

INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that books are an unrivalled source of cultural enrichment, new knowledge and social and educational understanding. They provide lasting pleasure. They preserve the wisdom of the past, communicate the perceptions of the present, and generate ideas which shape the future.

In order to satisfy the book hunger of their peoples, Commonwealth countries are expanding their publishing and printing industries, extending their library services, and taking action in a variety of ways to promote the reading habit. The Commonwealth Book Development Programme, administered by this Division, was established to assist member countries in these tasks. The publication of this handbook on book exhibitions is one element in the Programme. Produced in response to a recommendation made by the Eighth Commonwealth Education Conference, it is offered to all individuals, groups and organisations which have a particular interest in improving book promotion. We are indebted to Martyn Goff for preparing it for us.

Book exhibitions are recognised as being one of the most effective ways of stimulating an interest in books. Large exhibitions can attract adults and children in their thousands. Small ones can be arranged to accompany a specialist conference, draw attention to books on particular subject, demonstrate the capabilities of a local publishing industry, enable a school to supplement its library stock, and serve a host of other purposes. They are not difficult to organise, but they do demand careful planning and considerable attention to detail. This handbook provides advice on many practical measures to ensure that nothing is overlooked, that potential pitfalls are

avoided, and that the resulting exhibition is attractive, effective and succesful.

We hope this handbook will serve as a source of encouragement and assistance to all who are interested in the development of the book industry through holding exhibitions which are designed to bring books to the attention of the public.

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