



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-OA: Open Access

Removing barriers to knowledge sharing

Knowledge without Boundaries: Advocacy campaign in Kenya for open access and institutional repositories

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Results of the EIFL-funded Open Access Project

“People value a personal touch. When you speak one on one people tend to take the word seriously. This has worked very well for us but it is very slow especially when someone has a large audience to reach.”

-Lilian Gisesa, Repository manager, Kisii University

INTRODUCTION

Under the Kenyan Constitution 2010, the right to information is protected in the Bill of Rights. Article 35 states that an individual has a right of access to information held by the State. It further imposes a duty on the State to publish and publicize any important information affecting the nation. This Open Access (OA) project implemented by Kenya Library Information Services Consortium (KLISC), University of Nairobi (UoN) and Kabarak University complements the Bill of Rights by enhancing access to information in Kenya.

The overall goal for the project was to promote and advocate for OA initiatives to a range of stakeholders – policy makers and government, research institutions, academic staff and researchers, students, scholarly journal editors and librarians – to enhance access to scholarship. The specific objectives were to:

- Advocate for adoption of OA policies targeting the University of Nairobi Management Board.
- Provide technical support for installing, configuring, customizing and populating institutional repositories (IR) based on DSpace FOSS at ten KLISC member institutions.
- Sensitize stakeholders such as policy makers and top level research administrators, academics, students, journals editors and librarians to OA initiatives in order to increase OA adoption rate.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The University of Nairobi OA [Policy](#) was approved in December 2012 by the Senate members, who supported it overwhelmingly, and signed by the Vice Chancellor. The OA IR is now [online](#). The policy became the third OA policy in the country following two other

OA mandates adopted by [Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology's \(JKUAT\) Senate in April 2012](#) and [Strathmore University in 2011](#).

- Collaboration on OA advocacy between the Medical Students Association of Kenya (MSAKE), the University of Nairobi Library and the office of DVC Research, Production and Extension of the University of Nairobi has been strengthened. This has proved to be a good strategy to reach students and to work with them to ensure success of OA initiatives.
- Ten repositories have been set up at ten institutions that participated in DSpace installation trainings, half of them are already on the web with the others are on local Intranets (pending OA and IR policies approval by the relevant bodies) (see Annexure 1).
- Ten new OA and IR policies have been drafted, five of them have already been approved and five others are still pending approval by the Universities Management Boards and Senates.
- Over 30 research institutions in Kenya are now aware of the importance of OA initiatives including the national policy makers. Government officials in ministries, top level managers in Higher Learning Institutions, researchers and students, ICT managers and the press are better informed about OA initiatives and many participants were ready to support their respective institutions in OA developments. Read a testimony of Collins Wanjala, Research Assistant, African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) "[Importance of Open Access \(OA\) and Open Data](#)".
- 300 researchers, students, research administrators and managers, publishers and policy makers were trained, which resulted in increased awareness of OA.
- Great impact on OA Initiatives in KLISC Member Institutions and in Kenya as a whole. We were able to sensitize different stakeholders on OA initiatives.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- 8-30 August, 2012, a series of follow-up visits to ten KLISC institutions grappling with installation, configuration, and customization of DSpace were held. KLISC identified two local DSpace experts who did an outstanding job providing technical support and training for 136 librarians at the ten institutions. The librarians and their ICT team from the selected institutions were very supportive and willing to go the extra mile to ensure the success of the project within their institutions.
- On 30 August 2012, an OA/IR Policy workshop for the University of Nairobi Management Board was hosted by the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Research, Production and Extension Professor Lucy Irungu. Participants included the DVCs, Principals, Heads of Departments, Board of Postgraduate, Intellectual Property Coordinator, ICT Coordinator and other policy makers. Prof. Abukutsa who was a member of OA Policy Committee at JKUAT gave a talk to her peers on the importance of embracing OA initiatives. MSAKE voiced the students support for OA policies. The workshop was followed up by visits and meetings with the national policy makers (National Council of Science and Technology, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Information and Communication, The Network of African Science Academies (NASAC), etc) in their respective institutions, organized by EIFL and the University of Nairobi.

- On 3 November 2012, KLISC held a successful workshop attended by 36 participants that were selected from research institutions across Kenya. The participants included researchers, policy makers, ICT specialists, lecturers, medical doctors, librarians, and students. This workshop was held concurrently with the University of Nairobi OA Week 2012.
- At the end of October – beginning of November KLISC members celebrated International OA Week 2012. Fliers, brochures, bookmarks, posters, and banners explaining the importance of OA and IRs were used to promote the OA initiatives. The university websites and social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter were also used. Training sessions and exhibitions were organized. At these events, a variety of other promotional materials were also distributed and awarded, including bags, flash disks, cups, mouse pads, and biro pens.

The students members of MSAKE actively engaged in the project, they joined KLISC events and took the initiative to organize additional exhibitions, trainings and the OA workshop. They came up with innovative strategies to capture the interest of the participants; for example, they invited a doctor to provide free medical check-ups at OA Week exhibition. The medical check-ups proved to be very popular, the exhibition was overflowing with participants, which gave us an opportunity to reach a large number of participants to OA issues.

Researchers, students, and policy makers, as well as university presses and publishers were targeted during the project implementation and many of them were significant collaborators.

LESSONS LEARNED

- One of the participants best summarized all the aspects that are needed for a successful effort "... Developing a digital repository is a continuous process that requires technical expertise, resources in terms of items/documents, equipment and staff, management support and teamwork. What worked best was to involve all the necessary players from the onset and especially during the DSpace installation and training at the same time. What would work best is to have a project team that is conversant with the project goal and objectives, along with the technical expertise and willingness to champion the project. Top level managers of the institutions must be thoroughly sensitized and be willing to support the project all the way. This effort must be complimented by the library staff who should be the project champions and ambassadors...".
- It is important to sensitize policy makers and bring them on board to ensure support of OA initiatives. Direct interaction with policy makers is most effective. It was through visits to the Commission of Higher Education and other information stakeholders that policy makers became aware of the importance of embracing OA initiatives in Kenya.
- It is important to have local experts in OA initiatives to advocate for OA, to support institutions to develop repositories and also to encourage the publication of OA journals and/or publishing in OA journals.
- It is important to incorporate students in advocacy strategies to help to reach other students.
- Working on projects that result in the greater good for the community is very rewarding. The difficult part is convincing others that even though a project may not at first appear to be beneficial to them individually, once implemented they are able to see that, that which benefits the greater community will also benefit them.

THE FUTURE

Five more repositories will become publicly available (see Annexure 1) at the institutions that had DSpace installation trainings as soon as they approve their OA and IR policies.

[Kenya Library & Information Services Consortium \(KLISC\)](#) is a partner in a new EIFL regional project “Open access: knowledge sharing and sustainable scholarly communication in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda” funded by [Spider](#), the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions DSV, Department of Computer and System Sciences, Stockholm University. The aim of the project is to raise visibility and accessibility of research outputs in three countries. It builds on previous work of EIFL in the region and combines awareness raising, policy work and practical training to promote, support and establish open access journals and open access repositories at institutions of higher learning. It will run until June 2014 and other partners include [Consortium for Tanzania Universities and Research Libraries \(COTUL\)](#) and [Consortium of Uganda University Libraries \(CUUL\)](#). Stay tuned for news and updates!

EIFL-OA supported this project with a grant of US\$3950 in June 2012. For further information, please contact project managers Ms Rosemary Otando, at rotando02@yahoo.com, and Mr Evan Njoroge, at evan.njoroge@gmail.com.

ANNEXURE 1: REPOSITORIES STATUS AT TEN INSTITUTIONS THAT HAD DSPACE INSTALLATION TRAININGS

- Kenya Polytechnic University College: publicly available at <http://41.89.56.5:8282/jspui/>;
- Kisii University College: publicly available at <http://41.89.196.6:8080/xmlui/>;
- Africa Nazarene University: intranet only;
- Marist University College: intranet only;
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics: intranet only;
- Kenya Methodist University: publicly available at <http://41.89.224.13:8080/jspui/>;
- Presbyterian University of East Africa: intranet only;
- Pwani University: publicly available at <http://elibrary.pu.ac.ke/ir/>;
- Tangaza College: publicly available at <http://41.89.26.9:8080/jspui/>;
- Bondo University: intranet only.

ANNEXURE 2: FURTHER READING & HELPFUL SITES

Check out these resources that might help you in your repository project:

- Information that you will need to know before embarking on the process of setting up your repository: <http://www.rsp.ac.uk/start/before-you-start/>
- IR Planning toolkit: <http://www.ir-africa.info/toolkit-steps>
- IR Cases, Templates & Examples: <http://www.ir-africa.info/biblio/cases>
- Good practices for university open-access policies: [http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/hoap/Good practices for university open-access policies](http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/hoap/Good_practices_for_university_open-access_policies)
- Sustainable practices for populating repositories: <http://www.coar-repositories.org/working-groups/repository-content/preliminary-report-sustainable-best-practices-for-populating-repositories/>
- EIFL-OA case studies: <http://www.eifl.net/eifl-oa-case-studies>
- The Directory of Open Access Repositories – OpenDOAR: <http://www.opendoar.org/>
- Supporting your institution: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/supportingyourinstitution.aspx>