

REORGANISATION OF LIBRARIES UNDER GREATER JOHANNESBURG IN THE DEMOCRATIC ERA

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ABSTRACT

In the last ten years of Democracy, the country has experienced major changes. There was no way that libraries could escape these changes.

This paper looks at the journey undertaken by the City of Johannesburg Library Services, from the time they were under administration of nine local governments to date, where they are now under the City of Johannesburg Administration.

Discussions on stages of changes will start at the time where libraries were operating independently of each other under the administration of nine local governments, namely, Soweto, Alexandra, Roodepoort, Sandton, Diepmeadow, Randburg, Dobsonville, Ennerdale, and Johannesburg.

The next phase of change saw libraries under the administration of the Metropolitan Council, which was short-lived. This was legislated by the Local Government Transitional Act 1996 which stipulated various powers and responsibilities between Metropolitan Council and the Local Councils.

The substructures administration, namely, Southern, Western, Eastern and Northern Metropolitan Substructures shortly followed this with the Metropolitan Council at the centre.

In 1998, the Technical Task Team namely, Transformation Lekgotla, was formed and this lead to iGOLi 2002. The actual groundwork of iGOLi 2002 began in 1999, with the purpose of disbanding the substructures and adding the Midrand local government; to form the City of Johannesburg and the 11 decentralised regions. This process was promulgated by the Local Government Municipal Systems Act no. 32 of 2000. The Act stipulated that library service points of the city should no longer deliver services independently of each other. The integrated development plan was formulated and used as basis to integrate, direct and deliver library services to the residents.

Emanating from these changes, were both positive and negative impacts on Library and Information Services (LIS). The discussion shows the positive and negative impacts of the change. The discussion will also show how the LIS conform to democratic principles.

1. Introduction

When the country was undergoing social, political, and cultural changes, these created an unprecedented demand for information. If South Africans are to exercise their democratic rights in a responsible way, they need to access information. Information systems network should enable this effective access and use of information.

2. What prompted the change

Library and Information Services transformation coincided with LIS Professional bodies' transformation. July 1997 saw the establishment of one new united professional organisation in S.A namely, the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA).

1997 was also a year of financial crisis for the City of Johannesburg. This led to the Gauteng Provincial Government, and politicians in the Metro and Council taking action. The response undertaken was in accordance with section 139 of the Constitution, which provides that: "When a Municipality cannot or does not fulfil an executive obligation in terms of the legislation, the relevant provincial executive may intervene by taking any appropriate steps to ensure fulfilment of that obligation." It was for this reason that in October 1997; MEC for Development Planning and Local Government issued General Notice no. 3192 of 1997. The notice provided for the creation of a management committee known as the Committee of Ten. This was a precedent set for the way in which Provincial Government would interact with Local Government in times of crisis.

3. Developmental stages of the City

3.1 The Soweto Accord

24 September 1990, the Soweto accord was signed, setting up a Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber and launching negotiations for a democratic local government dispensation in Johannesburg.

During this period, the Regional Service Council was responsible for the bulk provision of services, including funding for library services.

3.2 Transitional Metropolitan Council

2 February 1994: The Local Government transition Act 1993 was promulgated, changing the Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber into the Greater Johannesburg Local Negotiating Forum. This Forum concluded an agreement on the establishment of Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) and Metropolitan Substructures (MMS's) for Johannesburg.

The Forum's agreement was codified in Proclamation 24 of 3 December 1994. The Proclamation provided for the vesting of all powers and functions of the dissolved nine Local Councils, in the TMC.

This brought about the transition from nine local governments, namely, Soweto, Alexandra, Roodepoort, Sandton, Randburg, Dobsonville, Ennerdale, Diepmeadow, and Johannesburg into the 4 Substructures namely, Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS), Northern Metropolitan Substructure (NMSS), Eastern Metropolitan Substructure (EMSS), Western Metropolitan Substructure (WMSS), and Metropolitan Council, namely, the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC).

3.3 iGOLi 2002

iGOLi 2002 is a plan to combine the 4MSS's and GJMC into a single unicity; a city that provides quality and efficient services to all its citizens equally.

3.3.1 Establishment of iGOLi 2002

The intention of dissolution of the 4 MSS's, in 1998, resulted in the formation of the Technical Task Team, namely the Transformation Lekgotla. This Team, which was broadened from the Committee of Ten, and for the first time included senior management.

The actual iGOLi 2002 groundwork started in 1999.

The iGOLi 2002 led to the establishment of the City of Johannesburg with 11 operational decentralised regions, with the inclusion of the Midrand Local Authority. The establishment of iGOLi 2002 was promulgated by the Local Government Municipal Systems Act no. 32 of 2000. The Act also stipulated that Library Service points of the City could no longer deliver services independently of each other. The then Acting Strategic Executive Officer: Community Services including Library Services of the EMSS, Bongi Mokaba, was appointed as the Libraries Co-ordinator. The coordinator's role was to form relationships, for the proposed structure, which would serve as a binding factor for the future

3.3.2 Library and Information Services Task Teams

Task teams with representatives from each of the former 4 MSS's and the GJMC were formed. The purpose of the task teams was to prepare proposals for LIS for the proposed structure of the city. The task teams were:

- Tariffs, By-laws and Membership
- Computerisation
- Bibliographic Services.
- Relationship with Province
- Staffing.
- Reference Services, and Adult lending Services
- Children and Young Adult Services
- Interlibrary Loans
- Study Centres
- Administration and Support Services
- Mobile services
- Local Government Libraries
- Audio-Visual Services
- Community Information Services
- Marketing, Fundraising, and Publicity
- Literacy

- Communication Team. This was one of the crucial task teams. It's core functions included:
 - ✓ To ensure that all employees of the LIS in the City of Johannesburg were kept informed of all the developments, and
 - ✓ They were invited to participate in the planning process.

3.3.3 Goals of iGOLi 2002

The primary goal of the iGOLi 2002 project was to put in place a single central administration body, formed around the City Manager's Office. This administration body would be responsible:

- ✓ To manage and coordinate activities of the 11 decentralised regions, and
- ✓ To provide grass root community services, including Library and Information Services, to the community.

4 The LIS Central Administration versus Regional Administration

4.1 The LIS Central Administration

Is responsible for:

- Formulation of policies,
- Regulation of contracts,
- Coordination,
- Monitoring of service delivery,
- Capital finance allocation and monitoring,
- Political responsibility and accountability,
- Mobile Library Services,
- Acquisition and processing of library material, and
- Courier service between service points, between regions and between regions and the centre

4.2 The LIS Regional Administration

Is responsible for:

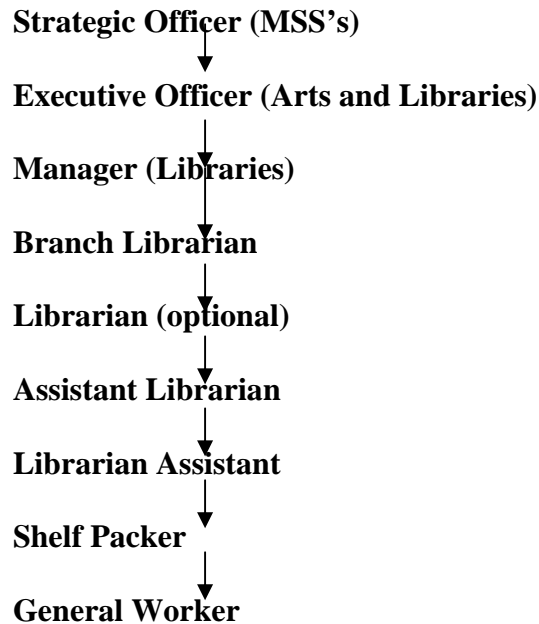
- Service delivery,
- Staffing,
- Planning and execution of projects/programmes,
- Operational finance allocation, and
- Everything to do with operational issues

4.1 The City of Johannesburg Library Services Business Plan: Priorities

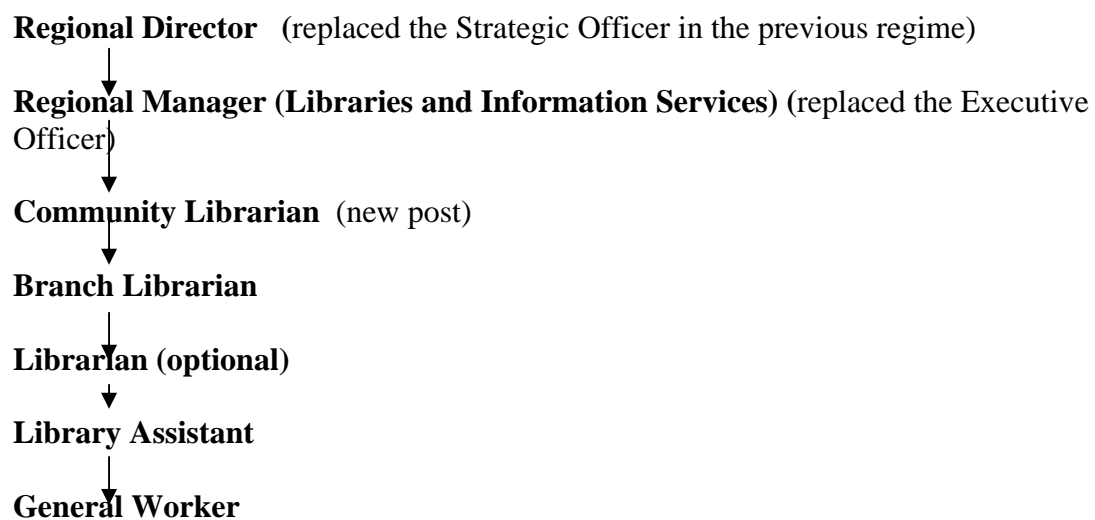
- Improved access by children to library services,
- Higher levels of literacy in the city, in terms of skills development priority of the city, and
- Improved access to electronic information.

5. LIS Organisational Structure

5.1 The Organisational Structure under the administration of MSS's was as follows:



5.2 The present Organisational Structure under the City of Johannesburg administration



The Regional Manager (LIS), in any of the 11 regions, is directly accountable to the Regional Director. Accountability to the Deputy Director LIS at central administration is in terms of policy and planning compliance.

Two posts i.e. assistant librarian and shelf packer have fallen away.

Two regions initially shared a Regional Manager, until it became apparent that the set-up is unworkable. Funding was gradually made available and thereafter each region had its own manager appointed.

See the complete City of Johannesburg LIS organisational structure. Annexure A.

6 ACHIEVEMENTS BY THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

6.1 BROAD OUTCOMES

- Integration of MSS's LIS computer systems into one network, using single software, namely, Urica. LIS in former MSS's previously used different systems namely, Libris, Urica, and Erudite.

This integration of information systems facilitated:

- ✓ interlending amongst all the City libraries,
- ✓ access to any of the libraries by a member who subscribed at any of the libraries in location within the City (interlocation),
- ✓ access to the entire City's LIS collection,
- ✓ better control of defaulters in the LIS services, and
- ✓ provides better communication with the City LIS employees namely, Online Bulletin Board.
- Rationalisation of 76 LIS service points and opening hours in view of limited resources.
- Establishment of children's reading promotion programmes in all libraries in the City namely, "Battle of the Books, and Story Skirmish."
- Expanding library literacy services through appointment of Literacy Coordinator in each Library Regional Cluster and use of PC- based literacy programmes (Media works). The City is in a process of acquiring more licences and maintenance of the information systems technology from the IT department of the City of Johannesburg.
- Development of Policies by the LIS Central Administration e.g. Selection Policy.
- Development and implementation of realistic production, service standards, and service delivery measurement for LIS.
- Implementation of training programme to improve customer relations in LIS.
- Revising LIS mobile service routes to provide services in disadvantaged areas.
- Revise Service agreement with Gauteng Provincial Library and Information Services, whereby libraries that were previously not catered for have been invited to be part of the agreement.
- The restructuring ensured flow of library services to municipal areas with high concentrations of poor people, narrowing the gap between the information rich and the information poor.

- The local councils have been able to focus on needs specific to those libraries within their areas.
- Equal opportunity where posts have been circularised or advertised for staff members, to apply and procedurally appointed as opposed to being matched and placed in boxes.
- Sharing of skills and resources.
- Effective expenditure of capital budget from 2001, on:
 - ✓ Building of new libraries at the rate of one library per annum,
 - ✓ Upgrading or extension of existing libraries, to accommodate children's corners and study facilities, at a minimum rate of two libraries per annum,
 - ✓ Upgrading of security facilities in all the libraries,
 - ✓ Upgrading or addition of computer facilities in all the libraries.

6.2 SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

- Establishment of Digital Villages in Alexandra and Emndeni Libraries.
- Establishment of "Informatica Library" in the Johannesburg Public Library.
- Change in library collection, to be in line with the Democratic Era, e.g. African Studies library collection that used to be inclined towards Colonial history, changed to include biographies of freedom fighters, and previously banned materials; audio-visual material, which was previously classical, is now more Afrocentric.
- Inner City Branch Libraries (former old Johannesburg libraries), which were meant to be only circulation libraries, now include study material. This change has been brought about by the demographic cross movements. The major problem in these branches is that there is no study space, which is highly sought by distance learning students coming from all parts of the city. This problem is gradually being eradicated by extending these libraries, adding children's corner, thus leaving more room for study purposes.

6.3 NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

- The terms and conditions of staff were never harmonised, with the result that staff doing the same job in the same location were paid different salaries; worked different hours and had different entitlement to overtime and leave. This affected staff morale. This situation was corrected in 2002.
- Employees became anxious about their long-term job security and cynical about the success of further organisational change.
- The City experienced a great exodus of experienced staff with the threat of collapse of the seven pension funds into one, which in the long run will not be paying a 13th cheque to pensioners.
- The book budget plummeted from R4, 9 million in 1994, to R2, 7million in 2004.

- The operational budget has also dropped drastically as compared to the capital budget, resulting in under provision for new facilities. The drop of the operational budget result in:
 - ✓ Dilapidation and depletion of books that were inherited 10 years ago, and
 - ✓ Deterioration of library buildings that cannot be maintained, and
 - ✓ Drop in membership because there is nothing to come to libraries for.

7. CONCLUSION

With all the changes that the Johannesburg libraries have undergone, what change should libraries expect with the looming municipal elections? Will the change be for the better or worst? Can the city expect new structures again?

Support of local government library by the Provincial Library Services also seems to dwindling or even coming to an end.

How long shall the city wait for the provincial policies? Another ten years? The city needs the provincial capacity.

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City of Johannesburg Organisational Structure

Annexure A

