

UCT Libraries including Africa in Global Publishing, Scholarly and Research Systems

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Global North Influence on Research



Historical perspective

- **Colonial Influence**
 - The historical dominance of research in the Global North can be traced back to its colonial expansions. Colonization allowed the extraction of knowledge and resources from the Global South, shaping the trajectories of research in the North.
- **Funding and Resources**
 - The Global North gained an advantage in research due to its access to substantial funding and resources. This enabled the establishment of leading research institutions and the ability to attract top talent globally.
- **Technological Advancements**
 - During the industrial revolution, the Global North saw significant technological advancements, which further solidified its dominance in research activities. The development of institutions and infrastructure supported the growth of research capabilities.



Impact on Knowledge Distribution

- **Publication Dominance**
 - The dominance of the Global North in research influences the distribution of knowledge, as a significant majority of influential research publications and journals originate from this region. This impacts the dissemination of ideas and perspectives globally.
- **Access to Networks**
 - The Global North's dominance in research networks and collaborations restricts the participation of researchers from the Global South, limiting their exposure to international research opportunities and resources.
- **Language Barriers**
 - English as the predominant language of scientific communication further reinforces the Global North's influence on knowledge distribution. It creates barriers for non-English speaking researchers to access and contribute to global research discourse.



Challenges and Criticisms

- **Epistemic Injustice**
 - The Global North's influence on research has been criticized for perpetuating epistemic injustice, where knowledge from the Global South is undervalued or excluded from mainstream discourse, leading to distorted understanding and biased research outcomes.
- **Power Dynamics**
 - There are power dynamics at play, where the Global North dictates research agendas and priorities, often disregarding the contexts, needs and perspectives of the Global South. This hampers inclusive and equitable advancement of global knowledge.
- **Marginalization of Indigenous Knowledge**
 - The dominance of research from the Global North has marginalized indigenous knowledge systems and local expertise in the Global South, leading to cultural and intellectual exploitation, and affecting sustainable development and wellbeing.

Advancements in Global South

Research Excellence

The Global South has made significant advancements in research across various disciplines, producing cutting-edge contributions to scientific knowledge and societal development. Examples include breakthroughs in sustainable agriculture, healthcare innovation, and environmental conservation.

Diverse Perspectives

Researchers from the Global South offer diverse perspectives and insights that enrich global knowledge. Their expertise and experiences bring valuable understanding of local contexts and challenges, benefiting global research outcomes.



Challenges faced by African Researchers



Limited funding



Language
barriers



Lack of
representation



Access to
resources



Infrastructure
limitations



Publishing fees



Limited
research
collaboration
opportunities

Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring that Africa's diverse voices are included in the global academic community and that valuable contributions from Africa are properly recognized and disseminated internationally.



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Context



Oldest university (1829). ranked no.1 (2024)



Highest number of world ranked and A-rated academics



3 Pillars – Excellence, Transformation Sustainability



Produce research that answers the complex problems of today and tomorrow



Find innovative ways of doing things



Provide thought leadership on social justice



Leverage participation in international and Afrikan partnerships



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What prompted UCT Libraries? 1. Political

2015 – 2017 Student unrest (#Rhodesmustfall; #feesmustfall)

Clarion call - decolonise education in South Africa!

What did this mean?

What are the implications for the academic library

Social justice

Access, participation, inclusion, human rights

New roles for academic libraries

Library-as-Publisher

What prompted UCT Libraries?

2. Economics

High cost of access to knowledge and information resources

- Fluctuating exchange rate
- Annual increases
- 15% VAT

Shrinking university budgets

- Positionality, value proposition
- Institutional priorities

South African National Libraries Consortium (SANLiC)

- Cost containment and the power of the collective
- Transformative agreements (14 publishers)

Advancing the Open Access movement in Africa

- “Open access is one of the most significant conduits for inclusive and free access to scholarship for the marginalized and has the mandate and potential to strongly promote unhindered participation in knowledge production.” (Raju, 2022)

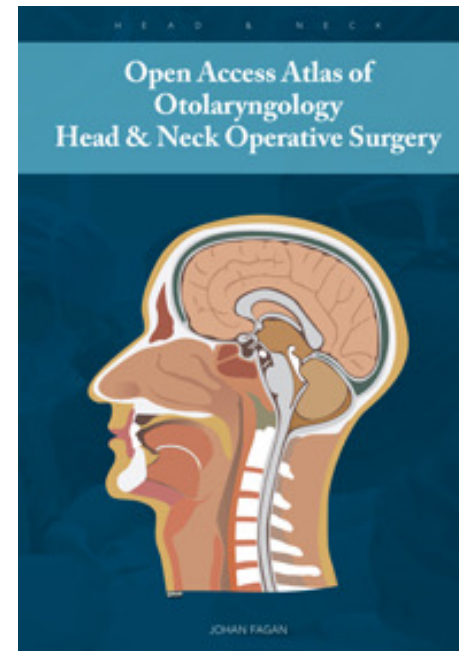


What did UCT Libraries do?

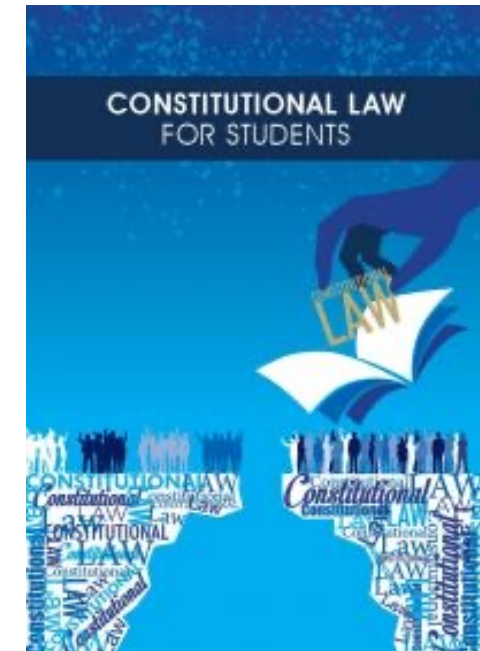
Disrupt the mainstream publishing model

- Adopted a Library-as-Publisher role (2016)
26 titles to date
Recipient of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion inaugural Award from the Library Publishing Coalition (2021)

2017



2020



What did UCT Libraries do?



Launched the African Platform for Open Scholarship (APOS), 2021

- Diamond OA
- To enable the *“African research community to take ownership of creating and sharing its own scholarly content, which contributes to the growth and development of local research for African society,”*
- To foster a *“community-based publishing alternative model that disrupts the commercial publishing system. This shift returns the control of publishing back to the researcher community.”*
- To provide a platform for African institutions to develop their own journals and have ownership of good academic rigour in publishing outside of global north influences.

Capacity building

Scholarly communications workshops

Engender understanding of how research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use

Increasing visibility

of African research through training on effective publishing strategies, academic networking, etc

- Namibia, Ghana, South Africa
- **Towards Sustainable Open Access Book Publishing in the African Context workshop, 07-09 February 2024**
- Malawi, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Sudan, Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Zambia and Namibia

Empowering

Authors/editors, researchers, librarians and infrastructure providers with skills necessary for successful engagement with all aspects of OA book production and distribution.



Partnerships with African institutions and beyond

Association of African Universities (AAU)

SPARC (USA), PKP, LPC

The Gates Foundation, Hewlett Foundation

Open Book Collective (OBC), Lancaster University

Directory of Open Access Books (DOAJ)

Redalyc/AmeliCA, UNESCO

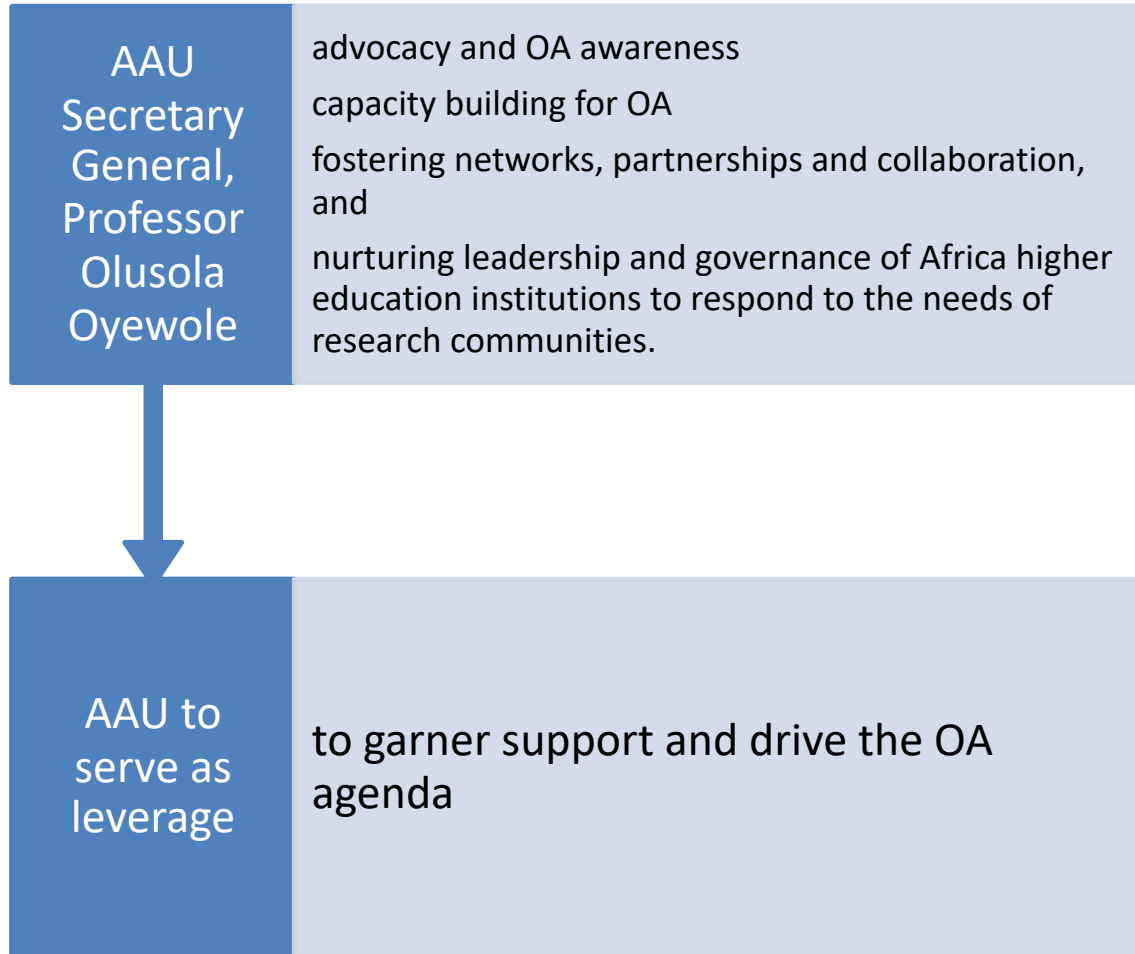


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Impact and achievements



- *“We [DOAB] aim to continue supporting local initiatives, including an OA landscape mapping exercise, and make best use of the momentum gathered from the workshop. DOAB will continue to make its services available to researchers, publishers, libraries and other stakeholders and to support African OA agendas.”*



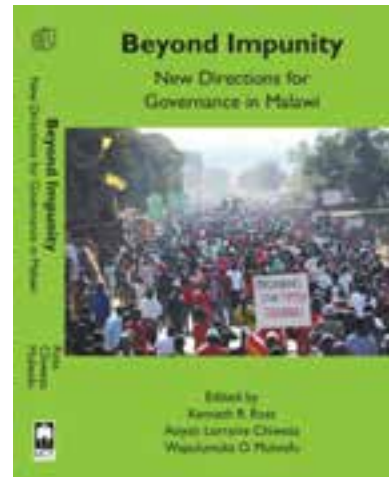
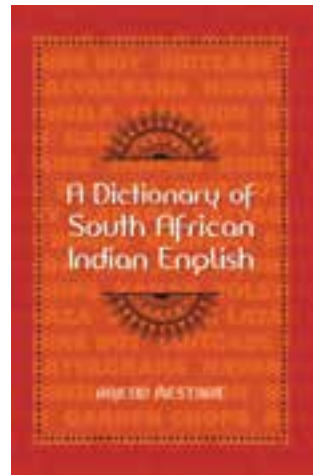
Impact and achievements

Entrusted with the hosting of UCT Press (2023)

Relaunched on 19 Oct 2023

64 'non-selling' retrospective titles now available as e-books

Avg print run – 200 and downloads have exceeded all expectations



Hosting the 2nd Diamond Open Access Summit, 08-14 Dec 2024

- To grow the diamond open access model especially among marginalized research communities;
- To grow an open access movement that is more inclusive and equitable; and,
- To develop capacity through centering scholarly communication in LIS education curricula.

Recommendations for a Balanced Approach

Equitable Partnerships

Promoting equitable partnerships between researchers from the Global North and South is crucial for a balanced approach. Collaborative projects should prioritize mutual respect, shared authorship, and co-creation of knowledge.

Resource Redistribution

Efforts to redistribute resources and funding to support research endeavors in the Global South are essential for fostering a more equitable global research landscape. This can be achieved through international cooperation and funding mechanisms.

It's crucial to:

- Address the influence of the Global North on research
- Understand the context of research in the Global South
- Strive towards creating a more inclusive and collaborative global research ecosystem.



Conclusion