

ZIMBABWE COUNTRY REPORT 2015 – 2016
by
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Delegates to the 49th Zimbabwe Library Association Conference and AGM held at Cutty Sark Hotel, Kariba, Zimbabwe 23-25 June, 2015 pose for a group photo.(seated is the ZIMLA – National Executive)

Introduction

Following the National Library and Documentation Services Conference held in Mutare in August 2009, delegates unanimously agreed on the need to revive the Zimbabwe Library Association, which had almost become defunct following Zimbabwe's decade economic decline. To kick start the revival of the Association a National Steering Committee was set and held its first meeting at the Great Zimbabwe Hotel in Masvingo in early February 2010, which culminated in the preparation for Zimbabwe Library Association Annual Conference and AGM.

To date successful Conferences ZIMLA Conferences have been held in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, with the most successful Conferences being those held in 2012 and 2014. 2012 saw the birth of the first ever building of successful networking and collaboration between ZIMLA and LIASA, as well as development of strong links with the Malawi Library Association.

At the Annual General meeting held in Victoria Falls in 2014, the following were elected into the National Executive Council:

President	:	Lantern R Fusire
Vice President	:	Wadzanai Chihombori
Secretary General	:	Harriet R Ncube
National Treasurer	:	Hosea Tokwe
Advocacy Officer	:	Jasper Lee Maenzanise
National Editor	:	Kenneth Mangemba

Ex-Officio members who are chairpersons of the Association's five branches:

Matabeleland Branch	:	Jerry Mathema
Mashonaland Branch	:	Ariel Muvhunzwi
Midlands Branch	:	Alphege Maisiri
Masvingo Branch	:	Shadreck Ndinde
Manicaland Branch	:	Nevermore Sithole

The following are some of the major activities that occurred during the period under review:

International Conference Participation

Netherlands Conference

The Midlands Branch member and National Treasurer Mr. Hosea Tokwe attended that 44th International Association of School Librarianship Conference whose theme was: School Library Rocks, held at Maastricht, the Netherlands from 28 June to 03 July 2015. He presented a paper entitled: Advocacy for School Library Development in Africa: the case for Matenda School Library Project in Zimbabwe. The member won two awards valued at \$1000 each. The first was the Ken Haycock Leadership Development Grant Award, which was used to pay for his attendance at the Conference, and the second was a collection of children's books for Matenda School Library which he developed from scratch.

Botswana Conference

IFLA/BLA Workshop on Advocating for School Libraries was held in Gaborone at the University of Botswana Library on 10 February 2016. The workshop was jointly organized under the aegis of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Section on School Libraries and the Botswana Library Association (BLA) under the theme: Advocating for School Libraries. The objective was to examine approaches towards enhancing advocacy efforts for school libraries in Botswana. Mr. Jerry Mathema, being the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) Director for Africa Sub Sahara region, and ZimLA Matabeleland Branch Chairperson facilitated at the workshop.

Library Celebrations:-

1. International School Library Month

Three Branches, namely Mashonaland, Midlands and Matebeleland all celebrated the International School Library Month, an annual event celebrated in the month of October to commemorate the value and importance attached to School Libraries worldwide. During these celebrations Schools, Librarians from local Library Schools took to the streets to march raising awareness of the importance of School Libraries.

2. International Literacy Day

In Harare the local Branch of Mashonaland commemorated the International Literacy Day by marching through the streets of Harare.

School Library Conferences:-

International School Library Conference(2012)

This Conference was a collaborative effort between Zimbabwe Library Association and the International Association of School Librarianship, it was held in Bulawayo and was hosted by Masiyepambili College. Matebeleland Branch through the Branch Chairperson Mr Jerry Mathema and an Organising Committee successfully organised the Conference. It drew delegates from Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Sweden.

IFLA – BSLA sponsored Workshops

The President of the Association and the Advocacy Officer attended a training workshop which was organised by the IFLA Building Strong Library Associations (BSLA) programme in Kumasi, Ghana and the culmination of this workshop resulted in the submission of two projects which were approved and funded by the IFLA – BSLA project.

- 1.** The ZimLA Strategic Plan workshop provided a structure of activities which have seen the Association making in-roads in engaging Government towards the recognition of LIS professionals and the role they can make in reviving the economy and promotion of social development.
- 2.** The Association organised a training workshop to equip its members and other stakeholders on engaging the government on the inclusion of libraries and other information centres in developing an embracing National Information and Communication Policy which will promote access to information for all.

Other Activities: -

- 1.** ZIMLA Branches were active in a number of activities, with two Branches the Midlands Branch and Matebeleland commemorating the International School Library Month, thus making ZIMLA visible among Schools.

2. Other Branches were active in bringing awareness of the importance and value of School Libraries through Book Donations.
3. During all Conferences held, ZIMLA built up important networks and collaborations with such international organisations like EBSCO, Emeraldinsight, Springerlink, Universal Knowledge Software and Elsevier Science with whom we have now established synergies for all our future Conferences.
4. Despite economic challenges and low Membership base, ZIMLA has continued to meet its Affiliation fees to IFLA, it has recently registered with Aflia, and will also arrange to join SCESCAL and IASL.
5. ZIMLA is also in the process of initiating an MOU that will be signed with the Kariba Town Council to undertake establishment of a Community Library. The Association will also engage the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to facilitate the securing of Books from Rotary Club duty free.



Zimbabwe Library Association Secretary General and National Treasurer holding the box of books donated to Kariba Town Council, whilst Kariba Town Her Workshop the Mayor, Mrs Ndoro looks on

Zimla Forthcoming 50th Anniversary - 2016

To celebrate its achievement so far ZIMLA would like to dedicate the 50th Anniversary by honouring LIS professionals who have made Zimbabwe Library Association and

Zimbabwe visible to the outside world, professionals who have made personal sacrifices to see the revival of ZIMLA what it is today. Also in line are local organisations that have helped with gifts, donations and financial support through exhibits. ZIMLA will not be where it is today without the Regional Library Associations that have also supported it by their physical presence during Annual Conferences, and all the Regional companies like EBSCO, Emeraldinsight, Elsevier Science, Springerlink and UKS who have provided funding in cash and kind are also in line to be honoured.

2016 is our year of celebration of the Silver Jubilee when we will be celebrating the small but impressive steps we have taken to put the Zimbabwe Library Association back on the world map. It would be our most memorable event ever and we will be so happy to have member Associations grace this occasion.



Zimla Conference delegates relax as they enjoy EBSCO funded Social Networking Cocktail Dinner after a full-day of Conferencing.(Zimla Conference, 23-25 June, 2015, Kariba, Zimbabwe)

Challenges / Constraints

- No appropriate legislation to govern operation of libraries
- Apathy from major institutions
- Lack of a Secretariat to communicate and market Zimla activities
- Lack of financial resources

Future Plans

- Initiate the crafting of a National Information Policy which will provide libraries and information centres with a platform to effectively contribute to the country's developmental goals.
- Need to increase the visibility of the Association at international level amongst librarians in different types of libraries throughout the country
- Organising Continuous Professional Development to retool and re-skill information professionals by updating them on contemporary trends in librarianship.
- Continuous Advocacy the establishment and development of school libraries in both urban and rural schools
- Revival of the Zimbabwe Librarian Journal