



# New Frontiers of Librarianship

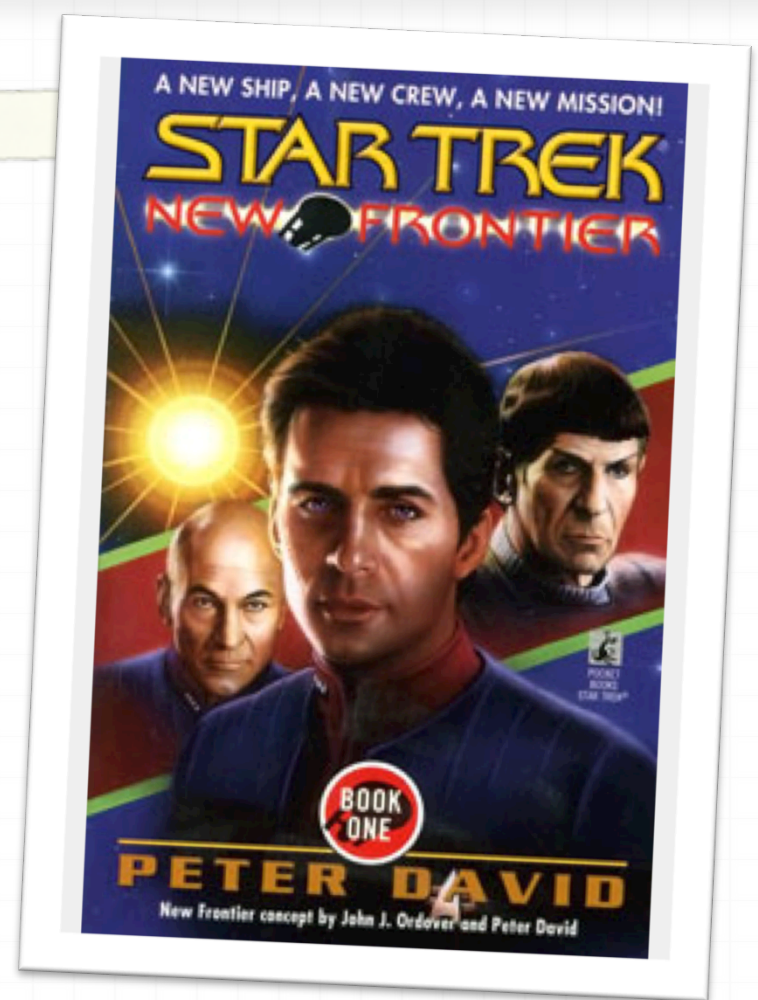
Ujala Satgoor  
Sabinet Client Conference  
06 September 2013

*We stand today on the edge of a new frontier--the frontier of the 1960s, a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.... The new frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises--it is a set of challenges.*

**John F Kennedy**

Presidential acceptance  
speech, 1960





## Venturing forth to new frontiers...

The unexplored or undeveloped region which lay beyond the fringe of settled settlements

## Definition: Frontier

Derived from 15<sup>th</sup> century French meaning “borderland”, which referred to the region of a country that fronts on another country



A border between two countries



The developing, often still “uncivilised or lawless”, region of a country

0 Any new field of learning, thought, etc. or any part of a field that is still incompletely investigated

*Webster's New World*



Frederick Jackson Turner,  
1861-1932

American historian noted for  
the Frontier Thesis in “The  
Significance of the Frontier  
in American History” (1893)

**Abandoned old  
practices, institutions,  
beliefs and ideas**

**Forged a new  
identity  
based on a  
pioneering spirit**

**Found new solutions  
to new problems  
created by their new  
environment**

## “The significance of the Frontier”



When you enter the frontier zone, you are changed by the encounter!

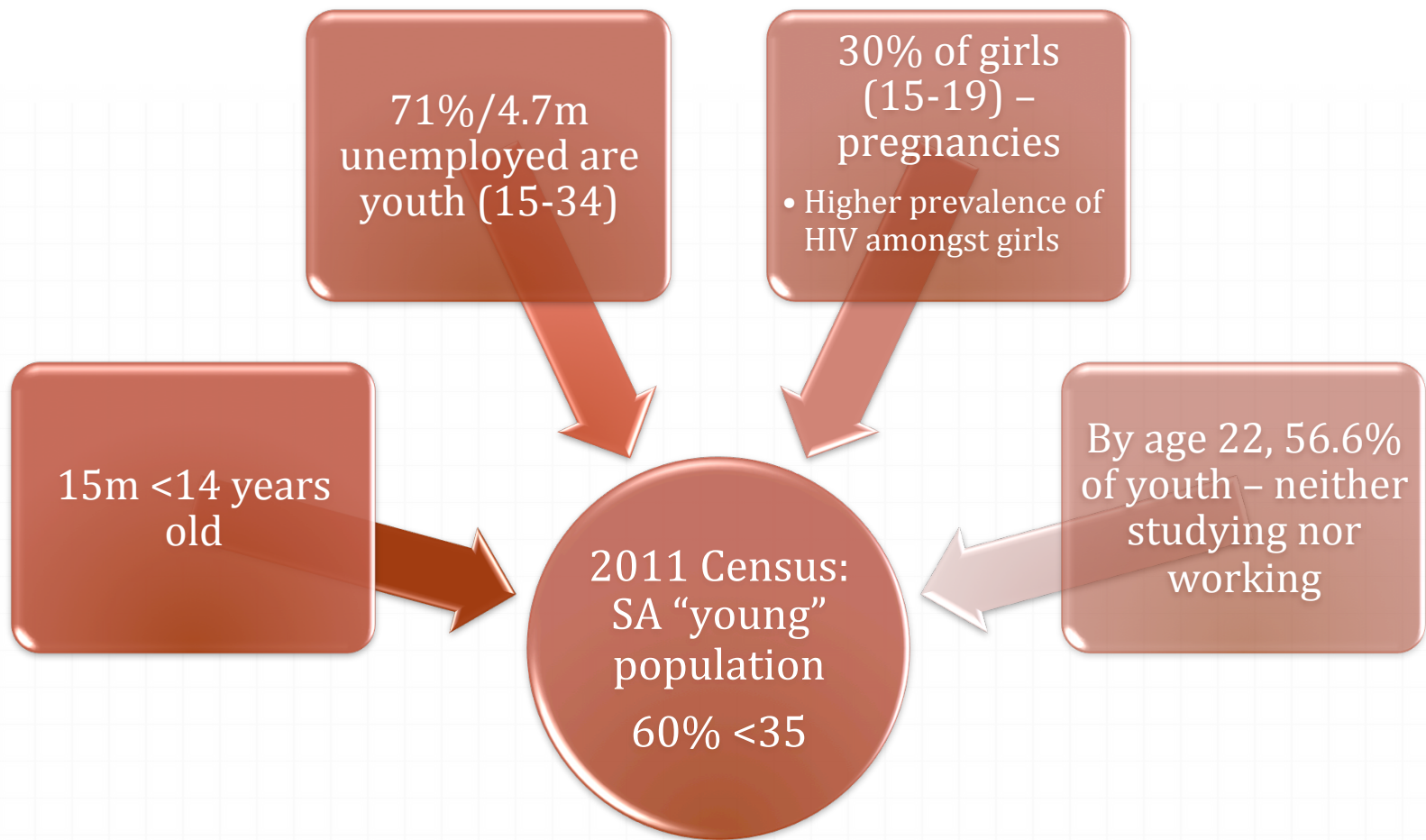
# CONTEXT

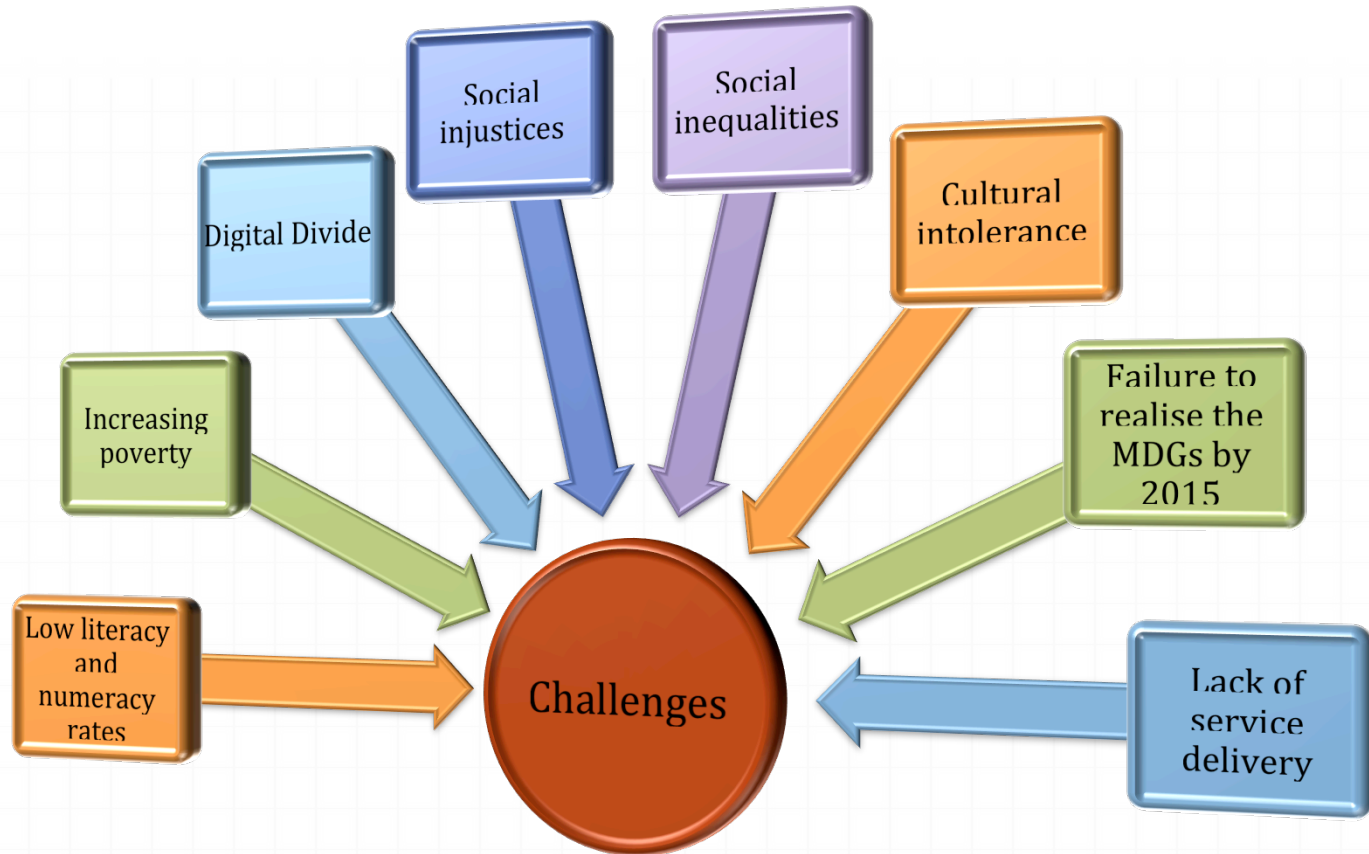
# National Context: Develop an informed nation

- 0 To understand the impact of the past on the present
  - Redress iniquities of the past
- 0 To create an acknowledgement and appreciation of existing diversity
  - Foster effective communication across cultures.
- 0 Stable democracy & progress
  - Safeguarding of human rights
- 0 To educate future leaders who will represent these values



# Socio-economic context





# SA LIS context

- 0 190 years
- 0 Transformation Charter
  - National Library – 2 campuses
  - Legal Deposits – 5
  - Public & Community Libraries – 1800
  - HE Libraries – 23
  - School Libraries – 25 145/ 19 940/ 3 388/1817
  - Govt. libraries – 79
  - SA Library for the Blind
- 0 10 Library Schools
- 0 Dept. of Arts and Culture
  - National Archive
- 0 Dept of Basic Education
- 0 Dept of Higher Education & Training
- 0 National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS)
- 0 CHELSA – Committee for Higher Education Libraries of South Africa
- 0 Library & Information Association of South Africa (LIASA)  
[www.liasa.org.za](http://www.liasa.org.za)

# SA LIS Context

## 0 National

- Development of an educated and informed citizenry

## 0 Professional

### 0 Historical legacy

#### 0 Redress of separate facilities

- Staff mindset - CPD

## 0 Transformation Challenges

### 0 Role of libraries - Recreation vs Education

### 0 Structure, competencies and responsibilities

- Academic & Public libraries – huge disparities
- School libraries

# Alignment of LIS to national imperatives

1. Redress and equity

2. Social and economic development

3. Social cohesion

4. Social inclusion

5. Poverty eradication

6. Diversity and responsiveness

7. Nation building

8. Entrenching a culture of reading

9. Developing a national literature in South Africa's indigenous languages

*We stand today on the edge of a new frontier--the frontier of the ~~1960s~~ 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of democracy, a frontier of ~~un~~known opportunities and perils, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.... The new frontier of which I speak is about unfulfilled ~~not a set of~~ promises--it is a set of challenges!*

Is librarianship  
at a new  
frontier?





# WHAT IS THE NEW FRONTIER FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIANS?



# FROM COLLECTIONS TO CONNECTIONS

**GREATER CONNECTIONS FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

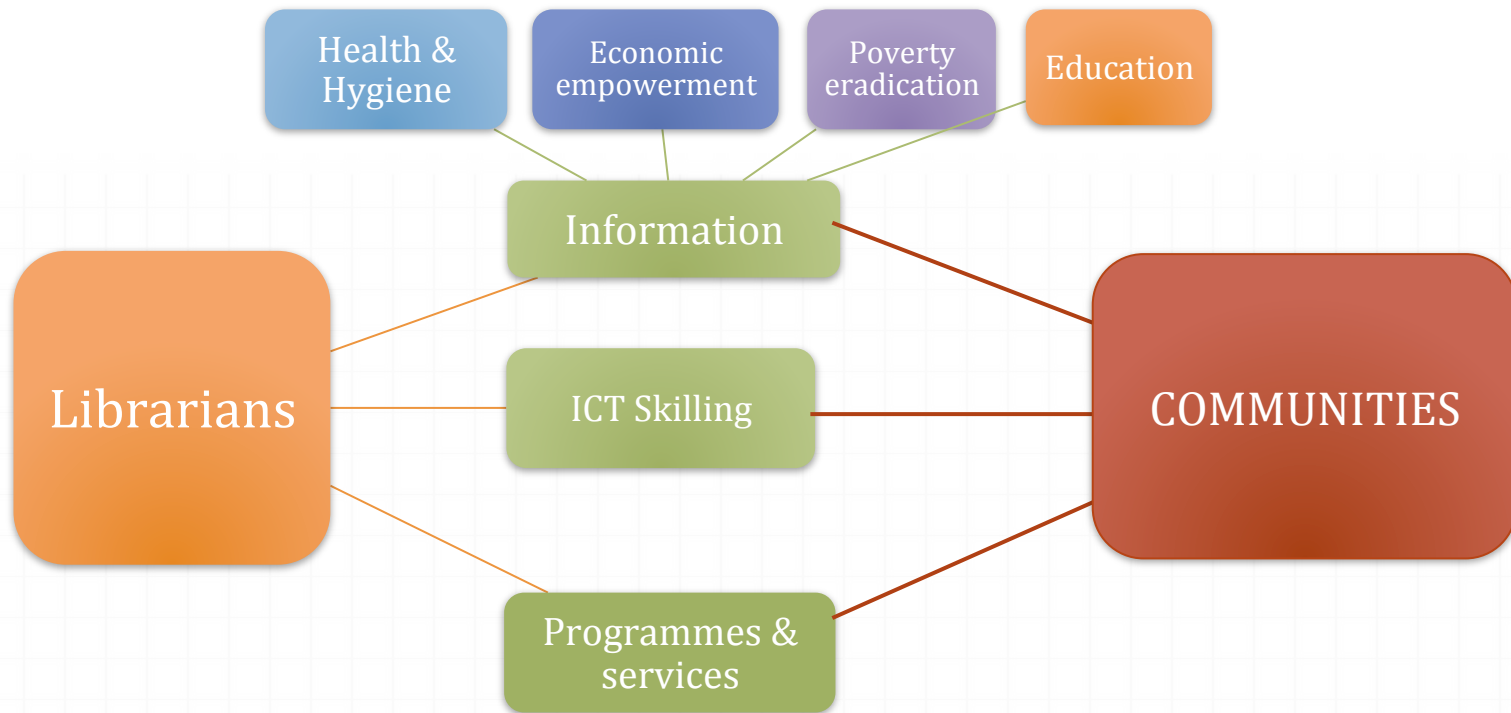


LIBRARIANS  
CONNECTING  
WITH EACH  
OTHER

• ENHANCE  
COMPETENCIES &  
REMOVE SKILLS  
IMBALANCE



TO CREATE A  
STRONG COHORT  
OF LIBRARIANS  
WITH A COMMON  
UNDERSTANDING  
& VISION OF AN  
INFORMED  
NATION!



**LIBRARIANS CONNECTING TO COMMUNITIES**  
**FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION, RESOURCES & SKILLING**  
**FOR PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**



**REDEFINE**  
**RE-IMAGINE**  
**REPURPOSE**  
**REINVIGORATE**



New Frontiers of Librarianship

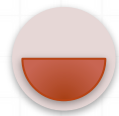


**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*



## Redeign

- Attitude
- Give new meaning to the practice
- Our purpose
- Strategic position of your library
- Leadership, strategies and activities
- Competencies & skills sets
- Commitment to developing an informed nation
- Libraries as cornerstones of democracy



## Re-imagine

- Think differently
- Consult & engage
- Organisational Culture & values
- Leadership – inclusive & collaborative
- One organisation, many leaders
- Innovation
- Technology as an enabler
- Reconceptualise services & practices
- Viability of the profession & libraries



## Repurpose

- Library Spaces
- Desired spaces
- Community spaces
- Appropriate assessments and measurements
- Collaborative learning & innovative thinking
- Easy access to information
- Support for the realisation of the MDGs and post-2015



## Reinvigorate

- Personal learning/lifelong learning (CPD)
- Personal branding
- Build networks
- Be informed
- Get involved in the professional association
- Be engaged
- Broadening your professional horizons
- Partnerships
- Become community development partners
- By being the best!

## Going Forward... Social Activist Librarians

Back to Turner...



- 0 Abandon the old complacencies & negative attitudes
- 0 Forge a new identity based on a pioneering spirit
- 0 Be bold & confident
- 0 Recognise the unlimited opportunity available to you because of where you are located
- 0 Be optimistic about the future by working on shedding your present restraints
- 0 Create the new environment that enables you to embrace new innovations and solutions
- 0 It is perfectly fine to practice librarianship differently here in Africa!

## LIASA' NEW FRONTIER...

As the custodian of professional values

- 0 Engagement between LIS educators & employers – **new competencies & skills sets**
- 0 Commenced the process for SAQA **Professional Body** recognition – redefine the profession
- 0 Hosting **IFLA 2015** in Cape Town
  - 0 **Opportunity to showcase**
    - the impact of the profession on social, educational and economic development
    - Our best practices
    - You to get involved...

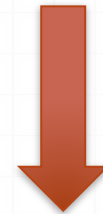


So, according to  
the definition...

(Webster's New World College  
Dictionary)



0 Any new field of learning,  
thought, etc. or **any part of a field  
that is still incompletely  
investigated ...**



0 The **new frontier of  
librarianship** is wide open for  
you to explore, investigate and  
take ownership...

UJALA SATGOOR  
DIRECTOR: RHODES UNIVERISTY LIBRARY  
LIASA PRESIDENT, 2012-2014

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