

TANZANIA COUNTRY REPORT 2000- 2002

Dr Alli Mcharazo
Chairman Tanzania Library Association

General Present Situation of Libraries in Tanzania

In our previous report it was stated that the situation regarding public libraries was and gloomy. To date the situation has improved. This is attributed by the willingness of Tanzania Library Services Board and local authorities to work in partnership towards running the regional libraries. As a result there is a regional public library in every region of the mainland Tanzania. The challenge for both organisations is to open more branches to district and village levels. The other challenge is to well – resource the libraries. This also means more employment for trained library personnel.

Tanzania Library Association (TLA) also notes, with appreciation, the existence of some government policies that make it mandatory for some public and private institutions and organizations to have libraries/documentation centres/resource centre. We are witnessing the establishment of libraries in the ever-mushrooming private primary and secondary schools and colleges. The situation is the same with non- government organisations. While we applaud the move, we are also obliged to advice schools, colleges and institutions to run their libraries professionally. It is also encouraging to see a significant number of these libraries embarking on automation schemes. University of Dar es Salaam Library and Economic and Social Research Foundation Library are just a few good examples of libraries that have been automated.

TLA Activities

Performance since 2000

From 1996 to mid 2000 TLA had not been at its best performance due to, amongst other reasons, lack of involvement amongst the TLA members and ineffective leadership. I must also say that the first couple of months the Executive Committee was pre-occupied by the task of tidying up the office. However, despite the afore-mentioned drawbacks, during this period TLA managed to organised the following:

- Workshop on strategic planning, Njuweni Hotel, Kibaha, Cost Region
- Talk on the Role of Book Aid International, National Central Library
- Talk on Marketing of Library and Information Services, University of Dar es Salaam.
- Annual General Meeting, Morogoro
- Annual General Meeting, IFM, Dar es Salaam.

In late 1999 the new leadership, under the Interim Chairman, Dr. A. Mcharazo, reassessed the situation and came up with an action plan which had some strategies to revive the association and make it more functional. The strategies involved, amongst other things, demonstration on how TLA can be useful to its members. Some of the activities involved were revitalisation of the

Executive Committee Members; organisations of seminars/short talks; media coverage; publication of Matukio Newsletter; personal visits to head of institutions and information professionals, etc. Under these strategies the following were performed/achieved:

- Short talks/Guest Lecturers
- Talk on Marketing of Library and Information Services Talk by Dr Anthony Olden
- Talk by Chinese delegation
- Running of Professional Courses (Government Lower and Higher Standard) Library Examinations
- Revival of Matukio (TLA Newsletter)
- Participation to International Conferences (IFLA Boston; Workshop on Internet for Research Networking Nairobi; EBDA Workshop, Kampala; Kenya Library Association AGM, Nairobi)
- Awards to the School Library Archives and Documentation Studies (SLADS) best students
- Capacity building (office, furniture, and equipment)
- Recruitment of new office holders (Organizing Secretary and Administrative Officer)
- Developed and revived contacts with national and foreign organisations (IFLA, Norwegian Library Association, British Council, USIS)
- Revival of the Grace Lema Foundation Scholarship
- Seminars/Workshops (Kibaha Discussion forum)
- Revival of our membership to International Organisations: IFLA, COMLA
- Revival of our membership to professional organisations within Tanzania, eg. Tanzania Book Development Council
- Information for Development & Strategic Plan Workshop, Morogoro
- Annual General Meeting, at Morogoro, and
- Launching of the TLA web-site

Training

Library Schools

A significant development was achieved in 1998 when the University of Dar es Salaam established a Masters in Library and Information studies. This is a good and commendable move. SLADS, that offer Certificate and Diploma in Library Archives and Documentation Studies programmes, is doing well. New SLADS Management has been working closely with TLA, and efforts are underway to bring back the Association representative to the SLADS governing boards.

Grace Lema Foundation

The Grace Lema Foundation Scholarship has been renegotiated. The outcome of these negotiations is that the Norwegian Library Association (NLA) and DANIDA are now providing scholarship to TLA members who are interested in studying for diploma in librarianship at SLADS.

Participation to International Events

Tanzania was represented at the 2000 SCECSAL by representatives from the University of Dar es Salaam Library. TLA was also fully represented at the IFLA Boston Conference in August 2001, and at the Kenya Library Association Annual General Conference in November 2001. However, TLA observes that Tanzania's participation, as an association and as individuals, to the above conferences is not as adequate and effective as it should. Of course, dormancy of TLA in the last few years is one of the reasons for poor participation. TLA has now embarked on the task to encourage them to attend the above conferences and present papers. TLA also encourages its members to attend Annual General Meetings of Associations in the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

Membership

Up until 2001 there were very few paid members (individual and institutional). This position, to a large extent, has been detrimental to the Association performance and finances. More details are provided in the Treasurer's Report. But it is worth mentioning here that experiences from other parts of the world shows that the success of library associations depends so much on its membership and their subscriptions for the effective running of their activities.

However, today I am pleased to say that the present position regards membership of the Association is not as bad as it used to be. There are now good signs that librarians and other information workers are joining the association. The Executive Committee, as some of you may have noticed, works hard to ensure that this trend continues and that more members from all sectors of the profession are recruited.

Programme of Activities for 2002

The programme of activities for 2002 is geared towards TLA capacity building and development activities. The specific activities are as follows:

1. Annual General Meeting and Elections of Office Bearers, February 2002
2. Short Talks/Public Lectures (4)
3. Workshops (3)
4. Seminars (2)
5. IT Courses (Internet Usage; Email Usage and Library Software Usage) (3)
6. Running of Government Lower and Higher Standard Review Courses
7. SCECSAL Johannesburg, 2002
8. IFLA Glasgow, 2002
9. Formation of Technical Committees
10. Amendment of the TLA Constitution
11. Introduction of a Written Code of Ethics
12. Revitalisation of TLA and Recruitment of New Members
13. Increase publicity for TLA (via TLA website, Matukio Newsletter, Media, etc.)

The Way Forward

The Executive Committee of TLA feels strongly that TLA has a lot of potentials and opportunities. The opportunities are there, but need to be taped in. To do/achieve this TLA needs a strong team of leaders that would effectively translate the needs of our libraries in order to set forth a clear direction. The development of a strategic plan document clearly suggests that the leadership has now understood the needs of its members.

On the professionals and members themselves TLA keeps on sending clear warnings: that lack of dynamism and failure to adopt to new information environmental (e.g. IT) can lead to lack of recognition. We are now living in a very competitive world, where, if we are not careful enough, other professionals can perform our jobs and tasks. TLA urges librarians, documentalists, archivists and other information workers to avail themselves to learning the new technology and be able to use the technology for the betterment of our clients. TLA will play its part by organizing those courses and others in order to better equip the librarians and other information professionals.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

The successful opportunity to revive our Association and consequently holding the Annual General Meeting and elections of office bearers (see Appendix 1 for results) and a Workshop on Information for Development and Strategic Planning is a result of tireless Executive Committee Members. They have been working overtime and without pay or allowances to ensure that our association is revived. May I therefore take this opportunity to congratulate and thanks them all.

May I also take this opportunity to thank and congratulate SCECSAL, LIASA and all donor organisations/institutions that have extend their moral and material support in order to revive our association and make our presence here a success. And lastly, but not least, many thanks must go to all participants of this meeting.

Many thanks, I wish you a successful year, and God bless you all.

I submit.

April 2002

Appendix 1

Results of the TLA Elections

Dr Alli Mcharazo - Chairman

Mrs Matilda Kuzilwa - Secretary

Mr Mathias Masawe - Organizing Secretary

Mr Sam Kasulwa - Editor

Mr Hermenegild Haule - Treasurer

SCECSAL XV Conference: From Africa to the World - the globalisation of indigenous knowledge systems. Caesar's Gauteng Hotel Casino and Convention Resort, Kempton Park, Johannesburg, South Africa, 15-20 April 2002

Mr Theophilus Mlaki - Executive Committee Member
Mr Richard Shemndolwa - Executive Committee Member
Mrs Lilian Liundi - Executive Committee Member
Mr Samwel Sekiete - Executive Committee Member