

Viability of LIASA Interest Groups

Introduction

LIASA has 10 interest groups (HELIG, ICTLIG, IGBIS, ILLIG, LISLIG, MAIG, PACLIG, RETLIG, SLYSLIG and SSIG). According to articles 15 of LIASA constitution the purpose of interest groups is to promote library and information services and/or science within and for a particular service, category of user, type of material, function or activity.

RULE 9 of LIASA constitution states that:

- The AGM on the recommendation of the Representative Council shall authorize the creation of interest groups of members of the Association who are interested in the same field and /or type of library and information service.
- An interest group shall have a Constitution that shall be approved by the Representative Council and no amendment or addition shall be valid until approved by the Representative Council.
- The interest group shall elect a Committee consisting of a Chairperson, chair-elect, Secretary and Treasurer and other members to manage its affairs.
- The funds of an interest group shall consist of money allocated to the interest group from national funds by the Representative Council, additional fees levied with approval from the Representative Council and monies raised by the interest group itself. The interest group account shall be kept at a registered banking institute.
- The Secretary of an interest group shall annually submit a report on the work of the interest group to the Secretary of the Association for the information of the Representative Council. Such a report must include an audited financial statement.
- If an interest group dissolves, all funds and other assets shall revert to the funds of the Association.
- All members of the interest group must first be members of the Association.

The practice of having IG is not unique to LIASA; even other library associations do have IG's that operate similar to LIASA. Nigerian Library Association (<http://nlaconference.org/>) has eleven special interest sections, Library Association of Ireland (<https://libraryassociation.ie>) 14 and

Australian Library and Information Association (<https://www.alia.org.au>) has 16 interest groups

Current state of IG's

LIASA IG's are supposed to be operational to all branches, according to the reports submitted by IG and branch chairpersons in 2015 and 2016 HELIG is the only active IG in all the branches, GS and GN has 7 active IG's whereas FS, WC and KZN have 6 active IG's others have less than 6 IG's. The national IG's leadership are unable to meet and plan physical, except meeting during due to financial constraints and geographical spread. Branches varies in electing IG's leadership some they have a convenors that will serve in the BEC as additional members, other branches will have a fully-fledged IG's committees. Reporting is also a challenge branch IG's has to submit to national IG committee and BEC, sometimes there will be information gap whereby branch IG will report to BEC only not national IG

A questionnaire was sent out to 9 branch chairs and 1 chair-elect, the respondent rate was very low only 4 people responded, the respondents state that some national IG hosts events in branches without BEC being involved and the these events are not advertised on liasaonline ,some branch convenors do not submit reports to BEC .

Recommendations

EXCO to commission RETLIG to conduct a full study on viability of LIASA IG's

Due to non-availability of members to serve in LIASA committees and other factors such as finances and the difference in operational mandates .e.g. ICT needs and operations of PACLIG are different from those of SYLSIG. The possibly solution is to have sectoral IG (HELIG, PACLIG, SLYSLIG, RETLIG and LISLIG) and disband functional/specialisation IG and have them as task teams operating within sectoral IG.

These task teams may not be static; they should be aligned with the strategic direction /focus of that particular term and new trends of the sectors.