

## *INASP Review and Highlights 2004*

# **Enabling Worldwide Access to Information and Knowledge**

Established in 1992, INASP is an international development charity working towards a world in which all people are able to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge necessary to drive sustainable and equitable development. Our mission is to enable worldwide access to information and knowledge with particular emphasis on the needs of developing and transitional countries. We work with partners and networks around the world to: improve access to scientific and scholarly information; catalyse and support local publication and information exchange; strengthen local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge; advise local organisations and funding agencies on ways to utilise information and publishing to achieve development goals. This short document describes some of our key activities in 2004. More information is available by contacting us at the address on the final page.

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### **Optimising Internet bandwidth**

Following from work in 2003, we collaborated with partners on various proposals to help institutions in developing countries optimise use of their existing bandwidth (Internet access). After discussions, the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) and the International Development Research Council (IDRC) agreed to co-finance a series of bandwidth optimisation and management training workshops and accompanying tools and training materials. The pilot workshop together with the follow up cascading and travelling workshops will begin in early 2005.

Alongside these efforts to better manage bandwidth, in 2004 we joined with Lund University to develop a (s)low bandwidth version of the existing Electronic Library Information Navigator (ELIN) used widely in Sweden. This application provides a single interface through which users can search, browse and navigate an extremely wide range of electronic information resources (such as are typically provided through the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information – PERI). The pilot system was developed in 2004 and will be tested in Pakistan, Rwanda and Uganda in early 2005. If successful, it will provide an exciting low bandwidth answer for users frustrated by the need to search multiple electronic databases over the Internet, one by one.

More information: [www.inasp.info/training/bandwidth/](http://www.inasp.info/training/bandwidth/)  
[www.inasp.info/peri/elin/](http://www.inasp.info/peri/elin/)

### **Information management training**

A major feature of our support to the research community and the information professionals supporting it, is training. In 2004, 760 people from 412 institutions participated in 32 training events. Participant evaluation of workshops indicated that: 91% of participants felt that the workshop would help them 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' in their work; 77% of participants felt 'very able' or 'quite able' to pass on what they had learnt; and for 89% of participants, 'all of' or 'most of' the aims and objectives of the workshops were met.

During the year, four new countries participated in INASP-supported training (Cuba, Pakistan, Rwanda, and Vietnam) and three new workshop series were developed and delivered: Training the Trainer (with the International Institute for Communication and Development), Web Page Design and Authoring, and PC Technical Troubleshooting for Library Personnel.

In terms of training materials, all 65 PERI workshop units are available via a Creative Commons license. In the year, 1325 registrations were received to download materials from the INASP web site. All these materials are also available on the ItrainOnline web site.

More information: [www.inasp.info/training/](http://www.inasp.info/training/)  
[www.itrainonline.org](http://www.itrainonline.org)

## Disseminating African research

The 'flagship' activity in the area of national publishing support is African Journals OnLine (AJOL). By the end of 2004, AJOL indexed the contents of 214 peer-reviewed African journals (an increase of 36 titles during the year), and provided access to full text articles through document delivery. More than 2,100 document delivery requests were fulfilled during the year (300% increase from 2003), and 12,151 people are registered to use the service. While the service generally only provides online access to abstracts, in 2004 some editors began to publish the full text of their journals on AJOL.

Three major developments during the year were the technical upgrading of the AJOL platform, planning for AJOL to move to African management, and workshops to support AJOL editors. The technical upgrading resulted in a fully database-driven system using the OJS software developed at the University of British Columbia. It has allowed more efficient uploading of content (full text as well as abstracts) and it provides more possibilities to interact with readers, in particular email alerts. The content is also fully open archive initiative compliant and is included in the beta version of Google Scholar which facilitates scholarly content retrieval on the Internet.

In the first part of the year, African organisations were invited to apply to manage AJOL and fourteen organisations submitted proposals. These were considered by an evaluation team consisting of AJOL journal editors, and a shortlist was drawn up. A decision is expected in early 2005.

We delivered two regional AJOL/publishing workshops in South Africa and Kenya, containing a mix of practical modules on publishing online with AJOL, as well as wider strategy sessions. We also published several publishing resources on the INASP website.

Some start-up support was provided for the Society of African Journals, to provide a forum for exchange of experiences and skills. Beyond journals, we worked with colleagues from Addis Ababa University Press as the prelude to a project with African university presses and we began to investigate institutional archives as publishing tools for African research institutes.

More information: [www.ajol.info](http://www.ajol.info)  
[www.inasp.info/psi/](http://www.inasp.info/psi/)

## Accessing research information

In 2004, we provided support for 22 countries and regions to gain access to international scientific information in databases and full text. Of course, not all of them are making equal use of the available opportunities. With support from multiple funders, we negotiated discounted country-wide licences with commercial publishers, liaised with each country to identify the resources required, and helped to ensure

that the content was locally promoted and used. A major step forward in 2004 was that countries themselves were able to generate 41% of the subscription funds needed from their own sources (a growth from 2003 when around 30% was paid for locally). A major contributing factor to this has been the emergence of consortia in several countries. These joint ventures have shown that institutes can successfully raise funds by working together.

By the end of the year, we had secured reduced prices and country-wide licences for over 14,600 full text journals from 19 publishers, at a discounted rate of around 96.3% of the full price. Statistics from 9 of the main content providers show that researchers in the 19 countries together carried out 369,000 searches and downloaded about 365,000 full text articles (roughly 100% increase on 2003).

This past year has seen a significant effort to strengthen collaboration among some of the initiatives working in the 'journal access' sector. In October, we joined the ACU and other partners to organise a workshop on journal provision in African university libraries. We negotiated memoranda of understanding with eIFL.net and the SIST project to foster more joined-up approaches. We also explored collaboration with the AGORA and HINARI programmes of the FAO and WHO respectively.

More information: [www.inasp.info/peri/electronic.html](http://www.inasp.info/peri/electronic.html)

## Revitalising African libraries

Recognising the important role that libraries can play in facilitating access to information, we have long supported professional development and networking activities for librarians in Africa.

In 2004, the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) programme to support the revitalisation of African public libraries neared its end. In July, we organised a workshop in Johannesburg on "ICTs and the Library: experiences, opportunities and challenges". We also carried out and published a survey of the use of ICTs in African public libraries and we supported national and regional Library Associations to produce their own newsletters (two regional newsletters and nine country newsletters).

We supported two meetings of regional associations of libraries (SCANUL East, Central and Southern Africa and SCECSAL) and commissioned and published two case studies from Zambia and Ghana. At the national level, with support from the Norwegian Government, we assisted in a planning exercise of the Malawi National Library Service.

Finally, in a look to the future, we initiated a digital libraries 'situation analysis' in public universities in Anglophone Africa to better understand the current status of different initiatives on the continent.

More information: [www.inasp.info/lsp/](http://www.inasp.info/lsp/)

## Networking information professionals

A core part of our mandate has been to promote cooperation and collaboration and to act as a clearinghouse for questions asked and advice sought by colleagues around the world. In 2004, our two sector programmes on health and agriculture were mainly operating in this networking and facilitation mode. Additionally, we replied to hundreds of general information requests, pointing them to our online directories of organisations and links and to other information sources.

Anticipating an upgraded database environment in 2005, we used the second half of 2004 to edit all the links and directory entries on our websites. Lenny Rhine at the University of Florida continually updated the health links directory. Initial steps were taken to migrate the INASP and Rural directory information into a new contacts database system.

In 2004, our health activities included the provision of advisory and Q&A services, facilitation of regular meetings of the UK-based health information forum, moderation of the HIF-Net email discussion list, and maintenance of a health links gateway and directory of health information development activities. During the year, HIF-Net grew to more than 1500 people. We organised four health information forum meetings: Getting research into practice in developing countries; Leapfrog technologies; Global review on access to health information; and Sharing reproductive health information. We also mobilised in-kind commitment from over 20 organisations to launch a Global Review of Access to Health Information in Developing Countries. In terms of country level capacity development, INASP joined AHILA and other partners to formulate a joint approach to address the training needs of health information workers in Africa. This will be followed up in 2005 through some sector workshops funded through PERI.

In agriculture and rural development, we participated in meetings with major global players in agricultural information – CGIAR, CTA, FAO, GFAR, and IAALD. We moderated an intermittently active discussion forum (iNARS). At the country level, we discussed agricultural information, exploring links between INASP programmes and the specific sector situations and needs. These will be followed up through sector workshops funded through PERI. In Ghana, we joined local networks as well as FAO and IAALD to hold an agricultural information networking and knowledge sharing day that showcased the range of initiatives in the country and promoted networking across the sector.

More information: [www.inasp.info/health/](http://www.inasp.info/health/)  
[www.inasp.info/south/](http://www.inasp.info/south/)

## Evaluating INASP activities

In mid 2004, we published the report of the 2003 INASP-Health evaluation. Following the suggestions of the team, we re-assessed our involvement in various health information activities, seeking to add more focus on capacity-strengthening in developing countries and to broaden the ownership and governance of the various networking tools.

In September, we initiated a mid-term review of PERI. It was designed to document and assess progress towards goals and objectives, to establish appropriate data and indicators for future monitoring and evaluation, and to identify appropriate priorities and directions for the next phase of the programme. The review examined five main areas:

- **Relevance.** Do PERI's current components meet the needs of the research community?
- **Usage.** Are PERI services and resources being used and why/how?
- **Management.** Is PERI being managed and structured in an effective way?
- **Sharing.** Are experiences and lessons being shared and learned?
- **Sustainability.** Are the activities currently supported by PERI becoming or likely to become sustainable within countries?

After visits to three countries, stakeholder meetings in five countries, questionnaires, and a global stakeholders meeting, the review team draft report concluded that the activities supported by PERI basically meet the needs of its stakeholders. However, attention is needed to: better embed PERI in its wider situation and with other stakeholders, to improve programme documentation, to increase use of the services provided, to develop evaluation and impact indicators, and to support progress to sustainability. The final report is expected in 2005.

More information: [www.inasp.info/peri/](http://www.inasp.info/peri/)

## Publications in 2004

Three issues of the INASP Newsletter were published and sent to over 2000 subscribers

- Alemna, A.A. and M. Cobblah. The Ghana Interlibrary Lending and Document Delivery Network. Co-published with SCAULWA.
- Chisenga, J. The Use of ICTs in African Public Library Services.
- INASP. The Use of ICTs in African Public Library Services. Infobrief 3.
- Simui, M.H. and Kanyengo, C.W. An Investigation into the Funding of University Libraries in Zambia. Co-published with SCANUL-ECS.

More information: <http://www.inasp.info/pubs/>

## Organisation and governance

INASP reached an important milestone in late 2004 when its application for charity status was approved by the Charity Commission of England and Wales. This completed the process by which INASP became a fully independent legal entity, separate from ICSU that created it in 1992. Close links with ICSU continue. A strong role is set out for INASP within the new ICSU Priority Area Assessment on Data and Information; we also expect that INASP will be recognised as an interdisciplinary body of ICSU.

Alongside this application process, a Board of Trustees was established as well as an International Advisory Panel with members from all the regions where INASP works. Mr Robert Campbell of Blackwell Publishing was the founding Board Chair; Professor N. Mukunda of the Indian Academy of Sciences was asked to Chair the International Advisory Panel. The Board met four times and the Panel once – in association with the first INASP Symposium held in November. With support from seven of our publisher partners, this symposium highlighted several promising approaches and tools that are helping to enhance access to scientific information.

Mobilising sufficient staff to deal with the growing demands on INASP continued to be a challenge. In 2004, we welcomed Sue Wright as our new Financial Director. In December, we said farewell to Neil Pakenham-Walsh and Blanca Gonzalez.

INASP is grateful to the following organisations that provided funds for INASP activities in 2004:

- Association of Commonwealth Universities
- Blackwell Publishing
- British Medical Association
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- EBSCO
- Elsevier Foundation
- Exchange
- Flemish Interuniversity Council
- INTAS
- Morel Trust
- National Academy of Sciences
- Nature Publishing Group
- Oxford University Press
- Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Springer
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- T&F Informa
- Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU
- Thomson Scientific
- UNESCO
- UK Department for International Development
- Wenner Gren
- John Wiley and Sons

## About INASP

*Enabling worldwide access to information and knowledge*

The mission of INASP is to enable worldwide access to information and knowledge with particular emphasis on the needs of developing and transitional countries. Established in 1992, we work with partners around the world to encourage the creation and production of information, to promote sustainable and equitable access to information, to foster collaboration and networking and to strengthen local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge.

We act as an enabler, connecting worldwide information and expertise. Working through networks of partners, we aim to strengthen the ability of people in developing and transitional countries to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge. In particular we seek to:

- Improve access to scientific and scholarly information
- Catalyse and support local publication and information exchange
- Strengthen local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge
- Foster in-country, regional and international cooperation and networking
- Advise local organisations and agencies on ways to utilise information and publishing to achieve development goals.

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