

2017 IASL/ZimLA ISLM Celebrations, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Region 1: Africa Sub Sahara

October incorporated the 2017 **International School Library Month**. In Zimbabwe, a program of events to celebrate this auspicious occasion was in place. The **National University of Science and Technology** Department of Library and Information Science hosted this year's event on 19-20 Oct. at the university's magnificent ceremonial hall. The two-day event was organized by the International Association of School Librarianship Region 1: Africa Sub Sahara led by the Regional Director Mr Jerry Mathema and the Zimbabwe Library Association (ZimLA) under the ably leadership of its President Mr Lantern Rangarirai Fusire.

Celebrations and an educational seminar in school librarianship focused on the theme 'Connecting **Communities and Cultures**', which was based on the annual IASL conference theme "**Learning Without Borders**". This year the program focused on the idea that ISLM connects communities (learning communities of all kinds and our own social communities) and cultures around the world as we share our love of school libraries and show the wonderful activities that go on in our libraries. The sub-theme is steadfastly anchored in our "**One school, One library, One librarian**" mantra.

Thursday was set aside for the ISLM Celebrations, which saw a large congregation of LIS students, lecturers, librarians, and high school pupils from various schools in the vicinity of the city and surrounding suburbs converging at the ceremonial hall to celebrate this great annual showcase in the school librarianship calendar of events. Two distinguished guests came from **Nekacheya Primary School** in Livingstone, Zambia Mrs Grace Mulife Malambo, and Mr Simbarashe Mandishona from **Masvingo City Council's** Housing and Community Services Department responsible for Public Libraries.

Sizane High School led the participants in singing the national anthem. Absalom Ndlovu a student in the LIS department gave us an opening prayer. A welcome address by Mr Nelson Guvava, a lecturer specialising in school library media centres, followed.

Leodine Sithole from Sizane High School recited a very interesting poem about the significance of school libraries. Mr Njabulo Tazibona a School Library Media Teacher at **St Columba's High School**, the Master of Ceremony kept the audience in stitches with his library-related humour and jokes.

In his opening speech **Mr L.R. Fusire** set the tone by comparing a school library's value to a school as oxygen is to the body. He indicated that the Zimbabwe Library Association firmly asserts that every school should have a school library run by a qualified librarian. He stated that the Zimbabwe Library Association is very supportive of such celebrations and encourages all branches to celebrate it throughout the country. He also noted that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education recognises the value of libraries hence

their inclusion in the new syllabus. Finally, he conveyed his sincere gratitude to the participants for taking part in the event.

Mr Jerry Mathema the IASL Director Region 1: Africa Sub Sahara read a speech by **Ms Katy Manck, President of IASL**. The speech focused on this year's theme – **Connecting Communities and Cultures** – reminded librarians, teachers and pupils that they interact with different cultures in different settings at work, within schools, communities and even globally. She postulated that school libraries are essential in supporting different generations to be well-versed, to understand diverse cultures and to appreciate alternative viewpoints. The celebrations continued with presentations of plays by NUST drama club and volunteers, reading of passages and poetry by Andile Moyo and Kudzai Tambanewako from **Matopo High School** and Sicoco Moyo from Sizane High School. IASL is grateful to the efforts of librarians Mrs Sichelesile Ndlovu from Matopo High School and Miss Lorraine Ntuli from Sizane High School for helping their learners to come up with such fine performances.

To cap it all, there was a Question & Answer session which was co-chaired by **NUST** students Vimbai Gwengo and Mellisa Moira Muone. Participants were asked questions on library-related issues. The right answers were rewarded with sweets. NUST second year students Mncedisi Ndlovu and Perserverance Chigamani gave us a brief profile and background of the student organisation they run.

Belvedere Technical Teacher's College staff led by Principal Librarian Mr Learnmore Kagwiro delegated Mrs Magodo and Mr Sakuro to give us a synopsis of the mode of operation of their college library and the courses they have on offer. They were further afforded a commercial slot during the proceedings where they exhibited and sold their promotional materials such as mugs, t-shirts and pens. All the presentations were quite topical since they touched on issues about celebrating the importance of having functional school libraries and qualified school librarians.

Mrs Alusi Nyathi Principal Librarian at **Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic** gave the congregants an inspiring motivational speech which chronicled the good working experiences she has had as a librarian at an academic institution. She closed the day with a hearty vote of thanks. The delegates were treated to a light snack of a hamburger roll and a can of soda.

There were no Mayoral and Provincial Education Director's speeches since they did not attend due to other commitments. It is unfortunate this time around, that we did not attract any form of sponsorship from the corporate world.

On Friday, 20 October, **IASL** conducted a seminar in school librarianship which was attended by various stakeholders in the education system. The seminar was held in SD 8 of

the **Faculty of Commerce Building**. Mr Njabulo Tazibona and Mr Herbert Mapfumo, Principal Librarian at **Masvingo Teacher's College** co-chaired the sessions.

The programme was reserved for presentations by selected presenters. Mr. Dzingai Shangwa from the **Chinhoyi University of Technology** presented on the Mandarin M3 Core modules that offer powerful and sophisticated features. He convinced the audience that whether one has one or multiple libraries, or the collection numbers one thousand or millions, these modules perform sophisticated functionality with the economics and ease of a PC installation. He also spoke on optional add-on modules that expand functionality to meet the needs of each individual library.

Mr Aleck Ncube from **NUST's Technopark** gave the second presentation of the day. The first part talked about **Open Education Resources** with particular reference to how the African Storybook (www.africastorybook.org) can be used to support the enabling legal requirement for content for the sixteen languages recognized by the current Zimbabwean constitution. He reviewed a two-day workshop that was run at the American Space at NUST where participants learnt how to translate books on the African Storybook electronic platform. The second part of his presentation covered how copyrights operate with particular reference to how authors can use them in an Open Education Resource like the African Storybook.

The last paper came from Mr Chrispen Hanyane from **E-Learning Institute** (www.elearninginstitute.biz). He touched on how makerspaces are used by libraries to revitalize dropping membership and generate revenues. Mr Hanyane discussed how the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education ICT Syllabus is aligned to the idea of makerspaces since it promotes students to create electronic artifacts such as e-Storybooks. Mr Hanyane has developed a training course entitled ICT for Teachers (ICTfT) which has cross issues like African storytelling, digital transformation and eco-tourism. He further outlined how the ICTfT course has been adapted to provide training to librarians and teachers to create makerspaces that teach learners Reading, Animation, Coding and Robotics. He showed how their picture storybook series entitled *Themba and the Big5* (ISBN 978-0-7974-8880-9) provides the central characters around which his company builds Afrocentric reading, coding and robotic content for ECD to Grade 7.

Expert **catering services** that included a buffet breakfast was provided by Mrs Nhlanhla Ndlovu-Matiwaza of Casmat Catering Services (+263772380438) and lunch by Mrs Antonetta Siphon Madziva (+263775230212) and her Colleague Mrs Joyce Madechawo of Mzilikazi Garden Catering Services (+263772830427).

Compiled by,

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