

Update from the 2nd LIBSENSE Regional Policy Development Workshop



LIBSENSE

STRENGTHENING OPEN SCIENCE IN AFRICA

About the Workshop

Workshop Theme: “Open Science and Research Assessment Reform”

Workshop Objective: “building research assessment reform into regional open science policy development and implementation in HE institutions”

Format: hybrid - in-person and online, streamed through a YouTube channel

Audience: regional associations of vice chancellors and rectors of higher education institutions, notably CAMES, CRUFAOCI, AWAU, Vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, rectors, deans responsible for research and innovation, senior librarians representing mostly Francophone and Anglophone countries in the WACREN region...

Attendance: ~ 30 persons attended in person and ~ 10 online

Keynote speakers:

Dr Ana Persic, Acting Chief of Section for Science Policy and Partnerships at the Division of Science Policy and Capacity Building at UNESCO

Professor Stephen Curry, Chair of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

LIBSENSE setting the scene

Mr Omo Oaiya, CSO, WACREN reminded the audience of the LIBSENSE vision and mission

Key to this workshop:

- The three strategic LIBSENSE pillars: policy, infrastructure, capability-building
- LIBSENSE partnering with UNESCO in promoting the UNESCO recommendations on open science at the regional, national and institutional levels
- LIBSENSE-DORA pre-workshop event (March 2nd) featuring FOLEC
 - To stimulate dialogue about an African initiative to promote responsible research assessment practices regionally, aligned to the principles of open science

UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science

Dr Ana Persic gave an overview of the work done towards launching the UNESCO recommendation on open science

Key to this workshop:

- Linking the international priorities and standards on open science with regional workshops like this one
- Linking open science to addressing divides in access to knowledge and achievement of SDGs
- Establishing the background, motivation and development of the UNESCO recommendation on open science - member states expected to adopt the recommendation and implement it/report on it
- Demonstrating policy environment as an enabler of the recommendation - policy at the regional, national and institutional levels

Research Assessment Reform

Professor Stephen Curry explained how the work DORA does on research assessment intersects with the open science movement and the broader theme of equity

Key to this workshop:

- Highlighting that incentives to publish are usually related to individual advancement of academic careers not advancing knowledge for the public good
- Presenting the history of research assessment reform over the years
- Providing alternatives to the current publishing systems including narrative CVs, preprints
- Highlighting challenges as well as accomplishments of pursuing research assessment reform initiatives globally

Presentations from the Compendium of OS/OA policies in African HEIs

The Compendium:

- developed for the first LIBSENSE regional workshop on policy development collocated with the November 2021 UbuntuNet Alliance conference
- enriched with additional case studies for the WACREN 2022 regional workshop
- Includes UNESCO recommendation implementation checklist for institutions.

Current status:

14 Institutional case studies across Francophone and Anglophone countries located across Africa highlighting OS/OA policy development and challenges and 1 regional case study from the Francophone region (CAMES):

- **Who and Where:** University's profile & context;
- **What:** Policy description - what changed and the key elements of change;
- **Why:** Motivation for change;
- **How:** Processes and dynamics for developing, implementing and managing change (including specific obstacles faced);
- **When:** Timeline for development and implementation

Case Study Presentations

LE CONSEIL AFRICAIN ET MALGACHE POUR L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR (CAMES)

- **Zakari Lire**, Head of the Information and Documentation Center (CID-CAMES)
- Un organisme d'harmonisation des politiques et des systèmes d'enseignement supérieur et de recherche

L'UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE DE CÔTE D'IVOIRE, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

- Prof. KONE Tiémoman, **Dr COULIBALY Cécile**, Prof. KOUAME Fernand, Université Virtuelle de Côte d'Ivoire
- Politique du Libre Accès et de la Science Ouverte de L'Université Virtuelle de Côte D'Ivoire

COVENANT UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA

- **Prof. Conrad Omonhinmin**, Professor, Plant Biotechnology (Molecular Systematics & Plant Genetic Diversity), Co-Ordinator, Open Access @ Covenant University (Oacu), NCP OA2020
- Open Access @ Covenant University

Breakout Group Discussion - Issues and Challenges of open science/open access policy implementation

Francophone Group - top 3 major challenges:

1. The legal frameworks for sharing data, IP, institutional policies, institutional frameworks at the national level, regional level etc. aligning with international policies and systems, establishing the same in French and English
2. Funding of research - researchers reluctant to put data at the disposal of others, need government support and incentives
3. Implementation and operationalisation of repositories - strategies, library involvement, open science policies

Anglophone Group - top 3 major challenges:

1. Lack of understanding of IP and rewards systems in open science - no deep understanding of the benefits of the open science concept
2. Governance of the open science platforms and government commitment
3. How open science can support ECRs especially female ECRs

Breakout Group Discussion - Issues and Challenges of open science/open access policy implementation

Francophone Group - addressing the top 3 major challenges:

1. Involvement of the regional associations like CAMES and CRUFAOCI in mobilizing action regarding strategies, policies and legal frameworks
2. Assuring the funding is going to the right actors to be most effective, which level is the right one - bottom-up starting at the institutional level or top-down starting hierarchically at the national level
3. Working with partners like WACREN on institutional level policies and operationalizing repositories

Anglophone Group - addressing the top 3 major challenges:

1. Produce a policy template available for use in the region involving the assistance of WACREN and AWAU, e.g. - spelling out the reward systems and a timeline, ensure measures of success are understood and how researchers will be rewarded for their intellectual work
2. On government commitment, there are different capacities for action within the region in each country, hence need to involve regional associations like ECOWAS, AAU and AWAU
3. On supporting ECRs especially female student, must embed and provide support for existing structures

Discussion on key questions related to research assessment reform

Quality assurance issues around open science

- Too many competing cultures, British, North American, others influencing the policies around academic career development - impedes progress towards open science agendas

Intellectual property and copyright issues around open science

- The rise in predatory journals and the dangers they pose to the credibility of open access publishing

The dominance of international ranking systems linked to citation indices & journal impact factors

- Although QA important there are increasing questions about the value of publishing in high impact journals if this is not translatable into societal outcomes

Strengthening African research systems

- The community is currently not involved in designing research; if research outcomes proven to be able to solve local and national problems, it would be valued more and funded more

Resources

Link to first LIBSENSE regional policy development workshop:

<https://events.ubuntunet.net/event/65/>

Youtube link to second LIBSENSE regional policy development workshop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ6kGGLGU1o>

Link to the compendium of OS/OA policy development initiatives in African HEIs:

<https://zenodo.org/record/6467301#.Ymp2hNrMK70>