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## Book review

*Human resources for library and information services (East, Central and Southern Africa)*, Julita Nawe.

Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press; xvi, 208p. ISBN 9976 60 341 X. Price not known

The book focuses on a broad spectrum of issues regarding of human resources and related issues in library and information services (LIS) in the East, Central and Southern African regions. There is also a strong focus on the problems facing the library and information workforce in these regions, as well as suggested solutions, such as the establishment of links between information professionals with those in other professions and the users; the quality and practical aspects of the training programmes; the need for LIS professionals to recognise, embrace and manage change; and the necessity for consensus in solutions to unique problems in the profession.

With regard to the management of library and information services in the Central, Eastern and Southern African regions, it is argued that the perennial complaint about the low status of information professionals should be confronted and that harmonisation among all parties be promoted. One of the ways of dealing with this problem is by the LIS education institutions offering continuing education courses to bridge the changes in knowledge and competencies in the field.

On LIS employer perspectives and problems related to human resources, several factors are highlighted. For example, often there is a lack of autonomy to be able run professional and management issues which in turn frustrates the initiative in those attempting to undertake this; there is a lack of research on management problems so that accurate information for successful decision-making can be generated; there is unsatisfactory remuneration, terms and conditions of service in the field, which can result in a “brain drain” to greener pastures; and there is a lack of effort to identify causes of problems and find solutions.

With regard to the education and training of information professionals, several issues of concern are identified. These are the need to evaluate current education programmes so that they are able to incorporate changes in the field, and the consolidation of career mobility in view of the challenges from information and communication technology (ICT) and alternative sources of information. It is important that the education institutions’ curricula take into account the latest information with regard to user needs, processing, control and accessing of information materials, interpersonal skills and service evaluation techniques.

Finally, the book stresses proposals for a positive future in LIS human resource management. These include cultivation of cooperation between employers and practitioners; identification of root causes of problems in LIS human resources and possible solutions; and learning from past mistakes in order to produce knowledgeable and committed information professionals.

In summary, the book is an illustration of well-researched, well-written and illustrated work, making it a suitable text for human resource managers, policymakers, administrators, educators, practitioners and other stakeholders in the library and information fields in all developing countries. LIS students studying human resource management at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels will benefit from the book.

The author, Professor Nawe, is currently the Director of the University of Dar es Salaam’s Library Services, a distinguished scholar and LIS educationist – the founder and teacher of the MA Library and Information Studies course at University of Dar es Salaam. She is also an experienced information professional and LIS consultant who has successfully managed several consultancies in Tanzania. These attributes coupled with wide research in education, extensive travel and practical experience in UK, USA and Africa, make her one of the most qualified persons to author a book on human resources in the library and information fields.

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