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One December morning in 2008, I sat across a table from Rachel More, Ujala Satgoor and Robert Moropa being interviewed for the position of CiCD Coordinator at LIASA.

Little did I know when I walked into my new job on 2 January 2009 that 13 years on, I would still be with LIASA and celebrate its 25th birthday. During this time, I have occupied many positions and have seen many staff members come and go. It is a pleasure to have stability at the LIASA National Office with Kagiso Ledwaba celebrating eight years with LIASA and Lebogang Masalesa five years. Having worked with seven Presidents and Executive Committees, each term of office bringing its own highlights, challenges and joys, I've seen CiCD, NGPL, and many other major projects running its course and successfully concluded. I remember the big move in July 2009, when we moved to LIASA House on the National Library of South Africa's premises, who to this day very generously hosts the LIASA National Office. During the past 13 years I've met so many wonderful people, each in their own right contributing to my personal development – whether it is through mentorship, being a role model, being a friend, or just through a smile of encouragement or a few words, while rushing past at the annual conference.

While we can reminisce about the good old times, we have also seen progress. While a shortened version of EXCO meetings was done through teleconferences pre-Covid-19, it was not the norm. These days face to face EXCO meetings are scheduled quarterly only, while there are monthly virtual meetings. In person events are slowly coming back again, but webinars and virtual events are still very popular. Not only is it cheaper, which results in more regular meetings or events, more people are able to fit them into their schedules since travel time is not a factor with virtual meetings. Persons that might not have been able to attend events or meetings in the past due to distance or personal circumstances, now have the opportunity to join in these events. Since the beginning of 2022 up to the end of April, there have been 11 webinars presented by the Interest Groups; the SALW launch event had more than 280 attendees; 64 meetings, both Branch and Interest Group Committee as well as EXCO or task team meetings, and also General Branch Meetings; and 32 training sessions on using MyLIASA (16 each of sessions 1 and sessions 2) for Branch and Interest Group Committee Members.

MyLIASA, the LIASA Association Management System, is a great all-under-one-roof system for you, the member, the Representative Council, Executive Committee, Branch and Interest Group Executive Committees and the various task teams to find, store and, disseminate information and it serves as a repository and an archive to preserve the LIASA institutional memory and history. MyLIASA Training is compulsory for all Branch and Interest Group Committee members and to date 42 have successfully completed the 2-session training.

Since the beginning of the year, you would also have seen the monthly email on LIASAOnline alerting you to the upcoming events and meetings for the following month. You can register for the events through the links provided or you can head over to the Calendar on the LIASA website and view all the events there. All webinars are recorded and uploaded after the event to the LIASA YouTube Channel, LIASANews (https://www.youtube.com/user/LIASANews/playlists), where you can view it if you were not able to attend the live webinar. On top of that, all designation holders can earn CPD points by attending the live webinars.

In April we reached 1000 members for 2022. While this is an 11% increase compared to the numbers for April 2021, it is still on average 24% lower than the totals for April 2020 and 2019. How do you show the value of being a LIASA member to your colleagues and friends – let us know!

Congratulations on 25 years, LIASA!

Annamarie Goosen (PL)SA
LIASA Manager

From the Editor

Dear LIASA member

Welcome to the 25th Anniversary issue where you can discover the origins of LIASA from the members who were instrumental in its establishment and laying strong foundations. You can also share in the reflections of members on how they have benefitted from the Association and why they renew their membership year after year – "ask not what LIASA can do for you, but rather what you can do for LIASA" (to paraphrase a more famous quote). Of special note is the article on LIASA's Professional Body status, what it means and how you can apply to be awarded the Professional Librarian designation. These articles illustrate how membership of LIASA is of mutual benefit and I hope that they will encourage you to maintain your membership and also recruit more members.

This issue also celebrates the 20th year since the official launch of South African Library Week. This year's theme "ReImagine! RePurpose! ReDiscover… Libraries!" seems to have resonated with librarians across the country especially after the past two years of COVID-19 restrictions and many were happy to once again welcome visitors to their libraries.

Further, enjoy the variety of news snippets from libraries, from World Read Aloud Day celebrations to coding programmes and the introduction of InstaNovels to encourage leisure reading.

My heartfelt thanks go to all the contributors and our loyal advertisers for this 48-page bumper anniversary issue.

The deadline for the September issue is 22 July 2022. Please look out for the detailed Call for Articles which will be distributed via LIASAOnline and send your contributions directly to me at: LiasaInTouch@liasa.org.za I look forward to your submissions.

Nohra Moerat PL(SA),

From the President



Nazeem Hardy

Dear LIASA members

Welcome to the 25th Anniversary edition of the *LIASA-in-Touch*. It is indeed a milestone for us to have reached this point in our history.

While we are celebrating 25 years of existence, the journey of LIASA started before that and in the late Clare Walker's definitive article "LIASA 1997-2007: Background and recent history" (https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.liasa.org.za/resource/resmgr/about/walker_clare_article-liasa-1.pdf), this journey to the "new dawn" that is LIASA is described in detail. It is worth our while to read that document in order to understand where we come from.

And while we celebrate LIASA's 25 years, we also celebrate other milestones during this incredible year. It is 20 years since the first SA Library Week (SALW) celebrations took place at the opening of Etwatwa Library in Daveyton with the theme "Free your mind – Read! (2002).

LIASA-in-Touch, LIASA's official magazine also celebrates its 25th year, having started out in 1997 as an A5 leaflet and evolving into the wonderful publication it is today.

SAJLIS celebrates its 20th year in its current manifestation. As per the SAJLIS history, it was in 2002 that SAJLIS changed its name and LIASA was allowed to be the publisher of this prestigious journal. (*See the article by its first editor, Prof. Dennis Ocholla, elsewhere in these pages*)

Reflections

It is my privilege to be the President of the Association during this momentous time and there are many contributors who will, together with me, reflect on this amazing journey.

My own journey with LIASA started in the then Bellville Library Chief Librarian's office, when she encouraged me to become a member. I had heard of LIASA via colleagues but had not paid it much attention at the time; Ilze Swart was a huge advocate for the Association and encouraged many librarians to become members and even more so, to get involved. Not long after that, I got roped into starting a PACLIG Interest Group in the Western Cape, again with Ilze's prompting, and I was proud to be part of this fledgling attempt to get this entity off the ground.

My next major involvement with LIASA came about when I applied for the South African Library Leadership Project (SALLP) and this opportunity created many firsts for me. It afforded me my first time to fly somewhere, anywhere, and then, when I was accepted to be part of the programme, my first trip overseas. The SALLP project brought me into contact with the LIASA leadership as well as future leaders of the Association and probably served as the foundation for where I find myself today. The SALLP journey placed one on a trajectory to "pay back" this amazing opportunity that was afforded to one and I saw this as the natural course that my professional life would take.

I spent a number of years in the LIASA structures following this, including Branch Chair, which also afforded me my first stint as an EXCO member. This was followed by my election as LIASA National PRO, whereafter I became an ordinary LIASA member again. In 2015, I started working more closely within a LIASA environment when IFLA came to Cape Town. The hosting of the Public Libraries Conference by the City's LIS Department energised my participation in LIASA once again. In 2016 I attended the Western Cape AGM where discussions started around restructuring, leading to a motion made at that year's Conference and which started us on a journey that is still playing itself out. Little did I know at the time that I would be President at a time when we are trying to bring that restructuring conversation to fruition. In 2018 I was approached to stand for President-Elect and the rest, as they say, is history.

Looking back at the time that I have been involved with LIASA, much of it has revolved around connections and networking. The people that I have met on this amazing journey have all enriched my professional life, have been there when I needed advice and solutions to problems, and acted as an informal university that has shaped the professional I am today. LIASA has always been the means to cope with work and to balance the demands of my work life and in turn enrich it, because it afforded me an outlet for the professional side of my life which helped me work better in many ways, especially in times when the work itself was not always personally fulfilling.

South African Library Week 2022

The South African Library Week celebrations took place in March and it was wonderful to see people embracing the theme in a variety of ways and instil the sentiment that we were striving for. The many celebrations during this time can be enjoyed elsewhere in the magazine. While it is satisfying to see how libraries adopted the theme and made it their own, it is a concern that we still have library organisations that do not embrace the LIASA SALW theme and imagery to celebrate what is a LIASA flagship event. We need to work harder at making this a truly nationally celebrated event under one theme and one poster.

LIASA-SCECSAL Conference 2022

By now you should have seen the notice on LIASAOnline advising that we will have a joint LIASA-SCECSAL Conference this year. This will certainly be a highlight on the calendar as we get to share and exchange ideas and information on libraries on the African continent. The theme for this year's conference is "AGAINST ALL ODDS: RESILIENCE OF LIBRARIES IN A POST-TRUTH WORLD". The theme allows us to carry through our SALW theme to the conference as we deliberate on reimagining, repurposing and rediscovering libraries in a post-truth world. This is a practice started during 2021 where the SALW theme resonates throughout the year, including Conference and other events.

The Conference theme specifically looks at taking a somewhat reactionary subject to one that is more positive in outlook when speaking about libraries in the COVID era.

I hope that you will be able to join us either in person or online as we look forward to hosting you at this special event.

Nazeem Hardy PL (SA)
LIASA President (2021-2023)

1997 Interim Organising Committee including UP staff



Library and Information Association of South Africa

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