

# Vad händer med biblioteken i Sydafrika?

BiS 90-tal präglades av Sydafrika. Föreningen stödde aktivt Masizame, ett resurscenter med bibliotek i en svart förstad i Östra Kapprovinsen och samarbetade med stöd av Sidapengar i ett nationellt skolbiblioteksprojekt (LPYL) med vår systerorganisation LIWO (Library and Information Workers Organisation), Education Policy Unit vid universitetet i Durban och Utbildningsdepartementet. Vad händer med biblioteken i Sydafrika egentligen? bis ställde frågan till ett antal gamla kontakter:

*Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the development of libraries and librarianship in the "New South Africa"?*



“ If we compare the situation today with what existed at the end of the apartheid era, the conclusion is that a lot has been accomplished. There were few township libraries in 1990, but there are many today. I am familiar with the dramatic expansion of libraries in Soweto and in the Cape Town townships. Many public libraries are beginning to offer public access to the Internet. The existence of LIWO and the various policy initiatives in the 1990s promoted dramatic change. On the other hand, the first wave of library development under the ANC Government has petered out. One can still find libraries that are dramatically under-resourced, and I visited one Cape Town township library this year that was down to one staff member who could not even keep the books on the shelves. There has been new national funding for public library development, but it has not yet been dispersed.

The demise of the elitist almost completely white SAILIS as the main library association is very important. In contrast the new library association, LIASA, is a fairly successful mainstream library association, but its membership is low compared to the number of librarians in the country. The kind of energy and explicit political orientation that we saw in LIWO is lacking. There is potential for a progressive caucus within LIASA and there are a few people who are interested in promoting this kind of development.

The distribution of wealth has not changed in South Africa; it is still at the top of the list of most unequal countries, and there is a lot of pent up frustration. Neoliberal economic policies can grow the economy but cannot bring the majority out of poverty. There needs to be a second major reorganization of society, this time based on economic justice. It is hard to see how this can happen in the near future, especially since the labor unions through their federation, COSATU, remain allied with the ANC Government. The socio-economic legacy of apartheid remains, and a new program for the major redistribution of wealth is sorely needed. It is that kind of development that would open up the opportunity to seriously address the social, cultural, educational, and library needs of the majority of the population.

## Al Kagan

*African Studies Bibliographer and Professor of Library Administration, Africana Collections and Services, University of Illinois Library, Urbana, USA*

“ I am very passionate about librarianship in South Africa especially the School Library Development which has been neglected by the National Department of Education since year 2000. I hope to see the national school library policy approved and implemented very soon in South Africa. The Equal Education 1 school 1 library 1 librarian campaign was a success and I hope the national department of education will act fast in signing the policy that will allow the introduction of a teacher librarian post in our schools.



## Busi Dlamini

*Gauteng Dept. Education, Johannesburg*

“ I think that I am optimistic overall but also disappointed that we have not achieved more since 1994 for ordinary citizens at the grass roots level. Much has been done, much more needs to be done and the sixteen year old democracy still has a great deal to deliver.



Two crucial areas remain poorly served:

1) We still need a national policy and an implementation plan for school libraries which are grossly under-resourced. We have good provincial school library policy and an implementation plan in KwaZuluNatal.

2) There has been a hiatus around the funding for public libraries since 1994 but there have been promising developments recently (the KPMG survey, the subsequent use of the KPMG survey in Gauteng, and the conditional grants to public libraries) and a new community libraries bill which should help us deal with the gap.

There are some wonderful people in Library and Information Service (LIS) in South Africa and several notable initiatives are underway - for example, to build capacity in LIS workers. The young leaders group I work with heartily endorses the view (from my paper from the 2007 IFLA book) that “potentially we are incredibly powerful”.

Initiatives based in social awareness are so important and I think fondly of the work bis did here and the inspiring contact we enjoyed.

A crucial area of need is also that of access to cheaper forms of internet and mobile phone connectivity.

### **Christine Stilwell**

Professor, Information Studies Programme School of Sociology and Social Studies. Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences Pietermaritzburg

“ I am still in the employment of the City of Cape Town , however not in libraries but as a full time shop steward. To date we have been instrumental in reinstating 2 library workers who were sacked. The top management of City libraries reflects the Apartheid regime, we back in dark period of struggles. Libraries in townships are losing staff and opening hours curtailed. ALUTA CONTINUA



### **Johnny Jacobs**

Tidigare kassör i LIWO och bibliotekschef i Bellville i Kapstaden



“ I am very optimistic about the development of libraries and librarianship in South Africa. I work in an academic library where we have the full support of university management and students. I also teach teachers who are working in primary and secondary schools. These teachers are studying part time at the Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban to become school librarians. Most of these teachers come from previously disadvantaged schools in South Africa. When they complete their studies they go back to their schools to promote both reading for pleasure and reading to learn. The Education Department pays the university fees of these teachers and also buys books for the school libraries. The promotion of school libraries and reading in schools will go a long way in addressing some of the imbalances of the past in South Africa.

### **William Dansoh**

Subject Librarian, Edminson Library, Edgewood, University of Kwazulu-Natal