



## KENYA LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES CONSORTIUM

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**KLISC AGM 2020**  
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**Kenya School of Revenue Administration (KESRA), Mombasa, Kenya**

***KLISC Chairpersons Report 2019-2020:***  
***Library Consortium Thriving in The Covid-19 Era & Beyond***

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### INTRODUCTION

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Once again we are gathered here to share and review our experiences of the past two years in our joint effort to make available scientific information to the research, higher education and public service sectors in our beloved country Kenya. I welcome all of us to open our minds to reflect on the challenges that we have encountered in the past and envision the opportunities that we have in front of us to make a significant contribution towards making Kenya more competitive in the global race for transformation of communities into the knowledge society.

Our vision of “*information access for all*” in Kenya is based on the widely accepted truth that access to knowledge is the firm foundation on which human development can be built in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is the enabler for quality teaching, learning, research, policy setting and implementation and indeed a catalyst for innovation and creation value in all sectors of our society.

### **THE CHALLENGE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TO LIBRARIES: A CALL FOR A NEW LIBRARY SERVICE MODEL & SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION**

These are not ordinary times. The years 2019 and 2020 were financially difficult years due to the economic challenges faced not just by our country but the global society. Due COVID-19 challenges, the year 2020 was particularly a difficult year, when many KLISC institutions faced unprecedented financial constraints due to lockdowns in all sectors of our country. However, I am satisfied that despite these challenges, the consortium has in the past year two years been able to deliver on its mission of “*Facilitating acquisition, access and sharing of knowledge and information resources for education, research and innovation*”.

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I encourage that we should not just bemoan the present crisis arising from COVID-19 crisis but should also take advantage of the inherent opportunities to innovate and transform the way our society generates, organizes, assesses and applies scientific information. This requires greater efforts in operationalizing modern tools of scholarly communication eco-system such as open access and e-publishing, library consortia, digital libraries, virtual communities and conferencing, social media and digital curation and preservation.

We need to leverage on the location of library in the scholarly communication ecology and grow our footprints in its processes: discovery of research ideas and knowledge gaps, generation of new knowledge, organization, dissemination and access to information, and knowledge curation. In this endeavour of necessity this can only be effective if our efforts are founded on collaboration, sustainability considerations, sound policy, capacity building, and innovation technology infrastructures.

#### **(a). Challenges facing consortium member due to COVID-19 pandemic**

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In 2020 many academic and research institutions around suffered the challenges emanating from COVID-19 pandemic with far-reaching implications on libraries. Particularly in Kenya, the pandemic led to:

##### **i. Forced shift of education, research and business operations to online/virtual environments.**

There was increased online/blended teaching and learning in universities and work-at-home arrangements for researchers, and public service employees. This has led to a separation of students, faculty, researchers and government agents from physical libraries, unprecedented high demand for digital library services and increased demand for variety in e-resources offering to cover different subjects/courses

##### **ii. Unfavourable financial climate facing KLISC member institutions.**

Across the spectrum of universities, there has been reduced budgetary allocation to public universities from exchequer while private universities suffer reduced revenue collections in private universities. For the consortium, there are increased delays in payment of library e-resources acquired through national library consortium and as a consequence, reduced revenues for the consortium (about 30% reduction over 2019 & 2020 for purchase of e-databases on behalf of member institutions. One notable result was increased disconnection of institutions from access to e-resources and removal of many institutions from the KLISC Register

##### **iii. Increased risk level of libraries and library staff in exposure COVID-19 infection and other pandemics**

Libraries are no doubt high risk for patrons and library staff in exposure COVID-19 infection is quite high. Why is this case? First, libraries are a social space, points of convergence many people of different age groups and geographical backgrounds. People spent a lot of time in libraries mostly working in close. Secondly, the goods and instruments of trade in the library (books, ICT equipment frequently change hands either between library users or library staff.

Due to high risk levels, to some degree, there is avoidance of library spaces due to high risk environment for rapid spread of COVID-19 (among library staff and library patrons). Many libraries were closed or open for limited periods in the height of COVID-19 spikes. To date, the challenge of making libraries safe against COVID-19 spread, in order to restore them as spaces convergence for community in search of knowledge still persists.

**(b). COVID-19 & Pandemic Situation as an Opportunity for Transforming the Library Service Model and Scholarly Communication in Kenya**

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The challenges associated with COVID-19 require us to rethink the scholarly communication model in which libraries stand at many areas on intersection. Key among these are:-

- i. *Re-focusing attention from sole reliance on “physical-based, face-to-face library service to online, digital and virtual library service.* This will enable us to:
  - ☐ Reduce physical human contact in favour of social distancing
  - ☐ Creating innovative, convenient for work-at-home arrangements, such as e-learning, digital research, e-research, consultation and reference services
- ii. *Creating institutional strategies for maximizing use of e-resources.* The main question: How do ensure access to quality scientific for teaching, learning and research, policy implementation in the virtual environment? There is urgent for institutions to: -
  - ☐ Allocate/secure adequate budget for e-resources
  - ☐ Implement remote Digital library services (DLS) for the academic community e.g. E-reference service/ user advisory services, digital research information support/ access support to community members and virtual information literacy skills training
  - ☐ Implement online membership and services for external library community

As much as possible majority of library & information service should be offered through online means. This will avoid a situation whereby the library will be totally disconnected from users leading to decline in performance outcomes throughout the institution

- iii. *Enhancing digital and information literacies of students and faculty members*

There is need to ensure that stakeholders are well prepared to use the e-resources even in their remote locations through targeted information literacy training for staff & students e.g. search strategies, academic writing skills, publishing skills, etc.
- iv. *New skillsets for library staff*

Library staff need to be provided with new skills to provide varied services during the COVID-19 period. Good examples are: - online pedagogical skill, Customer care service provision, remote user support, using of e-conferencing platform such Zoom, Teams, digital literacy skills, social media, digitization, etc.
- v. *Adoption of Innovative technologies in to deliver virtual library services e.g.*

- ☐ Integrate digital library with the institutional management systems to ensure seamless access to e-resources by online learners, researchers and policy makers
- ☐ Upload MARC records of e-books to the library OPACs: e.g. Proquest books,
- ☐ Implement remote access technologies e.g. Remotex, MyLoft (KLISC negotiated), VPNs
- ☐ Implement digital repository technologies for internal resources e.g. Theses, journal articles, research reports
- ☐ Implement e-payment systems for all library fees including overdue penalties, photocopying, and membership fees such use MPESA, Paypal, Airtel Money, T-cash etc

Other possible measures include: -

- v. *Adoption of open access databases (e-journals, e-books, OERs & open science) in learning, research & teaching*
- vi. *Promotion of use e-resources provided by KLISC through improved marketing and advocacy efforts*
- vii. *Maximize M&E for purposes better e-resource strategic planning of e-resources services*

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS BY KLISC IN 2019-2020

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In the year 2020 we proposed to focus on the following issues for the benefit of the consortium:

- ☐ Empowerment of member institutions to access and use scientific information
- ☐ Positioning KLISC as an influence of decision making in information access
- ☐ Securing financial sustainability for the consortium
- ☐ Building KLISC's capacity for leadership and management

Despite the ravages visited on all sectors in this country, I am glad to note that sustained the core business of KLISC. I would like to highlight few things we were able to achieve in both 2019 & 2020

### **i. Empowerment of member institutions access and use of resources:**

- (a) KLISC Initiated ERP implementation underway and to be ready in the next few months.

This will include a dashboard to facilitate efficient management of: -

- Member Institution accounts
- Publisher - IP Management
- Interaction with member institution: Information and Communication Management (web-portal)
- Usage and Report Storage (M&E)

- (b) We reviewed current e-resource portfolio, negotiated and licensed for member access a variety of globally recognized quality databases (Portfolio for 2021 contains 21 databases including:

- 5 e-book databases with a wide subject cover
- 17 e-journal databases that include research reports, conference proceedings, standards, technical papers, cases etc.)

We also carried out our annual awareness induction workshop of new members (Feb 2019 & Jan 2020 Seminars)

**ii. Efforts to position KLISC as national and regional influencer of decision making about access and use of Information for National development**

(a) Through collaboration with EIFL, KLISC accrued out the *Spider project* which was completed in late 2019. During this period:

- ❑ Twelve (12) open access/Digital Repository policies approved and three (3) in draft form
- ❑ Twenty-one (21) repository administrators and ICT support trained in Dspace/repository enhancement to improve visibility and discoverability
- ❑ Increased number of repositories in Kenya (37), about 50% increase,

(b) KLISC has in the past two years been a contributor to the global IPR negotiations. KLISC was represented & participated at *The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) conference (Nairobi & Geneva, Switzerland) on Exceptions and Limitations in the Copyright Act (2019)* and made a case for an international instrument to facilitate expanded exemptions for libraries, archives & museums

(c) As a member of the EIFL network, KLISC members have free access to premier e-databases through EIFL support such as:

- *JSTOR*
- *Royal Society*
- *OpenEdition*
- *JSTOR*
- *International Water Association (IWA) Publishing journals*
- *European Respiratory Society Journals (ERS)*

(d) In the area of licensing and negotiation, KLISC collaborated with EIFL to achieve highly discounted acquisition of premier e-databases negotiated:

- *Sage research methods and cases*
- *Taylor and Francis journals*
- *Oxford journals*
- *Urkund plagiarism checker*
- *Myloft (remote access)*

(e). KLISC is a now member of **OCLC** is a global library cooperative which has afforded us opportunities to network, on some global scale exchange ideas on best consortia practice and make input into the general global library agenda

(f). On the local level, KLISC has been part of the national and policy making on information access. For example, we submitted a written memo to the Kenya Copyright Board on the

ongoing discourse on new *Intellectual Property Bill* aimed at and review of its *Policy on CMOs*

**iii. Advocacy and contribution to improvement of libraries**

- ❑ KLISC is a major stakeholder in the accreditation process for universities in Kenya. Senior LIS professionals in KLISC i.e. have continued to engage with Commission of University Education (CUE) in peer review activities aimed at maintaining and improvement of university library Standards

**(iv) Maintaining Healthy Finances and Sustainable Financial system**

- ❑ Since the end of donor funding in 2017, KLISC leadership has prioritized achieving a health balance sheet and establishing a sustainable financial strategy for the consortium.

*(a) Efficient Financial system*

*In 2019, we implemented a financial management system that enables KLISC to:*

- Efficiently manage member accounts
- Timely generate invoices and payment receipts
- Generate financial management reports

*(b) Sustainability*

- ❑ The years 2019 and 2020 were financially difficult years due to the economic challenges facing the country and the consequent financial constraints facing many KLISC member institutions. Many institutions defaulted on KLISC subscriptions.
- ❑ Immediate measures undertaken in 2020 include:
  - ❖ Intensive collection of KLISC dues to reduce defaulting by members
  - ❖ Intensive negotiation of e-resources to obtain best prices & maximize discounts
  - ❖ Removing from KLIS Register of Members dormant members
  - ❖ Recruitment of New members:

**(v). Establishing/operationalizing a viable human resource structure for KLISC**

- ❖ Capacity building activities for KLISC and its stakeholders: M&E training for 22 KLISC members in May 2020 in a collaborative effort between KLISC and INASP

**(vi). Sustainable governance Processes & structures**

- ❖ Reviewed of TORs for Committees
- ❖ Developed a Service Charter (to be presented for approval)

**KLISC ACTIVITIES FOR 2021**

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The KLISC Executive Committee identified and is pursuing a number of activities in the year 2021 in line with the KLISC strategic plan 2020-2024.

- i. Capacity building activities through on online training of various stakeholders (librarians, lecturers & researchers) in collaboration with various partners and suppliers e.g. *EIFL, Proquest, Emerald, Ebsco, IEEE, Taylor & Francis*. So far we have held over ten (10) online trainings with a cumulative attendance of 1,100 members. We encourage that as heads of Libraries and Information centres you mobilize members in your institution to be part of this KLISC initiative.
- ii. Trial of new databases with the view to gauge their value in our e-database portfolio. So far we have held trials for e-books from *Ebsco*. Others such as *Emerald* and *Oxford* are slated later this year. These database trials give KLISC member institutions a chance to have a feel of databases so as to make suggestions on licensing proposes by KLISC Secretariat. We also use usage statistics from these databases to assess the popularity of these databases based on a number of parameters. We urge all institutions to participate
- iii. Evaluation of existing databases in terms of relevance, quality and responsiveness to user needs. This is an annual exercise contacted by our M&E committee and we are most grateful for the effort put in by the members of this committee. We urge member institution perfect the practice of collecting usage statistics for individual decision making but also enable KLISC make informed decisions in renewal and cancellation of subscriptions.
- iv. Negotiation for more e-book collections for possible inclusion in *2022 KLISC E-resources portfolio*. This is perhaps the most critical exercise as it will determine the future of access to various databases. We appreciate the tireless efforts by the L&N committee members for they have to comb through turns of data and engage vendors for ours in order to secure for us attractive deals that reflect value for money.
- v. Review of KLISC governance and management structures in line with KLISC constitution and by-laws in order to strengthen the consortium. This is ongoing process to ensure that KLISC operations remain aligned to our organizational values.

I trust all of us are participating in these training and will continue to do so for the good of the entire KLISC fraternity.

## **CLOSING REMARKS: AN APPRECIATION**

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The year 2020 was a year of vindication of pioneering efforts of the founders of KLISC who about twenty years ago initiated a programme aimed at:

- Transforming access scientific information from predominantly electronic formats and crystallization of digital libraries across the country to counter the persistent “information famine in our country”
- Remodeling of the scholarly communication in the country to match the global standards and erected pillars of this transformation namely: library consortial arrangements, open access publishing, virtual environments, social media platforms

We celebrate KLISC heroes and heroines. We recognize those have from time to time volunteered themselves to serve KLISC fraternity diligently and with dedication. During this AGM, we shall elect new members from among many volunteers to take up leadership as members of various KLISC Standing Committees. We greatly appreciate our colleagues who are retiring from these committees after periods of dedicated services. Their contribution to the growth of KLISC will be always be remembered by generations.

As we celebrate our colleagues and initiate others into service, let us remember that the best honour to them is to live the ideals of KLISC: *integrity and accountability, results orientation and dependability* in the contact of Consortia, business, *visionary and creative leadership* in LIS practice and collaboration through creating partnerships in the pursuit of the vision of the consortium which is *Universal access to knowledge and information resources* in Kenya. This is the commitment we have as KLISC leadership and indeed the desirable commitment all in position of leadership across KLISC fraternity.

**Thank you and God Bless**

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