

Dossier “Librarianship in the South”

This dossier is an information product of the Department of [Information & Library Services \(ILS\)](#) of the [Royal Tropical Institute \(KIT\)](#). It is a copy of an archived version of the former web document that was last updated in 2012. Some web links may no longer be valid. An overview of all ILS dossiers on health, gender, local governance, culture, and sustainable economic development can be accessed at <http://www.kit.nl/4733> or in [search4dev.nl](#).

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Table of Contents

Scope.....	1
In-Depth	2
KIT’s Involvement.....	2
Related items	4
Resources.....	4

Scope

This web publication is a spin-off from the [Portal Librarianship in the South](#), which is managed and developed by KIT Information & Library Services (ILS) with support and contributions from its project partners.

The focus of this web publication is on:

- information on library operations and systems
- information and knowledge management
- open access databases
- open source cataloguing systems
- institutional repositories, and
- digital libraries in low-resource environments



The target audience of this portal is formed by the global community of information professionals, librarians, ICT personnel as well as (university) library users: researchers, students, and lecturers. This Dossier focuses on providing relevant information to information professionals in the South.

In-Depth

Apart from managing its own library KIT also shares knowledge with libraries in the South and assists partners in library development, providing advisory services directed to the technical and managerial upgrading of (university) libraries.

Institutional development

Capacity strengthening in information and library services can never be an end in itself. It should be integrated within a broader context of institutional development. Therefore, interventions by KIT ILS will always be based on a general needs assessment that broadly examines the institution's developmental needs. Central questions are: what challenges is the institution facing in the field of information management and how can KIT's interventions support the implementation of the institution's policies? KIT's capacity strengthening projects in information and library services support institutions going through an organizational transition that involves changes in information management. KIT's interventions will be integrated with this transitional process, as defined by the institution itself.

Approach

KIT's interventions focus on knowledge exchange through training, advice and evaluation. KIT ILS does not provide funding or materials, nor does it provide staff to be employed in the actual implementation processes. However, the department may be engaged to develop the partner institution's capacity for fundraising.

In the course of each project, KIT staff may visit the partner institution at regular intervals on short missions to meet counterparts and to discuss objectives, inputs and results. The purpose of the first mission will typically be to establish an overall needs assessment and project plan. During subsequent missions, local training will be provided, including on-the-job training, as well as on-site consultancy. Depending on the needs assessment, local staff may also be invited to visit KIT or other relevant institutions in order to familiarize themselves with practices at other institutions in the field of information and library services.

In most projects, a major component of the knowledge exchange will take place through Internet communication. Face-to-face meetings between local staff and KIT personnel are, however, still important in establishing personal relations. These will allow both parties to communicate effectively during the periods in between meetings.

Training modules

In addition to tailor-made training activities and training on the job, KIT ILS has also developed training modules for general use. These are generic training modules related to information and library services, which can be customized to fit the specific needs of a particular partner institution.

KIT ILS is constantly on the look-out for partners and funding opportunities. Based on a budget made available by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the department has initiated a programme of partnerships with academic institutions in Mozambique and Ghana. Additionally, the department works with a wide range of partners, donors and funding agencies in other developing countries.

KIT's Involvement

The Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) works with partners in developing countries to build their capacity in the field of information and library services. Based on the notion that access to relevant information is

essential to virtually every development process, KIT makes its expertise available to support institutions in the developing world that offer development-related information to researchers, students or professionals in the field. The overall aim of KIT's involvement is to build capacity at the partner institution leading to sustainable development that is driven from within the organization itself.

KIT's Information & Library Services department (KIT ILS) has a longstanding history in disseminating information on international cooperation and development issues. Nowadays its services have shifted away from those of a traditional paper-based library, to include digital content, online access and electronic services. This makes the department well-placed to support partners in the developing world in various aspects of modern information and library services. KIT ILS offers expertise in a wide range of areas. Four areas have been identified as central themes for the capacity strengthening programme in the next couple of years.

- **Library automation**
Building the capacity at partner institutions to install, maintain and use systems for library automation
- **Open access electronic publishing**
Building the capacity at partner institutions to electronically publish research output through open access platforms, including institutional repositories.
- **End-user training programmes**
Building the capacity at partner institutions to develop and implement end-user training, including information literacy programmes.
- **Shared documentary heritage**
Building the capacity at partner institutions to preserve, restore and open up collections of documentary heritage from the colonial period, including digitization and making the content available online

In each of these areas, KIT's experts work themselves on the institute's own products and services, and are also available as trainers and advisors for international capacity strengthening projects. As a consequence, they have a hands-on and practice-oriented attitude. In recent years, the role of ICT-related expertise in information and library services has grown more significant worldwide. Also in KIT's capacity strengthening programme, ICT has become a crosscutting theme, which puts strong emphasis on free and open source software solutions.

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Related items

- [ILS Advisory services](#)
- [KIT provides tailor-made information services to ICCO](#)
- [Free and Open Source Software \(FOSS\) for Libraries in Africa conference](#)
- [Unique collaboration to support university libraries in Mozambique and Zimbabwe](#)

Resources

A dedicated site lists resources on institutional repositories: [Institutional Repository Communication Platform - Resources](#)

EIFL provides information on Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) for libraries: [Library FOSS Advocacy Resource](#)

Keep informed of new resources, news and events and subscribe to the RSS feeds or e-mail alerts of:

- [KIT Portal Librarianship in the South - updates](#)
- [KIT Library acquisitions on the different KIT themes](#)