

ZIMBABWE COUNTRY REPORT 2017 – 2018
by
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Participants at the ZimLA 51st Conference and Annual General Meeting held in Gweru in July 2017

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.

ZimLA Conferences and Annual General Meetings

To date successful Conferences ZIMLA Conferences have been held in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. The 2016 Conference Theme was, "Transforming information into knowledge tolls: ZimLA@50". This Conference was held in Masvingo and was graced by the AfLIA President, Mr John Tsebe as the Guest of Honour. The mayor of Masvingo gave a welcome address. His attendance resulted in the town taking a positive move to open its municipal libraries and employ professional personnel.

The 2017 Conference was held in Gweru and was graced by AfLIA Vice President and Library and Information Association of South Africa, Mr Mandla Ntombela as one of the keynote speakers. The theme of the conference was, "Libraries in the National Development Agenda: Repositioning libraries for sustainable development". The Acting Vice Chancellor of the Midlands State University, Professor A Muzvidziwa, was the Guest of Honour.

At the Annual General meeting held in Masvingo in 2016, the following were elected into the National Executive Council:

President : Lantern R Fusire
Vice President : Shadreck Ndinge
Secretary General : Harriet R Ncube
National Treasurer : Charles Poterai
Advocacy Officer : Praymore Tendai
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 : Austin Nyakurerwa
Masvingo Branch : Tofara Rugara
Manicaland Branch : Margaret Maenzanise

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

International Participation

ZimLA continues to engage itself with regional and international institutions such as SCECSAL, AfLIA, and IFLA and has been involved in a number of activities such as the Global Vision, Library Map of the World

and other activities. Its desire is to remain visible in local, regional, and international forums and will remain committed to updating its membership in these Associations.

1. IFLA invited ZimLA to a workshop on Public Libraries Advocacy in the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which was held in Pretoria, South Africa in October 2016. This was attended by Kathy Matsika, Tinashe Kuzuwazuwa, and Lantern R Fusire. It was an informative workshop which equipped attendees with skills on how to make in-roads with governments to support and actively participate in projects that promote community development.

2. The ZimLA President, Mr L R Fusire, was invited to attend a meeting organised by IFLA on IFLA Global Vision which was held in Younde, Cameroon in May 2017. This was an important meeting which brought together several countries in Africa to contribute in the development of a Global Vision for libraries and information centres which would promote international cohesion and local participation in global issues.

3. The ZimLA President also attended the 2nd AfLIA Conference in May 2017 which was held in Younde, Cameroon in May 2017 which saw the convergence of a wide range of participants from all over Africa.

4. The ZimLA President was invited to attend a workshop organised by AfLIA/ TASCHA which was held in Accra, Ghana in February 2018. The workshop was looking at ways of improving data collection in public libraries and how such data can be used to contribute to national development and international acclamation.

5. The Association attended SCECSAL XXIII through representation by Ms Nyarai Chibanda, Midlands State University Librarian. This Conference was held in Entebbe, Uganda in April 2018.



Zimbabwe Library Association participants at the IFLA Public Libraries Advocacy workshop held in Pretoria in October 2016. From left: Lantern R Fusire, Tinashe Kuzuwazuwa, and Kathy Matsika

Library Celebrations

ZimLA continue to recognize several events which recognize work done by librarians and information practitioners in improving access to information and improvement of communities. In collaboration with the International Association of School Librarians ZimLA has continued to hold International School Libraries Month (ISLM) in the month of October. Such celebrations are held in the five branches of the Association.

ZimLA Projects

ZimLA successfully applied for funding from IFLA on its National Information Policy formulation. The project was spearheaded by Praymore Tendai, the National Advocacy Officer. A National Libraries Policy is presently at its draft stage awaiting approval from government after a series of meetings and consultations.

Attempts were also made to collaborate with Zambia and Malawi on a project which would have seen promotion of advocacy to parliamentarians in the three countries. However, this still remains in the future as the three National Associations were not successful in their efforts to seek funding.

Publications

ZimLA has continued to be present on the internet platform through its website <http://www.zimla.org.zw>. It is on this website that it has managed to upload a series of newsletters and updates of its several events and announcements. This platform is maintained and run by Kenneth Mangemba, ZimLA National Editor. The Association is also visible on twitter on its handle [zimla@20](#), and on facebook.

Membership

While there is great potential to raise membership into hundreds because of the presence of library and information professionals in the country, the Association is still facing a daunting task of wooing professionals to become members. The table below shows a trickle of that potential membership. Efforts have been put in place to create social media platforms such as Whatsapp groups where all LIS professionals are encouraged to participate and where lobbying for membership is done.

Membership Category	Female	Male	Total
Professional members	35	55	95
Associate members	0	0	0
Student members	5	4	9
Totals	40	59	104

Other activities

1. ZimLA organised through the National Library and Documentation Service a courtesy call for the AfLIA President, Mr John Tsebe, to visit the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr Lazarus Dokora, where amicable discussions with regards to role of libraries in schools and the general value of libraries to communities was discussed.

2. The Association organised another meeting with the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr Masango-Utete, where, again, the role of libraries in schools was emphasized and desire of the Association to work with the Ministry in improving achievement in schools. This culminated into one of the Directors in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education attending the 52nd ZimLA Conference held in Gweru.

3. Meetings and workshops continue to be held at branch level which promote library development and the need to embrace technology to improve service delivery in libraries and information centres.

Future Plans

1. ZimLA 52nd Conference and Annual Meeting

ZimLA is currently gearing itself toward hosting the 52nd Conference and Annual General Meeting to be held in Mutare from 3 – 6 July 2018. The theme of the conference is, “ Libraries in transition: emerging trends and technologies.” It is hoped that the conference will attract a wide range of participants both at local and international levels.

2. National Libraries Policy

The Association is engaging itself in developing a policy which will be used to regulate the functions of libraries in Zimbabwe which it intends sending through the NLDS, which a government department within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. It is hoped that such a policy will be approved by parliament and will become a tool to regularize the functions of libraries in Zimbabwe.

3. Governance of the Association

The Association recently revised its constitution and also developed a 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan which should be adopted at its 52nd Conference and Annual General Meeting in Mutare in July 2018.