

Summarised report on the Global Summit

Introduction

The 2nd Global Summit on Diamond Open Access, held from 8-13 December 2024 at the University of Cape Town (Cape Town, South Africa). The University of Cape Town Libraries, in collaboration with Redalyc/AmeliCA, SPARC (USA), South Africa's National Research Foundation, UNESCO, CLACSO, Association of African Universities (AAU), Europe Science and the University of Cape Town (Libraries and Department of Knowledge and Information Stewardship) and other stakeholders hosted this Summit. These diverse range of stakeholders from across the globe came together to advance the collective understanding and commitment to Diamond Open Access (DOA).

The Global Summit on Diamond Open Access aimed to centre social justice within a more inclusive and equitable scholarly publishing system. Key goals included strengthening the diamond open access model among marginalized communities, expanding inclusivity in the broader OA movement, and embedding scholarly communication in LIS education. The summit sought to mobilize the global community to remove financial and systemic barriers to publishing, while also advancing practical training, fostering global communities of practice, shaping adaptable regional frameworks, improving research assessment, and co-developing a declaration to promote a just publishing ecosystem.

Summary of the Summit

The conference highlighted global perspectives on social justice, open access, and research assessment reform, emphasizing the need to decolonize knowledge systems, challenge exclusionary publishing practices, and build equitable, sustainable infrastructures. Speakers called for reframing African narratives, recognizing science as a human right, and rejecting commodification in favour of Diamond OA models rooted in community and collaboration. Emphasis was placed on reclaiming journal ownership, supporting local and multilingual publishing, and addressing systemic barriers such as APCs, biased metrics, and colonial legacies in research evaluation. Regional initiatives from Africa, Latin America, and Asia showcased the power of open, non-commercial infrastructures and innovation hubs to advance inclusive scholarly communication. Urgent action was urged to align research ecosystems with equity, transparency, and the public good.

Some reflections/takeaways

The summit discussions centred around several core themes emphasizing the transformation of the academic ecosystem, especially in relation to open science and open access (DOA).

Key takeaways include:

1. **Epistemic Justice and Reframing Narratives:** A strong call for decolonizing research, with an emphasis on amplifying marginalized voices and challenging colonial biases in academic publishing.
2. **Legitimacy and Citizen Engagement:** Open science must be driven not just by institutions but also by active citizen involvement, ensuring disadvantaged groups have a voice in knowledge creation and dissemination.

3. **Historical Contexts in Open Access:** Open access should be understood as a matter of power and privilege, addressing historical inequalities in research access.
4. **Sustainability and Equity:** The financial sustainability of open access publishing must ensure equity, with transparent agreements supporting long-term, culturally inclusive publishing infrastructures.
5. **Exclusion through Publishing Models:** The commercialization of academic publishing, particularly through pay-to-publish models and metric-driven evaluations, perpetuates exclusion and reinforces systemic inequalities.
6. **Global Access as a Right:** Open science is framed as a human right, with a call for a shift away from profit-driven publishing to a model that benefits humanity and prioritizes equitable access.
7. **Addressing Global Inequities:** The financial burden of publishing, particularly for researchers in the Global South, highlights the need for support for local knowledge and journals to promote more inclusive access.
8. **Collaborative Infrastructure for Sustainability:** Building non-commercial, sustainable publishing infrastructure is vital for ensuring that open access remains grounded in equity and social justice.
9. **Reimagining Research Assessment:** Research evaluation systems need to evolve from a "papercentric" model to one that values diverse contributions, especially from underrepresented regions.

Forum discussion: 14th December

The discussions centred around strategic planning, collaboration, and leveraging existing resources to further open initiatives:

1. **Roadmap and Strategy Development:** The group emphasized the importance of drafting roadmaps by the end of February, with input from all participants to ensure collaborative and inclusive strategies. It was suggested that regional networks from the AAU be used as models for developing future plans, with a focus on diversity, equity, and sustainability.
2. **Collaboration and Integration:** There was a focus on integrating various stakeholders, including library consortia, researchers, academics, and publishers, ensuring that all parties are engaged and can see their roles and contributions. Regional cooperation was also encouraged, with examples of successful open science networks shared.
3. **Leveraging Existing Infrastructure:** National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) already in place in several African countries were recognized as valuable resources for advancing open science. The group agreed to incorporate open science topics into NREN annual meetings, building on past successes in combining infrastructure with open access policies.
4. **Challenges and Opportunities:** The need for local capacity-building and the establishment of independent networks was stressed. Open science programs should

also focus on enhancing research visibility, institutional promotion, and community social impact.

5. **Naming and Positioning the Coalition:** The coalition's name should reflect inclusivity and the broad interests of all stakeholders, ensuring it resonates with diverse groups such as consortia, academics, and researchers.
6. **Engagement with Publishers:** There was a consensus on the need for collective action in engaging with publishers to advocate for fair and equitable open access policies.

Noteworthy outcomes

Launch of the Toluca-Cape Town Declaration (see Appendix below)

Formation of African Coalition of Library Consortia

Publications of a collection of essays – outcome of the DKIS conference. The book will be launched in September 2025

Commitment:

Creation of African Forum for the Advancement of Diamond Open Access

To place on the agenda of the leadership of African academic institutions on the adoption of DOA

Collaborative Agreement on Advancing Diamond Open Access Between Redalyc and AAU/UCT (to be explored)

FOLLOW THROUGH with outcomes from the Summit

1. Creation of African Coalition of Library Consortia
2. An address to the VCs of African academic institutions on Diamond Access (AAU conference in Morocco)
3. Submission of a proposal to Invest in Open Infrastructure led by the AAU with support from UCT and UbuntuNet Alliance
4. SPARC (USA) and SPARC Africa working to reignite enthusiasm for the African Forum