

IFLA MLAS Midterm Online Meeting || 28 April 2026.



LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

The Story of the Nigerian Library Association



Presented by:

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Who We Are – The Nigerian Library Association (NLA)

Building the information society since 1962

- ▶ Premier professional body for librarians & information scientists in Nigeria
- ▶ Evolved from West African Library Association → sovereign national body (1962)
- ▶ Covers all **36 States** + FCT with specialised sections: Academic, Public, IT, **School, Law,**
- ▶ Key milestone: LRCN (2002) — legal framework for professional regulation
- ▶ We face chronic underfunding, erratic power, security threats & a widening digital divide

1962

Year Founded

36+

States Covered

9,000+

Certified Librarians

64th

Annual Conference 2026

These are not minor inconveniences — they are existential challenges that shape every decision we make.

Our Vision, Mission & Strategic Pillars

What drives the NLA forward every day

VISION

Every Nigerian has equitable access to information

MISSION

Champion libraries & librarianship — fostering lifelong learning, innovation & inclusivity

Five Strategic Pillars (OBJECTIVES)



Professional
Unity



Standards &
Regulation (LRCN)



Advocacy for
Legislation



Knowledge
Sharing



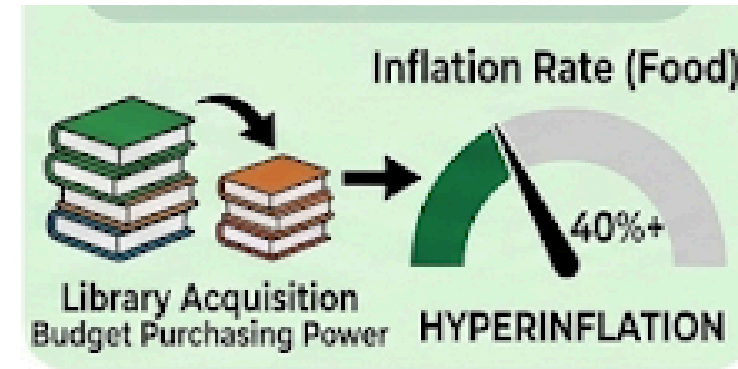
Capacity
Building

Navigating Uncertainties

Leading the NLA means navigating "a high-volatility index where the ground beneath our libraries is constantly shifting."

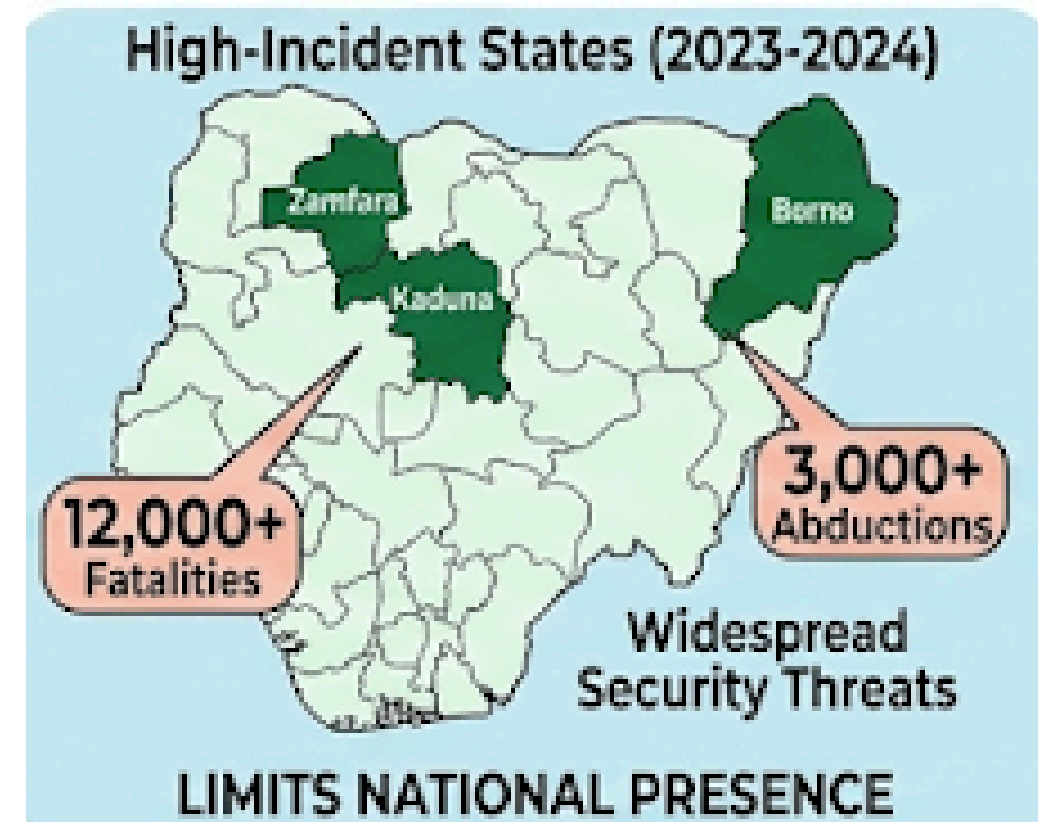
Economic Volatility

Radical Naira instability and hyperinflation. Conference costs can double between planning and execution phases.



Security Challenges

Armed banditry, insurgency, terrorism, and kidnappings limit national presence. Events face last-minute changes due to safety concerns.



Success Stories & Milestones



Legislative Recognition

Established LRCN to regulate the profession; librarianship recognized as distinct civil service cadre



Professional Development

Annual National Conference as premier knowledge exchange hub; specialized sections for niche expertise



Literacy Advocacy

Collaborations with National Library of Nigeria on national reading campaigns



Digital Transformation

Successful transition to Open Access repositories and Integrated Library Systems



Challenges Facing the Association

Infrastructure Deficit

Unreliable national grid and high bandwidth costs force expensive hybrid models instead of streamlined digital systems.

Policy Inconsistency

"Policy Somersaults" undo years of progress. The sudden LRCN defunding in 2024 exemplifies this challenge.

Chronic Funding Gaps

Funding is a serious threat, pushing libraries toward internal revenue to sustain e-library subscriptions.

Erosion of Membership Commitment

NLA faces engagement crisis: passion gap among librarians and widespread financial delinquency.

Digital Divide

Erratic power supply and costly internet bandwidth hinder digital service delivery.

Professional Identity & Perception

"Silent profession" syndrome fuels public misconceptions about Librarians' modern role.

Navigating the Hurdles: Strategies for Success

To move beyond the challenges the NLA adopted the following strategies

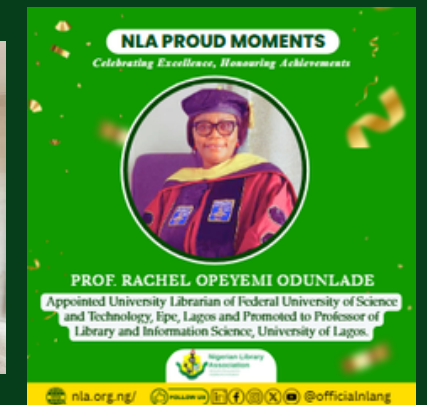
OUR FLAGSHIP RESPONSE

#BBOM

Bring Back Our Members

Not a slogan — a strategic policy framework

- ▶ Re-ignite passion and professional identity across all tiers
- ▶ Simplify financial obligations — remove barriers to staying current
- ▶ Prove tangible, visible value of NLA membership
- ▶ 2026: Digital Registration Portal — automated badges & certificates
- ▶ Eliminating manual delays that long frustrated our members



Other Key Strategies for Survival & Growth

A multi-pronged approach beyond #BBoM



Bridge-Building

Unifying university, polytechnic & college librarians into one powerful voice



Strategic Partnerships

IFLA, UNESCO, AFLIA & private tech firms for training & resources



LRCN Advocacy

Protecting 'Professional Cadre' status — a major incentive for financial membership



Continuous Re-skilling

Webinars & workshops on emerging technologies and digital librarianship



Digital Communication Crew

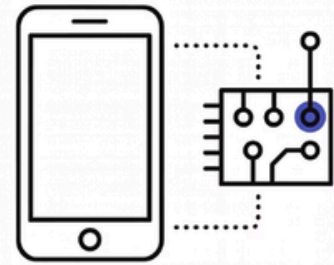
Dedicated social media teams fighting 'Silent Profession' syndrome publicly

Global Lessons from the NLA

The NLA provides a masterclass in resourcefulness and resilience for the global library community.



LEGISLATIVE FORTIFICATION
(Seek Legal Backing)



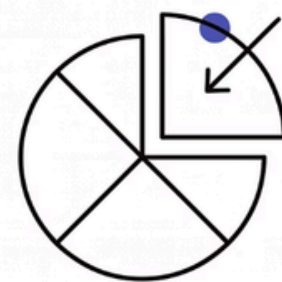
FRUGAL INNOVATION
(High-Tech in Low-Infra)



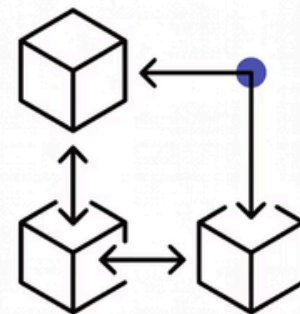
ADVOCACY AS SURVIVAL
(Active Lobbying)



MEMBERSHIP-AS-A-HOME
(#BBoM Strategy)



STRENGTH IN SECTIONALISM
(Robust Sections)



PROFESSIONAL AGILITY
(Modular Planning)

Key Takeaways

Professional associations must seek legal backing, prioritize appropriate technology over expensive technology, and solve internal friction before fighting external battles.

Resilience is not just about surviving the storm; it is about re-tooling while the storm is still raging.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the future of the NLA does not rest in the hands of the government or the strength of our buildings, but in the commitment of our members.

NLA IS A MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL PROGRESS

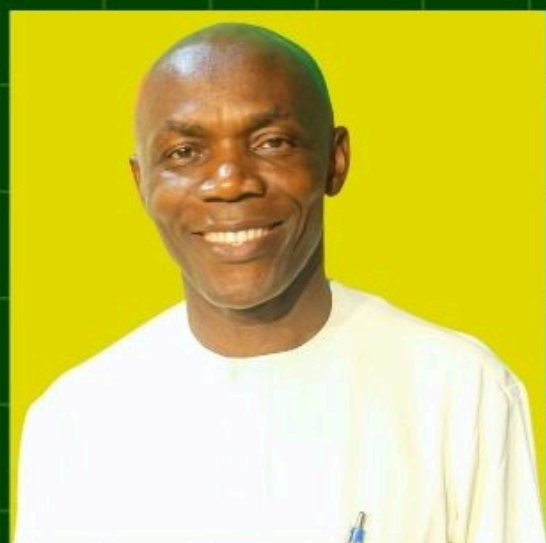
- ▶ Guardian of Nigeria's intellectual heritage since 1962
- ▶ #BBoM, digital integration & aggressive advocacy define our path forward
- ▶ The future rests in member commitment — not in buildings or budgets

“A united and financial membership is the most powerful infrastructure we can build.”

The lessons we have learned offer a valuable blueprint for the global library community.



Thank you!



Nigerian Library Association (NLA)

NLA our Passion! NLA our Pride!! NLA our Priority!!!