

# LIASA -in-Touch



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# LIASA 2024 CONFERENCE

LIBRARIES IN THE AGE OF

# DEMOCRACY

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**Advertisements:**

Ponani Mbhungela  
Tel: 012 323 4912  
liasaintouch@liasa.org.za

**Editor and Proofreader:**

Nohra Moerat PL(SA)  
Cell: 082 884 6275  
liasaintouch@liasa.org.za

**Design to Web:**

Muhdni Grimwood  
muhdni@telkomsa.net

**LIASA Office:**

LIASA House  
228 Johannesburg Ramokhoase Str.  
Pretoria, 0001  
Tel: 012 323 4912  
Fax: 012 323 1033  
liasa@liasa.org.za  
www.liasa.org.za

**LIASA Manager:**

Lebogang Masalesa PL(SA)  
Tel: 012 324 6096  
manager@liasa.org.za

**Membership and Operations Coordinator:**

Thandolwethu Majozo  
Tel: 012 323 4912  
membership@liasa.org.za

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to another bumper issue – 48 pages this time! I hope that you download the magazine and take time to read it at your leisure during your end of year break. It seems the record membership numbers have exponentially increased, not only the number of readers, but also the number of writers.

The next deadline is 24 January 2025. Detailed publishing specifications will be available in the Call for Articles via LIASAOnline.

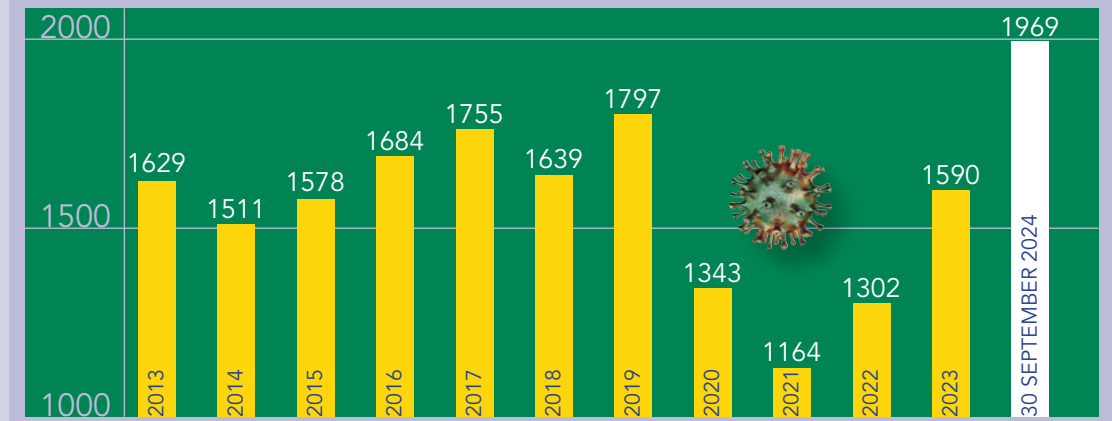
I wish all LIASA members a blessed Xmas, happy holidays and a great start to 2025.

NOHRA MOERAT PL(SA)  
LiasalnTouch@liasa.org.za

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MEMBERSHIP TOTALS: 2013 – 2024



It gives us great pleasure to announce that we have recorded the highest membership number in the past 11 years. A total of 1969 for 2024.

A big, warm thank you to each of the new members for joining the Association as well all those loyal and dedicated members that renewed.

While this year saw a great increase, there is still a concern about the huge number of unpaid invoices - a total of 299. These are members that requested an invoice or generated it themselves when they renewed but then did not make payment. There is a total amount of R191,613.52 owed on membership invoices which could significantly strengthen an already fragile budget. Please send us your ideas on how we can encourage payments on

membership invoices.

At the AGM held on 3 October 2024, the membership, as the highest decision-making body in LIASA, approved that the membership fees remain the same for 2025 and further approved that the International/African membership fee be reduced to a similar amount as RSA (from R1140 to R755). We recorded 30 onsite membership renewals at Conference and a total of 132 renewals during the period 1 October to 31 October.

All members are encouraged to pay their 2025 membership dues as soon as possible to ensure they get a full year of benefits. Renewing now also allows you to pay your membership fee in three instalments. Payments can be made via electronic funds transfer

or via card. Banking details for EFT payments as well as the secure online payment link can be found on your membership dues invoice.

If you have registered and have not received your emailed invoice: Sign in to your profile on MyLIASA at [www.liasa.org.za](http://www.liasa.org.za)

- ▶ then on the My Profile tab, located on the black menu ribbon, click on Manage Profile
- ▶ under the second group heading titled Invoicing, Payments and History click on Invoices
- ▶ ensure to select the Dues tab on the green bar
- ▶ then change the Filter by Status option to Any Status
- ▶ and lastly click on the little picture icon representing an invoice to open your invoice.

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2025	
Category	Fee
Individual Members (not residing in RSA)	R755.00
Individual Members (residing in RSA)	R755.00
Undergraduate Student Members	R325.00
Members who are Pensioners	R325.00
Members who are Interns	R325.00
Unemployed Members	R325.00
Institutional Members	R3 811.50

Please contact the LIASA National Office Membership and Operations Coordinator, Thandolwethu Majozo:

- [membership@liasa.org.za](mailto:membership@liasa.org.za)
- 012 323 4912

should you need any assistance on the MyLIASA platform or if you have general membership queries.

LEBOGANG MASALESA PL(SA)  
LIASA MANAGER

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Charlie Malepo

## From the President

**Finance Committee:** chaired by Jan Moeketsi, alongside Mologadi Maserumula, Charlie Molepo, Shanitha Bhim, and Lebogang Masalesa.

**Marketing Committee:** led by Romeo Matumba, with support from Mmaditshipi Seageng and LNO colleagues Aphelele and Thandolwethu.

**Academy Committee:** comprising the President, President Elect, Ujala Satgoor, Dr Ndaka (Chair of the LIS Schools Forum), Nazeem Hardy, and Lebogang Masalesa.

**CPD/Ethics Committee:** chaired by Jeff Nyoka, with members Aphelele Ndzimande and Lebogang Masalesa.

**Audit Risk & Performance Committee:** positions for this committee are currently being filled, and the Board will be represented by the Chair of Finance, the President and President-Elect.

**Nomination Committee:** led by Prof. Lefose Makgahlela, with Charlie Molepo and secretariat support from Dina Mashiyane.

**Community of Practice:** Chaired by Mmaditshipi Seageng and Jeff Nyoka.

The formation of these committees signifies our commitment to fostering collaboration, enhancing governance, and encouraging greater member participation.

Earlier this year, LIASA was proud to host South African Librarians' Day at the NLSA. This event featured prominent speakers, including CHELSA's immediate past chairperson, Dr Daisy Selematsela, Puleng Kekana from the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, and our keynote speaker, the revered Ellen Tise, who is not only the first LIASA President but also a former IFLA President. The conversations about the contributions of the LIS sector to our country over the last 30 years of democracy were both

enlightening and inspiring, serving as a formidable lead up to our conference themed "Libraries in the Age of Democracy."

Further to our outreach and advocacy efforts, I, along with the LIASA Manager and the Training and Development Officer, attended the SAQA Professional Body contact session. We are excited to announce that LIASA and other professional bodies will have an opportunity to participate in the upcoming career expos at institutions of higher learning. Additionally, we were invited to contribute an article for the SAQA Magazine; a chance to showcase our initiatives and achievements. Implementing the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process is high on our agenda, and we will work diligently to facilitate designations for candidates who qualify based on their prior work experience.

LIASA's engagement with the UNESCO Communication and Information National Committee continues to thrive, with my recent election as its representative. Jeff Nyoka also represents the City of Johannesburg. During this year's meetings, the UNESCO Secretary-General introduced the Information For All (IFAP) National Committee, where I was later invited to represent the library profession. As a significant part of our mission, LIASA is striving to further develop a strategy aimed at promoting Digital Media and Information Literacy (DMIL) for South Africa. The launch of the SADLD on 25 October marks the beginning of an annual event that will be celebrated on the last Friday of the Open Access (OA) and Global Digital Media and Information Literacy (GDMIL) week.

Our consultations with other organisations in the LIS and literacy sectors have made great strides, and we are in the planning stages for future meetings.

By the time of the next LIASA conference, we intend to have established connections with all existing LIS sector organisations. Furthermore, LIASA is in active discussions with the ETDPSETA regarding our potential role as the assessment partner for LIS QCTO qualifications, and we intend to regain representation within the governance structure of the ETDPSETA.

We held our annual conference in Durban from 1 to 4 October with over 700 delegates in attendance. The AGM was held on Thursday the 3rd, and there was agreement that we should set up a process that will help in filling in the gaps in the constitution, to be approved by the AGM 2025. The Board was mandated to form an ad hoc committee that will assist with the process. Both the organisation and financial reports were adopted by the members. Our next conference will be held in the Eastern Cape in line with the AGM resolution.

Lastly, State President Ramaphosa has sent the Copyright Amendment Bill to the Constitutional Court for review. While we are discouraged by the act, we are however hopeful that at least the Court will guide him on the way forward. LIASA joined 19 other progressive organisations under the umbrella body ReCRreate to be *amicus curiae* to the BlindSA vs President matter, in order to assist the Court by providing information in support of signing CAB into law. The case will be argued on 28 November 2024.

I wish all LIASA members a happy festive season, and our Christian members a Merry Christmas. I look forward to 2025 with the hope that our members will renew their membership and more will join to pass the 2024 membership of 1969 members.

CHARLIE MALEPO PL (SA)  
LIASA PRESIDENT

## OUR ANNUAL EVENT: THE LIASA CONFERENCE



# LIASA Conference 2024

## “Libraries in the Age of Democracy”



### OVERVIEW

An electrifying LIASA conference was held from 1 to 4 October 2024 at the Durban International Convention Centre.

Each day, delegates were treated to impressive guest speakers, robust engagements, discussions, research presentations and lightning talks from the best of the best in the LIS sector.

The conference provided an excellent platform for LIASA and the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector to reflect on the progress of libraries over the past 30 years, acknowledging both achievements and challenges.

The theme, “Libraries in the Age of Democracy,” enabled LIASA to revisit key discussions, highlighting the resilience,

adaptability, and essential role of libraries as community-centred spaces.

Sessions focused on driving innovation, fostering inclusivity, and expanding services to ensure libraries remain accessible and invaluable resources for all. Highlighting the past 30 years was a special video featuring insights and historical information by past LIASA officials.



### Attendance and Exhibitions

A remarkable turnout of over 700 delegates from across the library and information sector attended this dynamic conference. The conference included diverse exhibitors, with local and international information vendors displaying products and services that support innovation, enhancement and sustainable smart service delivery.

Approximately 27 exhibitors and sponsors were available in designated areas, providing conference delegates with valuable opportunities to network, engage, and gain insights into the diverse range of services and products offered.

### Committees

The Conference was organised under the leadership of the Conference Organising Committee which included the PCO team, chaired by LIASA President Charlie Molepo.

The programme committee included prominent members such as Prof. Mpho Ngoepe (Chair), Prof. Lefose Makgahlela (President-Elect), Lebogang Masalesa (LIASA Manager), Dina Mashiyane (Board Member), Danie Malan (past EXCO Member), Ponani Mbhungela (LIASA Membership Officer), Romeo Matumba (Board Member), Aphelele Ndzimande (Training and Development Officer), Mmaditshipi Seageng (Board Member), Mokgadi Senyolo (past EXCO Member), and Shanitha Bhim (Board Member).

The Committee undertook exceptional work reviewing submitted papers and developing the programme. Professor Ngoepe was assisted by Dr Siviwe Bangani, Dina Mashiyane, Nazeem Hardy, and Mmakwena Molala.

Additionally, LIASA incorporated rapporteurs for the first time, tasked with the scoring of outstanding conference papers. These were Xolelwa Xorile (University of the Free State), Lindi Mahlangu (North-West University), Phuti Rabatseta (North-West University), and Tebogo Makhurupetsi (University of the Free State). Looking ahead, LIASA plans to issue a timely call for rapporteurs for the 2025 conference, encouraging interested members to participate.

Keynote Speakers: Day One



LIASA President, Charlie Molepo delivered the first address to kick off the conference, setting a tone for delegates to engage and enjoy themselves.

This was followed by a keynote address by Zanele Njapha, "The

UnLearning Lady." Zanele is a Forbes contributor, Neuro Coach, and a motivator who specialises in organisational change, guiding organisations on adapting to new changes by "unlearning" outdated practices.

She highlighted the importance of organisations understanding and embracing what works for their organisations and understanding the changes needed while operating in a digital age.



Day Four

The final day's keynote was delivered by Prof. Oludayo Olugbara, a distinguished academic from the Durban University of Technology, leader of the ICT and Society (ICTAS) Niche Research Group, AI specialist, and Vice Chair of Space Science Research. He shared insights into the implications of AI in libraries, focusing on

how libraries can use AI to enhance service delivery, manage data more effectively, and meet modern information needs. Prof. Olugbara's perspective on AI highlighted a future where libraries are not only repositories of knowledge but also active innovators in technology and education.

Discussions and Presentations



Puleng Kekana of DSAC

The Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture (DSAC) and Provincial Library Services presented reports on recent developments, particularly focusing on how grant funding has been used to build new libraries and increase service access, including for those with disabilities. These presentations illustrated the government's efforts to support libraries as pillars of equal access and social cohesion.



Lindile Nhlapo of IFLA

An engaging presentation from the IFLA Africa Section examined libraries' contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Lindile Nhlapo, the IFLA Regional Manager for Africa, led discussions on the steps for South Africa's libraries to take part actively in the country's SDG peer review process. The session underscored the need for collaborative efforts across libraries to meet national and global sustainability targets.

Day Two

Day two featured guest speaker Kay Raseroka, a prominent advocate for African librarianship and Indigenous knowledge. Kay addressed the critical role of libraries in advancing literacy and valuing indigenous knowledge systems. She highlighted libraries' responsibility in preserving oral traditions and fostering a culture of reading, particularly within rural communities—a focus central to her leadership as past President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).



Day Three

Musa Zulu, a celebrated author and disability activist, shared insights into overcoming personal challenges and adapting to new life circumstances. Paralysed after a car accident, Zulu illustrated how libraries supported his journey by providing accessible resources and fostering inclusivity for people with disabilities. His story underscored libraries' role in embracing diversity and inclusivity in the democratic era.



Sector Meetings

The chairs of various sectors met with their constituencies to invite members to volunteer or nominate others to serve in the following sectors:

1. Public Libraries Sector

(Chaired by Shanita Bhim, LIASA Board Member)

The 2024–2027 Public and Community Libraries Sector Working Committee members are:

- Manda Hough, Northern Cape: Kimberley Libraries
- David Ramahuta, Mpumalanga: Leroro Library
- Ben Ramela, Gauteng: City of Johannesburg

- Anezwa Sibewu, Eastern Cape: SRVM
- Khomotso Mabina, North West: MHLM
- Sello Malebana, Limpopo – DSAC Limpopo
- Mzwandile Radebe, Free State: DSAC Free State
- Jongihlanga Mbanga, Western Cape: DSAC Western Cape
- Vincent Phumulani Ntshangase, KwaZulu-Natal: KwaMthethwa Library, Umfolozi Municipality

The newly elected working group will set a formal remit as an addendum to the constitution. Together, they will schedule meetings to draft a comprehensive 2025-year plan, which will include brainstorming sessions on public programmes, activities, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



**2. Schools Sector**

*(Chaired by Mamohobe Maserumule)*

On 2 October 2024, the School Library Sector held a meeting alongside other sectors to elect a transitional committee. This committee will collaborate with members to develop a

mandate aimed at guiding and revitalising the sector.

The School Library Sector working committee, consisting of six members, includes Kholo Saiya, Sizwesamazulu Zulu,

Moira Gundu, Mojaki Mahura, Teboho Morajane, Dr Nthabiseng Raduva, and Bianca Ledwaba. This committee will contribute to the working group responsible for establishing a mandate to advance the sector.



Fatima Darries (right) at A&RL Sector meeting

**3. Academic and Research Libraries Sector**

*(Chaired by Dina Mashiyane)*

Sector members met to elect an interim committee that will collaborate with the chair and the outgoing committee. A draft of the Sector's Terms of Reference document was presented for member feedback, with only minor additions made to the document.

An interim committee was set up that will work with the chair and the outgoing interim committee. Elected members were as follows:

- Glenda Makate, Gauteng: University of Witwatersrand
- Simiso Cebo Buthelezi, Kwa-Zulu Natal: University of Zululand

- Thandokazi Maceba, Western Cape: University of Cape Town
- Louisa Verway, Eastern Cape: Rhodes University
- Lindi Mahlangu, North-West: North-West University
- Eldah Ramasenya, Mpumalanga: University of Mpumalanga
- Gadibolae Moshotloa, Northern Cape: Sol Plaatjie University
- Mercy Mokgele, Limpopo: University of South Africa
- Zukiswa Ketiwe, Free State: University of Free State

**4. Special Library Sector**

*(Chaired by Mmaditshipi Seageng, LIASA Board Member)*

The Special Library Sector held its meeting to choose an interim structure. A special guest, Zine Sapula from NLSA, was invited to speak to members. Discussions of a possible consortium between special and private libraries with the assistance of SANLIC also took part. The Special Library Sector Working Committee members for the period 2024 –2027 were elected as follows:

Nomonde Maqubela, Eastern Cape (South African Library of the Blind), Mathilda Smit,

Free State (Free State Legislature), Mosima Maninjwa , Gauteng, Institution (Dept. of Higher Education and Training), Maria Lesele, KwaZulu Natal (Council for Geoscience), Fulufhelo Nenungwi, KZN (Public Works), Mamabolo Mantji, Limpopo (Capricorn TVET), Michael Alfred, Northern Cape (Africana Library), Mary Mahlakeng, North West, (North West Legislature) and Edwina Pillay, Western Cape (Vodacom)

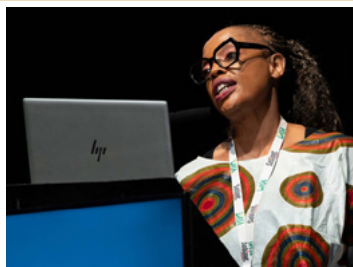
The chair and all members agreed to meet in November 2024 to discuss Sector Terms of Reference, activities and plans for 2025.



**Research papers and Lightning Talks**

The conference featured an impressive line-up of around 50 engaging research presentations and 14 dynamic lightning talks, sparking lively discussions on emerging trends in the LIS sector.

These sessions highlighted innovative research, and best practices and fostered invaluable knowledge-sharing among delegates, paving the way for fresh insights and collaborative solutions to industry challenges.



Snapshots of some presenters



## Awards and Recognitions at the Gala Dinner

During the Gala Dinner, notable contributions to the library sector were celebrated, with awards recognising emerging leaders, research excellence, influential leadership, community impact, and lifetime achievements in librarianship. These awards celebrated the dedication, resilience, and innovation shown by professionals in the sector.

- **The LIASA-UKS Librarian of the Year** award, sponsored by Universal Knowledge Software (UKS), boasted the amount of R40 000 for the winner. This prestigious accolade honours the achievements and contributions of inspiring and exceptional librarians across the public, academic, school, and special library sectors. This year's award was scooped by Sibongiseni Mrwashu, a dedicated Faculty Librarian at the University of Fort Hare.
- **LIASA-SABINET Influential Leader**, aimed at awarding the captains of the LIS profession was awarded to Rebecca Senyolo, Acting Manager, UNISA and Winnie Mangotlo, Director of Library and Archives Services in the Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture.
- **LIASA-Nevada LMS Emerging Librarian** award honours newly qualified professionals in South Africa's LIS sector who demonstrate innovation, creativity and commitment. It was awarded to Xolile Xorile, Senior Library Assistant, UFS.



Sibongiseni Mrwashu (centre) the LIASA-UKS Librarian of the Year



Rebecca Senyolo (2nd left) and Winnie Mangotlo (4th) – LIASA-SABINET Influential Leaders



Xolile Xorile, LIASA-Nevada LMS Emerging Librarian



**WWIS Research Librarian Award**, an award that honours librarians who significantly support research activities in their institutions was awarded

to Hesma Van Tonder (*third from left*), Postgraduate Librarian, for her outstanding research support at UFS Libraries.

Lusaka Public Library from the Gauteng Province won the **Public Library of the Year Award**, sponsored by Ndende Technologies.



Erna Mostert, Lindi Nhlapo, Barbara Frey and Pamela Mavuma

### THE PATIENCE MAISELA SELFLESS AWARD

LIASA introduced new presidential award categories to honour LIASA members who have shown exceptional commitment to advancing the profession, empowering younger colleagues, and contributing significantly to the growth of LIASA and the broader LIS sector.

This recognition celebrates the dedication of long-serving members who have consistently supported professional development, mentorship, and volunteerism and the sector's enduring impact on society.

Erna Mostert, Pamela Mavume, Barbara Frey and Lindi Nhlapo were recognised with the Patience Maisela Selflessness Award for their volunteerism within LIASA. Each has contributed significantly to the organization, with Nhlapo further extending her volunteer efforts to AfLIA and IFLA.

Nazeem Hardy was recognised as the LIASA Immediate Past-President, continuing his leadership and dedication to the association.



### THE GALA DINNER

This was nothing short of spectacular! Delegates enjoyed a night of elegance, laughter, and camaraderie, made even more unforgettable by the one and only Romeo Matumba, who kept the crowd thoroughly entertained. It was a night where librarians danced, celebrated, and left with lasting memories—and maybe a few new dance moves.

The Best Conference Paper and Best Lightning Talk were also awarded on the day as selected by the Programme Committee. Congratulations to David Thomas and Sagren Moodley for their presentation "Towards a data-informed culture: reflections on the Durban University of Technology Library's Data Literacy Programme" nominated as Co Best Conversational Presentation Experience: Case Studies and Best Practice with that of Jeff Nyoka titled "Nationalising MobiReadathon Digital Reading Programme through Johannesburg Libraries website".



Annual General Meeting

The LIASA Board

### Financial and Community Support

The conference's success hinged on financial support from the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture, corporate sponsors, and library suppliers. In its commitment to accessibility and affordable registration fees, LIASA

conveyed deep appreciation for this ongoing support, highlighting the critical role of partnership and collaboration in sustaining and advancing library services and community outreach.

### CONCLUSION

The 2024 conference celebrated libraries as transformative spaces, fostering social cohesion and adapting to change amid South Africa's democratic evolution. Reflecting on three decades of progress, delegates collectively

affirmed a vision of libraries as resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking institutions essential to South Africa's democracy.

ROMEO MATUMBA

## NAOMI HAASBROEK HONOURED

A past President of LIASA, Naomi Haasbroek, was once again in the spotlight as the recipient of the SALI Trust/LIASA Lifetime Achievement Award for 2024.

At a glittering dinner during the recent LIASA Conference, she received the award from the SALI Trust Chairperson, Rachel More, and a former LIASA President, Mandla Ntombela. Rachel More noted that the award honours those who have contributed immensely to the library and information profession in South Africa and have given a lifetime of leadership, commitment, service and achievement, and she encouraged LIASA members to nominate elders or stalwarts and so acknowledge their contributions to the profession and the communities served.

Naomi Haasbroek retired in 2020 after a stellar career of 38 years. Early on she worked in public and academic libraries and later also did some part-time lecturing in LIS at the Cape Town Technikon (now CPUT) and UWC, but for most of her career she was Head of Library and Information Services at iThemba Labs, a NRF research facility in the particle physics field. The LIS was also responsible for local and international conferences and hosted 60 conferences, workshops and summer or winter schools from 1999 – 2020. In 2016 she joined the new Communications Team. Always passionate about training and mentoring, she hosted students



Naomi Haasbroek after receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award with LIASA President, Charlie Molepo, SALI Trust Chairperson, Rachel More, and on the right Past President, Mandla Ntombela

annually and arranged internships. She is now Director of the company, Project Space, which specialises in events, project management and IT services.

Naomi made an invaluable contribution to the wider profession over decades. She has been a member of LIASA since its establishment in 1997 and attended the historic Constituent Conference. She was a founding member of the Western Cape Branch where she served as Secretary and later Chairperson from 1999 – 2001, and in 2008 was Western Cape Branch Librarian of the Year. Nationally, she served on the Representative Council, was Deputy President from 2002 - 2004, National Secretary 2006 – 2008, President Elect 2008 – 2010 and President 2010 – 2012. She often ran training workshops for LIASA and was an important part of LIASA Conferences. She was Chairperson of the Local Organising Committee for the Cape Town Conference in 1999

and continued to serve on the National Conference Coordinating Committee for many years. She developed the LIASA Conference Handbook and Guidelines in 2003 and as recently as 2022 – 2023 was Chairperson of the Programme Committee.

As LIASA President, highlights for Naomi Haasbroek included signing the Berlin Declaration on Open Access in 2011, migrating the SAJLIS to an open access platform from 2012, developing with EXCO the LIASA Strategic Directions 2010 – 2014 and implementing the Next Generation Public Librarian Scholarship Programme in 2012. Further afield, she presented a keynote address at the Zimbabwe Library Association Conference in 2012 and facilitated talks for that Association's revitalisation. She represented LIASA internationally at conferences and meetings, including IFLA, and served two terms on the IFLA Africa Standing Committee (2005 – 2014), including a term as Chairperson,

and played a leading role in the bid process for the IFLA 2015 Conference in Cape Town.

Even after reaching a pinnacle of the profession as LIASA President, Naomi Haasbroek remained involved in contributing to library structures, notably for LIASA Conferences and in the training and mentoring of librarians, underlining her lifelong commitment and service to the profession. She received Honorary Membership of LIASA in 2013 and is a member of the LIASA President's Forum.

In accepting the award, Naomi Haasbroek expressed her deep gratitude for the recognition by her peers. She looked back over her career starting at the East London Public Library and her first role model, Margie van Deventer. Her UNISA studies brought her into contact with the formidable Prof Anna Louw who made a big impression. Work at libraries in Port Elizabeth was followed by her appointment as Head of LIS at iThemba Labs in 1987 where she stayed until her retirement. She highlighted her long association with LIASA and the opportunities, challenges, personal development and inspiring work with colleagues this offered as well as the critical importance of a professional body such as LIASA to represent the profession and its place in our society and communities.

Finally, Naomi Haasbroek expressed thanks to her nominators, Betsy Eister and Nohra Moerat, the SALI Trust, LIASA leaders, members and teams she worked with over the years, iThemba Labs and her family for their support.

JOHN VAN NIEKERK  
SALI TRUST ADMINISTRATOR

## QALABOTJHA PUBLIC LIBRARY RECOGNISED AS A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LEARNING HUB

Qalabotjha Public Library plays an indispensable role in digital transformation. The library was nominated as a digital learning hub equipped with free Wi-Fi services and computers.

The librarian, trained by Cisco Networking Academy as a facilitator, ensures that the community benefits from courses such as Internet of Things, Computer Hardware Basics, Introduction to Cybersecurity, Operating Systems Basics, Ethical Hacker, Introduction to Data Science, eNetwork addressing, and basic troubleshooting. The Free State community is eager to learn and obtain certificates for these courses.

This initiative has attracted new library users. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has transformed how libraries operate, and



Julius Mkhize and Mzwandile Radebe librarians are working hard to attract users. Free State Libraries have included online services such as eBooks, Sabinet online, Britannica, and the librarian did not miss the opportunity to promote these online facilities while training patrons.

The library is very active in matters related to 4IR; the staff embraces change positively.

The librarian could not have achieved this success without the support of his staff at the library, district and provincial staff, as well as community members. Technological trends require libraries to be dynamic to stay relevant. Continuous learning is a priority for every community member. Completing these courses and obtaining certificates at no cost to the user is appealing to potential library patrons, attracting new users and retaining old ones.

Qalabotjha Public Library has achieved a significant milestone by being recognised at the annual LIASA Conference. This recognition is likely tied to their contributions to digital transformation, which may involve initiatives such as creating learning hubs, improving access to digital resources, or

empowering communities through technology. The library was in the top three for The Public/Community Library of the Year Award, given to a rural or peri-urban library that has significantly advanced technological innovation (including 4IR) within the Library and Information Service community in the last 24 months; such innovation must have a meaningful impact on the sector. This award will be presented to a library that has pioneered new technology that can be adopted by other libraries.

The librarian is expanding the programme across the province. One impactful story was an ordinary person from the rural community of Qalabotjha who completed all six courses and obtained certificates for each.

JULIUS MKHIZE  
LIBRARIAN, QALABOTJHA PL, FS



Mobireadathon representatives participating provinces and Jeff Nyoka (far left)

## Coj MobiReadathon Reading Programme ties for Best Conversational Presentation @ LIASA 2024

The Joburg E-Learning Unit presented “Nationalisation of the MobiReadathon Digital Reading Programme using the Joburg Libraries Website” at the LIASA Conference on 1 October 2024 at the Durban International Convention Centre.

This presentation achieved a tie for the Best Conversational Presentation Award. The session highlighted the programme’s pilot phase and expansion to other provinces. Librarians from the five participating provinces

were invited on stage to share their experiences and receive appreciation gifts.

The presentation emphasised the importance of intergovernmental relations, information sharing, and technology in supporting reading development for high school learners. MobiReadathon, a BCX Digital Innovation Award winner, reached over 1,900 learners across KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and Limpopo,

with KwaZulu-Natal achieving the highest engagement. Participating librarians received gifts of appreciation (sponsored by Joburg Tourism and Joburg Libraries), certificates and technology-themed items such as a cell phone stand from the Wits Innovation Hub Makerspace.

It is anticipated that more provinces will join the reading campaign in 2025, enabling libraries to reach more learners from the 6,000 Secondary Schools in South Africa.

“Congratulations to all the participating librarians. We are looking forward to more municipalities joining this vital reading campaign,” says Jeff Nyoka, eLearning Manager for the City of Joburg Public Libraries.

For more information, please email [enquiries@cojelearning.org.za](mailto:enquiries@cojelearning.org.za) or visit our website at [www.cojelearning.org.za](http://www.cojelearning.org.za)

JEFF NYOKA  
MANAGER: E-LEARNING  
COJ PUBLIC LIBRARIES

## LIASA Special Library Sector Meeting @ Conference 2024

On Wednesday 2 October 2024, the Special Library Sector held their meeting to elect an interim structure to be part of the working group that will organise special library members and take the sector forward.

Members were welcomed by the Board member for the special library sector, Mmaditshipi Seageng. They were taken by surprise because she had invited Zine Sapula, Open Access Project Manager from the South African National Library and Information Consortium (SANLiC) to talk about possibility of the LIASA Special Libraries sector and private libraries forming a Consortium. Sapula told members that “SANLiC promotes a transition to Open Access according to the best interest and participation of their members, as expressed in their negotiation principles for Open Access to give effect to Science as a global good, available and accessible worldwide”. She further noted our concern about being SANLiC members and said there are ongoing discussions



Mmaditshipi Seageng

regarding Government libraries; hopefully in the future we might be members of SANLiC as well and if that happens SANLiC can negotiate better prices, terms and conditions for electronic library and information resources.

Mmaditshipi thanked Ms Sapula for accepting the invitation at short notice and released her so that members could continue with meeting’s agenda, namely the election of the Sector Committee who will be working closely with the Chairperson,

assisting in coordinating activities of special libraries and ensuring that all special libraries in the nine provinces are represented. The voluntary election went well with eight provinces represented, excluding Mpumalanga.

The Special Library Sector working Committee members 2024 – 2027 are as follows:

- Eastern Cape: Nomonde Maqubela from South African Library of the Blind
- Free State: Mathilda Smit from Free State Legislature

- Gauteng: Mosima Maninjwa from Dept. of Higher Education and Training and Maria Lesele from the Council for Geoscience
- KwaZulu Natal: Fulufhelo Nenungwi from KZN Public Works
- Limpopo: Mamabolo Mantji from Capricorn TVET
- Northern Cape: Michael Alfred from Africana Library
- North West: Mary Mahlakeng from North West Legislature
- Western Cape: Edwina Pillay from Vodacom

Mmaditshipi thanked the members saying that volunteerism doesn’t mean you are an expert, the idea is it elevates your lifelong-learning, and you come out smart. She concluded by saying that, at their first meeting in November, Sector Working Committee Members will discuss the terms of reference, activities and plans for 2025.

MMADITSHIPI SEAGENG  
LIASA BOARD MEMBER: SECTOR  
CHAIRPERSON - SPECIAL LIBRARIES

## Libraries in an age of Democracy: highlights from a conference delegate

I was one of the 700 delegates privileged enough to attend the 2024 LIASA Annual Conference in Durban. The theme this year was "Libraries in an Age of Democracy". Having heard all about AI at last year's conference, I asked ChatGPT to briefly discuss "Libraries in an Age of Democracy", and this is what the result was "In an age of democracy, libraries play a crucial role in fostering informed citizenry and supporting the democratic process. They serve as institutions that promote equal access to information, encourage intellectual freedom, and provide spaces for public dialogue and education ...libraries in a democratic society uphold the values of inclusivity, knowledge sharing, and intellectual freedom, all of which are foundational to maintaining and advancing democratic principle". So, AI knows what's what!

This year's theme was successfully reflected in the topics of the presentations, and the choices of guest speakers. From the bookends of the opening session where Zanele Njapha



Michelle Biederman

enthralled us with ways to Learn and Unlearn; to the final day where a tiny robot gave the introduction to Professor Oludayo Olugbara, the conference was stimulating; invigorating, thought provoking and inspirational.

My top five highlights of the conference were:

- ▶ Indigenous language collections being highlighted at academic libraries. Durban University of Technology; University of Pretoria; and Rhodes University all presented on or around this important topic.
- ▶ Day Two's guest speaker, Mr. Musa Zulu whose personal story is a master class in overcoming life's challenges to succeed and accomplish your goals. I am looking forward to reading his book *Wheels on the Soul of my Shoes*.
- ▶ Last year's winner of the LIASA-Sabinet Influential Library Leader Award Ingrid Thompson's Professional Buddy programme. Speed dating to meet new librarians at a conference is just genius and was great fun. I met the lovely Nompumelelo Shongwe from the Mpumalanga Department of Education, and we spent some time together discussing our jobs and being a librarian.
- ▶ Face to face meetings with many of my Unisa colleagues who I have only interacted with online. It really was special to be able to connect on a more

natural level, and to put a personality and face to a voice on a Teams call!

- ▶ Lastly, the best presentation I attended was that of Mokgadi Mashiyani and her mentee, Tebogo Agnes Makhurupetsi. The title was "Bridging theory & practice: the transformative power of an academic library mentorship programme". Ms Mashiyani first described and went through the different stages of the mentorship programme. Then her mentee spoke about how the programme had been beneficial to her, and ultimately led to her publishing an academic paper, and getting employed. I think we were all so impressed by this bright, confident young woman who definitely has a long successful career ahead of her! All academic libraries should have some type of mentor programme to guide and encourage our recent LIS graduates.

Spending four days immersed in libraries and librarianship, along with "my people" was incredibly special, and I am sure I am not the only librarian who returned to work on Monday full of ideas and ready to spark some new life into their workplace.

MICHELLE BIEDERMAN PL (SA)  
BRANCH LIBRARIAN (ACTING), UNISA CAPE  
TOWN BRANCH LIBRARY



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## Reflections on LIASA 2024

The 2024 LIASA Conference, themed "Libraries in an Age of Democracy," provided a wealth of insights and discussions about the evolving role of libraries in South Africa. Attending this event with my colleague, Kim Albertyn, we proudly represented the City of Cape Town's Library and Information Services, gaining valuable networking opportunities and capturing reflections via video recording on the future of libraries.

LIASA President, Charlie Molepo, opened the conference by reflecting on the Association's history since its founding in 1997, during South Africa's democratic transition. He emphasised LIASA's resilience and its role as a crucial voice in the LIS sector. His personal story, including the registration of LIASA with SAQA, displayed the leadership needed to navigate challenges and guide the profession forward. He also highlighted the success of this year's conference, which attracted 700 delegates, strengthening unity and collaboration for LIASA's future.

A standout moment was Zanele Njapha's keynote on "Learning and Unlearning." Through an engaging presentation, she emphasised the need for shifting mind-sets and adapting to change in our profession. Her metaphor of Michelangelo seeing David within a block of marble illustrated the untapped potential within librarians, our spaces and the importance of embracing



Raphael Snyders, Kim Albertyn and Nazeem Hardy

innovation while balancing tradition. Njapha's call to unlearn old habits to foster innovation was particularly relevant given the technological changes libraries face today.

Several sessions focused on critical issues for libraries. One of the most impactful was Lungile Msiya's "Taking Hands to Open Libraries to All," highlighting how partnerships can drive literacy initiatives. The success of the Born to Read programme in Ekurhuleni, in collaboration with clinics and early childhood centres, demonstrated the role libraries can play in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, challenges such as illiteracy and changing community priorities persist, reminding us that our work is ongoing.

Guest speaker Musa Zulu shared a powerful personal story about the transformative role libraries played in his life. His session, "The Impact of Libraries on Society and Individuals," highlighted how libraries are not just repositories of knowledge but spaces for self-discovery and personal growth. Zulu's focus on accessibility and inclusion, especially for marginalised communities, is aligned with current efforts to make libraries more accessible through technology and specialised programmes.

Another key theme was the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in library services. Presenters like Kholotelo Makola and Lungile Dlamini discussed AI's role in transforming cataloguing processes, while Setlabo Phala

explored how AI is reshaping reference services with personalised recommendations. These discussions underscored the importance of reskilling librarians to fully leverage AI while upholding ethical standards.

The conference concluded with an awards gala, recognising exceptional contributions from librarians. Individuals such as Rebecca Senyolo and Winnie Mongotlo were honoured as Influential Librarians of the Year, while Lusaka Public Library was named Public/Community Library of the Year. Other awardees included Librarian of the Year: Sibongiseni Mrwashu, Research Librarian of the Year: Hesma van Tonder, Emerging Librarian: Xolewa Xorile, and Lifetime Achievement Award recipient: Naomi Haasbroek. These awards highlighted the diverse and significant contributions to the library profession across SA.

As we look to the future, it is clear that libraries must continue adapting to societal changes, embracing technology, fostering inclusivity and mentorship. The LIASA Conference 2024 provided a valuable platform to reflect on achievements, assess current challenges, and chart a course for a future where libraries play a central role in supporting democracy, education, and community development. The connections made and insights gained during the conference will help guide our profession toward greater relevance and resilience in the years to come.

RAPHAEL SNYDERS PL(SA)  
SENIOR LIBRARIAN, CITY OF CAPE TOWN

## A first-time attendee reports

My name is Zevile Sithole. I am currently employed by eThekweni Municipality as a library assistant at Chesterville Extension Library. I attended the conference for the first time ever at the Durban International Convention Centre (ICC) from 1-4 October 2024. The conference was interesting and very informative. I had an opportunity to meet librarians and information professionals all over the continent. The keynote address by Zanele Njapha was eye-opening and relevant in our working environment and in our daily lives. She emphasised that as people we need to learn how to improve ourselves in our profession. We need to learn new ways of doing things.

I even met my classmate from varsity, and we shared the challenges that we face when we apply for jobs that are far from home. Relocating might be



Zevile Sithole and Sithembile Dimba stressful, but it is exciting at the same time because you got the job that you are qualified for and the opportunity to grow within the profession.

The papers that I enjoyed the most were the ones presented by Mark Snyders and Themba Nkuna.

Snyders talked about first year students dropped off by their parents at the university who are unable to speak English; this is challenging for them as librarians and managers. These students are left with them to deal with. They introduced creative writing in their home languages in the spirit of what Nelson Mandela once said, that if you speak to someone in their own language, that goes to their heart. They allow the students to sing, dance and be as loud as they wish. Others write poetry and so on. Through creative writing, they can express themselves and this helps them to navigate life.

Themba Nkuna talked about librarians working from home. Is it possible? There are problems of limited space in libraries, over enrolment in South African Universities, and COVID 19 effects. Universities are unable to go back to how things used to be. More programmes are attended online. The key question

is do libraries have enough online resources? Does the institution have the required technological infrastructure? Libraries need to go virtual. He asked if library professionals can teach users basic computing, and then if they can teach them Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is the tool that can help users and library workers in their careers.

Lastly, I would like to thank Sibongile Doncabe and Thokozani Ngcamu our Senior Librarians at eThekweni Municipal Libraries for all the hard work and for giving me an opportunity to attend my first LIASA conference.

I would like to share words of wisdom from Kay Raseroka, "be proud of your profession, do not apologise for who you are and as information professionals we are called to serve, and we need each other".

ZEVILE SITHOLE  
LIBRARY ASSISTANT  
CHESTERVILLE EXTENSION LIBRARY  
ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

## My first LIASA Conference

LIASA's 27th Annual Conference was held from 1 to 4 October 2024 in Durban at the ICC. I was fortunate to attend this conference with Manda Hough, Manager of Kimberley Libraries and Research Services and Connie Mazimba, Senior Librarian. On our way to Durban, we stopped in Pietermaritzburg to visit the Bessie Head Library. We met with LIASA's past President Mandla Ntombela and his wonderful and dedicated staff members. We were there for more than an hour and were taken on a guided tour. What an amazing Library!

Walking through the library, it was evident that the staff was passionate about their work. This inspired me so much that I realised I can also do the same; I can also make a difference in my workplace and serve our community with the same kind of passion.

We arrived at the ICC on Tuesday to register. The atmosphere was filled with excitement, and it was at this



Michael Alfred

moment that I realised that this is the place where one can gain valuable industry insights and build potential partnership with colleagues in the same sector as me - Special Libraries.

The first day started with an introduction by LIASA's immediate past-president Nazeem Hardy,

who welcomed all the newcomers and explained how the conference will unfold. It was such a great session.

The conference started with keynote speaker Zanele Njapha giving an inspiring talk on how we should unlearn old habits and embrace change as an essential skill in today's evolving world. This made me reflect on my own situation at my workplace and in even in my personal space, to make use of AI tools, to enhance services to our communities and to improve our digitisation projects at the library.

There were so many inspirational and thought-provoking papers presented. Musa Zulu, a writer and entrepreneur, encouraged us to persevere in our own journey. He shared his adversities, achievements and challenges. Another great speaker was Kay Raseroka, sharing her knowledge on the evolution of libraries and their role in fostering democratic values over the years.

One of the highlights was the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, 3 October 2024. My first AGM! It was mind blowing

to see the interaction between members and the Board and how delegates participated fully in the meeting. Impressive!

The Gala Evening, the highlight of the week, took me by surprise. I didn't know that it was such a glamorous and well-organised event. Delegates were dressed for the occasion. Another inspiring moment was to see librarians being awarded for their contributions in the Library Sector. Who knows, I might receive an award too in the future. This made me realise that I can position myself to be an active player in the LIS sector and even present a paper.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my manager Manda Hough for affording me the opportunity to attend my first conference. I would also like to thank my association, LIASA, for an awe-inspiring conference. I am literally a different person after this experience.

MICHAEL ALFRED

DIGITAL TECHNICIAN: AFRICANA RESEARCH LIBRARY, KIMBERLEY, NORTHERN CAPE

## Comments of a first-time attendee

On 12 September 2024 I received the wonderful news that I was the winner of a first-time sponsorship by CSX to PACLIG Free State to attend this year's conference in Durban.

Although I have been working for more than 30 years as a librarian, it was the first time I could attend the annual conference physically. It was a total eye-opener for me.

Firstly, I must congratulate the organisers on their choice of keynote speakers. Zanele Njapha taught us to unlearn skills that no longer serve us and rather acquire skills that are relevant. How appropriate in the time of



Estelle Boers

artificial intelligence! Musa Zulu's quote from his teacher; "The

challenge of today's generation is not to grow from the library, but to grow into the library" and his motivation to everybody to tell their own stories will not easily be forgotten. Dr Oludayo Olugbara captured our attention immediately with his talk about artificial intelligence and the introduction of "Neo" to the audience. I am quite sure nearly all of us wanted to take Neo home.

To my fellow colleagues from all library spheres, it was a privilege to listen to your well-researched presentations. I realised again that, although we are from different sectors, we have the same goal and that is to share information with our users, whether they are students, community members or users

from special organisations. How we do it, and access to funding and the latest technology resources may differ, but we all strive to serve our users to the best of our abilities and beyond.

To all the prize winners that were announced during the gala dinner, you are worthy recipients, and you motivated us to work harder to follow your leadership.

Lastly, a huge thank you for the sponsorship of CSX and for the hard work of the PACLIG Free State committee. With your support we can take libraries, especially those in the Free State, to heights far beyond our imaginations.

ESTELLE BOERS

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
SASOLBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY

## From the LNO to the LIASA Stand at the Durban ICC

The work never ends. I was appointed on 1 June 2024 to the LIASA National Office (LNO) as the Membership and Operations Coordinator. LIASA is different to any library experience I have had. When I started working here, the workload was plenty while there was a need for me to learn how LIASA operates. I kept receiving a multitude of queries from members due to the upcoming conference. It was hectic!

The time came for Aphelele and me to depart to Durban.

We were so excited especially knowing that everything seemed to be in order, which meant less work for the LNO staff - a well-deserved break from the SBD 4, 6, 8, and 9. Little did I know that "the work never stops", even when you are closer to the beach.

Upon arrival, we checked into the hotel and then a few hours later checked in at the conference venue. We finally knocked off at around 19:00 pm. I thought that was the first day "normal" for any conference, but it never stopped. It was work all day long so that there was no time for us to attend sessions. The most worrisome or rather painful moment was when I missed the opening

ceremony, because I had to assist those members who were still registering on 1 October; I had to accept their payments. The only time I escaped the stand was to attend the plenary session on Thursday, where Kay Raseroka was a guest speaker. She took us on a journey of LIASA; how it started, how it is going and advised that the young LIS professionals should join LIASA as their Professional Body. Kay also reminded the delegates to ask, "what can we do for LIASA?" instead of asking "what is LIASA doing for us?".

I once attended a LIASA conference in 2017 at Birchwood in Johannesburg as a delegate where I learnt so much. I cannot

say I wish I could attend as a delegate because that would insinuate leaving the LNO, but I do wish to attend as a delegate for me to increase my knowledge in the LIS sector from those who have made the journey and those that are making an impact. I will however, for the Eastern Cape conference in 2025, peruse the programme and identify sessions that I can attend, and probably take turns with my colleagues. I appreciated the nature walk and the Gala dinner; there we had a break where it stopped for a little while...

PONANI MBHUNGELA  
LIASA MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATIONS  
COORDINATOR

## REFLECTIONS ON LIASA 2024

This year's conference was significant for members in KZN because the last time it was held here in Durban was in 2018, before the COVID 19 pandemic.

It was well organised and relevant to our libraries and library staff. All the sessions were spread evenly over all library sectors and the exhibition was informative. It was encouraging and inspiring to learn that the provincial leadership, Minister Mntomuhle Khawula, knows about our services and the importance of libraries and Librarians. The LIASA president shared a very encouraging report which showed that he is very accommodating and willing to unlearn the earlier ways of doing things which will encourage other professionals to join LIASA.

This year's theme was "Libraries in an age of



Sibonke Doncabe

Democracy" as libraries continue to play a critical role in offering democratic spaces, access to information, fostering inclusivity and community engagement. In this rapidly changing world, libraries are about more than just books and knowledge; they are spaces for dialogue, learning, and innovation. Librarians are the agents of change and serve as pillars of democracy, ensuring fair access to information and resources for all citizens.

The diverse speakers and

presentations were on point as they dealt with the challenges of digital literacy as well as the techniques to encourage reading for our citizens. Industry relevant topics on AI, new generation technology and 4IR were well covered. The conference was relevant and managed to add professionalism, knowledge, and inspirations to librarians. It was clear that all library sectors, even in other municipalities and academics are facing the same challenges regarding the lack of funds and a reading society. Best practice was shared, and one emphasis was to build relationships with other sectors and adapt to the new technologies that the country is gearing up to. One of the prominent speakers, Zanele Njapha, who is also an author from Durban, spoke about learning and relearning which is particularly important for librarians, especially public librarians.

Librarians should not be afraid to implement, learning and adapting new methods of information sharing. Our core function is to disseminate correct information in a suitable and user-friendly way.

We should not underestimate our abilities and think badly of ourselves as librarianship is an important profession in the digital age. Working in silos should be demolished. Librarians in all sectors must share knowledge with each other in order to leave a legacy and be innovative. We should not forget that we are information specialists and whatever information we have should not be kept in one's mind but be shared.

No technology will replace the human touch (librarians); however, we need to adapt and move with the times.

SIBONKE DONCABE PL(SA)

SENIOR LIBRARIAN, DON AFRICA LIBRARIES  
AND CENTRAL REFERENCE SERVICES  
ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY LIBRARIES

## FROM FEAR TO FULFILMENT: My first time presenting at a LIASA Conference

Presenting at the LIASA conference had long been a goal of mine. However, when the moment finally arrived, I was overwhelmed with nerves. Standing before a respected audience of library professionals from South Africa and beyond felt incredibly daunting.

In the weeks leading up to the conference, I experienced a mix of excitement and anxiety. Despite my thorough preparation, I couldn't shake the fear that something might go wrong. Amid all my worries, there was one source of reassurance, my mentor, Mokgadi Dina Mashiyane, who supported me throughout the process. From the start of my journey in librarianship, my mentor has been a guiding light, offering wisdom and encouragement. When it was time to present, we did it together which felt like a safety net. Knowing I wasn't alone in this experience helped



Tebogolo Makhurupetsi

calm my nerves. My mentor not only helped me with refining the content of my presentation but also worked with me on my public speaking skills. During practice sessions, I often doubted myself, but she always reminded me of my strengths and passion, which helped me stay focused.

As we stepped onto the stage, my heart raced, but I felt the calming presence of my mentor beside me. I glanced at the familiar faces of my UFS colleagues, and I could feel their silent encouragement. I clutched my notes tightly, fear gripping me once again. I worried I might stumble over my words. But when I glanced at my mentor, she gave me a reassuring nod. That small

gesture meant everything to me. It reminded me that I wasn't alone and that someone believed in me, even when I struggled to believe in myself.

Once we started presenting, my nerves started to fade. I grew more comfortable, focusing on my passion for the topic instead of my fears. We presented on the transformative power of mentorship in academic libraries, a subject that resonated deeply with both of us. I shared my journey from being an intern to securing a permanent position, emphasising how mentorship had shaped my career. Each word felt personal, and I realised this wasn't just a presentation; it was a reflection of my growth. The audience responded with warmth and encouragement, applauding and nodding along as I spoke. My mentor continued to offer subtle support, providing smiles and encouraging glances whenever I sensed my nerves creeping back. This ongoing support kept me grounded and allowed me to push through my fear. By the time we finished, a wave of relief and pride washed over me. What had begun as a moment of panic transformed into one of the

most empowering experiences of my career. Afterward, I received positive feedback from colleagues, while others praised the emotional depth of our presentation.

Reflecting on the experience, I realised it wasn't just about delivering a successful presentation. It was about overcoming fear, embracing vulnerability, and learning to trust in my abilities. This experience reinforced the importance of mentorship in my life and career and showed me how having someone who believes in you can make a significant difference. My mentor held my hand both literally and figuratively throughout the process, reminding me that fear is a natural part of growth. Sometimes, the best way to overcome it is to face it head-on, with support beside you. The LIASA Conference was a turning point for me. Not only did I conquer my fear of presenting, but I also deepened my appreciation for mentorship in our profession.

TEBOGLO MAKHURUPETSI PL(SA)  
INFORMATION LIBRARIAN  
UFS (SOUTH CAMPUS)

## MY FIRST LIASA CONFERENCE

Finally, the day that I had been looking forward to since I first heard about the LIASA Conference had arrived.

On 30 September 2024, I drove to Durban with my colleagues, and I must admit, their driving was exceptional. We drove through very scary and misty weather with light rain

here and there. What lay beyond were days filled with a wealth of information.

As a first-time attendee, I had sleepless nights thinking about the programme. I wanted to attend as many presentations as possible to learn and improve my skills, network with fellow librarians from other academic backgrounds (as we are from a public library), and for personal growth.

On the first day of the

conference, as we walked towards the entrance, even the air smelled of information, knowledge, and sharing. People were friendly, welcoming, and smiles were all around. I did not feel like it was my first experience. The proceedings of the day began, and I had to choose sessions that resonated with me. They all looked interesting, and I was overwhelmed, promising myself I would try to attend most of them.

The keynote speaker on the

first day spoke about learning and unlearning. As librarians, we must not be left behind; we must always learn new skills to stay relevant and keep up with technology. The exhibitors had attractive stalls that caught our attention from far away. We finally met face-to-face with people who provide services to our users and the community at large: Sabinet, Press Reader, OverDrive, and Share More Information. On a personal note, I was glad

(continued on page 15)

## PRESENTING A PAPER AT A LIASA CONFERENCE IS NOT THAT BAD!

In October 2023, I attended the LIASA conference in Somerset West, Western Cape. This wasn't the first time; that was in 2013 in Cape Town. The emphasis at the conference was on public librarians not taking advantage of opportunities to engage in research, write papers, and present them at conferences, seminars etc. As a public librarian, this statement didn't sit well with me, and it challenged my belief that research papers and presentations were only done by academic librarians and researchers in the field.

I recall the words of Prof. Makgahlela, Dr Mahlatji, and Dr Ledwaba encouraging me to present a paper at the conference. It seemed like a daunting task, considering my role as a principal librarian overseeing operations in the community libraries. However, after observing other presenters and the content they shared, I found the courage to set a goal to present at the



Mzwandile Radebe

2024 LIASA Conference. I titled my paper "Free State Libraries reading programme that champions the promotion of the reading culture amongst school learners and young adults: Reja-Buka Reading Festival."

Presenting a paper at a conference for the first time is an exciting and nerve-wracking experience. The anticipation builds from the moment the presentation is confirmed, knowing that you will stand before an audience of experts and peers

to share your research. There's a mix of pride in the work you've accomplished and the anxiety of wanting to communicate your ideas clearly and effectively. Preparing for the presentation often feels like an intense journey, from refining your slides to practicing your delivery, but there's also the thrill of stepping into the world of academic discourse.

When the moment finally arrives, stepping up to the podium, you feel the energy in the room—both a sense of vulnerability and empowerment. The questions and feedback from the audience can be both validating and eye-opening, offering new perspectives on your research. It is both a challenge and an opportunity to engage with scholars who have spent years in the field you are now entering.

Attending the conference itself, beyond the presentation, is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the latest developments in your field. It's a chance to network, meet prominent researchers whose work you've admired, and engage in conversations that might spark new ideas or collaborations. The

experience is both inspiring and affirming, reinforcing your place in the academic community while motivating you to continue pushing the boundaries of your research.

To all public librarians, I want to encourage you to take advantage of the platform to share what you are doing at your library or share research or problems you are facing. LIASA has created an online platform where all librarians can learn from each other, network, find mentors, and engage in research. With mentorship and information sharing, public librarians can positively contribute to knowledge creation in the LIS sector.

All credit goes to my employer for providing me with the opportunity to represent the Free State Provincial Library Services. I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr MT Nodikida, Mrs N Ramugondo (Library Services Director), mentors (Dr. Mahlatji, Dr. Ledwaba and Prof. Makgahlela) and colleagues at the Free State DSACR.

MZWANDILE RADEBE  
PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN  
FREE STATE PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICES

## A DREAM COME TRUE: a librarian's first-in-person LIASA Conference experience

When I applied for the grant from my municipality to attend the 2024 LIASA Conference, never did I dream that my application would be approved and that I would be able to attend the conference in Durban.

The conference took place from 1-4 October 2024, and it was filled with inspiration. From the Keynote Zanele Njapha who reminded us to unlearn the things that are not working for libraries, but still maintain the library's purpose, value and mission to Musa Zulu who shared his principles, telling us not to grow from the library, but to grow into



Kim Albertyn

the library by telling our stories.

The theme of the conference was "libraries in the age of democracy" and it constantly

came through in the presentations such as Jeff Nyoka's new approach to reading programmes through his MobiReadathon aimed at high school learners. I received confirmation from Dr Sheron Ndlovu's presentation that patrons do view libraries as making a difference in their lives.

The conference presentations had a lot of emphasis on AI and on the final day of the conference, Professor Oludayo Olugbara assured us that AI would never replace librarians, as human empathy is still needed.

I feel so privileged to have been able to attend the LIASA conference as it allowed me to experience flying in a plane, going to Durban as well as attending my first in person LIASA conference.

It also allowed me to network and meet so many people. I could

learn about their thoughts and opinions of the conference as well as their views on the future of librarianship. Despite not being able to attend the beach walk, my colleague, our new friend from the Free State that we met through networking at the conference, and I decided to go on our own nature walk in the Durban Botanical Garden and experience the beautiful scenery and landscapes of Durban.

This is the power of the LIASA Conference; it brings people in the profession from all walks of life together to be inspired, to connect and to network embodying "Libraries in the age of democracy".

KIM ALBERTYN PL(SA)  
LIBRARIAN, WYNBERG LIBRARY

to engage with Elsevier, whose articles and journals I used extensively while studying for my Bachelor of Information Science.

A presentation by Lungile Msiya titled "Taking hands to open libraries to all: enhancing literacy and reading skills through partnership" opened my eyes in ways I never thought possible. She spoke about their reading club "Born to Read," which focuses on expecting mothers sharing their thoughts with their

(continued from page 14)

unborn babies and reading to them while still in the womb, offering them solace. Our libraries must be vibrant to accommodate the youth and their activities.

Guest speaker Musa Zulu spoke about his book *The Language of Me* which discusses living a fulfilling life despite his disability and encourages others to do the same. He emphasised never underestimating our ability to conquer and achieve whatever the heart desires.

The exhibitors and their displays, as well as the presenters and their presentations, were detailed and exceeded my expectations. I was overwhelmed and enjoyed every minute spent listening to them. I learned about Artificial Intelligence and never thought it possible for robots to perform duties more efficiently and effectively than humans. As librarians, we need to be vigilant when it comes to Artificial Intelligence because it is the

future. I expanded my network and was exposed to new ideas that I will definitely implement in our local library.

As Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated and passionate.

DITLHARE MABITILE  
LIBRARIAN, SELLO-SECHA PUBLIC LIBRARY  
FREE STATE

## My first LIASA Conference

It was my first time attending the LIASA conference thanks to my organisation. The conference was informative, inspiring, and thought provoking.

It was clear that librarians should continue engaging with different stakeholders as drivers of literacy in our communities. Librarians play an important role in presenting literacy programmes to any community they serve through traditional ways as well embracing technology as the world is going in that direction. I suggest all librarians should have programmes that are technologically based as we celebrate the important days in our country through programmes that are facilitated by libraries. Academic libraries should work in collaboration with public and special libraries to share and exchange knowledge. The rapid advancement of technology and digital information resources requires continuous adaptation by libraries to stay relevant.

The digital divide is real as communities do not have equal access to digital resources, which can hinder information access and library engagement, especially in rural areas. Recently State President Cyril Ramaphosa



Smanga Mzobe

reached an agreement with Elon Musk for Starlink to be active in South Africa which is good for libraries in rural areas if they are going to grab that opportunity with both hands for the benefit of their communities. There is a need for ongoing training and professional development for librarians to equip themselves with the skills necessary to navigate new technologies and information services.

### Keynote Speakers

Renowned experts in library

and information science shared insights on current trends and future directions. I was taken from the first by Zanele Njapha on learning and unlearning what we have consumed in the past for the benefit of progressive learning and growth as an individual in your field.

### Paper Presentations

Researchers and practitioners presented their findings and innovative practices in library and information science. One presentation that caught my attention was by Dr. Shirlene Neerpath, where she dealt with knowledge equity, looking at the use of open-source software in libraries, which should take centre stage if we say libraries are not profit driven.

### Workshops and Seminars

Interactive sessions that covered a variety of topics, including digital librarianship, information literacy, and community engagement. One seminar/ session that stood out was on the first day by Mandla Ngubeni, where he shared their critical review of the City of Ekurhuleni's collection development; how they approach the issue of developing their library collection, their collection development policy, and the challenges they

face when it comes to collection development and its integration with technology.

### Exhibitions

Vendors and service providers showed their latest tools, technologies, and resources. Two exhibitors caught my eye. One was Ndende Technologies which deals with facial recognition. Second was Memorist, which deals with conservation, restoration, and digitisation of heritage in all forms. It was relevant to me, I work in a Reference Library which houses the heritage of the City of Durban and a unique Shakespeare collection.

### Awards and Recognition

Acknowledgment of outstanding contributions to the field, celebrating achievements and best practices. Noteworthy was where the LIASA President acknowledged all those who volunteered their time, money and undying spirit to make sure that they continue raising the LIASA flag, even when they are no longer working.

SMANGA MZOBÉ  
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN  
DON AFRICANA AND  
REFERENCE RESOURCES LIBRARIES  
ETHEKEKWINI MUNICIPALITY



Kola, Ramonyai, Prof Ngoepe, Malebana and Makgakga



LIASA members sharing ideas at conference

## Capricorn District Library @ LIASA 2024

LIASA conferences serve as a capacity building platform whereby LIS professionals across the country join heads to highlight the sector developments, examining the current status quo and how they wish the LIS sector to transform.

This year continued in that fashion as the conference theme was "Libraries in an age of democracy". Conferences not only serve as a capacity building tool through its formal

proceedings, but also through the networking opportunities it provides whereby we are able to share service standards and best practice with colleagues from different provinces with the aim of improving service delivery.

This clearly gives encouragement in the LIS sector, that we can share ideas with the great minds that walked this path before us, exchanging strategies and ideas on how to be better and grow in the sector. It is also

important to note the importance of exhibitors as they demonstrate services and systems that are of benefit to us. Hopefully, other service providers within the sector will also join hands and add to the current exhibitors so that we can have all these services under one roof where we are able to explore and express interest in using them in our respective libraries in the different provinces.

We congratulate the LIASA Board and all the members who

participated in ensuring that the conference is a success. We hope that in future more LIASA members will be able to attend this meeting of great minds to share papers, ideas, service standards and form relations that will assist us in taking the sector to greater heights.

SELLO MALEBANA  
LIBRARIAN  
CAPRICORN DISTRICT LIBRARY



# IGBIS Conversations with Leaders:

## A SESSION WITH KAY RASEROKA

instrumental in founding the Botswana Library Association (BLA), a significant initiative that continues to impact library services in Botswana today. She also played a key role in establishing the Standing Conference of African National and University Librarians for Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa (SCANUL-ECS), serving from 1992 to 1996.

Her leadership extended beyond national borders, with her active participation in the unification of South Africa's racially segregated library associations, contributing to the formation of LIASA in 1997. This crucial work laid the foundation for a more inclusive and unified library sector in South Africa.

### Global leadership, First African IFLA President

Raseroka made history as the first African to be elected President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) from 2003 to 2005. Her presidential theme, Libraries for Lifelong Literacies, emphasised the importance of recognising IKS as a vital part of information literacy. She championed the role of libraries in promoting the global knowledge society and highlighted the digital divide that often hinders fair access to information in many parts of the world.

Under her leadership, IFLA

adopted a collaborative and inclusive approach to its vision and strategy, ensuring that voices from diverse global library communities were heard and respected. This inclusive process has since become a cornerstone of IFLA's organisational culture, allowing President-Elect candidates to engage meaningfully with the membership and craft their leadership themes based on broad consultations.

### Advocate for Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

A staunch advocate of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Raseroka argued for the recognition of IKS as a legitimate body of knowledge and a crucial element in library services. She emphasised that IKS plays an essential role in promoting literacy and access to information, especially in communities where oral traditions and cultural heritage are central to the transmission of knowledge. Her advocacy laid the groundwork for IFLA's ongoing efforts to integrate IKS into its work, ensuring that libraries worldwide reflect the diversity of knowledge systems.

### Mentor and thought leader

Raseroka's impact goes beyond her leadership roles. She is a mentor to many within the LIS profession, sharing her knowledge and guiding the next generation

of information professionals. She has published widely and delivered numerous presentations at international conferences, where her insights into leadership, literacy, and IKS continue to inspire.

Her legacy of leadership, mentorship, and advocacy remains a guiding light for many in the LIS sector. Raseroka advises viewing membership in a library association not as a sacrifice, but as a valuable part of continuing professional development. Volunteering in these associations offers practical learning opportunities that go beyond theoretical knowledge from formal education. It allows librarians to grow by learning from others, engaging in self-education, and enhancing their skills through hands-on experience. She encourages all librarians who seek to advance professionally to get involved in associations as a means of improving their situation and contributing to their personal and career growth.

The #IGBISConversations series offers an invaluable opportunity for LIS professionals to engage with leaders like Kay Raseroka, whose life and work exemplify the transformative power of libraries and the importance of strong leadership in the profession. Her journey from Library Assistant to a globally recognised advocate for IKS and freedom of access to information is a story that will continue to inspire generations of information professionals. As we reflect on this conversation, we are reminded of the critical role that leadership plays in shaping the future of libraries, particularly in advocating for inclusivity, lifelong learning, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skDz3ueO3QE>

On 29 August 2024, the Library and Information Association of South Africa's Interest Group for Bibliographic Standards (LIASA IGBIS) hosted a webinar of the #IGBISConversations with Leaders, featuring the esteemed Kay Raseroka.

This conversation is part of an ongoing series which aims to motivate information professionals to embrace leadership roles by showcasing the journeys and experiences of influential leaders in the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector.

Kay Raseroka's professional journey is an inspirational testament to dedication, leadership, and a lifelong commitment to LIS. With a career spanning over five decades, Raseroka has made significant contributions to the LIS profession across Africa and globally, advocating for the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in library services and fighting for the freedom of access to information. Starting her journey in 1969 as a Library Assistant, she rose to become the Director of Library and Information Services at the University of Botswana, a position she held from 1981 to 2010.

### A pillar of LIS development in Africa

Raseroka's leadership journey has been marked by her unwavering dedication to developing LIS infrastructure and services in Africa. In 1978, she was



Kay Raseroka as President-elect in 2003 (IFLA Newsletter Aug 2003)



Snapshots of some presenters @ LIASA 2024

MERCIA MOREANA PL(SA)  
MANAGER: CATALOGUING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE  
WITS UNIVERSITY  
IGBIS CHAIRPERSON



Mmakwena Molala and Mmaditshi Seageng (NSG) with Soretha du Plessis (Sabinet) launching WorldShare Management Services

Keynote Speaker Salamina Molamu

## The National School of Government Library celebrates Electronic Resource Day with the launch of the library system: WorldShare Management Services

The launch of the library management system, WorldShare Management (WSMS) was a feast of information sharing.

The programme director, Mmakwena Molala, Director: Knowledge Management and Library, was visibly thrilled for the library to be joining the WSMS which is an open technology system that will promote transparency and collaboration within the library network. The system will help the library team to drive innovation, foster collaboration and deliver enhanced services. The library is looking forward to working with Sabinet in this important transition to take advantage of the flexibility and extensibility of the WorldShare Management System.

Dr Botshabelo Maja, Deputy Director General: Professional Support Services, welcomed everyone. He noted with concern

the perception portrayed by most people, that South Africans do not read. This, he qualified by noting a study that found that Grade 4 learners could not read for meaning. He asked the audience how many have read a book recently or read to their children. In his story telling tone, Dr Maja advised the audience to not only listen to Amapiano. He concluded by stating that it is important to learn about the history of the country in order to understand its future and innovate solutions.

Guest speaker Salamina Molamu, Head of Information Services in eResearch Knowledge Centre at the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), congratulated the NSG for acquiring WSMS. She gave a detailed presentation on how this system had made the HSRC library visible and accessible. She also shared the definition of WorldShare Management System

(WSMS) as "A fully integrated library services platform designed to meet the changing needs of modern libraries". An invitation was extended to the information database suppliers EBSCO, LexisNexis, Juta, ProQuest, Perlego, Taylor & Francis and Sabinet to exhibit and they were given a platform to showcase their products and support to the NSG. Soretha du Plessis, a representative of Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and Sabinet acknowledged the support from NSG ICT, Mmatsie Makhado and the team, in enabling a seamless transition. The WSMS is a complete cloud-based system that offers all the applications needed to manage a library, including Acquisitions, Circulation, Metadata, Resource Sharing, and a single-search interface that offers a search facility for library users.

The go-live system was launched with the cutting of the

ribbon by Soretha du Plessis as a symbol of the hand over to the NSG library. Prof Thean Potgieter, Chief Director: Research, Market and Intelligence, registered his support for the new system and for library staff to have access to the user-friendly new library system platform, noting that the WSMS will enhance the library's workflows while continuing to serve the NSG staff, even when working remotely. He concluded by thanking the DDG, HSRC Library Management, Information Database Suppliers and sister departments (Road Accident Fund, Dept of Public Works, Dept of Basic Education, Defence Intelligence, Compensation Commission) and LIASA Manager Lebogang Masalesa for honouring the NSG Library's invitation.

MMADITSHI SEAGENG  
LIBRARY MANAGER  
NSG LIBRARY

## My Book Review experience

I did my first book review as a Children's Library Assistant at City Libraries in 1975, almost 50 yrs ago, under the watchful eyes of Dr Lydia Pienaar, Cedric Callaghan and my colleagues. The book was called "Die Klein Pasella" by Hester Heese, and it was the start of a new world.

Through my years as Children's Librarian, I've reviewed more books than I can remember, and after my early retirement, as an avid reader, I never ever stopped reviewing books in my mind. I think each reader forms an opinion of the book which they read, and you make a choice to continue reading, or just put the book down. As I'm getting older, I am starting to rather put a book down if I'm not enjoying it...life is getting shorter. But if you are as enthusiastic about creating a love for reading, and a passion for books, this does not necessarily apply to children's literature,



Fadeela Davids (right)

as it is vital for them to read the best that is available. And fortunately, unlike 50 years ago when I started reviewing children's books, we have so much more choice. We have stories by, and for, our different cultures in our rainbow nation for all needs and tastes. We have access to all our stories...and we should be

part of this world of sharing and savouring our history...the good, the bad, as well as the ugly.

Last month I had the privilege of attending a special book review workshop titled: **How to Review Children's Books that Affirm the African Child**, a special workshop for *Biblioneef South Africa & IBBY South Africa*,

Cape Town. This workshop really opened my world even further than I thought possible, because its our duty to keep on learning and empowering ourselves to make sure that all our children are exposed to the best that they can get as early as possible and keep them reading. Its our duty to keep telling our stories, to encourage our seniors to share their stories and ensure that our youth takes up the baton and moves forward, knowing where they came from just like my granny opened my world to stories.

Thank you so much to Elinor Sisulu @ Puku Children's Literature Foundation for this wonderful gift as well as IBBY SA and Biblioneef. The facilitator did a wonderful job, and I hope that we can have this workshop accessible to more people for the benefit of our children, our future.

FADEELA DAVIDS

## Document process automation and AI in data extraction and metadata creation

LIASA IGBIS online

- Thursday, August 1, 2024, 10:00 am
- ZOOM, South Africa
- Niklas Zimmer [niklas@fctec.co.za](mailto:niklas@fctec.co.za)

## AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Can be used to enhance OCR outputs by improving accuracy and automating complex tasks.

Examples:

- Google Vision AI
- Amazon Textract
- Microsoft Azure Cognitive Services

## OCR engine

The complete system that processes scanned text, including image pre-processing, text recognition, and post-processing.

Examples:

- Tesseract OCR Engine
- OmniPage
- ABBYY OCR SDK

## Intelligent document processing platform

1. Ingest (acquire documents)
2. Image processing
3. Form recognition (OCR, ICR, OMR, Barcode)
4. Verification (Setting document types and attributes)
5. Export

On Thursday 1 August, IGBIS members and guests learned about artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for metadata extraction and creation in digital preservation during a webinar with Niklas Zimmer.

Niklas is the Digital Scholarship and Data Curation Manager at FCTEC (<https://fctec.co.za/>), a local provider of digitisation and digital transformation services. For this presentation, he spoke about the conceptual and practical aspects of preserving heritage assets in a digital context and explored the value of digital heritage preservation in Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM).

Digital preservation has three significant impacts in a heritage context. First, by using local expertise, communities retain intellectual control over the creation, interpretation, and contextualisation of heritage assets. Secondly, digitised collections support accessibility by reaching a wider audience, thereby fostering cultural exchange, collaboration, and understanding of diverse cultures and societies. Thirdly, developing the skills and knowledge needed to create digital collections encourages professional development and recognition for the South African GLAM community.

Within an institutional context, Niklas quoted William Kilbride, Executive Director of the Digital Preservation Coalition (<https://www.dpconline.org/>): "I think

archives and digital preservation are co-evolutionary; they are growing together and with each other." Adopting and innovating with digital preservation tools and online data solutions ensures institutions establish scholarly and archival repositories that meet user needs and support preservation. Examples like the fires that ravaged the University of KwaZulu Natal's Law Library (2019), the University of Cape Town's Library Archives (2021) and the Library of Parliament (2022) underscored the importance of establishing digitisation programmes for preservation.

The International Council on Archives (<https://www.ica.org/>) forecasts that the three most impactful AI tools for archives in the next decade will be automated metadata tagging, blockchain-based archiving, and natural language processing. This speaks to the potential of AI solutions to help overcome challenges with manual data handling, to help with reducing errors, and to streamline workflows.

Digitisation encompasses scanning and conversion of physical documents and processing of born-digital materials. A demonstration video explained how one can use document processing software and Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) to extract metadata from a digital document and a handwritten manuscript. ICR is a self-learning system that recognises scanned handwriting

styles and scripts and converts these into digital text. Seeing this process in practice highlighted the advantages of AI tools like ICR. (Also illustrated is that human involvement is still necessary during these processes.)

Niklas reflected on challenges experienced in digitisation projects: inconsistent or poor-quality metadata; insufficient training; and minimal engagement with cataloguers. Furthermore, a lack of strategic commitment and buy-in to the value and necessity of curation and preservation impedes success; this includes misunderstanding or underestimating the resources and expertise needed for digital preservation.

The benefits of AI technologies are manifold. Automated extraction and consistent use of metadata standards assist in ensuring heritage assets are findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (<https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>). Automating repetitive tasks frees up time for more intensive projects. For the end-user, tools like ICR enhance research, offering new avenues for search and discoverability. Digital scholarship opportunities expand, creating opportunities for collaboration and research through engagement with primary resources.

Niklas concluded with advice to GLAM institutions starting a digital preservation programme: start with a pilot project; implement training and

## Recommendations

- Do a pilot project to test and refine automation processes.
- Train staff to utilise AI-driven tools effectively.
- Invest in scalable digital infrastructure to support long-term growth.
- Explore and adopt AI-driven solutions to create more integrated and resilient digital archives, collections, and libraries!

skills development for staff; evaluate institutional resources for scalability; and explore AI-driven solutions.

Niklas's presentation emphasised the value of metadata in digital preservation. Digital imaging is not sufficient for preservation; quality metadata is vital for access to digitised resources. Niklas quoted archivist Jason Scott, co-founder of Archive Team (<https://wiki.archiveteam.org/>) who of metadata said, "It's a love note to the person after you, or the machine after you, where you've saved someone that amount of time to find something by telling them what this thing is." Metadata ensures discoverability of our heritage for posterity. Through digital preservation programmes, we are telling the story of our heritage, ensuring the safeguarding of community histories, educating future generations, and sharing our culture with the rest of the world.

The full webinar is available on LIASA's YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/C24QE-M7ixk>).

SARAH GOLBY PL(SA)  
IGBIS PRO (2021-2024)  
CATALOGUER, NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OF SOUTH AFRICA, CAPE TOWN

# Breaking barriers: celebrating inclusion at Bartimea School for the Deaf and Blind



On 6 September 2024, the University of Free State (UFS) South Campus Neville Alexander Library, in collaboration with Mr. Goliath (Assistant Director: Neville Alexander Library), and the Department of South African Sign Language, embarked on a transformative journey to the Bartimea School for the Deaf and Blind situated in Thaba Nchu.

This initiative was not just an outreach, it was a heartfelt celebration of inclusivity and the boundless potential of every child.

The event was designed to provide an engaging and inclusive learning environment for the

school's visually and hearing-impaired learners. These children often face significant barriers in accessing traditional educational resources, and this visit aimed to bridge those gaps through innovative technology and tactile learning experiences. The team meticulously prepared activities that catered to the unique needs of the learners, ensuring that they felt supported, valued, and included.

At the heart of the event were activities that engaged the senses and fostered interactive learning. Learners explored tablets pre-loaded with accessible games that turned education into a stimulating adventure. Virtual Reality (VR) headsets opened doors to new worlds, particularly for those with hearing impairments, allowing them to interact with immersive environments in a safe and captivating way. For visually impaired learners, a thoughtfully curated collection of visual storybooks brought narratives to life as team leaders read aloud, enabling the children to connect with the stories in profound and

meaningful ways.

Throughout the day, we ensured the comfort of the learners by providing water and snacks and creating a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Colourful banners and a well-organised gazebo set the stage for an event that felt both professional and inviting. Every detail was carefully considered, from the arrangement of learning stations to the supportive environment that encouraged participation.

Feedback gathered from the learners through evaluation forms painted a picture of success. Many of these children had never encountered such technology or interactive experiences, and their responses were overwhelmingly positive. The joy and excitement they expressed highlighted the transformative nature of the activities, opening new avenues for learning and engagement.

The day was more than an event, it was a powerful reminder of the impact that inclusive, thoughtfully designed educational experiences can have on children who are often overlooked. It was a celebration where blind and deaf

children were not just participants but empowered individuals, exploring and learning through tailored resources that resonated with their unique experiences.

The smiles, laughter, and moments of discovery shared by the learners will forever remain in our memories. This event underscored the importance of creating learning spaces where every child, regardless of their abilities, can thrive. The success of this visit has paved the way for future initiatives aimed at dismantling barriers and fostering inclusive educational experiences for children with disabilities.

As we reflect on this day filled with hope, inspiration, and joy, we are reminded that every child deserves the opportunity to learn in a way that speaks to them. By embracing technology and nurturing a culture of empathy and understanding, we can continue to build bridges both literal and metaphorical, creating a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

TEBOGO MAKHURUPETSI PL(SA)  
INFORMATION LIBRARIAN  
UFS (SOUTH CAMPUS)

## Welcome Back to Campus

### NEVILLE ALEXANDER LIBRARY'S WARM REBOOT FOR STUDENTS

The UFS Neville Alexander Library launched the new academic term with a lively and successful "Welcome Back to Campus" campaign on 2 September 2024.

This event was designed not only to re-engage students but also to display and market the library's vast resources in a way that was approachable, engaging, and welcoming. By fostering a friendly atmosphere, the campaign made a lasting impact on both students and library staff, setting the tone for a strong academic year.

Upon arrival, students were greeted with tea and snacks, a simple yet thoughtful gesture that set a relaxed and welcoming environment. This hospitality helped ease the initial formality that some students may feel when entering the library. It wasn't just about refreshments, it was about creating a space where students felt comfortable enough to interact with library staff, ask questions, and learn about the services available to them.

The event's informal nature was one of its most successful elements. By offering a low-pressure setting, the campaign allowed students to engage



with the library team on a more personal level. Whether they were learning about research tools, exploring new study spaces, or simply having casual conversations with staff, students were able to see the library as a supportive resource rather than an intimidating academic institution. Many students who may have been hesitant to approach staff or seek help in the past were more inclined to do so in this warm and approachable atmosphere.

One of the campaign's standout achievements was the level of student participation, which far exceeded expectations. This strong turnout demonstrated that students were eager to reconnect with the library, and the friendly approach made it easy for them to do so. The event also provided an opportunity for



students to explore the library's various services in a casual setting, which helped demystify the available resources.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from the event's evaluation survey highlighted the success of the campaign. Students praised both the atmosphere and the services provided, noting that the relaxed environment made them feel more comfortable using the library's resources. Several students felt encouraged to return to the library throughout the semester, now seeing it as a valuable support system for their academic needs.

The campaign reinforced the library's role as a key academic hub. The event helped students feel more at ease navigating the library's facilities and resources. This marks a significant step in

strengthening the relationship between students and the library, paving the way for deeper, ongoing engagement.

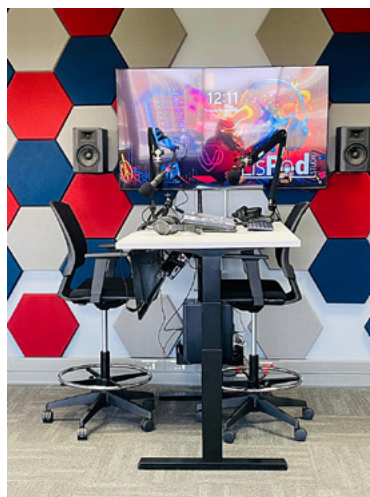
The event also provided the library team with important insights for future planning. Students were not only open to offering suggestions for improvement but also expressed enthusiasm for similar initiatives moving forward. This feedback has inspired the library to consider hosting similar events at the start of each academic term, ensuring that students continue to feel welcome and supported.

In conclusion, the "Welcome Back to Campus" campaign was a resounding success, fulfilling its goals of re-engaging students and promoting the library's resources in a friendly, accessible manner. This initiative has laid the groundwork for stronger student-library relationships, reinforcing the Neville Alexander Library's role as a cornerstone of academic support. With positive feedback and high levels of student engagement, the library is well-positioned to continue fostering meaningful interactions with students throughout their academic journeys.

TEBOGO MAKHURUPETSI PL(SA)

# Library and Information Podcast (LisPod) Studio

INNOVATING THE UFS LIBRARY THROUGH THE SOUNDTRACK OF KNOWLEDGE



Our innovative technology infrastructure



Faculty Librarian, Constance Ndemela interviewing Librarian, Refiloe Zim who is also our Coffee Talks Anchor during the LisPod soft launch



The LisPod setup

The rise of podcasting as a medium has been astounding. With millions of listeners worldwide, particularly among younger audiences, podcasts are a dynamic way to convey information, share knowledge, and tell stories.

These digital innovations allow academic libraries to repurpose and re-evaluate their operations and spaces to meet the ever-changing needs of their patrons and communities. By doing so, they become more relevant and adaptable, and the University of the Free State's Library and Information Services (UFS LIS) is no exception.

Recognising this trend, the UFS Library seized the opportunity to thrive in today's rapidly evolving environment. It integrated

podcasting into its library services to align with this innovative and trending mode of communication.

This initiative began in 2023 following the positive feedback received from researcher profiling projects and various events held at the library, such as book clubs, book review sessions, and the ongoing exceptional work by the multimedia team. LisPod is designed to amplify the diverse "soundtracks" (voices) and perspectives within the UFS community, highlighting the wide array of resources and services the library offers.

Furthermore, LisPod creates a collaborative and creative space for students and faculty to share meaningful content, including research outputs, library campaigns, current

affairs, information literacy, book recommendations, and author interviews. It also provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in podcast creation, video production, and audio editing.

Equipped with advanced technology such as the Blackmagic ATEM Mini Pro, Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera, a 55" monitor, professional acoustic panels, and industry-standard software like Camtasia and Adobe Audition, LisPod Studio enables high-quality audio, video feeds, and visual productions for podcasting. The Digital Services Division, under the leadership of Charlie Molepo, ensures that users have access to the best resources for producing professional-level

content, whether for academic research dissemination or for engaging with the vibrant university community.

LisPod's aim is to ensure that the UFS Library remains an essential part of our students' academic journey and an innovative leader in the digital information landscape. As we continue to expand our services and equip our students with essential digital skills, we also show that students can also develop professional skills and become library podcasters...the possibilities are endless.

TSHOLOFELO MALEHO  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
DIGITAL LIBRARY SERVICES  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

## Siyafundisana eMakhanda Project: fostering a love for reading in community

On Friday, 14 September and Tuesday, 17 September 2024, the Rhodes librarians proudly celebrated a significant milestone in the Siyafundisana eMakhanda Project by handing over donated classroom libraries to four schools in the Makhanda community.

The schools benefiting from this initiative include CM Vellem, Samuel Ntlebi, Makana, and the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Primary Schools.

The Siyafundisana eMakhanda Project is a collaborative effort between Rhodes librarians and local school teachers to instill a love for reading among young learners in the foundation phase. By providing access to reading materials and setting up classroom libraries, the project seeks to create an engaging reading environment that encourages students to explore the joys of literature and combat



reading illiteracy.

Generously funded by the SALI TRUST GRANT FUND, the project has made a tangible impact on the participating schools. The donated items include book nooks, reading cushions, reading mats, educational posters, and book readers, all designed to enhance the reading experience

for students. These resources not only make reading more accessible but also create a welcoming atmosphere that fosters curiosity and a passion for learning.

The handover events were filled with excitement and gratitude as teachers and students appreciated the new

resources. The Rhodes librarians are committed to working closely with the schools to ensure these materials are effectively integrated into the classroom. They provide ongoing support and guidance to teachers as they inspire their students to read.

As we look to the future, the Siyafundisana eMakhanda Project continues to strive towards its vision of empowering young readers and building a literate community. Together, we can make a difference in our children's lives, nurturing their love for reading and setting them on a path to lifelong learning.

For more information about the Siyafundisana eMakhanda Project and how to get involved and donate to classroom libraries, please get in touch with the Rhodes librarians. Let's work together to inspire the next generation of readers!

LUCKY MOSIA-XABA

# Celebrating Resilience

## UWC Library launches “Doctor of Hearts” biography

19-23 AUGUST 2024



The UWC Library, in collaboration with the Division of Student Development and Support (SDS), the UWC Writing Centre, and the Centre for Student Support Services (CSSS), marked the launch of *Doctor of Hearts: The Biography of Bongani Mayosi* with a week-long series of events starting on 19 August 2024.

Throughout the week, each lunchtime, the library atrium was dedicated to distinct themes connected to the legacy of renowned academic and cardiologist Prof. Bongani Mayosi. Activities were orchestrated around the central theme of resilience, featuring panel discussions, self-care presentations, open forums, and information sessions facilitated by the Centre for Student Support Services (CSSS).

The week of events celebrated Prof. Mayosi's contributions and engaged UWC students and staff in meaningful conversations about mental well-being.

CSSS hosted interactive events on mental health in higher education. Residential Services followed emphasising mentorship's critical role in academic success and highlighting Prof. Mayosi's medical research. Additionally, students were given an opportunity to participate in a whiteboard campaign, and panel discussions where they could ask guests questions and were offered various ways to win copies of the book.

The week ended in a vibrant open mic session showcasing UWC's creative talent through poetry, song, spoken word, praise singing, and dance. Each performer at the open mic session also received a book. At the end of the session, students were informed that all the works and performances would be published



Dr Shirlene Neerpath welcomes the audience

in UWC's own *WritingThreeSixty* journal, with the help of the UWC library, to the great enthusiasm of the participants.

- Highlights:
- Self-care demonstrations by intern counselling psychologists at CSSS, emphasised self-care using practical analogies to reinforce Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
  - Interactive Q&A sessions that provided a platform for

- students to share personal mental health experiences and discuss the importance of cultural and spiritual understanding in mental health services.
  - Open-mic event hosted by the Writing Centre where students shared poetry and creative pieces inspired by the book's themes.
- The week of activities underscored the importance

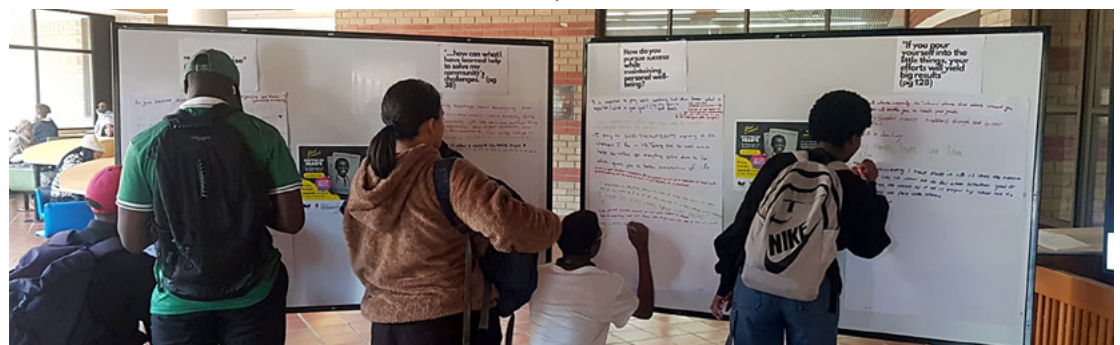
of utilising campus resources such as the Student Success Thermometer and the Wellness@UWC programme to foster mental well-being.

*Doctor of Hearts*, authored by Dr. Judy Dlamini and Dr. Kopano Matlwa Mabaso, is now available to borrow from the UWC Main Library.

ANDREW ENNIS PL(SA)  
FACULTY LIBRARIAN: ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
UWC LIBRARY



Full house at open mic session!



Students participating in the Whiteboard Campaign



# Showcase Your Library's Impact with Panorama

As the year wraps up, it's time to highlight your library's achievements effortlessly. With **Panorama**, analyzing your end-of-year statistics has never been simpler.



## Aggregate Data

Combine information from physical circulation, e-resources, and patron interactions.



## Generate Reports

Create comprehensive reports with just a click.



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Identify key performance metrics and trends over time.



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Present your library's achievements with clear, intuitive visualizations.



Say goodbye to manual data crunching and hello to streamlined reporting with **Panorama**.

Turn your year-end stats into powerful stories.



## #BeOpenAccessSmart @ Stellenbosch University Library

### LAUNCH OF AN OPEN ACCESS WEBINAR SERIES

Stellenbosch University's Library and Information Service is committed to advancing open science by implementing innovative services that support researchers, academics, and all stakeholders in the scholarly publishing process.

One such innovation is the recently launched #BeOpenAccessSmart webinar series which began with an inaugural webinar on 17 September 2024. With the introduction of the webinar series, the Library aims to consolidate its role as one of the foremost critical thought leaders in the open science arena. The aim is to invite high profile open

access advocates to speak during the webinars. The series will strengthen the Library's advocacy role for open science and ensure that scholars understand its benefits. Open Science initiatives typically seek to democratically provide knowledge, promote collaboration, and support the advancement of scientific innovation without any financial and access hindrances.

Senior Director Ellen Tise officially launched the #BeOpenAccessSmart webinar series and both internal and external attendees had the opportunity to learn more about open access/science. Conducted by Thanos Giannakopoulos

from the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the title of the inaugural presentation was "(G)AI, Open Access, and Sustainable Development: The Evolving Role of Libraries in a Transforming World." The focus was on the intersection of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), open access (OA), and sustainable development. Among other themes, the webinar explored the evolving role of libraries in promoting AI literacy, safeguarding data privacy, elevating the need to mitigate bias, and fostering OA for all. Giannakopoulos stipulated that libraries play a critical role in mitigating misinformation and raising awareness about challenges like privacy, bias, and the environmental impact of generative AI in relation to sustainable human development. He further alluded that libraries should ensure that AI tools are accessible globally, particularly for underdeveloped regions. He warned that generative AI poses risks associated with misuse and abuse of personal data, among other concerns. It is the role of libraries, collaborating with other stakeholders, to ensure responsible AI use. These libraries

must advocate for sustainable and ethical AI practices aligned with sustainable development goals.

Meanwhile, 460 registrations from about 23 countries were received for the webinar of which at least 180 people attended. Attendees alluded to the fact that Thanos' presentation greatly enriched their understanding of how these dynamic fields are shaping the future and the pivotal role libraries play in this transformation. Libraries are at the centre of the OA movement, and their role is to dissect the open science or OA concept and ensure that researchers are well informed and educated on the issues of open science/access.

We hope that these webinars will be a cornerstone for the scholarly communication landscape through the provision of essential education and support to researchers, who are navigating the complexities of open science/access publishing.

The second webinar will be on 21 November 2024. Starting from 2025, these webinars will be held quarterly.

SAKHILE MNGOMEZULU PL (SA)  
MANAGER: SCHOLARLY  
COMMUNICATION & OPEN ACCESS  
SU LIS



#BeOpenAccessSmart as presented on "X" (Twitter)



## The story of ThandiNcwadi Children's Reading Club

**M**ukhanyo Theological College (MTC) is an accredited academic institution offering Bible teaching.

MTC has six official campuses across South Africa: KwaMhlanga, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Rustenburg and Cape Town. Since 2021, the newly appointed librarian at MTC Libraries has made users aware of the importance of libraries and presented various global reading celebrations. In 2022 readers were introduced to World Read Aloud Day, unveiling not only the importance of reading (aloud), but the different initiatives being taken across South Africa in promoting reading and literacy to children. This information grabbed the attention of Yvette Mahirwe, an MTC library assistant at the time and a Development Study graduate from the University of Johannesburg. She was astonished to read about the fight against illiteracy and realised that there were few initiatives to tackle this problem among children in her community. After seeking advice from various individuals, Yvette established the ThandiNcwadi Children's Reading Club.

ThandiNcwadi - meaning love of books/reading in IsiNdebele - is a non-profit initiative seeking to introduce rural children to the love of reading for leisure, and the positive impact reading has on one's personal and educational development. This club offers

informal reading sessions, which officially started in July 2022 in KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga. It accommodates children in Grades 3 to 7, providing reading-for-fun sessions on Saturday mornings at a local church. These sessions are conducted using different reading styles: some Saturdays, we enjoy Read-Aloud sessions where children are divided into groups and given the same storybook to read aloud together, or Tutor-Led reading where a tutor reads and the children listen, or Individual-Reading whereby children choose a storybook of their liking and read alone.

The purpose of ThandiNcwadi is to encourage children to read for understanding, specifically using English storybooks, as a

mechanism to also help rural children improve their speaking, writing and understanding of the English language. However, the biggest challenge ThandiNcwadi faced was access to limited reading resources, as we depended on used/donated storybooks. The initial number of books grew somewhat, after involvement with Biblionef South Africa, a literacy organisation which organised a book donation for the Reading Club.

In October 2022, ThandiNcwadi applied to SALI Trust for a grant to further develop the club. Within a month, the Trust responded and agreed to sponsor ThandiNcwadi with R15 000 to buy storybooks, teacher training guides, and art

and craft materials. With the grant, ThandiNcwadi purchased 42 new colourful children's storybooks, including *Shudu Finds Her Magic*; *Madiba magic*; *Ubuhlalu bukaMpumi obunomlingo* and *Stories from Africa* by Gcina Mhlophe. We also bought teacher training guides from CHASE (associated with the South African Council for Educators, SACE; Literacy Association of SA and IBBY SA) to equip our tutors with some skills in reading literacy training. Titles include *Teachers Toolbox Benchmark Kit* and *Lighting the Literacy Fire*. Lastly, we bought art and craft materials online to provide colour pencils, finger paint and the like, for activities following our reading sessions.

SALI Trust Grant has greatly assisted ThandiNcwadi, but we are sadly struggling with children not habitually attending the reading club. Being in a community where reading for enjoyment is not commonly practiced affects our intake of children. However, driven by our objective to spread the love of reading, we plan to transform our children into bookworms.



YVETTE MAHIRWE  
COORDINATOR, THANDI NCWADI CHILDREN'S  
READING CLUB

# The Journey of Nhlanhla Tshabalala (Assistant Librarian)

A Story of Change: From Basic Computer Literacy Programme Participant to Librarian



## Introduction

Nhlanhla Tshabalala grew up in the small township of Qalabotjha in Villiers, Free State Province, where opportunities for personal and academic growth were limited. His family lived a modest life, and like many young people in his community, he struggled to imagine a future beyond the borders of his town. Despite these challenges, he had a hunger for knowledge and an insatiable curiosity about the world.

One day in 2016, while visiting Qalabotjha Public Library to make photocopies, he noticed a flyer pinned to the notice board

advertising a Basic Computer Literacy Programme offered by the library. Nhlanhla had never used a computer before, and the thought of being able to navigate the digital world excited him. After some thought, he decided to enrol in the programme, unsure of what to expect.

## Stepping into the Digital World

On his first day at the library, Nhlanhla felt nervous and out of place. The room was filled with computers and other participants, many of whom appeared just as uncertain as he was. But the librarian, Julius Mkhize, was welcoming and patient, guiding each participant through the basics of using a computer—from turning it on to typing, using a mouse, creating and sending emails, and exploring the internet. For Nhlanhla it was as though a new world had opened up.

Over the next few weeks, he grew more confident. He learned to send emails, navigate search engines, and even create documents such as curriculum vitae and formal cover letters. Nevertheless, what captivated

him most was the wealth of information he could access online. He found himself spending extra hours at the library, reading about topics he had never been exposed to before and most importantly, the role of libraries in society.

## The Inspiration to Do More

Nhlanhla's newfound abilities not only helped him in his day-to-day life but also sparked a dream. He realised how much the library had changed his life, and he wanted to be part of that change for others. His growing love for the library environment and his desire to make a difference prompted him to think about librarianship as a career. Fortunately for him, Mkhize shared information about a course in library and information studies and encouraged participants to enrol. Nhlanhla grabbed that opportunity to register at the Durban University of Technology in 2017.

## From Participant to Assistant Librarian

Encouraged by the librarian who had mentored him, he

completed his diploma in library and information studies. In 2022, he was hired by the Department of Sport, Art, Culture, and Recreation, Free State Province, as an Assistant Librarian at Phiritona Public Library, which is his current position to date.

## A Beacon of Hope

Nhlanhla's story is a testament to the power of libraries in transforming lives. What started as a simple decision to attend a basic computer literacy class at Qalabotjha Public Library had led him to a fulfilling career in librarianship. He now serves as a beacon of hope for his community, proving that with access to knowledge and the right support, anyone can change the course of their life.

JULIUS MKHIZE PL(SA)  
LIBRARIAN  
QALABOTJHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

NHLANHLA TSHABALALA  
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN  
PHIRITONA PUBLIC LIBRARY

FEZILE DABI DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE

## Molepo Library's benefit and improvement through LIASA CPD initiatives

The impact of LIASA's conferences, workshops and webinars on libraries has been profound. Molepo Community Library was in the top 5 of the Library of the Year Award announced during the annual Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) conference held in the Durban ICC in October.

Through its webinars and workshops specifically designed for librarians, LIASA significantly contributed to the improvement of library services to users.

These professional development programmes give librarians the abilities and expertise needed to promote literacy and offer top-notch customer service. The librarians at Molepo Library were able to obtain important knowledge about innovative library practices, technologies, and programming ideas by participating in these workshops and webinars.

This made it possible for us to develop and implement successful literacy initiatives, encourage a culture of reading, and establish a welcoming learning environment for the local schools. Librarians are now better equipped to support learners and researchers, providing targeted assistance



Learners ICT – Library users using the Library ICT



and guidance. The library has seen an increase in patron satisfaction, with users praising the librarians' expertise and helpfulness. Furthermore, Molepo Library has seen a significant increase in attendance at our literacy programmes (computer literacy, storytelling, chess games etc.), with community members benefiting from enhanced reading and information literacy skills.

Through LIASA's support, the library has become a vibrant hub of learning and knowledge-sharing, empowering its community to thrive.

KARABO DENNIS MAIMELA  
LIBRARIAN: MOLEPO COMMUNITY LIBRARY

# Heritage Day @ Moletjie Public Library

Bridging social gaps through culture and inclusiveness in the 30th year of Democracy

**M**oletjie Public Library in Koloti, Limpopo Province, hosted a vibrant Heritage Day celebration on 23 September 2024 to celebrate the legacy of our struggle heroes.

The event targeted children from three non-profit organisations (Mmasera Drop-in Centre, Reaga Sechaba Charity Organisation and Rephephile Reakgona Drop-in Centre) dedicated to supporting children from underprivileged families around Moletjie.

The event was not just a celebration but spoke to the need for continued support for libraries, particularly in underserved areas where access to books, technology, and educational resources remains limited. The event underscored the library's role as a community hub that connects people, preserves culture, and supports lifelong learning.

Library services offered by Polokwane Municipal libraries were marketed. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on the importance of using the library, library resources, membership, block loans, book circulations. The event also highlighted the significance of heritage and embracing our culture. One of the main objectives of the Heritage Day event



Learners taking part in Heritage Day activities



Director Winnie Mangotlo

was to address social division by promoting inclusiveness. By involving children from diverse backgrounds, the event aimed to break down barriers, encouraging mutual respect and understanding.

The Limpopo Director of Library and Archive Services, Winnie Mangotlo, in her keynote address highlighted that libraries have been at the heart of our democratic journey, providing a safe space for learning, self-expression, and growth, and encouraged the use of libraries as

community centres where people gather, collaborate, and engage in intellectual and cultural exchanges to strengthen social bonds and encourage civic participation. She alluded to the theme of Heritage Day celebrations in 2024 and how everyone must embrace the freedom and democracy we have because it is through the sacrifices of the struggle icons that we are free to express and celebrate our heritage and diversity today.

The event was filled with a series of *dinaka*, *mmapadi* and praise poem performances by

the children. Each performance celebrated the diverse cultural heritage of the community of Moletjie, demonstrating unity and shared values. The children had the opportunity to express themselves creatively and connect with their peers, building confidence and a sense of belonging.

The event closed with a library tour and orientation.

ERICA MOSA MAPHOTHOMA  
LIBRARIAN - MOLETJIE PUBLIC LIBRARY



## Heritage Day celebration @ Sundays River Valley Municipality libraries

**S**undays River Valley Municipality Libraries celebrated Heritage Day at Lungephi April Library at Moses Mabida in Nqweba on 26 September 2024.

Learners from local schools (Bhongoletu, Malmaison, Rietburg and Bontrung) gathered to demonstrate their literacy skills through reading and poetry recitals in their indigenous languages because Heritage Day affords us an opportunity to celebrate our diversity.

The event was planned to

promote arts, culture, heritage and literacy among the youth. The officials also took time to prepare and present their favourite African traditional cuisines. The dishes included *ulusu* (tripe) *umpokoqo* (dry pap), *sonka samanzi* (steamed bread), *mqombothi* (African beer) *mgqusho* (samp), pumpkin, cabbage, beef stew and ginger beer.

A local traditional dance group was also part of the celebration to instruct the young people about indigenous traditional dancing and singing.

One of the speakers, community member and the head of traditional dance for young girls, Ms April, spoke on the theme of living heritage and highlighted that South Africans can live heritage through cultural tradition, indigenous knowledge systems and a holistic approach to nature, and through society and societal relationships.

Living heritage plays an important role in promoting cultural diversity, social cohesion, reconciliation, peace and economic development. She

advised the young girls on the importance of staying pure until marriage and they were given a platform to enquire about their culture and heritage, as there is a saying that information is obtained from the elders.

The importance of reading in your home language was emphasised and we ensured that library users and the broader community were aware of the vast array of resources.

LONWABO HELENI  
PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN, SUNDAYS RIVER VALLEY  
MUNICIPALITY LIBRARIES



## Global Gleanings #22: The good, the bad, and the ugly

A COLUMN OF NEWS, VIEWS AND SNIPPETS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE OF BOOKS, LIBRARIES, AND INFORMATION, COMPILED BY PETER LOR

### The good

On the fringes of the 2023 IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, a small reception was held to hand over a *Festschrift* to [Dr Helena Asamoah-Hassan](#), a leading Ghanaian librarian who is the current Executive Director of the [African Library and Information Associations and Institutions](#) (AfLIA). Dr Asamoah-Hassan is well-known internationally. She was AfLIA's first President, and also served as a member of IFLA's Governing Board.

What is a *Festschrift*? This German word refers to a publication containing essays or chapters contributed by friends and former colleagues in honour of a respected academic or professional leader, usually at some milestone such as retirement or a 70th birthday. (It is mostly spelled with a capital F, because all German nouns are capitalised.)

This *Festschrift* (Okojie and Abdullahi 2023), professionally edited by Victoria Okojie and Ismail Abdullahi, and published in Accra, Ghana, is the best example I have seen in several decades of a *Festschrift* produced by the African LIS profession. Its 393 pages comprise 24 chapters by African authors on topics mostly relating to African LIS. Two of these deal with AfLIA's history and achievements (Appiah 2023; Sam, Boakye-Achampong, and Appiah 2023). Given the various failed and faltering continent-wide LIS associations that preceded it, AfLIA is indeed a welcome success story. Various other topics of current interest to African LIS professionals are dealt with. These include information technology issues such as artificial intelligence (Momame, Abifarin, and Imavah 2023), fake news, misinformation and cyberethics, knowledge management, library leadership, mentoring and coaching, needs of visually impaired students, and copyright management. A worthy tribute to Dr Asamoah-Hassan, and a credit to the African library profession.

Still under the heading of "The good", I draw attention to a recent special issue of IFLA journal (vol. 30, no. 1, 2024) which contains fourteen articles based on papers delivered at the thirty-

first BOBCATSSS Conference in 2023. These annual conferences are organised by students of European LIS schools. The name BOBCATSSS is an acronym which derives from the names of the cities of the first nine universities which participated in this initiative (Budapest, Oslo, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Tampere, Stuttgart, Szombathely, and Sheffield). For more background, see the introductory essay by the issue editors (Zaman Shuva et al. 2024). This is an excellent set of papers written mainly by students at these LIS schools. A wide range of topics is covered. One that caught my attention is a report on research towards a "STEAM model for digital fluency skills", where STEAM expands STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to include Arts. This means adding elements of creativity and imagination, and different ways of seeing things. "Digital fluency" or "transliteracy", goes beyond digital literacy in using technology and different tools to "create something new" in different genres, modalities and media (Encheva et al. 2024). Another paper reports on the information behaviour of the Brazil's Terena people. Brazil has 305 ethnic groups speaking 274 languages. In planning a multicultural library to serve a community such as this, cultural factors in information seeking and use must be understood and taken into account (Teixeira et al. 2024).

### The bad

Fake news is nothing new. "Photoshopping" to enhance or distort images has been around for decades. Now artificial intelligence is available to do just that more rapidly and more convincingly. In a BBC report, examples are shown of how AI can be used in electioneering to burnish a candidate's image and to damage that of an opponent. Do you want to damage the image of Mr Trump? Here's a doctored photo of him being led away in handcuffs. Do you want to convey the message that Mr Biden is too old and frail to run for president? Here's one of him lying on a hospital bed. All platforms have rules to prevent this, but researchers at the Center

for Countering Digital Hate have demonstrated experimentally that the rules can easily be circumvented (Wendling 2024).

Lately there has been an increase in articles reporting various kinds of misconduct, cheating and fraud in academia and scholarly communication. Denise Nicholson's blog, [Scholarly Horizons](#), alerted me to several of the following cases.

To get ahead, young and not so young scholars have to publish research in scholarly journals and to get cited. This is hard work, but a "paper mill" can help you. Paper mills are criminal organisations which for a fee produce manuscripts and submit them to academic journals, so as to pad the client's list of publications (Bouter 2024a; 2024b). They constitute a serious threat to scholarship by polluting the scholarly literature and inflating the citation counts of undeserving scholars (Kchozyan 2024; Waruru, n.d.). Another way to pad your CV quickly is to publish in a predatory journal (Grudniewicz et al. 2019). Publishers of these journals can be very devious. One method they use is to "clone" or "hijack" an existing journal. This can be done by creating a carefully imitated fake website for an existing high-status journal, creating a new website for a journal which has ceased publication, using an earlier title of a journal which has changed its title, or by making small changes to the title, for example by adding the word "American" or "International" to the title, or replacing the preposition "of" with "for" (Abalkina 2023; Parray, Loan, and Khan 2024).

Citation counts are important for academic appointment and promotion. More citations, higher status, more research grants, more senior positions... Recently a really sneaky way to increase the number of citations to a person's work is to conceal fabricated references in the metadata of an article at the time when the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is registered. The rogue citations are not visible to the reader, but they are counted by systems that generate citation counts. Quite how this is done is beyond me but read the article (Besançon et al. 2024).

### The ugly

Kathleen McCook's website, "[Ebla to eBooks](#): the preservation and annihilation of memory", is a useful source of current information on the fate of the world's cultural heritage. Ebla? Ebla is the name of an ancient city in what is now Syria, which was destroyed by Akkadian invaders in 2300 BCE. In the ruins of the palace archives, archaeologists found many [clay tablets](#), some intact, some broken, and many fragments, that had been used to record ritual and literary texts as well as bureaucratic information. It is thought to have been the earliest recorded case of the destruction of a library.

Fast forward to our own millennium and libraries continue to be damaged or destroyed. Some suffer damage due to weather events. Kathleen's site recently [reported](#) on the flooding of the Smithtown Library on Long Island, New York state, which housed the Long Island Historical Collections. It was seriously damaged by a [flood](#) in August this year.

Bureaucratic and political decisions can also have disastrous effects on libraries. In the United Kingdom, over 180 public libraries have closed or have become volunteer-run since 2016. A survey by the BBC found that around 950 libraries across the UK had reduced their hours during the past eight years, while 2000 library jobs have been lost due to cut-backs (Lynch, Tomas, and Hattenstone 2024). Whilst most of these smaller public libraries may not have held irreplaceable heritage materials, cutting off a significant proportion of the population from library services also means cutting people off from their heritage. We in LIASA need to remain vigilant. We can never take political support for granted. Many of our municipalities are in serious trouble. Has anyone done some research to find out what the impact of municipal dysfunction is on their public libraries?

To really destroy heritage, as in Ebla, you need drones, missiles and bombs. As of 22 August this year, [UNESCO has verified](#) damage to 435 cultural sites in Ukraine since Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

(continued on page 29)

(Global Gleanings #22 continued from page 28)

This includes 140 religious sites, 215 buildings of historical or artistic interest, 31 museums, 32 monuments, 16 libraries and one archive.

Access to Gaza is difficult if not impossible. In the "fog of war" the air is thick with propaganda and disinformation. No source can be trusted unreservedly. Although it is difficult to assess the damage,

it is clear that there has been an immense amount of destruction due to Israeli bombardment. The BBC has reported on an analysis of aerial photographs by researchers in the USA. It shows that by 29 January this year between 50% and 61% of buildings in the territory had been damaged or destroyed (Palumbo et al. 2024). This includes cultural centres, mosques, museums, archaeological sites, and

educational establishments which housed libraries. According to [Librarians and Archivists with Palestine](#), a "network of self-defined librarians, archivists and information workers in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination", one of the casualties is Israa University, which was blown up by the Israeli forces, completely destroying the complex, including a library and a national museum. The

museum had first been looted by Israeli troops (Librarians and Archivists with Palestine 2024). From whichever side we look at it, the destruction of libraries and archives is an abomination.

**Tailpiece**

No tailpiece in this instalment. To place an amusing tailpiece here would trivialise the horrors that are being perpetrated today in so many warzones across the world.

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## My experience at the IFLA Information Futures Summit 2024

I am Eric Njabulo Mdunge, Head Librarian at Emmarentia Library in Johannesburg, and I am excited to share my experience as a recipient of the Emerging Leader Grant from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

This grant allowed me to attend the IFLA Information Futures Summit 2024 from 30 September to 3 October in Brisbane, Australia.

As the only young librarian from South Africa at the Summit, I was honoured to represent my country among global library leaders. A highlight was the launch of the IFLA Trend Report 2024 which prompted discussions on how libraries can adapt to the changing information landscape. My focus during presentations was on the emerging "Linguistic Age," particularly addressing its challenges and opportunities for scholarly records. I was intrigued by this topic, and I was eager to offer my insights based on the points raised in the speaker's



Eric Njabulo Mdunge

presentation. I also had the privilege of

presenting key themes from the conference, reinforcing the

essential role libraries play in fostering knowledge accessibility.

To wrap up my experience, I participated in a workshop for Emerging Leaders on 4 October, hosted by the State Library of Queensland. This workshop facilitated networking and idea exchange among young leaders, showcasing our collective potential to shape the future of libraries.

This transformative experience has equipped me to enhance library services in South Africa. I extend my gratitude to my colleagues in the City of Johannesburg Library Services for their support and to the National Library of South Africa leadership for their presence at the Summit. I am committed to using these insights to inspire the next generation of library professionals and continue making a positive impact in our communities.

NJABULO MDUNGE  
SENIOR LIBRARIAN  
CITY OF JOBURG LIS

## Patience and perseverance spells success for learner at "Reja Buka"

Meet Letlotlo Molelekoa, a Grade 4 learner from Tharollo Intermediate School in Bluegumbosch, Qwaqwa/Phuthaditjhaba.

I first met her when she was in Grade 1; she was very shy but loved to visit the library. She would come into the library every day after school, take out a book, sit quietly by herself and read. When she was in Grade 2, I invited her to take part in the read-aloud library activity along with other learners. It was then I learned that she had a speech disorder; she stammered.

My plan was to give her support and encourage her to read in front of her peers to gain confidence. I empathized with her stammering condition as my daughter also stammers.

In 2023, I invited interested Grade 3 learners to take part in the Reja Buka Reading Festival at library level, with Letlotlo amongst them. She wanted to participate in the Sesotho Spelling Bee, and I gave her the prescribed book to read. I and the Sesotho teacher selected some Sesotho words for her to practice on. Because of her stammering she struggled with the pronunciation, but she was good at spelling. In the library-level competition, she did very well and came out first, progressing to the municipal level.

Letlotlo was happy and excited but there was more work



Letlotlo Molelekoa

to be done to help her improve her pronunciation. Hence for some time we focused more on practicing the pronunciation before we continued with the spelling practice. The strategy worked, and Letlotlo progressed through both the municipal and district-level of the competition, reaching the provincial level. I asked her mother to help and encourage Letlotlo with her reading and spelling at home. Through rapid reading, rapid spelling, and help from her mother and a teacher, we saw

significant improvement. Letlotlo had gained confidence and was looking forward to taking part at the provincial level.

Unfortunately, the Grade 3 Sesotho Spelling Bee judges at the provincial level were impatient with Letlotlo's pronunciation before spelling, causing her to feel under pressure and in the rush, making spelling mistakes. Despite this, Letlotlo's mother was happy and expressed her gratitude towards me and Ms. Mokoena for not giving up on her daughter. She said she never thought that her daughter would make it this far due to her stammer.

Early this year, Letlotlo participated again in Reja Buka – this time in the Grade 4 Sesotho Spelling Bee. She was more confident, and she reached the district level completion.

This case study shows us that when a learner with a special condition like Letlotlo is given support and opportunity, she can excel beyond expectation. This is a lesson for all teachers and librarians not to deny learners with a disability or disorder an opportunity, but rather to tap into their abilities and develop their skills. Letlotlo is a brilliant learner and must be credited for this and not be denied opportunities because of her special condition.

As librarians, when we involve the learners in our different library activities, we need to be



patient and help them discover and develop their reading abilities to read for meaning and understanding.

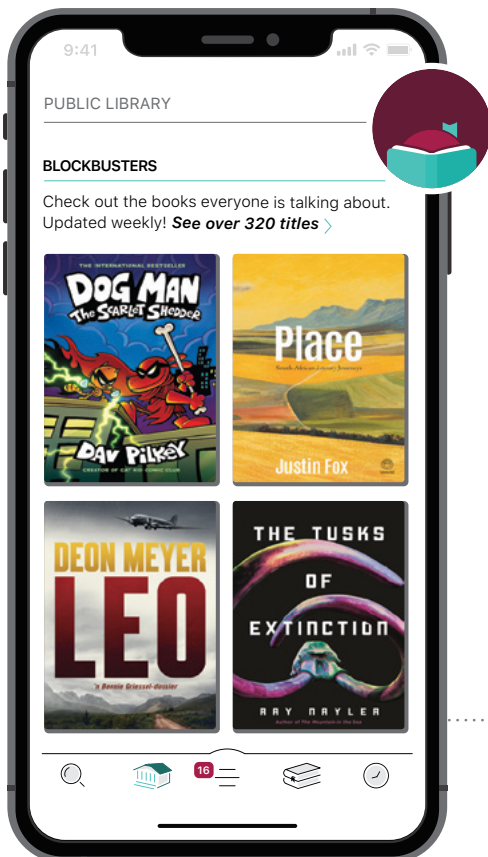
Despite her stammer, Letlotlo loves to spend time in the library and borrow books to read at home. Her visible love of reading is an inspiration for other learners to follow her example.

GIVENESS MAUNATLALA  
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN  
THAROLLO SCHOOL & COMMUNITY LIBRARY  
QWA-QWA

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Learners from the Elephante Daycare in Retreat enjoy the new Toy Library



Tracey Muir Rix (LIS Children's Coordinator), Ronel Viljoen (PC Chair Cllr), Local Ward Cllr, Edwina Africa (LIS Head) and Waseefa Achmat (Retreat Library Senior Librarian)

## City of Cape Town libraries open the door to a world of learning thro' play

The City's Library Information Services collaborated with the Community Arts & Culture Department to launch 12 new Early Childhood Development (ECD) Resource Libraries, also known as toy libraries, in October 2024.

This expansion brings the total number of these valuable play areas to 24 across the City. The

toys available in these libraries will offer children a wealth of educational resources, helping to nurture a love for learning through play.

On Monday, 14 October, Retreat Library was the place to be for the official launch of the Toy Libraries. The event featured a lively programme, where guests witnessed the unveiling of the diverse toys available at the Toy

Libraries. Children from the local ECD Elephante Daycare delighted attendees with heartfelt musical performances before getting a chance to explore the array of toys on display.

The libraries which will have toy library sections include Bonteheuwel, Delft, Dunoon, Elsie's River, Gugulethu, Hangberg, Khayelitsha, Lotus River, Mamre, Retreat, Valhalla

Park and Westridge Libraries.

Libraries will also incorporate the newly launched toy libraries into their quarterly holiday programmes as well as the popular "1000 Stories Before School" reading campaign. To access the toys, ECDs will need a LiBee Membership card, which they can learn more about at their local library.

TARCIA EIMAN



Kim Albertyn, Journalist Nabeelah Mohedeen and Suraya Davids-Kasu



Voortrekker High School learners @ the Journalism workshop

## Journalism writing workshops @ Wynberg Library

On 16 September 2024, Wynberg Library commemorated Fine Free Week and International Literacy Day (8 September) by hosting its first ever journalism writing workshop at the library.

The media club at Voortrekker High school was approached about the event and the teacher in charge immediately expressed an interest in attending the

workshop. Nabeelah Mohedeen, a journalist from the Athlone community newspaper, facilitated the workshop. The idea for the journalism-writing workshop came from library staff member Suraya Davids-Kasu. A total of 14 learners ranging from Grades 8 to 11 along with the teacher from the media club attended.

The workshop focused on how to start a school newsletter, the

topic provided by the school. Tips on how to start a newsletter such as format, quoting sources and the importance of editing were discussed. The session was engaging and there were many good questions from the group. The teacher expressed her appreciation for the workshop, saying that they will be using this information, and hopefully publish their first newsletter in

the new term. The teacher was also interested in having similar workshops in the near future.

Wynberg Library hopes to extend the journalism-writing workshop to other high schools as well.

KIM ALBERTYN PL(SA)  
LIBRARIAN, WYNBERG LIBRARY

## Lansdowne Library celebrates World Book Day!

Lansdowne Library celebrated World Book Day 2024 by hosting a fun and interactive puppet show for Jumpstart Pre-School and Educare.

A total of 77 children attended two sessions over two days. The show, performed by staff member, Nicole Collinet, and Yeboneer, Alwanga Matutu, told the story of a little farm dog looking for a friend.

The story was narrated in a very animated way by Zuraya Sassman, who led the show and interaction with the audience. Children in attendance were also treated to lovely storytelling by Feroza Amardien and Samra Fisher from Rylands Library. The programme concluded with a sing-along and dance session which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Thank you to all who helped make this programme successful and fun!

NICOLE COLLINET  
CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN, LANSDOWNE LIBRARY



Feroza Amardien

## Leandri (5) celebrates 1000 stories milestone

part of the "1000 Stories before School" (SBS) reading campaign, which has been running for just over two years.

Five-year-old Leandri Roodman reached this impressive milestone and her mom, Durbanville Librarian, Conette Koorts Roodman, shared that Leandri loves story time and enjoys picking out her own books.

"She will tell me about her day every night and then it is story time. At the moment we read two stories in the evenings. She started reading words by spelling them and pronouncing them, so she does a story like that (currently Tippiie stories). I then read whichever story she wants to listen to" said Conette.

To mark this special occasion, the Durbanville Library hosted a certificate ceremony at the library on 19 August 2024. LIS mascot, LiBee the friendly reading bee, shared this special moment with Leandri.

The 1000 Stories before School campaign encourages pregnant moms to read to their unborn baby from 26 weeks of pregnancy as this is when the baby starts to hear sounds outside of the womb. The aim is to reinforce the importance of bonding through reading and singing as the unborn baby gets used to the sound of their mother's voice.

Children who are frequently read to tend to develop better language and listening skills, as

well as a lasting love for reading that extends into adulthood. This practice also teaches them how to navigate social situations, solve problems and unleash their imagination. In addition, the 1000SBS programme has a range of incentives as learners make their way to 1000 books, including certificates of recognition, medals and so much more!

Parents can register their children for the 1000 stories before school campaign at any City of Cape Town library.

TARCIA EIMAN  
PROFESSIONAL OFFICER:  
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS, CCT LIS



Leandri Roodman

The City of Cape Town's Durbanville Library recently celebrated its first young patron to read 1,000 stories as

## Huguenot Square Library Career Expo leaves a lasting impression

On 10 April 2024, Huguenot Square Library hosted a Career Expo for the Grade 9 learners of Perseverance High School.

The event was hosted in collaboration with Stellenbosch University, CPU, Kamva Youth, Western Cape College of Nursing, Equilibrium, the National Sea and Rescue Institute, The Paragon Generation and TPTT Academy. A total of 274 learners attended the highly successful event, with learners gaining invaluable knowledge on which subjects are essential for their desired institutions. The various exhibitors not only presented

to the students, but also spent time interacting with them in an educational context.

Each institute played a pivotal role in this initiative and all parties involved contributed to making it such a tremendous success. This career expo left a lasting impression on the students and the 274 attendees left with newfound knowledge, life skills and a sense of empowerment. Many expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to learn and connect with potential future institutes.

CHERYL PETERSEN  
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN, HUGUENOT SQUARE





Firesenbet Adela Geda

In recent times, there has been an intensified discussion around the environmental impact of e-books versus paper books, particularly in the light of deforestation.

This article delves into the environmental benefits of e-books compared to paper books, highlighting the potential role of digital formats in combating climate change.

The manufacturing of paper books contributes to deforestation, leading to environmental issues such as habitat loss and decreased carbon dioxide absorption.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that deforestation is responsible for about 10-15% of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions. Turning trees into paper requires a lot of energy, uses a large amount of water, and releases harmful chemicals into the environment. Paper book production and

## The green library revolution: e-books vs paper books and the environmental impact

distribution involve transportation, which increases carbon emissions, significantly impacting the carbon footprint.

E-books are very environmentally friendly as they can be duplicated infinitely without additional environmental impact. They have lower energy consumption compared to physical books and the carbon footprint from manufacturing and disposing of electronic reading devices is relatively low.

Traditional libraries need a lot of physical space for paper books, requiring climate control systems that increase energy usage and the carbon footprint. E-books eliminate the need for physical storage, reducing infrastructure and energy usage.

Shifting towards e-book collections can improve the accessibility of libraries. E-books are easily accessible to users from any location around the globe, offering increased flexibility and convenience. This shift is particularly beneficial for students and researchers in remote locations, who might not have straightforward access to physical library resources.

Embracing e-books supports the "Green Libraries" initiative, aiming to reduce environmental impact by transitioning from paper-based to digital collections.

This change helps cut down on deforestation, energy use, and the carbon footprint. Green Libraries are making a positive contribution to environmental health and biodiversity, ensuring a sustainable future for all living creatures.

E-book libraries contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing the need for physical materials and energy, helping to save natural resources, cutting down on infrastructure and transport, and promoting eco-friendly habits.

Although e-books offer significant environmental advantages, numerous individuals continue to favour traditional paper books. The physical sensation of holding a book, the scent of its pages, and the pleasure derived from exploring tangible collections are cherished aspects for many readers. Nevertheless, it's crucial to realize that this fondness for paper books does entail environmental implications.

We cherish the tactile experience of reading physical books, but we must consider the environmental impact of paper production and transportation. There is a growing need to shift towards more sustainable practices.

Moving from traditional

paper books to e-books marks a significant advancement in decreasing the environmental footprint associated with reading and publishing. Opting for e-books contributes to forest conservation, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, and reduces waste. Although the sentimental and cultural significance of paper books cannot be overlooked, the pressing need to combat climate change and safeguard our environment strongly supports the shift towards e-books.

Libraries and educational institutions play a crucial role in promoting eco-friendly reading practices by expanding their e-book collections and advocating for digital literacy skills. As readers, we can also support efforts to enhance environmental sustainability in the publishing industry by embracing e-books.

Traditional paper books are appealing, but e-books are more eco-friendly. It's essential to embrace sustainable practices, including our reading preferences, in the fight against climate change.

FIRESENBET ADELA GEDA

MANAGER: UNISA LIS

ETHIOPIAN REGIONAL LEARNING CENTRE

ADDIS ABABA



Zukiswa Maya

Change is inevitable in both personal and professional spaces, and managing it effectively is a crucial skill. Leaders and managers, in particular, need strong change management abilities.

In recent years, I have faced significant changes in my professional and personal life, including moving provinces, changing jobs, adapting to new languages and cultures, and transitioning from a traditional university to a university of technology. The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded these changes, forcing libraries to adjust their plans and services.

## Change Management: sink or swim

As a middle manager, I had to navigate these changes, provide direction, and maintain stability during uncertain times.

A new leader at my workplace introduced new strategies, processes, and terminology changes. We had to adapt quickly. The LIS sector is rapidly evolving with developments like the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and AI tools significantly impacting academia and librarianship. Leaders had to rethink and repurpose for the future, leaving no choice but to adapt or fail.

Individuals respond to change in diverse ways: they either accept or resist it. Resistance often stems from fear of the unknown and a desire to maintain the status quo. I chose to accept change, especially in my professional life, as resisting would not have been beneficial. This period of change was an opportunity to learn new ways of doing things, acquire new knowledge and skills, take on new projects, and accept corrections and criticism. The choice was clear: fail or succeed. I chose to swim and developed the

necessary skills.

All change involves loss, such as giving up familiar routines, and sometimes the loss is substantial, affecting position, power, and networks of friends and colleagues. It is important to give yourself transitional space to grieve, let go of the old, and move on to the unknown. As a manager, I am still learning to master change management. However, I have found that introducing changes gradually, focusing on one or two at a time until they become ingrained in people's habits, is more effective. This approach may be time-consuming but allows for better adaptation to new conditions.

Change management requires patience, resilience, and a willingness to learn and adapt continuously. Effective change management requires visionary leadership characterised by risk-taking, effective communication, and the ability to gain trust and lead by example. Clearly defining roles is essential, and it is important to recognise and monitor any changes in

roles throughout the process.

If roles change, further training and support must be provided. Embracing change is crucial for staying relevant and resilient in an ever-evolving world. Adaptability skills are vital for personal and professional growth. Adopting a growth mindset enables you to view challenges as opportunities for gaining experience and developing new skills.

Change can be incredibly stressful, so it is important to have a support system, live a balanced life, and find time for hobbies. Enhancing your emotional intelligence is also key. Effective change management can make the library stronger and more resilient, accurately anticipating opportunities and adopting suitable strategies to capitalise on them.

ZUKISWA MAYA

DEPUTY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

CLIENT SERVICES

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FS

(Disclaimer: This is not an academic paper, it is the practitioner's viewpoint or opinion)



Dr Moira Gundu

## Contagious digitalities in schools: the role of school libraries in information inoculation, and immunity

Librarians (AASL) emphasises that information literacy is essential for students to thrive in a digital society (AASL, 2018). By integrating information literacy into the curriculum, school libraries can play a crucial role in inoculating students against the negative effects of misinformation.

To build resilience to misinformation, school libraries can implement several strategies. Hosting workshops focused on media literacy can help students learn to critically evaluate digital content. These sessions, which include hands-on activities that engage students in real world scenarios, align with suggestions of Mihailidis (2018). School librarians can curate collections of credible resources, guiding students toward reliable information. Through the provision and access to academic databases and reputable websites, libraries serve as a safeguard against misleading information.

Collaboration with educators is another crucial strategy. Librarians can partner with teachers to design lessons that incorporate information literacy skills, enhancing classroom learning, and reinforcing the importance of critical evaluation of digital content (Kahne & Bowyer, 2018). Moreover, fostering an environment of critical inquiry and open dialogue helps cultivate digital immunity, the ability to recognise and resist

misinformation. Libraries can create spaces for discussions about digital citizenship and the ethical implications of information sharing.

Incorporating AI tools can also improve the digital immunity of students. These tools can help identify credible sources and flag potential misinformation, empowering students to make informed decisions about the information they consume (Franz & Bowers, 2020). As information continues to flow at unprecedented speeds, the role of school libraries in education will only grow in importance.

They are not just places to borrow books, they are dynamic learning environments that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and digital citizenship.

Investing in school libraries and supporting their initiatives can ensure that students are equipped to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. This is not merely a matter of academic achievement; it is about fostering informed citizens capable of navigating the complexities of digital life. Through this lens, the importance of school libraries becomes clear: they are essential in preparing students to face the challenges of the digital age, making them not just consumers of information, but informed, critical thinkers ready to engage with the world around them.

DR. MOIRA GUNDU (PH.D.)  
HEAD INFORMATION AND RESEARCH  
HILTON COLLEGE

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### About the Author

Moira Gundu is an educator and knowledge management professional whose career spans governments, schools, and universities. Dedicated to transforming education, she focusses on research, curriculum development, and innovative teaching practices. Passionate about empowering students, Gundu emphasises inquiry-based learning and access to quality information to foster critical thinking and problem solving. She advocates for collaboration and knowledge exchange between educators, students, and institutions and leverages technology to enhance learning at all levels, from households to governments. Her expertise has been presented at national and international conferences and presentations, including Unisa, IBSC, LIASA, and Research conferences.

## 5<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution user services: a step toward human-centric libraries

Libraries are not left behind in the 5th Industrial Revolution (5IR), which combines human innovation and technological technology.

Emerging technologies are transforming library user services, which are vital to library operations. Even so, human-focused technological alternatives are encouraged.

### 5IR context

5IR differs from the 4IR as it places emphasis on automation, artificial intelligence (AI) and the internet of things (IoT). The 5IR fuses technology-based innovations with human-centred principles or philosophy such as compassion, creativity, and ethics, as opposed to 4IR. This trend is visible in how libraries are reimagining user services to improve user experience, social responsibility and technology.

### New tech changes in user services

#### 1. AI and Machine Learning:

User services employ AI and machine learning tools. Cataloguing administration and issuing out of materials are facilitated by automated technologies, thus lowering library staff workloads. AI systems can curate personalised recommendations that match the clients' searches and reading interests based on borrowing history. This innovation allows for effective and tailored services and fosters a human-AI connection.

#### 2. Self-service technologies:

The advent of mobile apps, and self-service kiosks are embedded in library user services. Self-service allows library workers to interact at a complex level with clients to help when needed. These 5IR-inspired technologies are meant to enhance human contact, not

replace it, but create less queues and focus on assisting in complex information needs.

#### 3. Blockchain and enhanced security:

Blockchain technologies, initially known for cryptocurrency, are being researched for tracking and validating resource movement in user services. Blockchain technologies facilitate decentralised and secure transactions and prevent tampering with borrowing records. This is imperative in a data-driven and sensitive society with key concerns on privacy and security as blockchain provides transparency and security to enable a trustworthy relationship between libraries and clients.

#### 4. Internet of Things (IoT):

IoT combines physical and digital resources by employing smart shelves and radio frequency identification (RFID) tags in library

material. This link allows real-time tracking and optimal physical material organisation, making user services efficient and user-friendly. This is a game changer in the location of materials that get lost in libraries.

### A shift in human-focused user services

These technological advancements enhance efficiency and modernisation in line with the 5IR's priority on human-centred growth. Libraries are strategically employing technological advancements that promote client wellness and engagement. Some examples are:

#### 1. User experience and personalisation:

The future of user services rests on fluid and intuitive user experiences. AI and IoT are employed to customise library user interactions, encompassing

(continued on page 41)



The DCS Choir mesmerises the crowd at the award ceremony

## 2024 Funda Mzantsi Championship: A historic celebration of Literacy

The National Library of South Africa (NLSA) in collaboration with the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and George Municipality hosted the 14th edition of the annual Funda Mzantsi Championships (FMC) in George, Western Cape from 23 to 27 September 2024.

The FMC is an annual reading competition that brings together participants from various provinces to showcase their literary skills in the spirited yet educational showdown. Book clubs representing different regions and languages converge in George to celebrate their shared love for reading and engage in this friendly but intense competition.

The 14th edition marked a very significant milestone; for the first time since inception, visually impaired individuals were able to showcase their literacy skills by reading books in Braille. This



Elvis November from the Northern Cape reading a braille book in Afrikaans

was a groundbreaking moment which reflects our ongoing commitment to ensure inclusivity and accessibility to all citizens regardless of any disability.

The atmosphere at this year's edition was nothing short of extraordinary; participants displayed impressive

preparations, showcasing their reading and speaking abilities. The standard of the competition continues to improve each year and has become a national event that fosters not only a love for reading but also an appreciation for critical thinking.

As the event continues to

grow, there is hope that future editions will see even greater participation from people living with disabilities, further improving the literacy landscape of South Africa.

In profiling the project, the National Librarian and CEO of the NLSA, Kepi Madumo, encouraged all South Africans to support this reading initiative to ensure that we improve literacy levels in the country. "As we look into the future, I urge every South African to rally behind the Funda Mzantsi national reading initiative; let us unite to ensure that the love of reading is not just a dream but a tangible reality for all", he said.

The 2024 Funda Mzantsi Championships was a historic occasion which set a new standard for inclusivity and proving that the love of reading can go beyond barriers. FMC continues to inspire readers and learners across South Africa.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SOUTH AFRICA

### Creating a love for reading one community initiative at a time

On 9 September 2024, Lotus River Public Library celebrated International Literacy Day in our own unique way with the launch of our very first Toy Library.

The toy library comprises of various materials that will be shared with Early Childhood Development Centres (ECD) in the community. ECD centres will have the opportunity to visit the library and schedule sessions that will enhance the learning experience for little minds.

The Library is very excited about this new initiative and plan to rollout "play dates" with the various community ECD's.



The launch included several ECD's, Mikhulu Trust who did a presentation for teachers, and the Department of Health which presented a demonstration to the learners on hygiene.

Lotus River Public Library is a small community library with passionate staff that is creating a love for reading one community initiative at a time.

AMINA ESSA  
SENIOR LIBRARIAN

From left: Amina Essa, Fenancia Magazi, Andre Bailey (LiBee Mascot), Fatiema Stanley, Ammaarah Abrahams and Lois Wilson. (Library Staff)

**JOBURG PUBLIC LIBRARIES CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL LITERACY MONTH**



Emmarentia Library



Jacqueline Motoma (GDE), Jaqueline Sebone (Spelling Bee winner) and Realogile High School Teacher

During September 2024, several programmes were held at public libraries across Joburg to celebrate International Literacy Day, but this article will focus on two standout events.

Emmarentia Library buzzed with laughter and creativity with approximately one hundred children aged 5 to 8 years. The day began with a captivating magic show that dazzled young audiences, igniting their imaginations. Following the performance, staff members led a cosy story time, sharing engaging tales that transported the children to magical worlds.

Next came digital story time, where interactive animations brought stories to life, fostering creativity among the kids. The festivities included colouring activities and a face painting station, transforming little faces into vibrant works of art.

“Teachers expressed gratitude to Emmarentia Library for including their children in this fun celebration. This event highlighted the importance of reading and literacy but also created lasting memories,” said Nobuntu Mpendulo, Director of Joburg Public Libraries.

Paterson Park Library recently hosted a successful Spelling Bee competition, emphasizing the importance of literacy and

education. This event, organised by the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services (CoJLIS) in collaboration with the Gauteng Department of Education, engaged learners and educators in discussions

on combating illiteracy in South Africa. Dr Johannes Masenya from CoJLIS highlighted the role of libraries in promoting literacy, while Mr Kaizer Phosa from the Gauteng Department

of Education stressed the importance of partnerships in fostering a reading culture. Participants engaged in discussions about youth perspectives and community-based solutions to illiteracy.

The Spelling Bee was the day's highlight, with Grade 8 learners competing using words related to online safety and digital literacy. Jacqueline Sebone from Kwabhekilanga High School emerged as the winner, earning applause from the audience. All participants received certificates, and special thanks were given to Ghetto Snobbs for providing stationery packs. This event marked a meaningful step toward addressing illiteracy in South Africa and inspiring future literacy initiatives.

CYRIL RASETLHAPA  
ERIC NJABULO MDUNGE  
SENIOR LIBRARIANS  
COJ PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**RHODES UNIVERSITY HOSTS PROVINCIAL BOOK FAIR POP-UP EVENT: A CELEBRATION OF LITERATURE AND CULTURE**



4:00 PM. Due to adverse weather, an alternative venue was used, and we went to the Library Veranda on the ground floor. The target audience included students and staff of Rhodes University community and aspiring young authors. The event was coordinated with the Eastern Cape Bookfair organisers, who facilitated logistics and overall management.

The library played a crucial role in hosting the event, taking advantage of its high volume of foot traffic and visibility. It assisted in promoting the event through its marketing channels and social media and provided logistical support, including setup assistance and staff to manage the event effectively.

The Provincial Book Fair Pop-Up was a vibrant platform for showcasing a diverse collection

of books. Highlights included book displays featuring local and regional publications and interactive sessions encouraging engagement with literature. A key attraction was a draw for students, allowing them to win books from the displayed collection. This engaging feature helped to generate excitement and increased participation among attendees.

The event successfully attracted a significant turnout, with students and staff from various faculties joining to celebrate literature. By bringing together a diverse audience, the event fostered a sense of community engagement and highlighted the universal appeal of reading.

SIZWE MABENA  
PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN: LEARNING SUPPORT  
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Rhodes University Library hosted a vibrant Pop-Up Event in collaboration with Lumkile's Book Joint, the primary organiser of the Provincial Book Fair, which took place from 9 to 10 September 2024, transforming the library into a hub of literary and cultural celebration.

The event was held in the Library Quad from 10:00 AM to



## SAHRC Library donates books in celebration of International Literacy Day

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) Library in collaboration with their Limpopo Provincial Office celebrated International Literacy Day by donating books and human rights materials to Leweng Primary School in Moletjie Ga-Phago in the Capricorn District on 6 September 2024 and Blaauwboschkuil Primary School in Masakhane Settlement in Belabela in the Waterberg District

Municipality on 20 September 2024. The visit was to give effect to the right to education through Social Harmony National Effort (SHiNE), and to enhance human rights awareness.

International Literacy Day (ILD) celebrations take place worldwide annually to remind the public of the importance of literacy and to advance the literacy agenda towards a more literate and sustainable society.

South Africa ranked last out of 57 countries assessed in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, which tested the reading ability of 400,000 students globally in 2021.

One of the issues raised as a reason behind the low literacy rates in South Africa was the lack of access to reading materials. Through this calendar day initiative, the SAHRC aimed to take the first step in

providing primary school learners with reading materials and encouraging them to find joy in reading. The donation of books and reading materials for the worthy cause of helping learners to read again was well received by both schools and community members.

BENFORD RABATSETA  
HEAD OF LIBRARY: SAHRC



Alldays Primary School dancers



Director LAS Ms Mangotlo Winnie (centre right) with officials and participants

## International Literacy Day celebrations @ Alldays Public Library

UNESCO states that since 1967, the annual celebrations of International Literacy Day (ILD) have taken place on 8 September around the world to remind policymakers, practitioners, and the public of the critical importance of literacy for creating a more literate, just, peaceful, and sustainable society.

This initiative of UNESCO to put a spotlight on literacy is especially important as we are faced with communities who don't see the importance of reading. It is through such initiatives

that we repeatedly remind our communities, schools, policy makers and other stakeholders about the importance of reading.

Capricorn District Library in collaboration with Alldays Library used this day to reach a large societal group to elaborate on the importance of literacy and the programmes that can be found at libraries. International Literacy Day was celebrated on 6 September 2024 at Alldays Community Hall, Blouberg Municipality in Capricorn District, Limpopo, with theme "**Promoting multilingual education: Literacy**

**for mutual understanding and peace**". The aim was to promote access to libraries, reading, writing and literacy through poems, dramas and debates; to encourage children and the community at large to appreciate and explore the pleasures of reading.

Different activities took place to encourage the use of the library as an information centre, resource centre and fountain of knowledge in the community. Learners from both Alldays primary and secondary schools participated through dramas,

poetry, reading aloud to name a few in order to demonstrate to attendees that not only reading activities take place in libraries, but also activities that promote social cohesion and help children in finding their talent, while at the same time being literate.

We continue to call on all members of society to use libraries as the pillar of information and social cohesion for nation building.

MALEBANA SELLO  
LIBRARIAN: CAPRICORN DISTRICT LIBRARY  
LIMPOPO

“PROMOTING LITERACY FOR A WORLD IN TRANSITION: BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND PEACEFUL SOCIETY”

The Rustenburg Municipality Library and Information Services (LIS) joined the world in commemorating International Literacy Day (8 September) with the main programme held at the Marikana Community Library.

Four primary schools participated in a spelling bee competition. It was interesting to watch learners show their commitment and ability to spell with ease. The broader community joined hands to ensure the success of the programme with the support of stakeholders from around Rustenburg (i.e. New Leaf Organisation, Siza Bantu Upliftment Centre, Metropolitan, Tharisa Mine, councillors and the author of *I am Moditile Pholo*).

Joseph Masilo, who originates from Tlhabane township in Rustenburg Municipality and author of *I am Moditile Pholo* (who was famously known as Raithwana in the local drama, *Lesilo rula mo baswing*) was the keynote speaker. He encouraged and motivated the learners and community on the power and importance of reading and writing for comprehension.

International Literacy month was celebrated throughout the various libraries in Rustenburg Municipality. On 16 September 2024, Karlienpark Community Library with the support of Glencore CSI division and New Leaf held a debate on the topic “Print reading vs electronic reading”. Four schools divided into two groups took part in the competition and Karlienpark



Marikana Community Library: top 3 Spelling Bee participants with Joseph Masilo



Karlienpark Library debate session: winners Karlienpark Primary School learners in check blue school uniform and Zinniaville Secondary School learners in blue uniform with Rustenburg Libraries staff



Thanya Institution of Learning debate participants

Viva Primary School debate participants

Primary School won the first section and Zinniaville Secondary School the second.

On 17 September 2024, Rustenburg Public Library invited Thanya Institute of Learning and Viva Primary School for a debate on the topic “Printed books vs electronic, which one is better?” Thanya Institute of learning won the competition.

Monakato Community Library held story telling sessions for the surrounding preschools on the 10 September. Libraries play an important role in fostering

literacy at an early age, knowing the importance and role played by storytelling in shaping and preparing children to be lifelong readers and introducing them to libraries at a young age.

Mathopestad Info hub situated within the premises of Lesele Secondary School held their literacy day celebration on 19 September. Learners were reminded of the benefits of being avid readers, how to improve reading skills, and reading for pleasure.

Rustenburg LIS believes in

nurturing and shaping the lives of its citizens and with what was achieved, and the children’s commitment and zeal, the LIS commits to sustaining and maintaining what it has started. There is a plan to roll out reading, spelling bees and debate competitions within all 45 wards of the municipality in partnership with key stakeholders including the Department of Education culminating in September 2025 during literacy month.

M.S MOALUSI

LIS UNIT HEAD, RUSTENBURG MUNICIPALITY

Raising Awareness: NWU Library’s commitment to students with Special Needs

On 21 August 2024, the North West University (NWU) Disability Rights Unit at Potchefstroom Campus hosted an impactful event aimed at raising awareness about the needs of students with disabilities.

The Library and Information Service (LIS) was invited to participate in this significant occasion, highlighting the vital role it plays in supporting students with special needs.

The event was a profound eye-opener, as it successfully brought together various departments, highlighting the collaborative efforts required to ensure an inclusive and supportive educational environment. As a



key stakeholder in the support of teaching and learning, the LIS recognised the importance of this opportunity to engage directly with people living with disabilities and special needs. The event offered a valuable opportunity to meet with these students, discuss their unique challenges, and explain the range of aid and resources available to them within

the library. We were also able to promote the new disability centre currently under construction in the library. This centre is designed to further enhance the library’s ability to support students with disabilities, offering a dedicated space equipped with the latest resources and technology tailored to their needs.

A noteworthy aspect of the

event was the interest shown by able-bodied students who demonstrated genuine curiosity and eagerness to learn about the support and resources available for their peers living with disabilities. One example was when one student mentioned that they noticed a wheelchair lift on the stairs in another building on campus which underscored the broader awareness among the student body about these resources.

The event served as a reminder of the importance of fostering an inclusive campus environment, where all students, regardless of their abilities, feel supported and empowered. The LIS remains committed to playing a crucial role in this mission, continually striving to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of its services.

LINDI MAHLANGU AND TEBANE KHOZA



Preparations for championships



Participation at Funda Mzantsi championship

## Moletjie stars shine at Funda Mzantsi championships yet again

On 27 April 2024, a new book club centre was officially launched at Mmakgabo Secondary School in Moletjie village.

This initiative was made possible through the proceeds from the Funda Mzantsi Championship held in 2023, where learners demonstrated their passion for reading and literary excellence by winning in all provincial categories further winning the National Sepedi Spelling Bee. Refiloe Shai as the language educator played a vital role in the preparations for all the competitions.

The book club centre serves as a hub for fostering a love for reading and enhancing literacy skills. It has been instrumental in preparing members of the Mmakgabo Book Club and the



Dynamic Book Club for the 2024 Funda Mzantsi Championships. The hard work paid off, as six learners from Moletjie Village represented Limpopo Province at the national competition and achieved victories across various categories.

Moletjie Public Library played

a crucial role in the establishment and ongoing success of the book club by offering a wide range of reading materials, from novels to educational resources; the library has become the heart of the book club. The library offers support in the coordination of Limpopo Department of Sports, Arts and

Culture book club registration, preparation and financial support. The library further offers a welcoming space for learners to explore different genres, engage in group discussions, and improve their literacy skills. The continued partnership is a significant step in promoting education and literacy in the community, empowering young readers to excel and inspiring a culture of reading.

The book club coordinator, Mr Makama Junior, an enthusiastic, energetic educator at Mmakgabo Secondary School with a passion for reading, accompanied the Moletjie representatives to the Funda Mzantsi Championship held in George from 23 – 27 September 2024.

ERICA MOSA MAPHOTOMA  
LIBRARIAN-MOLETJIE PUBLIC LIBRARY

## Nurturing Academic Excellence

The Central University of Technology (CUT) Library's role in student success

The library plays a vital role in fostering student success through various initiatives designed to support learning, research, and personal development.

Academic libraries continually seek ways to demonstrate that using library resources and services positively impacts students' academic achievements and overall learning experiences. CUT has aligned itself with the university's broader commitment to student success. On 17 October 2024, the CUT library launched the Exam Outreach Programme.

The primary objective of the Exam Outreach initiative is to enhance awareness of library resources and services tailored to support students during the examination period. This programme aims to ensure that all potential candidates are informed, motivated, and equipped with the necessary resources and facilities to excel in their upcoming exams. Additionally, it aligns with the CUT library's strategic objective to create awareness of Library



and Information Services (LIS) and their benefits. The target audience for this initiative includes all CUT students preparing for examinations.

A variety of platforms, including the library website, Blackboard, and social media, were used to promote the initiative. Faculty members were informed through emails sent by our Faculty Librarians, and an information brochure was designed and distributed both digitally and physically to

all students. On the day of the outreach programme, LIS staff visited classrooms, circulated the university, and distributed exam outreach pamphlets. They also provided students with gifts such as pens and rulers to encourage participation.

Students responded positively to the programme, expressing appreciation for the resources and support provided. Many found the initiative helpful in alleviating exam-related stress and enhancing their preparedness.

Feedback indicated that the outreach efforts, such as the distribution of pamphlets and gifts, made students feel more engaged and motivated. The personal interactions with LIS staff also fostered a sense of community and support, which many students valued.

Overall, the programme not only raised awareness about library resources but also encouraged students to use these tools effectively, contributing to their confidence and readiness for exams.

### Conclusion

The Exam Outreach Programme is a crucial initiative aimed at levelling the playing field for students in underserved communities. By providing essential resources and support, the programme helps students build confidence and improve their exam performance, ultimately creating pathways to greater academic and career opportunities.

AMOS MKAM & ZUKI MAYA



## Celebrating Language Diversity

International Translation Day and the launch of the Multilingual Reading Corner at CUT

Library partnerships play a crucial role in enhancing visibility and engagement within academic communities.

By collaborating, libraries can significantly boost their presence and impact. The CUT library is dedicated to forming strategic partnerships that align with the university's objectives. On 30 September 2024, the library, in collaboration with the language services at the Bloemfontein campus, celebrated International Translation Day and launched the Multilingual Reading Corner.

International Translation Day, observed annually on 30 September, honours the vital contributions of translators, interpreters, and language professionals in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. This day highlights the importance of translation in fostering understanding, peace, and cooperation among nations. The event began with an opening address from Prof. Ntsoaki Malebo, Senior Director of the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, who welcomed attendees and emphasised the crucial role of translators in our communities. With its eleven official languages, South Africa exemplifies the need for translation services to ensure that all voices are heard and understood.



Dr Dzingwa (CUT Registrar) cutting the ribbon with Prof Malebo (Senior Director Centre for Innovation, Learning & Teaching)

The day's agenda featured insightful presentations from various speakers. Nikiwe Mathebula from PanSALB highlighted the organisation's mission to promote multilingualism and support the development of all South African official languages, including Khoi, San, Nama, and South African Sign Language. Zuki Maya, Deputy University Librarian for Client Services, discussed the importance of translation in cultural exchange and preservation, noting how it fosters mutual understanding across diverse linguistic backgrounds. She also highlighted the benefits

of the new reading corner for students.

The reading corner aims to provide a comfortable space for reading, learning, and relaxation, promoting literacy by offering accessible books that enhance literacy skills and encourage regular reading habits. The official launch included a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by University Registrar Dr Dzingwa, who encouraged students to make use of the reading corner. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks and closing remarks from Dr Xolani Khohliso, Director of Curriculum and Staff Development.

This celebration not only marked a significant day for language diversity but also reinforced the university's commitment to fostering an inclusive academic environment.

The library plans to host a variety of activities to promote literacy and engagement, such as:

- **Author Readings and Signings:** Inviting local authors to read from their works and engage with students.
- **Workshops:** Writing, storytelling, or translation sessions to enhance language skills.
- **Book Clubs:** Students and staff can discuss selected readings, fostering a sense of community.
- **Literacy Events:** Celebrating special days like World Book Day, Literacy Day, or National Book Week with activities and competitions.

These events will help cultivate a love for reading and support literacy development.

AMOS MKAM  
FACULTY LIBRARIAN: HUMANITIES

ZUKI MAYA  
DEPUTY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN  
CLIENT SERVICES  
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
FREE STATE

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borrowing suggestions to return notifications. Staff evaluate data and provide individualised assistance based on user preferences, so the human touch is still essential.

### 2. Inclusivity and accessibility:

The 5IR emphasises inclusivity in digital lending systems, voice-activated services, and AI-driven interfaces to ensure equal access to library resources for those with disabilities or alternative formats. Physical improvements like adaptive technology ensure accessibility to everyone.

### 3. Sustainable strategies:

Libraries are adopting sustainable user service strategies to combat climate change by employing digital lending. This mitigates the library's ecological footprint by decreasing the consumption of matter through using eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient processes to manage resources effectively.

### Challenges and chances

Incorporating advanced technologies into user services is not a small task, as the digital divide proves to be a hindrance.

Access through public laptops, apps, and other digital devices ensures libraries grant access to technology for all socioeconomic groups. Staff capacitation must be achieved by balancing automation and human engagement in user services.

Libraries have a chance at innovatively rethinking their functions in 5IR. Human-focused libraries may evolve into social and intellectual hubs instead of mere storage facilities of knowledge. The intricate connection between technology and human interaction may foster lifelong learning while

improving society.

### Conclusion

User services of the 5IR connect technology and human elements. As libraries evolve, they should use technology to improve user experience, inclusivity, and sustainability, all the while being community centred. As the custodians of information, libraries are relevant whilst empowering communities in the 5IR.

SIBONGISENI MRWASHU PL(SA)  
LIBRARIAN: LENDING/INFORMATION SERVICES  
UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

## Bridging cultures with laughter: The Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria and the National Library of South Africa host satire-themed exhibition

The Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria, in collaboration with the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) and the Museum of Humour and Satire in Gabrovo, hosted an exhibition titled “Our Common World—Smiling Messages from Bulgaria”.

This unique and thought-provoking satire-themed exhibition was held at the NLSA Pretoria campus from 7 to 11 October 2024.

The exhibition displayed a selection of satirical works and contemporary Bulgarian cartoons, the work of the leading Bulgarian artists in this area that explore the humorous and light-hearted side of common human experiences, highlighting the shared values and challenges of our global society.

The art of Bulgarian cartooning has a rich history. It combines sharp witticism with keen political, historical



One of the satirical artworks on display

and psychological sagacity. The exhibition represented a cultural bridge between Bulgaria and South Africa, erasing the

geographical distance between the two countries, for cartooning should also be a universal art that is funny and recognisable,

while viewed both from Sofia and Johannesburg. The exhibition reflected the power of satire to bring people together through humour and making complex issues more accessible and engaging.

“Our Common World—Smiling Messages from Bulgaria” was more than just an exhibition; it was a celebration of the universal power of laughter and its ability to transcend cultural boundaries.

“We are excited to collaborate with the embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria. It is very important for the South African public to witness this amazing exhibition as this will encourage cross-cultural dialogue and understanding,” said Keki Madumo, National Librarian and CEO of the NLSA.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SOUTH AFRICA



Capricorn High School Principal Lucas Chuene and Malepeng Bokang



DSAC District Head Lucas Mabotja giving prizes to top performers

## Impossible is nothing; collaboration makes it possible

The saying by Helen Keller, “Alone we can do little; together we can do so much,” has been proven to be accurate by the Capricorn High School Media Centre / Library in 2024.

Following years of inactivity, the school reopened its Media Centre doors in March 2023. As an advocate for literacy programmes and youth development, the librarian collaborated with library volunteers (learners) and the languages department, lobbying for active participation and support in the 2024 literacy campaign initiatives. This collaboration yielded positive results. The Media Centre has actively participated in the commemoration of Library and Information Services campaigns, including South African Library Week, reading

and writing competitions, Book Club competition, Drop All And Read, and International Mother Language Day. The school has successfully participated in the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture’s District Book Club competition, the MobiReadathon competition organised by the City of Johannesburg, and the South African Literacy Association’s (SALA) creative writing competition.

We are proud of our learners’ achievements. Three of our five learners who participated in the MobiReadathon National Finals competition ranked in the Top 3 in the Limpopo Province. The school also takes pride in the accomplishments of a learner who secured 3rd place among the top 4 learners in the SALA National competition.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the District Head of the

Department of Sports, Arts and Culture and his team for the honour of awarding our learners with certificates during the Top 20 Awards Assembly on October 14. We are at a loss for words to express our appreciation for the gifts that they provided to the top performers in the 2024 Literacy Campaign programmes. Collaboration truly makes the impossible possible.

School libraries are not only reservoirs of teaching and learning resources, but they also serve as platforms to help learners discover and develop their writing and public speaking skills. It is often said that “readers are writers.” It is our belief that literacy programmes can have a tremendous impact on fostering a culture of reading and excellence among learners, which in turn improves their reading comprehension. We anticipate

that the achievements in 2024 will lead to an increase in the number of patrons at the Media Centre. Learners should engage in reading for both academic and leisure purposes.

With the experience gained from our 2024 activities, the Media Centre intends to implement literacy programmes in rural communities surrounding the City of Polokwane as part of our Community Development initiative. A key focus for 2025 is to enhance our activities with a writers’ workshop in collaboration with external stakeholders, as well as the adoption of a rural school to fulfil our community development responsibilities. We align with the theme of World Mental Health Day 2024, which states, “It is time to prioritise mental health in the workplace.” Schools serve as “workplaces” for both educators and learners;

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# Faculty Feud: Bridging Fun and Education in Information Literacy



Runners-up: Education Faculty



NAS Faculty student participants



Humanities student participants

Understanding the importance of information literacy, the UFS Neville Alexander Library staff, in collaboration with the UFS South Campus Faculty Student Council (FSC), recently hosted its inaugural “Faculty Feud” on 30 September 2024.

This lively event drew inspiration from the popular game show hosted by Steve Harvey, “Family Feud,” and transformed it into an exciting academic challenge for students.

“Faculty Feud” offered a fun, engaging platform for students to sharpen their information literacy skills while enjoying friendly rivalry. The UFS South Campus faculties, namely Economic and Management Sciences (EMS), Education, Humanities, and Natural and Agricultural Sciences (NAS), participated in the event.

As the 2024 academic year drew to a close, students were treated to a fast-paced game show that tested their knowledge and skills across three exciting rounds: academic faculty-based questions, a library scavenger hunt, and general knowledge.

In the first round, students were quizzed on topics directly related to their courses. This challenged their understanding of their modules and encouraged them to think critically and apply their knowledge in a competitive setting. Next up was the thrilling library scavenger hunt where students explored the Neville Alexander Library, searching for



Faculty Feud Champions “EMS FACULTY”

answers to questions aligned with their faculty’s library resources. This round added an adventurous twist to the event, encouraging students to explore the library’s vast offerings while enhancing their research skills. It was a fantastic way to remind students of the invaluable resources available as they prepared for their upcoming exams. The final round was a bonus general knowledge segment, where students of the same faculty formed teams in the final round, and their FSC representative had the chance to flex their brains on various topics to ensure that their faculty claimed the title. This round not only brought the excitement to a crescendo but

also ensured that students left with a broader understanding of information beyond their immediate studies. The EMS Faculty claimed the Faculty Feud Championship Title.

“Faculty Feud” was more than just a game; it celebrated learning. Participants reported that the event tested their analytical and problem-solving skills while significantly enhancing their information literacy. The atmosphere was electric, with laughter and cheers echoing through the library as teams battled it out for the title of “Faculty Feud Champion.”

The event underscored the importance of information literacy as a lifelong skill, aligning

perfectly with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). By engaging in this dynamic game show, students enhanced their ability to find, evaluate, and use information effectively—a crucial skill in today’s information-rich world.

The collaborative effort behind this event truly showcased UFS’ commitment to providing innovative educational experiences. In a world where information is abundant yet challenging to navigate, equipping students with the skills to discern, analyse, and use information effectively is more critical than ever. As the event wrapped up, students left with smiles on their faces and a renewed sense of purpose and preparedness for the upcoming exams. “Faculty Feud” proved to be a brilliant blend of education and entertainment, paving the way for more such initiatives in the future.

In conclusion, the UFS South Campus “Faculty Feud” has shown that learning can be fun and impactful. With innovative approaches to education, the future is bright for students at UFS, who are now better equipped to tackle their academic challenges head-on, armed with the essential skill of information literacy.

THUTO KGOSIEMANG PL(SA)  
LIBRARIAN  
UFS SOUTH CAMPUS  
NEVILLE ALEXANDER LIBRARY

therefore, literacy programmes are essential for supporting their mental health.

The theme for SA Library Week 2024 captures this sentiment perfectly. At the Capricorn High School Media Centre, we are committed to extending this slogan beyond 2024. Indeed, libraries foster social cohesion, which significantly impacts individuals’ mental health.

LERATO MALULEKE PL(SA)  
LIBRARIAN  
CAPRICORN HIGH SCHOOL



Capricorn High School’s Mmbi Devine receives a gift from DSAC

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## STEVE NGOAKO MOKHABUKHI

## IN MEMORIAM

(1969 – 2024)



Steve was born on 5 June 1969 in Mpye Village, Tzaneen, Limpopo province. He matriculated at Vasasele High School and proceeded to University of the North (Now University of Limpopo) where he completed his

Bachelor of Library and Information Science Degree in 1994.

While at university he was a founder member of the Balobedu Student Educational project for student support, career-guidance and catch-up programmes for matriculants from 1991-1994.

In 1998 Steve was appointed as a Librarian Phalaborwa Public Library. He was promoted to Chief Librarian in 2009 and later promoted to Manager: Library Services, a position he held until his untimely death on 21 October 2024.

Before that he was a member of the Tzaneen Library committee (1995/1996) with observer status for both EXCO and Council

meetings of Duiwelskloof/Ga-Kgapane Greater Letaba Local Municipality from 1997-1998. He successfully planned and implemented the library computerisation project for Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality Library services in 2001-2002. Steve served on various municipality committees. One of his career highlights was successfully coordinating the donation of two Phalaborwa Foundation Libraries to the municipality for integration in 2004.

Steve was the overall winner of the Mopani District Library and Information Service Excellence awards in 2006. He was a member of the Limpopo Provincial Library EXCO in 2009-2010. He participated in the coordination of the donation and implementation of a grant from DBSA to improve the capacity of Selwane library in 2012-2013. He often acted as Director of the Department of Community and Social Services when necessary. He was a member of the Limpopo Library Board (2015-2018) during which time he facilitated the donation of funds and the establishment of Prieska Community library.

An active member of LIASA since 2000, Steve presented papers at LIASA workshops and conferences. He served as LIASA

Limpopo chairperson in 2009-2010. He was the provincial coordinator of LIASA PACLIG for the Limpopo province in 2001-2007. He won the national LIASA/SABINET online public and community librarian of the year award in 2001.

He was a winner of the LIASA/Goethe Institute travel grant to attend IFLA World Library Congress and a tour of German libraries in 2003.

In 2017 Steve won the LIASA Librarian the Year Award. He used his prize money to attend the IFLA WLIC 2018 in Malaysia and took the opportunity to also visit the National Library of Singapore. He presented a report on his trip at the LIASA Conference 2018 during which he pledged "I will continue to plough back to the profession and other relevant sectors with the knowledge gained".

He lived up to his promise and was elected as Treasurer to the LIASA Executive Committee for 2018 to 2021 and served with dedication.

The LIASA Board, in sharing the message of Steve's untimely passing, said: "LIASA is deeply saddened by the loss... At this time of sorrow, let us remember the remarkable contributions of a remarkable man".

## JOHN WILLEMSE

## IN MEMORIAM

(1935 – 2024)



The passing on 12 August 2024 of Professor

John Willemse deprived South African librarianship of a respected leader who, over his lifetime and well into retirement, had contributed immensely to the library profession nationally and beyond our borders.

Johannes (John) Willemse, born in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, on 19 February 1935, was one of a cohort of librarians of Dutch and German extraction who contributed significantly to South African librarianship and information work in the second half of the previous century, among them Dr Hans Aschenborn, Prof P.G. Overduin, Dr Rob van Houten, Piet Westra, and Prof H.O.K. Zastrau. Having arrived in South Africa in his teens with his parents, he spoke impeccable Afrikaans, but his Dutch background could be detected when he spoke English. After high school, John attended the then Potchefstroom University with a bursary for a qualification in Education. He found the studies unchallenging, and therefore opted to also enrol for a qualification in Librarianship. He passed both qualifications, but, encouraged by Prof Henri van Rooy, he chose librarianship as his career path. His obvious ability led to a rapid rise in the profession. Not long after joining the library profession, he was recruited by Dr Aschenborn to head the State Library's historical collection of Dutch literature. While there, he wrote his MA thesis on "The legal deposit privilege, with special reference to South Africa", graduating at the University of Pretoria in 1962. In 1961 John moved to Unisa, as the first Deputy University Librarian. He

succeeded Zastrau as University Librarian and stayed there until his retirement as Executive Director of the Unisa Library in 1999.

The Unisa Library serves a predominantly distance teaching and learning user base. John Willemse was instrumental in developing it from a relatively small collection of less than 100 000 books to southern Africa's leading academic library. He was responsible for many academic library innovations: the establishment of a network of study collections for undergraduates, the implementation of computerised systems, the establishment of a system of subject librarians, the opening of two new library buildings, and the development of a performance measurement system that received world-wide interest. In recognition of his contributions, Unisa appointed him as a professor.

John Willemse's contributions extended well beyond Unisa. As a dedicated library professional, he was a member of the South African Library Association (SALA), the South African Institute of Library and Information Science (SAILIS), and later LIASA. Demonstrating his leadership abilities and his capacity for hard work, he served in many positions at all levels of SAILIS, including as President. He was awarded its Gold Medal for Exceptional Service in 1996.

From 1979 to 1981 he chaired the Computerized Cataloguing Network Project of the National Library Advisory Council, which presented recommendations to the government that led to the founding of Sabinet in 1983. John served on Sabinet's Board for many years, the last two years as chairman, thereby overseeing major developments in South Africa's information infrastructure.

Following the demise of SAILIS and the founding of LIASA, John Willemse, together with Clare Walker, was a driving force in

the establishment of the S.A. Library and Information (SALI) Trust in 1998 to foster library research and the development of libraries and librarians in South Africa. He was Chairperson and then the Administrator of the Trust for many years after his retirement. In 2016, he was presented with the first SALI Trust/LIASA Lifetime Achievement Award.

He was also actively involved in international librarianship. He was a long-time member of the American Library Association and the Association of College and Research Libraries. He was active as well in IFLA, where he served inter alia as Chair of the Section of University Libraries and of the Board of IFLA's Division of Research Libraries, and as Deputy Chair of IFLA's Professional Board. He also served as the Treasurer of the Standing Conference of African National and University Libraries (SCANUL).

John Willemse's lifelong commitment and endeavour in the service of communities and the library profession was outstanding and will live on in the institutions and people he worked with and served.

Upon retirement to Still Bay in the Western Cape, he soon got involved in various community organisations. He was a founder member of the Still Bay branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A), and chaired the Still Bay Interest Forum, helping among other things to eradicate invasive plants on municipal land. He also served on the board of the Hessequa Society of Archaeology and chaired the Still Bay Bird Club.

He is survived by his wife Jeannie, a daughter and two sons, and eight grandchildren. Our thoughts go out to them as we honour his memory.

JOHN VAN NIEKERK, SALI TRUST

PETER JOHAN LOR, UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

## ON THE MOVE – NEW APPOINTMENTS; PROMOTIONS...



Public Library branch, a

**MANDA HOUGH** PL(SA) was appointed, Manager, Kimberley Libraries and Research Services at the Sol Plaatje Municipality in September 2024. Manda's journey in Kimberley started in 2012 when she was appointed, Senior Librarian at the Beaconsfield position she served

for 7 years, with distinction and then Acting Manager.

During her time at the Beaconsfield Public Library, Manda started the "Imagination World Reading Club". One of the reading club members was awarded first prize in the African Spelling Bee competition in 2016. The reading club also featured on SABC news on International Literacy Day in 2019.

Manda Hough's 26-year career started when she graduated with a B.Bibl. Degree in 1997. She started her first job in 1998 in the Western Cape where she was a Regional Librarian for the Western Cape Provincial

Administration, overseeing 12 public libraries in the Hermanus Region. She also worked for 13 years as Head Librarian at Kai !Garib Municipality in Kakamas in the Northern Cape after which she moved to Kimberley in 2012.

Manda has served on numerous LIASA Committees including Branch, Representative Council, EXCO and recently in the National Interim Council. She was also nominated as the LIASA NC Librarian of the Year in 2016 and received the prestigious LIASA UKS Librarian of the Year Award in 2022.

BERNICE NAGEL PL(SA)

AFRICANA RESEARCH LIBRARY, KIMBERLEY



District under the Free State Library Services, Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, and Recreation (DSACR).

He was elected during the 2024 LIASA

**MZWANDILE RADEBE** has been elected as a member of the Public and Community Library Sector Working Committee. He currently serves as the Principal Librarian for the Thabo Mofutsanyana

Conference. In this role, Mzwandile focuses on three key performance indicators: providing training and professional guidance to library staff, overseeing the provision of library services at public, school, and community libraries, and developing a library collection that meets the information needs of the community.

With over 10 years of experience in the LIS sector, Mzwandile is a dedicated and passionate professional librarian. His expertise lies in training and developing library staff to combat illiteracy and promote a culture of reading. He recently led a pilot programme that used libraries to address youth unemployment by providing

training on accessing skills, employment, and funding opportunities through library resources. He presented a paper titled "Free State Libraries reading programme that champions the promotion of the reading culture amongst school learners and young adults: Rejabuka, Reading Festival (2005-2024)", at the 2024 LIASA Conference.

Mzwandile holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Information Studies from the University of Limpopo, as well as a BA degree in Communication Studies. He has also completed various short courses in different disciplines offered by the National School of Government.



**MXOLISI SOKHELA** has been appointed as a Cataloguer at the Department of Library Services at the University of Pretoria (UP). He holds a master's degree in information science from the University of

Zululand (UniZulu) and is currently pursuing a PhD at the same institution.

Prior to joining UP, Mxolisi served as an Assistant Librarian at the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Campus, within the division of Bibliographic Services and Collection Management (BSCM). He also gained valuable experience at the UniZulu, during Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

Additionally, Mxolisi held the position

of Library Assistant at Georgetown Public Library in KwaZulu-Natal, where he actively contributed to the development of school libraries in nearby communities.

ELSABÉ OLIVIER PL(SA)

## Tributes to John Willemse

### Brian Paterson

"It was a privilege to work for someone of John Willemse's stature and ability. He gave of his best and expected the same of others. His strong moral sense informed his actions. He nurtured the strengths of those around him and forgave the weaknesses. He encouraged me with endless patience over the years and became a good friend."

### Gwenda Thomas

"John Willemse made a lasting and significant impact on South African academic libraries across four decades as his vision and advocacy for learning and innovation converged at a time when demand was increasing exponentially for open and distance learning. As part of a cohort of early-career librarians in the Unisa Library, we were beneficiaries of John's generous mentorship and willingness to provide opportunity to step up and deal with challenges, but always with a focus on enhanced user experience and service excellence. John encouraged and

supported the next generation of leadership to seek out and engage in leadership opportunities, professional development and build personal resilience – these were important lessons about giving back to the LIS sector through active participation in national and international library associations. My lasting impression of John's impact on the academic library profession and beyond, was that his career embodied a lifetime commitment to stewardship for past, present and future scholars and growing a generation of library leadership to continue and adapt that legacy in response to contemporary values and aspirations."

### Noel Shillinglaw

"John was always an innovator and had a broad vision. I recall that, in the late 1960s, as a student, I was impressed by his pilot project for distributing Study Collection materials via microfiche, together with a lightweight reader. It was the innovative technology of the day. He was an enthusiastic and early adopter of computer technologies for the Unisa Library, and pursued

innovations in management and organisation. His persuasive enthusiasm and drive made him a leader who I greatly admired."

### Jenny Raubenheimer

"John Willemse was known as a respected leader. It was therefore an honour and privilege to be chosen by John as part of his Unisa library leadership team. I admired John particularly for his efforts to use technology to speed up the delivery of library materials not only for the benefit of the Unisa Open Distance Learning (ODL) environment but also worldwide. This is evident in his leadership provided at different South African and international forums such as Sabinet, the GAELIC consortium and IFLA."

### John van Niekerk

"I knew John Willemse from the late 1970s, and our paths occasionally crossed, but it was when I was invited onto the SALI Trust Board well into his retirement that I worked closely with him and appreciated his commitment to the profession. I was thankful for his guidance and that the first SALI Trust/LIASA

Lifetime Achievement Award was bestowed on him in 2016 – a fitting tribute to a remarkable librarian."

### Peter Lor

"When I arrived in Pretoria in 1968 as a newly qualified librarian, John Willemse, eleven years my senior, was someone to look up to, both physically and professionally. We got to know one another professionally and a friendship developed. As his retirement loomed, he once confided in me that he did not really have any hobbies. His work was his hobby. I suggested he get himself a bird book and a pair of binoculars. Whether it was my suggestion or not, he became a keen birder. He participated in the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2) and was instrumental in setting up the Still Bay Birding Club's regional 'atlassing' project, which has since been recognised as a model for citizen science involvement in Southern African ornithology. Whatever he did, he did with energy and enthusiasm. I shall miss him."

## A Journey of Passion and Advocacy: Reflecting on 42 Years in Libraries

Many view retirement through the lens of Gene Perret, who once said, "Retirement is nice to get out of the rat race, but you have to learn to get along with less cheese." However, I prefer the words of an unknown author who wisely said, "Retirement is not the end of the road. It is the beginning of the open highway."

As I stand at the start of my own open highway, I find myself reminiscing about my 42-year career. It began in 1982 as an English teacher at a secondary school. My love for libraries, however, soon led me to new horizons. In 1989, I accepted a position as an Information Assistant at the Unisa Library, where I worked until 1992. By 1993, I transitioned into the role of Information Specialist at the former Onderwyskollege Pretoria on the Groenkloof campus. When the campus closed and merged with the University of Pretoria (UP) in 2000, I was fortunate to be appointed as a Junior Information Specialist, starting my journey at UP.

In 2007, my passion for open access led to an exciting opportunity when I became the first Open Scholarship Manager in the Department of Library Services (DLS). At that time, open access was still a relatively new concept, but I actively championed the sharing of UP's research outputs, both nationally and internationally. This role allowed me to travel, learn, and serve as a Board member of the international organization NDLTD. The many presentations and contributions to UPSpace



ELSABÉ OLIVIER

stand as a testament to my dedication to open access.

In 2013, I transitioned into my final role as Assistant Director: Marketing & Quality Assurance, DLS, a position I held until my retirement in October 2024.

I became a member of LIASA in 2007 and have actively participated over the years.

As the DLS's Marketer, I made it a point to represent my institution in every edition of *LIASA-in-Touch*. I want to extend my gratitude to professional editor Nohra Moerat, who has not only been a remarkable collaborator but has also become a dear friend. I will miss her warm and encouraging feedback on our events and highlights.

Attending several LIASA Conferences has been a special experience, filled with friendships and invaluable networking opportunities. Some highlights include:

- Serving as a LIASA Gauteng North BEC member from 2010 to 2012;
- Receiving the LIASA Gauteng North Librarian of the Year Award in 2011, along with being the second runner-up nationally;
- Serving as Chair of LIASA MAIG from 2016 to 2018, working alongside wonderful colleagues such as Gerda Ehlers (UP), Cora Bezuidenhout (UP), Marita van der Merwe (National Library), and Theresa Schoeman (SU).

As I close this chapter of my career, I leave you with one piece of advice: find passion in your work. We spend so much time in our careers and loving what you do makes the journey infinitely more rewarding. It has certainly been true for me.

ELSABÉ OLIVIER PL(SA)

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: MARKETING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE  
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICES  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

## Professional Officer: Marketing and Communications, Tarcia Eiman, sat down with Chantal Smidt, Specialist Clerk, to unpack 40 years of service!

### When did you start working for the City and subsequently LIS?

At the age of 18 on 5 March 1984, I started working at Drill Hall under the mentorship of Mrs Beenheart in the Cataloguing Department. I was very excited in my role at the City as I always loved reading books and have fond memories of going to the library at a young age. I also did a short stint for a year as the school librarian at the high school I attended which was Immaculata Girls High, Wynberg, Cape Town.

### Which positions have you held within LIS?

My initial position when I started in the Cataloguing Department was as a Library Aide. Whilst working, I obtained a secretarial shorthand certificate in Athlone. Thereafter, I was motivated to complete my Senior Certificate at Grassy Park High School, attending night classes. I was then transferred to the Orders Department as a Clerk, which is now known as Acquisitions. I had to complete a typing speed test at Civic Centre, 35 words per minute, to become a Clerk. To date, I am still a Senior Clerk in the Acquisitions department.

### Your top three career highlights?

There has been a massive shift with the technological age as many years before, everything in LIS was done on a manual system. I had to transition from print to digital very quickly. The technological process in my



Chantal Smidt, seated, with family

department was made easier through the mentorship and guidance of Brenda Kyle who was instrumental in the process.

I was part of the team that was instrumental in ordering books for the newly opened Town Centre (Mitchells Plain) and Kuyasa libraries; I thoroughly enjoyed this project. Initially, there was no tender process in place, and it allowed me to build a network of many suppliers within the industry. The benefit of working at the City is that they encourage you to learn new skills, which allowed me to attend many in-house courses.

### What are you looking most forward to about your retirement?

Over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to travel abroad, and I am hoping to experience new places to travel to. I am very blessed to have such a supportive family, a family that includes my seven dogs. When I started, the books were only in hard copies; now I have the option of reading e-books in the comfort of my home. I am ready and looking forward to my retirement!

# Sabinet Honours *Influential Library Leaders* at LIASA 2024

Sabinet Recognises Exceptional Contributions to South African Librarianship

We are thrilled to announce that **Sabinet has bestowed two prestigious Influential Library Leader Awards** at the recent LIASA 2024 conference.



This recognition highlights the outstanding contributions of individuals from Public and Academic Libraries who have significantly shaped the library sector in South Africa. For over four decades, Sabinet has been a steadfast supporter of the library community in South Africa. As a founding sponsor of LIASA, we remain dedicated to fostering the growth and development of the LIS sector.



Strong and visionary leadership is paramount to the sustainability and success of our libraries. We are honoured to acknowledge the exceptional achievements of these two influential leaders and commend their unwavering commitment to advancing the field of librarianship.



Sabinet is committed to supporting leadership development and succession. By recognising, acknowledging, and applauding influential library leaders, we inspire and mentor the next generation of leaders. The Sabinet LIASA Influential Library Leader award aims to honour exceptional leaders with a proven track record of mentorship, providing them with opportunities to further their leadership and mentorship initiatives.



**Rebecca Mokgadi and Winnie Mangotlo** have demonstrated exceptional leadership and mentorship in their respective sectors. Both are very worthy recipients of the award, making significant impacts on different areas of the library field. The panel's decision to award both Rebecca and Winnie underscores their outstanding contributions and our commitment to recognising diverse leadership.



Contact us for more information

+27 12 643 9500 [info@sabinet.co.za](mailto:info@sabinet.co.za) [www.sabinet.co.za](http://www.sabinet.co.za)

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