



Challenges of data driven advocacy in East and Southern Africa

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Abstract:

*“The problem of availability – that is the provision of affordable or free journals and other resources in online form – **has been widely and successfully addressed...**”¹ That was the finding of a recent Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) study focusing on research access in four major universities in East and Southern Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania). The availability of electronic resources was approaching that of typical universities in UK and Sweden – yet those same resources were underused by staff and students, and longer term funding remained a challenge.*

INASP, the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications, has been working for many years with partner countries in the developing world to support all aspects of the scholarly research communication cycle. This includes promoting sustainable models for providing access to high-quality peer reviewed international literature, and equipping librarians with the skills to support research and deliver services in the digital library environment.

When libraries are at a turning point between availability of e-resources and use, and funding is fragile, statistics and assessment are key for empowering decisions. In July 2009 INASP rolled out MEERU 2, a revised 3-day workshop on “Monitoring and Evaluation of E-Resource Use” for library staff involved with the management and provision of electronic information services. The training focused not just on collecting usage statistics but the role and value of quantitative and qualitative data. This paper will consider the impact of this training including some of the challenges faced by participants seeking to collate statistics and data for library planning, advocacy and budgetary purposes.

1. Introduction

For several decades the main issue for librarians working to support research in developing and emerging countries was that academic journals were simply not available. In the 1960s and 70s, there were many institutions of excellence within Africa producing leading researchers. This changed as the

¹ Harle, J. (2010) *Growing Knowledge: access to research in east and southern African universities* Association of Commonwealth Universities: London p.VII www.acu.ac.uk/publication/download?id=291

1980s brought pressure for universities to expand whilst funding was diverted into primary education. The situation worsened in the following decade as the economic climate declined, whilst journal and book subscription costs increased. One Kenyan librarian remembers a period where print journal subscriptions dwindled to almost zero in public universities².

From the late 1990s onwards, universities slowly began to rebuild. For the university libraries, a true breakthrough came with the shift from print to online journals. From a publisher's perspective, access to their online journal collection could be enabled for little extra expense; unlike print journals there was no additional printing, storage or distribution cost. This brought a growing international awareness of the opportunity, and political will, to begin redressing what had become known as the "digital divide".

INASP, the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications, has been working for many years with partner countries³ in the developing world to support all aspects of the scholarly research communication cycle. This includes facilitating access to international scholarly e-journals as part of our Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii). Negotiations with international publishers for no-cost or proportionately priced access began in 2001 - the same year that the World Health Organization launched the HINARI programme for health journals with six major biomedical publishers. Over time these and other access initiatives⁴ like Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), combined with the commitment from publishers, have helped to secure much greater availability of international literature.

Recent research by the ACU demonstrated the success of initiatives like PERii via a study of the principal national research institution in Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania. The availability of electronic resources was found to be approaching that of typical universities in UK and Sweden, with between 76% - 82% of the top 20 titles across 15 disciplines available⁵. This significant volume of top-quality international journal content led to the conclusion:

"The problem of *availability* – that is the provision of affordable or free journals and other resources in online form – **has been widely and successfully addressed over several years.**"

In summary, the move to digital has meant that availability is now similar to that in UK/Europe – but only through collaboration with external initiatives such as PERii, Research4Life, and EIFL.

2. Libraries at a turning point

The next stage – the turning point – for librarians in developing and emerging countries is to start to move towards independence from external programmes and projects. Locally owned, sustainable models are needed to ensure continued availability of high-quality, peer reviewed international literature⁶.

Digital library developments have meant library staff taking on new roles and developing new skill sets to meet changing needs. Those changing roles need to be accompanied by institutional recognition and potential restructuring of the library team. The following quote is from a librarian within a research institution but illustrates the challenge, particularly for some of the smaller, newer institutions:

"Impress upon management to employ permanent staff to undertake management of e-resources as I'm operating a single-librarian entity & my time is mostly called on to do internal

² Were, J. personal email correspondence, 11/05/2012

³ INASP partner countries in Africa: Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

⁴ For a useful overview of access schemes for African libraries, see Harle, J. (2009) *Digital resources for research: a review of access and use in African universities* Association of Commonwealth Universities: London www.acu.ac.uk/member_services/professional_networks/libraries_network/growing_knowledge

⁵ Harle, J. (2010) *op. cit.*, p.11

⁶ For more information: Belcher, M. Burnett, P and Gywnn, S (2011) *Widening access to serials in the developing world: the role and philosophy of INASP* 2011 World Library and Information Conference: 77th IFLA General Conference and Assembly <http://conference.ifla.org/sites/default/files/files/papers/ifla77/164-belcher-en.pdf>

research communication activities". (Participant, Consortium E-resources workshop for new members, Kenya)

Over time tasks undertaken by INASP staff will transition to partner country librarians as they take on the selection and purchasing of electronic resources plus key support activities like enabling access, raising awareness and user training.

2.1 Selection and purchasing of electronic resources

In response to requests from partner countries, INASP has continued to negotiate with international publishers for affordable access to e-journals and other online resources. From less than 10 publishers in 2001, INASP now works with 50 publishers and aggregators and in 2012 PERii alone is able to offer potential subscriptions to more than 31,400 full text journals; 7538 full text e-books plus a document delivery service via the British Library.

Subscriptions are negotiated on a country-wide basis, so any local non-profit making organisation is able to benefit. Given the expansion of higher education in many partner countries, this is an important consideration. The ultimate goal is national level negotiations for local, sustainable access to e-resources. Support is provided for partner countries to take over licensing and negotiation directly with international publishers.

Each partner country undertakes an annual selection of resources available through PERii⁷. This process is led by a local coordination team, with INASP supplying a list of available resources (usually the full package of electronic journals offered by a publisher) plus usage statistics for the previous year. Subscriptions are paid for from country budgets. Securing and maintaining finance is a common challenge for libraries, but funding for African libraries is particularly vulnerable. For some partner countries, payment is made using targeted funding from an international development donor, which is often channelled through a 'principle university'. In this case, there may be little incentive for a vigorous collaborative selection process. However in many countries such external funding is slowly being phased out and subscription costs are now either transitioning to local funding or the total subscription cost is already being met via a collective payment by participating institutions.

The building or strengthening of local library consortia is playing a crucial role in the collective purchasing of e-resources. The desire to sustain access to online resources has frequently been the motivating force to begin collaboration. In an agreement between the Consortium of Tanzania University and Research Libraries (COTUL) and an international funder, COTUL is paying a sliding contribution towards subscription costs which increased from 25% in 2011 to 50% this year. This year members of the Ugandan library consortium CUUL have agreed to pay for 3 subscriptions to complement those covered by a donor, with that international funding ceasing in 2014.

The Kenyan Library Consortium

The benefits of collaborating are illustrated by KLISC - the Kenya Library and Information Services Consortium. A small group of six public universities came together in 2002 when donor funding ceased, resulting in the subsequent formation of KLISC. By 2012, it had grown to 86 paid up member institutions including public and private universities, research institutes, National Library and Archives, and tertiary colleges.

KLISC members are now able to pay for and have access to over 35,000 full-text e-journals plus over 50,000 ebooks in all subject-areas to support research. Consortium executive have begun direct licensing and negotiation with some international publishers.

2.2. Enabling access

A librarian from any eligible institution in the country is able to register for PERii and then sign up to have access to relevant e-resource collections via an online registration system. In order to fully benefit from those resources, a suitable ICT infrastructure is required including IT equipment and

⁷ The full list of publishers working with INASP is at: <http://www.inasp.info/publishers-working-with-inasp>
A list of available resources by country is available via the "publishers" link on each country page

suitable bandwidth. One of the challenges for librarians is building strong relationships with ICT colleagues, advocating for investment and appropriate policies to enable access.

Limited bandwidth can be a significant barrier to access. As part of the aforementioned ACU study, the download speed for a single 994 kb PDF article was compared across the four participating institutions⁸ :

Chancellor College, University of Malawi	University of Nairobi	National University of Rwanda	University of Dar es Salaam
45 minutes for 80% download, then timeout	3 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes

It is worth noting that this exercise took place mid-morning, whilst download speeds are often slower later in day as the Americas come online. In addition the samples were the principal national research institutions; it would seem reasonable to assume that download times in many local institutions will be much slower⁹.

Appropriate systems are also needed to manage online subscriptions and their access. IP registration has become increasingly common and is understandably preferred by many publishers due to greater security than usernames and passwords.

2.3 Promotion and user training

A common theme is the need for libraries to promote digital resources. This is an international challenge but potentially greater where recent history has meant many African libraries have had little to offer in the form of print resources - with academic reading cultures eroded as a result. Low levels of research activity have reduced the demand for journals. It has also often led to low expectations of the library from academics and researchers, and hence the need for librarians to take a strong proactive stance.

In practice, this may not have been recognised or library staff may lack the necessary skills:

“...few colleges and universities had an e-resources promotion strategy in place to address access and use of e-resources for research and education”¹⁰

“... we have always advised CUUL membership to think about marketing their library resources to users so they get value for money and justify their presence. However, the librarians have been limited with skills to carry on these tasks”
(Uganda Country Coordinator)

This is reflected in library websites which frequently overlook the opportunity to market their online resources. Equally library catalogues, where automation exists, rarely include e-resources. This is particularly important given the range and complexity of e-resources made available via access schemes like PERi¹¹, and without the aid of discovery tools like SFX.

With the complexity of the digital resource environment, linked to this is the importance of Information Literacy training. Once users are aware of e-resources, they need to be able to use them effectively. Librarians have a key role to play in providing training and support.

2.4 The need for data and statistics

Given the context and challenges outlined above, data and statistics have much to contribute. They can help developing country librarians moving towards independent, sustainable e-resource access by providing evidence for decision making and advocacy purposes. This includes:

⁸ Harle, J. (2010) *op. cit.*, p.9

⁹ Publishers are becoming aware of the need to consider download speed when developing new platforms. See <http://www.pubs-for-dev.info/bandwidth-challenge/>

¹⁰ *Seeing the Big Picture: Open Learning Exchange Rwanda strategy in promoting, monitoring and evaluating e-resources in Rwanda* [INASP case study] www.inasp.info/seeing-the-big-picture

¹¹ HINARI is now part of the Research4Life subject suite; INASP, EIFL, and Research4Life are collaborating to streamline access from the librarian and end-user perspective

- Data to demonstrate the usage of e-resources and identify needs to be met, and so inform the **selection** process both at institutional level and collaboratively at country-wide level through library consortia
- Data to inform other factors around e-resource usage (to include **troubleshooting access**, driving **promotion** and **information literacy training**)
- Data to **advocate for funding** – at institutional and consortial / national level. If librarians are unable to demonstrate the value of their e-resource collections to their senior administrators then funding is unlikely to be sustained, let alone increased over time
- Data to demonstrate **impact** in order to measure the difference that has been made (i.e. the need to move beyond simple availability and use)

3. Introducing MEERU

In practice the skills to gather and interpret statistics weren't sufficiently developed, being another new skill set created or at least redefined by the digital library environment. As one Kenyan librarian states, "I used to view usage statistics, but had no skills of interpreting the data" (MEERU impact review).

Following requests for support, in 2005/6 INASP designed the three-day "MEERU" workshop - Monitoring and Evaluation of E-resource Use. This was in collaboration with the library consultancy Evidence Base, based at Birmingham City University in the UK.

MEERU was designed as higher level training to build upon basic e-resource management skills. The intention was to create a practical workshop, with the focus not just on mechanisms to collect and collate data but also exercises to demonstrate its value and application. Evidence Base had been commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England "to develop a transferable model for e-library evaluation in higher education and to provide dissemination and training in e-library evaluation"¹². The resultant eVALUED toolkit¹³ is an excellent resource for guiding the gathering of qualitative data, alongside usage statistics provided by publishers. It includes good practice, sample surveys and case studies, tried and tested within the UK academic library community; unfortunately the toolkit is no longer maintained and so is now a little dated.

The agreed workshop structure was as follows:

Day One

- Introduction to the concept of monitoring and evaluation
- Collecting and interpreting quantitative data
- Using INASP and publisher websites to access quantitative data

Day Two

- Collecting and interpreting qualitative data
- Introduction to the eVALUED toolkit
- Planning evaluation

Day Three

- Practical steps in gathering data from selected publishers
- Recording and manipulating data in Excel
- Analysis and use of data by institutions (expanded to include consortia in MEERU 2)
- Agreed next steps

¹² For more information: <http://www.evalued.bcu.ac.uk/about.htm>

¹³ <http://www.evalued.bcu.ac.uk/>

The first round of MEERU training took place in 2006-2007. An evaluation of these first workshops showed mixed success¹⁴. The content and delivery were well received, but there was less evidence of application. This is to be expected when training is linked to behavioural change, and successful application is linked to external factors - not least an external culture of monitoring and evaluating.

Prior to the second round of training, the materials were reviewed and updated. The focus on Day Three was expanded to include the use of quantitative and qualitative data from the perspective of the local library consortium, reflecting the strengthening of a collective approach in the intervening period. INASP was already collating usage statistics as a reporting requirement for its own funders. Country-wide usage statistics were collated for the previous year, and incorporated into an accumulating spreadsheet of annual usage statistics at country level, broken down by publisher/e-resource collection and month. This data was shared with the relevant country coordination team, alongside a "Commentary on e-resource usage" which included general observations and points for consideration.

The spreadsheets used in this manual approach were included in the MEERU training materials, modelling the process undertaken by INASP staff. These were designed to: enable year-on-year comparisons starting from a reliable baseline; encourage standardised reporting to the consortia by each member institution; be applicable beyond the e-resources supplied through the INASP access initiative¹⁵.

The second round of MEERU included the following African-based workshops, facilitated by INASP staff with local co-facilitators:

Kenya (July 2009)
Malawi (May 2010)
Ghana (August 2010)

Uganda (September 2010)
Ethiopia (September 2010)
Rwanda (April 2011)

MEERU workshop materials are freely available for download from the INASP website under a creative commons license in English, Spanish and Vietnamese: <http://www.inasp.info/meeru>
This includes the participant handbook with presentation slides, hand outs and exercises, plus facilitator notes.

4. What have been the outcomes of the MEERU intervention?

MEERU participants were given a pre-workshop task of trying to find the publisher usage statistics for two electronic resources used by their own institution. They were also requested to bring any administrative user names and passwords to the workshop so real-life statistics could be collated, incorporated into a spread sheet and then analysed. In practice, most participants failed to do either task. Commonly the participant was managing the e-resources on a day-to-day basis, but the registered contact was a more senior member of library staff, unwilling to pass on administrator login details or unable to because these had been misplaced. This would seem to reflect a lack of understanding of the value of usage statistics, or a lack of priority given to this area.

Hence it is not so surprising that follow-up evaluations of the MEERU training showed little evidence of sustained monitoring of usage statistics at institutional level, although more detailed research is needed in this area. There are notable exceptions; in an impact study of the Kenya MEERU workshop for example, one librarian reported regularly downloading and analysing usage statistics and was able to use the data when reporting back to superiors - "I am able to evaluate the effectiveness of our e-Collections and justify for continued funding".

The main explanation for participants not regularly reviewing usage data was a lack of time - reflecting a lack of human resource capacity or potentially the failure to recognise the need for restructuring and reprioritising of roles and responsibilities. Linked to this is high staff turnover:

¹⁴ Morgan, G "INASP's Monitoring and Evaluation workshop: Where It Came From and How It Is Working" in Rosenberg, D. ed. (2008) *Evaluating Electronic Resource Programmes and Provision: Case Studies from Africa and Asia* INASP: Oxford

¹⁵ The materials are freely available from the INASP website, under Statistics, at www.inasp.info/access-support-documents

“The 2010 MEERU was highly anticipated as there were several changes in many libraries. MALICO had added new resources and many libraries had new periodicals librarians...”
(Malawi country coordinator)

“Again the high turnover of staff in some of the member institutions does not enable the creation of an environment where accessing and monitoring of usage data is made a tradition”. (Kenyan country coordinator)

“The issue of statistics generation has kept showing up because institutional coordinators keep changing”. (Uganda country coordinator)

Other challenges which have been highlighted through the MEERU workshops have included the statistical data collection process and IP addresses.

4.1 Data collection

Collecting and collating usage statistics from publishers can be very time-consuming. The process is normally a manual one - no country has yet moved to the automated retrieval of COUNTER usage reports via SUSHI (Standardised Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative), although Makerere University is one exception where the institution has invested in an automated process as part of their library system. The process is also complex; even when publishers are COUNTER-compliant, there are varying systems and presentations of data. In a follow-up to the Kenyan MEERU workshop, one university librarian was unable to access statistics for 19 out of a total of 30 institutional subscriptions, in part due to internal recordkeeping but also some publisher systems.¹⁶

INASP advocates for COUNTER-compliance when new publishers join PERii. However in the case of free resources it may not be cost-efficient for the publisher to enable usage statistics to be broken down beyond country level. For over one quarter of usage in 2011, it wasn't possible to present usage data by country. Instead it was aggregated for all INASP registrants. Clearly there will also always be some inconsistencies in usage data e.g. as publishers change platform, which is why the skills to interpret usage statistics in a wider context are so important.

The danger is that more time is spent on obtaining usage statistics than undertaking any analysis. This is a real concern when library staff are committing limited time and capacity, then not being able to see – or demonstrate to others – the benefits of undertaking that work.

4.2 Enabling access

ICT-related barriers can mean users are unsuccessful when trying to download the full-text of articles. Librarians at Makerere University observed in 2008, “When users do literature searches and/or try to download articles but find the Internet slow, some of them give up, and this affects usage”.¹⁷ As previously noted, many publishers have moved from passwords to IP registration. This has led to more accurate usage statistics as any downloads via a login would not be captured - but it can also restrict the availability of e-resources to on-campus only. The rapid expansion of HE has included an increase in part-time, online and distance learners who will be unable to access e-resources from off campus until their institution implements a proxy server.

Changing internet service provider at institutional level can be a major challenge, as any deviation from the registered IP addresses will cut off access to e-resources. This is often compounded by poor understanding and communication between the Library and ICT department, who may be unaware of the implications of changing IP provider on e-resource provision¹⁸.

“We haven't been able to monitor or evaluate e-resources as access to the resources we had subscribed to had failed. This was due to change of IP addresses and other institutional changes” (Kenya Impact Review)

¹⁶ *The Right Tools for the Job: The Value of the Monitoring and Evaluation of Electronic Resource Usage (MEERU) workshops* [INASP case study] www.inasp.info/case-study-the-right-tools-for-the-job

¹⁷ Musoke, M.G.N and Kinengyere, A.A. “Changing the Strategies to Enhance the Use of Electronic Resources amongst the Academic Community in Uganda with particular reference to Makerere University” in Rosenberg, D. (2008) *op. cit.*, p.86

¹⁸ To help address this, INASP has produced a short guide specifically for ICT staff: <http://www.inasp.info/media/www/documents/Fixed-IP-address-requirements.pdf>

These failed attempts won't be reflected in the download statistics, but qualitative research could highlight the challenges users are experiencing – and potentially provide evidence for investment or change. A 2011 user survey by Uganda Martyrs University Library for example found that the three top access problems were session time-out, limited internet connectivity and limited information literacy skills¹⁹.

Approximately one-third of all institutions registered for INASP e-resources have no fixed IP address. These institutions are reliant on publishers enabling access via a username and password, and so won't have access to usage statistics. This example demonstrates the need for MEERU training as institutions reach a level of readiness, including once there is sufficient ICT infrastructure to implement access via IP address.

Despite the challenges, there have been positive outcomes also:

4.3 Promotion and training

One outcome of applying the MEERU training has been highlighting the need for promotion. Low usage is often a shock for librarians, bringing the recognition that providing e-resources does not equate to those resources actually being used. The perception may have been that the usage was higher; or measurement of usage may simply not been something considered by the library previously.

“Event was useful in enlightening me on the immense resources available for my users & the realisation that it is a full-time activity for the librarian”
(Participant, consortium e-resources workshop for new members, Kenya)

“When analysing what we had gathered, we noticed Daystar had a surprisingly low usage rate...it became clear that awareness, or lack of, was a contributing factor”²⁰

One measure to address the low usage identified in the Daystar University example quoted above was an e-resources workshop for library and teaching staff plus research students. Other librarians who have followed up MEERU with qualitative surveys have recognised the need for similar steps:

“... the results haven't been encouraging hence the plans to have a sensitization workshop with academic staff who we believe can assist greatly by encouraging their students to use the e resources”. (Malawi Impact Review)

“I am able to know what the clientèle want and when to provide. I felt since I work in the University, every user is knowledgeable of what he/she was supposed to do therefore there was no need for assistance. This exercise proved me wrong”.
(Malawi Impact Review)

Implementing MEERU has enabled librarians to realise availability is only part of the process, with promotion and training playing key roles in transforming availability into access and use. Although this will already be reflected in the literature and experience of peers, it is arguable more powerful for library staff to recognise their local context – with the potential to monitor the impact of any resulting activities or measures.

Qualitative studies are also taking place at multi-institutional or consortium level. In Kenya, members of the consortium took part in a survey of 7 institutions plus user interviews to review usage levels of e-resources and the impact of training and promotion²¹. A similar study involving 3 institutions was undertaken in Tanzania²². Both studies advocated for more promotional activities and information

¹⁹ *Institutional Change Research: A Case of Uganda Martyrs University* [Oct 2011, unpublished]

²⁰ *If you know where to look: Improving usage of electronic resources at Daystar University* [INASP case study] www.inasp.info/case-study-if-you-know-where-to-look

²¹ *Monitoring and evaluation of electronic resources in academic and research institutions in Kenya* www.inasp.info/me-of-e-resources-in-kenya

²² *The impact of e-resource usage in academic and research institutions in Tanzania* www.inasp.info/the-impact-of-e-resource-usage-in-academic-and-research-institutions-in-tanzania

literacy training. COTUL is currently developing an online survey to consider the challenges users are facing when accessing PERii e-resources.

4.4 Strengthening of library consortia

The revision of the final day of MEERU to include the consortium perspective was totally appropriate as this is where the biggest impact appears to have taken place. Data has informed the practice of library consortia in several ways:

- Data is increasingly being used to inform the annual selection and renewal process of library consortia

This is potentially very complex as many consortia are operating at a national level, bringing together institutions from different sectors of varying size, discipline etc. National level usage statistics are being called upon when making decisions, as illustrated by feedback from both KLISC in Kenya and CUUL in Uganda:

“During the e-resources selection period, we do carryout surveys to establish which resources are preferred to the others. This has been helpful for example to select resources that are very vital for the academic and research needs of the university users and a consortium as a whole” (Uganda Country Coordinator)

“We do present the statistics to them and consult them on how they would want us to handle the less used databases” (Kenya Country Coordinator)

The growing value placed on usage statistics is also reflected in the requests to INASP for year-to-date country-level statistical reports to inform the selection and provide feedback to senior administrators. These are used by Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe to give three examples. Moving forward, the hope is that more statistics collected at institutional level will feed in.

- Consortia have the strength of a single voice to advocate for adequate funding
- There is evidence that data is being used to inform this process. For example the usage statistics for one publisher were used by the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) to lobby for funding during the Vice Chancellor’s forum meeting; further:

“We have also used the statistics in our reports to the donors and library annual reports to show value for money. We are currently using the statistics to lobby for more funding towards subscription to e-resources”. (Uganda Country Coordinator)

- Consortia have the potential to address an ongoing demand for M&E training, as identified in this paper

There is a shift in terms of consortia stepping in to address the on-going demand for training and support amongst member institutions. In this example from the Kenyan library consortium, low or non-usage had highlighted the need for some training:

“We have a huge number of new members in KLISC.... Our objective was to familiarise these new members with the eresources because we have been having very low or non-usage by these institutions and the intention of our Workshop was to reach them.”
(Kenyan Country Coordinator on 2011 e-resources workshop)

The workshop focused on e-resource management and use, but it is in the consortium’s own interests to also strengthen the capacity of member institutions to undertake M&E. If individual libraries are unable to demonstrate the impact of e-resources collections, they are in a far weaker position to advocate for support. Hence a 2011 e-resources workshop for new consortium members in Uganda included an awareness-raising session on obtaining usage statistics from publisher websites.

4.5 Increasing demand

As country co-ordinators rightly observe, without the demand of senior managers, there may be little incentive for library staff to monitor usage:

“There is little appreciation of the importance of the data and as long as nobody asks, a lot of the staff in the institutions do not really go after this data”
(Kenya Country Coordinator)

“the major barrier is attitude, personally I feel that many libraries have been overtaken by developments in the profession and they are failing to demonstrate their relevance”
(Malawi Country Coordinator)

However there is evidence of a growing M&E culture, and so increasing demand for usage statistics and data. This may be driven by an external funder:

“For PERII Rwanda the training will increase the institutional level of responsibility after knowing that the statistics will show what really is done on the ground. There will be also increase of level of satisfaction of the funder of the programme”
(Rwanda MEERU workshop event report)

In Rwanda, demand is also being led at a national level by OLE (Open Learning Exchange) Rwanda in partnership with the Ministry of Education²³.

A Malawian librarian describes how local papers publishing the low research rating of University of Malawi led to public outcry to improve the ranking. There had been little information about what the university had achieved, “our central office is now looking for statistics from the library which includes numbers of journals we subscribe to”²⁴.

There may be an institutional driver. Uganda Martyrs University top management has recognised the need to embrace research as its core strategic objective. A research unit was created, and a research policy is now being developed. Once in place, the library will play an important part in informing that objective.

Library consortia are also often playing an important role in encouraging institutions by circulating the national-level data:

“I circulate usage statistics once received, and then get feedback from different institutions. Interested institutions have made attempts to make follow up and request for guidance on how they can get the statistics while others are not bothered.”
(Uganda Country Coordinator)

“Every time we get the Consortia usage statistics, eg from Emerald or from INASP, we circulate the same to members and point out the areas that need attention. We do request institutions to communicate with us if they are experiencing problems that would affect their usage” (Kenya Country Coordinator)

The local library consortium circulating national-level data and requesting institutional data is a strong model for locally driven demand. Although many institutions are currently delivering, this is likely to change over time. In Uganda for example, each institutional coordinator has been requested to collect their usage statistics, to be fed back to the consortium executive to generate national figures for the AGM.

Whilst other INASP partner countries in Asia (i.e. Bangladesh and Pakistan²⁵) have started to analyse data to demonstrate the impact of e-resource access and usage on research output and other performance indicators, there is as yet little evidence of such data assessment by our East and Southern African partners.

²³ *Seeing the Big Picture op.cit.*

²⁴ Wella, K. personal email correspondence, 17/04/2012

²⁵ See for example *Building a Research Culture: Pakistan's National Digital Library Programme* [INASP case study] www.inasp.info/case-study-ndlp

Uganda case study

The Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) was established in December 2001 and consists of most public and private academic libraries in licensed and accredited institutions of higher education in Uganda. Some research institutions are affiliate members.

The table below shows availability and downloads of PERii-negotiated e-resources over the last 5 years:

Year	Full text downloads	Full text items available	Institutions registered under PERii
2008	217,685	17,295	35
2009	152,551	23,073	41
2010	180,132	20,298	47
2011	151,743*	17,062	62
2012		19,048	

* Problems with access for several months in 2011

When joining CUUL, an institutional e-resources coordinator is appointed as a first point of contact. These are listed on the consortium website. There were 20 participants at the MEERU workshop in September 2010; 70% self-ranked themselves as having little or no previous experience and skills in this area. One of the agreed outcomes was for institutions to feed usage statistics back to the consortium executive, so national figures could be generated.

In practice, only a small number of member institutions are regularly engaged in M&E activities; the explanation from the Country Coordinator will be familiar from elsewhere in this paper:

“The challenges faced by these institutions in having well established e-resources team, include, but not limited to: poor staffing level, most staff are not library and information science professionals, staff migration, poor ICT infrastructure in these university and lack of required skills”.

This can be compounded by a lack of demand from library management and leadership. However there are some institutions that are very active. CUUL is also modelling good practice by using statistics within reports and for advocacy purposes. The latter takes place not just at consortium level, but also for institutional librarians to inform their administrators.

There is clear evidence of structures and good practice being in place, but currently a lack of capacity to fully implement them.

5. Looking ahead

“This is a useful exercise that does not only awaken participants to their duties but also equip them as well.” (MEERU workshop participant, Ghana)

Monitoring and evaluation is an important part of the skillset for librarians working in the digital library environment. A review of the first round of PERI concluded that a culture of M&E had not yet been developed in INASP partner countries²⁶. It was still regarded as an extrinsic add-on instead of an integral part of librarians’ work. Although the picture remains mixed, there is evidence of a shift taking place, both at institutional and consortium level. This paper can only give a broad overview; actual levels of implementation will vary within country and between countries but there are encouraging signs.

The learning from the first round of MEERU workshops about the importance of timing of any training remains true. This is not just because of the huge expansion in higher education, but also staff

²⁶ Gwynn, S “Foreward” in Rosenberg, D. (2008) *op. cit.*, p xi

turnover, and institutional readiness. It is understandable when working at country-level that a single intervention won't be sufficient. The on-going sharing of INASP created country-level data and commentary has been important in demonstrating the benefits of monitoring usage; over time this is being taken forward by the local consortia. Consortia are also well-positioned to address the training needs of their member institutions; one sustainable solution to building local capacity is incorporating elements of MEERU into an e-resources programme, for example as part of a more advanced session once the basic e-resource management is mastered.

INASP continues to have an important role in recording and promoting good practice. A number of case studies have been referenced in this paper, these present M&E and share learning within a local context.

This paper began by describing a turning point where librarians move away from external programmes and donors, and towards a sustainable, locally-owned model for e-resource provision. Statistics and data have a clear role in supporting this transition, with library consortia frequently leading the way.

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