

SWAZILAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Swaziland Country Report to the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Librarians, 15 - 20 April 2000, Caesar's Gauteng Hotel Casino Convention Report, Kempton Park, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Presented

By

Nomsa V. Mkhwanazi

Chairperson

Swaziland Library Association

Introduction

Among some of resolutions emanating from SCECSAL 2000, Windhoek, Namibia, 10 - 15 April 2000 are follows:

- Member Library Associations that have access to the World Wide Web should be encouraged to set their own web sites.
- SCECSAL Member Library Associations should encourage their members to acquire relevant information and communication technology skills in order to ensure that they remain relevant in this ever-changing information environment.
- SCECSAL member Associations are encouraged to maximally and appropriately utilize information and communication technologies skill (ICTs) for effective and efficient communication and provision of library and information services.
- SCECSAL member library associations, in consultation with the library institutions in member countries should work out appropriate national marketing programmes for library and information services in their countries.
- SCECSAL member library associations are encouraged to adopt and implement codes of ethics for their respective national associations.

The Swaziland Library Association (SWALA) has worked tirelessly to implement these resolutions. Of particular note, SWALA restructured its working Committees resulting in, among other, the Empowerment Committee and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Committee. Most of the work relating to the SCECSAL resolutions has been carried out under the direction of these Committees.

SWALA Web Site

The SWALA web site is up and running. The site has all the basic information on SWALA and links to sites that are relevant to librarianship and information services. The URL is <http://www.swala.sz>

The site is currently being hosted on the Swaziland Post and Telecommunication Corporation (SPTC) server free of charge, thanks to SPTC.

ICT Skills for SWALA Members

To realize this objective, training workshops were designed. To this end two training workshops were successfully conducted in July and December 2001. Bearing in mind that a large section of SWALA membership lacked computer skills, the training covered basic computer skills for beginners. Some of the topics covered included introduction to computers, MS-DOS, Windows 98, Microsoft Word/Corel WordPerfect. Internet searching etc. More workshops are yet to come targeting different sections of the membership.

Other Skills

SWALA has been focussing on developing within its membership, a wider range of skills to enable them to function effectively and efficiently in the ever-changing library and information services environment. In this regard workshops on cataloguing and classification, preservation and outsourcing were conducted.

Pre-AGM Conference

The 2001 SWALA AGM was preceded by a conference whose main theme was information and communication technology (ICT) and libraries. A variety of papers were presented including

government, ICT and library views. It is hoped that the papers will be published in the next issue of the SWALA journal. The following resolutions pertaining to ICT were adopted: -

- That, through the ICT Committee, SWALA should develop greater human resource capacity for information technology (IT training by embarking on training of trainers' programmes.
- That, through the ICT Committee, national information and communication infrastructures such as SWALINET and e-mail list should developed.
- That, through training, SWALA should sensitise heads of information centres on ICT. The ICT and Empowerment Committees should ordinate the implementation of this resolution.
- That, through the Legislation Committee, SWALA should lobby for the reduction of taxes and tariffs for ICT and other information sources.

Marketing of Library and Information Services

SWALA's marketing initiative for the period under review kicked off with a workshop on marketing library services. The objective was to update member knowledge and skills in marketing. This was complemented by promotional and publicity activities. These include:

- (i) the hosting of picnics including cell phone raffle draw;
- (ii) production and distribution of the SWALA brochure;
- (iii) improvements to the SWALA Newsletter in terms of quality, coverage, frequency and distribution; and
- (iv) The Honourable Minister of Public Service and Information officially opened the 2001 SWALA annual general meeting and reaffirmed the Swaziland Government's commitment to ICT applications.

Code of ethics

Work on this resolution has not yet commenced.

Swaziland Library Association
April 2002