

https://dspace.org/

IFLA Quebec 2008 - Copyright and related matters

Nicholson, Denise R

2008-12
Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA)
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/8641

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

"PUBLIC LENDING RIGHTS FOR LIBRARIES?"

On 19 June 2006, a Copyright lekgotla was held at the Cape Town Book Fair. This event was a rights-owners (publishers and authors) event to discuss and debate various issues around copyright and to promote the Academic and Non-Fiction Authors Association (ANFASA).

As a librarian, I was concerned to hear the Secretary-General of the Norwegian Writers and Translators Association (NFF) promoting Public Lending Rights (PLRs) for South Africa at this stage of our development.

PLR programmes compensate authors for the potential loss of sales from their works being available in public libraries (mostly benefitting fiction writers). There is no international framework for lending rights, except for the EU Directive on Rental Right and Lending Right, 1992. Currently about 15 developed countries have PLR programmes, but in most cases, educational institutions are exempt. Unlike fiction writers, academic authors are generally salaried and are not dependent on sales or loans of their publications for their living.

PLRs may work in Norway, a wealthy, developed country with a small but highly educated and employed population, who can obviously afford to pay high prices for books and levies such as PLRs. However, it is not a system that suits less-wealthy countries in the EU, nor developing countries.

It would be inappropriate to consider such a system in South Africa at this stage. There is hardly a reading culture in South Africa. More than 50% of the total adult population has not completed a general level of education. Unemployment levels are high and literacy levels low. 42.5% of the total population is under the age of 19 years, thus the demand for libraries and information constantly grows. 43% of government schools in South Africa do not have electricity, nor do they have adequate books or basic resources. Only 19.8% have libraries or media centres. 7% of South Africans have access to the internet, according to two independent studies in 2004/5. Access to information is limited.

Libraries are crucial as the majority of people cannot afford books. Book prices are high and additional VAT and import levies make reading material very expensive. Some books are far cheaper in developed countries, e.g. Mandela's "*The Long Walk to Freedom*" and Coetzee's "*Disgrace*". Library budgets are stretched to the limit and would not be able to accommodate additional costs to manage a PLR programme. It would have a major impact on library collections and resources, if part of their budgets now had to pay for a PLR programme.

Restricting access or making it more expensive would just exacerbate problems around access to information and education, which is essential for socio-economic development and transformation in South Africa.

As the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) states in its Position Paper on Public Lending Rights (http://www.ifla.org/III/clm/p1/PublicLendingRigh.htm): -

"If PLR were introduced in developing countries, the State may be unable to divert funds to pay for it without severely compromising other services, such as primary healthcare, which may be considered more essential to the public interest. Publicly accessible libraries in such countries are likewise not in a position to be able to pay for PLR without fatally undermining their already fragile core services. If new charges were introduced to use public libraries, many people would be unable to pay. Library usage would decrease, which would have a profoundly negative impact on literacy levels and the subsequent economic growth of that country. It should also be noted that developing countries would most likely experience more payments for PLR to foreign authors than to their own nationals."

I am involved in international, regional and local projects, co-ordinated by the following organisations, which are addressing issues around access to knowledge in developing countries:

- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) - Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters (CLM) **www.ifla.org**
- Electronic Information for Libraries Network (eIFL.net) **www.eifl.net**
- Commonwealth of Learning (Canada) **www.col.org**
- Copy South Project (Kent University, UK) **www.copysouth.org.uk**
- African Access to Knowledge Alliance (AAKA) **www.nlu.go.ug/acfconf.htm** (own website to be created)
- Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) **www.osisa.org** (now managing the "Access to Learning Materials for Southern Africa Project" and "Access to Knowledge (A2K)Campaign in Southern Africa")
- African Digital Commons: **www.commons-sense.org**
- Creative Commons: **www.creativecommons.org** (and new website: **icommons.org**)
- Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD): **www.cepd.org.za**
- SARDEC: **www.sardec.org.bw**

Denise Nicholson
Copyright Services Librarian
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

COMLA/UNESCO Workshop on Information Literacy for Public Librarians across the Commonwealth



The reality that public libraries are part of the information literacy conquest was confirmed at a workshop organised by COMLA/UNESCO in Jamaica from January 28 to February 2, 2006. Public Librarians from various Commonwealth countries from the Caribbean, Botswana and as far from Fiji gathered at the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Jamaica. The workshop aimed to draft an Information Literacy Module for public librarians. The final model consisting of a manual and resource kit was submitted to UNESCO for consideration as part of UNESCO's Information for All Programme. Subsequent to approval, selected library associations across the Commonwealth will be approached to use the manual to empower public librarians to develop information literacy programmes for their users. The programme will be of great value to public libraries especially in developing countries to support development and life long learning.

The aim of the workshop was to help public librarians to develop information literacy programmes; to equip public librarians with skills to design and develop Web Pages for their public libraries and to network on the importance of information literacy in public libraries. The workshop agenda included a visit to Kingston Parish Library, Jamaica Library Service Headquarters and the annual LIAJA (Library and Information Association of Jamaica) meeting. The highlight of the workshop was the brainstorming sessions of the modules for the Information Literacy manual and resource kit.

The home hospitality far exceeded expectations. From the elegant LIAJA President's Dinner, the UWI Principal reception to the Jamaica Library Service luncheon, all participants experienced the warm heartbeat of the Jamaican culture.

But it was not just work. Each representative had to take with a cultural item that represented the country they were from. Each item had to be accompanied by appropriate notation explaining the significance of the item. I took with me a beaded-wire-bowl that represented the South African nation as follow:

- The different coloured beads represented the Rainbow Nation of South Africa
- The fruit bowl shape of the bowl represented the Unity of the nation
- The wire (metal) represented the rich natural resources of the country, and
- The open spaces (pattern) represented the right to freedom of association and religion.

All the items were sold on a "Dutch auction" to raise funds for COMLA, and I am proud to report that the South African beaded-wire-bowl took the highest bid of all the items.

Jamaica is like home away from home. The Island's surroundings, vegetation, humidity and people reminded me of KwaZulu-Natal; in fact at times I thought that I was in KwaZulu-Natal. I also had a taste of the unique "ackee fruit" only to be found in Jamaica. The flesh of this red skin fruit that grows on trees is used in many meals. It looks like scramble eggs but the taste is difficult to explain, but in a unique way very delicious. And yes, swimming in the idyllic Caribbean Sea was a bonus. In short, a picture of Jamaica, the home Island of Bob Marley, the king of Reggae.

Flippie van der Walt
Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality