



How can libraries, librarians and library associations be or not to be successful on developing countries: case study: Minas Gerais Library Association, Brazil

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125 — Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a strategy to build strong libraries and library associations — Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section with Management of Library Associations

Abstract:

Minas Gerais Library Association - just called ABMG - is 50 years old , same age of other 19 Brazilian LA, all members of FEBAB- Brazilian Library and Information Science Federation. The actual Board of Directors of ABMG is formed by four Past- Presidents and other new members. The Past- Presidents lived bad and good moments of ABMG history. In 2007, when they left ABMG management the LA was one of the most successful ones: ABMG had two headquarters in Belo Horizonte city (one of them was leased to bring money to the LA) a Bank Account of more than US\$ 50,000 in cash, good professional activities and nearly 540 associated members paying the annual fees. Therefore, the LA had good conditions to plan and to realize national and international professional events including BIBLOS 2000 - this International Congress gave status, good reputation, image and money to ABMG. In January 2010, after the last elections, when the new Board of Directors came to ABMG they could see that the out-going Directors performed a bad administration. After a short period (2007-2009) ABMG was in a failure situation: its headquarters room and furniture were almost destroyed, Bank Account was less than US\$ 4,00 and ABMG had many debts to pay; bad management from 2007 to 2009 put the associative movement away, so they had only 02 affiliated members; the site was not up-dated for more than 14 months and so on. From January 2010 until now the new Board of Directors is trying to change the situation, to save money and to get money with courses, journeys ad planning new activities. They are planning a National Meeting on Cultural Actions and Changes on Library and Information Science (2012) and a new Seminar on the Management of LA (2011 or 2012) to continue the Seminars developped by ABMG and other Brazilian LA from 1994 to 2006 They intend to follow IFLA Directions from the "Pre-Session Seminar on the Status, Reputation and Image of the Library and Information Profession" (IFLA, Delhi, 1992) and the " UNESCO Guidelines for the Management of Professional Associations in the fields of Archives, Library and Information Work"(IFLA. Paris, 1989) and other new ideas. The actual Board of

Directors consider that ABMG situation must be analysed by an auditor but before that, they are trying to detect what factors can bring success or failure to LA management, in order to prevent another situation of failure like that. They are looking at ABMG as a Case Study : they selected some main items in relation to personnel issues, in relation to planning activities and in relation to communication. From ABMG experience, ten main factors to get success and good results on the management of Brazilian LA are listed. Perhaps they can be useful to other LA, too.

1. Introducing ABMG.

Minas Gerais Library Association – just called ABMG – commemorated last year 50 years. ABMG represents professionals of LIS of Minas Gerais among other Brazilian LA members and institutions. Brazil has 19 more LA with more or less the same age as ABMG. The first ones were from Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Bahia and Pernambuco. They began to work together and after that they integrated as FEBAB - Brazilian Federation of Library and Information Science Associations and Institutions.

After a few years of existence FEBAB got its own headquarters in São Paulo (a donation from one of the first FEBAB's President) and since this period FEBAB represents the work of more than 25 000 Brazilian LIS professionals near to IFLA –LAC (Latin America office of IFLA) and IFLA. Brazilian Delegates from FEBAB, from other Brazilian LA and from IFLA_LAC leadership are present on IFLA decisions and meetings since then. ABMG had the opportunity to participate to IFLA meetings in other countries and now, in Puerto Rico.

The Scenery. How many professionals work in Minas Gerais State?

There are about 1681 LIS professionals in Minas Gerais, working in a big area- Minas Gerais has about 580 millions km² and a population of about 20 595 499 inhabitants

(following IBGE Census of 2006) in 12 Macro-Regions of great difference, in relation to financial resources, cultural and educational goals. Each region is divided into micro regions- Minas Gerais has 66 Micro- regions with more similar conditions and 853 cities.

About the universe of LIS professionals, there are 4 regular courses on LIS in Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte, Formiga, Tres Corações and Uba cities: there are many librarians working in the 10 great cities but only a few are working in other 843 medium and small ones. This is a great problem because although we have different libraries in almost all Minas Gerais cities, the great majority of professionals are working just in Belo Horizonte and in the great cities. So, the great majority of the other cities have libraries but there is no professional work on them. People who lives in medium and little cities have none idea of how libraries and librarians and LIS Library Association can help them in many aspects.

Looking Back

The current Board of Directors of ABMG for the period 2010-2013 has four Past- Presidents working with new other professionals just associated to ABM.G: Maria de Lourdes Cortes Romanelli, Maria Clea Borges, Fatima Chaves and Maria Eugenia Andrade. Each one of these Presidents had great success in their administration. These professionals worked from 1990 to 2006 – about sixteen years- with a continuous plan: in fact, each new President gave continuity to the best plans of the out- going President . This strategy brought success to ABMG and the Minas Gerais LA was one of the most successful among the 19 Brazilian Library Association, and this included FEBAB.

At the end of this period, from 1990-2006 ABMG had:

1. The new central HQ with two offices including a Cultural Center, with all furniture and electronic support to hold meetings and give classes to associated professionals and others. These goods were bought after the BIBLOS 2000 Congress, organized by ABMG from 1990 to 1994.
2. A Site in the Internet giving news to associated people and general public;
3. More than R\$ 60 000,00 (almost U\$ 50,000) in cash, deposited in Bank of Brazil. ABMG had two accounts: the first one, for everyday income management and the second one, to receive and control the fees and expenses of Special Events, Congress, and others.
4. One employee secretary paid by month and working 8 hours / day.
5. 540 members affiliated with full associate fees up to date (that is 30 % of all LIS Minas Gerais Professionals)
6. The old headquarters bought after the 1972 CBBDD Congress was leased to a dentist and it was bringing more money to ABMG every month.

A Bad Surprise

In 2007 a new Directive Group was elected and received ABMG as described before. They directed ABMG from January 2007 to January 2010.

In January 2010 when the members of the current Directive Group returned after elections to manage ABMG again, they had a bad surprise: it was difficult to recognize the Association and the bad conditions of the HQ just after 3 years.

The bad situation was as follows:

1. The LA headquarters were almost destroyed. Furniture and decoration had great damages and fax, computer, TV, video and other electronic equipments didn't work at all.
2. ABMG's site in Internet had none up-to-date news: it was 14 months late.
3. ABMG Bank accounts had only R\$ 1,73 of funds (less than U\$ 4,00) to pay all expenses and debts.
4. ABMG was paying 02 employees fees each month, with salaries and tax, but the office was closed.
5. ABMG had only 02 affiliated members with up- to- date payments: it means that not even the 14 members of the Executive Board of ABMG from 2007-2009 were paying their annual fees.
6. The old headquarters was not leased, and ABMG was paying to support the property taxes to the government.

The situation was so bad that the new elected leaders decided to order a investigation in the accounts of the ABMG Past- President and the out-going Board of Directors from the period of 2007-2009. They all were invited to meet with the new Directors, but only the Past- President came and she gave no answers to the questions of the new elected leaders. Even the financial and auditing department failed to show receipts and other documents. After six months trying to get information of what occurred, the new Board of Directors decided to confront the Past- President for her responsibility asking her to show the real

situation to all ABMG Directors and new LA members (at the end of 2010 ABMG had the old members coming again and 30 new associated begun to pay their fees)

The new Directors decided to ask for an auditor survey. So, the present study on the “ *Case of ABMG* “ is a reflection, a way to appreciate the whole situation not only from our point of view, but also from other professionals of different experience, too. And it is a good opportunity to look for the reasons of the good and bad results of modern Library and Information Science Association, in order to prevent another situation like that and to build strong Library Associations.

2. A short story from 1960- 2011.

ABMG was founded on June, 17th 1960 as a non-profit organization. Its mission was to congregate the librarians of Minas Gerais State and to give them different forms of continuing education and promotion of lecture, the library science and knowledge. The Directors are volunteers, but ABMG pays for other professionals’ work.

Since its beginning, the Board of Directors had the knowledge that a LA can succeed only if it is managed as a business organization and having financial objectives, too. So, ABMG paid for many works such as accounting, financial consultant, specialized works, courses, organization of local, regional and international meetings, cultural and marketing projects and others.

Many years after that, Brazil had a new law directed to the Third Section of Society, that is, the Organizations of Non- profit Actions. So, in 2000 the mission of ABMG became to be a non-profit association of educational, scientific, social, cultural aims, dedicated to integrate and develop LIS professionals with continuous education and pro- active work, bringing the up-to-date ideas to be known and discussed with the colleagues. As defined by IFLA a few years ago, “LIS Associations must be a driver force that unites the membership and be feasible, motivating and distinctive among other organizations.” (1)

ABMG from 1960-1990.

First Headquarters- Since its founding ABMG had many teachers from Minas Gerais Federal University (UFMG) as directors. During the first ten years of existence ABMG had the great opportunity to develop new ideas and get money also, in special from FEBAB’s greatest product; The Brazilian Congress, called CBBB- Brazilian Congress of Library and Information Science. This big Congress was organized in Belo Horizonte, July 1971, with more then 1 000 participants. This CBBB 1971 brought to ABMG not only status but also financial maturity and money enough to buy its first headquarters in Belo Horizonte.

Special Libraries Working Groups- During CBBB 1971 professionals and specialists decided to work together into “ Special Libraries Working Groups.” At that time, ABMG and other LIS Associations begin to develop four “Special Working Groups” as a place for Special Libraries and professionals to work together with the knowledge from specialized areas: Biomedical, Agricultural, Science and Technology, Public Libraries and School Libraries. A few years after, there were two more Special Groups - the Group of Social and Human Science and the Law Libraries Group. After this period the work of the Special

Librarians increased all around the country and in a few years more, another two Groups began to work together - Info Materials and Micro Isis Program Groups.

Classes- ABMG and the leaders of the Special Groups gave classes on special subjects and planned their special meetings. When Internet and Info Materials came, ABMG offered classes to face the new knowledge and to prepare professionals to new information goals. But even with these programs the LA had few associated.

Working Market – After it a new Board of Directors was elected and stopped to work with Special Groups: they decided to study the Working Market of LIS Profession. The idea was to help professionals to get a regular work and the first job and to know the real needs of the employers. ABMG established the first Chart of Salaries to help LIS professional works and employers. But this was not enough to bring success to ABMG and in a few months, ABMG associated were very few. Without resources from fees and without other good ideas to get money, the ABMG Board decided to lease the HQ and to house ABMG in the back-ground , at the back door of the UFMG School of Engineering University Library.

Looking for Better Communication- In 1988 a new Board of Directors decided to increase communication and bring new members to the LA. They edited a newspaper named CONTACT, with the objective to disseminate technical news and to integrate professionals from Belo Horizonte and other cities. The newspaper was sent to other Brazilian regions, too. CONTATO was active for about 15 years with the support of a State Bank. But to pay the post office was very expensive, so ABMG put an end to this project.

Classes and Special Libraries Groups again- At the end of this decade the bad situation of ABMG continued and some Special Libraries Groups were getting good results without ABMG assistance. The next four Presidents kept a minimum of affiliated professionals by giving classes and planning events of short duration. One of the best works of ABMG during this period was: the fight for the first “Municipal Public Library of Belo Horizonte Project” and the “Moving Libraries Network Project” with Libraries on Buses. Both projects were approved by the Municipal Law with ABMG support, and are still working now.

Politics and LIS Workers - During “the bad days” from 1971 until 1982 there was a great political change in Brazil. Authors, readers, politicians and many friends of LIS associations were involved in defending Brazilian Goals for Education and Culture and to give ideas for the new Constitution Law. Near 1981 ABMG helped Librarians and the Regional Council of LIS Professionals to fight side by side with other people to defend Brazilian Educational and Cultural Politics and to include Libraries Management in the New Constitution Law. A great problem appeared: “the Transformation of the Minas Gerais State Public Library into a CEP_- Permanent Education Center, “from 1972 to 1983. It was beginning a real social affaire: ABMG had to support political fights to defend the position of the Minas Gerais State Library and to integrate the Pro- Public Library Group to fight for a Public Library State System Politics. After six years of work the “bad politicians “finally changed. And the new Governor listened to the people and to ABMG and other Librarians as Delegates and could recreate the Minas Gerais State Public Library more powerful then it was before 1972: after 1983 it has the competence to give technical assistance not only to Belo Horizonte Public Libraries but also to all Public Libraries of Minas Gerais. And ABMG was helping the projects of Continuous Education for the staff of the new network of Public Libraries. This was a great political and technical victory of ABMG (2)

Success begins, at last - Since 1988 ABMG began to be more successful. One of the most impressive activities was the classes to prepare librarians to competitive public examinations and the courses for the libraries auxiliary staff training. The members of the Special Group of Human and Social Science developed a Users Education Plan, with a Video Course on Training Readers – named” Conheça sua Biblioteca “or “It is easy to know how to use your Library”. This good idea was prepared by ABMG with the technical and financial support of the UFMG Audio-Visual Department. This was a video course to be used by any library and it was adopted for many LIS Brazilian Schools and Library Associations. After 1990 ABMG Directors decided to change their activities in order to get money and to be possible to come back to their headquarters again. They offered to the LIS community of Minas Gerais the first LIS State Meeting and organized the First ENCO- “Special Non - Book Materials National Meeting” with good technical and financial results. But the situation of the LA was just beginning to be improved.

ABMG from 1990 - 2006

ABMG at IFLA International Conference in New Delhi, August 1992- ABMG was invited by IFLA - LAC Delegate to be part at the IFLA International Conference to be hold in New Delhi, India, as Brazilian Delegate. The objective was to study the Status, Reputation and Image of the LIS Profession, during the IFLA Pre-Session Seminar hold in Delhi, August 1992. But there was more then that involved: there was the possibility to get resources from IFLA to ABMG to develop a new IFLA Project in Brazil and two more Library Association of Africa and Asia- that was the “Model Association Project”, under the auspices of the IFLA Round Table for the Management of Library Associations.

During the Seminar in Delhi, from 24-28 August 1992, the participants were leaders from 23 countries under the supervision of Russel Bowden from IFLA_RTMLA/from England and Donald Wijasuriya, Chairman IFLA Pre-Seminar from India and other IFLA Directors. The objective was to recognize how much the profession’s image impacts the environment in which the members operate and if the opposite is true: did the environment impact the LIS professionals and LIS Associations goals? They assumed that accompanying the mission statements should be written goals that more specifically describe the actions that the LIS Associations must plan to accomplish its mission.

IFLA told us how to act to get Good Results. At the end of the Pre Session Seminar every LA Delegate received

1. *IFLA/UNESCO “ Guidelines for the management of library, information science and archive professional associations “an indispensable text for all LIS Association to study. (3)*
2. *The 17 Danger Items of Common Opinions and Attitudes the general public has about the profession and the professionals and that we from LIS Association must discuss at the beginning of each project and planning actions. The 17 Danger Items are: 1. Female Image. 2. Invisibility. 3. Quality of Services 4. Salary. 5. Volunteer Work 6. Marginal Role. 7. Librarians are not Distinguished 8. Little Money Responsibility. 9. Lack of Politics and Funding 10. Social Responsibility. 11.Dispensable Luxury 12. Low Expectations. 13. Unemployment 14. Dull image of LIS profession 15. Educational Requirements 16. For students only. 17. Reading less and Computer Competition.*

3. *The recommendations. The organizers of the Seminar believed that without strong and efficient and effectively managed Library and Information Science Associations there is no infrastructure to undertake the work that everyone will identify as necessary to improve image, reputation and status of LIS profession and to build strong LIS Associations all over the world. The 10 Resolutions for the Management of Professional Associations Guidelines named by the end of the Seminar are related as an Annex to all discussions (3)*

At the end of IFLA's Delhi Seminar all participants decided to meet the other LA of each country after coming back home to discuss the defined " 17 Danger Problems" and "the 10 Resolutions " of the Seminar. The objective was to collaborate to change problems and to assume new goals if necessary to build stronger and better LIS Associations. And this was made by ABMG with the support of IFLA "**Model Library Association Project**" in the first years and supported only by ABMG after the end of this Project, until 2006.

IFLA and ABMG and the Model Library Association Project. This Pre-Session IFLA Seminar gave an excellent continuity to the mission, goals and projects of Minas Gerais Library Association for more than 15 years. The Brazilian Delegate on IFLA Conference 1992/ New Delhi was the President of ABMG on charge and the Directors were the future Presidents and Directors of the following Directories of ABMG. So, this successive team gave the continuity ABMG needed to the main themes and projects.

Phases 1, 2 and 3. - From 1994 to 2006 ABMG developed three phases of the IFLA **Model Library Association Project** as the main LIS Association in charge. Minas Gerais, Santa Catarina and Pernambuco were the three states LA where they have to develop IFLA MLAP actions. What ABMG deed with Santa Catarina and Pernambuco LA help?

1. The first step was local – IFLA recommended organizing a common project to keep the management of the LIS Association on three states of different Brazilian Regions; part of the expenses for this phase came from IFLA Model Library Association Project.

2. The second step was national – the proposition was going on , when the three partners – Minas Gerais,(SE of Brazil) , Santa Catarina (South of Brazil) and Pernambuco (NE of Brazil) begin to expand the idea for other states inviting all the 19 Brazilian LA to a meeting to know the MLAP and to discuss the idea of a Continuous Educational Professional Project for LA, organizing Seminars on the Management of Library Associations in Brazil.

3. The third step was regional, that is: an intention to spread the idea of MLAP to Brazil and Latin America. When the MLAP from IFLA ended, the three Brazilian Association decided to go on and to develop the project using their own money and they had the support of FEBAB, IBICT and other Brazilian partners to go on. We must remind that this autonomy was one of the goals to be achieved with IFLA Project.

4. ABMG, FEBAB and IBICT developed four Seminars on the Management of LIS Associations. The idea was to do it each two years. The Seminars took place in Santa Catarina; Pernambuco, Maranhão and Porto Alegre. ABMG invited all 19 Brazilian Library Associations to meet in Florianópolis and 12 LA came. The participants suggested to hold these "Seminars " at least one time each year and also another one as a Pre-session Seminar before the traditional CBBB, National Brazilian Congress, every time this Congress came. But this was quite difficult. Next year the program went to Recife and received 12 Library Associations. After it, it was organized in Maranhão, and 14 Library Associations came. The Project on the Management of LIS Associations was each year better than the last one.

FEBAB was taken part on it, too. The discussions were programmed with print, audiovisual, power point and Internet materials. In Recife, the President of Argentina Professionals Library Association was invited by ABMG and the President came, to be part of the Seminar, too. Argentina leader was looking for IFLA's Recommendations and to know more about Best Practices on the subject of LA Management. The last one Seminar was in Porto Alegre, in South Brazil. 15 Library Associations came, with the presence and support of FEBAB, too. Discussions included a new partnership- a Round Table on Knowledge Management brought the presence of the Brazilian Society for the Knowledge Management, too. The Project on the Management of each Brazilian State Associations was discussed and there was a new idea - to plan a similar management program to all Library Associations, besides their own regional plans. Every LA asked for the continuity of the Seminar because they could see it was very special and very useful for the Directors of Library Associations. But in 2006, when ABMG elected a new Executive Directory the Seminar on the Management of LA was closed.

BIBLOS 2000 and after it.

From 1992-1994 ABMG organized BIBLOS 2000, the greatest Brazilian Congress with the support of FEBAB, IFLA-LAC and UNESCO, UFMG, and other supporting actors, as Minas Gerais Government, IBICT from Brasilia, PUC-MG (from Catholic Education System) PETROBRAS and other Brazilian Business groups. It has more than 2 000 participants, 104 speakers and 73 stands in a Big Fair during the entire event. A great idea came to use the Congress as a space of great visibility not only to LIS professionals but also to the general public. So, ABMG organized BIBA- Biblioteca Aberta or the Open Library to receive authors, children and parents, students and teachers, architects, book editors and the general public. They came to see BIBA and to know how one can work with imagination on libraries. It was the most successful idea. (4)

The BIBLOS 2000 paid all costs and brought money to ABMG. After it, ABMG had financial conditions to buy new headquarters with a Meeting Room and a Cultural Center all with new furniture and electronic equipments to be a center of continuous education, studying and communication to professionals and the general public. In this area every Executive Directors had a place to plan meetings, classes and social events. ABMG Executive Board attended invitations from visitors from other states and other countries and organized national and international trips of associated persons to know foreigner Associations and Libraries. ABMG began to expand their activities to many associated and the communication was increased with other areas of knowledge - as archives, documentation centers and museums. The idea was to mix the knowledge and to build better and strong Associations in the future.

3. Expansion X Restriction

Good Time.

During more than 15 years, from 1990 to 2006 a group of effective and each time more mature professionals succeed as Presidents and members of the Board of Directors of ABMG. One after another, they gave continuity to the Board Plans and Projects of each President's and their Staff, including as its main events- 1. The annual Meeting on Library and Information Science each October, open to the LIS professionals and general public 2. The Seminars on the Management of Library Associations, dedicated to develop leaders of the 19 Brazilian State Library Associations 3. other events, as small meetings with School

and Public Libraries, Special Libraries Groups, classes to study English and Spanish, classes to prepare associated professionals to take part in competitive examinations, cultural trips during week ends and so on. ABMG became one of the strongest LA in Brazilian Librarianship and Information Science scenery. ABMG had a positive bank account and favorable status among the LIS Universities and Libraries. With the annual Seminars on the Management of Library Associations they were adding a very useful knowledge on the best practices on the Management of Library and Information Science Professionals to Minas Gerais and to other Brazilian LA.

An example: During the LA Seminar on the Management of LA hold in Recife(northwest of Brazil) a good sign was the presence of the President of Argentina's Library Association who desired to know more about the Management Project of LIS Association with the Brazilian neighbors. After that, Argentina was elected the first Latin American Country to receive IFLA International Conference and this was a great event for all South America. To mix ideas with this LA and others form Latin America was a real goal to be achieved. The presence of Argentina in Recife was a first movement for what would become a regular one-ABMG and FEBAB had the idea to invite each year a new LIS Association from Latin America to be part on the Brazilian Seminar on the Management of Library and Information Science Associations: the intention was to interchange ideas and knowledge. But after 12 years of existence the Seminar on the LIS Association Management **inspired by IFLA's Model Library Association Project** was closed when the new Directors came to ABMG and they couldn't afford such a project from 2007-2010.

Bad Time, again.

From 2007 to 2010 a new group came to direct ABMG. Unfortunately, the only candidate to be the new President was recognized as a good professional but also to be a shy person, fearful to face difficulties and with little experience to manage money and to take financial decisions. It was only one group running for elections - so this group was elected to direct ABMG. As the former members of the ABMG Board from 2003-2007 knew that the only candidate to be the future President had no experience and she had personal problems to take care of money, the out-going Board of Directors suggested a name of this group to be included in the future Board and one of the Past - President of ABMG with great experience in planning, projects and Congress Organization was included. This was a strategic way to keep an eye to the new Directive Board in order to help it and to take care of ABMG patrimony and bank account, if necessary. But after the election in no more then four months this member of great experience was discarded out from the new Board of Directors – the excuse they used was the fact that the Past- President member had to travel (and she told the President about this traveling) but the Statutory said “ if one member is absent during three following monthly meetings, this member will be excluded of the Board of Directors”. At the end of the second year of work the new ABMG President asked two Past –Presidents to give her some help- but at that time the financial and management problem had no solution. And ABMG began to fail.

Actual Situation and On-going Activities.

In December 2009 Maria Clea Borges was elected as new President of ABMG and begun to work again with the assistance of new elected leaders in February 2010. They had some meetings wandering what could be done? And the situation begun to change when the new President and the Board of Directors decided: 1.To dismiss the two employees and pay all debts to them. 2. ABMG site was not good, but the Board of Directors decided to work as a

Virtual Office, for some time: the President and one Director work in the HQ for a few hours each week; the e-mail and electronic secretary helps, too. 3 ABMG leased the old HQ to a doctor and one of the rooms of the new HQ is leased to different teachers, to teach classes on Spanish, English and French Language: and they pay in advance. 4. The President organized small trips near Belo Horizonte with cultural objectives and the participants pay to the journey, too. So, ABMG is saving money and getting money and the HQ remains useful to ABMG members, as a meeting room, cultural room, social room, and so on. To start Continuing Professional Development, ABMG presented to State Government a project with the assistance of UFMG University to next 2012. This project will discuss School and Public Libraries Organization & Cultural Activities in Libraries, Archives and Museums. ABMG is going to review the "Seminars on the Management of LA" and the next one will be realized in October or in March 2012. Actually there are 32 new associated members and the Bank account has more than R\$ 10 000, 00 (almost US\$ 7,000) But ABMG have to pay debts from out-going Directors to the City Administration – so, to save and get money to pay debts is one of ABMG actual goals, too.

4. First Analysis and Proposals from "The Case of ABMG".

How could the actions of a bad Board of Directors undo what was a good, solid Library Association in such a short period, from January 2007 to January 2010 ?? Why they failed? What they didn't do?

LA Responsibilities- It is not the first time ABMG is in trouble and this causes low status, reputation and image to the LA, to professionals and even to the libraries. When one LA has a good leader, a good staff and good program of activities the LA is doing well and professionals pay to be part of it. And they came to be part of the activities. But if the President and the Board of Directors are anonymous and don't have a good plan to manage the LA or if they have financial difficulties and do nothing to support them, the LA becomes a weak organization, no one wants to help it and people disappear. The President and the Board of Directors must study the problems and do something to change the situation, into a positive direction, in a short time.

LA Mission turns into Plans - A LA must assume that accompanying the mission statements should be written goals that more specifically describe the actions that the LIS Associations are planning to take, to accomplish its mission. And all planning staff recommends that these goals must be measurable and have a timetable to guide the LIS Associations Directors on their own plans and projects. LA goals must include actions for three broad areas: Individual members Developing, Collective Association Program and Inclusion to the Environment in which the LIS Association operates. These goals must direct the actions planning and be part of every meeting, to avoid dispersive projects and money expending with no returns (1)

The Leader. A great emphasis is on the character of the LIS Associations leaders: they must be optimist and positive but strongly determined to bring success, financial support, visibility and to reach maturity – they must know how to grow in competence and understanding not only among their peers. If the President or the Directors knew they are not doing well, they need to learn with other LA and good professionals the best practices or exchange ideas by Internet and ask for other professionals to give support to each Director and improve their knowledge with consulting.

In 2007 Amormino Junior, from the site "BIBLIOTURMA" wrote that "there is a great inactivity among librarians and leaders of Minas Gerais LIS professionals." This is a fearful opinion. But in relation to ABMG activities at that time, Amormino was right. (5)

The propelling forces and the restrictor's ones - as IFLA Delhi Seminar discovered almost 20 years ago - remain the same. So, a good idea is to learn from "UNESCO Guidelines for the Management of Professional Associations (3) "and to IFLA 10 Resolutions on the Management of LA , because unfortunately they are up to date for our reality in Brazil. And the Board of Directors of ABMG is going to discuss them, in a new Seminar on the Management of LA, programmed to the end of this year. (1)

Challenges ABMG has to face.

The theme for the BOBCATSSS 2011 Conference organised by LIS students of Hungary, Norway and Austria is "Finding New Ways." They looked upon the consideration that "Over the past few years the world and accordingly the field of library and information science have faced a multitude of changes and innovations - and library and information professionals have been given the exciting challenge of changing and innovating right along with them." (6)

During next IFLA 2011 Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico we need to find what are these new challenges and the best way a modern LA works with the main challenges. We need to discover the new way people use libraries, what knowledge librarians need to add to face new challenges and how Library and Information Science Professionals Associations - and ABMG, too- have to program themselves to bring up to the professionals the new knowledge they need to have.

Thinking about new challenges to LA and ABMG.

- LA classes can be traditional, with teachers and students but what is going on? Are there good examples of virtual classes on-line to develop LA activities?
- LA must work towards continuing professional development, updating and re-training .Generally, the Universities are our best partners. But is it useful to a LA to work with the support of Trade and Business Organizations, with Non-Profit Organizations of Education and Culture, Science and Technology and others?
- LA must connect with general public needs, too. But is it useful to offer in LA some workshops on different subjects – as literature, story telling, theater, cinema, video, info materials and so on?
- LA must offer a new vision of the LIS profession. But is it useful to work with the new organism like Information Society or GED and Knowledge Management ?
- LA must act to improve the status, reputation and image of the profession and of the professionals. It includes ways of living to be good citizens. But is it useful to integrate LA with social and cultural movements and to work with cultural programs dedicated to improve literacy, computer access, environment protection, and others?
- LA must act to be part of the social campaigns to expand the world of literature and cultural possibilities to everyone. But what is the best way to do it?
- LA must act towards communication and visibility of the profession and of the professionals. But what are the best practices to work to increase the value, status, reputation and image of the LIS profession and professionals, now?

From ABMG bad and good experiences we have 10 practical proposals to get strong Library and Information Science Professionals Associations in Brazil. Perhaps they can be useful for other LA, too.

1. Once a LA is organized or if a new Board of Directors will be elected, the out-going Executive Board must indicate some names to the future LA Direction. The President must have an optimistic, positive and integrated leadership. The new Group to be elected must add some professionals recognized by their efficiency, mixed with the unknown young names to be able to perform the most valuable service a LA can give to professional members.
2. It is good to the new Board to include at least one member of the last Board of Directors to work for continuity of the best actions and to restrain the not so good ones. This special member must have the same treatment of the others, but he or she must work hard and to be accepted as an integrated adviser. If LA is in danger to lose money with activities not well planned or that are going to damage the LA patrimony, the adviser must call the President or the Financial Council and stop the activity before it starts.
3. Before election, the candidates to the Board of Directors must present a plan with the main lines which will guide LA actions for the period they will direct it. This plan must show some kind of integration with local leaders, such as: Universities, main Libraries Directors, teachers of the main LIS courses, directors of the Public Library System and so on.
4. The new Board of Directors must keep in mind they represent hundreds of professionals and their needs; and that associated fellows are paying each month to get from LA projects and classes with the new and the best knowledge on the LIS culture ; so LA must work with strong responsibility to offer good results. And the Executive Board must look ahead for what these needs are and perform valuable actions to reach them now and in the near future, remembering they have a short period to show their work as LA Directors.
5. The new Board of Directors must give continuity to the auxiliary staff /employees of the out-going LA Group; if some changes must be done, they must wait for first results of the new management actions. Staff members have good knowledge of particular matters and the new Directors must learn to get better results from this people then the Past-President or the out-going Group.
6. One of the main activities of LA is to give classes to associated members and to bring new ideas from advanced professionals and teachers of several subjects of LIS and other subjects, too. LA must work hard to have its own headquarters with an area to offer these events. Or LA may have partners to help LA to do these events, from time to time. To develop up-to date Courses and Seminars, Congress and Meetings on different topics must have a desirable continuity and constancy.
7. It is a desirable activity for LA to assume the organization of Congress and Local, Regional, National or International Meetings from time to time. They must be offered with regular periodicity: these events are strongly designed to update professionals, to be a positive marketing of the status and image of the profession and to bring also a lot of money to LA. But these good points from events will be achieved only if the following items are observed, too.
8. It is necessary for LA to have time to organize events. A big event (for more than 400 people) needs 3 years and a medium event (from 200 to 400 people) needs 1 or 2 years to be well organized. If necessary, the Board of Directors must be re-elected

to prepare the Congress with time enough to the end of it and the accounts presentation to associated professionals and to partners.

9. The main group to direct the Congress is the Board of Directors. But this main group must have time and disposition to do it.. They must have time to spend with the Congress organization besides their regular activities. And this work must be for free, with no other expenses. If there is possibility, the Congress must have the support of experts on Congress Management, no volunteers.

10. The events – little, medium or big- must have a good financial controlling staff looking now and in the near future for every detail and working hard with professionals of accounting departments. But the financial responsibility for the LA is of the President and the Director of Planning Financial Resources or the Treasurer. They are the ones who sign for the LA- they represent the LA to the Government and to the general public.

These proposals can give conditions to any LA to offer a good management and a good service to associated professionals, for many years.

Conclusion:

LA must be strong and must prevent failure and to work for success, everywhere.

Some time ago David Bender - from SLA / USA - said about this matter: _ It is difficult for LA “to pass through a maze of obstacles to create and maintain an effective organization; but the end result will be an Association that significantly enhances the power and the prestige of profession “(3)

We from ABMG would like to add: - A good LA will enhance the power and prestige of all Institutions dedicated to LIS professional’s improvement and good performance, everywhere.

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