

LESOTHO COUNTRY REPORT 2010

LESOTHO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (LLA)

Introduction

LLA wishes to pass its greetings to all SCECSAL member Association, especially to those that are here today. It is again that time of the year when member associations gather together to share the achievements, challenges and future plans for the benefit and growth of the profession in member countries. Despite the hardships that we encountered; LLA was able to engage a number of undertakings as outlined bellow.

This report covers the period March 2009 to October 2010.

SCECSAL XVIII (Lusaka)

Lesotho Library Association participated in the 2008 SCECSAL hosted by the Namibia Library Association in Lusaka Zambia. Quite a large number of its members attended the conference and they even managed to win the cultural trophy.

30th Anniversary

The LLA celebrated its 30th anniversary in October 2008. LIASA, Botswana Library Association and Swaziland Library Association were invited. LIASA and BLA declined. We were honoured by the presence of Swaziland Library Association representative – Mr. Morrison Mkhonta.

The anniversary was celebrated in a form of a conference and papers on the theme “the role of library associations in national development” were presented and discussed.

Lesotho National Library Act

The issue of the Lesotho National Library Act was reported in our previous report which stated that the draft was ready for presentation before the parliament. Regrettably the draft Bill has not yet been presented before the parliament because of the bureaucratic process that it has to go through.

Acquisition and Development of the LLA Site

On a positive note, LLA is glad to announce that it has been able to acquire a land, and has partnered with local land developers in a joint venture to develop the site. The plan is to come up with the type of buildings that can be leased out.

Courtesy calls

In an effort to create and maintain good relationships with policy makers in the country, the Association paid courtesy calls to the Ministries and institutions that LLA regards as stakeholders, and has an interest in the development of the libraries and librarianship. They are the following:

- Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture which is the mother Ministry of the National Library Services.
- Ministry of Education
- UNESCO office (Maseru)
- National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) – Government department responsible for award of sponsorships for study.

LLA Annual General Meeting (AGM) – 5th October, 2010

During its current AGM, LLA members among other things, deliberated on the growth and sustenance of the Association as a voluntary organization that is entirely dependent on its members devotion and active involvement. Members commitment was sought both in the operations of the Association and payment of subscriptions.

National University of Lesotho (NUL) Library programme

It is worth mentioning in this report that through the initiative of the Lesotho Library association, the NUL has established a two years Diploma programme in Library and Information Studies in the academic year 2009/2010, the first cohort of which will be graduating in 2011.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. LLA still needs to revive its website – the site was launched in 2007 but has since experienced some problems and ceased to function. LLA needs to revive it as this hinders communication and information sharing.
2. It also needs to revive its publication and this time in a form of a newsletter – it has been for some time now that LLA has not been able to publish its journal “ Lesotho Books and Libraries” due to financial constrains.
3. The Association is also considering the establishment of a National Council which will act as a guiding organization for the library professionals in the country.
4. It also has to complete the process of compiling a directory for the library personnel in the country.

CHALLENGES

1. Continuing Non-commitment of members is a serious challenge for the development of the Association.
2. For an Association that survives on meager fee of annual subscriptions by members and a subvention by the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture, it is not surprising that it falls short of fulfilling some of its obligations, and participating in events that would otherwise contribute to its growth. Declining membership despite the growing number of library cadre personnel Non-participation of members in LLA events; e.g. subscription to IFLA and COMLA
3. LLA`s work is voluntary over and above the demanding members` commitments in their respective workplaces.
4. Library professionals grow and develop independent of their Associations. It is well known that country associations operate without the benefit of professional help and expertise abundant in their countries because members are indifferent to the development and growth of their associations.

CONCLUSION

Like it was stated in the previous report “the future growth and development of our Association lie in the hands of members and professionals in the Library cadre”.