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The 'Information-Starved' – is there any hope of reaching the 'Information Super Highway'?

Denise Nicholson

Denise Rosemary Nicholson has a BA degree and Higher Diploma in Library and Information Science from the University of South Africa. Since 1983 she has been employed at the University of the Witwatersrand Library, Johannesburg, South Africa. Since 1996 she has held the post of Copyright Services Librarian. She is responsible for running the Copyright Services Office, administering the Central Copyright Fund and providing an advisory service for staff and students, as well as for individuals and organizations outside the University. In 1997, she initiated the Copyquest Listserv and an e-distribution list to raise copyright awareness in the educational and library sector. From 1998 to 2000 she was Convenor of two Copyright Task Teams under the auspices of the SA Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikons (CTP). She liaises with FAIFE, Government departments and colleagues locally and abroad with regard to copyright matters. She is a member of the following Committees and Professional Associations:

- IFLA Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters (and its Advisory Board for Core Activities)
- Library Association of South Africa (LIASA)
- LIASA FAIFE Copyright Committee
- Special Libraries Interest Group (SLIS)
- Digitization of Theses and Dissertations Project Team (University of the Witwatersrand)
- Intellectual Property Sub-Committee of the University Research Committee (University of the Witwatersrand)

She was awarded the LIASA Academic Librarian of the Year Award for 2001 and was also a winner in the WIPOUT online copyright competition during 2001.



The right to access to information and ideas is vital for any society. If citizens are to participate and make informed choices, they must have access to political, social, scientific and economic information and cultural expressions. They need access to the widest range of ideas, information and images. Freedom, prosperity and the development of society depend on education, as well as on unrestricted access to knowledge, thought, culture and information. This right to intellectual freedom is essential to the creation and development of a democratic society. The state of intellectual freedom in libraries is an important indication of the progress of democracy in a nation.[1]

This ideal is unfortunately unattainable for most developing countries in the sub-Saharan region of Africa, in their current circumstances. Throughout this region, illiteracy and dire poverty are serious problems and as a result, millions of people are deprived of access to information and knowledge, and hence the key to a better life. Although this paper highlights problems and some possible solutions from a South African perspective, many of them can be applied to other developing countries in the sub-Saharan region and even further afield.

Legacy of Apartheid

Prior to 1994, the white-dominated government followed a policy of 'apartheid', an oppressive and discriminatory system, which had very serious effects on the lives of millions of 'non-white' South Africans, especially with regard to social, economic and educational issues. The current South African government became a democracy in April 1994. The legacy of apartheid has left a daunting task for this government to resolve. Literacy has therefore been prioritized as one of the most urgent problems to tackle and the government aims to 'break the back' of illiteracy by the year 2005. In his inaugural speech of 8 September 1999, the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, stated:

> Unfortunately, there are something like 140 million people in sub-Saharan African who cannot read or write. More than 60 percent of them are women. In South Africa, 3.5 million adults over the age of 16 have never attended school. At least another 2.5 million have stayed a few years in school but through lack of practice can no longer remember how to read or write. So at least 6 million South Africans, who are a quarter of the adult population, are shut off from the written word. The figure may be as high as 40% of adults.[2]

South African Constitution and Bill of Rights

Minister Asmal also stated that

> South Africa boasts the most liberal constitution in the world. However, the guarantees in the

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> Bill of Rights are, in practice, more accessible to literate South Africans than to illiterate South Africans.[3]

Section 9 (1) of the Constitution states that:

> Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

Section 9 (2) states:

> Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.

Section 9 (3) states:

> The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.[4]

The Constitution also provides guarantees for Freedom of Expression and Access to Information. Questions must, however, be asked:

> How can equality of the law be applied, when illiterate people cannot even write their own names; cannot read the laws of the country; cannot read street-signs or vital information on medicine bottles; cannot fill out any questionnaire, application form or survey; cannot read an advertisement for employment or prepare a résumé; cannot read an invoice or guarantee for any purchase made?[5]

Illiteracy – a Handicap

Illiteracy is a serious handicap, which condemns people to a life of poverty, low self-esteem, unemployment and boredom. For many, crime is their only source of income for food and basic needs. Literacy, access to information and education are the 'key' essentials to self-development, self-dignity and a better life.

South Africa has two very different dimensions – First World and Third World. In the First World dimension there is wealth and a highly sophisticated infrastructure with digital and other advanced technologies, which can be compared with most developed countries around the world. However, in large sections of the country, the Third World dimension is very evident in rural areas and informal settlements around urban areas. The situation is one of dire poverty, high illiteracy and unemployment, and poor economic prospects. Most rural people do not have access to the printed media, let alone digital technology. Inability to access information is a major problem and is widening the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.'

Rural Communities

This paper will now highlight the very real situation affecting millions of rural people in South Africa and in their neighbouring countries. Most of them are illiterate and disadvantaged and experience various problems in their quest for information, literacy and personal development.

Most illiterate people (i.e. those who cannot read or write) or functionally-illiterate people (i.e. those whose learning and writing skills are underdeveloped) have grown up in a rural community, not always by choice though, because of pre-1994 apartheid land laws which forced people to live in certain rural areas. They live far from urban areas and are mostly involved in subsistence farming. There is little or no road infrastructure and access to these areas can be extremely difficult. As a result of poor education and other factors, deforestation, overgrazing and improper farming are threatening the soils and other natural resources which are critical to their livelihood and for the general prosperity of the region as a whole.[6] Their homes are tin shacks, mud huts or outbuildings on someone else's land. There are no water services, electricity, refuse removal services or telephone lines. Traditionally and for obvious reasons, oral communication is the main form of communication. Information is shared and spread from one person to another, in one or more of the eleven South African official languages. For those employed, their means of transport to work is generally by foot or by bicycle, if they are privileged to own the latter. Their children walk many kilometres to and from school each day. Their schools are makeshift buildings, which are mainly structures of brick and tin, with few or no windows and doors. Some schools have lessons out in the open, as there are no classrooms. There is no electricity or running water. Natural lighting is often the only source of light and on cloudy days their 'make-do' classrooms are dark and cold, making learning a difficult and unpleasant experience for scholars. School desks are made from boxes, broken chairs and tables or piles of bricks. Stationery is usually inadequate and books, magazines and other educational material for teaching and study purposes are extremely limited. Photostatted material is often the only source of information. Most scholars come from seriously poverty-stricken homes where even food is a luxury and money for basic amenities is not available. Being able to purchase textbooks or other educational material is rare. Access to information is extremely difficult and these people are entirely dependent on assistance from donors, community leaders, social workers, facilitators, teachers and librarians, where library services exist. Due to inadequate healthcare and prenatal care, many are also physically or mentally disabled. This exacerbates the problem of accessing information, as their special needs can rarely be addressed.

Very often these communities do not have any library services and depend on basic information spread

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verbally or information provided at local community resource centres. The lack of access to printed material, as well as multimedia and digital technology, are severely hampering the illiterate in their educational pursuits.

Where libraries do service rural areas, they are generally far from schools and homes and have unsophisticated buildings, extremely limited budgets, resulting in totally inadequate book and journal collections. Donations from more affluent libraries or aid organizations provide the bulk of their collections and very often photocopies, whether legally made or not, form their core collections.

Informal Settlements in Urban Areas

Exasperated with their rural existence, many individuals or groups move to urban areas in the hope of finding education and employment and a better way of life. Some also cross borders from poor neighbouring countries to search for a new life in South Africa. Many of them settle in illegal informal settlements called 'squatter camps' or 'shanty towns', on the outskirts of urban areas. Thousands of tin shacks are erected very closely together on vacant pieces of land. Each shack becomes home to one or more families. Overcrowding results in squalor and poor health conditions. Municipal services, such as water, electricity and refuse removal are not available to these settlements.

Their children are more fortunate than their rural counterparts in that they are able to attend the local government schools in the area. The quality of facilities and of teaching programmes, however, differs from one area to another. Unfortunately, due to the very cramped circumstances in which these people live, it is difficult for children to study at home. Books and other educational material are unaffordable. They are permitted to use the inhouse facilities of public libraries for their information needs, but are not permitted to borrow material. This means they have to do their reading during library hours. Also, without lighting in their homes, they cannot read after dark. Public libraries and school media centres serve as the main sources of information for homework and school projects. Most parents, however, still remain illiterate and unemployed, and they are therefore unable to stimulate or assist their children in the learning process.

The HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The spread of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa has far exceeded the worst projections and has retarded the transformation from illiteracy to literacy. Sub-Saharan Africa is by far the worst affected region in the world with millions of Africans dying every year. Unfortunately it is a 'Catch-22' situation, as the lack of access to information and education has been one of the major factors in the spread of this disease, and the pandemic itself has affected education in a very serious way.

Many teachers and literacy facilitators have contracted the disease or have already died from it, leaving vacant posts in the educational sector. Where parents have died, older children have to leave their schooling to look after younger siblings, thus exacerbating the problem of illiteracy. Grandparents, mostly illiterate, are forced to bring up their grandchildren and are unable to get them to school or assist them in the learning process. Each year the number of orphans increases drastically and many fend for themselves at home or as street-children in urban areas, with no prospect of becoming literate. Thousands of babies are born each year with HIV and their life expectancy is less than five years. For adults in this sub-Saharan region life expectancy has decreased from 64 to 47 years and between the years 2005 and 2010 it is expected to drop even further.[7] Thousands of young adults in the working sector are HIV-positive and will die within the next few years, leaving a serious gap in the workplace. As circumstances deteriorate, so people will abandon educational goals to care for the dying and cope with their difficulties at home.

Indigenous Knowledge

As a result of ignorance of their intellectual property and other rights, rural people are often at the mercy of large international corporations and individuals who recognize the potential in their traditional remedies, music, folklore, craftwork and other cultural traditions. These people are not aware of the legal requirements of having to put their oral expressions or traditional methods into a tangible format, before they can claim copyright ownership. Without access to information, they are unaware that their intellectual property is often misappropriated and used for commercial exploitation abroad. As a result, the rural community or individuals do not receive any compensation. In some instances, however, the communities are becoming aware of their rights and are involving themselves in projects to exploit their intellectual property. They are receiving some monetary benefits as compensation, mainly through development trusts.

Digital Technology

Digital technology has created an explosion of information worldwide. For the First World dimension of South Africa, the Internet has literally opened an online library, accessible from anywhere in the world, on a 24-hour/7 days a week basis. It has no language barriers and has provided opportunities to users to create work and trade online, to use and manipulate information and in general, to advance knowledge and understanding of information. Hi-tech business and education have been taken to new heights. All one really needs is access to a computer and the world is one's stage. This, un-

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fortunately, does not apply to the millions of illiterate people in South Africa, who are shut off from information. For example, out of a population of nearly 44 million people in South Africa, only about 2 million have access to the Internet.[8]

Considering the above-mentioned circumstances, the following questions must be asked:

- Do the illiterate or information-starved fit into the digital world?
- Will they ever reach the Information Super Highway or will they just become victims of the ever-widening Digital Information Divide?

Without electricity, any electrical or electronic equipment has no significance in their lives at all. Sophisticated technology serves no purpose whatsoever if one cannot even switch it on. Despite many technology transfer projects, sponsored by international organizations and commercial entities, this region is becoming more and more dependent on developed countries. Technology is advancing at such a rate that the digital divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' continues to widen.

Although telephone lines are being extended to rural areas, as a priority project by Telkom, the major telecommunications supplier in South Africa, it is a very slow process. This form of communication and access to information is not yet available to most rural people. The sub-Saharan region has fewer telephones than does Manhattan in New York City.[9] This highlights the very serious shortage of telephones and telecommunication services in this region.

Although mobile telephones have made communication possible for some rural people, the equipment and call costs are still out of reach of most of them. Also, the lack of electricity makes it difficult to recharge batteries and only where electricity is available, can they be used effectively. The positive side of mobile telephones is that they are portable and information can be transferred from person to person anywhere in the world. They are easy to use and illiterate people can be taught to use them without having to depend on the written word to operate them. Those who are functionally-illiterate can benefit from more advanced services offered by mobile telephone providers, such as SMS and e-mail messages.

Where electricity is available and facilities such as photocopiers, scanners and computers are available (e.g. at community centres or libraries), information can be accessed. In most cases, it is the facilitators or teachers who access and select suitable material for literacy courses. Where people are functionally illiterate but able to visit the community resource centre or library, they generally depend on the staff for assistance. Some educational institutions provide telematic educational services via public library networks and telecommunication services to assist rural communities. Some institutions only offer distance education courses and are responsible for disseminating information and course material to rural learners at home.

Copyright – a Hindrance to Access to Information

Despite their socio-economic dilemmas, illiterate people, as well as persons with disabilities, have another hurdle to contend with in their educational pursuits – copyright restrictions. Unfortunately, in the current South African copyright legislation, and in that of many other sub-Saharan countries, there are no provisions to accommodate the needs of illiterate people or those with disabilities. There are limited exemptions in the South African legislation for reproduction for educational purposes, but they only apply to teaching in a classroom situation. Also, access to Government documentation and other public domain material is difficult and this means that published versions available in libraries often have to be used and copyright restrictions apply.

In their efforts to make information available to illiterate and functionally-illiterate people, facilitators and teachers regularly need to select suitable material and to make multiple copies of information, either by photostatting it or by converting it on to audiotapes, where electricity and/or batteries are available. In view of South Africa having eleven official languages, very often material also has to be translated or adapted before it can be used for teaching purposes. The material has to be obtained from local community resource centres or direct from libraries or via interlibrary loans from other sources. In cases where users are disabled, special reproductions or conversions are necessary. However, for all the above-mentioned purposes, the current copyright legislation is restrictive. It does not permit such multiple copying or conversions, without permission first being obtained from the rights owner and copyright fees being paid. In most cases, copyright fees are payable in the South African currency, if cleared by South African copyright owners or the local rights organization. Depending on the medium to be copied, especially multimedia, fees are payable directly to foreign publishers. This is extremely expensive since our currency's value is very low in comparison to currencies in First World countries. However, some publishers do waive costs or reduce costs, especially for reproductions or conversions for persons with disabilities. Most literacy and basic adult education programmes do not have the resources to purchase original books or to subscribe to journals and they depend on copies for their course material. In most cases, they cannot afford the copyright fees. They are then not permitted to reproduce the material and have to use other information, which may not be as relevant. Access to that particular information is therefore restricted to those who can afford the copyright royalties. This situation has serious implications for education as a whole.

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South Africa's current copyright legislation has no clear definition or criteria for 'fair use'. Section 12 of the Copyright Act No. 98 of 1978, as amended, uses the term 'fair dealing', which permits individuals to make reproductions of a 'fair and reasonable' portion of printed books and journals for the purpose of private study or research or private use. However, users have to make the copies themselves and cannot depend on someone else to do this for them (except in cases where a librarian is permitted to make single copies for users). Making their own copies is not usually possible or practical in rural communities, as most people are illiterate, functionally illiterate or disabled and live too far from libraries or resource centres, to access the material personally. People involved in literacy courses, basic adult education and distance education, are therefore dependent on third parties (e.g. facilitators, teachers, resource centres or library staff) to provide learning material. Even if they can get to a library or resource centre, they need the assistance of the staff to access and copy the information for them. Librarians, but not informal resource centre staff, are permitted to make single copies for users, within the limits of 'fair dealing' but multiple copying is not permitted, unless prior permission has been obtained from the rights owners and the relevant copyright royalties have been paid. For example, a facilitator or a literacy student cannot make multiple copies for other rural students or fellow learners doing a particular course, unless copyright permission has been obtained and paid for, or unless the provisions of the Copyright Regulations apply.

The Copyright Regulations, based on the United States Classroom Guidelines, have some exemptions permitting limited copying for educational purposes (i.e. handouts for students) but these only apply to the classroom situation. They do not apply to distance education, nor to literacy and basic adult education programmes where tuition is not always conducted in a classroom.

Unfortunately, because copyright restrictions and lack of money affect access to information, non-compliance and copyright infringements do occur. Although such actions cannot be condoned, in practice they are sometimes the only way these communities or individuals can access or acquire information.

It is often argued that publishers' sales are detrimentally affected by such copying. This is debatable, however, since, in these circumstances, there is no possibility of a sale and hence no financial loss. Under-resourced literacy initiatives or organizations, as well as their facilitators and students, cannot afford books or journals, especially since prices and related taxes are excessively high. Second-hand books (often earlier editions or out-of-print books), donations and photocopies are the main sources of information. If extracts are copied, they are used solely for the purposes of non-profit educational purposes and not with any intention of undermining publishers' sales.

Research has shown that, for various reasons, oral communication is still the most popular in most literacy programmes in this region, but that the written word is an important medium to enhance the message and to use for more advanced programmes for the functionally-illiterate.[10] If restricted to only information that is distributed freely, or material in the public domain, these people would seldom have access to up-to-date information. New and current publications would only be accessible to those who could afford to pay the purchase price or the copyright royalty, where applicable. Rural people would remain 'information starved' and illiterate and countries in this region would have no hope of changing their status from 'developing' to 'developed'.

In recent years, the South African Government published proposed amendments to its Copyright Act and Regulations, as a result of pressure from the publishing industry. The proposals were very restrictive towards education and attempted to withdraw most of the exemptions in the current legislation. In view of the serious implications the proposals had for education, the tertiary educational sector lobbied to Government and as a result, both sets of proposed amendments were subsequently withdrawn.

The educational sector recognizes the need to update the copyright legislation to meet the requirements of the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty. Since 1999, this sector has been requesting the Government to address various issues in the copyright legislation to protect the interests of education, particularly as the publishing industry continues to call for more restrictive legislation.

In 2001, due to an impasse in the legislative process, the Intellectual Property Committees of the South African Vice-Chancellor's Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikons (CTP), representing the tertiary sector, initiated discussions with the Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA) and the International Publishers' Association (IPA). They also met with the Software Business Alliance in South Africa and the Registrar of the South African Department of Trade and Industry, in an attempt to resolve matters and to advance the legislative process amicably. Negotiations are continuing and matters under discussion are fair use, multiple copying for non-profit educational purposes, electronic copyright, provisions for persons with disabilities, as well as enforcement measures for rights owners.

As a priority, it is necessary for all laws which hinder or restrict access to information, to be reviewed.

Developing countries have very different needs from developed countries, which need to be addressed, internationally and locally. Currently the UK Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, WIPO and the World Trade Organization are seeking appropriate solutions for

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developing countries. It is hoped that South Africa will also benefit from this process.

The copyright legislation needs to be amended to provide exemptions for reproduction for non-profit purposes (i.e. including literacy, adult basic education and special educational programmes for the disabled). Such exemptions would open up information, which is currently shut-off from millions of illiterate people. This would enable the 'information-starved' to take their first steps onto the 'Information Super Highway'.

En Route to the 'Information Super Highway'

Despite the problems highlighted in this paper, I believe that Africans will find solutions to reach and advance along the 'Information Super Highway'. South Africa, a leader and major power in the sub-Saharan region, together with other entities, has initiated many cooperative projects within the country and regionally, with neighbouring countries, to address problems affecting rural communities and illiterate people. South Africa is a major player in the South African Development Community (SADC) and in the newly established African Union. Its recent initiative, NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and its hosting of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, during August 2002, also shows its commitment to the socio-economic development of Africa as a whole.

Unfortunately, there are no 'quick-fixes' for this region and adequate funding, international assistance and full commitment from Governments and non-government sectors are essential for the success of these projects.

The Department of Education has initiated various national literacy and adult basic skills training programmes and projects to assist illiterate citizens. Some projects have been more successful than others but there is earnest commitment to ensure that the goal of 'literacy for all' is achieved as soon as possible. However, more funding, better training for trainers, as well as facilities and an adequate administrative infrastructure are essential to ensure that these projects succeed. The private sector has also invested millions of rand in literacy training for individuals and groups, mainly to assist people in getting jobs or to better themselves in the workplace.

With regard to the access to information and education and freedom of expression, librarians continue to play a major role. The Library Association of South Africa (LIASA) is a member of IFLA and is involved in library and information projects locally, regionally and internationally. Literacy projects are high on its list of priorities.

As early as the 1980s, it was recognized that there was a "need for a new type of library in South Africa, which offered a radically different approach to library and information provision for the rural populations. It was seen as requiring a new paradigm of service, and a new type of librarian endowed with a range of skills and competencies far beyond those normally associated with the library and information workforce". Despite this, in the 21st century most sub-Saharan African libraries servicing rural communities are still largely in the 'stranglehold' of imported library models, which are not entirely relevant to the rural situation.[11]

Librarians need to recognize their very important and special role in the social and educational upliftment of illiterate people in this region. They have to adopt a whole new approach to their profession. Revised training methods and tailor-made services are necessary to make information accessible to all. Rural librarianship needs to be given more emphasis in formal library training courses to equip librarians with the necessary skills to meet the needs of the information-starved.

Librarians can also get involved in less conventional but philanthropic initiatives to assist rural communities. Many public libraries in South Africa already offer basic literacy and information literacy training and some have introduced other useful activities, for example, storytelling, reading and writing, as well as role-playing, arts and crafts and project work to encourage and assist illiterate and functionally-illiterate people. Some also provide collection points for used books, educational material and other useful items, for distribution to rural libraries, resource centres and schools. This service could be extended, if properly organized distribution depots were established to facilitate the collection, storage and distribution of such material to rural communities and under-resourced libraries.

Libraries are also the 'doors' to information in the digital world. Where digital technology is available, information literacy training, electronic courses and access to electronic resources are now part of library services. Some educational institutions provide telematic information services and other educational programmes to rural communities, but these services need to be extended countrywide.

Electronic or e-learning is an effective method to teaching and a new approach to learning for illiterate and functionally-illiterate people. E-learning allows education to be offered in a totally different, more flexible and less conventional method of teaching and accommodates all levels and has various graded models to allow for progress and advancement once learners have reached a certain level. It is adapted to the learners' needs, not the learner to the technology's needs. Most e-courses have a printed manual, also graded for various levels and facilities for revision. An interesting initiative in e-learning is that of Africare, an organization working together with large international corporate partners, including Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard and others. They have established 'digital villages' in some of South Africa's larger town-

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ships (e.g. Soweto, outside Johannesburg). Their most immediate goals are literacy, information literacy and job training. Africare and its partners intend to create such villages wherever needed in South Africa and to extend them to other African countries.[12]

Although radio has its shortcomings for literacy training and there is no 'face-to-face' verbal contact, it can be a very effective means of communication, in that it not only reaches the communities involved in literacy and basic education programmes, but it can be broadcast widely so everyone can benefit from the information.[13] Radios are reasonably cheap and can be operated by battery in non-electrified areas, enabling rural people to access information via this medium. Apart from the long-established radio services provided by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, many new community radio stations have been established in recent years to reach the illiterate. Literacy training via this medium should be expanded and offered in all eleven official languages. Television is also used as a medium for literacy training, but only where electricity is available.

The SA Post Office has various projects to provide 'one-stop shop' communication services and other essential services and information countrywide, and has prioritized rural areas. Although there are still only a small number of Citizen Post Offices and Multi-purpose Communication Centres operating to date, the SA Post Office plans to expand these valuable services over the next few years. "They provide a critical platform through which access and training can be extended to ensure that citizens in rural areas are not permanently excluded from information"[14].

Provincial and municipal local authorities in South Africa, together with Eskom, a major supplier of electricity in the region, are involved in on-going electrification projects. Each year, the national electricity grid is being extended and thousands of rural homes and informal settlements are being supplied with electricity, thus enabling these communities to access information via various media, including radio, television, fax machines, photocopiers, multimedia and computers.

Conclusion

All governments, private and public sectors, as well as librarians and individuals in the sub-Saharan region need to commit themselves to eradicating illiteracy in every possible way, so that everyone is given the opportunity to advance along the Information Super Highway. They need to aspire to the 'African Renaissance', as envisaged by Thabo Mbeki, the current President of South Africa, who has stated that:

> The new African World, which the African Renaissance seeks to build, is one of democracy, peace and stability, sustainable development and a better life for the people, non-racism and non-sexism, equality among the nations and a just and democratic system of international governance.

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