

ZAMBIA COUNTRY REPORT 1998 - 2000

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Introduction

At the 1999 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Zambia Library Association, a new Executive Committee was elected with Norah Mumba, a well-known local author and gender equality advocate, based at the University of Zambia Library, as Chairperson.

At each AGM, ZLA organizes a pre-AGM workshop. The theme of the 1998 pre-AGM conference was community information, which created some excitement among the public librarians. The 1999 pre-AGM conference was on the theme: Information for Investment, with interesting presentations from the Export Board, the Investment Centre, and the Zambia Privatization Agency.

National Library Week

The National Library Week is celebrated every year, with a different theme. The theme for 1999 was Information for Health and Development, and for 1998 it was Community Information. A series of seminars were held in Lusaka as a part of the programme, and the Week was celebrated countrywide with performances by schools, football matches (Readers v. The Rest), speeches and exhibitions.

National Library Policy

The main event in the library field in Zambia since 1998 has been the formulation of a National Library Policy, in which the Association has been taking part. The final draft is now with the Minister of Education for submission to Cabinet for approval.

While actively working, with the support of the Hon Minister, General Miyanda, on a bill for Zambia Library Service - which to date exists without legislative backing - it was realized that there was no written policy for libraries in Zambia, and that the only information policy in effect referred to journalism. This made it difficult to explain to lawyers the problems that needed solving and the need for legislation.

The National Library Policy establishes a National Library Council to oversee the various organizations that perform the functions of the national library service, as it has grown up in a fairly fragmented fashion.

It is hoped that, if this policy is approved by Cabinet, then it would shortly be backed by legislation, which will be easier to draft on the basis of the policy.