

**XV111 SCECSAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**

**COUNTRY REPORT
SWAZILAND**

JULY, 2008

Introduction

This report outlines activities, developments and achievements realized as well as challenges faced by the Swaziland Library and Information Association (SWALA) for the period July 2006 to June 2008.

The period under review was both a successful as well as a challenging period for SWALA.

The Association has also made concerted efforts to implement the SCECSAL XV11 resolutions agreed in Tanzania in 2006.

Capacity building in knowledge management

Following the SCECSAL meeting in Tanzania, and in its efforts to build the capacity of members, the theme of the Annual General Meeting of SWALA for 2007 was knowledge management. During this meeting, a number of presentations were made focusing on the various components of knowledge management and members were able to appreciate the significance of this concept in their work.

Because members felt that the first workshop was insufficient to cover in depth all the components of knowledge management, a second workshop on knowledge management was planned to take place early this year but unfortunately did not materialize due to financial constraints.

With regard to ensuring that Schools of Library and Information Science incorporate KM in their curriculum, Swaziland does not have a School of Library and Information Science and as a result was not able to influence the incorporation of knowledge management as per the SCECSAL resolution. However, one of the training institutes in the country (Mananga Training Centre) and has introduced a course on librarianship for library managers.

The Association however, acknowledges the fact that tools are a major component for the performance of library associations and as such plans to engage in partnerships with other Association in the region to ensure that training and other KM capacity building initiatives are shared are in the pipeline.

Strengthening of knowledge management partnerships

As part of a partnership initiative, SWALA has entered into partnership with the National Emergency Response Council on HIV and AIDS Information centre to disseminate HIV and AIDS information as well as to facilitate health related research.

Subsequent to a long term partnership with the American Embassy in Swaziland, SWALA continues to enjoy support through a number of initiatives. Of particular significance during the period under review was the sponsorship of the Chairperson of the Association to attend the International Leadership Program (ILP) which entailed visiting a number of libraries in different states in the United States of America.

The Association has also formed a partnership with civil society organizations to establish libraries for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in neighbourhood care points (NCPs, community centres where OVC go for a meal as well as some form of non-formal education).

Furthermore, SWALA organized a successful educational tour to some of the libraries and information centres in Maputo. This activity has opened up possibilities of networking and collaboration on different aspects of the profession.

One of the successes realized was in the area of policy and legislation. SWALA members were nominated to become members of the National Library Services Board which is a policy making body enacted to steer the implementation of the National Library Act.

Furthermore, SWALA members were invited to make inputs as stakeholders in policy and legislative dialogues that took place in the country aimed at revising the Media and Information Bill.

Strengthening local library association

Members of the Association have embraced the MDGs in the library development agenda as their members are involved in the establishment of school libraries especially in rural areas and also train teacher librarians. Such an activity significantly contributes to supporting the government initiative of realizing universal primary education.

SWALA is working closely with the mass media to create effective communication channels with the general public to promote library and information use for development. A time slot has been secured with the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services to promote the usage of libraries in Swaziland.

One of the major challenges for the Association is the issue of capacity building in a number of areas for members of the Association and this will be the main focus of activities for the future.

Swaziland continues to face membership related challenges and one of the future activities will be a focus on engaging on an aggressive membership drive.