



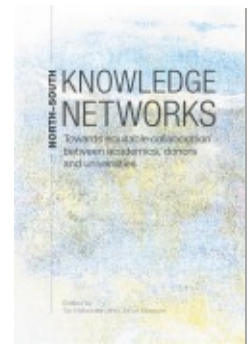
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## North-South Knowledge Networks Towards Equitable Collaboration Between

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## CHAPTER 6

# South–North collaboration and service enhancements at Makerere and Bergen University libraries

*Maria GN Musoke and Ane Landøy*

Collaboration between Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Bergen in Norway began in 1999. In 2009, the two universities celebrated the first ten years of their ongoing relationship, which includes research collaboration, scientific competence-building, student and staff exchanges, and institutional development (Musoke and Landøy 2014). The relationship also extends to the libraries at the two universities, and the collaboration between Makerere University Library (Maklib) and the University of Bergen Library (UOBL) is the focus of this chapter, although their partnership has gradually expanded to draw in libraries at other universities in Uganda, Norway and South Sudan.

Makerere University was established in Uganda in 1922, making it one of the oldest public universities in sub-Saharan Africa. Initially, it was a College of London University, then it became the University of East Africa, and later Uganda's national university. In 1958, an Act of Uganda's legislature made Maklib the first legal deposit library in the country, and it carried out this function until 2002, when Uganda's national library was established. In 1972, in addition to its primary role of serving the primary academic institution in the region, Maklib

became Uganda's national reference library. The institution has a main library and ten branch or college libraries.

By mid 2014, Makerere University's full-time student population had grown to about 50 000 undergraduates and postgraduates, about half of whom are female. The demand for library services is high, and Maklib has had to respond to the changing needs of its users (Musoke 2008; 2010). The University of Bergen has just over 14 500 students and 3 200 employees. With six faculties, covering most of the traditional university subjects, the institution is heavily involved in international co-operation in research and education. UOBL has approximately 93 staff members, and six libraries – one for each faculty. The staff include librarians with traditional librarianship training, academics with masters or doctoral degrees, and others with various high-school or lower-level university backgrounds. UOBL houses several special collections (including of pictures, old and rare books, and manuscripts), and also offers digital systems and services that include open-access institutional repositories.

Like Maklib, UOBL mainly serves the university's own academic staff and students, and its staff are active in initiating library-user and other forms of training for students. This has included collaborating with other national universities in Norway to create online courses such as 'Search and Write' ([www.sokogskriv.no](http://www.sokogskriv.no)) and 'PhD on Track' ([www.phdontrack.net](http://www.phdontrack.net)).

Although there are similarities in the general challenges facing the two academic libraries, their different climates and economic situations have created some key differences. Uganda is a low-income country and the university is not well funded. This creates challenges for Maklib relating to the affordability of printed resources, IT facilities, furniture and the general ambiance of the library. The costs of bandwidth and internet connectivity in Uganda have also prevented the establishment of a fully automated and integrated library service. However, when it comes to influencing the universities' administrative structures, Ugandan legislation gives Maklib full membership of the university senate. UOBL, on the other hand, is governed by a board that has no direct access to the university senate committee.

## **Academic libraries and changes in higher education**

Given the ever-changing landscape of higher education, it is helpful to consider the ongoing role and relevance of academic libraries. The rapid changes in technology, paradigm shifts in research, as well as developments in areas such as scholarly communication, data management and pedagogy within the higher education arena, have led academic libraries to develop new resources and services that address the evolving needs and expectations of library users. To remain relevant, academic libraries have had to respond and adapt. However the libraries also have to balance the need to offer new facilities with continuing to provide their core services, while anticipating future user needs related to new technologies, growing data sets and further paradigm shifts in learning, teaching and research.

Michalak (2012) pointed out that some of the factors driving these changes are networked technologies with powerful search engines that are available to all, as well as social technologies and the digitisation of almost every piece of information. Factors supporting these shifts include collaborative relationships between academic and research libraries at national, regional or international levels, state funding, and pragmatic librarians who are transforming their workplaces from lumbering and old-fashioned facilities into agile, change-oriented units ready to respond to whatever the future holds. Budgetary constraints, rapid advances in technology, and demands that libraries continue to demonstrate their value have also played a role.

Raju (2014) highlighted the forces for change in academic institutions, and their impact on the relationship between universities and academic libraries. Specifically, new methods of scholarly communication, the expansion of the libraries' virtual space via knowledge portals or research commons, the proliferation of social media, and the explosive growth of mobile devices, such as tablets and related applications, have collectively altered traditional academic libraries beyond recognition. These changes have obviously also had a significant impact on the knowledge and skills requirements of library and information-science professionals.

Technology-influenced changes in teaching and learning, linked to new knowledge products such as subject portals and subject-specific websites, as well as new physical or virtual spaces, have greatly affected university libraries. At the same time, e-science has developed rapidly in the physical and medical sciences, which have traditionally been influenced by advancing technologies, but also within the humanities and social sciences. These developments have forced a dramatic shift in the way academic and research libraries serve the needs of researchers, and many have asked how academic libraries are coping with these advances (see for example Musoke et al. 2014).

Not only are libraries' traditional services (such as building collections and supporting teaching, learning, research and dissemination) becoming increasingly digitised, but technological changes have also created new tasks and roles for academic librarians. For example, large amounts of research data, sometimes referred to as 'big data', have to be collected and curated to ensure ease of access and use. Increasingly, academic libraries are expected to provide this service, and to be able to plan for and provide for future access, which is inevitably becoming more and more open.

To enable digital capture, curation, preservation, sharing and other knowledge-management tasks, academic libraries in the digital era have to embrace a wide range of new services. These include digitisation; electronic publishing; Web 2.0, Web 3.0 and beyond; Library 2.0, Library 3.0 and beyond; social media; big/open-data management and access; and a host of other fast evolving ICTs (Raju 2014). As research becomes more intense, and research information increasingly available via open access, libraries have to become more visible and relevant. Fortunately, the new technologies are opening up huge opportunities for academic libraries to support learning, teaching and research. Academic libraries are adapting in a myriad of different ways. Employing more staff, as well as retraining and retooling existing staff with new skills, changing physical spaces to serve new purposes, and restructuring to create new departments within the library, or merging with other university departments. Radical new forms of collaboration between libraries at different institutions are also emerging.

Saunders (2015) pointed out that the need for change raises concerns for academic libraries around the world, and emphasises the importance of collaboration between libraries. Areas of knowledge and expertise in different libraries may be exploited when such institutions work together, and solutions can be found either by transferring knowledge or by joint efforts. Worldwide, collaborations range from establishing consortia for the purchase of resources and joint storage of less-used collections, to setting up common portals and joint repositories.

In Africa, various organisations have echoed the need for change. For example, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) has highlighted the need for universities in Africa to implement curricula that will produce a new generation of graduates who are capable of acting as nuclei for change. At another level, the *Trend Report* published by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA 2014) elaborated on anticipated changes following, among other things, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by United Nations in 2015.

The theme of North-South collaboration implies strategic knowledge sharing and development, and this fits well with the shifts in library and information services outlined above. The term ‘collaboration’ is often used interchangeably with the term ‘partnership’. In our view, there is a difference between the two. We concur with Carnwell and Carson (2009), who pointed out that a partnership refers to ‘what something is’ while collaboration describes ‘something that is done’. Partnerships imply an equal commitment, accompanied by shared risks and benefits, and focus on a specific problem or outcome. They may be political, charitable or ideological relationships in which power is shared. Sometimes the focus of a partnership is strong enough for the boundaries between partners to fade and blur in deference to the overarching importance of shared goals. Collaborations share many of these characteristics, but collaborators contribute their expertise to the degree that is needed to solve a problem *with no expectation of reciprocity*. Collaborations can, therefore, be considered to be more project- or goal-focused, and when the goal is achieved and/or the project is implemented, collaboration may cease.

UOBL has collaborated with Maklib with no expectation of reciprocity, and, as subsequent sections of the paper show, the relationship has enhanced service delivery.

## Collaboration and its effects

The collaboration between the two libraries has involved UOBL supporting Maklib in carrying out its various professional activities. This includes training library staff, helping to manage interlibrary loans and document delivery services, supporting catalogue conversion, and establishing Makerere University's institutional repository – MAKIR (this was formerly the Uganda Scholarly Digital Library).

One of the first activities that started in 2002 was a document delivery service between the two university libraries. Maklib's subscriptions to electronic journal databases were then in an initial stage, and this service offered a reduced subscription to much-needed print journals, giving Makerere students and staff access to current literature at substantially reduced costs. At the time of writing, Maklib was subscribing to over 20 000 full-text online journal titles, and has been able to do so since 2009.

In 2003, Maklib began the long process of converting its manual catalogue cards into an electronic library system. As part of the process, a team from UOBL visited Maklib in March 2005, offering professional support that included a well-articulated and mutually agreed work plan. In 2006, Maklib launched its online public-access catalogue, MAKULA (Makerere University Library Access). The word '*makula*' also means 'a gift' or 'something splendid' in one of Uganda's languages, thus expressing something of how Maklib staff endeavour to maintain and offer a 'splendid' catalogue as a 'gift' to library users (Musoke 2010). By 2010, all the old catalogue cards had been converted. Library users, visiting librarians and scholars have described the change from the wooden catalogue boxes to online terminals as a 'transformation'.

In 2009 and 2010, six additional university libraries in Nigeria and one in Ghana joined Maklib in using the Virtua Integrated Library System. Maklib staff have since shared their experience with librarians

at those libraries, offering training and support, and operating much like a 'help' desk, thus passing on some of the assistance they had received from UOBL.

Maklib's collaboration with the UOBL also expanded in 2005 to include a digitisation project. This was the beginning of setting up an institution-wide digital repository for the university. The repository was initially named the Uganda Scholarly Digital Library, and later renamed Makerere Institutional Repository (MAKIR); it runs on DSpace's open-source repository software. In addition to supporting the records conversion, librarians from UOBL assisted staff at Maklib in planning for MAKIR during their 2005 visit. A project plan was drawn up, which included the training of Maklib staff. Training was done in the use of DSpace and in hands-on scanning, and a first attempt was made to upload digitised documents to a DSpace server that was set up at the University of Bergen. By December 2014, over 5 000 full-text records had been archived in DSpace for access on the MAKIR site. Access limits were placed on some of the content (especially theses), giving authors the right to decide when their work is made fully accessible.

The training and support offered by UOBL inspired several Maklib librarians to pursue further studies in this field. For example, the head of Maklib's Digitisation section, who was also the key librarian in MAKIR, spent some time at UOBL and completed a PhD on the management of open-access institutional repositories in East Africa. In addition to building the capacity of librarians to manage an institutional repository in a low-bandwidth environment, digitising Makerere University's research output increased Makerere University's visibility on the internet. By sharing a high number of rich-text files, the institution has been able to continually improve its webometric rankings.

The establishment of MAKIR bore yet another fruit, when librarians at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania began to create their own institutional repository. UOBL recommended that they work with Maklib, and the experience of establishing MAKIR was then usefully shared.

Various departments at Makerere University have also benefited from the collaboration with UOBL in specific ways. For example,



although the Department of Music, Dance and Drama was established at Makerere University in 1971, it was 2006 before the first digital music archive of Ugandan music was established.

To manage the collection, a music librarian had to be identified and trained to collect, organise and digitise the collection. Maklib and UOBL both worked with their respective music departments and researchers, and the University of Bergen's music librarian visited Makerere to help train Maklib's newly appointed music librarian. As part of this training, Maklib's music librarian and archivist both also visited UOBL. Maklib's archivist still supports the music librarian, and the music archive is hosted within the main library. While UOBL provided hands-on training, Makerere University supported the music librarian in enrolling for a masters in information science, and her research focused on the management of the music collection. Similarly, in training and sharing experiences with the MakLib music librarian, UOBL's music librarian also learned new skills, and was inspired to enrol for a masters degree, focused on copyright issues related to music materials held in academic libraries.

By 30 November 2014, 2 980 audio files had been uploaded, of which 1 577 were songs from the 1940s and 1950s (these included Klaus Wachsmann's and Peter Cooke's collections that were repatriated from the British Sound Library). In addition, 1 555 videos, 30 tapes and 28 phonographs – mainly related to ethnomusicology – had been digitised and preserved in the music archive, along with other digital recordings. In addition, 15 051 paper archives, 1 786 photographs (including 32 undigitised and 46 digitised photo albums) have been included in the collection.

As mentioned, various MakLib staff have been seconded to UOBL for periods ranging from two weeks to three months where they were able to get hands-on training and observe best practices. Between 2001 (when the Maklib-UOBL collaboration was first formalised) and June 2015, sixteen Maklib librarians visited UOBL, and six UOBL staff visited Maklib to conduct training in different aspects of academic librarianship, to prepare joint publications and to attend various planning meetings.

UOBL has also supported Maklib in introducing LATINA (Learning and Teaching in a Digital Era). Skills acquired by Maklib librarians who attended the initial LATINA training in Oslo have been applied in library activities and programmes. The course has introduced participants to new ways of approaching teaching, learning and digital librarianship. For example, the Maklib album in Picasa is continuously updated, and user guidelines and an OPAC video tutorial have been uploaded to YouTube, along with a photo story generated from pictures of branch libraries. The LATINA course aims to build capacity not only at Maklib, but to enable Maklib staff to facilitate similar training courses at their own or other institutions in future. In 2012, a LATINA course was held in Africa for the first time by Maklib, and was attended by participants from university libraries in South Sudan and various other East African countries. By 2015, LATINA had been held at Maklib three times.

Building on its collaboration with Maklib, UOBL was awarded two grants by the Norwegian University Cooperation Programme for Capacity Development in Sudan, which funded collaboration between higher education institutions in Norway and Sudan. The first new project was the Juba University Library Automation Project and the second was the Education of Librarians Project. Both focused on the automation of the library and the training of the library staff. As the projects had an academic training component, the East African School of Library and Information Science at Makerere University and the Norwegian School of Librarianship at the former Oslo University College were also involved.<sup>1</sup>

The sustaining of their relationship over many years is one of the major achievements of the collaboration between UOBL and Maklib; many similar projects have ended after just the initial phase. The ongoing collaboration has led to the relationship expanding into other East African countries, and particularly into South Sudan as Maklib has begun sharing the knowledge and experience it has gained (Musoke and Landøy 2014). The success of the Maklib-UOBL collaboration set a precedent for university administrators from both universities, particularly as they sought to expand their collaboration from two to five institutions, and this has benefited both institutions in various ways.

## Lessons learned

One of the lessons learned is that rapid advances in IT mean that automation is never complete. Librarians have to update their knowledge and skills constantly. Capacity building among librarians is therefore not only important to the implementation of IT library projects and activities, but also to the sustainability of entire institutions when the skills and knowledge acquired not only enhance access to knowledge *but* are shared with others in the region (Musoke 2010). This important benefit has informed subsequent phases of the collaboration.

Another lesson learned is the benefit of including ‘neighbours’ in library-development projects. That is, the partnership with Maklib was vital to the success of projects in South Sudan. The value of this was acknowledged by UOBL when they approached the Transilvania University of Braşov in Romania to become a partner in the development of an academic library in neighbouring Moldova.

Lessons were also learned outside the project, and the collaboration between UOLB and Maklib changed both partners in several ways. Both institutions faced challenges and had expertise in different areas of academic librarianship. UOBL had better access to electronic information and more technology, as a result of Norway’s higher economic status and larger investment in staffing. Maklib had developed innovative approaches to lending as a result of books and other information resources being much less affordable for students. Maklib also had an impressive track record in fundraising, strategic planning and in implementing projects and strategies. UOBL learned from Maklib how to get library matters onto the agendas of university leaders, even though UOBL’s director is not on the university senate in Bergen, as is the case at Makerere. UOBL also strives to emulate the culture of learning, improving and sharing that is a hallmark of Maklib.

## Conclusion and the future

In this chapter, we have highlighted the benefits of South–North collaboration in knowledge sharing and institutional development.

Although the activities described seem to focus on capacity building at Maklib with UOBL as the facilitator, the experience and knowledge sharing has been of significant benefit to UOBL librarians. This highlights the importance of strengthening and nurturing linkages, networks and collaborations as the higher education environment continues to change.

The fifth of the long-standing laws of librarianship developed by SR Ranganathan states that a 'library is a growing organism' (1931: 382). Accordingly, the imperatives of the new information environment require that competencies of knowledge organisation are developed and implemented with creativity or innovation and a sense of entrepreneurship. Continuing with business as usual at Maklib was never an option. Creativity and innovation have been key driving factors behind the collaboration between Maklib and UOBL since it began.

To continue to develop their libraries into the best possible scholarly information resource in ways that solidly support teaching, learning and research, Maklib and UOBL will have to remain true to their ideals of innovating within their ever-changing, albeit different, environments. Certain goals and activities are therefore relevant for both libraries, for example:

- Patrons and library users need to learn how to manage information overload, and the immense possibilities created by the internet. The libraries must, therefore, provide support through periodic information-literacy programmes that build search and retrieval skills in a scholarly and ethical way.
- Researchers have to publish, and funding agencies often expect researchers to make their research output available via open-access channels. Librarians can advise researchers on how to select the appropriate publishing channels, indicating which journals have the highest impact and widest outreach, and advising on portals for open access, including optimising their own institutional repositories. In this way, both the 'gold' and the 'green' publishing avenues can be catered for.
- Universities are required to show their 'output', in terms of graduates, research and publications. Libraries can play an important

role in contributing to bibliometrics/scientometrics by reporting into national research-information systems.

- A culture of mutual sharing and peer training is necessary if libraries are to succeed in developing relevant services of high quality for patrons/users and their institution.

Exchange visits remain an ongoing part of the collaboration. For example, UOBL hosted the librarian from Makerere University's Institute of Social Research for a two-week attachment in September 2015, and the MAKIR librarian spent a year in Norway from August 2015 on a NORHED-supported PhD programme focusing on digitising weather records. Furthermore, the collaboration continues to support joint research, publications and presentation of papers at conferences. To sustain such activities, grant-proposals are written jointly.

As Henry Ford observed, 'Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.' UOBL and Maklib have worked together successfully and plan to stay together as they build for the future of their respective universities.

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## Note

- 1 From August 2011, Oslo University College and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences merged.

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