EIFL-OA: Open Access

Removing barriers to knowledge sharing

Promoting the adoption of campus-based, faculty-driven open access policies

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Results of the EIFL-funded Open Access project

INTRODUCTION

In 2012 there were three open access (OA) repositories in Uganda: Uganda Scholarly Digital Library (USDL) at Makerere University, E-commons at the Aga Khan University and UMU Research Repository at Uganda Martyrs University. Plans were under way to establish OA repositories in other institutions.

Seven OA journals have been published in the country: African Crop Science Journal, published by the African Crop Science Society; African Health Sciences, published by Makerere University Medical School; East and Central African Journal of Surgery, published by the Association of Surgeons of East Africa and College of Surgeons of East Central and Southern Africa; Health Policy and Development, published by the Department of Health Sciences of Uganda Martyrs University (UMU); UMU also has Mutafiti Mwafrica (African Researcher) which is published by the African Research Documentation Centre of UMU; East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights published by The Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC) of Makerere University and Pan African Medical Journal, published by the African Field Epidemiology Network.

Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University has publicly acknowledged that having an OA institutional repository and an OA journal contributed to the high ranking of Makerere University in the Ranking Web (Webometrics Ranking) of World Universities. But there were no OA policies adopted in the country yet.

The main goals of the project, implemented by the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL), which includes 24 public and private universities and research organizations, were to encourage member institutions to promote the adoption of campus-based, faculty-driven OA policies and to encourage the creation of OA institutional repositories (IRs).

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- At Bishop Stuart University, Busitema University and Uganda Christian University, the University management and Research Committees welcomed the idea of OA repositories.

- OA Policy documents are now being written at Busitema University, Uganda Christian University and Uganda Martyrs University.

- Librarians at Makerere University and Uganda Christian University collected electronic dissertations (which had previously been managed by different departments), to be uploaded to their OA institutional repositories.

- Over 29 graduate and undergraduate students at Makerere University received individual tutoring on OA publishing and many of them have already put this knowledge into practice.

- Makerere University hired an OA repository librarian who now works closely with the e-resources librarian during the e-resources training to promote/market the OA repository.

- Makerere University migrated to a new repository and installed a statistics tool.

- Parliament of Uganda installed DSpace software for their OA repository and trained the members on submission workflows.

- Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) celebrated International OA Week for the first time. The Vice-Chancellor opened OA Week 2012 and suggested that it should be an annual event. All top management members and over 50 faculty members and students, including postgraduates attended interactive workshops. Faculty and postgraduate students who previously only had a vague idea about OA embraced its benefits and some of them have already had their work uploaded into the UMU Research Repository.

STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND TOOLS

The project strategy was to organize a workshop to bring together important stakeholders in Uganda higher education and research institutions. Over 35 individuals from 18 institutions attended including Bishop Stuart University, Busitema University, Cavendish University, International Health Sciences University, Kabale University, Kampala International University, Law Development Centre, Makerere University, Nkumba University, Parliament of Uganda, Uganda Christian University, Uganda Management Institute, Uganda Martyrs University, Victoria University, CEHURD, Pan African Medical Journal, RUFORUM and Makerere University Council. The presentations from the workshop are available here.

After the workshop, the participants conducted a series of follow-up activities. All of them wrote and shared reports with their university management outlining the importance and benefit of OA. In addition, follow-up meetings were conducted to discuss OA projects with the institutional management and Research Committees. (See Appendix A for details by institution.)

In addition, EIFL-OA Programme Manager together with the project team visited the following national policy makers and regional research networks based in Kampala to discuss OA policies and strategies – Inter-university Council for East Africa, National Council for Higher Education, National Information Technology Authority Uganda, Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, Research and Education Network of Uganda and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. All of them expressed interest in OA and showed strong commitment to an OA agenda in the country and on the continent.

"OA AND THE EVOLVING SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT" WORKSHOP AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

OA FOR RESEARCHERS AND PUBLISHERS: INCREASED READERSHIP, VISIBILITY, USAGE AND IMPACT

Two OA journal editors shared their experiences during the workshop.

Dr. Paul Nampala (African Crop Science Journal and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture) highlighted challenges and opportunities of scholarly publishing in Africa: the benefits of OA for African Crop Science Journal, such as increased visibility and submissions (increasing number from outside Africa), cost reduction in publishing (up to 70%), time saving (the time required for production and dissemination are much less when publishing online - the Editorial Board is now considering publishing more issues), and discouragement of plagiarism.

Allan Mwesiga (Editor of the Pan African Medical Journal) shared his experiences with sustainability of OA publishing in Africa. Some lessons learnt: an African OA journal can attract large numbers of manuscripts in a very competitive environment; and an increase in submission volumes comes with an increase in challenges (need for staff, system upgrade, changes in procedures).

OA FOR RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS: INCREASED VISIBILITY AND IMPACT

Agnes Namaganda (Makerere University Library) presented the role of CUUL in OA institutional repositories development and suggested the following collaborative activities: advocacy-meetings with Vice-chancellors' Forum; librarians' round tables; sensitisation seminars/training/workshops; model sample policies which can be customised by institutions; setting up a forum for discussion/share skills; setting up a Functional Committee on Institutional Repositories at CUUL; and fundraising/proposal writing.

At the final session, "Planning check-lists and strategies for collective advocacy of OA to research results in Uganda", over a dozen universities and research organizations presented their plans on the following topics: institutional OA advocacy campaigns; setting up OA repositories; and adopting OA policies. Strategies for collective advocacy of OA to research results in Uganda were also discussed; these included model OA briefs for vice-chancellors, model OA repositories proposals, collaboratively designed OA promotional materials and training materials for repository administrators and managers, signing the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, and OA Week celebrations.

THE FUTURE

Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) 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 the visibility and accessibility of research outputs in the 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 OA journals and OA repositories at institutions of higher learning. It will run until June 2014 and other partners include Kenya Library & Information Services Consortium (KLISC) and Consortium for Tanzania Universities and Research Libraries (COTUL). Stay tuned for news and updates!

After the workshop at Makerere University on July 9-11, 2012, "OA and the Evolving Scholarly Communication Environment", attendees conducted the following activities:

- **Bishop Stuart University**. Librarians presented a report to the University management. The management welcomed the idea of OA, but advised them to start by doing the necessary work on the University website so that the OA repository can be embedded on the site.

- **Busitema University**. Librarians presented a report to the University management. They were given approval to develop a proposal and policy documents which are required for setting up an OA repository.

- **Cavendish University**. Librarians presented a report to the University management in which OA and OA repositories were explained. Unfortunately, Management was not in agreement regarding establishing an OA IR at this time. The librarians decided to collect electronic dissertations (which had been previously kept at different departments), then they will present the IR idea again, but this time they will have concrete examples of content that can be uploaded.

- **Makerere University**. Librarians conducted training with students through one-on-one sessions, user education for undergraduate students and training programmes for the Graduate school training in 2012 and 2013. The university has also hired a librarian specifically for DSpace who now works closely with the e-resources librarian during the e-resources training to promote/market OA IR. Faculty and students have also been introduced to OA and some of them have already embraced OA publishing. The OA IR was upgraded, redesigned and a statistical tool was added.

- **Nkumba University**. Librarians wrote a report to the Vice-Chancellor informing him of the need for an OA IR. He recommended that they prepare a project proposal to be presented in the next management meeting, after which a report shall be presented to the University Senate where School Deans and Heads of Departments are members. It is expected that the Senate will mandate depositing research outputs in the OA IR. Unfortunately, the idea of OA access repository came up when the University budget committee was already in its final stages of creating the 2012/2013 financial year budget so it could not be included. However, there are plans to include it in the financial year 2013/2014 and once approved the activities will start.

- **The Parliament of Uganda**. DSpace software was installed and document submitters received training.

- **Uganda Christian University (UCU)**. Librarians wrote a report recommending the creation of an OA IR, using DSpace software. The report was submitted to the Head of the Department who presented it to the Research Committee. The Research Committee endorsed the implementation of an IR, which they had earlier rejected. The IT department is in the process of installing DSpace on the University server. In addition, a detailed OA repository project proposal and a policy statement are being developed. Some dissertations and research papers have already been collected to be uploaded once DSpace is installed. There were no funds to organize OA week events but through UCU community email, faculty and students received information about International OA week and links to OA journals and repositories.

- **Uganda Martyrs University (UMU**). Librarians organized a variety of OA Week 2012 activities, which were well attended. The Vice-Chancellor himself opened the week and suggested that it should be an annual event.

  - An interactive workshop was held on the Wednesday of OA Week and a majority of the top management attended it. The concept of an OA IR was introduced and the Vice-Chancellor welcomed the idea. However, he requested that a concept document be written that explores and documents all concerns, before he fully approves the idea.

  - Faculty and students visited the exhibition tent and were given OA handouts and flyers. Faculty and postgraduate students, who had only a vague idea about publishing in general, appreciated information about OA. Some of the faculty members who attended have already asked that their work be uploaded to the OA IR.

  - The greatest achievement was that UMU participated in the International OA Week 2012 with the rest of the world to raise awareness of OA.

  - OA Week follow-ups: The OA IR concept paper has been written in November and discussed by all the Faculty Boards in December. The OA IR was on the agenda of the Senate Meeting that took place on January 31, 2013. All were in favour and commented that it was long overdue. Some concerns have been expressed, such as: will researchers be able to continue publishing with the popular publishers?; could they deposit the articles that have already been published? how do they deal with the issue of copyright?; what are possible ways of dealing with quality of content deposited i.e. especially in regard to the thesis & dissertations? how to license their educational materials under Creative Commons licenses? The library was able to address these concerns and was given a go ahead to launch the OA IR.