

**17th SCECSAL MEETING
DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA**

COUNTRY REPORT

SOUTH AFRICA

(July 2006)

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Introduction

This report outlines activities, developments and achievements of LIASA from July 2004 to June 2006.

LIASA as an organic structure had its fair share of highs and lows which is common to structures of its size and nature. In this report it is our aim to reflect on developments in the Association and future plans.

On our return from the 16th SCECSAL Conference, LIASA held its 7th Annual Conference in Polokwane, Limpopo Province from 27th September to 1st October 2004. The theme of the conference was "Libraries and Democracy: The Vital Link". The conference was a huge success and a new President was elected - Mr T Matthee, whose term of Presidency comes to an end in September 2006.

LIASA is currently preparing for elections of the Executive Committee and the Representative Council in September 2006; the 9th LIASA Annual Conference and the World Library and Information Congress: 73rd International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) General Conference 2007 (WLIC/IFLA 2007). Certainly, there is a lot to be done, but the membership and partners of LIASA are so inspired and they are looking forward to a successful year and conferences.

Management of LIASA National Office

The LIASA national office continued to play an important role in complimenting the elected leadership who are all volunteers as well as executing the operations and decisions of the Representative Council and Executive committee. At the end of 2005 the Office manager, Mrs Karin Kitching, took up a new position and as a result caused some disruption in the office. She was replaced by a very able and competent office manager, Mrs Adelaide Vilikazi in March 2006, who is currently settling in well and taking charge of the office as they dispose of tasks allocated to them by the elected leadership. The Membership Administrator position is still vacant due to a promotion of the previous membership administrator, and would be filled by end of July 2006.

The LIASA national office also relocated at the end of July 2005 to a new building in Skinner Road, Pretoria. It now occupies a suite of 7 offices and a boardroom as well as enjoying access to meeting and training rooms. LIASA national office will in future be hosted in the new National Library of South Africa (NLSA) building, once the construction is completed in 2008.

Membership

Statistics in the last report reflected a total membership of 1625 paid up of which 422 were new members. Currently (June 2006) our membership statistics reflect a total of 1740 paid up members including 99 new members. The biggest challenge faced by LIASA is the retention of existing members. This phenomenon can be ascribed to various factors which include:

- Apathy
- The laborious process of renewing membership
- Lack of activity in certain branches and Interest Groups
- Inability to participate in LIASA activities due to lack of staff at centres where members work and thus it becomes “difficult” for members to pay membership knowing that they are unable to access all the benefits LIASA offers.

The abovementioned challenges seem to be common problems with a number of Library Associations throughout Africa and indeed the whole world. We however continue our efforts to overcome these and other challenges relating to membership.

Representative Council and EXCO

As mentioned earlier a new Representative Council was elected in September 2004, during the 8th Annual Conference of LIASA held in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga in 2005. The constitution was amended and the most significant change effected was that of creating a new position of President-Elect. This will help in ensuring continuation in leadership and better succession planning. Elections for a new Representative Council and the Executive Committee are due in September 2006 at the 9th Annual Conference to be held at St George Hotel, Tshwane. The Representative Council and Executive Committee for 2006-2008 will be announced at the Conference. The newly elected members will commence with duties from 01 October 2006.

Branches and Interest Groups

The ten branches and Interest Groups of LIASA are continuing to play a pivotal role in taking LIASA and its activities to the members. Branch Executive Committees are also being elected for a 2-year period and we still experience an imbalance between branches and Interest Groups in respect of capacity and resources. The leadership however at these levels are very committed and are doing their best in ensuring that our members receive services. In 2005 we introduced the NielsenBookdata/ Presidents Award for the branch that excel at various levels. This was introduced with the support of NielsenBookdata as a way of encouraging branches to perform and the first recipient was the Western Cape branch (Cape Town) who received a plaque and cash prize of R 5000, 00. This award will be extended this year (2006) to a deserving LIASA member who will receive R 2500, 00 to be used by this member as he/she chooses.

The focus areas of LIASA (Branches and Interest Groups) since SCECSAL 2004 are training, social development and building partnerships, so are the theme of the Conference and the Library week events. The interest group and branches have also been embracing the theme in the 2006 Pre-Conference Workshops.

The workshops will cover interesting topics such as:

- Libraries, Learning and Citizenship for Children and Youth (SLYSIG)
- Popularising research and knowledge dissemination among students in South Africa (RETIG/SIG Seminar)
- Blogging Workshop presented by Ingrid Thomson (Western Cape Branch)
- Serving people with disabilities presented by the Free State Branch
- Communication, writing skills and Business English for Non-professionals (SSIG)
- The impact of Special Libraries in the development of South Africa (LiSLIG)

Communication and Marketing

LIASA has done well in the improvement of communication and its image-building; this includes the promotion of events such as National Library Week, publications of the Association i.e. LIT and SAJLIS, the webpage and Listserv. The success is evident in that LIASA has gained partnerships in government, private and non- governmental sectors.

○ **Library Week**

From the time when the Minister of Arts and Culture formally declared the 2nd week of March as South African Library Week, as an annual government calendar event, LIASA was committed to the call, events thereof were very successful in all the years:

- In 2005 the library week launch took place in Kliptown Library, Soweto, the theme was selected to coincide with 50th anniversary of the Freedom Charter. It was 'Libraries: Opening Doors of Learning and Culture to All'.
- 2006 Library week launch took place in Phuthaditjhaba, Free State and the theme was "Libraries: Partners in Learning, Nation Building and Development".

○ **LIASA publications**

Our publications improved tremendously as a result of the highly competent and committed editors. Their sterling work resulted in a regular, on time and professional magazine (LIASA IN TOUCH) and accredited journal (SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE - SAJLIS) :

○ **LIASA-in-Touch (LIT)**

LIASA-in-Touch (LIT) is published quarterly and reaches 1700 institutional and individual members of LIASA. LIT is gradually becoming popular, judging by the increasing number of advertising returns. This magazine edited by Mrs Nohra Moerat reaches all LIS workers in South Africa, Library associations in Africa and international partners and donors.

○ **SAJLIS**

The South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science (SAJLIS) is published twice per annum. An Editorial Management Committee has been appointed under the Chief Editor, Professor Dennis Ocholla of the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Zululand, KwaZulu Natal. The Editorial term is two years and in September 2006, a new Editorial Board will be appointed.

○ **LIASA Website (www.liasa.org.za)**

The greatly improved look and functionality of the website serves as one of the marketing tools for the Association by presenting the image and face of LIASA, not only to its members, but also to the world, both locally and internationally. The website is current and the contents are updated on a regular basis.

○ **Listserv**

The LIASA-online listserv is running very smoothly and all members of LIASA worldwide have access to all announcements being made within the LIS sector. It is very popular in announcing events being held by Branches and Interest Groups, and even international members are making use of the listserv to announce conferences and other international events pertaining to LIS.

- **Media Coverage**

The PRO submitted articles to several publications regarding the President, LIASA leadership, Library Week and all LIASA conferences.

During Library Week LIASA received media coverage from SABC Radio News.

- **Conferences**

The 7th Annual LIASA Conference 2004 was held in Polokwane, Limpopo Province from 27 September to 1 October 2004 and the theme was “Libraries and Democracy: The Vital Link”, to continue celebrating 10 years of democracy. The keynote speaker at the conference was Mr Alex Byrne, President Elect of IFLA.

The 8th Annual LIASA Conference 2005 was held at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Nelspruit, Mpumalanga with the theme “Taking Libraries to the people”, did not reach our expectations due to logistical challenges.

The 9th Annual Conference will take place from 25th to 29th September 2006 at St George Hotel, Tshwane. More details are available on the website, including online registration.

Relations with other Library Associations and Partnerships

Relations with other library associations and partnerships, include the following:

- **NCLIS**

LIASA is represented on the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS). NCLIS hosted two symposiums on the culture of reading, as well as a consultative workshop on the review of library legislation.

NCLIS is working on the development of a funding model for Community libraries and transformation Charter that will in future benefit LIASA and LIS workers. The model will be effective from 2007/2008 until 2010. LIASA is playing an instrumental role as the representative structure of LIS workers.

- **World Summit on The Information Society (WSIS)**

The 2nd Phase of the WSIS took place in Tunis from 16-18 November 2005. IFLA and Bibliotheca Alexandrina held a pre-Summit Conference in Alexandria, Egypt on 10-11 November 2005. Delegates involved in decision-making in their countries in relation to the Information Society were invited to participate. The theme was: Libraries – the Information Society in Action. The Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries: the Information Society in Action was launched at this event. IFLA also developed a position statement on Internet Governance.

The IFLA Success Stories Database was created to showcase the value of libraries to society as a whole. LIASA members were invited to contribute to this database, via an insert in the LIASA-in-Touch. The documents were also made available from the LIASA website. LIASA considered it essential to ensure that SA library projects and success stories are featured in the global database, which intends to reinforce and make visible the key role of LIS in building the information society.

A working Committee on the Information Society monitored events relating to WSIS and communicated progress and reports to the LIASA membership via the listserv and website. Presentations on the WSIS activities were also made at the LIASA Annual Conference in 2004 and 2005.

○ **Carnegie Corporation of New York**

The initial support by Carnegie Corporation of New York for infrastructural support of LIASA ended in March 2004, but we were fortunate to obtain a grant of \$500 000 to establish a Continuing Education and Professional Development (CEPD) programme :

- Establishment of a resource centre and training database
- Education and Training of our ten Interest Groups with the focus on public libraries
- Support to Carnegie model libraries by facilitation training in the US at the Mortenson Centre(Illinois University)

The Carnegie Corporation has accepted our request for a grant extension and revised timelines, from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2007. A comprehensive report of activities up until July 2005 was submitted by Ms Ujala Satgoor at a meeting held in Oslo, Norway with the CCNY Program Officer, Dr Rookaya Bawa.

○ **Finnish Library Association (FLA)**

The President met with representatives of the FLA at the Oslo WLIC 2005, and the co-operation will continue.

In 2006 a delegation was nominated to go to Finland. John Tsebe and Lucille Webster jointly delivered a paper on “**Impact of the Internet in the SA Community**”.

○ **Swaziland Library Association**

A request was received from the Swaziland Library Association to facilitate a series of meeting for librarians with various Higher Education Institutions, service providers such as Sabinet Online and Government departments. The delegation visited various institutions in Pretoria, South Africa during September 2005.

○ **WLIC/ IFLA**

LIASA has appointed a National Advisory Committee for the WLIC/IFLA 2007. The Core Committee comprises the following NAC members: Chair – Ellen Tise; Co-Chair – Laila Vahed; Secretary – Myra Boyes; Treasurer – G.H. Haffajee; LIASA President – Tommy Matthee; LIASA PRO – Rene Schoombee; Reigneth Nyongwana representing eThekweni Municipality. Preparations are well underway, regular meetings (every second month) is being held in Durban. Plans to host a successful conference is well underway and efforts are being made to secure funding to ensure that a significant number of African and South African delegates attend WLIC 2007

○ **COMLA**

An invitation was received from COMLA for a Public Librarian from South Africa to attend an Information Literacy workshop for Public Librarians across the Commonwealth in Kingston, Jamaica from the 28th January to the 2nd February, 2006. This training workshop is being implemented in Collaboration with UNESCO. In 2006 Flippie van der Walt from the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality was nominated as the LIASA representative to attend the workshop.

Activities and Achievements of 2004-2006

- September 2004 - 7th Annual LIASA Conference, Polokwane, Limpopo with the theme "Libraries and Democracy: The Vital Link"
- March 2005 - The launch of Library Week 2005, Kliptown Library, Soweto – Theme "Opening doors for learning and culture to all"
- September 2005 - 8th Annual LIASA Conference, Mpumalanga, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Nelspruit with the theme: "Taking libraries to the people."
- March 2006 - Appointment of new LIASA Office Manager
- South African Library Week held in Phuthaditjhaba, Free State Theme: "Partnership in learning, nation building and development"
- June 2006 - Appointment of Project Co-ordinator for Centre for Information Career Development project

Grants

The operating costs of LIASA are mainly covered by membership fees but we were successful in securing financial support from our partners and donors which include :

- o Carnegie Corporation of New York - \$ 500 000 over three year period ending December 2007
- o National Lottery Development Trust Fund(NLDTF) -April 2005 – R 214 000
- o Sali Trust – R 25 000 to support one issue of the journal (SAJLIS)
- o National Research Foundation – R 10 000 – research on statutory status of LIASA
- o Department Arts and Culture – 2004 – R 85 000
2005 – R 100 000

Future Plans

Our immediately plans for the next two years include:

- o Hosting a successful 73rd IFLA / WLIC 2007
- o Celebrating LIASA's 10th anniversary in 2007
- o Relocation to new office with the National Library in 2008
- o Implementing the continuing education and development programme (CICD)

conclusion

Despite all challenges face during this period, we can state without hesitation that it still represented a very successful two years.

All of the above achievements wouldn't have been possible without the generous grants awarded by partners of LIASA and sponsors. Special thanks are hereby extended to our regular sponsors, the hard work and commitment of LIASA staff members and all office bearers from the Representative Council, Branch Committees, Interest Groups Committees, volunteers, our members and supporters.

Tommy Matthee
President: LIASA, June 2006