

Co-operation and collaboration to strengthen the global research cycle

A breakout session at the 36th UKSG Conference, Bournemouth, April 2013, will be based on this topic and will be run by Lucy Browse and Kay Raseroka

This article provides an update on the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), a development charity working in Africa, Asia and Latin America. INASP's work with partners helps strengthen the global research communication cycle in all its forms (research availability, access, use, creation and communication). To help activities have the most impact and reach, it establishes effective partnerships and co-operates and collaborates with libraries, library consortia, publishers and policy makers in developing and developed countries. Some of these partnerships will be explored, including INASP's work with country co-ordination teams, library consortia and international publishers who provide online journal and book access and support resource access, awareness and use through 'Publishers for Development'. Looking ahead, the emerging 'Librarians for Development' will be introduced, with its promise of how a group of librarians from developing and developed countries might help support and enrich the work of each other.

Background

The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2012. INASP is a development charity with the goal of contributing to sustainable social and economic development by strengthening the research communication cycle. It helps address some of the challenges developing countries face around the availability of international online books and journals, the writing and publication of locally-produced work and the communication and uptake of research to inform policy and practice. INASP is perhaps best known for the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI)¹, which is primarily funded by INASP's partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and European governments via the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Norwegian Development Agency for Co-operation (NORAD) and the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida).

For many of the developing countries in which INASP works, insufficient investment in higher education (HE) by national governments and international donors during periods of economic crisis in the 1980s and 1990s had created inadequate libraries, laboratories and ICT facilities. While experiences varied by country, there were some general trends: a loss of talent, insufficient numbers of teaching staff (as student enrolments were also increasing) and a fall in the standard of research undertaken at post-graduate level. From the late 1990s, attention began to return to higher education. New funding has emerged and universities are being rebuilt, but this is a slow process requiring co-operation, long-term strategies and investment by governments and agencies in both developing ('southern') and developed ('northern') countries.² New investment has been partly driven by recognition that academic research is a principal source of the information and knowledge needed for the social, economic and political well-being of countries. As the Commission for Africa report stated:

'Scientific skills and knowledge enable countries to find their own solutions to their own problems, and bring about step-changes in areas from health, water supply, sanitation and



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35 energy to the new challenges of urbanisation and climate change. And, critically, they unlock the potential of innovation and technology *to accelerate economic growth, and enter the global economy.*³

The development of INASP's programme areas

INASP's programme areas have been designed to help bridge the research information gap in developing countries and address some of the challenges faced by universities, researchers, libraries, publishers and policy makers. The core areas, which will be looked at in more detail later, are:

- making online journals, books and databases available
- library development: workshops and long-term training and peer support
- managing the bandwidth available - bandwidth management and optimization (BMO)
- Publishers for Development (PFD): advocacy and exchange for publishers and developing-country colleagues
- AuthorAID: helping developing-country researchers get their work published
- increasing the distribution and visibility of developing-country research: getting journals online
- training policy makers and policy influencers to request and use up-to-date research.

Making online journals, books and databases available

INASP negotiates with international publishers for free and low-cost access to resources for libraries in developing and emerging countries. In 2012 the 'Information Delivery' component of PERI included the following resources from 50 publishers and aggregators across multiple disciplines:

- 7,538 full-text books
- 31,476 full-text journals
- 23,072 abstracted journals
- 82 databases
- document delivery from 20,000 journals through the British Library.

"Over 3,140,284 scholarly articles were accessed by the countries in which INASP works during 2011."

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In each country, a co-ordination team and/or library consortium select from the resources available to them depending on research priorities and budget. This means that country-specific portfolios of resources comprising free, fee-based, and open access materials are created. In some cases funding may come from an external donor but INASP works with country teams and consortia to assist them in establishing their own cost-sharing models, membership structures and funding sources – hopefully, leading to an arrangement where resource availability is supported by each country. As Agatha Kabugu from the University of Nairobi and member of Kenya Library and Information Consortium (KLISC)⁵ states, "Consortia help us to share experiences and to share the load. It gives us a stronger voice... this benefits the institutions, the individuals. If we were negotiating separately the country would be losing out at a higher level."⁶

36 INASP requests that publishers commit to a long-term programme of affordable access and activity which reflects the pace at which change might realistically occur. INASP's aim is that participating in access initiatives will enable more direct co-operation to occur between publishers and developing country partners.

Library development: workshops and long-term training and peer support

The availability of online journals and books is only effective if it is supported by trained information professionals and researchers who can successfully find and use what is available to them. This means that outreach activities, including building a cadre of trainers who can go on to train others in their own country and beyond, and other forms of outreach, have become central to INASP's activities.⁷ Library training includes:

- information literacy and 'working together to support research' workshops for librarians and researchers
- library management and use of online journals and books
- library automation training
- training in measuring and monitoring online resource use
- establishing institutional repositories
- library school curriculum development
- library consortium development
- licensing and negotiation skills training
- increasing awareness and use of online resources via promotion and advocacy grants and competitions. Since 2009, this has also included a competition to increase participation and impact of Open Access Week in individual universities.⁸

"... availability of online journals and books is only effective if it is supported by trained information professionals and researchers ..."



A workshop on monitoring and evaluating e-resource use (MEERU), Zimbabwe

Managing the bandwidth available: bandwidth management and optimization (BMO)

In many of the developing countries where INASP works, internet bandwidth is a challenge, so INASP has developed activities at institutional and national levels to help universities improve their management of internet bandwidth. The BMO programme also supports the formation of National Research and Education networks – dedicated high speed broadband networks for academic and research institutions.⁹

Publishers for Development (PfD): advocacy and exchange for publishers and developing-country colleagues

PfD is an advocacy initiative enabling information exchange, discussion and debate between academic publishers, librarians and researchers in developing countries, and organizations involved in international development.¹⁰

The role of publishers in supporting developing-country research A joint initiative of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)¹¹ and INASP, PfD was established as a result of the complementary work the two organizations undertake with institutions in developing countries and international publishers. PfD aims to increase understanding of the unique challenges facing libraries, researchers and publishers in developing countries, and provides a forum for information and discussion and an opportunity for international colleagues to hear from one another and share experiences. One of the key messages from the 2011 conference was that: 'Publishers need to co-ordinate support across their editorial, IT, sales, and marketing teams – and ultimately at board level – to help ensure

37 that developing-country researchers are included in the research cycle'.¹² Information is shared and networking achieved via the annual conference, plus bi-annual newsletters, the PfD website and PfD in Action case studies which showcase what publishers are doing to support developing country research.

Bandwidth was identified as a major obstacle and an area where publishers had a role to play by adapting their sites to enable greater access, so working with Aptivate¹³ and the ACU, INASP launched the 'Bandwidth challenge' in 2012. This encourages publishers to speed-test their sites and work with their technical teams to identify ways in which their sites could be speeded up¹⁴. Aptivate demonstrated that big improvements to speed can be achieved with modest investment of time and money. Cambridge University Press, for example, have used their mobile platform to provide an alternative low-bandwidth interface¹⁵, while Springer's work to improve their site speed was part of their overall online strategy, designed to benefit all users, in developed and developing countries.¹⁶

AuthorAID: helping developing-country researchers get their work published

AuthorAID is a global research community for researchers which, as of July 2012, included more than 5,000 researchers and others from more than 150 countries, with 700 registered mentors. AuthorAID provides help for researchers in the publishing process; its main components are mentoring (scientific and editorial) by volunteers, face-to-face writing workshops and online courses delivered via Moodle.¹⁷

Feedback in a case study about AuthorAID training at National University of Rwanda (NUR) quoted Ashraph Sulaiman¹⁸, who had participated in a workshop: "As an academic and a researcher, I [submitted] my first two conference papers in the NUR conference in 2008. My papers were peer-reviewed and received few suggestions to improve some of the areas of presentation of the research paper. I was guided by the Research Commission of NUR to participate in [the] AuthorAID workshop during 2009. [Since then], I have published six papers in which one paper got the Best Paper Award among 400 papers".

Supporting developing-country authors AuthorAID was developed to help support developing-country researchers in getting their work published and, as mentioned, mentoring is a key component of this programme. As Dan Korbelt, an AuthorAID mentor, notes: "being an AuthorAID mentor goes beyond a conventional teacher-student relationship – it is a really stimulating and worthwhile learning process for both mentee



An AuthorAID workshop in Nepal, locally run and funded by a small grant

38 and mentor".¹⁹ A number of INASP's partner publishers already encourage their editors to become AuthorAID mentors – it is INASP's intention that this will increase the inclusion of developing-country research in journals globally.

Publishers can also assist researchers by providing information to the AuthorAID website about their submissions policies, and provide any training materials they might have to support publication.

AuthorAID is actively seeking new mentors from amongst the academic community in the UK and elsewhere and the support of publishers in promoting it amongst colleagues and editor networks would be very valuable.

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Increasing the distribution and visibility of developing-country research: getting journals online

The Journals Online programme builds the capacity of editors and publishers in developing countries to manage and share national research content via Journals Online platforms (JOLs). These platforms or websites for online journal hosting were developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) based in Canada.²⁰ This programme originally began with African Journals Online (AJOL), which is now managed in South Africa. It has grown to include Bangladesh Journals Online (BanglaJOL), Latin America Journals Online (LAMJOL), Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL), Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL), Philippines Journals Online (PhilJOL), and Vietnam Journals Online (VJOL). The JOLs are initially hosted by PKP in Canada but, as with the case of AJOL, it is planned that they will be hosted in the country of origin. PhilJOL and VJOL are now being managed in-country and BanglaJOL (see photograph) began the transition to country-ownership in 2012.²¹

Training policy makers and policy influencers to request and use up-to-date research

The Evidence Informed Policy Making (EIPM) programme trains policy makers and policy influencers, such as civil servants, in gaining access to and using research information.



Handover to local management of BanglaJOL (L-R): Naz Huda (Editor, ICPJ), Fahmid Khondoker (Local Administrator BanglaJOL) and Farid Uddin (Assistant Local Administrator, BanglaJOL)

39 In particular it emphasizes the need to increase demand for research, rather than just addressing availability. By 2012, 406 policy makers and influencers were trained, 25 master trainers were produced across Africa and 65 parliamentary and government staff from Zimbabwe, Zambia and Ghana attended training in writing policy briefs.²²

From INASP's programmes to INASP's partners

Local partners - country co-ordination teams and consortia

The INASP team is relatively small, with 18 staff based in Oxford and London. However, INASP's reach is much greater as it works in co-operation with organizations and individuals in developing and developed countries to help carry out its programmes. In each of the countries where INASP is active, there is a co-ordinator or, ideally, a co-ordinating team, to help to guide the design and delivery of INASP's work in that country. Local ownership helps to prevent the duplication of activities and helps to ensure activities are supporting national and institutional research priorities. The co-ordinators often have existing professional research roles and national mandates – in many cases as senior university librarians – enabling them to:

- develop and enhance individual, institutional and organizational capacities
- retain and develop independence and sustainability
- inform INASP's practice and strategy, via its annual steering committee meeting as well as ongoing discussion.

Local library consortia are not always established or active at the beginning of INASP's work in a country, so along with organizations like EIFL²³, supporting the development of a consortium is a key component of its work. It is important that all institutions in a country be aware of the resources available to them and that a co-operative network of institutions develop at the national level. This co-operative network can then form the basis for a consortium which might in time share the cost of resources and training. In 2011, INASP provided training for 2,700 researchers, academics, librarians and editors in over 750 institutions²⁴ and it is important that such activities can become locally owned, funded and driven over time.

How publishers and librarians can further help researchers: raising awareness

Some schemes have already been discussed, but both publishers and librarians can also help by letting developing-country researchers know what is available to them, by building their awareness of existing routes to international journals and books available to libraries and researchers in developing countries. Such routes include the Information Delivery component of PERI²⁵, Research4Life²⁶, and the licensing work of EIFL²⁷ in addition to the many open access resources that are now available globally. INASP recommends the *Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)*²⁸ and *Director of Open Access Books (DOAB)*²⁹ as good sources for open access journals and books. Navigating the complexity of these multiple access routes can be challenging, so INASP works with other access initiatives such as Research4Life and EIFL to avoid duplication and strengthen the impact of our collective activities. Publishers can make an important contribution by participating in the access initiatives discussed above.

Despite very real improvements in availability, a challenge remains in that awareness, access and use of the resources available is lower than we would hope it to be. A study in 2010 explored the journals available in four African universities, and noted: '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...'³⁰ but significant barriers to accessing and using resources were identified and the need to continue raising awareness of what is available to researchers and academics was shown to be very important.



Library student ambassadors at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

Using global publisher, editor and member networks to promote what is available in developing countries is a valuable way to increase awareness. However, there is also a place for promotional materials such as leaflets and posters. In libraries where few resources had been available previously, providing prominent signs of a newly invigorated learning space can have a big impact. INASP has also seen really positive results from the advocacy competitions it has been running.

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Looking ahead: 'Librarians for Development'

A future project, 'Librarians for Development', could potentially involve librarians from the UK, Europe and US, and provide an opportunity to share experiences, ideas and best practice by co-operating and networking with librarians from developing countries working in HE. Many developed-country universities have a significant intake of international students and researchers each year, and becoming familiar with what is available to them from their own institutions and helping researchers to know how they can access those resources is really useful.

Librarians might support resource awareness and advocacy by providing information to lecturers, academic editors, students and other librarians about the situation for scholars in developing countries and build awareness of what is available. They might also wish to encourage visiting developing-country researchers to follow up with their librarians about any schemes they should have access to and assist them in identifying open access resources. It is important that the expectations of librarians and researchers are raised, that they can be confident that resources are available and that any problems with access routes are reported and investigated.

During 2013, there are two areas where INASP will be setting up a working group, piloting activities and ways of networking in relation to a potential 'Librarians for Development' programme of work. These are:

1) Promotion and marketing of e-resources

Recently, Ruth Gibendi, the Senior Librarian at Meru University College of Science and Technology, Kenya, wrote a post for INASP's Practising Development blog³¹, which provides a space for librarians in developed and developing countries to exchange ideas.

The post focused on marketing resources and Gibendi shared her top tips. INASP would encourage other librarians to share what works for them and contribute their ideas and experiences to the discussion.

2) Sharing licensing and negotiation knowledge and skills

Over the next phase of INASP's work, as more direct relationships grow between publishers and developing-country librarians and consortia, having formal or informal networks of librarians that might offer peer-to-peer support in understanding licence terms and agreements and being able to discuss strategies for effective co-operation with publishers will be very important.

As with PFD, INASP would aim to start small in this pilot and involve colleagues in developing and developed countries in equal measure. Experiences would be captured via blogs, case studies and an online community.

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Conclusion

There remain many challenges in the creation of an equitable global research system. Situations in the countries INASP co-operates with can be fragile, affected by personnel changes and socio-economic and political developments. It is important that the capacity developed is robust and able to embrace changes and challenges. However, INASP's experience over 20 years as a successful network is that increased co-operation and understanding of the work being undertaken in developing and developed countries is a very positive way of helping university authorities, librarians, researchers and publishers to take things forward.

This article ends with an invitation for readers to look at the results of the 'Bringing Libraries to Life' photo competition³² that was held by INASP in 2012. This provides an inspiring overview of some of the researchers, libraries and institutions that INASP is reaching through its work.

"It is important that the capacity developed is robust and able to embrace changes and challenges."

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To find out what resources are available in a given country please select the relevant country page from the INASP website; this will also provide the details of the country co-ordinator.
INASP website:
www.inasp.info
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Research4Life is the collective name for AGORA/HINARI/OARE/ARDI, a public-private partnership of the WHO, FAO, UNEP, WIPO, Cornell and Yale Universities and the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers.

Using the reference links you can select a country to see what resources are available:

HINARI: for access to research in medicine and health:
http://extranet.who.int/hinari/en/country_offer.php

AGORA: for access to research in agriculture:
http://agora.aginternetwork.org/content/en/country_offer.php

OARE: for access to research in environmental science:
http://oare.oaresciences.org/content/en/country_offer.php

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