



# AHILA e-Newsletter



The Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa (AHILA) is a professional association founded in 1984 with 46 member countries, partners and collaborators worldwide. Its aims and objectives are to: improve provision of up-to-date and relevant health information; encourage professional development of health librarians; promote resource sharing in Africa and exchange of experiences; promote the development, standardisation and exchange of health databases in Africa

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## Goodwill messages

I am delighted to know that AHILA is not only alive, but continuing to move forward. This is to send you my very best wishes for the success of the 14th Biennial Congress in Dar es Salaam. May you all return to your various countries re-energised to carry on the important work of improving access to information and knowledge for personal health and health care in our sub-region. -*Lucilda Hunter, Former AHILA President*

All good wishes to the LOC, partners and delegates for a successful 14th biennial AHILA congress. AHILA has made and is making great strides in the dissemination of health information in all Africa. This would not have been possible without the unstinting support of partners and many dedicated individuals. We pray that during this congress strategies would be worked out to achieve timely and appropriate dissemination of Health Information for all in Africa especially during this period with the Ebola crisis raging in West Africa. Together working with sincerity and a keen sense of purpose with our partners we make a difference. I wish you well in all your deliberations. - *Nance Mjamtu-Sie, former Vice President of AHILA*

AHILA's programme looks excellent and I hope that the conference will be fruitful and inspiring for all the participants. - *Philippe Colomb, Pompidou Centre Library, Paris. PAHI trainer with Ibrahima Bob, Senegal (2011) & Cape Verde (2012), IFLA/FAIFE Committee Member, 2010-2015*

## Opening day AHILA 14th Biennial Congress, Dar es Salaam

We were welcomed by a friendly and efficient team into the newly opened Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre, which is an impressive, spacious building equipped with state of the art technology.



In the first session the keynote presentation from Prof Maria Musoke, was a *tour de force* encompassing the main themes of the Congress and AHILA's role in accommodating the huge changes that have taken place in our profession. She had been in Nairobi in 1984, when AHILA was founded and was happy to have been associated with AHILA throughout its life. This Congress marked its 30th birthday and was a time to celebrate. She challenged us *For librarians to remain relevant, we have to change as professionals in the dynamic electronic info age. This has to be sustained by continuous professional development of librarians.* Emphasizing the importance of African leadership in health information she said AHILA and its Chapters must ensure that its structure is able to

meet and support the benefits and challenges of ICT in the provision of relevant, safe and secure health information to all who need it.

These themes were taken up by the principal guest speakers - the representative for the Minister, for Health and Social Welfare and His Excellency the Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania Dr Mohamed Gharib Bilal who emphasised the importance of e-health resources in the education and practice of health care and the effects of health on poverty and the national economy.

## PAHI GRANT 2014

The Public Access to Health Information (PAHI) grant is sponsored by Phi for £1,000. It supports health librarians/ health information professionals in carrying out a small project of their choosing which will promote public access to health information in an AHILA member country. We appreciate greatly the time and effort spent by those who sent in proposals.

Congratulations to the winners Mr Gilchriste Ndongwe and Mr Ronald Munatsi, Zimbabwe

And to those whose proposals were very highly commended

Mr Samuel Bello, Nigeria

Ms Monica Chipungahelo, Tanzania

Mme Cecile Coulibaly, Cote d'Ivoire



*Blessing Chataira receiving first prize for the PAHI grant on behalf of Gilchriste Ndongwe and Ronald Munatsi, Zimbabwe*

## More Congress highlights; second keynote

**speaker** Anne Seymour from the USA introduced us to the **Informationist** (or Information Specialist in Context) someone who provides research and knowledge management services in the context of clinical care or biomedical research, providing a fascinating look at how librarians are expanding their roles and in new areas and the enormous future potential for members of our profession. She advised us as we looked at developing and equipping ourselves to change.

- Graceful self-promotion
- Seizing opportunities
- Thinking big
- Always saying 'yes until you have to say 'no'
- Having your 'elevator' speech ready

## CABI PRIZE 2014

Phi and AHILA collaborated on the Short Report on Health Information Activities competition, which was generously sponsored by **CABI** publishers for £500. We thank those who took time and effort to enter.

Congratulations to the winners

Dr Alison Kinengyere & Ms Glorias Asimwe, Uganda  
(Further information in Press release on AHILA's website [www.ahila.org](http://www.ahila.org))

And to the two other very highly commended entries from:

Mrs Symphrose Ouma & Ken-AHILA, Kenya

Mr Masimba Muziringa and colleagues, Zimbabwe



*Dr Kinengyere receiving her award for first prize from the Vice President of Tanzania*

## More Congress highlights; HIFA session

In addition to many well researched papers on access to health information for targeted specific groups the harsh realities of providing health information in rural areas, were vividly articulated in this session. Community health workers and their Project Manager( from CUAMM - *Doctors with Africa*, an Italian organization NGO which trains Community Health Workers (CHWs) at the grass roots level in seven African countries) described their work. Neither of the two CHWs who spoke had ever been to Dar es Salaam a six hour car journey. Their presentations were given in a local language and their colleague a CHW trainer with the project gave an immediate translation. They showed us the books and equipment they carry as they cycle great distances to carry out their work. Their dedication was humbling.

How to map health information to improved health outcomes was a challenge to us all! If we could only show this correlation to funders! Elsevier Foundation projects chaired a brainstorming discussion. Some useful ideas emerged from the distinguished panel and so the research continues. Keep your eye on the AHILA website for more news.

## Appreciation soundbytes

Transport arrangements excellent especially being met at the airport; feeling cared for! Thank you Charles Marwa for doing a great job!

Excellent lunches at the Conference Centre and desserts to die for! What a venue for the Conference dinner and what fantastic entertainment! Thank you Wolters Kluwer!

AHILA conferences get better and better! Thank you to all the hardworking organisers.

