

Democratisation of South African LIS Education: Some Causes and Effects

FIONA BELL

Information Studies, School of Human and Social Studies, University of Natal,
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

In South Africa during the 1980s and 1990s socially conscious librarians took steps to transform librarianship. This inevitably led to the democratisation of library and information science (LIS) education. This process was inextricably linked to the social, political and economic events in the country as it prepared for its first democratic elections in 1994. From the traditional approach to library and information work prevalent in the apartheid era emerged an alternative approach. This new approach recognised strong links between libraries and the struggle for democracy and rejected the idea of librarianship as a neutral activity. Various leading librarians in South Africa began to criticise the prevailing model of education for librarianship and to redefine

its educational goals and objectives. The need for more appropriate training as well as rapid technological changes necessitated curriculum revision. A newly emerging clientele and the appearance of resource centres and community libraries also called for alternative training for information workers. By 1994, in spite of plans, policy-making and recognition of the need for change in the education for librarians, problems of fragmentation, a lack of articulation of programmes and little differentiation and specialisation persisted in LIS education and training. Although there have been further policy initiatives and gains resulting in legislation in the 1990s, the democratisation process of LIS education in 2001 is far from complete.

Introduction

The early development of training for librarianship in South Africa has been well documented (Malan 1973, 1974; Kesting 1980). The writings of these authors, although sound narrative history, tended not to search for the socio-political causes and effects of the development of training for librarianship. New approaches to historical research may well encourage researchers to revisit these early phases from a different perspective. This paper attempts to document the changes that came about in library and information science (LIS) education in the 1980s and early 1990s from a contemporary critical perspective, attempting to see causality and effect in terms of socio-political and economic influences.

Education and training for librarianship in South Africa had its origins in the first meeting of

the South African Library Association in 1930. Moulded and developed through the following years, it had its roots in the segregationist policies of the apartheid era. Of the fourteen universities providing university level LIS education, the largest schools or departments – the Universities of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, the Orange Free State, Rand Afrikaans and Potchefstroom University – were based in universities catering mainly for the white Afrikaner majority. Four smaller, less well-funded departments – the Universities of Natal, Cape Town, the Witwatersrand and Rhodes University – catered largely for English-speaking students and were all struggling for survival, the reasons for which will be touched on below. The remaining five departments were in the historically disadvantaged universities (HDU).

The philosophies underlying education for LIS in South Africa tended to follow two totally dis-

parate schools of thought according to their political origin, namely the Afrikaans University departments based their teaching on the European philosophical tradition posited by de Vleeschauer (a Belgian philosopher and lecturer in LIS) of UNISA, who saw librarianship as an intellectual occupation, whilst the four English-speaking departments took a pragmatist approach, which grew out of their close association to the Anglo-American library traditions upon which they were based. To a large extent the HDUs were staffed by graduates of the Afrikaans-speaking universities and held to their particular philosophy, but there were notable exceptions such as Manaka at the University of the North and Switzer and Vermeulen at the University of Zululand.

South Africa in the 1980s was still immersed in the traditional approach to library and information work. Underwood (1996, 147), Professor of Librarianship at the University of Cape Town, criticised the existing situation and suggested that this was also a "first world" approach and "its derivation of syllabi, professional agenda, techniques and issues from Europe and America ... has prevailed..." Emphasis was on "information" and information technology and the importance of computerisation of libraries in a "first world" situation was stressed. As a result this tendency was termed the technicist approach. Underwood (1996, 147) rightly points out that the traditional approach to library and information work "... assumes that libraries are neutral agencies, outside the struggle for democracy and redress." This assumption seemed to fit comfortably with the general approach to librarianship in South Africa under apartheid. The impact of this approach upon librarianship and consequently training for librarianship was to be profound and split the profession into opposing camps, a rift which some believe has not yet completely healed.

This paper attempts to outline, and to bring to the notice of a wider audience, some of the steps taken, in the main, by socially conscious librarians to democratise librarianship in South Africa and inevitably thus to the democratisation of LIS education, at least in the English language LIS schools. This transformation process is inextricably linked with the social, political and economic events in the country as it moved towards the first democratic elections in 1994.

Significant issues and events in the 1980s and 1990s

Censorship and freedom of information

The network of apartheid censorship laws impacted on the profession as these severely limited access to information, restricted library acquisitions policies and in universities, infringed upon academic freedom by seriously curtailing research activity. Merrett, activist Deputy Librarian of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg and later a founding member of LIWO (Library and Information Workers Organisation), maintained that after years of censorship, librarians had grown accustomed to it and its inhibiting effects on libraries (Merrett 1988a, 124). Switzer (1988, 118), the pioneering head of LIS at the University of Zululand, with strong democratic views, believed that it was time

that South Africa's professional association and its members seriously considered the essential conflict between the system of legal censorship in the country and the ethics, which should be integral to the profession.

This lack of initiative to take concerted action against such injustices was, according to Merrett (1988b, 2), illustrative of the entrenchment of "the authoritarian thought patterns of white nationalism" in the country.

The divided professional associations: SAILIS and ALASA

The position adopted by the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS), the largest of the professional associations, was indicative of the predominant philosophy of librarianship of that era. SAILIS, aware of the negative image it had in the 1960s and 1970s as SALA, attempted to metamorphose itself into a non-racial, professional body in 1980. However, Merrett (1994, 212) criticised this new organisation, SAILIS, for its general "apathy and a lack of critical standards", for concentrating "its energies upon apolitical and relatively non-controversial issues such as the status of librarians, management and computerisation" ... and failing "to condemn ... the wider aspects of censorship on documentation." SAILIS also introduced strict

membership criteria, for instance, school librarians were not eligible to join.

The shift from libraries to information

According to Nassimbeni, a progressive LIS academic from the University of Cape Town, the early 1980s brought an "increased awareness of the economic and strategic importance of information" (Nassimbeni 1988, 156). The Minister of National Education was quoted as saying that "information is today being recognised as just as important a national resource as manpower, money and machinery" (Nassimbeni 1988, 156). There was a shift in emphasis from "libraries and librarianship" to "information." In an attempt to formulate and implement a national information policy, the National Advisory Council on Libraries and Information (NACLI) appointed by the Minister of National Education, aimed to "to mobilize for optimal use the information capabilities of the public and the private sectors" (Zaaiman 1985, 136). Zaaiman (1985, 134), an academic from the University of South Africa and influential advisor of SAILIS, maintained that in South Africa "the information technologies, both old and new, are well established, intensively used and are being vigorously developed." He believed that "the development of all peoples towards solving problems in an informed manner is the key to the production of a consistent information society in South Africa" (Zaaiman 1985, 137). It was evident that librarians were making a transition to the provision of information. The establishment of the first chair of Information Science by UNISA in 1976 was indicative of the start of such changes.

On a technological level, LIS in South Africa moved into an era evincing a greater usage of computers and telecommunication networks, the use of both of which increased dramatically, especially with the introduction of the South African Bibliographic and Information Network (SABINET) in 1983. In surveys undertaken to assess the effects of new technology in South African libraries, Musiker, a leading academic librarian and bibliographer, University Librarian of the University of the Witwatersrand, head of their library school and initiator of the *Wits Journal*, found that progress in library computerization had been "remarkable" and that thirty-one librar-

ies were "operating computerised systems" (1985, 68). Although the need for this "high tech" information technology "significantly influenced the curricula of library and information studies in South Africa" (Walker 1988, 135), it also served to further highlight the divide between the information rich and the information poor in South African LIS, because the services provided only benefited certain sectors of the society.

Recognition of crisis times in the 1980s

Accelerated change in the social, political and economic contexts in South Africa gave rise to a growing awareness that a new and different political system would emerge to replace the prevailing one (Nassimbeni 1986, 157). Hooper (1993, 22), Director of Libraries at the University of Cape Town, remarked "the tide of events in South Africa in the 1980s was forcing even the most blinkered librarians to become politically aware and active." An indication of the changing attitude appeared in a 1985 *SAILIS Newsletter* article, entitled "Libraries must adapt to societal changes." The title of the 1986 SAILIS Conference, *Libraries in a time of crisis*, did point to the acknowledgement, even in technicist circles, of a crisis within the profession (Merrett 1988b, 1). Following on from this, the 1987 Conference was entitled *Planning for change: the challenge to the Library and Information Profession* which was "reflective of the pervasive sense of awareness of imminent political and social change and the need for information, ideas and planning to meet the challenges facing the country" (Nassimbeni 1988, 163).

The Resource Centre movement as a democratising influence

The recognition that apartheid had spawned a totally inequitable library policy, not merely in economic terms but also in the wider cultural context, led to the sudden growth of resource centres, and these alternative libraries challenged librarians and changed their attitudes. One of the first community resource centres to be established was at the Ecumenical Centre in Durban in September 1983 (Berghammer and Karlsson 1988). According to Karelse, LIS lecturer and activist at the University of Cape Town, resource centres emerged

as 'alternatives' to established information services like public libraries; alternative in the sense of providing resources both to support mass struggles and to counter the propagation of information by the dominant classes for the maintenance of exploitative relations (Karelse 1991, 4).

Resource centres differed but most of them were "characterised by their non-governmental nature and their concern with building democracy both in their internal work practices and in society at large" (Karelse 1991, 3). They aimed to "empower local communities and mass organisations through the provision of skills and knowledge which can be used to transform oppressive social conditions" (National Education Policy Investigation 1992, 31). This determined "attempt to address community information needs" (Karelse and Radloff 1995, 61), which public library services had frequently failed to do, led to their also being referred to as community resource centres (CRCs). The term 'resource' centre stemmed from the fact that the centre had a wide variety of media in various forms would be available to the community. It was essentially the interactive information work "based on exchanges and interchanges between information workers and user communities" which often involved "other development initiatives that incorporate an information function, such as job creation schemes and health, legal aid, and education services" (Karelse and Radloff 1995, 63) that characterised the alternative services offered informally by resource centres, as opposed to formal public library provision.

By 1992 there were 103 resource centres (Karls-son and Booij 1993, 27) and popular information networks known as resource centre fora were established regionally (Stilwell 1994, 303) "to encourage discussion and debate around common issues and problems, and to promote training of resource workers and sharing of skills" (National Education Policy Investigation 1992, 32–33).

Usually staffed by staff without formal qualifications, the training of resource centre workers was regarded as a problem. However, in 1988 the University of Natal Department of LIS together with the Natal Resource Centre Forum established "a successful co-operative training venture" (Walker 1993, 154). The Community Resource Centre Training Project (CRCTP) was the first sustained initiative by a tertiary institution to offer a relevant level of training to meet the demands of this new type of information worker.

South African librarians were able to learn invaluable lessons from the resource centre movement. It was later referred to as a "creative approach to information provision" which involved "an active policy of community participation" to ensure "vitality and continued relevance" (National Education Policy Investigation 1992, 34). There was demand for information linked to the real needs of the people and the value of outreach programmes was demonstrated. Perhaps of greatest significance was the obvious link between information provision and education. The success of the resource centre movement enhanced the alternative or structuralist approach to librarianship in South Africa (National Education Policy Investigation 1992, 4; 34).

Transformation in the universities

The beginnings of transformation in education in South Africa began in the 1980s. Universities, too, as part of this process, began to reassess their offerings in their attempts to democratise and Africanise their institutions. Because education and training for librarianship was largely situated in universities, it inevitably became part of this process of transformation.

The transformation of the South African university has been well documented by Lamoral (1994) who highlighted the fact that the *Perceptions of Wits: Report* was an indication of the initiatives, which had started in other universities as well. In this survey "community perceptions regarding the university were collected from a section of the disadvantaged community" and its results "made it clear that the university decision-making bodies should be more representative of society" (Lamoral 1994, 99).

The findings revealed a

unanimous feeling that Wits should move its research priorities from narrowly technical considerations towards a greater responsiveness to community concerns ... above all, community based or 'progressive' research can play a vital role in convincing people in South Africa as a whole of the need for change (Tomorrow begins at Wits today? ... 1986, 24).

This important observation had far-reaching implications for universities. Walker, forward-looking LIS academic and lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, commented that

“there is no reason to suppose that education for librarianship is exempt from these perceptions: information is a necessity for community survival and advancement” (1988, 136).

Trends in the literature which challenge the status quo

Although the literature of South African librarianship in the early 1980s reveals little evidence of a change of attitude, towards the end of the decade more voices were heard in the LIS sector articulating the changes taking place and indicating that transformation was urgently needed in education for librarianship. These changes became important influences on education for librarianship in South Africa.

The *South African Journal of Library and Information Science*, the pre-eminent LIS journal and mouthpiece of the professional organisation SAILIS, is now known to have been heavily subsidised by the apartheid government. Socially aware academics did not wish to be associated with this journal and alternative vehicles had to be found. Some, in the 1970s, such as Schauder, then University Librarian, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, published overseas. The content of a local journal, however, the 1988 issue of the *Wits Journal*, reflected the emergence of alternative and even radical ideas during the country's State of Emergency. Two University of Natal academics, Verbeek, an influential lecturer and activist, and Stilwell, a lecturer with strong links to the resource centre movement and later a founder member of LIWO, produced the article, “Speculations on the nature of an alternative school library system for post-apartheid South Africa” (1988), which appeared in this issue.

However, the establishment, too, was changing – even if slowly. The influential Zaaiman report, *The use of libraries for the development of South Africa*, was published in 1988 (Zaaiman, Roux and Rykheer 1988). The fact that a comprehensive research project had been commissioned by SAILIS to investigate the role of libraries in development acknowledged that there were “serious areas of neglect in the provision of library and information services” (Nassimbeni 1988, 164). As Lor (1993a, 64), an academic and Director of the State Library, commented, “for the first time the multi-cultural nature of South African society

was fully acknowledged in a major report intended to stimulate discussion making on a future course for South Africa's libraries.” Nassimbeni (1988, 164) believed that the report was

remarkable for its recognition that library and information services should be established and maintained on a more participatory and democratic style than is currently the practice which tends towards the top-down management style.

Lor (1993a, 14) regarded the report as a much more progressive document than anything which had gone before. It created “both an awareness of the need for change and a certain dissatisfaction that is very necessary for a paradigm shift.”

The articulation of the imperatives for change in LIS education

Walker (1988) and Nassimbeni (1988) had begun to raise doubts about the appropriateness of library education for the coming democratic South Africa and concern about standards was raised by the Committee of University Principals (CUP) Review Committee in 1989 (1990). The relevance and appropriateness of education for librarians were to become major issues of debate amongst academics and practitioners from then until the mid-1990s.

In fact Zaaiman himself, was one of the first to voice doubts as to whether

the education of librarians and information officers is well enough adapted to the conditions pertaining to South Africa. Education is dominated by First World ideas emanating from the United States and Britain. For this reason the cultural characteristics and grass roots needs of the largest part of the population mostly go unheeded and unsatisfied. Librarians are taught information systems, but these systems are not adapted to the needs of different cultures (Zaaiman 1985, 136).

In a groundbreaking work on education for librarianship, entitled “The imperative for change: curriculum revision in South Africa” (1988), Nassimbeni recognised the “various technological and socio-political determinants” which were to lead to a “reformulation of strategic objectives” for LIS in South Africa. This, in turn, implied “a redefinition or refinement of educational goals and objectives” (Nassimbeni 1988, 181–182). Certain sectors of society were identified as not hav-

ing access to information and libraries and that an assessment of their needs was required. It was "this greater awareness and acknowledgement of inequities" (Nassimbeni 1988, 182) which Nassimbeni believed should help to shape the curriculum.

Following closely on Nassimbeni's article, Walker published "Out of Africa: pointers to possible developments in South African library education" (Walker 1988). She believed that in the future planning of education for librarians and information workers, perceptions from other parts of Africa should be drawn upon so that courses would include "certain approaches and skills appropriate to providing information for developing as well as First World populations" (Walker 1988, 21).

Lor's paper on "The future of education for library and information science in South Africa" (1989) concentrated on trends and issues which he believed would shape librarianship and information work in the next decade. One of the pertinent factors he stressed was "that the concept of the 'neutral' librarian and information worker dispensing information to all who have 'information needs' is due for revision" (Lor 1989, 78). He noted that the increase of community libraries was "a symptom of the inadequacy of the concept of 'neutral' librarianship in South Africa" and advocated that LIS schools should produce students "with a higher level of political and social awareness", with a "better understanding of how society functions, the role of information in society, and such aspects as group and community dynamics" (Lor 1989, 78). By the end of the 1980s the issue of the neutrality of South African librarianship was under review by other writers. It was brought to the fore by Nassimbeni and further highlighted in the 1990s by the NEPI research papers and subsequent report (see below). This issue clearly had implications for education and training.

With change in the country, education for librarianship faced a number of important challenges. The urgent need to make training more appropriate necessitated curriculum revision; also required for keeping up with the rapid changes in technology. The need to deal with the imperative of a newly emerging clientele and the emergence of resource centres and community libraries called for training of resource centre workers. The challenges at the beginning of the

1990s could be summed up in the following quotation:

Library education cannot be discussed without a clear understanding about the library situation of the society(ies), as it is closely related to the manpower requirements of the libraries. It also requires an understanding of the society, to which the library belongs, because libraries exist as a social agency to perform the roles, which are expected, by society (Atan and Havard-Williams 1987, 145).

Co-operation and negotiation around transformation

If the 1980s was the decade in which the need for change was recognised and change was advocated, then it was in the 1990s that change gradually began to occur. Social and political change initiated by the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of political parties such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1990 ushered in a period of transformation which affected all spheres of life, including LIS. It was a period characterised by planning and policy-making in LIS and it was recognised that "information and information providers like libraries and resource centres have a crucial role to play" (Wyley 1993, 20). The change required was more than one of practice, but rather one of philosophy, definitions, concepts and objectives. Wyley maintained that "this period of social change demands that we revise the traditional definition of librarianship and of information" (1993, 21). Also writing in 1993, Lor questioned whether the Africanisation paradigm shift was discernible in South African literature of library and information work. He suggested that "between the late eighties and the present time our agenda has progressed from proposals concerned with adapting and extending services to proposals concerned with far more radical changes" (Lor 1993a). The progress he was referring to related to the difference between the Zaaiman report and the NEPI report. Dickson's bibliography "An initial bibliography of changing librarianship in a changing South Africa, 1990–April 1994" (Dickson 1993) reflected the changing content of LIS literature of this transitional period.

An example of the more radical changes taking place was the emergence of a new LIS organiza-

tion. Aware of the prevailing social and political differences in the profession, a small group of activist librarians split off from SAILIS formed the Library and Information Workers' Organisation (LIWO), launched in Durban in 1990. LIWO was strongly supported by those responsible for library education. This split would ultimately contribute to the dissolution of SAILIS in 1995 and the formation of a new "unified" library association. Although there was a growing voice of "dissenting" librarians, both on the political and LIS level, activist librarians remained a small minority as was evident when only a small band of LIS workers joined LIWO when it was launched in Durban in 1990.

Official statistics in 1991 show that 9,304 individuals staffed LIS service points in the country's formal sector. Of this number 2,308 were professionally qualified (Underwood and Nassimbeni 1996, 217). These figures did not include the 'non-formal' sector, which consisted of resource centres, and nor did they include those who staffed school libraries. It is interesting to note that in 1991 "a total of 1877 students enrolled at South African universities for a first professional qualification in LIS and a total of 329 enrolled for advanced degrees" (Nassimbeni, Stilwell and Walker 1993, 36). Also of interest is the percentage of students in the various groups registered for LIS in 1990. The predominance of white students who formed 56,9% of the total was a cause for concern. Black students made up 26,9%, Coloureds 8,8% and Indian students 7,4% (Nassimbeni, Stilwell and Walker 1993, 35).

In the 1990s criticisms of the current model of education for librarianship, specifically that it was Eurocentric and based on Anglo-American origins, continued. Nassimbeni, taking up Lor's concern with the neutrality issue, was one of the first to highlight the technician/structuralist divide, mentioned above, and inherent in the country's education for librarianship. In her paper at the 1991 IFLA Conference she stated that

most librarians have been trained in programmes which emphasise the technical and practical dimensions of LIS and tend to neglect the social and political context in which information is generated, distributed and consumed (Nassimbeni 1991,10).

These ideas were expanded upon in the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) LIS

report which recognised the traditional approach as the dominant mode in library and information work where it was assumed that libraries were neutral, and that "librarianship is value-free, and research activities and approaches are framed in terms of a quest for the 'physics of librarianship'" (National Education Policy Investigation 1992, 4). This objective and apolitical stance did not acknowledge that "the struggles in the workplace, schools, universities, and country-side of South Africa involve a contest over ideas and aspirations; and therefore that libraries are also sites of struggle" (National Education Policy Investigation 1992, 4).

It was from these origins that the structuralist approach to library and information work emerged (Nassimbeni 1991, 10). This alternative approach recognised strong links between libraries and the struggle for democracy and rejected the idea of librarianship as a neutral activity. It "challenges traditionalists to be more analytical and critical of the ideological assumptions underlying their practices" (National Education Policy Investigation 1992, 5). The consequences of the alternative approach, which have manifested themselves in education and training in a number of different ways, have been clearly set out by Nassimbeni, Stilwell and Walker (1993, 37-38) in their comprehensive research paper for the NEPI LIS Group.

An interesting feature of the early 1990s was the coming together of various LIS groupings other than under the SAILIS aegis. The policy documents and reports emanating from these initiatives significantly influenced the direction of LIS and, in turn, had the potential to influence LIS education for librarianship. More than in any other period before, an attitude of critical analysis was prevalent in matters relating to LIS education and training. This healthy situation led to a recognition of the need for transformation, but by the end of the period of the study Dickson, an activist librarian, stated that "the formal LIS education sector has not yet begun to address the transformation process in a meaningful way" (Dickson 1994, 3).

Increasing co-operation and negotiation

Another trend, discernible since the beginning of the 1990s, had been the greater degree of contact

and communication between LIS individuals from various institutions and organisations at various levels, not only within provinces but also across the country. This stems from observations made firstly with LIWO from 1990, where library and information workers of all levels, formally qualified and others, came together. This development seemed to expand with the NEPI process and intensified during the Transforming our Library and Information Services (TRANSLIS) process that developed from NEPI. An increased number of conferences helped to forge links across the LIS spectrum. Examples of such conferences were the First National Resource Centre Conference held in Durban in 1991 and the series of Info Africa Nova conferences started in 1992 that successfully brought LIS individuals within South Africa, and indeed from the rest of Africa, into contact with one another. Various important initiatives followed and these are described below.

National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI)

The NEPI project is regarded as the single most influential event in LIS of this decade. It was an "example of the potential for collaboration by the various professional organisations to achieve a common purpose" (International Federation of Library Associations 1993, 17), which, as mentioned above, was a new feature detectable in LIS. The NEPI project was instigated by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) established in the 1980s. LIWO recognised the advantages of linking LIS to this essentially educational project and took the initiative in helping to form the NEPI LIS research group. The aims of the project were to

- Attempt to articulate links between library and information services (LIS) policy options and educational policy options.
- Explore policy options, which would enable the development of a coherent and co-ordinated national library and information service for South Africa.
- Provide a background for discussion and debate by interested participants around issues that have been highlighted by the research (International Federation of Library Associations 1993, 17).

In spite of various shortcomings, the publication of the Report, which followed, was acknowledged by Lor (1993b, 52) as "a milestone in the literature of South African librarianship and in-

formation work" and its significance should also be measured by "its role in stimulating debate and action." It was remarkable for the collaboration and collective research, all of which took place in a progressive paradigm, and which was subjected to scrutiny and broadly consultative at the same time. The formation of the Transforming our Library and Information Services (TRANSLIS) coalition was a significant consequence of the NEPI LIS initiative, which had provided the incentive for members of LIS organisations to continue to work together.

Transforming our library and information services (TRANSLIS)

TRANSLIS, which comprised ten LIS groupings, was formed in March 1993 "to develop a LIS policy and programme which directed the process of participatory change of South Africa's libraries and information services" (Stilwell 1995, 39). It chose to continue using most of the NEPI principles of democracy, redress, non-sexism, non-racism and a unitary system. Its importance in the context of education for librarianship was that "the TRANSLIS Coalition policy discussion document can be seen to have influenced the LIS section in the ANC Education Department's *A policy framework for education and training* (ANC 279) which was published in 1994" (Stilwell 1995, 39).

Implementation plan for education and training (IPET)

The year 1994 saw the publication of a number of policy documents related to LIS policy. A new group charged with developing LIS policy was formed in January 1994. This was based at the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), a research centre commissioned by the ANC to draw up an implementation plan. Although its final report, the *Implementation Plan for Education and Training (IPET)*, became available later in 1994 and proposed the centralisation of all LIS legislation and its national governance structures, its credibility and accountability were called into question for a number of reasons. Although the IPET document "did not make any specific references to LIS education" (Aitchison 1996, 4), it was a valuable resource for later documents (Stilwell 1995, 40).

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

At the same time as the IPET document was being formulated, the IDRC was compiling its report, which was made available in May 1994. The IDRC aimed to assist in the establishment of a national information policy and strategy for South Africa to support the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG)

The reports and recommendations of policy documents issued prior to 1994 were relied upon and used as a foundation for further policy formulation and legislation drawn up after the new government came in to power. In 1995 the newly formed Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology appointed the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) to advise the Minister on arts and culture policy. A Subcommittee on Libraries was formed to put forward "proposals concerning policies at national, provincial and local levels" (Arts and Culture Task Group Library and Information Services Subcommittee 1995). The Task Team agreed on "a single focal point for decision-making and co-ordination" (Nassimbeni 2001, 28), and recommended that this should remain with DACST for the present. It also recommended, "that a national consultative body should report directly to the Minister" (Nassimbeni 2001, 28) but failed to describe its exact nature and composition.

Working Group on the National Libraries of South Africa and the Inter Ministerial Working Group on the Library and Information Services (LIS) Function (National Level) (IMWG)

Two working groups were established by DACST to review all legislation for which it was responsible. It was perhaps from such bodies that the more tangible results of the democratic process were evident. As a result of the Working Group on the National Libraries of South Africa the amended National Libraries Act was implemented in November 1999. This amalgamated the State Library and the South African Library to form the single, unified National Library of South Africa (NLSA).

The aim of the IMWG, appointed in 1996, was to advise the Minister of Education and the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on

mechanisms to ensure good governance of the library and information system at the national level in South Africa to facilitate maximum availability and use of all relevant information sources to advance the Reconstruction and Development Programme (South Africa Department of Arts Culture, Science and Technology and Department of Education 1997, 18).

Working Group on Libraries and Information Technology (WGLIT)

The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE), soon after its establishment in 1995, appointed WGLIT "to provide a set of guidelines on library and information technology policies for the sector" (Nassimbeni 2001, 30). Its report emphasised the benefits of collaborative models of information provision and use in the higher education sector, endorsing the newly formed LIS consortia in the country and supporting the efforts of the higher education sector "to respond to the inequalities and inefficiencies inherited from the past" (Nassimbeni 2001, 31).

Assessing the extent of change in LIS education and training

Dickson's journal article entitled "Education and training for library and information services in a changing South Africa" (1994) is of particular significance as it provided an assessment of the education and training issues of the time. In fact, this particular issue of *Innovation* in which it appeared provided a wide context in its coverage of education and training for LIS in southern Africa. Dickson's article, based on her 1994 survey of five technikons and thirteen universities, attempted to establish whether any of the criticisms of LIS education raised by the NEPI report and others had been addressed. Dickson concluded "three years into the transition period, the formal LIS education sector has not yet begun to address the transformation process in a meaningful way" (Dickson 1994, 3). The conclusions she reached focused on those problem areas in LIS education which were little changed in spite of plans, policy-making and recognition of the need for change. It was clear that fragmentation persisted.

There was "still very little differentiation and specialization among the institutions in terms of the courses offered" (Dickson 1994, 4). Many departments identified similar areas of specialization

which would lead to unnecessary duplication between institutions. This duplication indicated a need for co-operative joint decision-making amongst library schools as to what should be offered according to various factors such as location and strengths and weaknesses. In the same issue of *Innovation*, Kaniki (1994), head of the Department of Information Studies, University of Natal, concentrated on the availability of, and need for, courses aimed at equipping LIS workers to serve the special information needs of rural communities in South Africa. He concluded that the failure to cater for these needs had more to do with lack of resources in the LIS departments than any lack of interest.

A lack of articulation of programmes between education and training institutions was noted as an on-going problem for universities and technikons. Although individual institutions had taken the initiative there were "no formal structures underpinning the process" (Dickson 1994, 4) and a national initiative was called for to address this and other issues. For instance most institutions claimed that they had satisfactorily attracted students of all race groups because there were no longer any segregation policies. However, Dickson pointed out that an increase in the numbers of black students at historically white institutions

only resolves the issue of racial imbalance in terms of numbers at these institutions and does not guarantee that there will be more Black librarians to work in rural areas or on literacy projects (Dickson 1994, 6).

Another potential problem was raised by Dickson, namely "how many, mainly urban, university-educated Black students would be prepared to go out and work in rural areas?" (Dickson 1994, 6). She claimed that there was a "need for rigorous and extensive research into the local library and information situation" (Dickson 1994, 7).

Conclusions

The 1980s were a period characterised by the recognition of the shortcomings of LIS and LIS education in South Africa. The profession mirrored the situation in the country – it catered for the white middle class. Socially conscious librarians and library educators were increasingly articulating recognition of the problem. The first

four years of the 1990s up to the first democratic elections were characterised by articulate academic investigations into the requirements of a democratic library system based upon an "Africanised", democratic library education.

What has come out of all this? Primary results include recognition and an understanding of the changes that are needed and what must be changed. After the first democratic elections in the country in 1994 there were great expectations. The policy initiatives and the resulting legislation of this period reflect the aspirations of LIS towards reconstruction and transformation. In spite of these efforts however, "there has been a contraction of services" (Nassimbeni 2001, 32). The falling value of the Rand has hit libraries extremely hard, with book and periodical budgets buying less and less. The Constitution made public libraries a provincial competence but the provinces do not have the money to institute radical change. Some areas have suffered more than others, for example, the Northern and Eastern Cape. Basic education in the schools is an absolute priority and the educators and learners articulate a desperate need for libraries, but the Department of Education does not have the money to make school libraries a priority. It must be recognised that the new government's major inputs were into very basic services during the first four years. The National Library of South Africa and the South African Library for the Blind, however, now have democratically elected boards as opposed to appointed boards. The IMWG's proposal for a new national council, instigated by NEPI will shortly become a reality with the approval by Cabinet of the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS) (Nassimbeni 2001, 33).

SAILIS as an organisation was disbanded in 1995 and replaced by LIASA, which has yet to prove itself. If LIASA's plans materialise, the temporary disappearance of the SAILIS journal will be replaced by a substitute journal as a mouthpiece for LIS in South Africa (LIASA 2001, 27). The training of librarians and information workers has become more and not less diffuse as suggested by CUP. The technikons are now also offering degrees in LIS. Every University department in the country is battling for survival, because of financial constraints. Democratisation of South African LIS education has taken place but

the process is far from complete and it is imperative that this process should continue on its intended course.

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