



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-OA: Open Access

Removing barriers to knowledge sharing

Capacity building for the adoption and implementation of open access policies and open access repositories in Zimbabwe

Agnes Chikonzo, Librarian, University of Zimbabwe

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Results of the EIFL-funded Open Access Project

INTRODUCTION

Most of the universities and research institutions in Zimbabwe have embraced open access (OA) initiatives and have created OA Institutional Repositories (IR), however most have not formally implemented OA policies. [Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium \(ZULC\)](#), a consortium of 12 University libraries, took the initiative to start discussions at the national level about OA policies by organizing a workshop for key stakeholders at universities, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and at research organizations.

This project builds on the successful EIFL-funded University of Zimbabwe 2011 OA Advocacy Campaign “Say “No! To Secret Knowledge: Support OA” (see the case study [PDF](#)) which resulted in drafting an OA institutional mandate. The draft has been submitted to the Vice Chancellor’s Office for his comments. The next steps are that it will be presented to the Academic Committee and then to the Senate for approval.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- At the workshop, 55 executives from 21 institutions expressed their support for OA initiatives. Pro-vice Chancellors and Academic Affairs and Research Directors who attended gained a greater understanding of OA issues, expressed their support and commitment and created a multi-institutional platform for OA policy formulation.
- Various institutions took advantage of the workshop to identify academics who will be OA champions for future OA advocacy campaigns.
- The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and the Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education pledged to support OA (a milestone achievement for the nation and ZULC).
- Formulation of a National OA Policy was commissioned.
- The National Repository (www.researchdatabase.ac.zw) established by the Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) was chosen as a good starting point for OA dissemination of research information at a national level. A proposal to have RCZ partner with Universities was also put on the table.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On 22 November 2012, ZULC hosted a round table workshop on Capacity Building for the Adoption and Implementation of OA Policies and OA Repositories in Zimbabwe. The workshop focused on building skills in OA policy formulation and implementation and on OA advocacy.

STRATEGIES, TACTICS, AND TOOLS

The workshop was held at the University of Zimbabwe after the ZULC International Conference on OA (22-23 October 2012) and International OA Week 2013 Celebrations. These two events provided participants with the necessary background about OA issues.

Participants included Pro-Vice-Chancellors from various state universities, in charge of academic affairs and responsible for research; Library directors from the Zimbabwe Universities Libraries Consortium (ZULC); research directors/officers in universities; Research Council of Zimbabwe; Scientific Industrial Research and Development of Zimbabwe; representatives from Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education (ZIMCHE); representatives from Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and other specialized research outfits. The workshop sought to encourage OA appreciation through a top-down approach by reaching out to high level academic authorities and key decision and policy makers.

Presentations

Presentations provided a general picture of the OA landscape in Southern Africa as well as putting the plenary discussions into perspective. The presentations and plenary discussions were followed by a Question and Answer session and discussion about future directions.

- OA in Southern Africa: opportunity, future and advocacy by Dr. B. Mbambo-Thata, UNISA Library, South Africa
- OA Policy – Formulation by Dr. H. Assamoah-Hassan, University Librarian at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and a Chair of [Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana \(CARLIGH\)](#) (EIFL partner in Ghana, see their case studies: OA IRs Advocacy Campaign [\[PDF\]](#) and Promoting OA through the implementation of OJS (Open Journal Systems) for KNUST research community [\[PDF\]](#))
- OA and Institutional Repositories by Dr. G. Hapanyengwi, Director ICT at University of Zimbabwe
- OA Policy Implementation by Nason Bimbe, Institute of Development Studies, UK

Promotional Materials

- Branded T-shirts
- Branded Folders
- Branded Stationery

Prior to the round table meeting, an inclusive OA committee encompassing all ZULC member institutions, ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, the Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education and the Research Council of Zimbabwe was supposed to be established to kick start the initiative. However ZULC decided that it was better to conduct the workshop first so that participants could gain in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills in OA advocacy, policy formulation and implementation before they took part in a National OA Committee/Task Group.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

ZULC Consortium made the workshop a success because they brought together high profile participants. Invitations to the target audience were sent by the ZULC Vice Chairperson.

The question and answer segment was most beneficial to the participants because it provided an opportunity to address (and dispel) misconceptions about OA, which resulted in a deeper appreciation of OA issues.

The workshop served to reinforce the adoption of OA in Zimbabwe, building on the interest in OA issues that was generated at the ZULC International Conference on OA (held on 22-23 October 2012) and during International OA Week Celebrations held at various institutions (22-28 October 2012).

SUCCESS STORIES

- The participants agreed that there was a need for a National OA Policy board that would ensure uniformity and guide the OA activities of different institutions.
- A participatory approach was emphasised as a critical factor to be considered when crafting the National OA policy. Some of the relevant stakeholders identified were the Ministry Higher and Tertiary Education, the Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education, the Zimbabwe Universities Vice Chancellors Association, Research Council of Zimbabwe, researchers, ICT experts and librarians.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Workshops are essential for sharing knowledge and experiences especially in OA policy formulation and implementation. They are a stepping stone for institutions that are still in the early stages of OA adoption, because it is a platform where they can adopt and improve on existing OA initiatives and policies rather than starting from scratch.
- Ongoing OA advocacy campaigns targeted at academics and University Executive Management are a prerequisite for the adoption and implementation of institutional OA Policies.
- A National OA Policy will only come when key stakeholders and consortia like ZULC play an important role in facilitating interaction at a national level.
- A one-day workshop is insufficient for the deliberations of OA advocacy, policy formulation and implementation especially at a national level.

THE FUTURE

- ZULC institutions agreed to conduct ongoing OA advocacy campaigns targeted at their communities; with particular emphasis on academics, researchers and the executive management.
- Individual institutions and universities were tasked to develop institutional OA Policies.
- ZULC will lead in the creation of a National OA committee to spearhead OA activities in Zimbabwe.

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