

Dear SAJLIS Readers,

It is gratifying to represent yet another valuable contribution in our first issue of *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*, Vol. 69 No. 1. As you are aware, LIASA elected its new office bearers in October 2002 at its fifth conference in Port Elizabeth. The Journal Editorial Team takes this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the new LIASA President, Mr. Robert Maropa, and the new office bearers. Coming back to the journal publication, it is delightful to note that another student article, based on completed masters research at Rand Afrikaans University, has been accepted for inclusion in this issue. Furthermore, it is important to note that we also positively reviewed an article by a colleague from Botswana, one of the neighbouring countries. The contents of this issue consist of informative articles on information policy, information seeking, library resource sharing/networking or consortia, and management of the merger processes between two tertiary educational institutions in South Africa. We have also included a conference report and book review.

There are two articles on information policy. Peter Underwood provides a theoretical paper that is based on reflective practice on "*Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the development of the Library and Information Service profession in South Africa*". Peter defines and discusses RPL in the context of the role and involvement of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) in the enhancement of professional recognition and the development of LIASA members. We recognise that RPL has offered an immense opportunity for a more liberal approach to education and training in centres of higher education in South Africa – an opportunity that is valuable to a large majority of the population left out of advancement in terms of education and career promotion due to conservative, elitist and rigid requirements for higher education in the past. The second policy-related article, that also hinges on repackaging of agricultural information, is titled "*Getting the write message right: Review of guidelines for producing readable print agricultural information materials*" by Craig Morris and Christine Stilwell. The authors provide valuable guidelines on repackaging print agricultural information materials (PAIM's) for farmers. They recommend collaboration between communicators and the target audience so as to enhance the development of agricultural information in rural areas.

The third article dwells on information seeking. JK Shokane, who discusses the extent to which small- and medium-sized enterprises in Acornhoek make use of business information for sustainable competitive advantage, writes "*The use of business information by small and medium-sized enterprises in Acornhoek*". It is recognised that support for the small business sector that is rapidly growing and absorbing most people without formal employment is essential for development.

Resource sharing, networking and library consortia are increasingly crucial for the availability and accessibility of publications particularly in the resource constrained information environments in the 'Majority World'. An article by Chedza Molefe on "*current developments in library cooperation among special libraries in Botswana*" provides an informative insight into the status and issues of resource sharing in the country. Chedza, referring to a resource sharing interest group in the country, strongly suggests the formation of library consortia that would facilitate the development of a full text database on information produced in Botswana in the subject domains in which the librarians are responsible. The final mainstream article represents aspects of reflective practice, where Veena Jayaram of Durban Institute of Technology (DIT) provides a participant's insight into the merger process between the Libraries of ML Sultan and Technikon Natal. One major outcome of transformation in tertiary education in South Africa is the creation of a new education landscape that, among other things, has resulted in the painful merger of some tertiary institutions. Veena's article is likely to inform those undergoing similar processes of the issues and problems involved in a merger.

This issue has other informative contributions of general nature including the SCECSAL Conference by Clare Walker; and a book review by Monica Moodley. Please note that we always have our readers in mind and do hope that, once again, they will gain additional knowledge and information from the contributions represented in our first issue of 2003. Your valuable contributions are always welcome.

Best Regards

Dennis N. Ocholla

Editor - in- Chief, SAJLIS.