

KENYA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (KLA)

KENYA COUNTRY REPORT 2004-2006 PRESENTED DURING SCECSAL BUSINESS MEETING HELD ON 14TH JULY, 2006 IN DAR-ES-SALAAM, TANZANIA

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Introduction

This report covers the period of August 2004 to July 2006. During this period, the Kenya Library Association (KLA) continued to engage in various activities aimed at attaining the objectives of the Association. At the same time, KLA continued to address the various issues indicated in the previous report of SCECSAL XVI Conference. In particular, KLA paid special attention to the resolutions of 16th SCECSAL General Assembly, and carried out several activities which include the following:-

- Marketing and advocacy
- Reading promotion
- Capacity development for teacher librarians at local/district level
- Mentoring Programme for students in Kenya LIS Training institutions
- Participation in ICT policy formulation
- Participation in Kenya Librarians and Information Services Consortium
- Participation in review of terms of service for librarians working in the civil service
- Publications
- Development of KLA web site
- Hosting the KLA Golden Jubilee and Annual Conference
- Hosting the KLA World Social Forum workshop for Librarians in East Africa
- Participation in local/regional and international conferences meetings/conferences
- Collaboration and Partnerships

Marketing and advocacy of KLA

Previous reports have indicated the need to seek ways and means to market our Association with the view of increasing the membership. In previous years, advocacy campaigns included recruitment seminars, and lunches. The last two years saw an increased membership base from the different categories of members. This was as a result of new and renewed membership and recruitment strategies that included personal visits to institutions, informal meetings with potential members, or members whose membership had lapsed, and sponsorship to workshops/conferences.

Reading Promotion

KLA has over the last ten (10) years been involved with projects aimed at promoting reading and literacy among the disadvantaged urban, peri-urban slums and rural

grassroots communities in Kenya. This is in line with the principle of “*Education for All*” and the Millennium Development Goals, and the related global human rights covenants on access to information and education for all. KLA facilitated the reading promotion project in collaboration with the National Book Development Council of Kenya (NBDC-K) through the East African Book Development Association (EABDA), and the Ministry of Education. During this period, several Children Reading Tents (CRTs) were hosted in primary schools in identified needy rural districts/divisions in Kenya. The primary objective of the CRTs is to develop a desire for reading for children in their formative years for lifelong education, and to improve on their literacy and numeracy skills, thus enhancing their capacity for creative and life skills, and empowering them to cope with the different subjects for educational attainment. At the end of each CRT, KLA donated books to the participating primary schools. The book donation is meant to be a seed towards the development of a school library network in Kenya. KLA also participated in the National Book Week Celebrations, an annual event that is hosted by the NBDC-K.

Capacity development for teacher librarians at local/district level

Capacity development for the teacher librarians at the local district and provincial level has been an on-going activity. In September 2005, KLA trained 100 teacher librarians in Budalangi Division, of Western Province of Kenya. The objective of the training is to sensitize the teachers on the value of developing a reading culture among young children in primary schools, and provide them with relevant skills to develop school libraries.

Mentoring Programme for students in Kenya LIS Training institutions

As part of the re-engineering process, the Association in the last one year developed a programme aimed at nurturing and mentoring students in LIS training institutions. This was as a result of the discovery that most of the students and graduates from our training institutions do not join the Association for a long time after graduating from the library schools, nor identify with the Association since they had little information about it.

The mentoring programme includes the following components:-

- Organizing with the LIS schools/colleges for meetings with Heads of Departments/faculty staff
- Giving public lectures to students and staff
- Marketing the association by encouraging students to register as student members, and at a nominal fee
- Sponsoring students to KLA meetings, workshops, conferences
- Involving students to assist KLA in organizing events
- Encouraging students to research and present papers at KLA conferences/seminars/workshops
- Modeling/learning by example

During the last one year, KLA reached out and introduced the mentoring programme to two training institutions, namely, Moi University, School of Information Sciences, and Kenyatta University, Department of Library Studies.

We intend to reach out to more institutions in the coming years. Above all, KLA will seek for strategies to ensure the continuity of the Programme. One of the most encouraging outcomes of this initiative is that KLA now has paid up student members who are keen to volunteer and participate in KLA activities. KLA envisages that this programme will help greatly to mould the aspiring and young information professionals to a career that they understand, and are confident of undertaking

Participation in the Kenya Librarians and Information Services Consortium (KLISC)

The Kenya Librarians and Information Services Consortium (KLISC) is a major leap forward to information sharing in Kenya and a collective bargaining power initiative. Established barely two years ago, KLISC to date has forty (40) institutional members drawn from public and private library and information institutions, including the research institutions in Kenya. The institutions collectively subscribe to electronic journals at an affordable fee. The initial registration fee is K.Sh. 5,000, and an annual subscription of K.Sh. 10,000 for administration purposes. Thereafter, subscribing institutions share the cost of subscription. KLISC has proved to be an extremely cost effective cooperative venture that provides prompt access to current quality information from electronic journal publishers such as the Emerald, Oxford, Blackwells Synergy, African Journals Online, etc., Our Kenyan educational and research institutions have found the consortium to be particularly valuable as the KLISC initiative has addressed the information gap that was experienced for a long time in our educational and institutions in terms of shortage of, or lack of current journal literature to facilitate research and learning. KLA has continued to play an active role in the consortium since its inception, and encourages the members to enlist and pay up their subscriptions.

Participation in review of terms of service for librarians working in the civil service

KLA continued to engage and dialogue with the Government on the review of terms of service for librarians working in the civil service. This is in view of the fact that in spite of earlier reviews in 1999, and 2001, both of which KLA was centrally involved, the implementation by the government left the librarians one rank lower than their equivalent counterparts, e.g. the archivists working in the same civil service. The NARC government in Kenya recently declared the need to harmonize terms of service for all civil servants. KLA took the leap forward and started negotiations aimed at streamlining the hiring, remuneration, and over all terms of service for the library and information workers in civil service terms of service. Several interviews and meetings took place between April-June 2006. A Working group was set up to spearhead the review.

Publications

For some time now, KLA has not been able to publish the MAKTABA, the official journal of KLA. This is primarily due to financial constraints. The lack of publishing MAKTABA has been a matter of great concern to KLA, as the association has not fully been able to fulfil one of its core objectives, that of regularly contributing to research and publications. In view of this, during our last KLA Annual General Meeting, the members resolved to take the open source approach to publishing MAKTABA. The members further resolved that the KELIAS newsletter also published electronically. Such an approach would guarantee wider circulation to members and the global community. Few print copies will however be published, as funds became available.

Development of the KLA website and Electronic discussion list

In keeping with the changing trends and developments in information sourcing, sharing and exchange through information and communication technologies, KLA developed a new website and an electronic discussion list in November, 2004. The members have found the two communication channels extremely rewarding as they are now in a better position to seek and share information with instant response. We have also been able to interact with colleagues globally and in the region through this channels. The design and development of the website was realized through the support of INASP.

Hosting the KLA Golden Jubilee and Annual Conference

In March 2006, KLA celebrated fifty years of existence since the establishment of the EALA in 1956. The theme of the conference was ***Celebrating the development of libraries and a knowledge society in the East Africa: 1956-2006***. KLA invited Uganda Library Association (ULA) and Tanzania Library Association (TLA) to participate in this event. In the spirit of regional cooperation, KLA also gave sponsorship to two members from each of the two countries, one of whom was to be nominated from the LIS student community. Excellent papers were presented at the KLA Golden Jubilee Conference, and included overview of early developments in the establishment of libraries, archives and documentation centers in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania; libraries as a bridge to a knowledge society; developments in ICTs and their impact on libraries and information services in East Africa; libraries and information services as centres for human and democratic rights; capacity development for information professionals for a knowledge-driven society; developments in the preservation and conservation of information resources; re-engineering library and information associations in East Africa; and networking for regional collaboration and information resource sharing.

Hosting the KLA World Social Forum workshop for Librarians in East Africa

As part of her re-engineering process, KLA organized a World Social Forum workshop for librarians on 3-5 July, 2006. The Forum provides space for like-minded individuals, groups and organizations to participate in a form of active citizenship in which librarians have a professional role to play. The workshop covered topics on the critical role of information and knowledge as essential ingredients of development; politics of information within a global and African context; issues of social justice within the information context; advocacy and leadership; networking; and the role of the internet and digital communications in information acquisition, documentation and presentation and dissemination to all. The workshop was held also in preparation of the World Social Summit scheduled to take place in Nairobi in January 2007. In the spirit of regional cooperation, KLA again invited Uganda Library Association (ULA), and Tanzania Library Association (TLA) to participate in this workshop. KLA hopes that the ULA and TLA will support the initiative by KLA and also invite KLA to participate in their future professional forums.

Participation in local/regional and international conferences meetings/conferences

In the last two years under review, KLA participated in various local, regional, and international meetings and conferences. These include attendance to IFLA and COMLA meetings and conferences, and participation at the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS). KLA also participated in meetings held by the Kenya Information Preservation Society (KIPS); Kenya Library and Information Services Consortium (KLISC); KLA played an active role as a member of the Local Organizing Committee of the International Association of Agricultural Specialists (IAALD) Africa Conference Chapter that took place in Nairobi in May 21-25, 2006. The conference culminated in the formation of the IAALD Africa Chapter with Mr. Justin Chisenga elected as President, and Dr. Joseph Kiplangat from Kenya, elected as the first Vice-President. The Association of Health Information Professionals in Africa (AHILA) shall be hosting a major conference in October this year, and KLA is represented in the LOC. KLA also played a major role as a member of the Board of the NBDC-K, and in the formulation of terms and conditions of service for the NBDC-K staff.

In addition to KLA official participation, individual members of the Association actively participated in other professional meetings in the country and beyond. The Association has always encouraged these trends as they are enriching to the participants, their institutions, and the professional fraternity as a whole.

Collaboration and Partnerships

KLA continued to enjoy healthy relationships with her collaborators and partners, while at the same time, renewed her relationships with old and new partners. In facilitating the CRTs and the teacher librarians' workshops, KLA liaised with the Ministry of Education, with financial support from the NBDC-K. KLA also renewed her collaboration with UNESCO, and the Library of Congress, Nairobi Office who gave partial financial support for the KLA Golden Jubilee Conference. KLA also received financial support from INASP who gave partial sponsorship to develop the website. Our recent collaborator is the Finnish Embassy Office in Nairobi, who sponsored the World Social Forum workshop. We are exploring more opportunities for collaboration in order to meet some of our strategic goals for the next two years.

Way Forward

- Community outreach programs aimed at increased reading promotion
- Outreach to KLA members through the establishment of regional branches
- Participation in formulation of policies and policy reviews (education, ICT)
- Mentoring programme. Reach out to more LIS training institutions, students and faculty members
- Review of Terms of Service for civil service Librarians
- Review of KLA constitution and the strategic plan
- Strengthen collaboration with our partners, at the same time, seek for new partnerships

Thank You.