



## **LIASA MAY SEMINAR 2016:**

### **THE LIBRARY ECOSYSTEM: MAXIMISING THE COLLABORATION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION FOR THE MARGINALISED LIS SUB-SECTORS**

#### **Background**

The Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter was endorsed in April 2014 by then Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Paul Mashatile. The focus of the Charter was on defining the challenges facing the LIS sector and providing a clear framework of principles and mechanisms for effecting the changes needed for the sector to become more vibrant contributors to the efforts to eliminate illiteracy and inequality and, to build an informed and reading nation.

The Millennium Development Goals era (2000 – 2015) that targeted halving extreme poverty rates, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education has concluded. The global post-2015 agenda has brought about a new set of goals as determined in the bold and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders. South Africa's response to the intention to finding the balance between meeting both present and future needs is found in the National Development Plan 2030.

Libraries among other relevant stakeholders have a critical role to play within the National Development Plan to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals over the next 15 years. The eradication of information illiteracy and building of a modern, efficient and equitable library and information system was highlighted as an important developmental action by the LIS Transformation Charter.

The Charter team consulted widely both within the sector and society at large engaging with scholars, practitioners, users' services, civil society and political leaders. The challenges and opportunities facing the various LIS sub-sectors (Academic, Public, School, Special and Research libraries) were noted and addressed with priority recommendations. Notwithstanding the imperfect state of libraries in South Africa and in recognition of the difficulty of resource constraints, the Charter adopted the notion of progressive realization of the right of access to information as embedded in the [South African Bill of Rights](#) and, that the full enjoyment of the right of access to information is a long-term goal.

Each sub-sector of the conventional LIS divisions is defined by the user group it is designed to serve; the inequalities among sub-sectors and even within a sub-sector are glaring.

Recognizing that this well meaning but divisive convention might hinder the fresh vision that is

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#### **Executive Committee Members:**

Ms S Molawa (President), Mr M Ntombela (President-Elect), Mr D Malan, Ms B Eister, Ms N Crowster, Ms Z Maya, Mr A Moko, Ms M Senyolo, Ms I Smith



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required to transform the South African LIS, the Charter proposes an ecosystem approach to the challenges and opportunities in the LIS sector.

An ecosystem is characterized by interactions of “actors and organizations linked by flows of resources and information” (Mars, Bronstein and Lusch, 2012: 277), making it an appropriate tool to deal with the persistent fragmentation in the sector and to move towards an inclusive cohesive profession. Well-established platforms of collaboration can ensure that the strong organizations support the weak in various areas of service that ensure improved access to information.

**Objectives of the seminar:**

- To raise awareness of the [LIS Transformation Charter](#)
- To explore strategies for implementation of the ecosystem approach proposed in the Charter
- To ensure implementation of the [priority recommendations](#) from the Transformation Charter by the LIS sector

**The framework for topics to be covered:**

- Building systems that supports the ecosystem approach within LIS, bearing in mind existing library policies, human resources, skills and salaries
- Identifying the skills needed to render services in an ecosystem environment
- Defining the role of technology in support of the ecosystem approach
- Exploring, debating and determining the role of libraries within political, social, economic and cultural systems
- Ensuring the implementation of the Transformation Charter priority recommendations

**Expected outcomes:**

- An understanding of the dynamic role that librarians play in service delivery and facilitated access to information
- An understanding of the relevance, importance and key role of libraries within the National Development Plan 2030 and the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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- Approaches to understanding how institutional strengths could be deployed to empower others in restricted environments
- The acceptance of personal responsibility for skills development so that librarians continue to be seen as viable and effective in the evolving LIS sector and changed clientele of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Segametsi Molawa**

**LIASA President**

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*“Libraries for development: Action, Integration and Collaboration”*

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