Library funding: Adequate financial support for African university funding. John Willemse
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Funding university libraries in the East, Central and Southern Africa (ECS) region, as elsewhere on the continent, has been of great concern to university library administrators, managers and users. The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) took the bull by the horns and decided, “to develop, formulate and finalize guidelines, norms and standards, suitable for practical application by university librarians/libraries.” The strategies were to examine and recommend what percentage of the host university budget should go to the library; what percentage of the students’ fees should be apportioned to the library; which income-generating activities would be undertaken by the library; and the system to control university library funds. To study the status quo and establish possible solutions, INASP commissioned Professor John Willemse, a LIS educator, renowned academic library manager, prolific writer and with a long experience of IFLA, particularly the section on university libraries. He undertook a survey of the university libraries in the ECS region from which certain findings were established. Recommendations derived from these findings are fully discussed in the respective chapters of this book.

The theme of the book revolves around the truism that good libraries are essential for good universities and therefore need good funding. The book first reviews university library funding at the global level before examining the current state in the ECS region, and at the continental level. It further discusses important related issues, including required standards and norms as a means to influence the authorities to improve funding; the library budget in relation to the host university, either in terms of the definition as a percentage of the university budget or as the university’s actual expenditure; a percentage of students’ tuition fees for the purpose of developing the library; and the libraries generating their own funds so that they are not solely dependent on university funding.

The major finding is that most of the university libraries in the ECS region are inadequately funded. The most enticing section of the book is Chapter 11, which features the recommendations.

The general recommendation concerns the recognition of the indispensability of the library to the university, the need for autonomy of university libraries, regular collection of library statistics, and the need for approval by the AAU of the terminology applicable in university libraries. Other recommendations include the adoption of standards as guidelines and performance measurements; and income generation schemes to supplement the inadequate library funding and minimise the dependency on funding from the university. Other alternatives for funding, such as donors, should be explored.

The book uses minimum professional jargon and is therefore very clear and easy to read. It has comprehensive and up-to-date references and an Appendix featuring action plans related to university library finance and sustainability passed at SCANUL-ECS Conferences.

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Who next…?: A guide to children’s authors. 2nd ed.
Norah Irvin (Ed.)
ISBN 1 901786 56 0 (sb)
Price: £13.99 (17.5% trade discount and orders over 10 copies). Postage: UK nil, Europe £4, rest of world £6.50 for single copies. For multiple copies LISU should be contacted.

Parents, teachers and public librarians all strive to promote reading. They want children to enjoy reading and to widen their horizons in the ongoing search for new and exciting authors. Often this is difficult, because children claim to have read everything of interest (Reviewer’s comment: “I can recall doing this myself”), and the “promoters” recommendations are limited by their own reading experiences, and the knowledge of authors a particular child might like. Their only alternative is then to rely on recommendations by other parents, librarians and teachers. Who next…? however, aptly solves this problem by offering a ready reference work on children’s fiction and authoritative
recommendations on authors who write alike. What better way than a colourful, glossy publication to stimulate a child’s reading interests and to widen his/her reading experiences?

Who next...? intends to guide young children to new authors they may find interesting by recommending authors who write in a similar style. The book also offers advice on authors writing in a particular genre. However, the editor admits that no two authors will write in exactly the same style. Children may not agree with Norah Irvin’s recommendations but, as has been proven by the first edition and the accompanying publication for adults (Who else writes like...? which is now in its fourth edition), the recommendations are often extremely useful and on target. Norah Irvin is a qualified librarian, with many years of experience of working with children and young people. To create the author entries, Norah Irvin also draws on the accumulated professional expertise of a team of expert advisers with first-hand knowledge of children’s books and readers.

The 2nd edition of Who next...? lists 436 writers of children’s fiction. With each name, other authors who write in a similar style are suggested. The idea is that one can look up a favourite author and then be guided to other authors. If one likes a particular author, it is possible to follow up their entries, which might lead to further authors of interest. For example, if the work of JK Rowling (author of the Harry Potter series) is of interest, works by the following authors may also be of tried: Stephen Elboz, Diana Hendry, Diana Wynne Jones, Theresa Breslin, Annie Dalton, and Catherine Fisher. Each author entry includes the following: a few of the author’s most important titles, the genre or type of book the author writes, such as adventure or humour, the age group(s) for which the author writes, and a list of authors who write in a similar style.

Who next...? is arranged according to three main age groups, namely 5-7, 8-11 and 12-14 years. The structure of the book is as follows: acknowledgements, an introduction, guidelines on how to use the book, an author list for ages 5-7, 8-11 and 12-14 years respectively, a section on picture books for older readers, a section on different genres, a section on children’s fiction series, current children’s book prizes, a bibliography and an index. The following genres are covered: adventure; animals; ballet, computers, detective mystery; diaries, environment, family; fantasy; friends, ghost/supernatural; historical; horror, humour; letters, magic; mythology, other cultures, other lands; pony/horse, romance, school; science fiction; social issues, space; sport, stage, thrillers; traditional, war. Some of the groupings seem a bit odd, but the reviewer assumes that the editor has done this for a purpose. A number of useful website addresses and an author index are also included. The index includes an alphabetical list of authors, the age ranges for which they write and the page numbers for the author entries.

Who next...? is highly recommended as a ‘must have’ publication for all public librarians, English language and media teachers. It is an essential companion for parents visiting the local library or bookstore… and how about dropping a hint to grandparents… who always seem to have more time to promote “reading”? The reviewer looks forward to the next edition of Who next...?, and hopes that it will still be going from strength to strength by the time she is a grandparent!

Who next...? has been prepared under the auspices of the Library and Information Statistics Unit at Loughborough University. It can be ordered from the Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU), Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU, UK.

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Further information and review copies are available, on request to Mary Ashworth or Sharon Flechter.

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