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MEDIA & FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Africa: Progressive African Library & Information Activists' Group

2005-06-22

<http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/media/28705>

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The African Progressive Librarian and Information Activists' Group (PALIAct) is an initiative of a group of progressive African librarians and information workers. We recognise that current "leaders" in the African information field have done little to break the colonial and imperialist policies and practices in meeting the information needs of working people in Africa, or to make the profession more relevant to the needs of African librarians and information workers. We have therefore decided to take the initiative to set up an alternative organisation - the Progressive African Library and Information Activists' Group - PALIAct.

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PALIAct will provide a new vision to help create a people-orientated information service that can meet the information needs of workers and peasants. It will work towards providing an anti-imperialist and a Pan African world outlook among African librarians and information workers. It will also seek to set up an alternative information service in partnership with the potential users of the service as a way of showing what our "official" libraries and information workers should be doing. PALIAct will form partnerships with progressive information and other workers within Africa and overseas.

The Project will bring together the resources, skills, and labour of those who accept its vision for a relevant information service, based on the principles of equality, equity, social justice, and democracy.

The PALIAct Vision

To develop a people-oriented information service run and managed by/on behalf of workers, peasants, pastoralists, fisher people and other marginalised individuals and groups whose information needs have not been met. The new service will be based on equality for all African nationalities, for women, disabled people, classes, ...

The PALIAct Stand

PALIAct recognises the right to relevant information as a basic human right. This right must be enshrined in the constitution of all African countries and be endorsed as an active programme by the African Union.

The struggle for a relevant information service is intimately linked with the political struggles of the people for organising a society that ensures that material, social, cultural and political needs of the people are met. PALIAct believes that the opportunity for making fundamental changes created as a direct result of political victories in the early period of struggle for liberation was lost. The opportunity that history had brought to our doorsteps to provide a people-orientated information service was lost. Instead of challenging the very basis on which library and information services were built, we allowed ourselves to be manipulated into making merely quantitative changes in library services, but failed to make any qualitative changes. The classes who were served by the colonial library service continued to be served and the needs of working people who had always remained outside the remit of such services remained unmet. Their experiences, their cultures, their very language remained outside the walls of impressive library buildings. Thus the advantage gained in the early period of struggle for a society and an information system which served the needs of all its people was lost. The struggle for such an information service continues to date.

The London Library

The world's largest independent library. St James's Square, SW1 www.LondonLibrary.co.uk

South Africa Guide

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PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT, FAHAMU

We are looking for an enthusiastic, hardworking and committed individual to work as publications assistant for a dynamic, pan-African organisation based in Oxford. If you have excellent copyediting and proofreading skills and have experience in design and desktop publishing, then we want to hear from you.

Full details available in pdf format or by request to fahamujobs@googlemail.com. Closing date: 28 July 2008.

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- **Black History Month: Interview with Gabriella Ballard**
- **Black History Month: Interview with Floyd Webb**
- **Duniya yetu Arts Azimuts**

See the [list of episodes](#).

AU MONITOR

This site has been established by Fahamu to provide regular feedback to African civil society organisations on what is happening with the African Union.

- **Environment Atlas**
- **Bassolé Appointed Chief Mediator**
- **Capacity Building of RECS**

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"This prestigious award seeks to recognize the innovators and pioneers, the dreamers and doers who bring democracy online. This year marked the toughest year ever in choosing the 20 finalists."

Thank you to all of you who voted for Pambazuka News, our readers, writers and contributors. This is your award. Congratulations to you all.



FAHAMU BOOKS



Dorothy-Grace Guerrero and Firoze Manji (ed) (2008) *China's New Role in Africa and the South: A search for a new perspective.*

Hakima Abbas (ed) (2007) *Africa's Long Road to Rights: Reflections on the 20th Anniversary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights / Long Trajet de l'Afrique vers les Droits: Réflexions lors du 20ème Anniversaire de la Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples.*

Patrick Burnett & Firoze Manji (eds) (2007) *From the Slave Trade to 'Free' Trade: How Trade Undermines Democracy and Justice in Africa.*

Issa Shivji (2007) *Silences in NGO Discourse: The Role and Future of NGOs in Africa.*

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