

Lesotho Library Association (LLA)

COUNTRY REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- It is our great honor and privilege as Lesotho Library Association (LLA) to have this opportunity of presenting this country report. Lesotho Library Association wishes to pass gratitude to all Library Associations present here today. The report outlines the activities, achievements, challenges, and the future plans of the association. The report covers the duration; November 2014 to present.

2 .0 Membership

- The membership of the association is still low, considering a number of information centers and libraries in the country. The biggest challenge of LLA is the retention of existing members. This can be ascribed to various factors which include among others:
 - Apathy
 - Inability to participate in LLA activities due to staff shortages to some workplaces, and thus becomes “difficult” for members to participate as a result reluctant pay membership knowing that they won’t be able to take part to whatever activities organized by the association. However, the school library membership seems to be taking the lead to support and revive the association.

3.0 ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1 Marketing and Advocacy

- In previous years, LLA experienced the alarming decline in membership hence the initiative to seek ways and means to market LLA. The association engaged in various recruitment strategies such as informal meetings with potential members as well as those whose membership had elapsed, sponsorships to workshops and conferences, and encouraging students to register as student members, and at a nominal fee.

3.1.1 International School Libraries and Open Access week

- LLA objective is to promote, safeguard and encourage the establishment and improvement of libraries and professional interests of librarians. To achieve this objective, the Lesotho Library Association (LLA) in collaboration with Lesotho Library Consortium (LELICO) celebrated International School Libraries month and Open Access week in Teyateyaneng on the 30th October, where five high schools in Teyateyaneng and three high schools in Leribe were invited. Books were donated to all these eight schools.

3.1.2 Meeting with School Principals

- LLA Executive Committee sent a representation to attend High School principals meeting in the district of Butha Buthe, with the aim of selling LLA to them, and also encouraging them to be members. They were also made aware of the importance of the school libraries, and the role LLA plays towards the development of those libraries. The meeting was very fruitful indeed, and the principals showed interests in establishing school libraries

3. 2 Library site

- The Lesotho Library Association has a site, which is to be developed very soon. Presently LLA is renting its site as a way of generating income. This also makes it possible for the association to undertake its professional activities such as Annual General Meetings (AGMs), workshops and conferences.

3.3 Professional Development

- Training is a key pillar to a strong association. Being aware of the importance of training, LLA has not only been facilitating training opportunities for its members, but also negotiating sponsorships for LIS professionals. The effort is paying off as for this year the main sponsor which is the Lesotho government will be sponsoring both undergraduate and postgraduate LIS programmes. There were some LLA members who managed to pursue their studies through some other means like self-sponsoring which is really unaffordable.

3.3.1 Resuscitation of LIS programme at the National University of Lesotho

- In realizing the shortage of LIS professionals in the country, Lesotho Library Association made an initiative and liaised with the management of the University of Lesotho to resuscitate the LIS programme which was suspended three (3) years ago. The effort paid off, and the association is therefore grateful to announce that the programme is now in operation, and four (4) members of the association have been recruited as part time lecturers.

3.4 Participation in local and international conferences and workshops

- In the last two years under review, LLA participated in various local, regional, and international meetings and conferences. These include the 2014 SCESCAL held in Lilongwe Malawi on 28th July – 1st August, IFLA conference held in Cape Town South Africa in August 2015. The Association managed to provide transport to and from Cape Town (by road). The most impressive part of it is that one of LLA members presented a paper in that conference.
- LLA also participated in workshops organized by the National University of Lesotho and INASP on enhancing use of E-Resources and Institutional Repository. The aim and objectives of the workshop was to train librarians to get more involved and active on Institutional Repositories, Open Access and Open scholarship.
- As part of the re-engineering process, the Association held awareness workshop aimed at nurturing and mentoring students in LIS programme as well as paraprofessionals. This was as a result of the discovery that most of them do not join and fully participate in the association's activities due to lack of information about it.

3.5 Reading Development

- LLA continues to play a very important role in promoting the development of a
- reading culture in Lesotho. In collaboration with National University of Lesotho it has over the past five (5years) been involved with projects aimed at promoting reading and literacy among the identified needy schools and community in the rural districts in Lesotho, through book donations and mobile library services. The book donations were meant to be a seed towards the development of schools libraries country wide.

3.6 SCECSAL 2014 RESOLUTIONS

- In line with SCECSAL 2014 resolutions, the Lesotho Library Association celebrated the International School Library month and Open Access in partnership with the Lesotho Library Consortium, where students from 8 schools, from the Northern Region of Lesotho were sensitized about the importance of libraries, Open Access and e-learning.
- The Lesotho Library Association (LLA) partnered with the National University of Lesotho (NUL) to hold the workshop towards the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty that commits state to provide information for visually impaired people in adequate formats. The workshop was also meant to sensitize the related parties to understand and fully appreciate the efforts taken by the relevant stakeholders such as learners, instructors and other clients with visually impaired, in terms of library services are concerned. This was done in line with resolution number three, which stipulates that SCECSAL member associations should host national conversations on the provision of information services to people with special needs.

4.0 LLA CELEBRATIONS

- **4.1 International School Libraries and Open Access week**
- In line with the LLA objective to promote, safeguard and encourage the establishment and improvement of libraries and professional interests of librarians, the Lesotho Library Association (LLA) and Lesotho Library Consortium (LELICO) celebrated International School Libraries month and Open Access week in Teyateyaneng on the 30th October 2015, where five high schools in Teyateyaneng and three high schools in Leribe took part. Books were also donated to all these eight schools.

5.0 CHALLENGES

The association has been faced with a number of recurring challenges.

- The major challenge that we have had to deal with is getting the Library and Information professionals to become active LLA members. This is major hiccup as without membership there is very little that can be achieved.
- Lack of sponsorship for LIS Students especially Diploma students at NUL. Only two undergraduate students were sponsored to pursue their Degrees at the University of Botswana.
- Minimal absorption of Diploma graduates in the workplace.
- Lack of funding (Donors) to support LLA programs and activities.

6.0 LLA FUTURE PLANS

- Mobilize resources for the development of LLA national office (site development).
- Sensitize the community with regard to the importance of library services.
- Devise membership-based projects that will stimulate LLA members in addressing the challenge of lack of enthusiasm.
- Community outreach programs aimed at increased reading culture
- Amendment of LLA constitution
- Empower school librarians and teacher librarians by providing intensive trainings in the form of workshops and seminars on school librarians.
- Increased advocacy especially to Government to revisit the issue of the school libraries.

7.0 Conclusion

- Notwithstanding numerous challenges like lack of funding, apathy among Information Professionals and commitment, LLA continues to operate and steer the ship for development of the library and information profession in Lesotho.