

# B R E A K I N G D O W N

The theme of the 32nd IASL Conference is

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES: BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Central to the IASL conference theme for 2003 is the belief that effective school library programmes narrow gaps and equalise opportunities. They provide academic enrichment and catch-up interventions, and serve to connect learning across the curriculum. They provide access to literature that might heal divisions, build the self-esteem of the marginalised, and promote tolerance.

IASL 2003's goal is to break down some of the barriers that hinder school library development within South Africa, the rest of Africa and internationally. These barriers divide the profession from within and also isolate it from the very partners it needs to work with - teachers, curriculum developers and policy-makers. Many countries have reformed their education systems - opting for a learner-centred curriculum that will produce school leavers who are lifelong learners, able to compete in the global economy. However the potential role of school libraries in this reform has often been ignored.

It is hoped that IASL 2003 might be a forum for discussion and debate on these anomalies. It will focus on the need to narrow the gaps between school library sectors, school libraries and other libraries, librarians and educationists, librarians and managers, librarians and government, and libraries and their communities. Interested practitioners, educationists, teachers, literacy specialists, and researchers are invited to submit proposals on the following suggested themes:

- So-called North/South relations -the creation of constructive creative relationships and connections between the advantaged and disadvantaged sector. *How to harness the goodwill that exists, or overcome the sense of alienation that often exists among teacher librarians working in poorly resourced schools.*
- Innovative programmes that demonstrate how school library programmes might be set up in disadvantaged sectors and in remote rural areas.
- Programmes that bridge the so-called digital divide.
- School library policymaking - how to influence it, how to implement it. *What evidence is there internationally of the impact of policy on school library development? What approaches work best in what contexts? How can education policy makers be persuaded to the indisputable role of school librarians in a successful outcomes-based or competency-based education system?*
- The barriers between:
  - educators and librarians who should be equal partners in schools and education systems
  - personnel working within schools and advisory staff working within school library support services
  - sectors of librarianship - collaborations and partnerships among school librarians, public librarians, educators, and community members.
- Information literacy education in the developing sector. *How do we apply the latest thinking, relevant to learner-centred curricula, in schools that have inadequate resources?*
- The role of school libraries in the struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic that threatens Africa's youth. *How can the school library contribute to the fundamental shifts in beliefs and thinking needed to arm young people against the epidemic? How can the media persuade them to change deeply ingrained beliefs about gender relations and sexual behaviour?*
- Gender issues in school libraries. *Is school librarianship a woman's profession and does this impact on its status? What are the career paths for school librarians? Are the information needs of girls being met and do they have equal access to the information and communication technologies within school systems?*
- The gaps between researchers and practitioners. *How do we encourage reflective practice, and set about*

**International Research Forum** proposals must include a detailed description (approximately 1000 words) as follows:

- Title of paper/study
- Research questions and/or hypotheses/purposes of study
- Methodology/process
- Results/findings (may be preliminary)
- Conclusions (may be preliminary)

**Professional Papers** must include on a separate page:

- Title of paper
- Detailed description outlining paper content and relevance to professional practice (approximately 500 words)

### Submissions:

#### By post:

Send a hard copy to Sandy Zinn, Dept of Library and Information Science, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Belville, 7535, South Africa.

#### By fax:

+ 27 21 959 3659  
Attention: Sandy Zinn, Dept of Library and Information Science, University of the Western Cape

#### By e-mail:

Please send as an e-mail attachment (preferably in Microsoft Word) to: szinn@uwc.ac.za



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The ELITS Directorate, KZNDEC, authorised by the KZN Cabinet and funded by the KZN Department of Education and Culture, will host the 32nd IASL Conference with the support of

- The Department of Library & Information Studies, University of Western Cape, Cape Town
- Department of Information Studies, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg
- The Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA)
- The KZN LIASA branch
- The KZN Media Teachers' Association
- The International Convention Centre, Durban
- The City of Durban
- Durban Africa