this.
- **Community Engagement:** Establish ties with the neighborhood's parents, teachers, and leaders by getting involved in it. Recognize their wants and preferences. Plan community gatherings and educational events to increase awareness of the services provided by the mobile library.

## CHALLENGES OF ESTABLISHING MOBILE LIBRARY IN THE RURAL AREA

While starting a mobile library in a remote location is a noble initiative, it is not without its difficulties. These difficulties may differ based on the requirements and particular rural community. The following are some typical difficulties that arise while establishing a mobile library in remote areas:

- **Poor Infrastructure and Accessibility:** The mobile library may find it challenging to get to remote places in rural areas due to a lack of suitable road infrastructure (Mathews, 2017).
- **Limited Resources:** Financial and human resources are typically scarce in rural towns. The creation and upkeep of a mobile library might put further burden on already limited resources (Iannuzzi & Baule 2016).
- **Lack of Technological Infrastructure:** It's possible that many rural communities lack access to contemporary technologies like the internet. This may affect the library's capacity to interact with online cataloging systems and provide digital materials (Smallwood, 2016).
- **Difficulty in Community Engagement:** It might be difficult to foster trust and involvement in a remote community since people there could be reluctant to use the mobile library services (Safford, 2016).
- **Difficulty in Logistics and Maintenance:** It might be difficult to maintain the mobile library truck and guarantee the safety of the books and equipment, particularly in places with severe weather (ALA, 2019).
- **Literacy and Educational Barriers:** The influence of libraries can be impacted by low reading rates and educational obstacles in remote locations.
- **Difficulty in Sustainability:** It may be difficult for the mobile library service to be viable over the long run, particularly if it depends on outside financing.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Cultural diversity can exist in rural locations, thus it's important to consider this while choosing resources and interacting with the locals (Ortega, 2017). These difficulties are frequent, but they are not insurmountable. By carefully planning, including the community, and having a thorough grasp of the special requirements of the rural population, mobile libraries may be developed and effectively improve literacy and education in these places.

## DETERMINANTS OF MOBILE LIBRARY ESTABLISHMENT IN THE RURAL AREA.

Numerous factors that affect the viability, efficacy, and sustainability of such projects affect the construction of a mobile library in a rural location. Depending on the rural community, these factors may change.

### Here are some key determinants:

- **Community Needs and Support:** The specific needs and level of support from the rural community play a crucial role in determining the feasibility of a mobile library (Miller, 2019).
- **Financial Resources:** A mobile library cannot be established or kept up without sufficient funds and resources. "Financial Management for Libraries" (Smith, 2017) emphasizes the value of financial planning.
- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** The mobility of the library is influenced by the availability of an adequate road network and the ease of access to the desired locations within the rural community. The issues associated with rural infrastructure are examined in "Library Services to Rural and Distant Users"
- **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Initiatives including mobile libraries can benefit greatly from partnerships with neighborhood groups, educational institutions, and governmental entities (McNeil, 2016).
- **Library Resources and Collection:** To address the educational requirements of the community, it is imperative to have a suitable collection of books, digital resources, and instructional materials available (Johnson, 2018).
- **Staffing and Training:** Staff members who are knowledgeable about community needs and have received proper training are essential to the success of the mobile library. Pankake & Barefoot, 2018)
- **Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity:** Effective library services need an awareness of cultural variations and a comprehension of the multiplicity of cultures within the rural community (Juárez, 2015).
- **Government Policies and Support:** The creation and long-term viability of mobile libraries can be significantly impacted by government laws, rules, and funding for library services in remote regions (Chang, 2016). These factors provide a framework for evaluating the viability and accomplishment of mobile library ventures in rural regions. Comprehending and tackling these variables is vital in customizing library offerings to suit the distinct requirements of rural areas.



## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that setting up a mobile library in a remote location is a commendable initiative that might revolutionize local communities by removing obstacles to education and encouraging reading. Mobile libraries have the potential to provide those who might not have access to regular libraries with the world of information and reading at their doorstep through a methodical and community-driven procedure. Recognizing and resolving the difficulties associated with deploying mobile libraries in rural regions is essential. Strategic planning and ingenuity are necessary due to infrastructure constraints, budgetary constraints, and the requirement for sustainable funding. Ensuring the long-term effectiveness and impact of mobile libraries in remote areas requires overcoming these obstacles.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- During the planning and execution phases, the local community should be included. The services and materials offered by the mobile library should be determined by their preferences and insights.
- Create a long-term funding plan that combines public and private financial sources. To guarantee ongoing support, look for collaborations with regional businesses and governmental institutions.
- Realize that every rural community has different requirements. Be flexible and eager to modify the services offered by your mobile library to suit those particular requirements.
- Make sure that even the most remote locations can be reached by your mobile library. Overcome infrastructure obstacles to maximize accessibility to library services.
- Put your attention on developing literacy and reading. All age groups may develop a love of reading by participating in outreach programs and offering a wide variety of reading materials.

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