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Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust in partnership with Equal Education

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Topic:

SCHOOL LIBRARIES: INTERNATIONAL DEBATE

Speakers:

Sandy Zinn
Albert Boekhost
James Henri
Luisa Marquardt
Lourense H. Das

The aim of these dialogues is to create a space for open and informed dialogue and debate around key local and global political, social and economic issues facing South Africa.

Debate on Schools Libraries in South Africa

**Equal Education in partnership with the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust
International Debate on School Libraries in South Africa**

**University of Cape Town 21st June 2011
Leslie Social Science Building, LT 2D**

Panelists

Albert Boekhorst: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

James Henri: International Association of School Librarianship

Luisa Marquardt: International Association of School Librarianship

Lourense H. Das: European Network for School Libraries and Information Literacy

Daniel Mangale: African Network for School Librarianship

Khanyi Dubazana: Director of ELITS, the library and information technology service directorate in the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department

Moderator: Sandy Zinn, Lecturer at the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of the Western Cape

Ms Sandy Zinn, chairperson for the event and lecturer in the Department of Library and Information Science at University of the Western Cape welcomed everyone, introduced the Panelists and gave an overview on the state of School Libraries in South Africa.

MODERATOR: Good Evening Ladies and Gentleman I am a Lecturer in the Department of Library Information Science at the University of Western Cape. I am going to introduce the panelists to you and then say a few words about school libraries in South Africa. On my far right we have Daniel Mangale. Daniel is from Kenya. Next to him is Khanyi Dubazana she is from KwaZulu Natal and next to her is Lourense Das. Lourense is from the Netherlands and next to her is Albert Boekhorst. Albert is from the Netherlands as well but he is somebody who seems to travel the world because he has worked quite often in South Africa at the University of Pretoria and presently resides in Brazil. And then we have Luisa Marquardt. Luisa is from Italy and then all the way from, I hope you are flipping through your geography, Tasmania we have James Henri.

Now this Panel that you see before you they are a Panel of activists. They are involved in International organizations such as the International Association of School Librarianships. If you would like to talk to them about that particular association afterwards while you are having a glass of wine or juice then please do so. They are also active in the International Federation of Library Associations, the School libraries section. Those who are from Europe are involved in the DOTT [inaudible: 2:39:6] School Library Association and they are not only involved in but some of them are the founding people of the organisation called ENSIL and some of you may have taken one of their pamphlets at the top. It's a proclamation, which they have drawn up and after I have read through this Proclamation I realized that it resonates with what we are offering here in South Africa in terms of activism around school libraries.

Very recently in Johannesburg around two weeks or a month ago there was an African Libraries Campaign where they had a Conference to look at Librarianship generally on the Continent and people like Daniel work very actively in that organisation. So before I hand over and start to pummel my Panel with questions let me just say a few words to give you a bit background. I know I am standing in front of people who are here with a purpose and I know that you have been following the discussions around school libraries in South Africa. I think that we all are familiar with the statistics about how there are perhaps 7% of our schools with school libraries and these are mainly in the ex Model C Schools, so you'll find that the Apartheid legacy is still very strong in South Africa. We've got maybe about 13.5% of schools that have some kind space for a school library. But you've got almost 79 – 80% of schools with no semblance of a school library. There's no infrastructure, there is no space, there is no material, there's no Librarian. Now one wonders why this has come about and that one starts to think about 'are

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school libraries so important?’ And for those of you who have been following the School Library agenda, you will know that since 1997 there have been five different agreements of the policy for school libraries, none of those have been accepted still. The most recent document on the table, are a set of guidelines and we know that guidelines do not have the same clout as a policy and an implementation plan. A guideline is a guideline you can take it or leave it. Now I think that this lack of strategy at National level, lack of policy, I think can also be seen in the Division for School Libraries at National level. That particular division was I suppose erased from the organogram. They shut down this special division, which we had at National level for School Libraries. That was shut down in 2002 and one wonders what the thinking was on the part of policy makers who had introduced a resourced based curriculum, a curriculum which you’d think that you want independent learning or this is what is described in the Education policies, critical thinkers. How can we achieve this without a school library? Needless to say in terms of research that has been done world wide there have been a number of research reports that have come out that look at the link between academic achievement and the well resourced school libraries which are run by professionally trained school librarians. There, it’s unequivocal that kind of relationship, it’s been shown, it’s been demonstrated through research. So one wonders what is going on in the minds of policy makers in South Africa. For example we have a literacy strategy in South Africa but we don’t have a library strategy. Does that make sense? Very recently research has been completed by the Disc Transformation Charter, it is called the Disc Transformation Charter Library Information Services Transformation Charter, which in 2008 was accepted. It was finally actually accepted by the Minister of Education at the time, Naledi Pandor. Nothing happened. So one wonders do we do research for the sake of putting it into file 13 or you know what exactly happens, or why is all this amount of research going on which goes to show that school libraries are actually agents of change. How do you have to convince people, policy makers, that we actually do need school libraries and I think that Equal Education has gone some way in drawing up, and I think that the latest leaflet that they’ve given you is this one here ‘The Campaign for School Libraries’, finding a timeline, and they’ve gone to some lengths to show that the kind of money that was spent on building the World Cup stadiums could have been used to put school libraries in twenty thousand schools. And they have asked me to mention and circulate a list so that you can write down your name and contact details because they have now updated their ‘You can’t afford not to’ booklet. The details are on their website. You will get the updated version of the book.

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So my esteemed Panelists, lets start with them. Let's find out what they think a library means, what does that meaning have for you? Why do we need school libraries? Anybody would like to start?

MODERATOR: Ok shall we start with Lourense?

MS DAS: Ok, I will start. It's an interesting question because I graduated as a school librarian in the late seventies, so I'm a school librarian already for many, many years. When I started as a school librarian for me a school library was a room where books, magazines, tables, students, teachers working, engaging but over the years I sort of developed an idea of what a school library is. For me the school library is a functioning education. It's not particularly a room or a building. It is a function and the rationale of that school library is professional staff. A suitable collection of resources and by suitable one means the collection should fit the school curriculum and the needs of the students and the teachers and co-operation between the teachers and the school library staff. For me that is a school library.

MODERATOR: Anybody else what do we mean by school libraries.

MS DUBAZANA: Let me define school libraries in the South African context. My reference would be towards the former President, Thabo Mbeki who defined the South African economy. He said there were two economies in South Africa; the first economy and the second economy. So when you look at the first economy, if you define a school library there it will be different from schools that belong to the second economy. For the first economy you would say that a school library is a space that is filled with a relevant and adequate collection and you will find that you'd have almost 80% print and 20% electronic resources and you will find that in that particular school if it is a public school the person who managing the library would be paid by a School Governing Body (SGB). If you go to the second economy you will find that a school library is different. The school library is a storeroom size sometimes or a converted classroom with limited shelving of course and inadequate stock sometimes you will find that are text books in the library per se and there is a teacher who is volunteering to serve in that particular library. So that is how we would define a school library that it depends on where you are in South Africa.

MODERATOR: Daniel, do you want to say something?

MR. MANGALE: Yeah. I'm thrilled by the way she's put it because it is a typical of the African society, where we have one society that is having it and the other one that does not have. But then what I am looking at is that from my Kenyan perspective, we've actually gone away as they say from the rooming or anything else but what we are saying is that 'a school library is a process of cultivating a culture of reading and understanding and actually imparting life long learning skills on the life of the child from the highest level of their development so that they move out from that grade eight or let us call it primary school education they can stand on their own whether they go to colleges they go to secondary but they have a life to live they have a tool to use because they are informed, they are literate enough to use information for their livelihood'. That is how we define it. And that is why in the primary schools, whether there is library or not we want to see a program running to actually impart these skills to the children.

MODERATOR: Ok so what, the library is function so how does it process or a program, nobody is talking about spaces and places? Ok James

MR. HENRI: Yes, Ma'am, well you see all these guys are completely wrong, I just wanted to warm you up. I am thinking about something different. But I want you to think of something slightly different. School Library in two words, what if we change it the other way around, Library School? Now if I ask you to draw a picture of a school and then I ask you to draw a picture of school library. Undoubtedly you will place the school library within in the school. You will find a place somewhere for it. Now I want you to change your ideas. Think of the school inside the library. Draw the school inside the library in other words, what I'm suggesting to you is you can't have a school that is not immersed inside information. Libraries are only about information, that's it. They are information for enjoyment; or information for learning or information about wanting someone it's information. The thing about a library is that it is the centre where it is all organized, specially collected and specially disseminated and people work with that as a tool or laboratory or whatever.

So how could a school work if learning is not helped by information? So how can a school work if it is not immersed into information? Now that means changing your whole opinion of the design of schools, the way it looks, you take away all the dog boxes, one teacher forty kids, take all that away and redesign the school and insert it inside a library. Immerse it inside all of that information and you've got my idea of what a school library is. And my idea of what the purpose of a school librarian is, the purpose of that person is, every other teacher in that school teaches

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a subject, and the subject of the librarian is the learning, not Maths, English, French, German, Swahili, its learning. And that you learn by grasping information, you learn by grappling with information, you learn by tearing it apart, pulling it apart, putting it back together and making it into something of your own understanding. That's what developing understanding and knowledge is. Taking something from somewhere else and putting it together to suite the purpose you want to help, so to me that is empowering. So I would design schools with lots of school librarians and fewer teachers because schools should be much more about learning than about subjects. You know.

MODERATOR: Albert do you want to say something?

MR. BOEKHORST: Yes, unlike my neighbour I am not a school librarian. I am not even a librarian I am an Information Scientist that means I try to look at facts in a more analytical way. I see that people need information to survive [inaudible: 19:26:3] to develop and for recreation. And they need that to become critical independent thinkers that are able to decode the information they need for these processes. So how do they then become that by implementing it themselves but more important in education. The Education process is an inner process where the management of school, teachers and librarians should co-operate to create a vision, a mission and a strategy to create an integrated programme. It is in school libraries that the students and teachers learn to get access the information that they need. I think it is true for any society to also put the efforts into this.

MS MARQUARDT: The school library can be conceived as a hub of creativity. These are not my words I am quoting a famous writer Michael Bartollo from Italy. He said a school library is a hub of creativity with its foundation in that is very much research based. The previous presenter mentioned the ties and correlation between a good school library programme and a good quality education in students' learning. There is another relevant correlation that competitive economies are based on a creative society and are based on innovation and innovation needs a creative society. Creativity begins with education and creativity in terms of natural talent can be learnt and exploited and acquired through the school library and in an environment that is very stimulating. If you think about multiple talents [inaudible: 22:19:9 – 22:27.3]...

MODERATOR: Thank you. So we have an idea of a library, as one speaker said it is like a learning lab where learning happens. It is about information and it is about looking at the process of learning. So why is it a priority then?

MR. HENRI: Well because it does not have to be a priority. As I said yesterday, Governments can spend money on building swimming pools because they don't have the problems of the water bills. You can look at it as something good without it actually being useful and it costs money. We could replace all those World Cup stadiums by turning them into school libraries. Why not just turn them into school libraries?

MODERATOR: And the practicalities of that?

MR. HENRI: Someone else can worry about that. Let us use them. They are going to sit there, what else is going to happen to them? They are just going to sit there. Think about what I said. If you think about how a school gets designed and how it is funded. Schools are designed and funded on the basis of classrooms. Every school has a certain number of classrooms which requires a certain number of teachers and that's the basic funding model that all governments have. So twenty classrooms requires twenty teachers. So anything that sits outside of that, apart from principals, is expendable. So it's the design of the model that's the problem. If we did not have classrooms in schools, we would definitely have more libraries because there would be no need for government to think about the fact that there needs to be a certain amount of teachers to fill if those classrooms. Then you'd have school libraries and school librarians in every school in South Africa today if every teacher in every class in every school will take two more students. Because that would mean that every school could employ one less teacher and free up one person to become the school librarian. It's as simple as that. You don't need any more money at all. So it is just that they don't have to.

MODERATOR: James you have no idea how many learners we have in a classroom.

MR. HENRI: It does not make any difference; if you have 50 students in a classroom and you increase the size to 52 it doesn't really make any difference because on any particular day you'll probably have 50 students there anyway. Two will not be there. Right?

MR. BOEKHORST: I guess it is not problem to ask if there are too many schools in South Africa that don't have a library so the principals says it is no problem for me because I don't have a library. So there are those that have the school library and that is safe, and those very special ones that have Internet access and things like that and they think that is good. You put one word in google and you have your answer and they also do not know better. [Inaudible: 26:04:0] So they are ignorant.

MS DUBAZANA: I would not say that it is not a priority, when you read the National Curriculum Priority Statement, one of the seven critical outcomes is about collecting, analyzing information etc. etc. What I will say is that it is a priority competing with numerous other priorities and I would like us to think about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. We are faced with a hungry child hence we have prioritized the schools nutrition programme. We are faced with the HIV positive child, we are faced with an unsafe child at school, and so you find that there are many programmes, which the Government is funding. For instance at present you will find that the 'no fees schools' are increasing. All of these projects and programme are taking up the Government budget. So I wouldn't say it is not a priority per se but there are numerous other priorities as per needs that are competing with school libraries.

MR. MANGALE: Thank you. I'm just a bit worried about the trend if you're talking about school libraries, as one of the things that is competing with that needs and this is actually why we are in South Africa today, because we want to put the record straight that the value of schools libraries cannot be over emphasized. I can't say this would proof that you have a child to understand how to read, to engage and understand what they are reading and they can use that to actually translate it into anything else they want to do in life. I was in a school this afternoon and the teacher in grade twelve was teaching mathematical literacy and I was asking this teacher why now teaching mathematical literacy when if at the ECD level you would have thought taught literacy? And this child would just have been able to do everything they want to do in their life. So competing interests yes, but let us ask ourselves as partners in creating change in this region. Are we being sincere if we want to renegade school libraries as the non-essentials because there is something else? Because I believe that all these other issues we talking about with good interested backgrounds can't be resolved without any challenges. So that is something we need to think about as a Government representative our sister has to start having a paradigm shift and advise the Government on the best methods to do this.

MODERATOR: Would you like to respond?

MS DUBAZANA: Yes I would like to. I am saying this because I am going to refer to KZN where I come from. You will find as School Libraries we do have a directorate and I am head of that particular directorate. So it does not mean that there is nothing that the Government is doing. There is something that the government is doing and we have a budget that is allocated. And we have complaint that the budget is insufficient so it doesn't mean really that we aren't doing anything about it.

MR. HENRI: I think that it doesn't matter how much you spend, if you don't have the people to manage it. The critical factor is that there are many countries around the world where they are spending a lot of money on buildings and corrections but if they don't spend money on a person who is equipped to deal with the learning in the school and that is the school librarian that it's all wasted and it's not actually useful. For example in Japan they claim not to have a lot of money for school libraries, a lot of money for collections and yet every school has a school librarian but in fact that person teaches mathematics, Japanese, physics, cleans windows, drives the principal to the bank so this person is never actually the school librarian. So even though they have one there they don't have one. But you guys don't even have one. That is your problem. You don't have the person who is qualified to deliver the service. It doesn't matter if you have the facilities and the equipment that is wasted because the change agent is not there to give people a chance. And as for facilities why does a school need a principal? Get rid of the principal in every school and make that person a librarian.

What research is out there that principals make a difference to learning outcomes, ask yourself that. What evidence is there? What evidence is there that music teachers make a difference to educational outcomes? Well, ask yourself what the evidence is? There is more evidence for the impact of school libraries than any other single venture. And, the evidence is outright clear that the main issue to do with poverty in society is to put people to read. It's the single most important factor. The second most important factor is to feed people. So feed them, give them hot meals at school is vitally important. But reading quips people with change their lives and reading is all about libraries.

MODERATOR: Ok then, Luisa?

MS MARQUARDT: I am speaking in general. In most countries education and culture are not on the top of the political agenda. And speaking about libraries there it is easier to get a fellowship to space building or [inaudible: 32:41:1] and to physical material aspects. But it is difficult to get attention about value of the transformational difference that a well-educated and trained librarian is having. How this change can have a positive impact on the community; school community, university community and local community. So it is a challenge but we need to be more effective in conditions to translate this into something more understandable ... [inaudible: 33:39:3]

MODERATOR: OK. In the Western Cape we've been training school librarians at our university. The Western Cape Education Department has offered bursaries but those are full time teachers in the classrooms. They are teaching English, teaching life orientation, they're teaching history and they have set up their libraries but they are basically white elephants. They are closed most of the day unless there is somebody else who can stand in that library. My question is you've all had many years fighting for school libraries. Tell us what kind of action can we take here in South Africa. Who should we leverage in South Africa? Who should we convince and how can we do this?

MR. MANGALE: What you say is something that is common factor across the African region. You go to a library school, you come back you are a teacher and you forget about that. What I'm asking myself is this; do we believe that Libraries Programmes in schools can have a transformative change in the lives of the people and on and the lives of society? If we believe in that, if I believe in that and everyone else believes in that even that teacher coming to that school will not have to make that school library, a white elephant. The reason they are do is that they are going to the university that is paid for by that department to add purpose to their curriculum vitae, but not because they have they have the heart to transform the lives of the children in the schools where they are responsible. Now this is about attitudes we have poor attitudes as Africans and that is why today we are living Malema. Actually if he says something, Zuma says 'yes'. It does not say anything about school libraries of course. His is about political survival as a young a person wanting to be the president. I believe like greatness came out strongly and I think I am happy about the equal education model and maybe this might turn South Africa and maybe can be copied across Africa. And we become a force when we say School Libraries have to be about an attitude change of the teachers and the society

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around the schools so that literacy is an issue for all of us not an issue for that one then I think we can move a step forward. And we might not have to complain about politics and political budgets and everything else. They will be looking for us so that they are a part of us and will be able to survive in their political world.

MODERATOR: Well, if you look throughout South Africa we've got the learner at schools and they are marching for school libraries but where are the teachers? Why are they not fighting for school libraries?

MS DUBAZANA: I want to add that we need wider participation. At present we find that all the professionals are involved and then they are trying as much as they can but I think we need to involve Teacher Unions and we need to pressure at every angle. Going to all the structures in the government and talk to them as well. I think here we have the Head of the Education Department Committee. We do the have the Council of Ministers of Education as well. We need to go to those structures because that is where decisions are taken and present our evidence of what we are saying. So for me it is wider participation going as far as Teacher Unions etc and parents if it need to and then also approach the relevant structures of decision makers.

MODERATOR: I see that Equal Education went to Parliament where one of the questions was around Minimal Norms and Standards for Equal Infra structures for School Libraries and I see they say on the 14th or 15th of April The Council for Education Ministers voted against the adoption of the Minimal Standards for Schools for Equal Infra structures. So there had been representation there already but what more can one actually do to get action going?

MR. HENRI: Form a revolution. How many are teachers? (A show of hands.) There are only five teachers here tonight? What do the rest of them do?

PARTICIPANT: We do not know about them. We do not know about these types of meetings because we are not part of the networks.

MR. HENRI: So this needs to be on a major television network. Those of you who are teachers how many of you do not mark every student's piece of work? When you mark a student's assignment do you mark the whole assignment? (A show of hands from participants, indicating they do.) Well you see that is the problem. Every teacher is busy marking those 50

students work all of the time. Now I would suggest what the teachers do to free up a lot of your energy is by using statistical measures instead of marking every student. Only do enough marking to see whether the group is learning. Get on board with what everyone else does. No one in society measures everyone, no body; if we did then we would go from house to house to get opinions. If we want to know about a new coke brand then we bring together a focus group of 20 or 30 people and from that we generate an idea of society. Teachers who are buried in marking of every piece of work for the last 100 years are wasting their time and every body's time doing that. It is a complete waste of time. [Inaudible: 40:49:0] Just mark the first and last page, whatever you like and you will have so much free time for marking the script on school libraries. Tell fellow teachers to get out there and fight for school libraries.

MODERATOR: I think Khanyi wants to say something.

MS DUBAZANA: It something different to the previous comment. It is a suggestion. I feel we need to target the worst schools in the country the worst performing schools and turn them around. So that we can put evidence in their face to say 'look at this school and look how it has turned around'. Politicians and decision makers are only concerned with the results and evidence. If we can take a couple of those schools, turn them around and show the evidence. It is one way of convincing them.

MODERATOR: My question is this what about the research out there that says do not waste your time with worst performing schools and rather to work with schools that are showing interest, where the teachers are interested and the schools show some kind of success. It does not has to be the worst quintiles but has to be schools where the teachers themselves did something. Albert, do you want to say something?

MR. BOEKHORST: What can we do? Maybe to show that there is ample scientific evidence that schools where the libraries are integrated with education produce much better results. And if you read the statistics of the outcomes of South Africa in education then there is a real reason to start implementing libraries in education.

MODERATOR: Well I can say I saw a study that says that 87% of SA high school are not producing the kinds of learners that we wan to produce in tertiary education. So 13% of those

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schools are producing quality learners and I am sure those schools have school libraries to get those learners to that quality education.

I would just like the speakers to say something more before I open up to the audience. Lourense?

MS DAS: I just wanted to know how many school librarians are in the audience? (A show of hands indicating this from the audience.) Well to all the school librarians I would say be good and show it because that makes a difference.

PARTICIPANT: I just want to say I see five of my past students in the audience.

MODERATOR: Okay. Are these university students here? Okay, so you are saying you've got evidence here. I have spoken to a teacher in Khayelitsha and she started a library at her school. Now she was indicating that all of the learners at their school received high enough marks to go to university but what happened is that they came to university and dropped out. That is because their world is so narrow, so small, that it was a total culture shock to come to a university and to interact with a wider world that is out there. They were not familiar with it. All they know about is their own little informal settlement. She started a library and she says that through reading and through having a library period, which I thought was phenomenal. Her principal decide that the library period was so important that the rest of the time table fitted around the library periods. And she said definitely the reading, the access to library provided them with the access to a wider world that is out there.

Do you want to say something more Lourense? Daniel?

MR. MANGALE: I just wanted to know because in the audience there was a teacher who said she does not know about the reaching of the networks and she is a teacher in a school. As a teacher your role is to transform lives by imparting skills and you can only do that if the ones you impart the skills on are able to grasp what you are talking about. That means you have to nurture them to be learners or independent leaders. Many a time within the traditional teaching method across the African Continent it has been that the teacher is both the resource material and the reference material; so the teacher is everything. If the teacher does not write on the black board the child could never answer any question paper because it was not taught. I want

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to say that the new shift should be that the teacher should be the reference material and school library or the library should open up the world for the children to have resource materials; so that they read, understand and relate to the teacher what they do not understand. The teacher then actually helps them to understand what they do not know. But what they do know is that you, the teacher knows, and they keep on getting the knowledge.

We will then never have a problem where we say the teacher is over worked or overloaded because now the children are reading on their own and only asking you one or two questions in a day. I think that as a teacher you need to automatically do that are in a process of developing literacy skills with the children that you have nurtured. That question of not being invited will not appear because you are automatically already part of the process. So the only thing you might need to know is how to share your experience with the rest. I just wanted to open that up so that it is clear.

MODERATOR: I would like to know this from the panel. Schools that I visited in the past told me that they closed down their libraries because they now have computer labs and they now have the Internet, these are very powerful they will tell you, so they don't need a library. The next clip for viewing, it is a clip from an organisation called 'World Book Reader'; and they are investigating bringing e-books, e-book readers into Africa. The next section of the debate is going to look at the role of the Internet and what kind of role does electronic information play including your e-readers.

Can we have the clip? (Recorder switched off.) Clip on e-books (After clip on e-books)

Panelists what would you say. Do we come from countries where the Internet is no problem? Where it is not that expensive for you in terms of your income and staff? Do you think we should go the e-book route? Is it feasible for South Africa? James, do you want to say something? Lourense?

MS DAS: I think it is about content. It is not about performance, in the first place and that is for every school in the first place. It might be interesting to have an e-reader and an e-book, yes it is and it could be challenging to implement that in South Africa. But it is not the first thing that I would do. If I think of a library I would think about content and because you need the content for

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learning and in what would format it comes to you is only interesting later on, in the second phase not the first phase.

MODERATOR: Okay. Albert.

MR. BOEKHORST: About 5000 years ago they started to write on rocks and then it took some time before they scribbled on a book. It took some time before they started printing and then let's [inaudible: 51:53:9] level is something newer. One thing that changes now is that from now we are accustomed to very different information carried with us and that is changing now. Technology enables us to go on the clouds. More and more we put out information and documents on a server on the web. Countries without adequate infrastructure it is still a problem, a struggle. But it is just a tool for accessing information. It is not changing the role of the library or the school library, because in that cloud there is an enormous amount of nonsense and useful information. You have to learn to find the most suitable information for you and the learner in the school in combination with the subjects at the school library.

MODERATOR: Okay. James.

MR. HENRI: How many people drive a BMW or a Rolls Royce? Anyone drive a Rolls Royce? Well, the purpose of a car is transportation, is it not? Although some people buy a car as jewelry they are actually meant to transport you from one place to another. There are some cars that are more complicated than others and it is smart to drive those more carefully. But the ultimate aim of a car is transportation. So the ultimate aim of any information carrier is for learning and that is the end of it. And the more information there is and the more places you can get them the more complexed it becomes. Therefore the more need there is to have mentors who can help you the skills of learning. And so my point about schools is that schools are very, very, very slow to change. Schools still teaches subjects but there is not subject on any curriculum of a school called 'learning'. The one thing a school need they don't offer.

Most of us went to school and most of us have forgotten almost everything that we learnt at school. So how useful was school to us? Do we think school was useful? No! So the focus should be on the information and what we do with it and not what sort of information it is. I would like to say one more thing and that is if you are driving a car and it breaks down today the same as it broke down last week, the same as it broke down a month ago, the same as it broke down

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a year ago, you might start to think that it is time to buy a new car. While schools have been broken for 30 or 40 years seeking evidence on something that does not work seems dumb. If you've got a broken car, you don't need evidence that something else works, you've already got of what you've got does not work. Change it!

MODERATOR: Okay. Khanyi.

MS DUBAZANA: My thinking is that it seems that we are at the entry level in South Africa. For me it was a misconception that for those schools who did away with libraries and opted for computer labs. My thinking is that we need the 80 / 20 principal have 80% print and 20% electronics so that we are not left behind. Saying that we are sticking to book no matter what. I think it would be very unrealistic to say so. Though we are still at the entry level but lets embrace the new technology and other electronic processes. Thank you.

MR. MANGALE: Maybe the e-readers in the African context; e-readers, Internet, the greatest library in the world is the Internet today. But I would say one thing; I know about 80% of the African region is rural. Rural that does not have electricity; rural that does not even have the mobile networks. You go somewhere and your phone says 'there is no signal'. We actually put it in the beginning that there are two societies here, the first society and the second society. So, the e-readers is for the first society but then what do we do for the second society? Because we must be think of both societies. Lets do it by talking about value adding. Where possible that the second society can afford an e-reader, computer or something let it value to what is available as a school library. So at the end of the day whether it is there or not, literacy and reading has to continue but we should not close our eyes to the new developments. Because we want to impact and influence because learning is about change and change is about accepting and sharing innovations and new methodologies. So I think this is the way we should go. The e-readers are there to stay, the Internet is here to stay and computers are here to stay but we should not forget the second society that has to be brought back to the reason why we are here.

MODERATOR: Thanks. Luisa? I have to say to say to the audience because we are recording this session we need to use mikes. I see your hand Sir, we will just have our last comment and then over to the floor.

MS MARQUARDT: Flying from Johannesburg to Cape Town today I read a special story about a young man who is an independent thinker; and it is a success story based on a successful decision of independent thinking. The interesting input during this reading is a very interesting book 'Poverty and the South African democracy and the retreat of intellectuals' – by William Gumede and Lesley Dikeni. They [1:00:5] talk about engaging with poverty intellectuals also engaged with critical thinkers and independent thinkers in this society. Independent thinking and creativity, and critical thinking are the benefit from a wide range of media. A wide range of sources, in different formats and different forms not only the e one. The Internet is not actually a library; it is a huge store but if its sources are not selected, and are not organised then it is up to each of us to make a good or bad decision.

MODERATOR: Okay. That man at the back, please take the mike to him. Please keep your questions short.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you very much. My name is Tumani. I am going to be very frank and bias. My question around the [inaudible: 1:01:54] Firstly, you mentioned something about policy makers and that is my interest. In other words you mean politicians. Well, at some point I addressed a private school called Bishops College in Cape Town and when we organized this partnership on public and private I was in a public school where our libraries had nothing, no nothing. I had to go to Bishops College to speak to the Vice Chancellor there, the Headmaster. He said to me come and address us. When I went there the Headmaster took me in and said to me, Tumani, actually your Minister from the Department of Education his son is here.

Now the problem in South Africa is that you've got public representatives who take their children to private schools. This is a fundamental problem, it is a structural problem and how do we deal with it? I think when someone said there is a revolution that is needed, that is true. You've got learners here and I am telling you that SA Representatives are still sending their children to private schools. What they are telling their parents when they come back is we want to go to Holland, etc, etc. But until these youngsters tell their fellows to go on protest and ask public amenities where they actually are then we will see a shift when it comes to public libraries.

The last point it fundamentally important to address issues that are actually at a core. In SA today you've got tax on books; think again about policy makers. Two years ago the Minister of

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Finance said SA can not afford to actually take tax off books because the privilege would have us as the public or the [inaudible: 1:04:34]... I think those are issues that should be addressed.

Lastly, I am very disappointed with your Panelists. You are talking about libraries and you are talking about students, these young kids, but none of them are there. That is a problem. One of the Ministers of SA said one day that this world is getting younger every day therefore young people must be in the forefront, on panels.

MODERATOR: I take your point. I hope that the Panelists are not offended by the last comment. (Raise your hand and the mikes will be brought to you.)

PARTICIPANT: Just a couple of comments. The first point: I think that it is a universal fact that unless parents start to read to their children then those children don't become readers. No one has managed to get over that. So if we actually had policies that parents read to their children then things would change. My second point with regard to this information on revolution - I've got 20 000 books on a stick but I do not have a R1000.00 to get the e-reader. We have a Government that wasted R20 billion on a failed Pebble-bed Reactor Programme. If we had taken that R20 billion we could have bought every child in this country an e-reader. Then we could have had no child left behind policy. So I seriously question the policies of the present Government. Education does not seem to be number one. Thanks.

PARTICIPANT: I coordinate the [inaudible: 1:06:49] There are so many issues to raise, and I think the one is that one can't consider libraries in isolation and in a vacuum, one need to have a culture to get it rooted in our societies. The other point I want to make is if we don't talk about language and languages when we talk about literacy, reading cultures and libraries. We are completely missing the point. We know that the across the content people speak African languages and we also know that education policies force English and Portuguese onto children even before they have begun to develop concepts in their mother tongue. This is an issue in SA as well when we talk about migrants. We have to talk about migrants and have to talk about language if we want to get children reading then we have to create books whether they are e-readers or print. We need books that are appropriate and have children who want to read, and we have to have adults who read to them. So all of those things fall under the umbrella of language and I think I take the point that was made about teachers and so on but I think you should spend some time in our schools to really see what a devastating situation is where many

of us try to change this. Teachers as well as parents do not read in this country, nobody reads for pleasure, for enjoyment. Nobody reads to me and the reason for this, besides all the historical and political factors, is that there is nothing to read in the language that you know well and until we start to sort out that problem we will be talking and talking about things that we already know.

PARTICIPANT: My name is Malinga Mazwi and I am from Cosset in Khayelitsha and I am an 'Equalizer'. This is just a statement: Now I don't understand that there are other important things that are in South Africa because we only demand one right and that is education. We have many rights denied but we demand one right, the right to education. Now ladies and gentlemen according to the reference in Khayelitsha there are 54 schools. Only five have functioning libraries. Now do you call that equal education? No! Do you think that in future there are going to be Scientists in Khayelitsha? No! What are you guys doing to those schools in Khayelitsha? The foundation need to be fixed first before you can stand on it. You need to fix those other schools that don't have libraries so that in Khayelitsha, learners in Khayelitsha can become something in future!

Now, ladies and gentlemen we all know that there are learners from Khayelitsha who come to UCT and they fail, why, because they do not read. At UCT all of the subjects are done in English and they do not know how to speak English and that is why they suffer, and that is why they fail. Now, according to the learners coming from Khayelitsha they think they will never be successful in life. How fair is that? Thank you ladies and gentlemen. I just want to say that we know that the government has lots of in hand but next time we say that we have lots in hand. [Inaudible: 1:11:33] but think what made you to be on that seat today? What makes you to be on that sea today is the education, is the library, is the reading, is the love of reading and understanding it. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

PARTICIPANT: Now, coming to technology and e-books developed countries seem to forget, even our politicians seem to forget, developed countries underwent developmental stages before they reached the technology world. They had their teething stages and problem stages until they worked it out. This is Africa and Africa has been deprived even before the [inaudible: 1:12:52] but we won't go there. I cannot agree with Khanyi that though we are Africa, we do not want to be left behind. Everything starts with the printed words. For everyone to be able to start using the their technologies, like the Internet, they need to read books, they need to

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be able to write, they need to understand all the concepts. So, we need to be seen that this is Africa and it has been deprived. Not to say that people do not want to read but we have been deprived.

Secondly, teachers have made it academically without libraries in their communities and also in their schools. They used textbooks for tuition, so I don't want to say teachers are not motivated or that they do not want to read; they do not know what reading for leisure is. And secondly teachers are bogged down with such a lot of clerical work to do before they can even teach, learning, and what is learning and what it is to be motivated. The teachers that we produce who are also librarians can't do everything at the same time because they also get tired. And unfortunately in SA, especially here in the Western Cape, our politicians are ideological. They govern by ideology. If a certain political ideology wins it changes everything that was there to introduce it's own, whether it is destructive or whatever. And also vice versa a lot of what is already in place is wasted then. So though Khanyi is saying the government is spending on feeding schemes and all other things I do not want to agree with her because one of the panelists said that school libraries are supposed to be a part of creativity. Now, even though school libraries and the coming generation becomes [inaudible: 1:15:12] it means in the near future the government will stop spending money because everyone will be innovated, will be creative, then it will be used on something else, it won't be used on grants and feeding schemes because we will be like China because China was also colonized but now China is one of the wealthy powers because the government knew where to focus their money. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Can we have closing comments?

MR. HENRI: I just want to respond to your teacher about China. I think I might know more about China than anyone else in audience since I have lived in Hong Kong for several years and I have worked in rural China for about six years. And I think you are very mistaken. Rural China is in a worse situation than you are and teachers have the same issues that you have, they have a lack of resources as you have, they have the cultural problems that you have but we have seen tremendous change in those schools over the last few years. The [1:16:40] in China has 1.2 million people and the vast majority of this number are deprived. They don't have a reading culture they don't have an experience of parents reading to children, and so on. However my experience is that over the last few years there has been a significant shift in the attitude of Chinese people about the need to read because they have recognized as a society

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they have lacked creativity for some hundreds of years. They are copycats; they copy everybody else and do a very good job of it. So there are no inventors anymore. So they are leaping forward. So the gentleman at the back who asked me to be a young person, I am seriously considering that. ... The fact is that some of us actually have a lot of experience in cultures very similar to yours. So even though we lived in advanced countries, do not think that we do not have a lot of experience in undeveloped countries and countries that are really trying to make a difference.

MODERATOR: Khanyi?

MS DUBAZANA: Since we are having this debate for me we need to have another debate to involve politicians and decision makers because I think the issues that are here are broader than us here. There are people that we really need in such debates. For me we need to have another debate and make sure that we invite them to be members on the panel then you will be channeling the question to the relevant people. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Okay.

PARTICIPANT: My name is William and I am doing a Community Learnership Programme at Equal Education, which corrects the things that I did not have at my previous school. I want to direct my statement to Mom Khanyi. "You said that education is a priority competing with numerous priorities". From my understanding of priority, the word priority means that it is something, which stand out from the rest, that it is very important. The way that the Apartheid Regime invested on education, do we have to remind you about that? I think that the government should get its priorities straight.

And Sir, you said that we should not look at a library in schools but have a 'library school' but in essence we don't know what a library is. I never had one at my school. So then in order for me to think of a library I have to think about this place where I find relevant information quick, quick to do well. Because I don't think I deserved the mark I had in my matric that is why I am repeating most of my subjects. So if I did have that 'library school' in my school then I think I would have done more and in fact I think I would have passed like those so called private schools learners. Thank you.

MODERATOR: I think we have time for one or two more questions and then I think that someone from Equal Education will say a few words.

PARTICIPANT: I think it is easy to make superficial statements about the school libraries but we have to consider the way in which policies are driven by particular ideologies. But also that they are shaped by other factors like historical, cultural, institutional and the political. This is particular in SA where school library policy making must be seen in the context of a transformation process in which the education process as well as the library information sector are under going a transition from the racist apartheid society to a non-racial democracy. Our policy options should take their departure from the principals of democracy, unity, non-discrimination and historical [inaudible: 1:22:41]. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

PARTICIPANT: My name is [inaudible: 1:22:58] and I attend Chris Hani High School in Khayelitsha. One thing that everybody fail to do, they only say that education is for learning and that reading should be fun but how can reading be fun if you are complicating things and making them very technical that one does not understand a single word? Now I am not talking about novels and stories, I am talking about textbooks. If you do not understand a word when will we learn anything at all?

PARTICIPANT: My name is Chris Taylor and I just want to make a comment. It is something about schools not having libraries and we seem to have gone off the subject. I think that we need to focus on exactly that. [Inaudible: 1:24:19] We can talk about librarians and the value that they bring but without books we will not have a librarian and these guys have no books. So I think we need books, we live in a society that lack books and if you do not have books then you've got nothing.

So I would like to suggest that we start getting the books in the libraries and grow from there. We've got to have the basics and start with the basics and then grow.

MODERATOR: Thank you. Can Equal Education give an indication on our time frame? A few more? Okay.

PARTICIPANT: I have a question for the Panel. I would like to know if the Panel have any thoughts on school libraries versus community libraries and if you can also quote a source for me?

MS MARQUARDT: Can I answer the question? I would like to ask you to please go to the web and google Alan Bundy. Alan Bundy is an Australian person who did a PhD on collaboration between community libraries and school libraries. And his work is very important and he is very good on that topic.

In the old days long before we had community libraries there were school libraries that were also community libraries. Later on they changed in the Western World into public libraries and then we started to set up school libraries as well. For me they are a natural partners but sometimes the problem is that community libraries are making the politicians think that community libraries can take over the role of school libraries. And that is really endangering school libraries in the Western World at the moment. So if you ask me how they compare then I would say they are natural partners. So they should collaborate and work together to make in house learning in the schools. But in a situation where there are no school libraries but there is a good community library then that community library could possibly take the role of helping schools and you have to be a little bit pragmatic in that way. That does not answer your question?

MODERATOR: Okay. We are going to take one more question then you can interact with the Panel afterwards.

PARTICIPANT: My name is Emile Jansen from an organisation called [inaudible: 1:28:19] I am a qualified schoolteacher as well. One of the things that I am really concerned about is that everybody is speaking about information being power but we have to remember that information is extremely Euro-centric. And this being Africa, we need to be very clear about the content of the information because whoever controls information controls the minds of the masses and it is very important that the books and the access we have to the internet also have access to our ancestry and our rich heritage that exists within Africa as well. What can the Panelist tell me about that? Is there a percentage or quota for writers from Africa in our libraries? The Sister from KwaZulu Natal?

MODERATOR: Khanyi.

MS DUMBAZANA: I first want to respond to the competing priorities. There was a question on competing priorities earlier on. That is a fact, there is no way that you can ignore other things. I think we need to speak loudly because we are aware that Government has limited resources. And if we speak of no pre schools in the Ministry the bulk of the money goes to schools because parents are no longer paying school fees. There are other issues that we have to take in consideration and all we have to do is speak louder, such that they can divert wherever money goes to and consider school libraries as well because at present there is a budget but it is not sufficient.

Can you repeat your question please?

PARTICIPANT: Content.

MS DUMBAZANA: The content that we apply when we select library serials is that we consider 50% books written in other countries and we consider 50% books written in Africa. So that is our selection policy.

MODERATOR: We will give the Panelists a chance to say their last words and please stay for refreshments and to interact with the Panelists. Daniel?

MR. MANGALE: I think the last person said the only way out of the situation is to invest in school libraries and get functional literacy that is going to spark over development in the next few years to come because the only way out of this is functional literacy across the African region. And that is the only thing we can talk about and we get functional school libraries in all Public Primary and - Secondary schools across this Continent if you want the result we want to see. Thank you very much.

MS DUMBAZANA: I would like to say that we are almost there with the libraries. There are things that are being done and been attended to in Government and all I want to say is that please let us take this debate to another level. Let us involve politicians and decision makers so that we can win the battle. Thank you.

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MS DAS: Being from the Western World I would like to thank the audience for their comment and for sharing with us. The only thing that I would like to add is some of you might have picked up this leaflet, it is a campaign that the ENSIL Foundation started a year ago, the content could be very interesting for you as well. You can go to the ENSIL website, it is ENSIL dot EU (ensile.eu). Thank you very much and lots of success with your work.

MR. BOEKHORST: Education is a basic human right and it is the only way to be fair. School with a vision for a lifelong learning so an active school library is essential.

MS MARQUARDT: The multiple sound and the multiple cultures and the realities of Africa between local and global dimensions and challenges are part of the globalization phenomenon. This multiplicity of emerging needs is not to get a common debate response. School libraries as a fruitful dynamic intervention between education and information between the schools and the local communities to begin an enquiry to help learners develop a sense of identity, ownership of responsibility and create a variety of intellectual work of the different cultures and publishing it. Libraries can help learners with the means, abilities and opportunities required for the 21st Century. Thank you.

MR. HENRI: Thank you. Lots of places in the world have the same problems that we are talking about here today. A recent Government report from Australia. The gentleman who had the microphone I will take issue with you. My whole issue is that we are talking about building, we are talking about collections, we are talking about services, technology and we are talking about professional people and we are talking about the training of that person. My experience tells me that what we get first is not books or a building; it's not make a building, it actually to provide a professional person who is going to drive that thing. So if I had to make a choice and there was not enough money to do it then I will put money into qualifying a teacher librarians and putting them into schools and they would drive the process. Because if we just put the collections in there without someone who understands what to do about them they will just disappear like it always does around the rest of the world. If we just have buildings they get used for other things. So I think the critical factor is if you don't have that supply of human resources with the capabilities then we don't know what we are talking about. Good Luck!

MODERATOR: Thank you everybody and thank you to the Panelists who come from far. Someone at Wits University said that he does not think we are angry enough because if we are

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then we will be prepared to march maybe then we will make a difference. I will hand over to Equal Education.

EQUAL EDUCATION: Thank you very much and can we have a round of applause for the Chair. There was not time to go into the Panelists biographies but please ask them about their experiences in places like China, Brazil and Kenya. They have all be traveling for a very long time and will be traveling for a long time to go home just to have been here; in Johannesburg last night and here today.