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### **Research support services in academic libraries in Uganda: challenges and opportunities**

Academic libraries support teaching, learning and research through provision of end-user training, reference management software, research guides, online tutorials, and the vast collections and resources. In order to equip librarians with skills necessary to support teaching, learning and research activities in academic libraries, INASP and the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) conducted a *Pedagogy for Librarians'* course to empower librarians with skills necessary to deliver learner-centred training.

This paper seeks to examine the challenges and opportunities associated with the provision of research support services in academic libraries for improved academic and research output.

A survey was conducted between October and November, 2014 among 21 librarians of CUUL member institutions in Uganda. Findings revealed that academic institutions are faced with numerous challenges, including inadequate ICT infrastructure, power failure, low bandwidth, technophobia, lack of local content, and negative perceptions of the academic staff regarding what the librarians can offer.

In view of the above challenges, the paper suggests that there should be effective interaction between researchers and librarians. This is because there are significant differences between the researchers and librarians in attitudes, perceptions and awareness of key issues. This paper points to the need to lobby key stakeholders such as host universities, funding bodies and the government to build on these findings to develop policy framework on how to best support the development of the necessary infrastructure in order to support research. Libraries need to proclaim their value so that researchers properly understand and acknowledge what the library is bringing to their working lives.

The existence of CUUL provides opportunities for collaboration in the provision of both information resources and human resources required to support research. The paper concluded that equipping researchers with appropriate skills may not necessarily academic and research output. This calls for concerted efforts to improve librarian-researcher relations and to provide the prerequisite infrastructure.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Learner-centred, Research, Research support, Reference management