Special Issue: Reading Ecosystem

Mpho Ngoepe
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6241-161X
Section Editor
University of South Africa
ngoepms@unisa.ac.za

Articles for this special issue were accepted for presentation at the national reading conference which was supposed to be co-hosted by the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) in collaboration with the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa in May 2020. The summit was postponed due to the lockdown imposed by the government as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The NLSA is, among other things, responsible for inculcating a culture of reading among South Africans. Over the years, several role players have been working in the reading space; driving programmes and projects that are meant to turn South Africa into a reading nation, especially with regard to leisure reading. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that some of these programmes are beginning to bear fruit, a National Reading Survey conducted by the South African Book Development Council in 2017 has found that very small strides have been made over the last few years, and that a lot more needs to be done if we were to achieve significant levels of leisure reading.

The theme of the national reading conference was "Strengthening the reading ecosystem". This conference sought to achieve the following outcomes:

- assess national reading initiatives and campaigns to determine their effectiveness, impact and reach;

- develop strategies and interventions to strengthen and integrate reading initiatives in South Africa to reach significant levels of leisure reading; and

- enable informed decision-making by the officials involved in the reading programmes.

Contributions for this special issue were received from both the academics and the practitioners. As a result, a writing retreat workshop was hosted by the NLSA in February 2020 to guide the contributing authors. Eight papers were selected for this issue covering diverse themes from book clubs, storytelling, reading using pictures, offender rehabilitation through bibliotherapy, reading initiatives, and digital technologies for reading.

UNISA | university of south africa PRESS