

Title: Library publishing for an inclusive education

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Abstract

Higher education, in the main, should be structured such that it addresses the issue of diversity and rejects all forms of hegemony, stereotypes and biases: both as a public and a common good it must provide equal opportunity for as many as possible in the interest of a more rights-based, egalitarian, and cohesive society. However, the cost of scholarly literature has spiralled out of control, making higher education unaffordable. In a post-colonial era, it is imperative that higher education be relevant and decolonised. Unfortunately, the quest for maximizing profits by large publishing houses have not supported the goal of an affordable and decolonised education. Academic libraries are attempting to bridge this divide by providing an open access and social justice driven ‘library as a publisher’ service. This service upholds the principles of inclusivity and diversity. Library publishing provides opportunity for an inclusive, affordable and decolonised higher education.

Introduction

According to the UNESCO declaration on knowledge societies (2005, p.170), scientific knowledge is a public good which is created and transferred for the welfare of society and integrated into the global knowledge economy. However, one of the instruments for the generation of scientific knowledge, that is, higher education has come under criticism for shifting the burden of cost to students and their families (Marginson, 2018). This shift has contributed to the growing marginalization of the poor in higher education and negatively impacted the generation and dissemination of scientific knowledge, especially from the global south. This transfer of burden must be viewed against the backdrop of the assertion that “higher education brings collective benefits, elaborating on the notions of higher education as both a public and a common good ... providing equal opportunity for as many as possible in the interest of a more rights-based, egalitarian, and cohesive society” (Marginson, 2018, para. 4). Therefore, it is imperative that the higher educational system be structured to address, amongst others, the issues of diversity and reject all forms of hegemony, stereotypes and biases (UNESCO, 2015). Traditional factors of marginalization in education, such as gender, urban vs. rural residence, income, language, minority status, and disability have to be rigorously addressed for a rights-based, egalitarian, and cohesive society.

One of the significant contributors to a diversified educational system is the library which has made significant strides in addressing the issue of inclusiveness by making provision for free access to scholarly content via open access. The principles of egalitarianism have always been fundamental to the open access movement. In this open access arena, libraries are rolling-out a publishing service that is driven by the principle of equity to ensure social inclusion. The drivers of library publishing programmes are empowerment, capacity

development, and attention to socio-economic challenges; thus, contributing to higher education as a public good.

This chapter will engage in discussion about the role of the library as an institution contributing to diversification and inclusivity through its open access publishing service. The chapter focuses on the South African environment and the responses to the demand for a social justice driven, inclusive, and diverse higher education. The complexities associated with South African society and its historical past provide important lessons to be shared with countries facing similar challenges of marginalization and exclusion. The discussion addresses the interpretation of diversity, efforts to decolonize higher education, the role of libraries in these efforts, and the library quest for an affordable, inclusive, and decolonised education, as illustrated through the chosen example.

Interpretation of diversity

The concept of diversity is complex. For the purpose of this chapter, the authors view diversity as the process of bringing together demographic and philosophical differences through the removal of prejudice and fostering a climate of equity and mutual respect. In the South African environment, societal heterogeneity, against the backdrop of its historical past, dictates a broader interpretation of diversity. On its own, diversity underscores the need for parity to level the playing fields. In South African society, diversity and inclusion should be underpinned by social justice principles to bring to the fore equity before the roll-out of equality.

Before engaging in discussion on a social justice driven education system, it is important to provide some context. The authors contend that although the context is set in South Africa, elements within this discussion could be applicable to many countries including those in the global north.

Transformation in the post-colonial era

Enlightenment, egalitarianism, equality, equity and, economic and social affluence are high in the list of priorities of many African countries. However, decades of colonial rule, subjugation, and marginalization have turned these ideals into an illusion. The post-colonial era has seen the growth of dictatorships and continuous economic deprivation and social inequality. It is against this background that many African countries are mapping their transformational trajectory and consolidating their political independence. *En route* to democracy, South Africa had to overcome years of apartheid and indoctrination. There was legislation that declared the First Peoples of South Africa and indentured labourers as inferior to Whites and must accept their roles as labourers and domestic workers (Union of South Africa, 1953).

South Africa's political democracy was shaped by several watershed events, many of which were led by the youth. One such event was the 1976 Soweto Youth¹ Uprising, a student protest that immensely changed the socio-political landscape. It is posited that the intensity of the Soweto Uprising was a reflection of "the development over the years of these people's

¹ The Soweto uprising was a series of demonstrations and protests led by black school children in South Africa that began on the morning of 16 June 1976. Students from numerous Sowetan schools began to protest in the streets of Soweto in response to the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools - Afrikaans was associated with the system of apartheid and oppression (Brown, 2016).

[Blacks] reactions to the growing crisis of apartheid” (SAHO) and the systematised marginalization of blacks. The events that triggered the uprising have been traced back to policies of the apartheid government and the systematic marginalization and exclusion of blacks. The youth of the 1970s used education and their own marginalization to profoundly change the socio-political landscape of South Africa.

In the post-apartheid era, the 2015-2017 student protest action was South Africa’s most disruptive student action since the 1976 Soweto Uprising. According to the BBC (2016) report, “South African universities have been affected by the biggest student protests to hit the country since apartheid ended in 1994²”. At the epicentre of this protest action was the indirect or unintended exclusion and marginalization of the black majority from quality tertiary education. For many, this action was viewed as another desperate attempt at social justice. The need for tangible change was compelling in post-apartheid South Africa as there was no actual social justice, “either because that there has been no concrete change in post-apartheid or because the country is currently suffering from a post-apartheid ‘hangover’ where the legacy of apartheid still affects the daily life of the average South African” (Linden, 2017, p. 59). For the large majority of black students, the protest action is viewed as a positive action to achieve the necessary promised social change and the next step in South Africa’s democracy.

The students’ demand for an affordable and relevant education is not deemed unreasonable. This demand is not unique to South Africa or Africa, it is a universal demand. In South Africa, frustration levels are on the rise because the majority of blacks are excluded from tertiary education due to the economically challenging state and despite the fact that South African democracy has been more than 20 years in the running. Clearly, the institutional racism, whereby people of colour are continuously but covertly marginalised by longstanding institutional norms and practices, also manifests itself in the form of under-representation. In this sense, the black South African identity, culture, and thought in university curricula, language policies, and student life tend to be downplayed in favour of white supremacy. The frustration at the ongoing systemic exclusion, whereby blacks are repeatedly denied education based on financial circumstances and are overlooked in long-standing university practices, eventually culminated in the 2015-2017 student protest.

Student protests make it evident that higher education is a pivotal point in the quest for social justice. Patrinos (2016, para. 18) posits that education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality, which sets the foundation for sustained economic growth and inclusion. The potential of education to advance political and socio-economic freedom, is clearly articulated in the aforementioned protests: in 1976, the goal was inclusion and political freedom; in 2015-2017, the goal was inclusion through the affordability and relevance of education, in other words, a decolonized education.

The dearth of local content to support the demand for a decolonized curriculum is a challenge and so too is the issue of unaffordability of textbooks which continues to affect the pass-rate of black students. The critical question is how libraries can contribute to inclusionary practises and social justice. One way to do so is through an open access library publishing service.

² Student protested demanding tertiary education funding from government and decolonisation of the curriculum under the banner of #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall (Shay, 2016, par.1&2).

Social justice

According to Tjbane and Pillay (2011), social justice is a contested concept in theory and practice, with various definitions. One of the definitions is that social justice entails the redistribution of socio-economic amenities. Social justice advances the egalitarian position of 'justice as fairness' and the liberal principles of equality and freedom.

Rawls' (n.d.) premise is that 'justice as fairness' promotes the creation of a more open society based on egalitarian social justice. In expounding egalitarian social justice, egalitarian theories contend that every member of society should be guaranteed the same rights, opportunities, and access to goods and resources while social justice reflects a concept of fairness in the assignment of fundamental rights and duties, economic opportunities, and social conditions. In the South African scenario, equity must precede equality to ensure the fair redistribution of resources.

Social justice and inclusive education

As mentioned, equitable, quality education is viewed as a social justice imperative - social justice in a transformed higher education system in South Africa must be viewed as a priority for the democratically elected government.

One of the emerging interpretations of social justice in the South African context is its association with inclusive education. In this regard, a socially just education system entails the celebration and valuing of diversity, accommodation and tolerance of all learners, creation of equal opportunities and the promotion of the capabilities of all learners (Pendlebury & Enslin, 2004, p. 50). Inclusive education encompasses other mechanism of social justice, namely, increased and broadened participation of previously excluded and disadvantaged people. Hence, the significance of the 1976 and 2015-2017 student protest. The latter is of greater significance given the principles of social justice is enshrined in the Constitution of the country. This assertion is corroborated by Case (2017, p. 1) who posits that the adoption of social justice practices "can be associated with a sharply growing sense that the democratic government has not been able to address the inequities inherited from colonial and apartheid times – both access to and success in higher education remain skewed by race".

Inclusivity in access to information and education

The necessity for the inclusion of individuals of diverse and unique needs in the education mainstream for the attainment of social justice has led to the development of inclusive education frameworks, which call for inclusivity in access to knowledge for the disadvantaged users by digital libraries. While these innovations on the internet support flexibility for user access, on the flipside there are high chances of exclusion as there are another set of challenges with accessing information online (Brophy & Craven, 2007).

Research highlights the growing marginalization of those with disabilities, including but not limited to those with blindness or visual impairment. Brophy and Craven (2007) argue that, it is critical for libraries to ensure access for all through adopting relevant technology and good

practice in interface design, as dissemination methods have become predominantly Web-based, with e-book provision being prioritised. Innovations related to Web-based information resources from simple text to dynamic and interactive designs are being developed to enhance access to information, especially for those with differing abilities: these innovations cater for learners with diverse and unique needs including the blind.

However, as pointed out by Thomas (2013, p. 474), inclusion should not be one dimensional but rather be broad based to cater for both disability and social justice. The aspect of social justice in this case acknowledges inequalities among able bodied learners, which are fuelled by socio-economic imbalances and poverty.

The demand from the student body during the 2015-2017 protest action was for an affordable and decolonised education. The authors posit that the delivery of a decolonised education will be a challenge as there is dearth of denorthernised content to support a transformed curriculum. The authors go on to argue that a diamond library publishing service will support the demand for an affordable (through free access to open textbooks) and decolonised (through the publication of local monographs and journals) education.

Denorthernization of the colonized publishing landscape

The decline in the publication of local content has significantly contributed to the consolidation of global north centred curriculum – teaching and learning cannot take place without access to scholarly literature. The global north dominated publishing landscape has to be challenged if there is to be a realization of the commitment to a decolonised curriculum and to an affordable higher education.

The authors argue that there has been an unintended but systematic colonization of the African publishing landscape. The decline of an already small African publishing industry has opened opportunities for major global north publishing houses to supply critical scholarly literature to African ‘markets’ even though it carries a global north bias. In the quest for maximum profits, major global north publishing houses have inadvertently northernised the African publishing landscape.

This ‘northernization’ of the publishing landscape has marginalized the research voices from the global south. The inequalities in publishing for and by marginalized voices are compounded by economic circumstances, that is, the inability of global south authors to pay exorbitant article processing charges³ (APCs) in an environment where there is a push via the openness movement for the free sharing of research output.

Bonaccorso *et al.* (2014) adds that there are two fundamental processes that propagate exclusion or marginalization; firstly, global south researchers, in the main, do not have access to research already published (and that would include research produced in the global south) for them to adequately contribute to the world’s knowledge production. The second is the delegitimization of research emanating from the global south. Roh (2016) presents a scenario which demonstrates how this delegitimization contributes to the colonization of the publishing landscape. She highlights that economics papers written about the United States were more likely to be published in the top five economics journals and only 1.5% had

³ A fee paid by authors for their article to be published open access immediately on publication

content about countries other than the U.S. Hence, there has been a shift in contributions from researchers from global south countries who have refocused their research and were reporting on the United States in order to get published. Thus, confirming that the target markets of the global north publishing houses are contributing to the dearth of global research literature.

Library publishing is meant to bring parity by creating fertile ground for new voices to find their way into disciplinary conversations, reach new audiences, both academic and public, and positively alter the existing publishing landscape. There is a desperate need for the democratization and decolonization of the publishing landscape: and, library publishing is one such service that can deliver on this need. This publishing service promotes social justice through the inclusion of African researchers and research output into mainstream research processes. Library publishing is envisaged to be that social justice service that can give voice to the marginalized: give space for active and equitable participation of global south researchers in knowledge production and dissemination.

Inclusivity and demarginalization through library publishing

South Africa is a fledgling democracy that has endured decades of apartheid which compartmentalised higher education with the historically disadvantaged black institutions being dramatically under resourced (Raju et.al., [2020]). The authors assert that the historically advantaged institutions have a moral obligation to share scholarly content for the advancement of research in the country as a whole and for the greater good of the public. The sharing of scholarly output will have a domino effect of accelerating the growth of research ultimately culminating in Africa's moving away from being a net consumer of the world's knowledge production to becoming a contributor to knowledge production.

There must be concerted collective efforts to mainstream the 'library as a publisher' service to support equity first and then equality in the creation and dissemination of African research. A successful roll-out of the service will contribute to a decolonised and affordable higher education as well as contribute to demarginalization (e.g. offering local authors a forum to publish their scholarly content) and inclusivity (e.g. making textbooks freely accessible).

Transition to social justice driven library publishing

The University of Cape Town (UCT), a leading research-intensive university on the African continent, was the foremost point of the 2015-2017 protest call for a decolonised and affordable higher education. As a historically advantaged university, the authors posit that it has a moral obligation to share its resources as openly as possible. The moral obligation together with the demand for decolonised and affordable education influenced the establishment of publishing programme at UCT. As competencies in the delivery of a 'library as publisher' service grew, the commitment to social justice became stronger – currently, the principles of social justice are the primary driver in the delivery of the service.

The authors also advocate for social justice principles being the primary driver for the transformation of traditional publishing practices as it advances diversity and inclusivity; it promotes equitable access to knowledge. Academic libraries are to be more than purchasers/subscribers of information, they are to be contributors to students' success and

advocate to be a partner in the university's core business such as contributing to its social responsive goal. Library as a publishing service is mooted as one of the drivers in the disruption of the traditional publishing landscape

The South African textbook dilemma

Joseph (2015) asserts that scholarly publishing in South Africa is on the decline as the local publishing markets are small which is exacerbated by increasing costs of publication. Declining library budgets, the principal purchaser of textbooks, is another aggravating factor in the decline of local publishing. This assertion is corroborated by Ngobeni (2012, p. 7) who states that since university libraries have been experiencing budget cuts, scholarly publishing has suffered as a result of libraries having to decrease their purchase of scholarly books. In the case of the global north, publishing is thriving due to the capacity to invest in supportive technologies, extended reach, offer of "excellent author services, production and editorial workflow systems and increased discoverability and demonstrable usage" (Joseph, 2015, p. 63).

Confirmation of the South African textbook dilemma is data from Statistics South Africa, which states that the price of textbooks has increased by 13.6% in 2014 which is way above inflation rate (Nkosi, 2014). This increase in prices is exacerbated by publishing houses changing editions every year negating a second-hand textbook market. Wiens (2015) conducted a study on the cost of textbooks for the University of Cape Town (UCT)'s students. The study revealed that the average cost of first year science textbooks is approximately US\$1400 per year, however the contribution toward textbooks for students on a Bursary Scheme is approximately US\$283. There is an additional cost of \$1117 (not covered by the Scheme) per year for textbooks – this shortfall is a major burden on students and their families. There are many bursary students who are forced to make choices between food and shelter over textbooks. The untenable cost of textbooks has also forced students to make decisions that have negatively impacted their academic careers: the tendency to avoid buying critical textbooks is viewed as a major contributor to high failure and dropout rates by students from low income households (Raju & Pietersen, 2017).

Included in the unaffordability of textbooks, is the overarching problem of the exorbitant cost of tuition at universities and the need for local content to be taught in the lecture halls. The 2015-2017 protest actions brought to the fore these national issues. The absence of local content due to cost and publishing challenges does not augur well for a decolonised and affordable education. The protest action had set South African higher education on a trajectory that forced libraries to re-examine their roles and responsibilities and commitment to social justice.

The exemplar of UCT's publishing service

UCT Libraries, like several other South African academic libraries, are making concerted efforts to provide an alternate publishing model to make African scholarship more widely accessible. The underpinning philosophy is that the service is part of a suite of services that academic libraries routinely provide. In keeping with this philosophy, UCT Libraries provide a diamond open access publishing service. Essentially, this service allows readers free access

to the journal or monograph (including textbooks) and authors do not pay for publishing. It must be noted that the academic rigour is not compromised despite not conforming to global north publishing standards.

Rollout of the publishing programme

In 2015, UCT Libraries piloted its library as publisher service by publishing an undergraduate journal, *UR@UCT: undergraduate research*. As a research-intensive institution, UCT wanted undergraduate students to explore research development beyond the classroom through publishing and to provide a forum to increase the number of postgraduate students by exploring careers in the academic world (Raju, Raju & Claassen, 2015: 274). Since 2015, UCT Libraries has published four additional journal titles. This includes journals that are peer reviewed and those that are not. There are niche journals for highly specialised fields as well as an international journal *Global Health Innovation*, which is a collaboration between UCT, the University of Lagos, the University of Ibadan and Northwestern University in the USA.

In 2016, UCT Libraries started to experiment with publishing open monographs and textbooks. The rationale for offering a publishing service changed as competencies grew. UCT Libraries is now driven by social justice principles and the ‘library as publisher’ service has been incorporated into the Libraries’ strategic plan and adding value to the University’s social responsiveness and Afropolitanism agenda (Raju, 2017). In the period 2016-2019, the Libraries published 13 monographs of which three are open textbooks. There was a deliberate ploy to differentiate between open monographs and open textbooks - open monographs are written primarily for a community of scholars, be it students, peers of the authors or any other persons and may be used as required for supplementary reading in the teaching process. Open textbooks on the other hand are closely linked to the curriculum and aligned to teaching philosophies and academic pedagogical approaches. It is written primarily for students and is intended to be used in the lecture halls.

In delivering a social justice driven publishing service, several innovations had to be investigated, tested and rolled-out by UCT Libraries. African challenges such as exorbitant cost of bandwidth and connectivity interruptions together with frequent black outs had to be factored-in to deliver an ‘access for all’ service. There are three books that have explored different options of presentation to make the monograph more accessible to Africans. The first book was by a leading otolaryngologist and the second book was by senior law students and managed by a tutoring company.

In terms of the first book, Lukama, Kalinda and Aldous (2019) point out that there is a dire shortage of otolaryngologist in Africa. They found that 64% of African countries had less than one otolaryngologist per million population while developed nations having up to 13.325 otolaryngologist per 100,000 population. This is exacerbated by the lack of facilities. This textbook attempts to bridge both the challenges through the inclusion of audio and video clips to simulate research and learning environments. The Libraries hold the view that the audio and video clips will help students understand surgical procedures outside the classroom as well as assist practicing doctors in Africa with the latest surgical procedures. The book is available in

a format that accommodates content being downloaded and viewed offline, or streamed, when connectivity is available.

The second book is the *Atlas of Paediatric HIV Infection*. Sub-Saharan Africa bears the greatest burden of paediatric HIV disease. This atlas is the first of its kind with photographs of varying skin, systemic conditions and opportunistic infections in the HIV-infected paediatric patient. The aim of the atlas is to illustrate conditions which were captured among paediatric patients presenting to HIV clinics and wards in an African setting.

The third textbook is in constitutional law. Constitutional law is one of the more complex subjects in the legal curriculum with an extremely high failure rate. The current prescribed textbooks are too expensive, and students try to get by without purchasing these prescribed textbooks which is to their detriment. Further, a large cohort of the student body are second or later English-speaking students who have challenges navigating dense legal content. To address this challenge, the book has an audio format which allows for students to listen to the book before reading it. The authors are of the view that this makes the book more inclusive as it caters for different learning styles. Embedded in the textbook, are mini workbooks to help students prepare for the constitutional law examination.

Inclusiveness is also evident through the different formats available to read or download the textbook. As smartphones are more available than computers, content can be viewed in HTML or ePUB format, ensuring wider accessibility on the African continent. Even though the rationale to have the two formats were not initially for the text-to-be-read-aloud to the reader, the feature in later internet browser, Microsoft Edge, facilitates read aloud to the reader. This emphasises the inclusivity of the two formats.

Thus, UCT library contributes to publishing African scholarship using ‘denorthernization’ guidelines. The library is cognisant of the continent’s challenges and consciously advances publishing local relevant content and its dissemination across the continent. The ‘library as publisher’ service enables the library to actively contribute to transforming the publishing landscape – denorthernization of the landscape, to make scholarship more inclusive.

This sense of commitment to inclusivity and demarginalization is extending to the African continent via the creation of an African publish platform.

African Continental Platform

In acknowledging the skills shortage and poor information technology infrastructure on the African continent, UCT Libraries, in collaboration with a number of partners, are developing a continental platform for the publication of open journals and books. There is proof of concept for the functioning of an aggregated institutional platform which has been extended into a national platform, a South African platform. This South African platform is made available to any of the academic institutions in the country to use for the publication of their local journals and/or monographs. The next phase (which is currently in process) is to extend this platform to other African countries. Currently, the University of Namibia is publishing on the platform. There is discussion and proposed training for the University of Botswana to use the platform. Further, there are two institutions from Zimbabwe that have shown interest

in publishing on the platform. The authors are optimistic that the platform will be utilised by more African universities soon.

In March 2020, there will be a meeting in Benin (a north west African country) to engage in discussion on the consolidation of the platform and to formally invite north-west African academic institutions to use the platform to publish journals and monographs.

Conclusion

The principles of diversity, social inclusion and social justice have been fundamental to the open access movement. Given the propensity for publishing houses to prioritize profits at the expense of inclusion and marginalization, academic libraries are duty-bound to provide an open access publishing service that disrupts the commercialization of scholarly information in support of an inclusive education system.

In a post-colonial and post-apartheid era, exclusion and marginalization are still, although not by design, a major challenge. The challenges of exclusion from quality education is not peculiar to South Africa, Africa or the global south, it is a universal challenge. The moral dilemma of an affordable, relevant and inclusive education is universal. Hence, it is imperative that the academic library broaden its role of disseminator of information to include an information publishing service (library as publisher) to contribute to the advancement of a demarginalized and inclusive education.

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