



**AFRICAN UNIVERSITY PRESSES PROJECT**

A research project of African Minds funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York

# THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Published in 2017 by African Minds  
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Funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York grant number G-52005.

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Design and layout by COMPRESS.dsl  
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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>AAU</b>	Addis Ababa University
<b>AAUP</b>	Addis Ababa University Press
<b>AAUP</b>	Association of American University Presses
<b>ABC</b>	African Books Collective
<b>ACLS</b>	American Council of Learned Societies
<b>AJOL</b>	African Journals Online
<b>ARL</b>	Association of Research Libraries
<b>AUP</b>	African university press
<b>CODESRIA</b>	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
<b>DOAJ</b>	Directory of Open Access Journals
<b>GERD</b>	gross expenditure on research and development
<b>ICT</b>	information and communications technology
<b>IPG</b>	Independent Publishers Group
<b>POD</b>	print on demand
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>UON</b>	University of Nairobi
<b>UONP</b>	University of Nairobi Press
<b>WU</b>	Wollega University
<b>WUP</b>	Wollega University Press

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We would like to thank the staff at Addis Ababa University Press, Nairobi University Press, Wits University Press and Wollega University Press who gave up their time to be interviewed for this research project. Without their perspectives, the research would have lacked the richness of context.

We acknowledge the research assistance provided by Hanitra Rasoanampoizina (University of Antananarivo), Lunette Warren (Stellenbosch University) and Taabo Mugume (University of the Free State).

We are grateful to those who provided comments on the draft version of this report – their inputs contributed

clarity, rigour and relevance. Thank you to Jonathan Harle (INASP), Karen Colvard (Guggenheim Foundation) and Justin Cox (African Books Collective).

We would also like to acknowledge and thank Carnegie Corporation of New York for supporting a project that at first glance may not have seemed like a natural fit in its programming on higher education in Africa. In particular, Claudia Frittelli's interest in the role of the university press to support the dissemination of African university research and her encouragement to conduct research on the topic are greatly appreciated.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While there are new and enabling conditions for university presses to increase production and to widen distribution, the question remains: How can African university presses make the most of these opportunities? Most likely, the answer lies in deploying the technological changes in production, distribution and marketing made possible by digitisation and network effects of the internet.

At the same time, propelled by a growing perception in academia of ‘robber capitalism’ on the part of publishers as they protect their oligopoly in the face of dissolving spatial barriers and diminishing value add, we are witnessing a contrary trend: the emergence of the knowledge commons. However, this emergence takes place in an institutional context long dominated by an editorial logic and, in more recent times, by the logic of the market.

A holistic way of approaching the question of how African university presses can reposition themselves in support of the broader shift of some African universities towards a greater focus on research, is to consider shifts in the dominant institutional logic in the academic publishing industry. Based on a baseline survey of university presses in Africa, in-depth case studies of selected university presses, and an analysis of the

publishing choices made by African academics, this research project examined the opportunities and constraints faced by university presses in Africa.

It provides an overview of the African university press landscape and shows that there is a small, active group of university presses. University presses in Africa are not yet making use of technological advances to reconfigure their production, distribution and marketing processes, nor are they experimenting with new publishing models such as open access. While case studies of selected university presses surfaced unsurprising challenges (such as scarce resources and limited capacity), they also show that university presses in Africa are constrained by institutional logics that are holding them back from experimenting with new ways of doing things. The research also reveals that an alarmingly high number of academic authors at one flagship research university in Africa are choosing to publish monographs with predatory publishers.

The report concludes with a set of pragmatic recommendations; recommendations that are simultaneously attuned to the opportunities and to the realities of African university presses as revealed by the research conducted.



PART 1

# **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**



**What seems clear is that to succeed  
presses are going to need to be a  
more important partner in helping  
their host institutions to fulfill their  
research and teaching mission.**

L Brown, R Griffiths and M Rascoff (2007)  
University Publishing in a Digital Age.

There are new and enabling conditions made possible by technological advances for university presses to increase production, improve distribution and, more generally, explore new models for the publication of academic books. At the same time, university presses are confronted by shifting market conditions and expectations on the part of academics, both as authors and consumers of knowledge. These conditions raise the question: How can university presses make the most of global opportunities while adapting to local realities?

## New opportunities and challenges for the university press

The Academic Book of the Future Project<sup>1</sup> has produced a comprehensive review of the literature on academic book publishing.<sup>2</sup> As an introduction to the current state of the university press and the publication of academic monographs in this report, we borrow selected sections from that review of the literature and refer the reader to the review itself for a fuller overview of the landscape. We also refer to other initiatives in academic book publishing, pay particular attention to the opportunities afforded university presses by new technologies and, of particular relevance to this research project, supplement the overview that is predominantly from an Anglophone and developed-country perspective with research on academic book publishing in Africa (on scholarly publishing in general in some cases but with preference given to research on the university press in Africa).

## The university press and the publication of monographs

The original mission of the university press was to ensure that a university's own teaching and research was disseminated as widely as possible. John Fell, Dean of Christ Church (Oxford University), expressed this mission in 1669 when he said of a press at his university: 'by God's blessing may [it] not only prove useful to us poor scholars but reflect some reputation and advantage on the Publick'.<sup>3</sup> The non-commercial, public-good mission behind the founding of Princeton University Press over 200 years later in 1905 was similar: it was initially set up as a press that would issue scholarly books 'not feasible for commercial firms' and among its first publications were books by Princeton academics.<sup>4</sup>

Scholarly monographs – those books intended for a specialist academic audience, authored by one or several academics on a single topic and which may be distinguished from academic 'trade' titles that synthesise prior research and aim for a more general audience – serve two principal functions: '(1) they present original scholarship and provide the foundation for humanistic research, forming the basis for synthetic analyses and (2) they serve as a critical component of professional credentialing for the humanities and the interpretive social sciences'.<sup>5</sup>

According to several studies, researchers in the humanities tend to regard monographs as the predominant and most important formal publication type.<sup>6</sup> Books are seen as providing the structure and space to develop ideas in full in a manner not possible in other publication types such as journal articles.<sup>7</sup> Research by Estabrook and Warner shows that 46.8% of humanities researchers indicated that a book was needed to develop their argument and ideas while a further 25.4% indicated that they would rather publish their work in a single book than as a series of articles.<sup>8</sup> Becher and Trowler suggest a link between the nature of the research and the preferred publication: researchers focused on a narrow area of study are more likely to

1 <https://academicbookfuture.org/>

2 The Academic Book of the Future Project (n.d.) *Academic Books of the Future: An Initial Literature Review*. <https://academicbookfuture.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/initial-literature-review-with-references.pdf>

3 McKitterick M (2002) in Lockett A & Speicher L (2016) New university presses in the UK: Accessing a mission. *Learned Publishing* 29: 320–329. doi:10.1002/leap.1049

4 Lockett A & Speicher L (2016) New university presses in the UK: Accessing a mission. *Learned Publishing* 29: 320–329. doi:10.1002/leap.1049

5 Crow R (2014) *A Rational System for Funding Scholarly Monographs*. A white paper prepared for the AAU-ARL Task Force on Scholarly Communications. <http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/aau-arl-white-paper-rational-system-for-funding-scholarly-monographs-2012.pdf>; Eve M (2014) *Open Access and the Humanities: Contexts, Controversies and the Future*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781316161012

6 See Creaser et al. (2010), Fry et al. (2009a), Huang & Chang (2008), and Engels et al. (2012) in The Academic Book of the Future Project (n.d.); Lockett & Speicher (2016).

7 Cronin B & La Barre K (2004) Mickey Mouse and Milton: Book publishing in the humanities. *Learned Publishing* 17: 85–98.

8 Estabrook L & Warner B (2003) *The Book as the Gold Standard for Tenure and Promotion in the Humanistic Disciplines*. Champaign, Illinois: Committee on Institutional Cooperation.

publish in journals while those ranging across a number of themes or topics are more likely to publish books.<sup>9</sup>

The so-called 'monograph crisis' can be dated back to the 1990s – a report of a conference sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) referred to the 'death of the monograph' being 'near at hand' as a result of tightened library budgets and increasing scholarly specialisation.<sup>10</sup> However, the author of the conference report also notes that data indicative of the crisis was hard to find. Some have pointed to failures in marketing<sup>11</sup> or in creative thinking and effective strategies,<sup>12</sup> while others question the value of the persistent 'monograph crisis' rhetoric and encourage both an acceptance of the instability of monograph publishing and more constructive approaches to sustaining their publication.<sup>13</sup>

The average sale of monographs fell from approximately 1 500 copies in the 1970s to 200–300 in the early years of the 21st century; and the average price of a university press book rose by 13.6% between 1989 and 2000, while scholarly books published by commercial presses rose by 23.2%.<sup>14</sup> Thompson estimates that print runs have fallen from 2 000–3 000 in the 1970s to half that figure in the mid-2000s, with sales in the majority of cases at less than 750.<sup>15</sup> Such figures are hard to verify, and do not take account of the shift to small print runs accompanied by the ease of reprinting additional small runs as determined by demand.

Crow argues that there has been a failure of the market (in the US academic publishing system) to sustain the publication of monographs:

The market failure for monographs—that is, the inability of a market model to supply an adequate supply of monographs without a subsidy—is not a recent development. It has long been recognized that the cost of producing specialized scholarly monographs cannot be recovered through a market model based solely on individual title sales. The very existence of North American university

presses, represents, in large part, an attempt to provide an alternative to commercial publishing. A university press system subsidized by a small group of institutions functioned adequately as long as market sales were sufficient to minimize the financial support required from the host institutions. However, as library purchasing has declined, the financial commitment required of press institutions has increased. As institutional subsidies to presses reach their limits, presses face increasing pressure to consider commercial viability as well as scholarly merit in making publication decisions. Consequently, the effects of the inherent market failure are no longer hidden: the system cannot deliver an adequate supply of monographs, especially in narrow or specialized fields, thus constricting the communication of foundational scholarship and compromising the tenure and promotion system.<sup>16</sup>

Costs for publishing monographs can vary considerably depending on the costs included in the calculation, which typically include staff, overheads, infrastructure, editing, design, typesetting, marketing, and sales. Research by Maron et al. found that the average 'basic' cost of a monograph title (excluding press-level overheads or in-kind support) ranged from USD 22 559 at the smallest presses to USD 34 686 at the largest. Their findings also reveal that the highest single cost is that of staff time, particularly the time required to commission new titles – an activity that is closely linked with a university press's reputation and an activity that is the least likely to be outsourced. A counter-intuitive finding from the sample of American university presses was that larger university presses did not appear to benefit from economies of scale in that the smaller publishers were able to produce monographs at a lower cost than their larger counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

Based on the importance of the monograph, the relatively high costs of publishing academic monographs and on the failure of the market to support the publication of monographs, the US-focused Task Force on Scholarly Communication proposed a shift to

9 Becher T & Trowler PR (2001) *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*. 2nd Edition. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

10 The Academic Book of the Future Project (n.d.).

11 Wood C (1997) Marketing scholarly publishing: Monographs as lite beer. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 28(4).

12 Lipscombe T (1999) The golden age of scholarly publishing. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 30(3): 143–145.

13 Eve (2014); Mudditt A (2016) The past, present, and future of American university presses: A view from the left coast. *Learned Publishing* 29: 330–334. doi:10.1002/leap.1047

14 Greco et al. (2003, 2008) in Lockett & Speicher (2016).

15 Thompson (2005) in The Academic Book of the Future Project (n.d.).

16 Crow (2014).

17 Maron N, Mulhern C, Rossman D & Schmelzinger K (2016) *The Costs of Publishing Monographs: Towards a Transparent Methodology*. New York: Ithaca. [http://www.sr.ithaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SR\\_Report\\_Costs\\_Publishing\\_Monographs020516.pdf](http://www.sr.ithaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SR_Report_Costs_Publishing_Monographs020516.pdf)

supply-side funding in the form of a first-title subvention paid by university faculties.<sup>18</sup>

In March 2016, the University Press Redux Conference was held in Liverpool, UK. If this conference is taken as a litmus test for the challenges and opportunities faced by the contemporary university press in the digital age, then the following statements summarise the state of university presses in the Global North:

1. Publishers must adapt to changing environmental conditions<sup>19</sup>
2. New university presses are needed<sup>20</sup> (five were established in the UK in 2015–2016<sup>21</sup>) and the established presses have a role to play in exploring new ways of supporting scholarly communication<sup>22</sup>
3. University presses are able to be more responsive to the needs of its institution and scholars than an external publisher relying on sales revenue<sup>23</sup>
4. There are growing internal pressures on presses to be more accountable and self-sustaining<sup>24</sup>
5. The future of the monograph is central to the success of the university press<sup>25</sup>
6. Networks of and collaboration between organisational units is important<sup>26</sup>
7. Open access holds many benefits for the university press.<sup>27</sup>

While perhaps implied or taken for granted by university presses in 2016, the Task Force on Scholarly Communication in 2014 placed a much stronger emphasis on technology and its impact on the university press:

In early 2012, the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) formed a joint task force on scholarly communication. The Task Force's charter indicates that AAU and ARL seek to harness the potential of digital publishing technologies and ubiquitous networking to increase access to scholarly research and reduce production and distribution costs.

## Technological opportunities for university presses

While Cond and Rayner (2016) choose to focus on a diversity of university press types in the Global North, mainly premised on market and organisational characteristics,<sup>28</sup> one irrefutable and universal change in the international scholarly publishing landscape has been the technological changes in production, distribution and marketing made possible by digitisation and the network effects of the internet. According to Peter Dougherty, writing on the university press in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, four specific technological innovations provide the tools for academic presses globally to make the most of current market conditions.<sup>29</sup> According to Dougherty, the single most significant innovation in the global publication of scholarly books is the formation of online library-aggregation services such as Project MUSE and Books at JSTOR. By mid-2012, together they made available for purchase roughly 30 000 fully searchable digital books to libraries. Project MUSE reports that nearly 40% of libraries that buy its journals are outside of the United States. JSTOR's journals programme has 7 000 library accounts around the world, including 50 universities in China.

A second technology available to the university press is the existence and growth of supranational online book merchants. Sites like Amazon allow university presses to reach readers in foreign markets. Amazon accounts for a quarter to a third of sales for many university presses. At the University of Minnesota Press, for instance, 31% of print sales are through Amazon, and Amazon Kindle sales make up a majority of the press's retail e-book sales. John Sherer, director of the University of North Carolina Press, sums up Amazon's importance simply and unequivocally: 'They are our biggest customer.' Like most publishers, university presses appreciate Amazon for its ability to help readers find books. 'Before Amazon, it was exceedingly difficult to get the range of books that we do into the hands of individual scholars and readers,' according to the University of Minnesota Press. Scholars turn to Amazon for the books they

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18 Chain Bridge Group (2014) *Prospectus for an Institutionally Funded First-book Subvention*. Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

19 Hill M (2016) The new era of the university press: The critical role of established presses. *Learned Publishing* 29: 316–319. doi:10.1002/leap.1059; Mudditt (2016).

20 Hill (2016).

21 Lockett & Speicher (2016).

22 Hill (2016).

23 Bargheer M & Pabst J (2016), 'Being small is not a fault': Making sense of the newer generation of German-language university presses. *Learned Publishing* 29: 335–341. doi:10.1002/leap.1053

24 Mudditt (2016).

25 Lockett & Speicher (2016); Mudditt (2016).

26 Watkinson C (2016), Why marriage matters: A North American perspective on press/library partnerships. *Learned Publishing* 29: 342–347. doi:10.1002/leap.1044; Mudditt (2016); Bargheer & Pabst (2016); Kember S (2016) Why publish? *Learned Publishing* 29: 348–353. doi:10.1002/leap.1042

27 Lockett & Speicher (2016).

28 Cond A & Rayner S (2016) The university press redux: Introduction. *Learned Publishing* 29(S1): 314–315. Doi: 10.1002/leap.1055

29 Dougherty PJ (2012) The Global University Press. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (23 July 2012). <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Global-University-Press/132927/>

need, especially when interlibrary loan proves too slow or cumbersome. The downside is that this has gone hand in hand with the decline of library sales for the university press monograph. Scholars might buy fewer books through Amazon if their libraries were buying more of those books in the first place.<sup>30</sup> The challenge for university presses is to get into as many foreign online book sites as possible.

A third technology that is at the disposal of university presses is print on demand (POD). POD technology enables distributed printing, negating the need to ship stock to international markets, which is a slow, administratively intensive and costly exercise. Books can be printed just-in-time at a location much closer to the point of sale. POD presses also keep books in print perpetually and control inventory while satisfying customers' needs. Ingram Content Group's Lightning Source has facilities in the UK, US and Australia, and a new partnership initiative, Global Connect, in Germany and Brazil to support distributed just-in-time printing. Integrated Book Technology has opened sites in Britain, Germany and Australia, and has plans to expand into India and Brazil. The widespread availability of POD has also provided presses with an incentive to digitise their backlists, bringing back into print scholarly books previously out of print.

A fourth technology at the disposal of the academic press is digitally-driven publicity, particularly via social media. Publicity in the form of reviews, articles, interviews, blog posts, excerpts and feature stories drives successful book publication. Digital communications have multiplied publicity's power, making possible heretofore unheard-of exposure for university presses and their authors on a global scale. The message for university presses is that they need to create publicity lists to include book-review editors, journalists, bloggers and public intellectuals from across the globe; maximise the use of social media; and work with authors to place book-related content in online news services.

## Open access

While not a technology, open access is predicated on new technologies (such as the internet, electronic

books and peer-to-peer networks) that disrupt traditional methods of content dissemination as well as the hold of publishers over that critical component of the publishing process. According to Lockett and Speicher, newly established university presses 'express ambitions to make a positive contribution towards the increasingly unappealing (to commercial publishers) mission of publishing scholarly monographs successfully. An important aspect of this laudable mission is the recognition that some very good books are reaching some very small audiences via the tried and tested commercial market model'.<sup>31</sup> As Rupert Gatti of Open Book Publishers notes, traditional monograph publishing 'remains successful as a business model. But as a dissemination model, it is an unmitigated disaster'.<sup>32</sup>

Open access monograph publishing has therefore been a major shift in the market over the past decade, and continues to impact everyday discussions and planning at established university presses<sup>33</sup> while simultaneously drawing new entrants into the market.<sup>34</sup> The Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) was founded in 2008 and counts among its 100 plus members several open access monograph publishers.<sup>35</sup> The Directory for Open Access Books (DOAB)<sup>36</sup> lists the open access titles of 45 university presses across the globe.

## African university presses

To take advantage of the global opportunities provided by digital technologies, those at the helm of university presses will need the confidence and insight to experiment with emerging models, or to develop their own. Production departments will need to adapt existing print-based workflows to accommodate all relevant platforms for content delivery, and marketing departments will have to develop new strategies to increase the visibility of publications on the internet.<sup>37</sup> Rights managers will need to update, expand and possibly re-invent the nature of their contacts with foreign co-publishers. Of course, this is not an easy task for African university presses (and for many international university presses<sup>38</sup>). In comparison with

30 Howard J (2014) Around retail giant Amazon, university presses tiptoe and whisper. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (24 July 2014). <http://chronicle.com/article/Around-Retail-Giant-Amazon/147895/>

31 Lockett & Speicher (2016).

32 Quoted in Lockett & Speicher (2016).

33 Hill (2016).

34 Lockett & Speicher (2016).

35 OASPA. <https://oaspa.org/membership/members/>

36 DOAB. <http://www.doabooks.org>

37 Mrva-Montoya A (2015) Beyond the monograph: Publishing research for multimedia and multiplatform delivery. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* July: 321–342. doi: 10.3138/jsp.46.4.02

38 Hill (2016).

university presses in North America and Europe, African university presses are still in their infancy, with as much as 600 years between the establishment of the first university press at Oxford University and some African universities in former colonies. This leaves a significant gap in institutional and organisational experience, along with other context-specific obstacles such as relatively smaller markets, the predominantly North–South direction of knowledge flows and a concomitantly weaker publishing sector dominated by multinational (textbook) publishers;<sup>39</sup> the lack of an intellectual culture (partly due to high university teaching loads as a result of massification and the rise of a consultancy research culture);<sup>40</sup> the high costs and low reliability of traditional distribution channels; host universities' limited access to more stable funding sources (e.g. university endowments instead of donor funding); and nascent research management strategies<sup>41</sup> and culture<sup>42</sup> at institutional level. At the same time, the African Research University Alliance has been established.<sup>43</sup> It includes in its mission the promotion of collaborative research and, of particular relevance to university presses in Africa, is the Alliance's focus on seven (of thirteen) research areas that value the monograph in the communication of research.<sup>44</sup>

Zell<sup>45</sup> and others<sup>46</sup> note a paucity of empirical evidence on the state of academic book publishing in Africa. However, some research has been done to shed light on the experiences and strategies deployed by African academic publishers to take full advantage of new developments in global publishing. Others have made recommendations for new strategies. In 2005, Darko-Ampen, for example, based on the results of a study of the policies and practices of six African university presses, posits the formation of a consortium of African university presses as a way to minimise production costs, attract donor funding, improve the quality of services and leverage the rapid growth of information and communications technology (ICT). Models for such

a consortium exist but he suggests that it is worth considering whether a new model adapted specifically to the needs of African university presses might be more appropriate given the fact that previous attempts at the establishment of a continent-wide publishing consortium have failed.<sup>47</sup>

Ganu, in a discursive piece, presents the history of Ghana Universities Press (GUP), a small consortium of three Ghanaian universities established in 1962.<sup>48</sup> GUP also provides a model of what an African academic publishing consortium might look like. GUP faced the typical problems that keep African university presses from breaking into the global market: staff and organisation, manuscript acquisition, finding reviewers, copy-editing, intellectual property, high-quality printing and continued typographical errors in published manuscripts. On the financial front, GUP initially received subsidies from government, but also had to cover a large portion of its expenses from other income streams, including a publishing fee of at least 50% from authors. Lack of funding also often impedes progress towards the international distribution of African scholarship. In response to the lack of interest in African publishing from the global market, GUP established the African Books Collective (ABC) along with other African publishers in 1989.<sup>49</sup>

ABC is based in the UK and distributes books by independent African publishers, including university presses, throughout North America and Europe in both digital and print formats. A large part of its printing is done on a POD-basis.<sup>50</sup> With the success of ABC, independent African publishers have been able to address at least some of the obstacles to garnering a share of the global market. According to Ofori-Mensah, African scholars who crave international recognition but still want their work to be available in their home countries no longer have to make a choice between either a local or an international academic publisher.<sup>51</sup> The issue of print quality, at least abroad, is also

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- 39 Bgoya W & Jay M (2013) Publishing in Africa from independence to the present day. *Research in African Literatures* 44(2): 17–34; Joseph A (2015) Scholarly publishing in South Africa: The Global South on the periphery. *Insights* 28(3).
- 40 Mamdani M (2016) Undoing the effects of neoliberal reform. In: T Halvorsen & J Nossum (eds) *North–South Knowledge Networks: Towards Equitable Collaboration between Academics, Donors and Universities*. Cape Town: African Minds. pp. 109–133. [http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/AMT-South-North-Cooperation-Lighting-Source\\_LWed.pdf](http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/AMT-South-North-Cooperation-Lighting-Source_LWed.pdf)
- 41 Cloete N, Maassen P & Bailey T (eds) (2015) *Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education*. Cape Town: African Minds. [http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/9781920677855\\_txt1.pdf](http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/9781920677855_txt1.pdf)
- 42 Mamdani (2016).
- 43 McGregor K (2015) African Research Universities Alliance launched. *University World News* 358. <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150310185922166>
- 44 Dell S (2017) Bringing out the best in African research. *University World News* 448. <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20170222141914772>
- 45 Zell HM (2016) Publishing and the book in Africa: A literature review for 2015. Hans Zell Publishing Consultants. [http://www.academia.edu/20432811/Publishing\\_and\\_the\\_Book\\_in\\_Africa\\_-\\_A\\_Literature\\_Review\\_for\\_2015](http://www.academia.edu/20432811/Publishing_and_the_Book_in_Africa_-_A_Literature_Review_for_2015)
- 46 Bgoya & Jay (2013).
- 47 Darko-Ampen K (2005) A university press publishing consortium for Africa: Lessons from academic libraries. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 36(2): 89–114.
- 48 Ganu KM (1999) Scholarly publishing in Ghana: The role of Ghana Universities Press. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 30(3): 113–118.
- 49 Ganu (1999).
- 50 More information on the African Books Collective can be found at: <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/about-us>; see also Bgoya & Jay (2013).
- 51 Ofori-Mensah A (2015) The state of publishing in West Africa. *Logos: Journal of the World Publishing Community* 26(3): 40–50.

handed over to ABC, which means academic presses cut costs on printing, focusing more on increasing print quality and reducing costs at home, and since ABC is a non-profit organisation, expensive printing fees do not apply.

African universities and their presses are especially suffering from budget cuts and lack of government support (including funding).<sup>52</sup> There are several reasons for the decrease in funding. Across sub-Saharan Africa, demand for tertiary education is growing, which is putting pressure on current funding models and infrastructure.<sup>53</sup> University presses are increasingly expected to operate as profit-centres or businesses, resulting in governments and host universities no longer seeing the need to provide funding support. Book donation organisations and their impact on local markets is another factor for the university press to contend with.<sup>54</sup> ‘Book dumping’ is a controversial practice not only because the books donated are often irrelevant and culturally inappropriate, but also because where those books may have been useful, they are dated.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps the most disconcerting negative consequence of book donation programmes is the resulting lack of funding from government, who expect libraries to fulfil their bibliographic needs through these programmes. This, in turn, results in a decrease in the number of books purchased from local publishers. African governments regard the supply of books from donations as justification for a lack of financial and regulatory support for the local book industry.<sup>56</sup>

While government funding for higher education institutions and university presses continues to decline, African university presses are beginning to experiment with new revenue models.<sup>57</sup> In order to make up the shortfall from government funding, university presses in Africa have, on occasion, turned to charging authors publishing fees. At one point, as much as 50% of GUP's income came solely from authors' fees, while a large portion of the remainder came from government subsidies.<sup>58</sup> And African university presses who work with ABC have taken the first steps toward a

stronger financial position by accessing the global publishing market.

However, in order to effectively make use of the opportunities available to them, staff at university presses need adequate skills in commissioning, editing, production, sales and marketing, as well as specific skills related to digital publishing. A 2014 INASP<sup>59</sup> needs assessment found that publishers in Tanzania do not take full advantage of the digital technologies available to them, especially in terms of marketing and sales, and recommended further training in almost every aspect of publishing, with special emphasis on digital publishing, including the use of e-databases such as African Journals Online (AJOL) and different forms of open access.<sup>60</sup> And according to Kimegsi et al., African university presses aren't engaging in open access publishing on a large scale for several reasons. Lack of awareness remains an issue, but so do the specific implications of open access in the African publishing environment, the greatest of which is the need to remain a financially sustainable enterprise. Inadequate ICT infrastructure and limited open access advocacy further complicate the matter.<sup>61</sup> To increase awareness of African scholarship and publishing in the global market without losing top scholars to established and highly reputable Western publishers, Kimegsi et al. suggest that a significant first step would be the introduction of a sustainable business model, which many African university presses do not have.

## Purpose and conceptualisation of the study

The perspectives of university presses are under-represented in the literature on academic book publishing. According to The Academic Book of the Future Project, ‘the literature available in the public domain on matters relating to academic book publishing from the perspective of publishers is

52 Bgoya & Jay (2013); Mamdani (2016).

53 Mingat A, Ledoux B & Rakotomalala R (2010) Developing post-primary education in sub-Saharan Africa: Assessing the financial sustainability of alternative pathways. *African Human Development Series*. Washington DC: World Bank.

54 Zell HM (2015) Book donation programmes for Africa: Time for a reappraisal? Part I. African Research & Documentation. *Journal of SCOLMA* (the UK Libraries and Archives Group on Africa) 127: 1–107.

55 Zell (2015).

56 Zell (2015); Hite MT (2006) Traditional book donation to sub-Saharan Africa: An inquiry into policy, practice and appropriate information provision. Unpublished masters thesis, University of North Carolina. [https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent?id=uuid:b0733540-c360-4eb2-965a-0bb41cef58c8&ds=DATA\\_FILE](https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent?id=uuid:b0733540-c360-4eb2-965a-0bb41cef58c8&ds=DATA_FILE)

57 Nderitu A (2015) View from Kenya: On boxing, publishing, and going digital. *Publishing Perspectives* (26 Oct 2015). <http://publishingperspectives.com/2015/10/view-from-kenya-on-boxing-publishing-and-going-digital/#.V7XbVmlUwzdk>

58 Ganu (1999).

59 International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications Limited.

60 Duine M (2014) Needs assessment: Strengthening indigenous academic and digital publishing in Tanzania. INASP. [http://www.inasp.info/uploads/filer\\_public/2015/04/17/tzap\\_publishing\\_needs\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.inasp.info/uploads/filer_public/2015/04/17/tzap_publishing_needs_assessment.pdf)

61 Kimegsi JN, Oben EEE, Molombe JM & Mojoko FM (2016) Repositioning Africa's open access movement on the global stage: Challenges and prospects for African universities and research institutions. Fourth CODESRIA Conference on Open Access Publishing, Dakar, Senegal, 30 March–1 April 2016.

noticeably slight when compared with that coming from librarians'.<sup>62</sup>

At the same time, against developments in global academic publishing driven to a large degree by new possibilities introduced by technology, the question arises of how relevant the experiences, models and aspirations of international university presses are to university presses in Africa. No African university press participated at a recent conference on the future of the university press. In their introduction to the collection of articles presented at the conference, the editors acknowledge this absence. They speculate on the possibilities for African university presses in the context of the decolonisation of curricula across the continent. Leaving aside the not insignificant matter of who will be publishing the monographs and journal articles that disseminate the knowledge on what a decolonised curriculum might look like (leaving African university presses to publish textbooks), of relevance is that African university presses were not present to contribute to global discussions on the future of university presses. Nor is there empirical research specifically on the African university press to inform policy and strategic decisions on the future, if any, of the African university press.

The broad purpose of this study is therefore to produce new knowledge on African university presses and their contribution to knowledge production as a critical component in the codification and dissemination of new knowledge from the African continent. The research project seeks to generate new empirically-based insights on African university presses to inform future strategies on the role that the university press

may play in the dissemination of African knowledge. From a grant-maker's perspective and from an institutional support perspective, the project therefore intends to provide evidence-based recommendations to guide future decisions related to the development or reconfiguration of the university press in Africa.

The question that this research project poses is therefore: How are African university presses positioned in relation to new global opportunities and challenges?

Given the lack of currently available data, it is necessary to answer the primary research question from multiple angles – institutional, organisational and individual; quantitatively and qualitatively; both broad/comprehensive and narrow/specific. The research project therefore consisted of three components. First, it conducted a desktop survey of the overall landscape seeking to establish baseline data on African university presses. The resulting database includes basic information on each university press. In a second component, illustrative case studies of several African university presses were drawn up to explore the ways they engage with the opportunities and challenges they encounter within their respective organisational and institutional contexts. A third component undertook a study of the choices academics at Makerere University, Uganda, are making in terms of publication type and publisher when faced with the decision of how to disseminate their research to peers in the global science community. The report is structured around each of the project components and concludes by pulling together insights gained in each of the components and with a set of recommendations.

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62 The Academic Book of the Future Project (n.d.).





PART 2

# **BASELINE STUDY**



**There is a vital need for research  
analysis, documentation and  
systematic gathering of reliable data  
and statistics on the whole book  
sector in Africa.**

Hans Zell (2016) *Indigenous Publishing in Africa:  
The need for research, documentation, and collaboration.*

## Introduction

According to Zell, there is a need for more systematic empirical research (including documentation, data gathering and analysis) of the African book sector.<sup>63</sup> A scan of Zell's literature review of publishing and the book in Africa reveals articles, presentations and blogs strong on sentiment but weak on evidence.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, when it comes to the book publishing sector in general and scholarly publishing in particular, very little empirical evidence is available with which to frame policy advice, advocacy campaigns and requests for funding support.

The baseline study component of this research project set out to remedy the dearth of empirical research in general and data in particular that are required to produce an accurate, realistic overview of the contribution of the African university press to the broader scholarly publishing landscape. Desk research was conducted by three researchers from February to December 2015 to collect baseline data on African university presses. The researchers were proficient in English and French, and had a basic knowledge of Portuguese. In addition to consulting the available literature on scholarly publishing in Africa and conducting internet searches, the International Association of Universities' Worldwide Database of Higher Education Institutions, Systems and Credentials (WHED)<sup>65</sup> produced by the International Association of Universities was referenced as a source of African universities from which to determine whether an African university housed a university press. At the time the research was conducted, the WHED database contained 1 572 entries for African universities.

The baseline data points were determined by the interest of this research project in the use of digital technology by African university presses to adjust their production processes, to increase their visibility, to reach new markets and to create new revenue streams. The following data were collected for each university press identified:

1. Name of university press
2. Host university
3. Country in which university is located
4. GPS coordinates of the host university
5. University press website URL
6. University press contact email (as provided on the press website)

7. Availability of a catalogue of publications on the university press website
8. Whether a price list is available on the university press website
9. Types of publication published by the university press (academic books; trade books; journals; textbooks; other)
10. The most recent title published by the university press (year)
11. Whether it is possible to order the university press's books online (press website; Amazon)
12. Most recent title on Amazon
13. Online visibility of the press (books are available on Google books; active Twitter account; Twitter handle; active Facebook account; Facebook URL)
14. Whether the university press publishes any open access books or journals
15. Whether the university press publishes any ebooks
16. Where ebooks can be accessed (press's own website; Amazon)
17. Whether the press has co-published any of its titles
18. Distributors (name; URL; region)
19. Whether the host university has an institutional repository (URL)

Data were captured and stored in an online Google Sheet.<sup>66</sup>

Acutely aware of the limitations of relying solely on desk research to collect accurate data, the research team supplemented its desk research with email requests sent to email addresses retrieved from the university press websites for additional data or for clarification.

Selected data (name of press, location, website, Facebook page, Twitter account, open access, latest publication, institutional repository) are displayed on an online map (see Figure 2.1).<sup>67</sup> Users are able to filter university presses displayed on the map by whether the press publishes open access books or journals, whether the host university has an institutional repository, whether the university press has a website, and whether the university press has a Facebook or Twitter account. The map invites visitors to provide feedback or to suggest corrections via an online form. The complete dataset is also available for download.

63 Zell (2016).

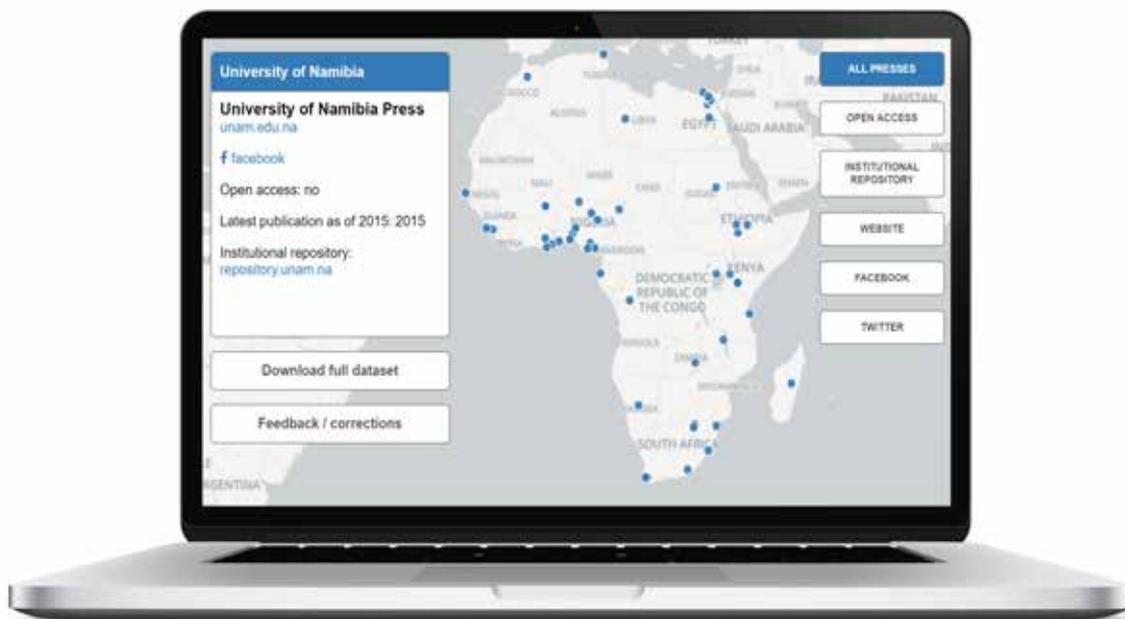
64 Zell (2016).

65 <http://whed.net/home.php>

66 The Google Sheet is publicly accessible and can be viewed here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1URiTsMVkeM12DIzT7IfxqcYgVt0hohli4xly983F18/edit>

67 The interactive map is available from the African Minds website (African University Presses tab) and on the website: <http://code4sa.org/african-university-presses/#all>

Figure 2.1: Map of African university presses generated from the baseline data collected



Source: <http://www.africanminds.co.za/african-university-presses/>

## Findings and discussion

### Number and activity of African university presses

From the research done, 52 university presses were found to be housed at universities in Africa (see Figure 2.2). This number excludes non-university academic presses such as African Minds (South Africa), HSRC Press (South Africa), Sahara Press (Ghana), Fountain Publishers (Uganda) and the like. Presses that were clearly of the printing kind and do not provide a full set of publishing value-added services (e.g. peer review, editorial intervention, proofreading, distribution, etc.) are also not included in the list of 52 African university presses.

To assess how many of the 52 university presses are active, data was collected on the most recent publication listed on the university press's website, or that could be located elsewhere (for example, on Google Books or on Amazon). Figure 2.3 shows the findings for the level of publishing activity. Of the 52 academic presses, only 7 (13%) had published a book or a journal in the same year as the research was being done (2015); 4 (8%) published in 2014 and the same number published in 2013. In other words, based on what was discoverable online, only 15 (29%) of university presses had published in the past three years. It may well be that other African university presses not listed in Figure 2.3 were active, but the fact remains that if that is the case, those university presses' publications were not discoverable online, nor did they respond to invitations to correct the data.

### Use of technology for communication and distribution

Of the 52 African university presses, 27 (52%) had websites (see Figure 2.4). Locating the websites of university presses was challenging for two reasons: (1) university press website are not well-indexed by search engines (possibly because their website URLs are often sub-domains of the host universities' URLs); and (2) links to the university press website are not prominently displayed on the home pages or in the menus of the university's home page. Only 9 (17%) of African university presses had their own website (that is, a website with a dedicated URL such as <http://www.aucpress.com/>, <http://www.ukznpress.co.za> and <http://www.witspress.co.za>).

The websites of university presses provide a contact email address in 21 (78%) cases (see Figure 2.4). In other words, only 40% of the 52 university presses can be contacted via email if the press's website is referred to as a source for contact details. (See Appendix 3 for a detailed overview on using the email addresses to communicate with university presses in Africa.)

Of the 27 university presses with websites, 9 (33%) were found to provide a catalogue of their publications for download from their website. An assessment of the publication types for university presses with websites revealed that almost all (23, 85%) published academic books. The remaining university presses (4, 15%) only published journals. In total, 20 (74%) published academic journals; 5 (19%) published trade books, 12 (44%) published textbooks and 11 (41%) published other types of publications (such as collections of plays or poetry, dictionaries, etc.). The data show that most academic presses are publishers of both academic books and journals, and that their lists are fairly diverse in terms of publication type. The presence of trade books, textbooks and other publications could well be an indicator of the need to include publication types with more popular appeal or that are likely to be prescribed at schools or universities to generate sales and prescription revenue that niche academic titles are less likely to guarantee.

It was possible to order print copies of publications on 41% (11) of the university press websites. An analysis of all university presses (those with and without websites), revealed that 32 (62%) had at least one book listed on Amazon. The explanation for the higher number of university presses with titles available on Amazon than those with their own websites, is that some university press's (older) titles appear on Amazon by virtue of agreements with international distributors even in cases where a press may not have its own website. And this seems to indicate that, at least in some cases, publishers are choosing not to invest in the technology required to make ordering books from their own websites possible when online ordering via third parties is in place.

The most recently published title available for 10 of the 32 university presses listed on Amazon pre-dates the year 2000. This may support the finding that many university presses in Africa are inactive or it may indicate that some university presses have abandoned international online distribution in favour of more local, offline distribution arrangements. Based on the increase in funding and network support in the 1990s and the demise of some of these initiatives in the

Figure 2.2: Map of African university presses (n = 52)



Figure 2.3: Most recent year of publication (as at December 2015)

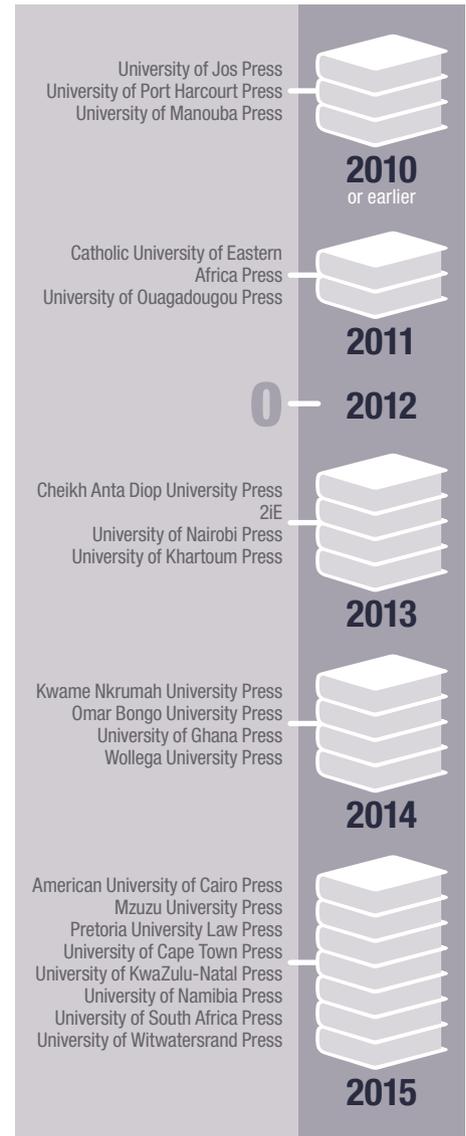
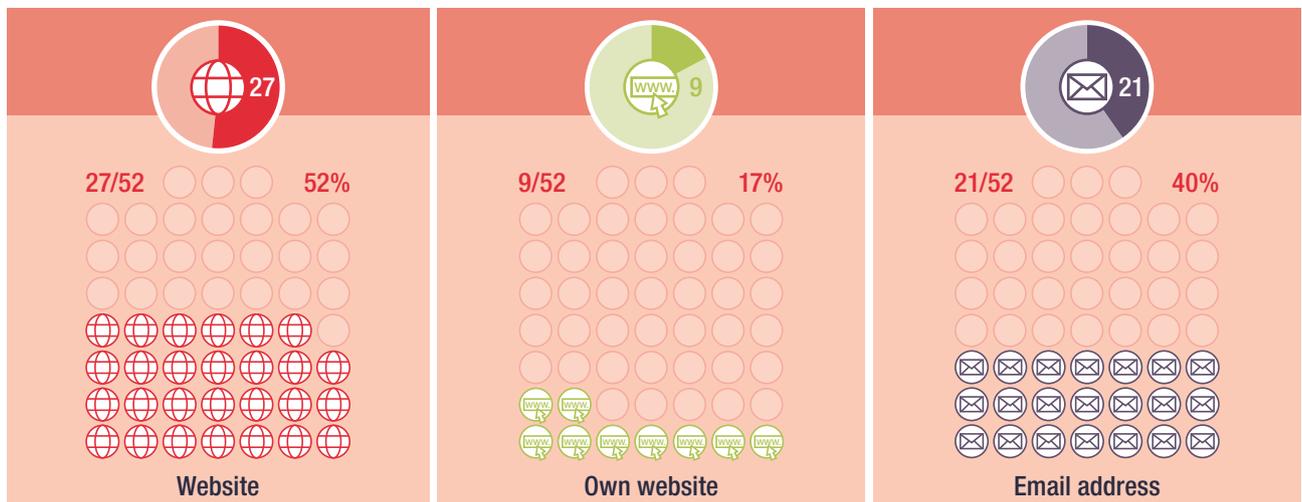


Figure 2.4: University presses with websites and contact email addresses on their websites (as at December 2015)



2000s,<sup>68</sup> one might hazard a guess that the former is more likely to be the case.

A high number of university presses were found to be present on Google Books: 47 (90%). Possible reasons for this high number include: (1) some international distributors such as African Books Collective add their clients' titles to Google Books; (2) some African libraries independently add titles produced by academics at their institution to Google Books; and (3) in some cases it may be the result of ad hoc donor-funded projects to digitise African books. While a presence on Google Books increases the visibility of African university presses, without facilities to enable reliable online ordering of physical copies or to provide access to electronic copies of those titles, Google Books is limited as a platform for bolstering the distribution of academic books published by African university presses.

Although not necessarily linked directly to advances in technology, it could be argued that entering into co-publication arrangements with international publishers and setting up international distribution agreements for territories outside of a university press's home country are made easier by electronic communication and the ability to share marketing and promotional materials in electronic formats. It was found that 13 (25%) of African university presses had entered into co-publishing agreements at some point. Eight (15%) African university presses have international distribution agreements in place, mainly with African Books Collective,<sup>69</sup> Eurospan<sup>70</sup> and IPG.<sup>71</sup>

### Using technology to increase visibility

Data were collected to establish whether African university presses are making use of social media to increase the visibility of their titles and, by implication, of the university press itself. Seven (13%) of all university presses had an active Twitter account and 10 (19%) of all university presses had a Facebook account. Six university presses had both a Twitter and a Facebook account, and five of these are located in South Africa. Outside of South Africa and with the exception of the American University of Cairo Press, it is evident that African university presses are not making use of social media to promote their publications.

### Using technology to publish new formats

Of the 27 academic presses with websites, 6 (22%) were found to publish ebooks. These presses used their own websites and those of online booksellers to sell their ebook titles. Of the university presses, the American University of Cairo Press had by far the most advanced and sophisticated ebook purchasing system with a dedicated online bookshop<sup>72</sup> making available online ordering and transactional functionality. eBooks are made available as digital rights managed PDFs and ePub files. The other five African university presses' ebooks appear to be part of early experiments in making digital rights managed ebooks available.

### Open access

Only four African university presses have published some type of open access scholarly publication. This despite the fact that 36 African universities have signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access, and 12 of those university presses that have signed the Berlin Declaration are included in the 52 African university presses in the database. To provide an international perspective, 48 university presses were listed on the Directory of Open Access Books on 7 September 2016; none of them from Africa.

The composition of open access publications at the four university presses is shown in Table 2.1. It is clear from Table 2.1 that African university presses are not yet investing in open access as an alternative or complementary mode of publishing academic monographs. At most, some university presses are publishing open access journals.

### Digital repositories

Given the low number of university presses with websites, the research team was interested to get a comparative picture of the number of universities with digital repositories. It was found that the 29 (55%) universities that have a university press also have an institutional repository. In other words, slightly more (2) universities have institutional repositories than university presses with a website. The more informative finding, however, is the fact that 16 of the universities that house a university press without a website, have

68 Three substantial initiatives received funding at a continental level in the 1990s: African Books Collective, Bellagio Publishing Network, and the African Publishers Network. The Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) continued to receive support indirectly for its publishing programme, having been established in 1973, and the Zimbabwe International Book Fair and the Southern African Book Education Trust also received funding during the period. Of these, only African Books Collective and Codesria are still in existence (Bgoya & Jay [2013]).

69 <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/>

70 <http://www.eurospangroup.com/>

71 <http://www.ipgbook.com/>

72 <http://ebooks.aucpress.com/Default.aspx>

**Table 2.1: Open access publications produced by African university presses (2015)\***

University press	Publication	Year	Type
Wollega University Press (Ethiopia)	<i>Proceedings of the National Symposium on Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education</i> (English)	2013	Book
	<i>Proceedings of the National Symposium on Science, Technology and Innovation for National Development</i> (English)	2014	Book
	<i>Science, Technology and Arts Research (STAR) Journal</i> (English)	2015	Journal
Omar Bongo University Press (Gabon)	<i>Annals of the Omar Bongo University No. 19: History, Society, Poetry</i> (French and English)	2015	Book/ journal**
2IE - International Institute for Water and Environmental Engineering (Burkina Faso)***	<i>Science and Technology in the South</i> (French)	2010	Journal
Pretoria University Law Press (South Africa)	<i>African Human Rights Law Journal</i> (English)	2015	Journal
	<i>African Disability Rights Yearbook</i> (English)	2015	Journal
	<i>De Jure</i> (English)	2015	Journal

\* As per the African Minds database <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1URiTsMVkeM12DIZT7IfxqcYgVtE0hohli4xly983F18/edit>

\*\* The publication has been assigned both an ISSN and an ISBN.

\*\*\* Although 2IE is an institute rather than a university, it is both a degree-awarding institute and it conducts research – two of the defining functions of universities. Its publishing operation is therefore seen as being equivalent to that of a university press.

institutional repositories. Reasons for this finding require further research. However, possible explanations could be that institutional repositories are regarded by universities as a replacement for the university press (and/or the need for the press to have a website) or that external donor funding is more readily available for repositories than it is for supporting the activities of university presses.

It is beyond the scope of this study to explore in full the outcomes and impacts of the rapid growth in institutional repositories at African universities. But, based on the findings of this study, it seems reasonable to pose the question as to whether the rise of the institutional repository has cannibalised the perceived value and role of the university press in Africa. And whether universities have an *integrated* scholarly communication strategy in place that consider the differentiated functions of both the university press and an institutional repository.

## Conclusion

The baseline data presented in this section provides empirical evidence on the state of the African university press. The data collected are a first foray into compiling a comprehensive overview of the landscape. We are mindful of the pitfalls of relying on online sources only and of inviting responses via email to validate and correct the data collected. It is for this reason that

the research project incorporated case studies in its design. But while the case studies provide depth, they lack breadth. Further research is required not only to fill the gaps and answer some of the questions that have arisen from this first attempt, but also to build on the data collected by this project to produce a more robust empirical overview of the university press landscape in Africa.

The data collected nevertheless reveals some preliminary insights. It shows that while the overall picture is bleak, there is a small group of active and committed African university presses that are able to survive, if not thrive, in the current climate of an increase in research output at flagship universities countered by limited government funding for higher education and shifting expectations. Few university presses are experimenting with new technologies to produce ebooks or to enhance their visibility using social media. And even fewer university presses are looking to open access as a complementary or alternative publishing strategy. Time will tell whether African university presses are able to survive their dependence on a largely local book-buying market and whether some are able to shift their publishing models with support from their host universities or external benefactors. In the meantime, it is hoped that others will build on the data or at least re-use the data presented here (and in the sections that follow) to chart an empirically informed path for the African university press of the future.





PART 3

# **THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING**



**Social capitalism is driven by  
collaboration and sharing, by the  
replacement of command and control  
by self-organising ecosystems of  
independent producers.**

H Shaughnessy (2012) The emergence of social  
capitalism: Adaptation or threat?

## Introduction

A holistic way of approaching the question as to how African university presses are positioning themselves in relation to new global opportunities and challenges, and one that is complementary to the baseline data presented in Part 2 of this report, offers itself in the consideration of historical shifts in the dominant institutional logic in the scholarly publishing industry.

Following a historical analysis of key characteristics of the higher education publishing industry in the United States, Thornton and Ocasio<sup>73</sup> identify a shift from a professional or editorial logic to a market logic in higher education publishing between the late 1950s and the early 1990s. Empirically, this shift involved changes in typical characteristics of higher education publishing such as the organisational identity of the publisher, the publisher's source of legitimacy, internal authority structures, mission, focus of attention, strategy, logics of investment and rules of succession. At the end of the transition to the market logic, publishing had become a different world: the shift inserted higher education publishing into the system of market capitalism, turned higher education publishing from a profession into a business where market position and share value became the dominant sources of legitimacy and the mission became one of building a competitive market position for the firm and of increasing its profits in a context of resource competition. The CEO as head of the corporate hierarchy had replaced the founder-editor and his or, more rarely, her personal networks as the source of authority. Ownership by shareholders replaced private and often family-based ownership.<sup>74</sup> In the end, academic publishing had become but another industry in the capitalist economy (compare columns 2 and 3 in Table 3.1).

Looking at the opportunities and challenges in higher education publishing, and particularly the ICT revolution, recent innovations in the publishing industry such as the growing knowledge commons and open access movements, alongside rapid changes in related industries such as music and film, it can be hypothesised that the publishing industry is in the midst of a second transition from a market-orientated institutional logic to one which accounts

for the changing international market conditions precipitated by the digitisation of content and the rise of the internet. Considering the economics of open source software development, crowdsourcing and so forth, Shaughnessy suggests that we are seeing the emergence of a new kind of economics, which he calls social capitalism: 'This social capitalism is driven by collaboration and sharing, by the replacement of command and control by self-organising ecosystems of independent producers of software, apps and even components'. It involves, *inter alia*, a shift in the market from 'what to consume to what to make'.<sup>75</sup> There is already evidence in the ICT sector in Africa of the emergence of social enterprises – business-like ventures motivated more by social good than by profit.<sup>76</sup>

In keeping with these observations, we ask whether the academic publishing industry is precisely affected by an emerging social capitalism: a technologically-enabled synthesis of capitalist and socialist economics, which expresses itself in the development of the knowledge commons; views publishing as a collective social innovation enterprise rather than a business; organises in self-organising peer-to-peer networks, who invest their cultural capital in the global open access knowledge commons with the aim of collectively producing shared knowledge and value, and thereby 'socialising' problems and solutions.

The open access movement is one of the indicators of the emerging shift to a new institutional logic in academic publishing.<sup>77</sup> We propose that this second transition is driven specifically by key developments in *distribution*. Previously, the producers of knowledge, especially academics, retained editorial control over the product, while publishers controlled the distribution channels (i.e. print and subscription in the case of journals; print and access to librarians in the case of books) and thus garnered the lion's-share of added value. However, the internet and the ability to move digital content instantaneously and at very low cost around the world has led to academics and open access advocacy groups challenging the hegemony of publishers.<sup>78</sup> Hence, global technological changes in publishing production, distribution and marketing

73 Thornton PH & Ocasio W (1999) Institutional logics and the historical contingency of power in organizations: Executive succession in the higher education publishing industry, 1958–1990. *American Journal of Sociology* 105(3): 801–842.

74 Thornton & Ocasio (1999: 809).

75 Shaughnessy H (2012) The emergence of social capitalism: Adaptation or threat? *Forbes/Tech* (23 Jan 2012). <http://www.forbes.com/sites/haydnshaughnessy/2012/01/23/the-emergence-of-social-capitalism-adaptation-or-threat/#5276ab841dfc>

76 Mejabi O & Walker J (2016) Towards a model of sustainability for open data motivated start-ups. Paper presented at the 2016 Open Data Research Symposium, 5 October 2016, Madrid, Spain.

77 Van Schalkwyk F (2017) Open access as a return to the values of science. SSRN. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2983628>

78 Jaschik S (2015) Language of protest: The 6 editors and 31 editorial board members of *Lingua*, a top linguistics journal, have all resigned to protest Elsevier pricing. They plan a new open-access journal; *Inside HigherEd* (2 November). <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/11/02/editors-and-editorial-board-quit-top-linguistics-journal-protest-subscription-fees>; Dobusch L (2013, 7 November) Open access and the power of editorial boards: Why Elsevier plays hardball with deviant linguists. <http://governanceborders.com/2015/11/07/open-access-and-the-power-of-editorial-boards-why-elsevier-plays-hardball-with-deviant-linguists/>

– made possible by digitisation and the network effects of the internet – precipitate a new institutional logic in higher education publishing, involving key challenges for traditional marketing, production processes, and revenue and distribution models, along with important opportunities for enhancing a global presence and access to locally produced knowledge for university presses. Presumably, these opportunities are particularly important for African knowledge producers.

While Thornton and Ocasio's original study was historical, our characterisation of a new 'logic of the knowledge commons', in contrast, is based on our reading of contemporary developments. Our characterisation presumes that factors that contributed to the erstwhile decline of an editorial logic and rise of market logic during the earlier transition (involving changes in competition, new technologies, new views of legitimacy and so forth<sup>79</sup>) are once more facing contradictions which are 'resolved' in a knowledge commons-orientated institutional logic; in the broader perspective, this reflects an industry-specific expression of an emerging social capitalism.

Table 3.1 characterises the three logics, including the original institutional logics elaborated by Thornton and Ocasio (1999) and our characterisation of an emerging 'logic of the knowledge commons'.

For this project, the question arises whether Thornton and Ocasio's findings hold for African university presses. Did African university presses follow similar shifts in their institutional logic as was the case for North American university presses in their study? Thornton and Ocasio's two institutional logics emerged historically in sequence and in relation to new developments in publishing technologies, the changing size of markets for academic publishing and different ideologies and market requirements. As far as the higher education 'market' is concerned, the shift from publishing as a profession to an industry driven by markets largely coincided with the transition from elite to mass market higher education in North America (and subsequently in Europe). Meanwhile, African higher education is only massifying now and therefore one expects to see the emergence of a market logic in African academic publishing. The question is whether the editorial and market logics will have to compete with, creatively adapt or succumb to, a knowledge commons logic because African publishers will not be shielded from its global effects.

Along with the emerging massification of higher education systems in many African nations, there has been a sharp increase in knowledge production in the last ten years. This could be seen as an opportunity for the logic of the knowledge commons to flourish. According to the latest statistics, the number of research articles published on the continent rose by 60% between 2008 and 2014. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of global publications rose from 2.0 to 2.6 per cent in the same period. Africa's gross expenditure on research and development (GERD), grew from USD 12.9 billion in 2007 to USD 19.9 billion in 2013, calculated at constant 2005 prices. Thus, the continent's GERD spend as a percentage of GDP grew steadily, too — from 0.36% in 2007 to 0.45% of GDP in 2013.<sup>80</sup>

Higher education massification and the rise of science production and publication in Africa constitute contextual factors that may well have a bearing on the dominant institutional logic. In order to determine the ways in which African university presses are positioning themselves in relation to these changes and to consider the dominant institutional logic evident in the African academic publishing industry, empirical research is needed.

To determine the presence and impact of institutional logics on African university presses, empirical case study research should investigate several dimensions including a basic profile of the historical development of the university press, its market presence and relation to key technological innovations and changes in the professional ethics of publishing, followed by an analysis of any variation in key indicators, particularly with respect to different revenue and distribution models.

## Profiling the university press

A basic profile of the university press must include a succinct contextualised history (i.e. its purpose of establishment and historical development, the current size of the press, e.g. basics of catalogue, disciplines, formats, etc.), its current purpose and orientation, its distribution reach, the language(s) of publication, type of publications it produces as well as related matters (e.g. licensing model). Moreover, it must consider the authorship of its publications, for instance with regard to an orientation towards services to emerging academics or to established academics, and its typical clients/users (e.g. students, academics, government, civil society).

79 Thornton & Ocasio (1999: 810).

80 Blom A, Lan G & Adil M (2016) *Sub-Saharan African Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Research: A Decade of Development*. Washington: The World Bank. [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2015/11/27/090224b083559651/1\\_0/Rendered/PDF/Sub0Saharan0Af0ecade0of0development.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2015/11/27/090224b083559651/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Sub0Saharan0Af0ecade0of0development.pdf); UNESCO (2015) *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*. Paris: UNESCO. [http://en.unesco.org/unesco\\_science\\_report](http://en.unesco.org/unesco_science_report)

**Table 3.1 Expanded ideal types of institutional logics in academic publishing**

Characteristics	Editorial Logic	Market Logic	Logic of the Knowledge Commons <sup>78</sup>
Core logic(s)	Family + Profession	Profession + Market	Profession + Community
Characterisation	Product-oriented	Market-oriented	Commons-oriented
Economic system	Personal capitalism	Market capitalism	Social capitalism
Sources of identity	Publishing as a profession	Publishing as a business	Publishing as collective social innovation
Sources of legitimacy	Personal reputation Education value	Market position of the firm Share value	Quality of the product Use value
Sources of authority	Founder-editor Personal networks Private ownership	CEO Corporate hierarchy Public ownership	Expert peers Peer-to-peer networks Trusteeship of commons
Basis of mission	Build prestige of house Increase sales	Build competitive position of corporation Increase profits	Maintaining the commons Collectively producing shared knowledge and value
Basis of attention	Author-editor networks	Resource competition	Value creation for common benefit
Basis of strategy	Organic growth Build personal imprints	Acquisition growth Build market channels	Commons-based peer production Build ethical networks
Logic of investment	Private capital committed to firm	Finance capital committed to market return	Cultural capital committed to socio-economic development
Governance mechanism	Family ownership Trade association	Market for corporate control	Peer cooperative / trustees / curators Consensus judgement
Institutional entrepreneurs	Prentice Hall	Thomson	Amsterdam University Press
Event sequencing	Increased public funding to education; increased college enrolments; Wall St. announces good investment	Founding of boutique investment bankers; publishing finance newsletters; 1980s acquisitions wave	Development of new ICTs; globalisation; increase in accountability of public institutions; government/donor support for open access

Source columns 1–3: Thornton PH & Ocasio W (1999: 809) with additions and adaptations by authors.

81 Inspired by existing practices and drawing on: Bauwens M & Iacomella F (2015) Peer-to-peer economy and new civilization centred around the sustenance of the commons. *The Wealth of the Commons: A World Beyond Market & State*. <http://wealthofthecommons.org/essay/peer-peer-economy-and-new-civilization-centred-around-sustenance-commons>; and Shaughnessy (2012).

Considering key issues related to the dominant institutional logic of a specific publisher, the investigation must further probe the corporate self-identity of the publisher, its stakeholders and internal and external governance mechanisms, its defining purpose, mission and strategy, and legitimation. Which other publishers are seen as 'aspirational peers', and which as comparative peers? What makes a good or successful publisher in the opinion of the publisher?

The changing international market conditions present opportunities for African university presses to enhance their international presence and to make use of technological innovations. In order to make use of these opportunities, production departments at African university presses will need to adapt existing print-based workflows to accommodate all relevant platforms for content delivery, and marketing departments will have to develop new strategies to increase the visibility of publications on the internet. Rights departments need to update, expand and possibly re-invent the nature of their contacts with foreign co-publishers. How are the technological changes in production, distribution and marketing made possible by digitisation and the network effects of the internet being deployed by African university presses?

Opportunities are one thing; having the confidence, expertise and resources to convert opportunity into a *sustainable* income stream is quite another. Research shows that 'multiple stakeholders including university presses [...] are challenged by the increasing volume and the rapidity of production of these new forms of publication in an environment of economic uncertainties'.<sup>82</sup> This means that African universities and their presses – many of which are only now beginning to develop research agendas of their own – must also establish new capacity, processes, governance structures, business models and policy frameworks.

In addition to the opportunities created by ICTs and an increasingly globalised world, the strong ethical sway of the open access movement, with increasing support from governments and research funding agencies, is forcing academics to reconsider their publishing options and academic publishers to rethink their business models. African university presses are not immune to these pressures. What is not known is how pressures for change are being blended with local realities and global opportunities to create new revenue models to ensure sustainable university presses

in Africa. Key questions to consider are therefore: Does the African university press have a sustainable income stream? Does it have a distinct catalogue and a research agenda of its own? Related issues to consider include the African university press's capacity, business processes, governance structures, business models, policy framework. How are global pressures for change and local realities used to create new revenue models that ensure the financial sustainability of the African university press?

It has been found that '[m]any research publications by African researchers, especially those focused on domestic or regional African issues and problems, are not accessible through the modern ICT facilities'.<sup>83</sup> The findings on the accessibility of monographs published by African university presses confirms this (see Part 2 of this report). University presses are critical for the dissemination of African knowledge in a context where African universities are placing increasing strategic focus on their transformation from predominantly teaching universities to becoming research-intensive universities. While there are many university presses that also publish scholarly journals, they more often complement the role of journal publishers by playing an essential role in publishing scholarly monographs, for example in supporting emerging scholars by publishing their first scholarly monograph, which is often a critical requirement in launching an academic career (particularly in the humanities). Given global opportunities and technological shifts, the place of the scholarly monograph is no less central in the knowledge project. The challenge for African academic publishers is to make the most of the opportunities presented with regard to adapting their publishing and distribution models, including the publication of open access content.

The central research question to consider in the comparative analysis of in-depth case studies of African university presses is: How are African university presses positioning themselves in relation to new global opportunities and challenges given the institutional pressures that constrain and steer them? In particular, this question is investigated with a special focus on four dimensions: (1) Marketing and promotions (digitally-driven publicity, including use of social media; digital catalogues; memberships); (2) production (print on demand technology; digital formats such as ePub, PDF and mobi); (3) distribution (print and digital distribution; local versus global distribution channels; online library-aggregation services; online booksellers;

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82 Harley D (2008) The university as publisher: Summary of a meeting held at UC Berkeley on 1 November 2007. *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 11(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0011.208>

83 Tijssen RJ (2007) Africa's contribution to the worldwide research literature: New analytical perspectives, trends, and performance indicators. *Scientometrics* 71(2): 303–327.

and positioning in relation to open access); (4) revenue models (self-funding vs. subsidisation by host university; funding through grants, distribution, authors, other sources). The different dimensions to investigate the research question empirically overlap in relation to key issues such as the use of ICTs and access to content strategy (e.g. open access). Three of the four research dimensions relate to the four most important recent technological innovations that provide the tools for African academic presses to potentially make the most of current market conditions.<sup>84</sup> The fourth dimension, which looks at revenue models, investigates the positioning of the university press in relation to its financial sustainability and the organisational conditions (resources and structures) in which it must negotiate its existence.

## Methodology

The purpose of conducting case studies was to gain an in-depth comparative understanding of the ways in which different African university presses are positioning themselves in relation to new global opportunities and challenges with a special focus on their international presence, marketing and promotions; governance; production processes; and distribution and revenue models. The comparative case study design sought to locate the chosen cases in relation to each other, taking the theoretical model of different institutional logics and related empirical dimensions as the 'lens' through which to conduct the comparative analysis. It uses multiple sources of data (i.e. African university press online database, interviews and primary documents) for the purpose of in-depth description, comparative analysis and interpretation.<sup>85</sup>

The selection of cases was guided by criteria determined on the basis of the research design and questions, and the intended uses of the cases. Stake (1995) argues that the key criterion in the selection of a case should be the 'potential for learning' and therefore the selection of a case should ensure that it 'maximize[s] what we can learn'.<sup>86</sup> Given that the research problem concerns ongoing changes in African university press development and positioning in relation to new global opportunities and challenges, a comparative study requires cases that can indicate a range of variation, i.e. a selection of a number of *dissimilar* cases. A newly established university press may be contrasted with a university press that has

a long history of traditional academic publishing. Moreover, given that the research problem focuses specifically on the extent to which African university presses have been successful in deploying the technological changes in production, distribution and marketing made possible by digitisation and the network effects of the internet, cases which have not at all engaged with the technological innovations should be limited; rather a focus should be on African university presses which have in some way or another sought to make the most of the emerging changes in market conditions, i.e. (1) the formation of online library-aggregation services; (2) the existence and growth of supranational online book merchants; (3) the development of print on demand (POD) technology; (4) digitally-driven publicity – and thus their use of digital technologies and its reflection in terms of adapting the governance, production processes, and revenue and distribution models.

The final selection of cases was determined pragmatically in terms of the opportunity for gaining effective access to key primary data and the cooperation of African university press leaders as available and accessible interviewees.

In the course of 2015/16, we developed a comprehensive database of the landscape of university presses operating in Africa (see Part 2 of this report). On the basis of this baseline study and the criteria elaborated on above, four cases of African university presses were selected which promised to show a great deal of variation, and therefore opportunity to learn, in terms of their history and context of operation, as well as characteristics relevant for considering their current state. The comparative analysis includes the following cases:

- University of Addis Ababa Press, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- University of Nairobi Press, Nairobi, Kenya
- Wits University Press, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Wollega University Press, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Each case includes a basic profile of the historical development of the university press, its market presence and relation to key technological innovations and changes in the professional ethics of publishing, followed by an analysis of variation on key indicators, particularly with respect to different revenue and distribution models. The case study database draws principally on three sources: (1) the African university

84 Dougherty (2012).

85 Yin RK (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd Edition. London: Sage.

86 Stake RE (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage; and Stake RE (2000) Case studies. In: NK Denzin & YS Lincoln (eds) (1995) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd Edition. London: Sage.

press database developed for the purpose of this project; (2) interviews with the heads of the African university presses, and; (3) primary documents from the university press, in particular their websites, annual reports, budgets and catalogues. They were complemented, where available, by other primary and secondary sources (such as newspaper clippings, chronologies and histories of the case African university press).

The African university press database includes basic information about the press, its university affiliation and location, its catalogue (including publication types, most recent publications), its marketing and visibility (including own website and visibility on social media platforms), its open access policy (and availability of ebooks and pricelists), its presence with online distributors and other distribution channels. In interviews with heads of publishers, this data was probed and verified. The detailed issues or empirical dimensions probed in the interviews have been outlined above and are presented in the interview schedule (Appendix 2).

The research was designed and interviews conducted with due regard to the ethics of research with human subjects. The primary concern is that no harm be done to the research participant (the interviewee) as a result of their participation in the research. This was ensured by informing the research participants of the purpose of the research and seeking their informed consent for participation; by ensuring that questions and questioning were non-intrusive and protected the privacy of the participants; by offering participants anonymity and keeping parts or all of the research conversation confidential if so requested; and by ensuring data security (i.e. the use of the data only for the purposes of the project and its successor projects and for related scholarly publications, as well as the safe storage and deletion of the data) (compare Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form and Appendix 2: Interview Schedule).

## Case studies

### Case 1: Addis Ababa University Press, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University Press (AAUP) was established in 1967. It publishes scholarly monographs, textbooks, reference and teaching materials in Amharic and English in all academic fields for an Ethiopian audience, that is, both the academic community and the general public.<sup>87,88</sup> The majority of its authors are Ethiopians. According to the Director and Editor-in-Chief of AAUP, Prof. Yacob Arsano, the press is a well-respected publisher and has published many publications that have been 'internationally acclaimed for their high academic standard'.<sup>89</sup> Its reputation is maintained by a rigorous process of editorial vetting and publishing decisions based on the recommendations of external reviewers. The press is owned by Addis Ababa University (AAU), and its Board of Editors (which also performs some of the functions of a governing board) is appointed by the University Senate. The Board is comprised of senior faculty members at AAU from different academic disciplines at the university.<sup>90</sup>

The executive function of the press is vested in the Director/Editor-in-Chief, who is the seventh director in the history of AAUP. He is a senior faculty member at AAU, a political scientist, an expert on hydro politics, former Dean of the College of Social Sciences and former head of the Department of Political Science of AAU.<sup>91</sup> He ascribes his appointment to lead the press in 2011 to a combination of his academic seniority, both as a senior faculty member and previous head of major academic units, his previous work on the advisory board at AAU's Development Research Institute, and his experience on the advisory boards of academic journals. Moreover, he suggests that the

[M]ost important appointment for the university press is someone who can help the press continue to make contact with publishers outside, authors outside and in the university, and someone who is interested to help the university press to go forward. [...] I don't have special editorial, managerial experience and this was also the case with previous

87 AAUP (2016). *AAUP Catalogue*. Addis Ababa: AAUP.

88 AAUP does not publish any academic journals. AAU journals are produced within the disciplinary centres of the university. Plans to 'centralise' the publishing of AAU journals are on the cards but not likely to be actually realised, as the organisational effort of constituting editorial boards and organising the workflow of a journal production schedule are beyond AAUP's capacity (Interview with Prof. Yacob Arsano).

89 AAUP (2016: 1); Among the most prestigious English-language books are those by Emeritus Prof. Bahru Zewde, cf. (2014) *The Quest for Socialist Utopia and A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855–1991*, both co-published by AAUP.

90 AAUP (2016: 2).

91 AAUP (2016: 49).

appointments; it is taken to the senior faculty to do the job.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, the key criterion in appointing the head of the press is academic seniority, academic management and networks (the ability to attract good authors and to establish links with other publishers).

The Director has a modest staff complement consisting of three full-time editorial staff members as well as administrative staff who ensure the day-to-day operation of the press.<sup>93</sup>

The press is fully funded by AAU and operates on a budget provided by the university (which in turn finances itself from government appropriations). AAUP is not expected to make a profit; indeed, it is not expected to cover its costs and has only limited control over costs and income. According to the Director,

The price of our books are much lower than other publishers in town. The reason is, it's not for making profit. It's possible to make money but that money goes into the university income system. It circulates. We are not required to sell books to the extent of covering our costs. That is not the deal. The deal is we publish as many books as possible in high quality, with a high level of publication, and make it possible that the public reads the books, and if there is a deficit of costs and budget then that is where the university financial system comes in.<sup>94</sup>

The biggest budget item for the press is printing, which is outsourced. AAUP does not have printing facilities but puts its printing needs out to tender. For these tenders, AAU printing services (which fall under AAU general management) as well as printing companies from outside the university can submit quotations. Payment (e.g. for printing services) are authorised by the AAUP Director but done through the university finance system.<sup>95</sup>

In its fifty years of existence, AAUP has accumulated a catalogue and backlist comprising about a hundred

titles. According to the Director, the plan is to accelerate the production of new publications so as to function 'at a fast commercial pace'.<sup>96</sup> However, there are a number of challenges in this regard, mostly organisational shortcomings and a high turnover of qualified staff who can secure better salaries in the private sector than in the government salary system. To address the problem of editorial staff turnover, editorial staff are set to be appointed as academic staff (and employed on the academic staff track in departments of AAU with the associated salary, benefits, rights and privileges rather than as administrative staff who are members of the civil service).<sup>97</sup>

AAUP has a very limited, mostly Addis Ababa-based, distribution network for its books, which are only distributed in print. It markets new publications by printing additional book covers that are then distributed as advertising material. AAUP participates in book fairs in Addis Ababa and holds its own book fair on the AAU main campus. There are 12 booksellers in Addis and they are regularly informed about forthcoming publications. They sell AAUP books on consignment. There are also those who visit the AAUP offices on the AAU campus to buy books. Wider distribution is not currently high on the agenda of the press. According to Prof. Arsano, one advantage that international distribution channels or digitisation could bring for AAUP is that they would be able to reach the 2 million Ethiopians who live outside Ethiopia.<sup>98</sup>

Apart from the bookshops, book fairs and in-house sales, AAUP does not have any national, Africa-continental or international distribution channels in place.<sup>99</sup> Some AAUP books have been co-published with international publishers such as James Currey (UK), Lund University Press (Sweden), Michigan State University Press (USA), Ohio University Press (USA), Rutgers University Press (USA), University of Chicago Press (USA).<sup>100</sup> Yet, the purpose of such co-publishing arrangements is less about AAUP seeking to reach an international audience; rather it is to ensure that books of Ethiopian interest published by international publishers are available and affordable for Ethiopians.<sup>101</sup>

92 Interview with Prof. Yacob Arsano, AAUP.

93 AAUP (2016: 4).

94 Interview with Prof. Yacob Arsano, AAUP.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 This information provided in the interview contradicts the information in the African university presses project database. From our desk research, AAUP was found to have an international distribution agreement with African Books Collective (ABC). A query sent to ABC CEO, Justin Cox, confirmed that ABC has a distribution agreement with AAUP but that ABC has not been receiving any titles from AAUP. It is not clear why Prof. Arsano is unaware of an agreement that may have been entered into by one of his predecessors.

100 AAUP (2016: 3).

101 Interview with Prof. Yacob Arsano, AAUP.

Currently there are no agreements with library-aggregation services. The focus is entirely on print publishing and when a title is out of print, and there is demand for it, a reprint may be put out to tender. While there have been projects undertaken by AAUP to move to electronic publishing (including two attempts by the current director), this has so far come to naught.<sup>102</sup> The AAUP website is easy to find and includes listings of published as well as forthcoming books.<sup>103</sup> This is the only web-presence of AAUP; it has neither a Facebook nor a Twitter account.

Currently there is no open access policy in place and there are no plans in this regard. One important issue for the Director is to balance the interests of 'popular' authors (who have an expectation of royalty income), with those of authors whose books do not sell in large numbers (and who therefore do not earn much by way of royalties and would prefer the books to be given away for free). AAUP's model to ensure access is that books are affordable and sold at low prices; while ensuring the high academic quality of the books.<sup>104</sup> An open access policy would require different licensing models which the Director has not yet thought through. These matters are downstream from his most pressing concern, which is to ensure that capacity in the press is retained by getting editorial staff to be appointed into academic posts.

Once we have accomplished this and once we have a good track with the editorial board and the editorial staff, then we have the possibility and expertise to put people to the digital process, to put people into a foreign market [...].<sup>105</sup>

The expectation is that the basic capacity problems at the editorial staff level will have been resolved during the course of 2017 and that this will allow the press to concentrate on other matters, including digitisation and e-publishing. The need for a full-time Director of the press was expressed: a more operationally involved manager to ensure that what is articulated in Senate legislation and in the strategic plans of the press are implemented, and that the entire press runs more efficiently, has its own cost centre to be able to pay authors, reviewers, etc. on time, and work with its own income and budget as allocated.<sup>106</sup>

## Case 2: Wits University Press, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Wits University Press was established in 1923, one year after the establishment of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), as an outlet for its research output. It has a multi-disciplinary catalogue, with a focus that includes art and heritage, popular science, history and politics, biography, literary studies, women's writing and selected textbooks.<sup>107</sup> Wits University Press publishes about 15 to 20 scholarly books per annum. Wits University Press has a strong backlist with important titles in African Studies and African language literature. It publishes mainly monographs, edited collections and some cross-over trade publications,<sup>108</sup> textbooks and plays (some of which are prescribed in schools). It does not currently publish any scholarly journals. Wits University Press publishes in print and digitally; currently titles are available behind paywalls in digital format, i.e. PDF, ePub, mobi, etc., going back to about 2010, with a process underway to digitise its backlist.

A declining number of its authors (about half) are based at Wits; others are from South African universities or from abroad. Of about 200 manuscript submissions a year, only 20% are selected for review and eventually only about half (20) are published. Scholarly publications (and about 90% of cross-over publications) are double-blind peer reviewed after having undergone editorial screening by press staff.<sup>109</sup>

Wits University Press is fully 'owned' by its host, the University of the Witwatersrand. It sees itself as 'strategically placed at the crossroads of African and global knowledge production and dissemination [...], committed to publishing well-researched innovative books for both academic and general readers'.<sup>110</sup> It is governed by a management board, which is chaired by the Wits Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and which includes Wits faculty members as well as external members. The publisher, Ms Veronica Klipp, reports directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In terms of the press's strategy, she feels she has sufficient scope to determine strategy with input from her staff and the board. A recent significant development was the appointment of a digital publisher in 2014. Wits

102 Ibid.

103 <http://www.aau.edu.et/offices/aau-press>

104 Interview with Prof. Yacob Arsano, AAUP.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 Wits University Press website; Interview with Ms Veronica Klipp, Wits University Press.

108 That is, scholarly publications written for a non-scholarly audience and for sale in general bookshops to the general public.

109 Interview with Ms Veronica Klipp, Wits University Press.

110 Wits University Press website.

University Press has five full-time staff members (plus one vacancy) as well as a part-time bookkeeper.<sup>111</sup>

There are a number of criteria by which Wits University Press measures its success: sales (of which the most successful tend to be the less scholarly books), citations (Wits University Press is the first and only African university press to be included in the Thomson Reuters Book Index) and reputation. In terms of reputation and sales, the most successful recent book published by Wits University Press is by the university's vice-chancellor, Adam Habib.<sup>112</sup> Ms Klipp sees Wits University Press as being in a very strong position currently, both financially and in terms of its reputation.<sup>113</sup>

Wits University Press has a digitally-driven marketing strategy. It markets its publications by drawing on a strong database to send information about new titles (especially by email); the press has its own website, which is search-optimised for Google (but cannot be accessed easily via the Wits University website). It has social media presence through its Twitter account. About two-thirds of its books are sold in South African bookshop chains (especially Exclusive Books) as well by independent bookshops, or they are ordered directly from Wits University Press. Wits University Press does not operate its own campus bookshop. For publicity, Wits University Press hosts book launches and seminars for which it sends out invitations using its database. Internationally, there are distribution arrangements in place with Blue Weaver for the South Africa region, the Independent Publishers Group (IPG) for the North America, South America and China markets, and with Eurospan for markets in UK/Europe, Australia and India. Through these international distributors, Wits University Press titles are also made available on Amazon and other online retailers.

For international distribution, there is a POD contract in the offing. Locally, printing is still in larger runs of more than 500 copies by offset litho printing. Overall, the production process has been standardised and digitised in order to produce multi-format digital products. Typesetting is outsourced to India; art books are still designed and typeset locally.<sup>114</sup>

Currently, Wits University Press publishes its titles under a copyright licence. A number of related matters are under discussion, including an agreement with JSTOR. While being in a position of strength, the

press is developing and rolling out a new strategy and implementing its digitalisation plan. As far as open access publishing is concerned, Wits University Press's strategy is currently limited and still under development; for 2016 one front-list as well as several backlist titles have been made available open access. The key constraint is the need 'to remain a financially viable press':

Open access, I think, needs to be seen as a business model. [...] There still needs to be funding to publishers to do that. I think it's very interesting and I think it's very important, and again the internationals are far ahead of us with that, but they are treating it as a new revenue stream.<sup>115</sup>

In this regard, author-based funding is noted and the fact that some publishers require high book processing charges. While Wits University Press does receive author-based funding for some titles, this is not a requirement.

The press is not required by the university to make a profit, but it is meant to cover its own costs, including salaries. As a 'department' of the university, it presents its budget annually to the university. In some years it manages without a subsidy from the university; while in other years it receives a subsidy. The press's income is mainly from sales, and is supplemented by limited supply-side funding. For prescribed school books, Wits University Press has a licensing agreement in place with two educational publishers in South Africa and this provides an important source of income. The press has no grant income; although it did seek funding for its digitisation strategy.

Ms Klipp sees the future of the global university press publishing industry in a positive light. Although they compete with 'cut-throat' commercial academic publishers in the local market, she finds that African university presses have established a good niche. But challenges remain: 'Africa looks less promising [...] [W]e seem to be lagging further and further behind.'<sup>116</sup> Moreover, while there is good co-operation between South African university presses, facilitated inter alia by the Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA)'s scholarly subsector, she notes that there is 'very little interaction with publishers based in Africa excluding South Africa. We have once or twice been

111 Interview with Ms Veronica Klipp, Wits University Press.

112 Habib A (2013) *South Africa's Suspended Revolution: Hopes and Prospects*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

113 Interview with Ms Veronica Klipp, Wits University Press.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

to CODESRIA meetings.<sup>117</sup> Lagging behind is mainly a matter of being able to get the funding to keep up with the technological innovations in the publishing industry. This, Klipp argues, is a massive challenge for African university presses, including those in South Africa, to be able to 'compete'. Capacity constraints due to funding relate to staff development, training, being able to expose staff members to the international market (e.g. by sending them to international book fairs), and to be alert to international developments. As key measures of success for Wits University Press in the next five years, she cites international recognition and increased international reach.

### Case 3: University of Nairobi Press, Nairobi, Kenya

The University of Nairobi Press (UONP) was registered as a private company wholly owned by the University of Nairobi (UON) in 1984, but only became operational in 1990.<sup>118</sup> Its mandate is to serve as a publishing house for the dissemination of UON research in all disciplines, and to publish textbooks at secondary and tertiary levels. It does not publish journals or theses. Currently, approximately 80% of its authors are scholars associated with UON (as current or former staff), and the remaining 20% are from outside of the university. UONP's multi-disciplinary catalogue (which is available on its website) is somewhat skewed towards the humanities and social sciences. To date, UONP lists over 50 scholarly titles in its catalogue. It negotiates its publishing programme with UON on an annual basis to publish about six titles per academic year; it has at times exceeded that number.<sup>119</sup>

UONP is described as a semi-autonomous unit within the university.<sup>120</sup> In reality, however, it is fully integrated into the university's governance, management, planning, funding and HR system. It is treated as an administrative unit of the university and UONP staff are staff members seconded to it by the UON and occasionally deployed to do work elsewhere.<sup>121</sup> UONP has no staff of its own. Its Board of Directors is meant to be the supreme policy organ and to support the head of the press in approving budgets, strategic

plans and drafting the press's publication policies.<sup>122</sup> The Board of Directors is made up of senior university management: its chair is the Chair of the UON Council; the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Director of University of Nairobi Enterprises are all statutory members. However, the Board has not met in ten years. Effectively, the head of the press reports like any other administrative unit to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) (Research, Production and Extension).<sup>123</sup> This has created a void in terms of governance and strategic direction of UONP.<sup>124</sup>

The Editorial Board is a committee of the Board of Directors; it is chaired by the DVC (Research, Production and Extension) and includes representation from all the colleges of UON, as well as the library and the bookshop. The Editorial Board was recently re-constituted but it has refused to meet before the Board of Directors meets and mandates its authority. Thus, in the absence of a Board meeting, the editorial processes are done administratively involving the Chair of the Editorial Board (i.e. the DVC).<sup>125</sup> The Chair identifies peer reviewers and decides on the acceptance of manuscripts based on peer review reports. All UONP publications are peer reviewed.<sup>126</sup> In addition, manuscripts are entered through plagiarism detection software (Turnitin). Editors (staff) can also recommend the rejection of a manuscript.<sup>127</sup> While a number of manuscripts are rejected every year, the press cannot publish all the manuscripts that are accepted due to resource constraints.<sup>128</sup>

In the late 1990s/early 2000s the future of the university press was uncertain. The press did meet the criteria of an 'income generating unit'; rather it depended heavily on revenue from the university to survive. In this respect, it was a great success when a commitment was made acknowledging UONP's crucial contribution to the realisation of the research function of the university to disseminate and preserve knowledge, and to promote the global reputation of UON. The decision was taken that the university would subsidise the press.<sup>129</sup>

While Oxford University Press is mentioned as an 'aspirational peer', this is not seen as realistic by UONP staff. Indeed, the head of UONP sees it as

117 Ibid.

118 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

119 Ibid.

120 <http://press.uonbi.ac.ke/about.php>; also see: UONP Service Charter (Pamphlet) (n.d.)

121 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

122 Interview with Mr Bernard Waweru, UON.

123 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.; also see: UONP Service Charter (Pamphlet) (n.d.), p. 5.

127 Interview with Ms Mercy Macharia, UON.

128 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

129 Interview with Mr Bernard Waweru, UON.

an achievement that the press has survived to date, particularly because there is no university press in Kenya that is able to operate as it does,<sup>130</sup> and other major university presses in the region, like Makerere and Dar es Salaam, have ceased operations.<sup>131</sup>

UONP is a relatively small unit in UON, with nine staff members seconded to it by the university. They comprise two editors as well as the managing editor/head of the press, one designer, a marketing manager, as well as an accountant, a secretary, a driver and a messenger. Especially at the level of design and editing, the Head feels that the press is strained for resources and needs another four to six staff members.<sup>132</sup> The expansion of the press is constrained mainly by resources: both funding (revenue) and human resources. In the latter case, it is a challenge to attract and retain well qualified staff to the press who can command higher salaries in the private sector than those available on the university's public institution service scale.<sup>133</sup> The Head feels that UONP is 'marginalised' within UON and currently under strain to the extent that he cannot keep up with the demand for scholarly publishing.<sup>134</sup>

As for its finances, the press is in principle expected to cover its own costs and there are pressures on it to commercialise – often with reference to international presses like Oxford University Press or Cambridge University Press as successful examples in this respect. Currently UON pays for the staff, offices and facilities of the press, as well as providing a small operational budget. The press generates revenue from mainly three sources: sales of books, author contributions (which are not compulsory) and partnerships. The latter is similar to author contributions but involves a partner such as the African Economic Research Consortium entering into an agreement with UONP as its publishing partner to produce project-related publications paid for by the partner. UONP currently receives no outside grants to support technological 'catch-up' or to realise its strategic goals.<sup>135</sup>

UONP measures its success in reputational terms linked to the quality and relevance of its publications. While, in terms of sales, the textbooks and manuals

that UONP publishes are the most successful, as a university press it discounts sales in favour of the scholarly 'seriousness' of a publication. Visibility and the extent to which a book is referred in public discourse, citation counts and 'hits' on websites, enquiries, etc. are all mentioned; however, there is currently no firm measure in place to measure success in these quantitative terms.<sup>136</sup> When the Head has to report on its performance, UON management typically has a different perspective on what success is: 'The first thing that they look at is not how many books have they done; they look at how much you have generated, and then we start a big debate and a big fight there.' The Head therefore feels that he constantly has to defend the performance of the press and he would be happy if UONP could simply operate as a good, sustainable university press.<sup>137</sup>

The marketing and distribution activities of UONP are centred on its campus-based bookshops and local distributors in Kenya such as Text Book Centre, Savanis and Nakumatt. UONP also handles direct enquiries and orders. These enquiries come mainly from faculty members who are seeking a specific title for use in teaching in universities in Kenya and abroad. UONP markets its books through its catalogue, the website, by means of exhibitions and by approaching librarians. Indeed, university libraries, tertiary institution libraries, as well as key national libraries, all stock UONP books.<sup>138</sup> Internationally, African Books Collective (ABC) handles its orders in Europe.<sup>139</sup>

In terms of international presence and technological innovations, there is awareness of key global innovations in the publishing industry, particularly with regard to digitisation, e-publishing and open access, and how these may create better and cheaper access to quality publications for academic staff and students. It is understood that this requires a new perspective, and it is argued that 'the African context is disadvantaged because we are always the Jonny-Come-Lately when it comes to technology'.<sup>140</sup> However, referring to the way cell phone technology has revolutionised communications in Africa, the Head expects that the new publishing-relevant technologies

130 UONP seems to be unaware of the operational Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) Press located in Nairobi.

131 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

132 Ibid.

133 Interview with Mr Bernard Waweru, UON.

134 Ibid.

135 Interview with Mr Bernard Waweru, UON; and interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

136 The website, for example, celebrates the achievement that one of UONP's titles *Kiswahili: Past, Present and Future Horizons* (1997) by Rocha Chimerah was selected as one of Africa's 100 best books of the 20th Century, as compiled for the Zimbabwe International Book Fair in 2002, cf. <http://press.uonbi.ac.ke/about.php>

137 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid.

140 Interview with Mr Bernard Waweru, UON.

may eventually do the same for revolutionising scholarly publishing in Africa.<sup>141</sup>

In terms of digitally-driven publicity, UONP has a working website, and digitally-driven marketing has been piloted in the past with a blog and a Twitter account, but neither was sustained due to lack of capacity.<sup>142</sup> UONP does not participate either in Project MUSE or Books at JSTOR; it prides itself, however, that its books are indexed by the Library of Congress. The agreement with ABC gives UONP not only an international presence and distribution channel, but its books are also available online from Amazon via ABC. Moreover, ABC provides POD for new UONP titles overseas; locally, POD is used by other publishers for small print runs and investigations are underway to consider its use by UONP.<sup>143</sup>

Open access is being discussed both within and outside the press. The UON library recently adopted an Open Access Policy,<sup>144</sup> and UONP was encouraged to follow suit. However, the Head of the press argues that the UON library's drive to digitise UONP's content and to make it open access involves legal and other issues that have to be considered:

Now our library was trying to capture [all content] and go digital, but once you have been digitised it means that you are accessible to the students. But there are issues around copyright and intellectual property rights there and we have not been able to resolve that issue. [...] I wish that someone could give me the experience so that I can see how are they dealing with some of these issues.<sup>145</sup>

The dilemma for the Head is that, on the one hand, the UON librarian would like the press to go fully open access; on the other hand, authors say that 'they need something out of it, otherwise I am not giving you my manuscript'.<sup>146</sup>

Moving forward then, the UONP sees the opportunities of technological innovations in a positive light, but is constrained by many factors – resourcing, legal implications, etc. – to make use of these innovations. The most pressing issue is governance, which

leaves the UONP without the ability to formulate and implement an appropriate and distinctive strategic direction. Being one of many administrative units, the distinctiveness of being a university press is not appreciated; staff cannot be hired, supported and promoted as publishing professionals; and the press is 'starved' of resources, both financial and human.<sup>147</sup>

#### Case 4: Wollega University Press, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Wollega University Press (WUP) was established in 2013. Since the end of 2016 it has operated as part of Wollega University's Publication and Dissemination Directorate under the Vice-President: Research and Technology Transfer.<sup>148, 149</sup> Wollega University (WU) is one of Ethiopia's second-generation public universities and was established in 2007 in Nekemte, Oromo Province. WU aspires to be 'one of the top universities in Africa by 2032'<sup>150</sup> and it established a press with the specific objective of furthering this ambitious goal. The press is seen as playing an important role in supporting the core functions of research and teaching by publishing globally. WUP was the brain child of the former President of WU, Prof. Fekadu Beyene, and its establishment and first years of operation have been coordinated by the current Editor-in-Chief, Dr Raghavendra, a health scientist, who came to WU from India in 2011. WUP aims to publish monographs, academic journals, textbooks and reference books across all disciplines and for all levels of education, for pupils, students, teachers and academics, for policy-makers as well as general readers. Its aim is to reach an Ethiopian and a global audience with its publications.<sup>151</sup>

WUP has only published the conference proceedings of its annual national research symposia, as well as five volumes of its flagship *Science, Technology and Arts Journal (STAR Journal)*. The *STAR Journal* has been able to attract authors from across Africa (25% papers from WU academics; 75% from outside WU and abroad), and established itself as a widely-indexed, multi-disciplinary, quality, open access journal. Three more journals are in development, specialising in agriculture and natural resources; medicine and health

141 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid.

144 <http://uonlibrary.uonbi.ac.ke/node/1482>

145 Interview with Mr Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid..

148 Interview with Dr Raghavendra, WUP.

149 Interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, WU.

150 Wollega University Corporate Communications Directorate 2016. Wollega University Brochure.

151 Wollega University Press website (2016) About Us. <http://www.starjournal.org/>

sciences; and Afaan-Oromo (i.e. the local language).<sup>152</sup> In addition, WUP has received monograph manuscripts (in economics and cultural studies), as well as a manuscript for a textbook in physiology, all of which are in the editorial process and slated for publication in 2017. All publications are double-blind peer reviewed and there is an emphasis on ensuring high-quality publications. Furthermore, there is a plan to buy Turnitin software to conduct systematic plagiarism checks on manuscripts.<sup>153</sup>

Wollega University Press has no employees. Rather, Dr Raghavendra, an Associate Professor of Biochemistry, was assigned by the previous President of WU to establish and coordinate WUP as its Editor-in-Chief. He ensures that all WUP operations run smoothly and is supported by the WU senior management and their staff. The editorial board of WUP, which is de facto also the editorial board of *STAR Journal*, operates hand-in-glove with Dr Raghavendra. Effectively, the success of WUP is a team effort by the top manager-academics of WU:

It is like a team we are working. The team is Research Director, Research and Technology Transfer Vice-President, so my office, and then he [an assistant in Dr Raghavendra's office], even our President, Dr Eba Mijena. So we are dividing the work. If a medical science related paper comes, it will come to me, I will send it for the reviews; if social science comes, it will go to our President because he has a social science background; and if agriculture comes, it will go to go Dr Hirpa; and so forth.<sup>154</sup>

Overall, WUP is able to run a 'tight ship', mainly due to the commitment from high-level university management, who are all relatively young, research-orientated manager-academics with a strong commitment to building the university. At the time of research, the Editor-in-Chief was being re-assigned from coordinator to a third-tier management position as Director: Publication and Dissemination. Yet, Dr Raghavendra insisted – as did the other university managers – that he would not abandon his discipline but continue his research and teaching while assuming a greater level of management responsibility. At present, it is

his coordination, the commitment and teamwork of top management, and the editors' and reviewers' work, all done above and beyond their academic duties, that holds the editorial process together. With the appointment of a Director: Publication and Dissemination and two coordinators for publication and dissemination respectively, more formal structures are being put in place,<sup>155</sup> albeit without full-time press staff.

With this way of operating, WUP has not needed a budget of its own. Rather, its expenses are small and part of the research budget negotiated annually with government. Payments are approved by the relevant Vice-President of the university as they arise. WUP has not applied for any external funding, nor has it generated any income of its own. While there is currently no expectation from the university to generate revenue, it is clear that WUP will need to move towards sustainability at some point, perhaps within the next ten years. With the third generation of universities being established in Ethiopia, WU will no longer receive the special start-up funding that it has benefited from thus far. Thus, a business model will need to be developed which may include subscriptions but it is unlikely to include an author-pay system as this would be prohibitive for Ethiopian academics.<sup>156,157</sup> The argument is that WUP plays a very important role in disseminating WU research (especially in agriculture, and Oromo language and culture); that it is part of establishing WU's 'brand identity'; and that the quality and relevance of its publications will attract future funding from regional and federal government.<sup>158</sup>

WUP publications are all available open access from its website and from other co-hosts such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and African Journals Online (AJOL) in the case of its journal. Print publications can be purchased directly from WUP. The option of subscribing to *STAR Journal* is available and subscription requests have been received. Currently, WUP prints 200 copies of all its publications. Given the lack of high-quality printers in Nekemte (which is some 330km from Addis Ababa), along with the administrative and time burden that is involved in getting quotations from printers in Addis Ababa and supervising the printing process, Wollega University has purchased the latest digital printing equipment to print

152 This development is contrary to what is happening in the rest of Ethiopia where from 29 journals indexed by AJOL, 18 have stopped publishing regularly. The decision to establish three more journals is one that involves Senate and will eventually be taken at the level of the University Board/Council (as per interview with Dr Raghavendra, WUP); also see interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, WU.

153 Interview with Dr Raghavendra, WUP.

154 Ibid.

155 Interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, and with Dr Raghavendra, WUP.

156 Interview with Dr Raghavendra, WUP.

157 Interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, WU.

158 Ibid.

and bind books on campus.<sup>159</sup> WUP distributes three free copies of its publications to all Ethiopian university libraries, research centers, agricultural colleges and Ethiopian government ministries. To date, there are no agreements in place with international distributors or with POD centres in other regions; the Editor-in-Chief is, however, aware that this is the way to go, especially once WUP starts publishing monographs.<sup>160</sup>

WUP uses the Creative Commons Attribution licence 4.0 (CC-BY) to legally facilitate its open access model for articles published in the *STAR Journal*, as well as for the conference proceedings published.<sup>161</sup> The licensing arrangements and compensation of monograph authors is currently under discussion. Given that WU library – which has several branches across the various WU campuses – is digitising its content to ensure better accessibility of knowledge to students and staff, and has a digital research repository, there is a commitment by WU to ensure that WUP publications are accessible and usable.<sup>162</sup>

A strategy to make the *Star Journal* more visible to the international research community resulted in the journal being listed in close to a hundred indexing services across the world (including AJOL, DOAJ, WorldCat, ProQuest, OAJI, SHERPA-ROMEO, etc.)<sup>163</sup> and available in various libraries. The journal has also applied for inclusion in prestigious indices such as SCOPUS and Web of Science.<sup>164</sup> It has approached JSTOR but has not yet received a satisfactory response.<sup>165</sup> Given that WUP is yet to publish its first academic monographs, neither JSTOR Books nor Project Muse have been considered. WUP has a well-functioning website that can easily be found and from which PDFs can be downloaded and print publications ordered.<sup>166</sup> It does not have Facebook, Twitter, or other social media accounts.<sup>167</sup> The overall ICT infrastructure available in Nekemte is seen as inadequate for WUP's needs.<sup>168</sup>

## Discussion

The dominant institutional logic of Addis Ababa University Press, as articulated by its Director and

evident from core documentation, is traditional editorial, with a primary orientation towards 'the book' as its high-quality product and the key source of legitimacy. A challenge, therefore, is the quality and capacity of editorial staff to ensure the production of high-quality products, and networks of authors, reviewers and editors that the editorial board can draw on. The professionalism of the editorial and publishing function of AAUP is therefore a priority.

Another source of legitimacy and part of AAUP's public mission as the university press of the national flagship university is to ensure that its publications serve the Ethiopian academic community and Ethiopian general public, with the implication that its books are affordable and accessible.

Plans for the future development of the press are not articulated in explicit market-oriented or commons-oriented terms but rather in terms of increasing operational control over the press (and thus gaining more independence from the university system) in order to operate more efficiently and productively. This may, down the line, create pressure for a more market-oriented way of operating. When prompted, the opportunities presented by technological innovations in the publishing industry are mainly understood in terms of creating marketing and distribution channels complementary to the existing print-based model. The defining characteristics of a commons-oriented university press model – such as open access distribution, creative commons licensing, focus on use value, etc. – are not part of the thinking of the AAUP leadership at present, even though the commitment to access (currently implemented only in terms of affordability) and the AAUP revenue model (which does not require the press to cover its own costs) would allow it to consider such a logic in a way that balances the interests of authors while reaching a wider audience.

Wits University Press' institutional logic can be interpreted as a hybrid, with leanings towards both editorial and market logics. Wits University Press has a strong niche position in the publishing market in terms of sales revenue and reputation. It has been

159 Ibid. As a second-generation Ethiopian university, Wollega University still receives substantial development grants from federal government that allow it to maintain an ambitious building and development programme, of which WUP is also a beneficiary (e.g. in terms of getting on campus access to brand new digital printing and binding equipment).

160 Interview with Dr Raghavendra, WUP.

161 Ibid.

162 Interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, WU.

163 Wollega University (2016). *Science, Technology and Arts Research (STAR) Journal: An Official International Publication of Wollega University* 4(1): vii.

164 Interview with Dr Raghavendra, WUP.

165 Ibid.

166 Wollega University Press website, <http://www.starjournal.org/>

167 Given the political instability in parts of Ethiopia of late, there have been numerous 'social media blackouts' over extended periods and a social media-driven publicity strategy is therefore not workable at present; cf. <http://mgafrica.com/article/2016-07-13-social-media-blackout-in-ethiopia>

168 Interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, WU.

able to keep up with key technological developments in the publishing industry, follow global trends, and has expanded its market reach through international distribution agreements. Yet, at the same time, it remains a traditional university press: in terms of its core identity and mission, its ownership and governance model, its non-profit revenue model (which includes a university deficit parachute), and its ability to grow organically in a niche market with limited resources.

Thus far, Wits University Press seems to be able to make the best of the technological innovations in the publishing industry: it has a digitally-driven publicity strategy that leverages social media and complements traditional forms of publicity such as attending book fairs and organising book launches. The press is currently considering an agreement with a major library aggregation service (JSTOR); its international presence is ensured by international book distributors who also give it access to Amazon, along with direct sales marketed via its website; and it is putting in place the contractual infrastructure for POD through one of its international distributors. A fully open access publishing strategy would require a radical change from its currently successful business model, and this is not on the cards at the moment. There is, however, an acute awareness of reputable international university presses in some cases experimenting with, and in others making a wholesale shift to, open access. In the meantime, Wits University Press is making selected titles, especially backlist titles, available open access as part of its current digitisation strategy. All of this, however, does not amount to a fundamental departure from its editorial and market logics; it is rather a way of strengthening its hybrid model to make it sustainable in the face of changing industry trends.

The institutional logic of University of Nairobi Press is decidedly editorial in a context where there are long-standing and strong demands from central university management to commercialise (not only to cover its own expenses but to become profit-oriented), and new 'encouragements' from other quarters such as the library to pursue open access. For either scenario, however, the necessary governance and policy infrastructure is absent, and the press is not resourced and staff are not capacitated to pursue either path. Hence, UONP focuses on what it has done well traditionally: producing quality, relevant scholarly publications at the scale of, at least, six per annum; trading on its reputation and defending its position as a necessary part of a university which aspires to be recognised as world-class and research-led. The Head of the Press is accordingly a managing editor, with primary training and experience in mass

communication and journalism, and who has become a publishing professional through a process of on-the-job training. His focus is on producing quality, relevant books; on increasing sales using traditional and new distribution channels; and on responding with incremental changes to technological developments that have a direct positive impact on the constrained bottom line (e.g. producing in e-format for the international distributor; considering POD for local printing). The primary relationships are therefore between the 'parent' company, i.e. UON, and the Head of the Press, and between the editors and the authors.

Wollega University Press has travelled the furthest down the route towards the logic of the knowledge commons. This is indicated not only by its open access policy and related creative commons licensing, but by the way it is conceived and operates.

On the one hand, the establishment of WUP can be seen as an appendage to the 'reputation project' in which Wollega University put in place processes and structures for becoming a prestigious, research-led university. On the other hand, there is a strong commitment that WUP provides a quality outlet for research produced by the university (and other researchers beyond WU in the developing world), and that WUP's publishing must be relevant and accessible to the local community, the academic community and the education sector more widely, as well as to policy-makers and the general public. This commitment – coupled with the open access model – resonates with notions of value creation for common benefit and investing in cultural capital committed to socio-economic development (which are characteristics of the 'knowledge commons logic').

Both of these rationales – reputation and relevance – are sufficient for WU to commit to the WUP: to govern and finance the press as an integral part of the university's research function. In some respects, WU's top management form a 'peer cooperative' in the way its members are integrally involved in the operations of WUP, and committed to its development.

In the next five years (and beyond), WUP is expected to grow organically to a list of five to six quality journals – including a journal in the local language Afaan-Oromo, which will publish multi-disciplinary research relevant to the local population and development of the Oromo language, culture and economy; to publish relevant books, including textbooks, from staff research; to have standardised procedures to improve the overall workflow and standardised designs to enhance the WU brand; and eventually become known as a centre

of excellence in academic publishing and knowledge dissemination on the continent.<sup>169</sup> Correspondingly, WUP considers the success of its publications in two terms. First, the success of the *STAR Journal* is measured with citations as indicators of academic quality, accessibility and relevance. But there are other measures of success, particularly linked to the notion of serving the community with relevant knowledge and technology transfer: who publishes in the journal, on what topics, and how this is immediately relevant to the local community, etc.<sup>170</sup>

Table 3.2 provides a simplified overview of the dominant institutional logics at each of the university press case studies included in this research project.

**Table 3.2: Simplified overview of institutional logics at four African university presses**

University Press	Editorial logic	Market logic	Logic of the knowledge commons
Addis Ababa	✓		
Nairobi	✓		
Wits	✓	✓	
Wollega			✓

According to Frolich et al.,<sup>171</sup> '[r]ecent theoretical contributions have underlined that institutional pluralism may actually be the default setting: [...] Organisations are confronted with diverging or several institutional logics embedded in different regulatory regimes, normative orders and cultural logics, and dynamics at the field level are created through a number of different – sometimes clashing – mechanisms.' Although this project did not specifically solicit information from university administrators, it seems evident from the interviews conducted with staff at the four university presses that university management hold their own beliefs about the function of the university press. And these beliefs may either align or conflict with those of the press. In other words, not only must the press contend with competing established and emerging institutional logics, but it must manage situations where the dominant logic of the press may differ from the dominant logic of university management. Divergent logics seem most acute in the case of University of Nairobi Press where the press shows a strong affinity with the editorial logic while university management favour the logic of the market. Convergence is most evident at Wollega University Press, where management

of the university and press overlap, and there is clearly a common leaning towards a knowledge commons logic. Similarly, there is alignment in terms of the dominant institutional logic at Addis Ababa University.

Based on this observation, one might speculate that independent academic publishers have an advantage over university presses where there is a conflict of logics at the organisational level within the university because as independent presses they do not have to manage these competing interests.<sup>172</sup> At the same time, however, independent academic publishers may be at a disadvantage to university presses where there is an internal coherence of logics – especially if this logic is not that of a market logic – because in such cases university presses may enjoy access to resources (particularly financial) that an independent academic press may not. Further research into scholarly publishing systems in Africa that include both university presses and other scholarly publishers may provide evidence for such differentiation between conducive and constraining organisational operational environments for university presses.

The case studies show that university presses in Africa are constrained by a dominant institutional logic, regardless of whether the logic of the press is in alignment with that of university management. To some extent, there is a correlation between the establishment of the press and its dominant logic. Wollega University is a new university and while it is not immune to institutional pressures to conform to existing taken-for-granted norms and values, the university has been afforded the opportunity to plot its own path without the influence of experiences shaped in the earlier phase of university press history. Wollega University Press has also received financial support from government and brought in academics from outside of the country, thereby diluting the dominance of local experience in determining shared norms. The other three, older presses are more firmly rooted – if not trapped – in an editorial logic that aligns with, but is both enabled and constrained by, the established administrative apparatus of their host universities. There is some hybridisation at Wits University Press with evidence of a market logic co-existing with that of an editorial logic. This could be attributed to the fact that Wits University Press has access to a larger market by virtue of being located in South Africa where there is a larger book-buying public, more university, public and corporate libraries, and more general and academic bookshops.

169 Ibid.

170 Interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, WU.

171 Frølich N, Huisman J, Slipersæter S, Stensaker B & Pimentel Bo'tas PC (2013) A reinterpretation of institutional transformations in European higher education: Strategising pluralistic organisations in multiplex environments. *Higher Education* 65(1): 84. doi:10.1007/s10734-012-9582-8

172 Naturally, independent scholarly presses are also institutionally bound organisations and may therefore have to manage a different constellation of institutional logics.

The case of Addis Ababa University Press seems particularly relevant in this regard. The press seems well positioned to explore open access as a viable publishing model because it aligns with the expectations of its host (which has signed the Berlin Declaration). Addis Ababa University Press is not expected to be profitable and is expected to make the university's knowledge products accessible and affordable. Holding back a transition to open access is the expectation of *authors* to generate income from royalty payments that are dependent on book sales, an expectation characteristic of the editorial logic. But if there is no expectation for the press to be profitable, the press could explore alternative methods of remunerating authors, such as once-off, upfront payments,<sup>173</sup> to name but one example. This would resolve the tension between sales-dependent royalty payments and open access. However, the press seems unable to devise solutions that are outside of the taken-for-granted editorial logic.

Most of the managers of the university presses interviewed expressed an interest in connecting with other university presses on the continent to share experiences and to explore collaboration. The question that arises from this observation is why in an age of email, social media and affordable flights connecting African cities, these university presses have not been able to convert the desire to connect into reality. A speculative answer within the framework of this study is that personal networks are characteristic of an editorial institutional logic – very different to the open networks for the knowledge commons – and the dominance of a reliance on personal networks to operate a publishing house prevents or inhibits the possibility of networking in ways made possible by new technology.

The finding that university presses struggle to operate outside of the institutional parameters dictated by a

particular logic is further confirmed by the curious fact that Addis Ababa University, Wits University and the University of Nairobi are all signatories to the Berlin Declaration on Open Access, but are less advanced in implementing open access in their university presses than non-signatory Wollega University.<sup>174</sup>

## Conclusion

We set out to answer two questions in this part of the research project. The first was very broad. Is the academic publishing industry affected by an emerging social capitalism: a technologically-enabled synthesis of capitalist and socialist economics, which expresses itself in the development of knowledge commons; views publishing as a collective social innovation enterprise rather than a business; organises in self-organising peer-to-peer networks, who invest their cultural capital in the global open access knowledge commons with the aim of collectively producing shared knowledge and value, and thereby 'socialising' problems and solutions? The second question was more specific. How are African university presses positioning themselves in relation to new global opportunities and challenges given the institutional pressures that constrain and steer them?

The answer to both questions is that all the investigated cases of university presses are aware of new technologies and the opportunities that they afford the press. Some are using technology to improve their visibility and the reach of their publications. But most university presses in Africa are not making full use of these technologies, particularly when it comes to shifting to new publishing models such as open access, because they are restrained by institutional logics that cannot accommodate such models.

173 See Van Schalkwyk F (1998) Beyond copyright: reconsidering the author/publisher/reader relationship. *Logos* 9(4): 207–218.

174 <https://openaccess.mpg.de/319790/Signatories>





PART 4

**CHOICE OF  
ACADEMIC BOOK  
PUBLISHER BY  
ACADEMICS  
AT MAKERERE  
UNIVERSITY**



**If we are going to have an impact,  
we need a publishing house that will  
not be driven by profit motive only.  
That will wait for ideas to be born,  
nurtured and spread.**

Anonymous personal communication,  
24 December 2015.

## Introduction

Limited financial resources and capacity are often referred to in the case study interviews in Part 3 of this report as placing constraints on the ability of the university press to operate effectively. Being locked into a market logic can make operating a press in constrained environments particularly challenging. But there is another less frequently referred to input: the academic texts produced by academics. Academic publishers, no matter how well-resourced and how highly capacitated they are, rely on the content produced by academics as the products of their research endeavours. Perhaps one explanation for the lack of attention given to this critical 'raw material' is that academic book publishers are in the enviable position of supply constantly outstripping demand. In short, academics produce more research outputs (raw material) than publishers can viably absorb and convert into products for the academic book market. Of course, not all academic texts are of the same quality or are likely to be received equally enthusiastically by the market (or reviewers), and there is competition among publishers for the best new contribution to a field of study or for the bestseller (depending on whether the publisher is primarily driven by quality or sales when deciding on which texts to invest in). Nevertheless, the fact remains that there is a sufficiency of supply to allow academic book publishers of different guises not to be apprehensive about a shortage of academic texts being a threat to their continued operation.

A focus on the beginning of the value chain on the supply side of academic book publishing brings into focus the role of the academic, and, in particular, the choices faced by 'publishing ready' academics when presented with a number of options: publication type (journal article, monograph, book chapter, conference paper, etc.), type of access (paywall or open access), financial investment and returns (no financial cost, author-pay charges, royalties), and publisher (or, more likely, which journal in the case of an academic article, or which conference in the case of a conference paper), to name the most obvious. Prestige is certainly important: according to two US-based case studies<sup>175</sup> university presses are the most prestigious outlets for humanities books. And there is no avoiding matters of cost. Harley et al.<sup>176</sup> find that permissions to

reproduce content can be very expensive in certain disciplines. Estabrook and Warner<sup>177</sup> found that 24.5% of faculty surveyed had been asked by publishers for a subvention for one or more of their books, and that in 90% of cases the cost was more than USD 1 000. A focus group within the same study expressed a concern that large subventions may begin to look like paying to publish.

The choices made by authors will ultimately, to a large extent, therefore be determined by contextual factors such as the relevant academic discipline, academic status of the author(s), available financial resources to support the publication, awareness of publishers and their reputations, etc.

Given that university presses rely on academic texts as primary inputs and that academics are faced with a range of publishing options, the following questions arise: What is the opportunity for an African university press in terms of the availability of academic texts to establish itself as a viable academic publisher? And what are the decisions being taken by African academics in terms of publisher?

## Methodology

To answer this question, Makerere University was selected as a case study. Its selection was based on the fact that the university has seen a marked increase in academic publications (using journal articles indexed in the Web of Science as a proxy): from 92 in 2000 to 648 in 2015, a seven-fold increase.<sup>178</sup> This would indicate an increase in levels of research activity and consequently a viable environment for operating a university press, at least from the perspective of the availability of texts as a primary resource. Makerere University Press was founded in January 1996. It was charged with the responsibility of 'publishing books, research reports, journals and all kind of scholarly works of Makerere academics and other Ugandan scholars. It is committed to bringing out publications with local orientation, suitable for our institutions of higher learning. The Press considers itself as

175 King CJ, Harley D, Earl-Novell S, Arter J, Lawrence S, Perciali I (2006) *Scholarly Communication: Academic Values and Sustainable Models*. San Francisco: Center for Studies in Higher Education, UC Berkeley. <http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/publications/scholarly-communication-academic-values-and-sustainable-models>; Thompson JW (2002) The death of the scholarly monograph in the humanities? Citation patterns in literary scholarship. *Libri* 52: 121–136.

176 Harley D, Acord SK, Earl-Novell S, Lawrence S & King CJ (2010) *Assessing the Future Landscape of Scholarly Communication: An Exploration of Faculty Values and Needs in Seven Disciplines*. San Francisco: Center for Studies in Higher Education, UC Berkeley. [http://escholarship.org/uc/cshe\\_fsc](http://escholarship.org/uc/cshe_fsc)

177 Estabrook & Warner (2003).

178 Bunting I, Cloete N & Van Schalkwyk F (forthcoming) *An Empirical Overview of Eight Flagship Universities in Africa 2001–2015*. Cape Town: CHET.

an institution in service of Makerere academics',<sup>179</sup> Currently the university operates an in-house printing press but does not house an operational university press. Efforts have been made to revitalise the press through, for example, 'Phase II of the Next Generation of African Academics Programme (2013–2016) titled; 'Enhancing research capacity and retention of the Next Generation of Academics at Makerere University'. The NGAA II three-year grant of USD 2 563 700 is supporting post-doctoral research, PhD, travel grants *and the revitalization of the Makerere University press*' (emphasis added).<sup>180</sup> Amidst these revitalisation efforts, academics at Makerere University have theoretical access to all academic publishers with lists that coincide with the academic disciplines in which academics at the university are actively conducting research. Not least of these is Kampala-based Fountain Publishers, a publisher that has been in operation for over a quarter of century and has a list of over a thousand titles including academic books.

Publication data were collected from the annual reports published by the university for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Each annual report contains a section that lists the publication outputs for the year being reported on for each school and department of the university. Data were scraped from the PDFs of the annual reports made available on the Makerere University website. Data were cleaned to remove duplicated outputs (e.g. an output listed as 'under review' or 'in press' in one year and listed again as a published output in a following year), unpublished masters and PhD theses, incomplete entries (e.g. no title), and older publications incorrectly reported in the reporting year (e.g. an output published in 2008). This reduced the initial list of 1 183 outputs to 1 116 outputs.

The cleaned data were coded for year, college and publication type (i.e. book, conference, journal, periodical, report or working paper series). Indicators such as 'journal of', 'volume', 'issue' and ISSNs were used to identify journals; conference names, dates and cities to identify conferences; 'news', 'magazine', ISSNs and the absence of 'journal of' to identify periodicals; and place of publication, publisher and ISBNs to identify books. Where these indicators were insufficient to determine a type, an online search was done to

determine it. Entries coded as 'book' were further coded for output type (book chapter, conference proceedings, creative, edited volume, monograph, textbook), publisher and publisher location (city and country).

A limitation of the adopted method is that it relies on self-reporting by the university colleges and the list can therefore not be assumed to be comprehensive. And it is not possible to determine whether the colleges may be under-reporting on certain research outputs. From the errors picked up in the lists of research publications and the inconsistent formats used to report on research outputs, it seems safe to conclude that the research outputs were not checked prior to publication, and that there is no or limited research management intervention taking place in the reporting process. The implication of this is that the reported outputs are likely to be highly variable in quality. No quality indicator was devised and used in this research project to exclude outputs of questionable quality (e.g. such as those published in predatory journals). However, the lack of quality control also presents an opportunity to include in the data and the subsequent analysis book-type academic outputs submitted by academics at Makerere University to a wide range of publishers, including predatory<sup>181</sup> and non-academic publishers.

## Findings and discussion

The breakdown by publication type of 1 116 academic outputs is illustrated in Figure 4.1. It shows that books made up a relatively small proportion (10%) of the publishing 'carrier' type chosen by academics at Makerere University when compared to journals (82%). Nevertheless, academics at Makerere University chose to publish 110 academic outputs in or as books over the four-year period.

A distinction was made between a book as a carrier type and as an output type. To illustrate, chapters and conference papers appear in books but are not themselves types of books, just as articles, letters and reviews appear in journals. Monographs, edited volumes and conference proceedings are types of

179 Abidi SAH (1998) Makerere University Press: An agent of scholarly publishing in Africa. *Occasional Paper no. 8*. Kampala: Makerere University, East African School of Library and Information Science.

180 <https://rgt.mak.ac.ug/news/makerere-university-carnegie-next-generation-african-academics-fact-book-2015>

181 A predatory publisher is a publisher that claims to be an academic publisher by purporting to offer to academic authors the full range of publishing processes and services required to maintain the quality of academic publications when, in reality, the predatory publisher offers only a limited range of processes and services in order to maximise the generation of revenue at the expense of quality. For example, a predatory publisher may offer online and print distribution to academic authors but not have in place any manuscript selection policies or peer review requirements to determine the acceptance and publication of manuscripts; and they may present fabricated editorial boards and review processes. Some predatory publishers maximise revenues by charging for the publication of a manuscript and publishing open access publications; others do so by waiving publication fees and selling non-peer reviewed publications with no editorial intervention at high prices via online retailers. Characteristic of predatory publishers is their aggressive and often personalised targeting of academics using email (with email addresses often harvested from university websites and web pages of academic conferences).

Figure 4.1: Publication carrier types (2011–2014)

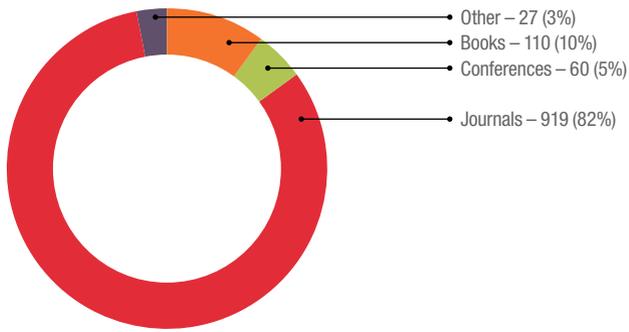


Figure 4.2: Types of books published (n = 33)

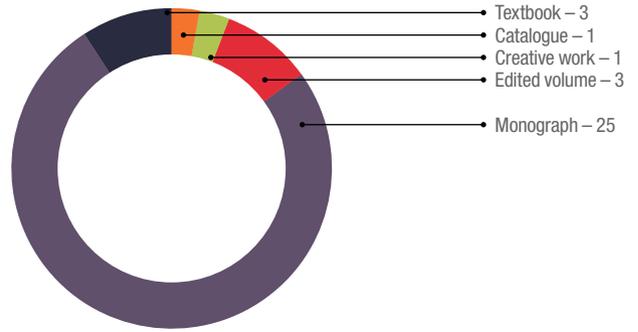


Figure 4.3: Location of book publishers by country (n = 33)

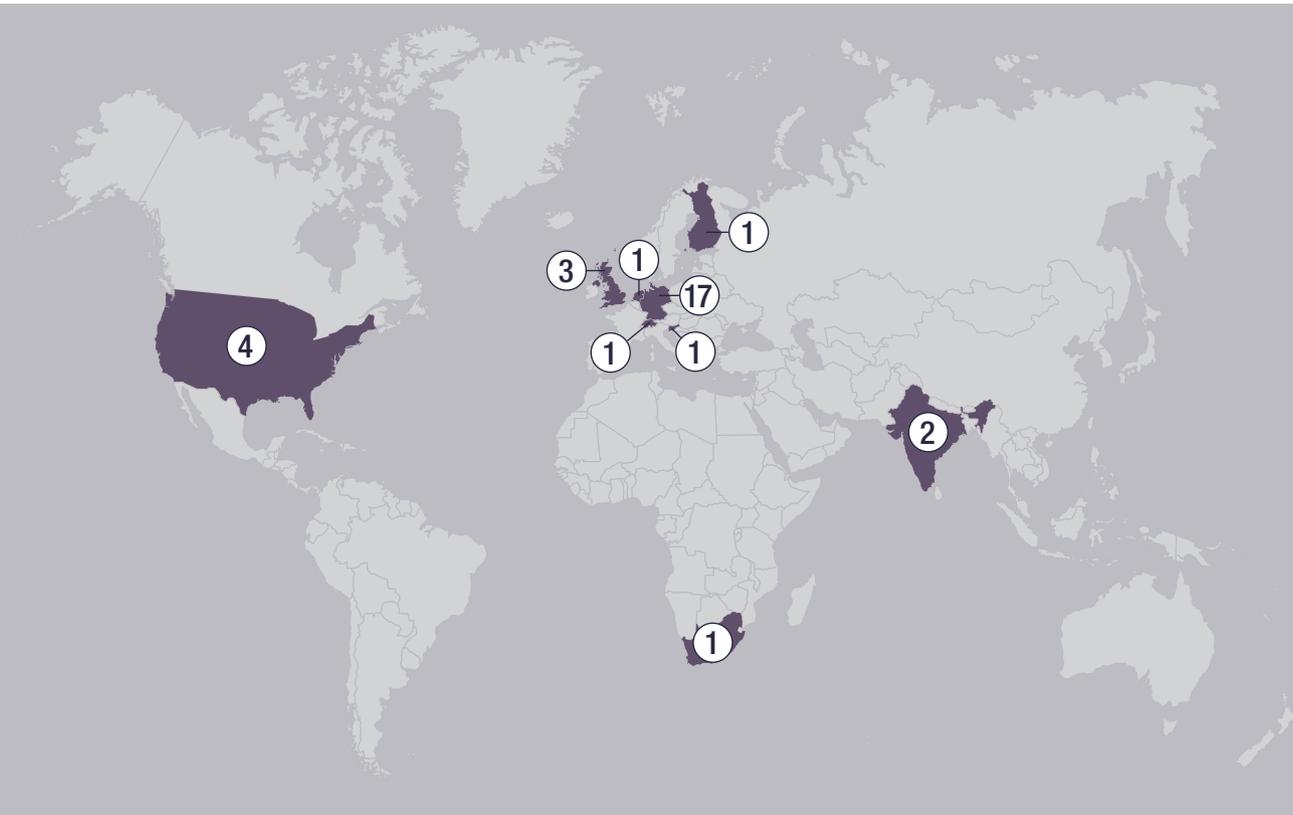
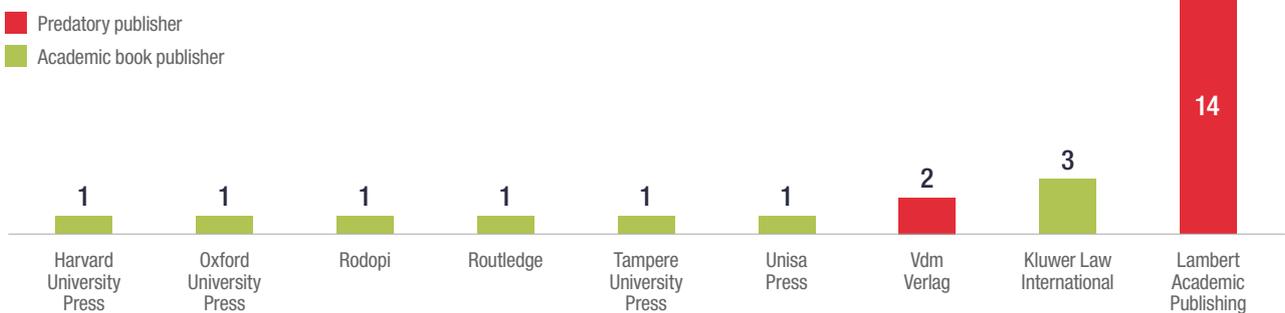


Figure 4.4: Monographs by publisher (n = 25)



books. After separating the carrier types from the output types, it was found that academics at Makerere University had authored 33 published books, or 8 books per academic year. Figure 4.2 shows the different types of books authored – predominantly monographs (25, 76%). Academics at Makerere University therefore either favour the authoring of academic monographs or there are more opportunities to publish monographs than there are to publish other types of books.

Figure 4.3 shows the country location of publishers of books authored by academics at Makerere University. Publishers are located in decreasing order in Germany (17), the US (4), UK (3), India (2), Uganda (2), South Africa (1), Croatia (1), Finland (1), Switzerland (1) and the Netherlands (1). Academics at Makerere are clearly not publishing predominantly with local publishers, most notably the established local publisher, Fountain Publishers. Their motivation for choosing foreign over local book publishers cannot be determined from the data. However, Figure 4.4 may provide some insight. It shows that of the 25 monographs authored by academics at Makerere University, 16 (64%) were published by what are regarded as predatory publishers (Vdm Verlag and Lambert Academic Publishing).<sup>182</sup> At least in some cases, academics are choosing book publishers that do not enforce the academic publishing industry's standard manuscript-selection process of subjecting manuscripts to peer review before deciding on whether to accept a manuscript for publication. Further research would need to be done to establish whether academics are choosing to publish with predatory publishers because their manuscripts are of poor quality, because local and international publishers do not deal with their manuscripts in a fair and professional manner, or simply because predatory publishers provide a quick and easy route to producing a publication that suffices in a university environment in which there is limited research (standards) management.

## Conclusion

While the pointers were welcome, the question was: If there was no Anglo-American literature to explain social relations and reference points in [local African contexts], does it mean no one else in Africa could tell the stories? [...] Should we surrender [...] to external theoretical writers? We have to come up with our own vocabulary and theoretical constructions [...]. The challenge therefore is how far and what impact are these papers likely to have on scholarship. If we are going to have an impact, we need a publishing house that will not be driven by profit motive only. That will wait for ideas to be born, nurtured and spread.<sup>183</sup>

Thus writes an African academic in the conclusion of a letter in which she details how seven articles and book chapters were rejected by the editors of publications published in the Global North. But her frustration is not only directed at publishers in the Global North, she is employed at one of Africa's flagship universities, home to one of the more active university presses. Perhaps for reasons of limited market appeal rather than a misfit with dominant theory, her own university press is of no more assistance to her than any of the publishers on either side of the Atlantic.

Faced with such a cul-de-sac in terms of publishing options, perhaps it should come as no surprise that 64% of monographs have been published by predatory publishers at Makerere University between 2011 and 2014. The fact that 42% of the book chapters, monographs and edited volumes published by Makerere University academics are in the theory-laden fields of education and the humanities and social sciences, may provide further impetus for academics at African universities to seek alternative publishing options from publishers that are responsive and productive, albeit devoid of any of the accepted quality-control mechanisms in scientific publishing. Nevertheless, the findings show that there is sufficient content being produced by academics at Makerere to warrant the existence of a university press.

182 See footnote 178 for a description of what constitutes a predatory publisher.

183 Anonymous personal communication, 24 December 2015.





PART 5

# **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



**The starting point of any critique of neoliberalism in higher education is the recognition that a university is not a business but a place of scholarly pursuits. Its objective is to maximise scholarship, not profits. Of course, no one can afford to be blind to financial realities. Universities are no exception. But if promoting scholarship is our core mission, we must be prepared to subordinate all other considerations, including financial ones, to the pursuit of scholarship. To forget this is to lose our way.**

Mahmood Mamdani (2016) Undoing the Effects of Neoliberal Reform.

This research project has provided a first-attempt, empirically-based overview of African university presses. While there are acknowledged limitations in relying solely on the websites of university presses and email requests to check and improve the data, some initial observations can be made. The data collected and presented in Part 2 of this report reveals that the landscape is fairly bleak – of the 1 572 African universities listed in the Worldwide Database of Higher Education Institutions, Systems and Credentials, only 52 have at some point in their history been home to a university press.<sup>184</sup> And of those 52 university presses, only 11 were found to have published in the past three years (using the listing of published titles online as an indicator of activity). Conversely, the baseline data show that this small group of university presses is active and that they are beginning to deploy technology to reduce production costs, enhance their visibility and widen their reach. Only one university press in Africa was found that publishes open access academic books, indicating that open access has not been integrated into the operational models of African university presses. This despite the fact that 36 African universities have signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access, 12 of which are included in the 52 African university presses listed in the Africa University Press database.<sup>185</sup>

From the four in-depth case studies (Part 3 of this report) that included interview data, it was found that, with the exception of one university press, university presses in Africa are typically bound by the traditional editorial institutional logic of the press as a site for the production of high-quality academic books by a professional publisher supported by personal networks for the creation of a reputable press. One university press was found to straddle an additional institutional logic – that of the market – most likely because it finds itself in a more viable local market. The exceptional university press was found to have been established from the outset in a manner espousing a new, emerging institutional logic – that of the knowledge commons. It is the only fully open access university press that has published both books and journals (although its book list is still admittedly thin), and it shares with university management a common understanding of the value of the press in supporting the dissemination of research. This finding surfaced the possibility that university presses are more likely to thrive when the institutional logics of the university and that of the press itself are in alignment, and when

such alignment is centred on the role of the press as a knowledge disseminator and not as a cost centre and profit generator. Lack of alignment may indicate that independent academic presses are better suited to thrive, although such a statement remains speculative without further research. The case studies also drew attention to some of the areas ‘on the ground’ where African university presses face challenges with respect to the adoption of new technologies: human capacity, technical and legal know-how, and institutional frameworks.

The examination of the choices made by academics at a flagship African university when deciding where to publish (Part 4 of this report) revealed that books make up a small but significant component of the total number of publications. In terms of academic books, most of these were monographs as opposed to textbooks or edited volumes. What is encouraging, is that the number of books authored by academics at the university studied would be sufficient to support an academic press at that university. Of concern is the finding that the majority of these monographs are published by international predatory academic book publishers.

The findings in Part 3 of this report on the limits placed on the behaviour of university presses by constraining institutional logics, when counterpoised with the constant refrain (not always supported by facts) that insufficient funding is the destroyer-in-chief of a thriving university press ecosystem in Africa, makes for a novel, and possibly unpopular, set of observations. Commenting on SIDA’s long-term financial support of Makerere University, Mamdani concludes that ‘lack of money is a problem, but it is not the most important problem. More important than how much money we have is how we use it’.<sup>186</sup> Our findings support Mamdani’s conclusion.

Generally speaking, funding is not the main problem facing African university presses. There are other problems, such as outdated employment models, procurement systems, a weak research culture, and inappropriate institutional frameworks that are too bureaucratic and not attuned to enabling reputation-building and managing the ‘expanded periphery’ of universities where university presses are located. But primarily, it is a matter of being locked into a predominant logic unsuitable to the local context that disables innovation and creates what is seen to

184 Admittedly, not all universities in Africa are research universities and are therefore unlikely to invest in the establishment of a university press. However, in the absence of a list of African research universities and setting aside what characteristics would define a research university in the African context, the Worldwide Database of Higher Education Institutions, Systems and Credentials serves as an imperfect reference.

185 Database: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1URiTsMVkeM12DIZ77fxcqYgVt0hohli4xly983F18/edit>; interactive map of the data: <http://code4sa.org/african-university-presses/#all>

186 Mamdani (2016: 122).

be a 'funding crisis'. In short, the universities are not entrepreneurial, and nor are their presses.

The case studies provide support for this claim: the least funded university press is the one that operates in the most digitised way, and is furthest down the line in terms of exploring alternative publishing models that are more focused on enhancing the university's contribution and status as a knowledge producer.

The focus of discussions on the future of the university press in Africa should therefore be less on funding and more on re-inventing how the press can operate and thrive given new possibilities afforded by digitisation and the internet. The recommendations that follow, particularly those for university presses, provide some suggestions on how African university presses could enhance their operations within current levels of support received by their host universities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research project, the following recommendations are made. As is to be expected, there is a degree of overlap between some of the recommendations. And it may be that some of the recommendations would be more effective if implemented in conjunction with other recommendations rather than in isolation.

### For African university presses

#### 1. Set up a university press network

The first recommendation that emerges from the research undertaken for this project is to set up a university press network. This would not be a novel undertaking on the continent; networks have been established in the past with variable success. Most notable of these was the continent-wide African Publishers' Network (APNet), established in 1992, now dormant. One of the main reasons for APNet's demise was the low commitment from its members and other stakeholders.<sup>187</sup> There are currently active nation-wide trade associations and consortia that fulfil a similar role to APNet's but on a smaller scale.<sup>188</sup>

The benefits of a continental network are numerous: knowledge disseminators have a collective voice, a channel through which to communicate openly, share resources and build skills. This does not disregard the major differences between publishing industries, states of development and economic and

language policies between countries in Africa,<sup>189</sup> but rather sees the opportunity in building relationships with colleagues in different contexts facing similar challenges.

There are continued calls for networks to be established by industry experts<sup>190</sup> and these calls are supported by those university press managers interviewed in this research project. Interviews conducted as part of the case studies in this research project indicate that the heads of university presses are particularly interested in matters of knowledge transfer, networking and capacity building. The head of Addis Ababa University Press, Prof. Arsano, expressed his hope that the experience of digitisation and e-publishing could be shared.<sup>191</sup> Prof. Arsano sees a great opportunity in establishing a continental network of AUPs and would be supportive of this with or without outside funding. Similarly, the head of University of Nairobi Press expressed a wish that 'someone could give me the experience so that I can see how are they dealing with some of these issues [of open access, digitisation and copyright, intellectual rights etc.]'.<sup>192</sup> The Vice-President of Research and Technology Transfer of Wollega University, Dr Hirpa Legesse, expressed an interest in being networked with top universities on the continent; however, they are not responding to his calls to organise site visits. Moreover, Wollega University Press would like to be able to provide workshops for the capacitation of research staff on how to write up research ('they have good data but sometimes researchers don't know how to put it into publishable format') and capacity development for

187 Darko-Empen (2005: 106)

188 Zell (2015: 61).

189 A major reason for APNET's cessation of operations was an inability to coordinate between countries that differed so radically (Bgoya & Jay [2013: 23]).

190 Zell (2016).

191 Interview with Prof. Yacob Arsano, AAUP.

192 Interview with Josphat Kirimania, UONP.

staff involved in the editing, proofreading, typesetting, printing and dissemination.<sup>193</sup>

The design of a new network should be purposive. It should be a network of minds stimulating innovation and creativity in African scholarly publishing. And it should take into account the findings of this project to include criteria such as the alignment in institutional logics between university management and the management of the university press; the similarity between presses in what they aspire to achieve and what is possible given their organisational and environmental context (which will contribute to grounded approaches to solving common problems); and a mix of high status but innovative presses that have successfully shifted to the knowledge commons and aspirant university presses wishing to do the same. An organisation such as the recently formed African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) could play an important role in ensuring that member universities and their presses prioritise the quality and accessibility of knowledge outputs rather than their income-generating potential in order to bolster the contribution of research to the reputations of member universities.

A networked approach allows for dispersed and distributed capacity to be harnessed. This, in turn, will enable the network of presses to achieve more than any press can achieve alone. In the area of journal publishing, INASP has seen the benefits of the networked approach. It established African Journals Online (AJOL) and, once it was established, it established similar platforms in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, and more recently in Mongolia and Central America. These have given the individual journals (many of them based in universities) access to a publishing infrastructure and to expertise that they could not have secured as lone publishing initiatives. Networked university presses also open up the opportunity for joint distribution arrangements, for consortia sales agreements with international university libraries and research institutes, and for joint marketing efforts.

While the presses interviewed indicated that there is support for an African university presses network, and that an organisation such as ARUA could play a valuable role in holding the network together, attempts by African university presses to link to their prestigious counterparts in the developed world will not be easy, as those presses with established reputations may perceive little benefit from participating in an international network. Nevertheless, this should not dissuade individual African university presses from connecting with new and established university

presses abroad. And African university presses do have something to offer. For example, given the high costs of producing academic monographs, there is value in leveraging the fact that origination costs in Africa are comparatively lower than in the US, UK and Europe. This cost differential could open up opportunities for co-publication arrangements (provided that African university presses are able to access the requisite publishing skills in terms of design, typesetting, proofreading, etc.). Under the open access model where borders dissolve and regional rights to sell titles no longer make sense, African university presses could take the lead in exploring what form open access co-publication could look like. There is most likely still a case to be made for open access co-publication on the basis that different university presses have access to different networks rather than different markets, and that if use by means of the widest possible dissemination of scholarly monographs is the objective, then connecting different networks through co-publication arrangements makes sense.

## 2. Emphasise the value proposition of the university press

‘[Publishing is] not a job anymore. That’s a button. There’s a button that says ‘publish,’ and when you press it, it’s done,’ says publishing expert Clay Shirky. If everyone is a publisher, what is the added value that academic book publishers bring to university researchers? The findings in Part 4 of this report show that a great number of academics at Makerere University are choosing predatory publishers for their monographs. This suggests the possibility that academics at that university disregard or are unaware of the value added by ‘traditional’ publishers on their doorstep and favour instead ease of publication and listings on the websites of international online retailers offered by persuasive European ‘editors’. The reason for this shift is most likely a weak academic culture after decades of consultancy-driven research.<sup>194</sup> African university presses need to re-engage with their clients – academic authors – to counter the perception of push-button publishing and reassert the value that the university presses provide in transforming manuscripts into academic monographs that make a valued contribution to the knowledge enterprise. Walking the corridors of the academy to engage face-to-face with academics to showcase what the press is producing and making enquiries about current research products and interests is but one straightforward way of reconnecting. Another could be to research the quality, reach and (academic) returns of monographs published

193 Interview with Dr Hirpa Legesse, WU.

194 Mkandawire T (2011) Running while others walk: Knowledge and the challenge of Africa’s development. *Africa Development* 36(2): 1–36; Mamdani (2016: 130).

by predatory publishers versus those published by university presses.

### 3. Integrate funding into commissioning and planning

Research has shown the extent to which African university researchers, in the absence of national science councils and institutional funding for research, rely on donor funding to support their research.<sup>195</sup>

African university presses can unlock funding to support the publication of academic monographs, and particularly of open access monographs, by working more closely with university researchers when they are conceptualising and planning new research projects and are seeking external funding to support such projects. This model has been used effectively by the HSRC Press when it was re-established – researchers at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) were encouraged to plan for published outputs and publication funding early in the research process rather than seeing it as an incidental part of the research function.<sup>196</sup> Publishing services company, Compress.dsl, did the same in the research NGO publishing sector in South Africa. When it became apparent that research NGOs typically had insufficient project funds at their disposal to publish and disseminate their findings due to poor budgeting, Compress.dsl set out to provide NGOs with non-binding publishing plans and estimates of publishing costs when NGOs were in the process of submitting proposals to prospective funders.<sup>197</sup> Based on anecdotal evidence, some funders regard the presence of a publishing and dissemination component in the overall research project plan as an indication of good project design and this, in turn, makes for a stronger proposal.

## For funders

### 4. Consider the scholarly publishing ecosystem when providing financial support to African universities

Like the unintended consequences of book donation programmes in Africa, the funding of specific elements in the research communication system (such as institutional repositories) without taking into account the impact on the broader scholarly publishing ecosystem

introduces distortions and unintended consequences in the academic publishing system. The risk for university presses of funding being channelled to institutional repositories, for example, is that host universities do not support their presses because they see the repository as fulfilling the role of disseminating the university's knowledge outputs. This is to miss the important role that the university press and/or other academic publishers play in ensuring quality and acting as an important filter in a world saturated with content.

Similarly, the university library continues to play an important role for university presses. The viability of an African university press is dependent on guaranteed library sales in Africa for scholarly books, whether digital or in print. If reliable sales exist, as they do elsewhere, they can at the very least provide a stable sales platform for monograph publishers.

Funding for infrastructure and initiatives that seek to support knowledge production and dissemination should therefore take a holistic approach that is sensitive to all the actors and processes in the research communication system, including the university press. It is also incumbent on universities to provide due recognition and adequate support to university presses in the disbursement of funding intended to support knowledge production and dissemination at African universities.

### 5. Support the university presses that are fit-for-purpose

If the intention of funding support is to enhance the visibility, use and impact of African knowledge by supporting university presses, then funding should be provided to those universities and their presses that understand how to repurpose themselves to achieve that goal. Such financial assistance should focus on enabling universities and their presses to experiment with new goal-aligned publishing models by connecting to and being able to reinterpret (innovate) existing expertise in the field. While it is not a university press, the HSRC Press, located in an institution not altogether dissimilar from a public research university, is illustrative in this regard as it shows how a publishing press was able to re-engineer itself to align with the institutional goal of knowledge dissemination.

In 2001, the HSRC in South Africa commissioned a report through which they hoped to restructure their

195 Van Schalkwyk F (2015) University engagement as interconnectedness. In: N Cloete, P Maassen & T Bailey (eds) *Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education*. Cape Town: African Minds. [http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/9781920677855\\_txt1.pdf](http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/9781920677855_txt1.pdf); Mkandawire (2011).

196 Gray E, Van Schalkwyk F & Bruns K (2007) Digital publishing and open access for social science research dissemination: A case study. *Africa Media Review* 15(1/2): 22–57.

197 Personal communication, 20 October 2016.

business model around a policy of high-quality open access publishing that is sustainable and competitive in the global market. A key aspect of the report was the effective use of ICT for knowledge dissemination and for cutting costs. The report found that the HSRC had become decentralised, relying on different departments to handle their own publications. In addition, researchers had come to see publications less in terms of market value and more in terms of staff evaluation and their own ambitions. The ‘publish or perish’ model had a severe negative impact on the profitability of publications, since books went into large print runs and then didn’t sell. With no central publishing department and a lack of ICT skills, print quality and online marketing also suffered. The report recommended a three-way publishing strategy aimed at rebranding publishing ‘as an integral part of the research function’. Published content would in future be stored in a fully searchable database, from where readers could read documents online or download them at no cost. This system would also allow the reader to order a print copy, which the HSRC managed on a POD-basis and at cost-recovery price. In order to fully benefit from the POD model, the HSRC was advised to go into business with a single print-management partner. Content would be published under Creative Commons licences. A central publishing department was necessary as was explaining the strategic function of the publisher in quality assurance, conceptualisation of research publications and knowledge dissemination to researchers.<sup>198</sup>

The HSRC took the report to heart and implemented its recommendations. Some years later, this new business model has proven itself to be remarkably efficient. The HSRC has become a leading publisher of African scholarship, and distributes its books in more than 200 countries, largely through online booksellers. It has made further changes in its marketing strategy, including working with other publishers and organisations to increase the exposure of their publications and attending conferences.<sup>199</sup>

## For universities

### 6. Be clear about the function and value of a university press

Universities should remind themselves of the original purpose of the university press: to ensure quality and

to disseminate knowledge, both within communities of scientists and to the public. Without overstressing the point of the functions of the university and the role of the university press in supporting the core university function of research, it is left to Mahmood Mamdani to sum up this recommendation:

The starting point of any critique of neoliberalism in higher education is the recognition that a university is not a business but a place of scholarly pursuits. Its objective is to maximise scholarship, not profits. Of course, no one can afford to be blind to financial realities. Universities are no exception. But if promoting scholarship is our core mission, we must be prepared to subordinate all other considerations, including financial ones, to the pursuit of scholarship. To forget this is to lose our way.<sup>200</sup>

## For funders and universities

### 7. Consider alternatives to the university press as the best-placed disseminator of knowledge

It may not always be the case that the university press is best-placed to fulfil the role of academic publisher. This research project has shown that where university management’s expectations are in alignment with those of the university press, for example where there is alignment regarding the role of the press as a knowledge disseminator and not a cost centre and profit generator, then it is more likely that the press can effectively fulfil its role as publisher. If there is no alignment, then an independent academic press may be a better solution. Further research that examines the effectiveness and complementarity of university presses and independent academic publishers in particular country settings would need to be done to provide more weight to this recommendation that, in some instances, publishers other than university presses may be better placed to disseminate research. However, in the meantime, caution should be exercised in making assumptions about the university press being the best solution to disseminating knowledge in every instance.

198 Gray, Van Schalkwyk & Bruns (2007).

199 See the HSRC Press website for more information: <http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/>

200 Mamdani (2016: 130).

## 8. Support and focus on the core publishing processes

Alternatives to the idea of the university press as an in-house publisher requires further research and investigation. Universities with plans to revive dormant university presses (such as Makerere University and the University of Ghana<sup>201</sup>) appear to be focusing on the production side and not on the functions of the press that add the most value and contribute the most to building the reputation of the press and, by implication, the university. This could be because printing services generate more immediate financial returns and because overseas suppliers of printing machinery are willing to support the establishment of printing facilities in new markets. However, production is the easiest part of the publishing process to

outsource. The heart of the university press and the crux of its value lies in the functions that are the most expensive and the most difficult to outsource: the commissioning of new titles and the editorial process that follows in the transformation of submitted manuscripts into published academic monographs. Certain longstanding African university presses (such as the University of Cape Town Press) operate as an editorial board only, while all other functions are provided by an established commercial book publisher. Funders should ensure that their grants fund the most important parts of the publishing process; and universities should support the outsourcing of non-core functions such as typesetting and printing, and create attractive posts for dedicated and passionate publishing and editorial personnel at their university presses.

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201 While neither the University of Ghana nor Makerere University have an active university press, there are plans at both universities to support the increase in publications at these universities that express in their mission statement their intent to be research universities. At Makerere University, according to the university's website, Phase II of its Next Generation of African Academics Programme (2013–2016) titled 'Enhancing research capacity and retention of the Next Generation of Academics at Makerere University' is a three-year grant of USD 2 563 700 to support post-doctoral research, PhD travel grants and the revitalisation of the Makerere University Press. No evidence could be found of this revitalisation process – not from the university nor from the provider of the grant. At the University of Ghana, an internal document titled 'Academic Publications Guideline' has been drafted to provide standards and guidance for the prompt and impactful publication of the university's research. The document proposes a publication office to be located within the Office of Research, Innovation and Development. The document does not make reference to Ghana Universities Press. However, according to the Office of Research, Innovation and Development, the press is 'active' – there is a press administrator with a telephone number but no email address, and there is no university press website. The university has recently invested heavily in new printing and binding machinery.

# INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

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- 19 April 2016** Ms Veronica Klipp, Publisher, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, South Africa
  - 17 May 2016** Mr Bernard Waweru, Academic Registrar, University of Nairobi (previously member of the UONP Board), Nairobi, Kenya
  - 17 May 2016** Mr Josephat Kirimania, Publishing Editor and Head of UONP; Ms Mercy Macharia, Design, University of Nairobi Press, Nairobi, Kenya (joint interview)
  - 3 August 2016** Dr HL Raghavendra, Associate Professor, School of Medicine, College of Medical and Health Sciences, and Editor-in-Chief: Wollega University Press, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia
  - 4 August 2016** Dr Hirpa Legesse, Vice-President: Research and Technology Transfer, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia
  - 6 August 2016** Prof. Yacob Arsano, Professor at Addis Ababa University, and Director and Editor of Addis Ababa University Press, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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# APPENDIX 1: Informed Consent Form

## Informed consent form: Wits University Press

### What is the purpose and value of the AUP project?

The project 'The African university press in a digital age: Practices and opportunities' is a research project focusing on (a) mapping the terrain of existing university presses in Africa; (b) examining their existing and emerging revenue models with reference to different format types (e.g. journals, books, e-books, Kindle editions); and (c) analysing their current distribution

models, use of open access, print-on-demand, etc., and the use of university press websites and other online platforms (such as social media) as a way to create visibility and publicity. From the perspective of the project funder (The Carnegie Corporation of New York), the project is also intended to guide further support for the development of African university presses.

### Who participates in the study? What does participation entail?

This project invites participation from the senior staff of African university presses in interviews in which the following matters are discussed: (1) the historical development and current profile of the university press; (2) governance and strategy; (3) the use of new technologies in the marketing, production and distribution model of the university press; (4) the revenue model of the press; and (5) outlook for the future of the press.

There are no immediate benefits to participants. We value the time, experience and expertise shared by participants in this process of knowledge production. Participants will be acknowledged in the research outputs (unless anonymity and/or confidentiality have been requested) and participants will receive copies of the research outputs.

### What about confidentiality, privacy and anonymity? Is participation voluntary?

Participation is entirely voluntary. Participants will be asked to provide some background information about their professional development and history and role in the publishing industry. Participants will be personally

identified and acknowledged in the research unless they ask for confidentiality and/or anonymity. The results of the study will be reported in various formats (e.g. research reports, journal articles, books).

### For more information, comments or complaints, please contact:

Mr François van Schalkwyk, Principal Investigator, African Minds, editor@africanminds.org.za; +27 83 4567844; +27 21 8500712

Dr Thierry Luescher, Assistant Director: Institutional Research, University of the Free State, thierry.luescher@outlook.com; +27 83 3505959; +27 51 4013771

### CONSENT FORM:

- I have read this document and understand the information.
- I understand that once I commence the interview, I may withdraw at any time.
- I understand that my personal information, or any such information that may result in my identity becoming known, will be made anonymous if I so request in writing to the principal investigator at any stage in the research process.
- I understand that any or all of the information I share in the interview will be treated as confidential if I so request at any stage in the research process.

- I understand all the above and agree to participate in the research.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 2: Interview Schedule

## 1. Personal professional development

1. What is your current position at this press?
2. What has been your career path that has led you to this point in your career? [Include qualifications and memberships.]

## 2. History and current state of the press

1. When was the press established and for what purpose?
2. What would you consider the milestones in the development, both the ups and downs, of the press?
3. What recent development has had the biggest impact on the press?
4. How many publications does the press typically publish per annum?
5. What types of publications does the press publish?  
Monographs? Journals? Trade publications? Textbooks?
6. Does the press have a disciplinary focus?  
Or is it more general in the titles it publishes?
7. How many full-time staff does the press employ?
8. Who are your typical authors? How are they identified?
9. Do you only publish for academics from the host university?
10. What selection and quality assurance/review mechanism do you have in place?
11. Are ALL publications peer reviewed?
12. What are your typically successful publications?  
Which academic book published in the past five years do you regard as the press's most successful?
13. How do you measure this success? Sales?  
Downloads? Citations?
14. How would you describe the current state of the press?

## 3. Governance and strategy

1. Who 'owns' the press?
2. What governance structures are in place?
3. Who serves on the governing board (or its equivalent)?
4. How are members of the governing board elected?
5. Who determines the strategic direction of the press?

6. What is the current strategy of the press?
7. What other university presses do you consider to be your close peers currently, and which ones do you aspire to become more alike (if any)?

## 4. Marketing, production and distribution

1. Who are your 'clients'? How do they know about you and your publications?
2. To what extent do you use digitally-driven marketing and publicity (e.g. use of reviews, articles, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, news services, own website)?
3. Where do potential readers/users access your publications?
4. Do you have an in-house book store? Do you have a local distributor and/or an international distributor?
5. Do you use print on demand (POD) technology? Who is your local POD service provider and or international POD service provider (e.g. Lightning Source; Global Connect; Integrated Book Technology)?
6. Are all your new publications available in e-format? To what extent is your backlist digitised?
7. Is it possible to order your publications online? On which sites (e.g. amazon.com; other online book sites, own website)? In which formats?
8. What licensing model(s) do you use?
9. Does the press have an open access policy?
10. Do you provide some/all of your publications open access? What determines whether a publication will be open access or not?
11. Do you participate in any online library-aggregation services, either directly or indirectly (via your distributor), e.g. UP Content Consortiums' Books on Project Muse; Books at JSTOR; journals in AJOL, Sabinet, etc.?
12. To what extent is your production process adapted to accommodate electronic media and new platforms for content delivery?

## 5. Revenue and funding

1. How does the press fund its operations?
  - In-house funding / subsidisation by host university
  - Author-based funding model (supply-side funding)
  - External grant-based funding model

- Revenue from book sales
  - Revenue from subscriptions
  - Other funding models
2. Is the press expected to cover its own expenses?
  3. Is the press expected to make a profit annually?

## 6. Outlook

1. How do you see the future of the academic publishing industry globally and in Africa?
2. How do you see your university press developing in relation to the current challenges and opportunities presented by new technologies and the open access movement?
3. What capacity and resources would you need to be able to position yourself optimally in relation to new global opportunities and challenges?
4. If there is one thing that your university press is known for five years from now, what would you hope that to be?
5. What would be the one change you would make so that your university press could fulfil the hope identified in the previous question?

# APPENDIX 3: On communicating with knowledge disseminators in Africa:

## An experiment



In the second and third quarters of 2016 African Minds engaged in two projects which involved making contact with knowledge disseminators. The first was the culmination of a long-term research project on student politics in Africa, which resulted in the publication of a book. As part of its grant proposal, African Minds had committed to donating 100 copies of *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* to university libraries, the overwhelming majority of which were to be African libraries. The second project is the current African University Presses project. In this Appendix, we present the results of attempts to establish contact with knowledge disseminators in Africa.

Data was collected from email campaign manager and analytics tool Campaign Monitor, email exchanges and website analysis. The experiment proceeded in three stages.

During the first stage, researchers attempted to locate contacts at all relevant knowledge disseminators for use in stage two. This was done either by locating the university press's website using the African University Press project's database, or by identifying another contact at the university likely to be able to offer a meaningful referral. In the case of university libraries, this was done by searching for a contact person at the library's acquisitions department or identifying another contact likely to be able to offer a meaningful referral.

Researchers then attempted to establish contact via email. African university presses were informed of the baseline database (see Part 2 of this report) and requested to review their information and respond with updated information or corrections. The African University Press project identified 52 university presses in Africa. Of these, 27 had websites. Not all the websites contained contact details and, as a result, only 19 of the presses were directly contactable via email. The researchers proceeded to send an email informing the contact at the university press of the AUP Database and requesting that they check whether the information in the database is correct and up to date. If it was not, they were asked to reply to the email with updated information. In order to establish contact with the remaining 31 presses, researchers

attempted to find a relevant contact at the university who was connected to the press through internet searches for press releases and academic biographies, or alternatively a contact person at the library. A total of 22 contacts were collected, while nine universities' websites either had no contact information in English, Portuguese or French, or did not function or exist. We imported these contacts into Campaign Monitor and sent out an email requesting a referral to a contact at the university press.

A similar strategy was followed for the donations of *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism*. This title was selected because of its direct relevance to Africa in general and to African universities in particular, thereby distinguishing it from the foreign titles donated by book donation agencies. The requirement was to distribute 100 copies of the book to African libraries and other relevant libraries. Some books were to be delivered by hand through authors and colleagues to various universities, of which most were in Africa. This total came to 37 personal deliveries. Another 63 needed to be sent by courier or post. As a safety measure, African Minds wanted to contact those libraries they intended to donate to in order to confirm the address for delivery. A first step was therefore to find an email address for a relevant contact person at the library, either at the acquisitions department or elsewhere. For the purpose of this study, only African libraries are included in the survey. That left a remaining 45 universities that needed to be contacted.

The search for contacts at the relevant libraries proved difficult, and so was expanded to include a scholar working in a relevant field and who might be able to offer a referral. A total of 33 email addresses were collected, and one scholar was contacted via Academia.edu. The remaining universities presented the same problems with websites as were faced when trying to contact the AUPs, and indeed some were the same universities. Additionally, it became clear that a number of universities have no contact information at all on their websites or, in rare cases, only a general contact address which almost always returns a soft bounce for a full mailbox.

The email stated that African Minds would like to donate a hardcopy of *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* to the institution or research centre's library. It also requested that if the library was interested in receiving the book, they should please respond directly to the email with the appropriate delivery address. The email made it clear that there were no fees or obligations involved.

The second email sent took a slightly different approach. The email was sent to 74 recipients. Included in the mailing list this time around were 18 non-African recipients (higher education research centres in Europe and Asia). The remaining recipients were African library contacts as found on university websites or through prior correspondence. In all cases a link to 'donations' was sought first and foremost, though often only a general inquiry email address for the library as a whole was available. In 12 cases where there was no library contact information, an attempt was made to find another suitable contact at the university in the form of an academic or vice-rector. The message contained slightly different information, and stated the following instead of a direct offer of a book donation:

The African Minds Trust is a not-for-profit publisher of open access African scholarship. From time to time, when funding permits, we donate books to libraries around the world as part of our mission to broaden the African knowledge base and disseminate information to as many users as possible.

During the final stage and after several weeks had passed for recipients to respond to communications, researchers compiled the data from Campaign Monitor to assess ease of communication with knowledge disseminators at African universities.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show the statistics for the sent emails. Only 40% of emails in stage 1a and 29% in stage 1b were opened, as opposed to a much larger share of 47% and 67% respectively remaining unopened. The bounce rate in stage 1a was high [four (21%)] and four emails were undelivered. The bounce rate refers to emails that could not be delivered for any number of reasons, and are divided into soft bounces and hard bounces. Soft bounces include full mailboxes, blocked IP addresses and emails, messages that are too large, spam filters and bounces for undetermined reasons (known as a general bounce). A hard bounce is an email address that does not exist. Stage 1a had two soft (mail block and general bounce) and two hard bounces, while stage 1b had one hard bounce.

Response rates were not much better. Even though Campaign Monitor's analytics show that some

recipients returned to the emails several times, especially in stage 1a, only one reply was received in stage 1a and stage 1b did not receive any replies.

Due to the high bounce rate and number of unopened emails, researchers attempted to establish contact a third time. In stage 1c, researchers grouped recipients from stages 1a and 1b together, and new email addresses were sought. The possibility that respondents from stage 1a did not reply because their information was incorrect and or not up to date was given due consideration. Upon further analysis, it was found that of the six recipients that did open the email, at least two had incomplete information, neither of which had contacted African Minds to update their information. Campaign Monitor's statistics further show that both recipients opened the email more than once and clicked on several links in the email. As a result, these recipients were included in stage 1c.

The third email to establish contact with African university presses was sent to 40 recipients. The nine universities that were previously unreachable were again included, but did not yield any results. The recipient who responded to the initial email was excluded. Figure 5.3 shows the statistics for stage 1c.

Nine recipients in stage 1c opened the email. Analytics show that some of those recipients interacted with the email either by opening it several times or by clicking on a link in the email. Even so, and despite incomplete information in the database, no replies were received. 70% of emails remained unopened. Stage 2c had two soft (general) and one hard bounce. The nine universities that were unreachable were again revisited, but similar problems as before barred researchers from finding contact details. These difficulties include servers that couldn't be reached, websites that were down for maintenance, and websites that show a home page but that are circular (i.e. every click on a link on the home page simply reloads the home page).

Figure 5.4 shows the response rates for the email sent to 74 African libraries requesting them to confirm their physical address to receive a copy of *Student Politics in Africa* at no cost to the library.

In total, six university libraries replied, and one scholar contacted on Academia.edu replied three months after the initial message was sent. A further 5 emails bounced and 22 emails remained unopened.

Figure 5.5 shows the statistics for the second email sent to libraries.

Out of the 74 recipients, 23 (31%) opened the email (17 African and 6 non-African recipients), 45 (61%) did not open the email, and 6 (8%) emails bounced (2 general,

2 mail block and 2 hard bounces). Eight (11%) recipients replied to the email, of which one was non-African and seven were from African university libraries. The proportion of recipients who opened the email were comparable for the African (30%) and the non-African recipients (33%); the proportion of those who replied was slightly higher in the case of African (12%) versus non-African (5%) libraries.

The analysis of attempts to communicate with knowledge disseminators suggests a number of problems with respect to the extent of the 'online life' of African university presses and libraries. And the findings confirm those in Part 2 of this report as to the limited online presence and low level of importance afforded to digital communication at Africa's university presses.

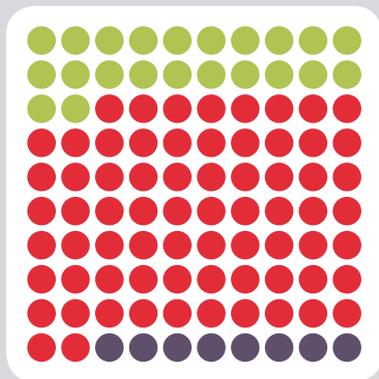
**Figure 5.1: Direct contact with AUPs (Stage 1a)**



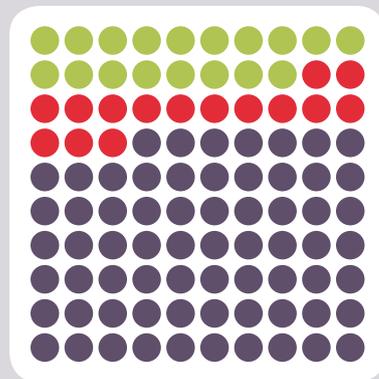
**Figure 5.2: Referral request for AUPs (Stage 1b)**



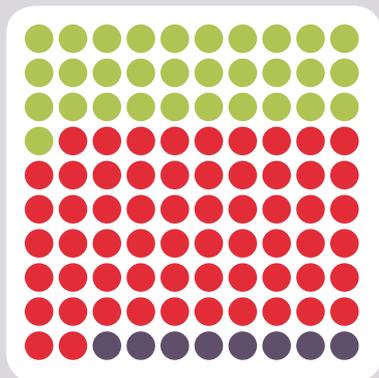
**Figure 5.3: Second referral request for AUPs (Stage 1c)**



**Figure 5.4: Response rates for African libraries (Stage 2a) n=74**



**Figure 5.5: Response rates for African libraries (Stage 2b) n=74**



**KEY**

- Opened
- Unopened
- Bounced

