LIBSENSE Research Agenda

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Outline

- Background
- The Bigger Picture
- Emerging Librarian role
- A Research Agenda
- Workshop Survey Review Approach

BACKGROUND

Motivation – Institutional Concerns

- TANDEM survey of end-user needs in the WACREN area – academics, researchers & technicians revealed:
  - End-user community of librarians in higher education play a pivotal role in the *identification, provision and dissemination of information resources* through the services offered by RENs
  - Among the prioritized areas for their service users was "*open access data repository services*"
- Librarians could play a key role as *"institutional focal points"* for NREN advocacy going forward
- Institutional weaknesses identified as an issue.

Types of Institutional Weaknesses (West African context)

- Institutional weaknesses leading to lack of adequate "digital" skills acquisition:
  - Ignorance and apathy among librarians
  - Poor funding of libraries
  - Lack of funds to pay/sponsor for the training
  - Lack of facilities needed for such training in some of the skills programmers
  - Insufficient skilled personnel to train the librarians in the country
  - Limited training opportunities within the country
  - Lack of motivation by the library administration.

OA Awareness (West African context)

- Issues faced by Nigerian academic libraries in playing a key role in developing OA resources:
  - Depleted budgets
  - Unavailability of IT facilities
  - Insufficient skills to access web resources
  - Lack of opportunity to access repositories, databases and OA resources
- Lack of affordability of computer resources is frequently mentioned.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Digitalisation

The general trend towards _transforming traditional content and media, into digital representations_, which has implications for how these altered formats can be _transmitted, shared and consumed_, thus affecting and potentially disrupting business models in industry and the delivery of learning and teaching in education.

Some direct impacts for librarians:
- Traditional information resources → digital assets
- Traditional library collections → digital collections
- Traditional research support → research data management/digital curation, etc.

Digitalisation & Convergence

- Convergence of communication and information technologies and the development of cheaper, faster and more convenient hardware together with the platformization of IT services, e.g. cloud computing, create a situation where computers are a ubiquitous commodity and content is available on request.

Digitalisation & Dematerialisation

- Digitalisation leads eventually to *dematerialisation*, i.e., the physical and tangible become the virtual and intangible.
- The result is that the skills learnt to deal with material properties of objects need to change due to dematerialisation.
- This leads to:
  - De-skilling: loss of traditional skill sets
  - Re-skilling: learning new digital skill sets
  - Up-skilling: trading up to higher level skills that are not easy to automate.

The Contemporary University

- On demand courses
- Lifelong learning
- University as a partner to business
- Providing value to the "market"
- Emphasis on information
- Student as customer
- Anywhere/everywhere availability
- Multidisciplinarity
- Emphasis on technology
- Globalisation of higher education.

…New HE Challenges

- Publication and scholarly communication (e.g. open access)
- Delivery and use of digital resources (e.g. open data and open repositories)
- Students from different backgrounds, locations, abilities, ethnicities
- Increasing demand for traditional resources
- New channels for delivering learning (e.g. distance learning, MOOCs, open education)
- Doing more with less, reduction of resources, particularly in staffing.

The Open Movement

The open movement seeks to work towards solutions of many of the world's most pressing problems in a spirit of transparency, collaboration, re-use and free access. It encompasses open data, open government, open development, open science and much more. Participatory processes, sharing of knowledge and outputs and open source software are among its key tools. The specific definition of "open" as applied to data, knowledge and content, is set out by the Open Definition.

From:
http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/open-movement/

Open Scholarship

- Some Assumptions:
  - …has a strong ideological basis rooted in an ethical pursuit for *democratization, fundamental human rights, equality, and justice*
  - …emphasizes the importance of *digital participation for enhanced scholarly outcomes*
  - …is treated as an emergent scholarly phenomenon that is *co-evolutionary with technological advancements* in the larger culture
  - …is seen as a practical and effective means for *achieving scholarly aims that are socially valuable*

Open Scholarship

- In Practice:
  - Open Access Journals and Institutional Repositories
  - Scholars' digital presence
  - Open Educational Resources, Open Teaching, Open Courses
- Synonymous with Open Science
  - "Opening" of the research process
    - Provocation → Ideation → Knowledge generation → Validation → Dissemination → Preservation

The Librarian as Information Specialist

- Key roles emerged:
  - Information retrieval
  - Information seeking
  - Information literacy
  - Information organisation
- These roles support the academic/researcher in making sense of data and interpreting it for their own specialism

Other New "Digital" Roles

- Systems librarian
- Electronic resource librarian
- Digital librarian
- Institutional repository manager
- Clinical librarian and informationist
- Digital curator/research data manager
- Teaching librarian/information literacy educator
- Information and knowledge manager.

EMERGING LIBRARIAN ROLE

The Role of the Academic Library

"*Students and faculty alike fail to involve library resources and services in regular learning and instruction, turning to the library primarily as an undergraduate study hall or reserve book room. National initiatives fail to mention, much less to plan, improvement of library resources. [There is] a disheartening decrease in academic library share of institutional funding, they remain, for the most part, on the periphery of decision-making and innovative processes, librarians are often not involved in information policy development. In all, the 'library is the heart of the university' metaphor leads librarians and academics to erroneous conclusions about the real relationships between*

Academic Libraries' Response

- Changing librarian's *roles and responsibilities*
- Developing a *service-oriented model* of collection development and dissemination
- Providing *free and equal access* to information
- Keeping up-to-date with *ICT developments*
- Leading in *digitalisation* movements
- Understanding *new learning and teaching schemes*, *new economic/business models* and *new regulatory frameworks*.

A Central Role

"Changes could catapult the library into <u>a central role</u> within the teaching/learning enterprise <u>if appropriate adaptations are made</u>; if not, they could further remove the library from the institutional centre" (CETUS, 1997).

Institutional Factors

- **Structure**
  - Role played by the library function vis-à-vis teaching and research
  - How the library function is integrated with other support functions, e.g. the IT function
- **Rules, regimes, standards**
  - The rules of the game – how libraries actually function, their constraints and enablers
- **Norms**
  - Institutional logics driving the librarian function
- **Culture**
  - Organisational culture, professional culture, cross-over professions, boundary spanning roles

A RESEARCH AGENDA

Research Agenda & Survey

RQ: How to *develop sustainable institutional support for HE librarians to play a central role* in providing services linked to Open movements through NREN infrastructure?

Main Outcomes:

- *Identifying* institutional factors that constrain or enable a more central role for librarians *as information managers in West and Central African HE institutions.*

- *Developing and launching a* wide-ranging survey to investigate the issues currently experienced by the HEI librarian communities of practice *in establishing efficient and sustainable information resource management capabilities within HEIs in the West and Central African region*
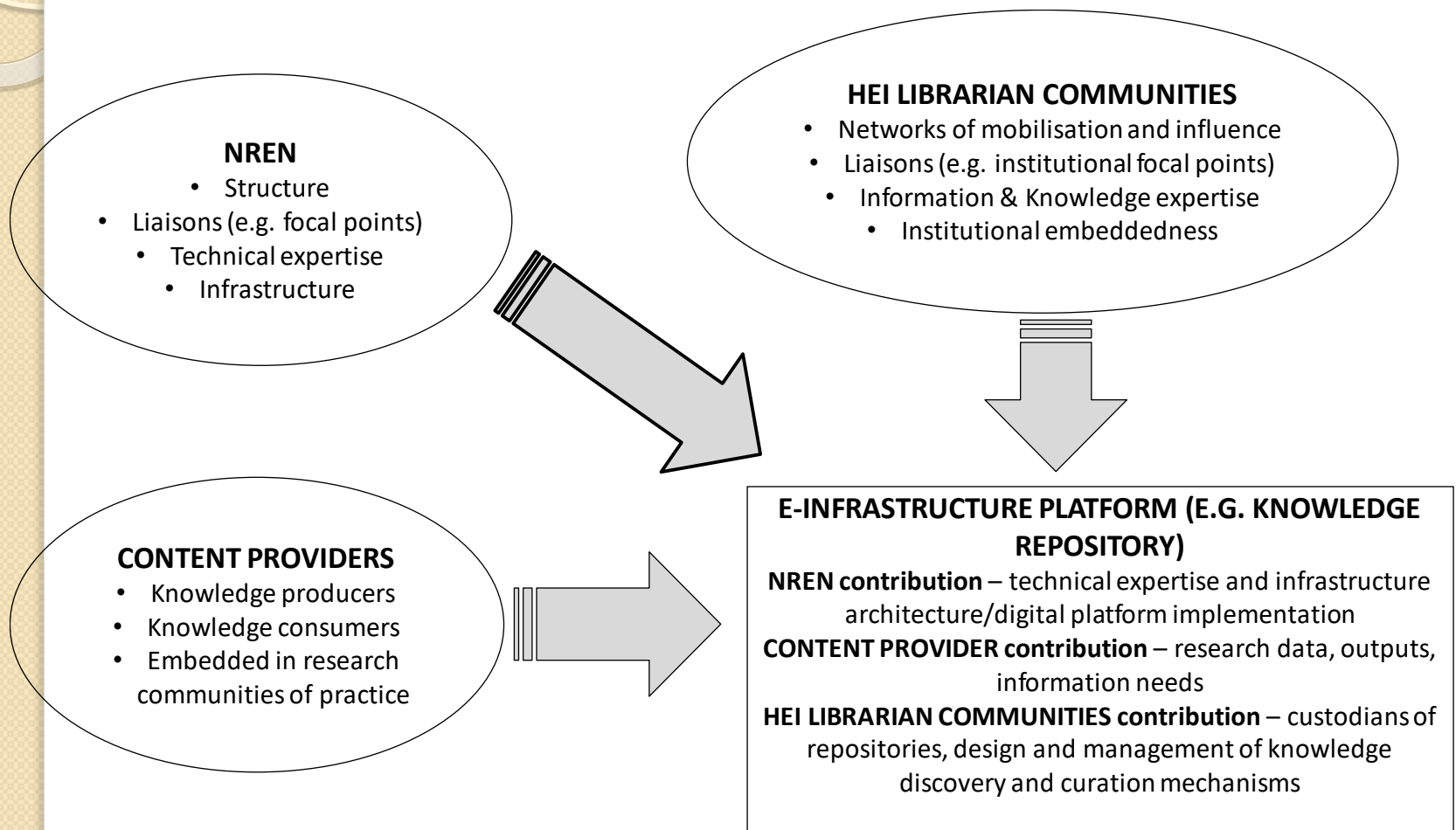
Motivations

- A need to develop and implement a vision of **African Open Scholarship** led by African Librarian Communities of Practice

- A need to establish and understand **the drivers for**, and **the hindrances against, change** that would deliver on this promise

- A need to determine **"e-readiness"**, i.e., the extent to which higher education institutions were **building the necessary resources and capabilities** to deliver digital innovations

- A need to determine the **evolving role of the African HEI library** in light of digitalisation

Key Questions for LIBSENSE workshops

- How can Open Access Repositories operate *embedded in NREN e-infrastructure* and provide a foundation for an innovative, open, distributed and networked resource for *scholarly communication and Open Science in Afri*ca?

- What are librarians' inputs into a *guiding framework for federated Open Access Repositories in Africa*?

- Using a typical information science tripartite of the key influences of *information, people, and technology*, what part does the *upskilling* of librarians in digital skills play in providing guidelines and policy direction for this framework of action?

Key Stakeholders in OAR Creation

NREN
- Structure
- Liaisons (e.g. focal points)
- Technical expertise
- Infrastructure

HEI LIBRARIAN COMMUNITIES
- Networks of mobilisation and influence
- Liaisons (e.g. institutional focal points)
- Information & Knowledge expertise
- Institutional embeddedness

CONTENT PROVIDERS
- Knowledge producers
- Knowledge consumers
- Embedded in research communities of practice

E-INFRASTRUCTURE PLATFORM (E.G. KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY)
NREN contribution – technical expertise and infrastructure architecture/digital platform implementation
CONTENT PROVIDER contribution – research data, outputs, information needs
HEI LIBRARIAN COMMUNITIES contribution – custodians of repositories, design and management of knowledge discovery and curation mechanisms

Aims & Objectives

- The **aim** of the survey was to produce a rounded picture of how higher education sector librarians view the **enabling and constraining factors of their practice as information resource managers** especially regarding the development, implementation and maintenance of Open Access Repositories.

- The **objectives** of the survey were to:

1. Understand the evolving role of the library function in contemporary African higher education institutions (HEIs)

2. Understand how institutions affecting the higher education sector support or constrain the roles of librarians

3. Determine how NRENs can work with librarians to support their roles

4. Gather demographic information that would be useful in categorizing the librarian communities of practice
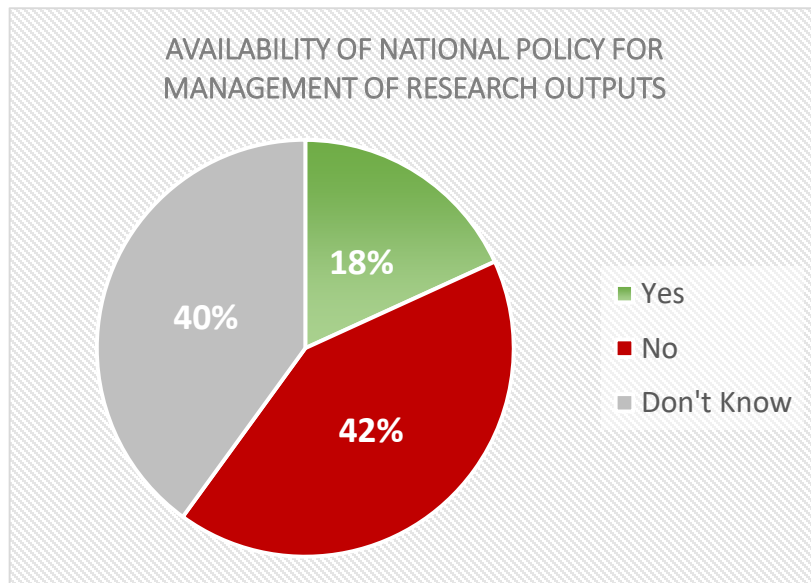
WORKSHOP SURVEY REVIEW APPROACH

Survey Approach

- **Regions**:
  - Ubuntunet Alliance – Region 1 (East & Southern) – 1st Survey & Discussion Workshop
  - WACREN – Region 2 (West & Central) – 2nd Survey & Discussion Workshop
  - ASREN – Region 3 (Northern) – 3rd Survey & Discussion Workshop
- **Key Partners**
  - WACREN, EIFL, COAR, UoS
- **Distribution**
  - Librarian consortia and associations in these key regions
- **Questionnaire**
  - Revised version of Pilot Survey distributed to WACREN librarian mailing list last summer
  - Developed in consultation with HEI librarians in Libsense workshops and key partners
  - 6 sections, 94 individual questions in all, French and English versions available
  - Sections A to D target specific library functions– Management, Operational, Subject Specialist & Technical
  - Section E deals with librarians' digital skills
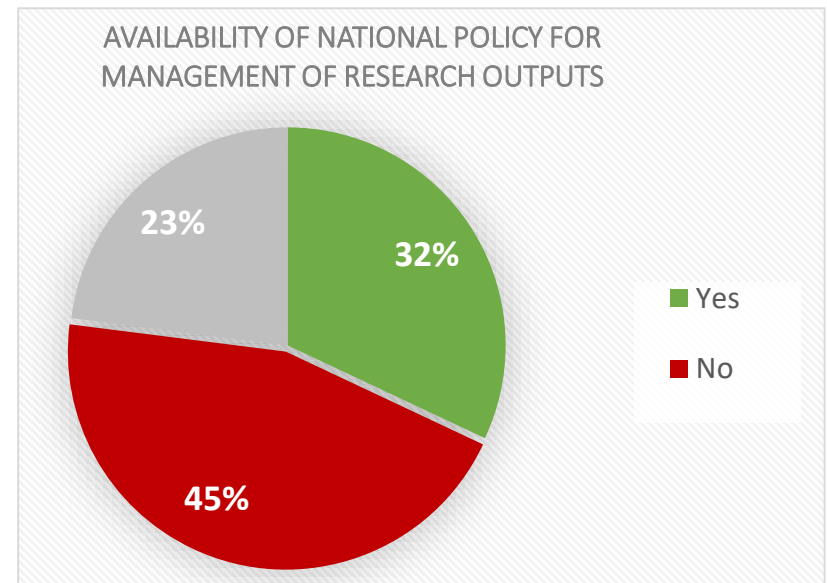 - Section F deals with demographics

NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR OAR - POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Awareness of the existence of national policies for the management of research outputs is apparently higher in E/S Africa (32%) than it is in W/C Africa (18%). 82% of participants in W/C either deny or do not even know of the existence of such policies compared to the 68% recorded in E/S Africa

W/C AFRICA

AVAILABILITY OF NATIONAL POLICY FOR
MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS

- Yes — 18%
- No — 42%
- Don't Know — 40%

E/S AFRICA

AVAILABILITY OF NATIONAL POLICY FOR
MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS
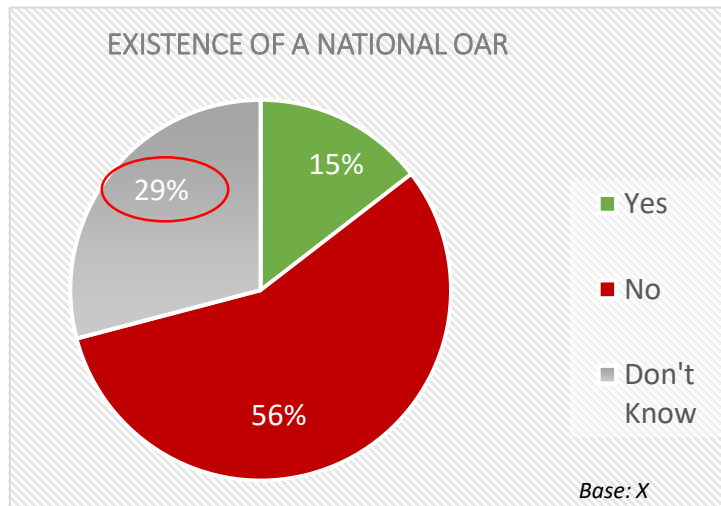

- Yes — 32%
- No — 45%
- 23%

A7. Does your country have a national policy regarding approaches to the management of research outputs (e.g. a policy regarding the publication of research outputs using national funding sources)?
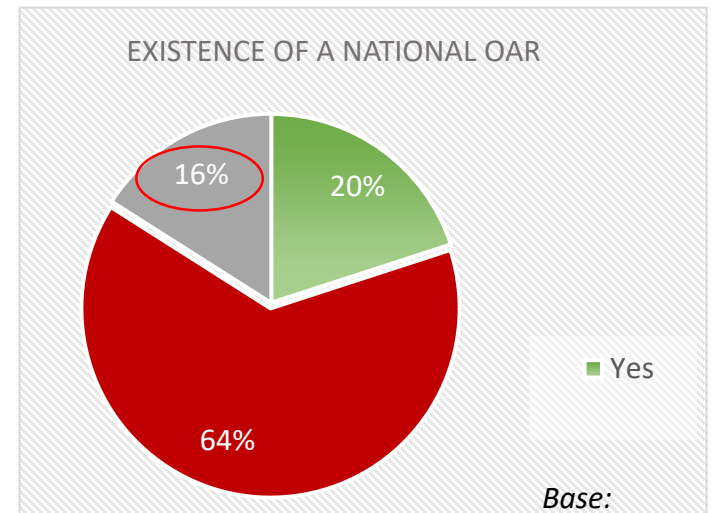
NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR OAR - POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

While in both regions, the recorded claims of the existence of national OARs are high, the level of ignorance on this question is quite significant and worrying – 29% 'DK' in W/C Africa & 15% in E/S Africa.

W/C AFRICA

EXISTENCE OF A NATIONAL OAR

15% Yes
56% No
29% Don't Know

Base: X

E/S AFRICA

EXISTENCE OF A NATIONAL OAR

20% Yes
64% No
16%

Base:

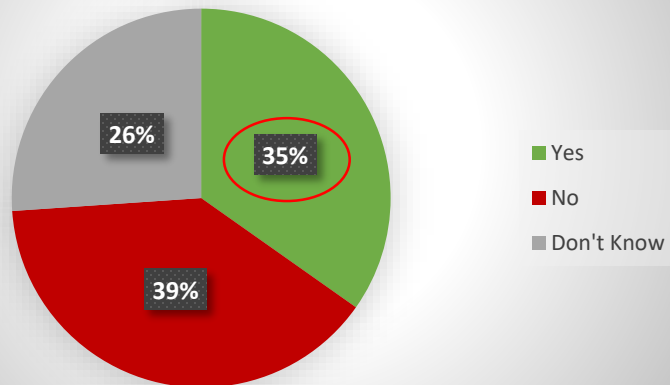*A8. Does your country have a national Open Access repository?*

NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR OAR - POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Results more comparable to E/S than W/C regions.

N AFRICA

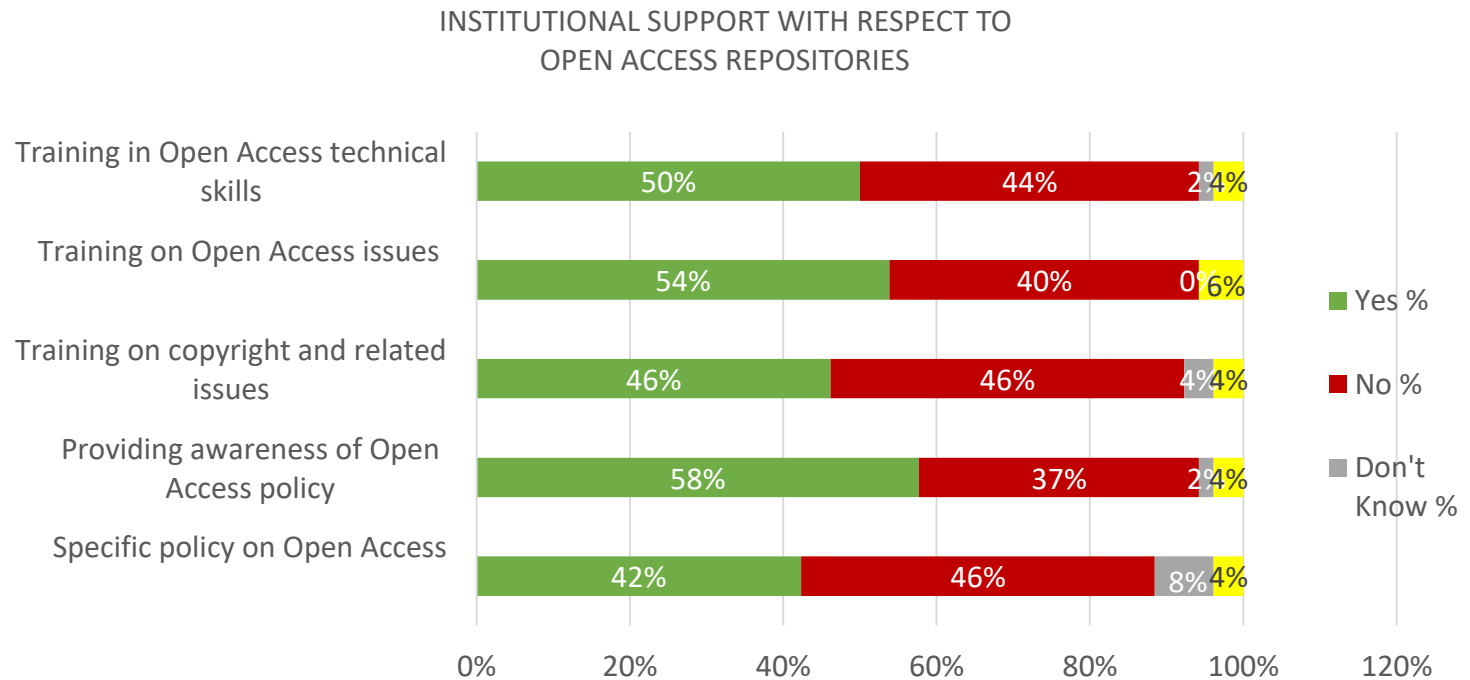AVAILABILITY OF NATIONAL POLICY FOR
MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS

- 35%
- 39%
- 26%

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

N AFRICA

EXISTENCE OF A NATIONAL OAR

- 4%
- 31%
- 65%

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- Don't Know
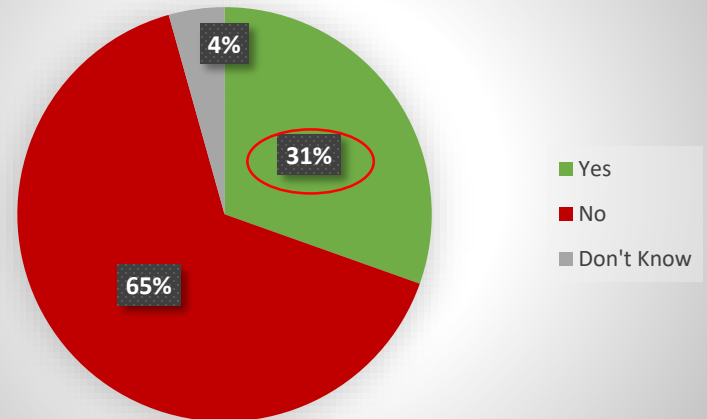
A8. Does your country have a national Open Access repository?

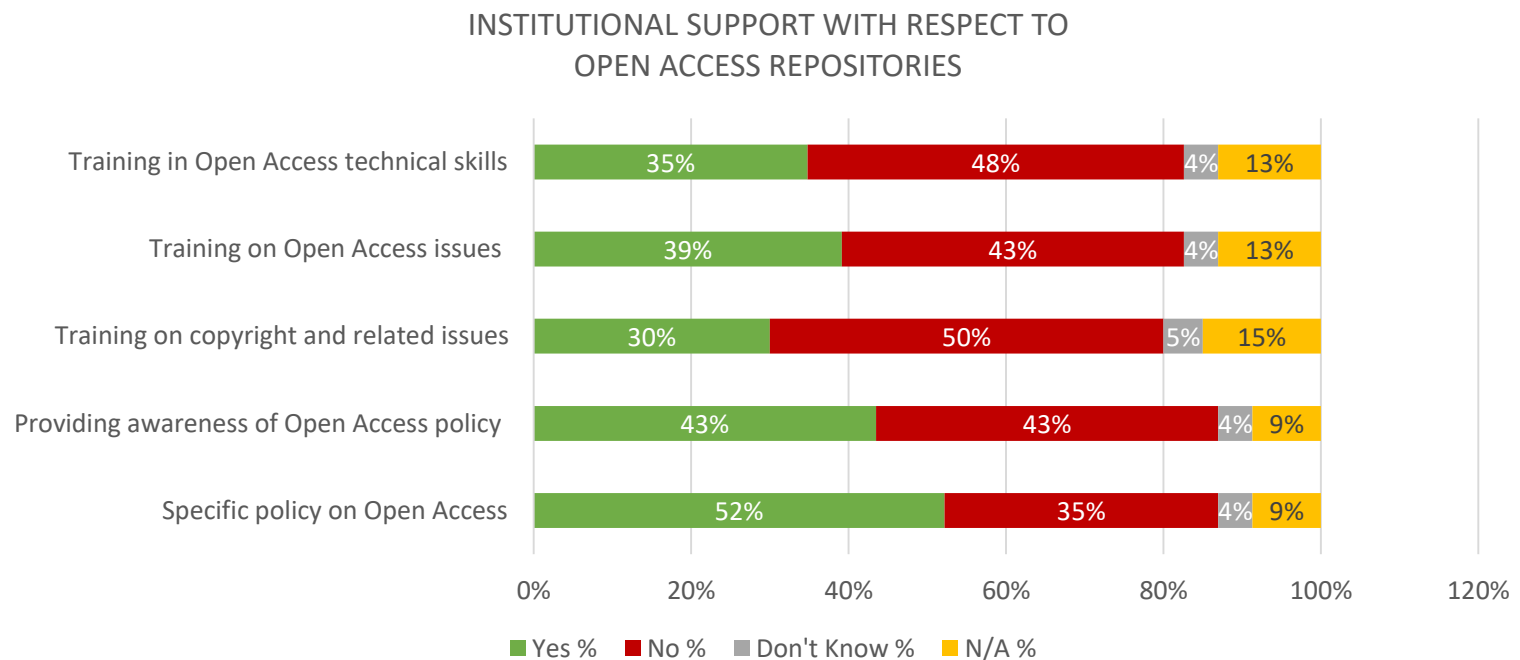# INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT SPECIFIC TO OA DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY (W/C)

Two areas reported below 50% are "Specific policy on Open Access" and "Training on copyright and related issues". This corresponds with previous responses on policy guidance reported in this survey.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT WITH RESPECT TO OPEN ACCESS REPOSITORIES

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %	
Training in Open Access technical skills	50%	44%	2%	4%
Training on Open Access issues	54%	40%	0%	6%
Training on copyright and related issues	46%	46%	4%	4%
Providing awareness of Open Access policy	58%	37%	2%	4%
Specific policy on Open Access	42%	46%	8%	4%

B7. With respect to Open Access repositories, what forms of support does your library receive from the institution?

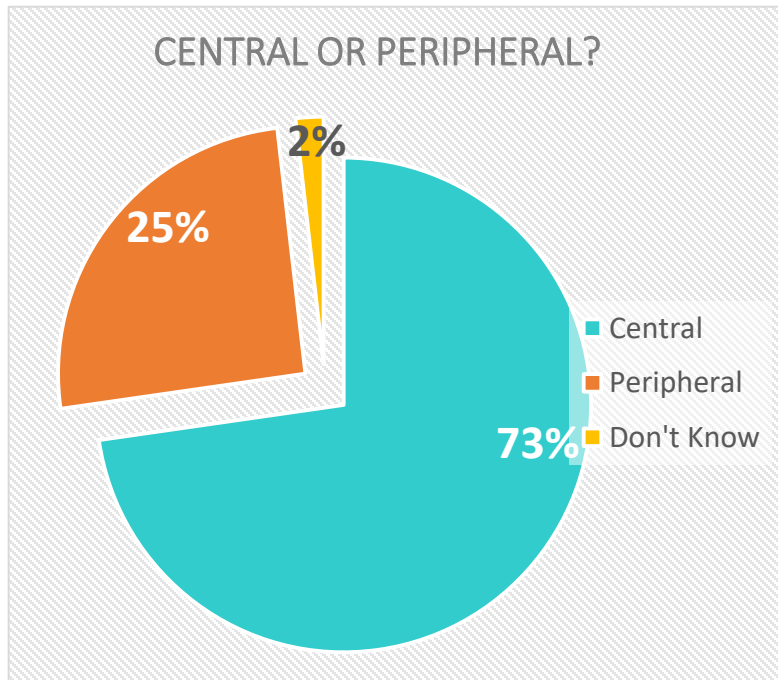# INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT SPECIFIC TO OA DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY (N AFRICA)

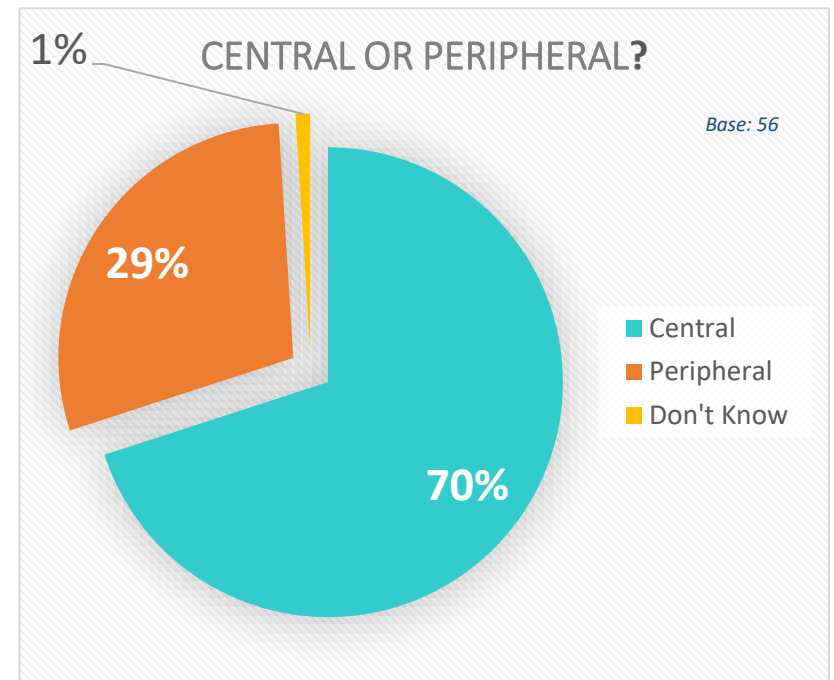Comparable responses with policy seeming to be slightly better reported in this region.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT WITH RESPECT TO
OPEN ACCESS REPOSITORIES

Category	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %	N/A %
Training in Open Access technical skills	35%	48%	4%	13%
Training on Open Access issues	39%	43%	4%	13%
Training on copyright and related issues	30%	50%	5%	15%
Providing awareness of Open Access policy	43%	43%	4%	9%
Specific policy on Open Access	52%	35%	4%	9%

■ Yes %   ■ No %   ■ Don't Know %   ■ N/A %

B7. With respect to Open Access repositories, what forms of support does your library receive from the institution?

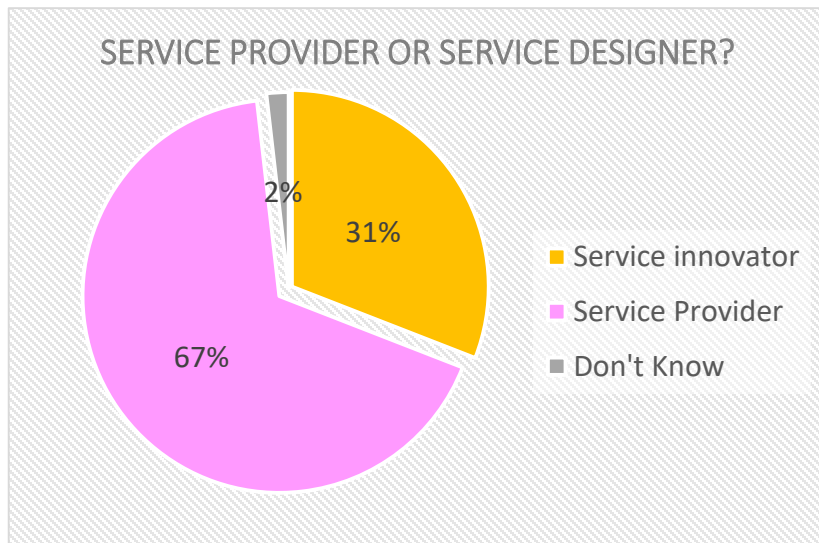# OPINION ON THE PERCEPTION OF THE LIBRARY AS AN INFLUENCER IN THE INSTITUTION

CENTRAL OR PERIPHERAL?

2%
25%
73%
- Central
- Peripheral
- Don't Know

CENTRAL OR PERIPHERAL?

Base: 56

1%
29%
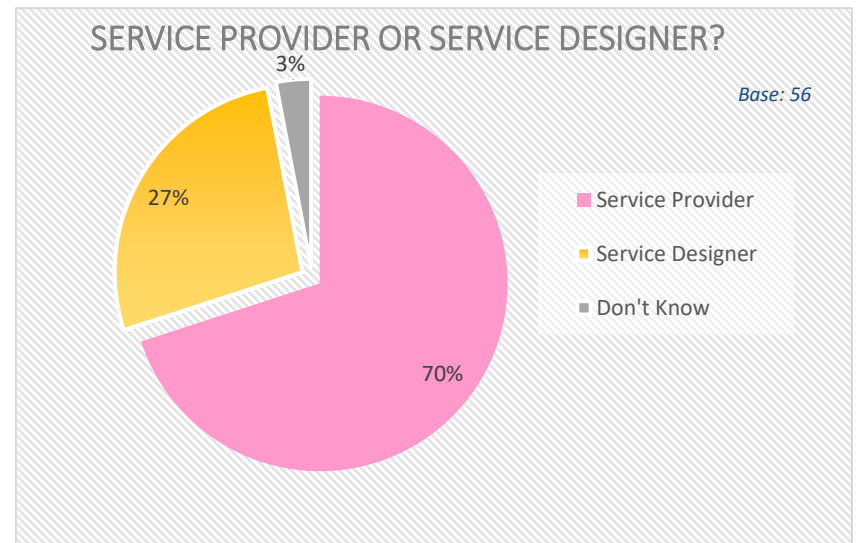70%
- Central
- Peripheral
- Don't Know

A13. Within the institution as a whole, is the role of the library considered central or peripheral?

OPINION ON THE PERCEPTION OF THE LIBRARY AS SERVICE PROVIDER OR SERVICE DESIGNER
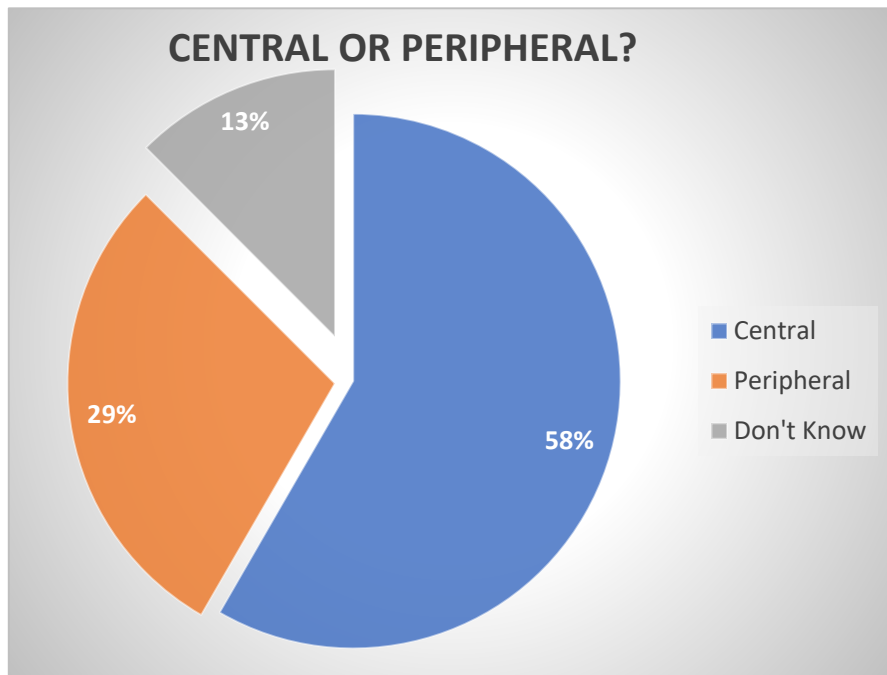
W/C AFRICA

SERVICE PROVIDER OR SERVICE DESIGNER?

- Service innovator
- Service Provider
- Don't Know

2%
31%
67%

E/S AFRICA

SERVICE PROVIDER OR SERVICE DESIGNER?

Base: 56

- Service Provider
- Service Designer
- Don't Know

3%
27%
70%

Slight change in the phrasing of this question may have led to differences in responses, but they are not significant.

A14. Is the library considered a service provider (support role) or a service innovator (transformational role) in your institution?

OPINION ON THE PERCEPTION OF THE LIBRARY AS SERVICE PROVIDER OR SERVICE DESIGNER
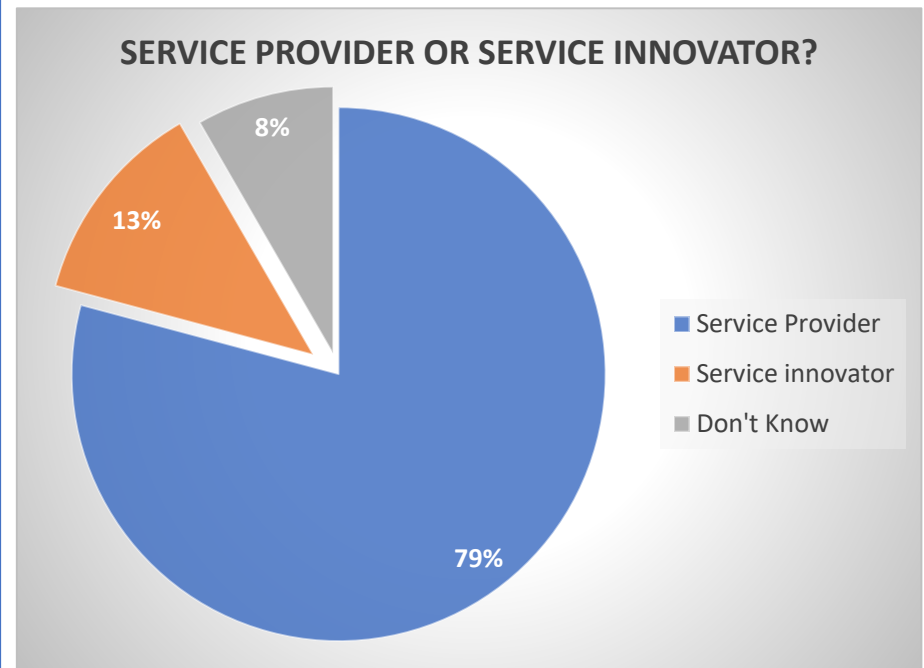
A13. Within the institution as a whole, is the role of the library considered central or peripheral?
A14. Is the library considered a service provider (support role) or a service innovator (transformational role) in your institution?

Focus Groups

- Focus groups help to delve deeper into issues surfaced from the surveys
- For participating in Sunday's Focus Groups (5 – 8 people each) – please give me your name, institution, and an email address to notify you for participation.
- The scheduled times:
  - Sunday 28th April 2019
  - Focus Group 1 – 15:15 – 16:15
  - Focus Group I1 – 16:15 – 17:15

More Links

- LIBSENSE main information can be found at https://spaces.wacren.net/display/LIBSENSE
- LIBSENSE-I workshop https://events.ubuntunet.net/event/19/
- LIBSENSE-II Workshop https://indico.wacren.net/event/77/
- LIBSENSE-III Workshop http://asrenorg.net/?q=content/libsense-iii-workshop
- Inquiries to: libsense@ren.africa

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Ojedokun A Ayoku Victoria Nwamaka Okafor , (2015)," ICT skills acquisition and competencies of librarians Implications for digital and electronic environment in Nigerian universities libraries ", The Electronic Library, Vol. 33 Iss 3 pp. 502 – 523

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