NetDiploma Project Event 2 in Malawi

Report

A two-day workshop was held at the National Library of Malawi in Lilongwe on 18th and 19th September 2018. The workshop was attended by 35 people from a range of organizations including the National Library and National Archives of Malawi, representatives from various ministries and government departments, research/professional bodies and private businesses in Malawi.

List of NetDiploma Workshop in Malawi

Name of Participant	Institution
Trevor Namondwe	Lilongwe University of Science and Technology
Humprey Mpondaminga	Department Arts (Ministry of Civic Education, Culture and Community Development)
Stanley Gondwe	Delegation of the European Union in Malawi
Grace Khoza	Department of Arts
Thokozani Chikuse	Malawi Parliament
Nubson Benje	Malawi Law Commission
Chrissie Mtonga	Department of E-Government
Michael Phoya	Open Culture
Christopher Magomero	Malawi National Commission for UNESCO
Gray Nyali	Malawi National Library
Keshav Dawal	University of the West of Scotland
Richard Wato	Kenya National Archives and Documentation
Solomon Abate	Addis Ababa University
Julie MacLeod	Northumbria University
Gobinda Chowdhury	Northumbria University
Paul Lihoma	National Archives of Malawi
Clement Mweso	National Archives of Malawi
Heinz Kaposa	National Archives of Malawi
Naomi Mwenda	National Archives of Malawi
Drina Mphote	National Archives of Malawi
Enock Bauleni	National Archives of Malawi
Martha Khonje	National Archives of Malawi
Mphatso Mwagumba	National Archives of Malawi
Veronica Jere	National Archives of Malawi
Evelyn Kachigamba	National Archives of Malawi
Bright Joshua	National Archives of Malawi
Innocent Mankhwala	National Archives of Malawi
Evans Kadongola	National Archives of Malawi
Philip Samuteni	National Archives of Malawi
Austin Chilanga	National Archives of Malawi
Annet Ng'ambi	National Archives of Malawi
Robert Mkuwira	National Archives of Malawi
Vote Somba	National Library Service
Thomas Bello	Kamuzu College of Nursing
Alice Benza	Ministry of Information

Members of the project team – PI Chowdhury, UK Co-I Mcleod, Co-Is from the partner countries, viz. Co-I Lihoma, (Malawi), Co-I Wato (Kenya) and Co-I Solomon (Ethiopia) were present in the event. Prof.Dahal, member of the International Steering Committee was also present. Member of the Malawi National Steering Committee and Librarian and CEO of the Malawi National Library hosted the event and took active part in the discussions on both days.

Day 1 (Tuesday, 18th September) began with a welcome address by the country Co-I Dr. Paul Lihoma followed by a welcome address by the host Mr. Grey Niyali, Librarian and CEO of the Malawi National Library. Dr.Lihoma presented a list of the partners/stakeholders of the NetDiploma project from Malawi that include the following:

1. National Archives of Malawi
2. Malawi National Library Service
3. University library, Mzuzu University
4. National Commission for Unesco, Malawi
5. University Library, University of Malawi
6. Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
7. Kamuzu College of Nursing
8. Department of E-Government
9. Ministry of Information
10. Delegation of the European Commission to Malawi
11. Parliament of Malawi

Presentations: This was followed by:
- A presentation by Prof. Gobinda Chowdhury, PI of the NetDiploma project, where he explained the key objectives of the project, activities and achievements so far. He outlined the key objective and plan for the workshop which was to understand the key challenges and enablers for ICT and infrastructure required for building the future DPLAF (Digital Public Library of Africa), a broad outline of which was developed after the Northumbria event of NetDiploma (in March 2018) (available on the website: www.northumbria.ac.uk/netdiploma)
- A presentation by the country Co-I Mr. Richard Wato (Kenya) explaining the networking activities and developments in relation to the NetDiploma project that have taken place in Kenya since his last report at theNetDiploma event in the UK in March 2018. He pointed out that new partners and stakeholders have been added since the beginning of the project. The list of project partners and stakeholders in Kenya now includes the following (the first four are the original partners/stakeholders, and the others are new:
    1. Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service
    2. Kenya National Library Service
    3. UNESCO Kenya
    4. Article 19
    5. Kenyatta University
    6. Egerton University
    7. Commission on Administrative Justice (Ombudsman)
    8. ICT Authority
    9. Council of Governors
    10. Ministry of Education

- A presentation by the country Co-I Dr. Solomon Teferra (Ethiopia) explaining the networking activities and developments in relation to the NetDiploma project that have taken place in Ethiopia since his last report at theNetDiploma event in the UK in March 2018. The list of partners/stakeholders from Ethiopia include the following:

1. Institute of Ethiopia Studies, represented by Mr. Meseret Assefa
2. National Archives & Library Agency, represented by Msr. Mulumebet Hagos
3. Knowledge & Library Services Section, UNECA, represented by Msr. Irene
4. Information & Knowledge Management Division, African union, represented by Mr. Garoma Daba

Dr. Solomon has also pointed out that he is discussing to have partnerships with other potential partners including the following:

1. ARCCH -- Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage
   - Partners on LeaPs, represented by Msr. Zelalem
   - Registers moveable and immoveable cultural heritages
   - Makes them accessible for researchers and the public
2. MCIT
   - Developed National ICT policy
   - Running National open data portal
   - Leads research and development of local ICT solutions
     - Eg. SIS and Department of Computer Science will start developing local social media with MCIT
3. MoST
   - Developing the National ICT roadmap
   - Running Digital Library in the areas of S&T

In his presentation, Dr. Solomon has highlighted that the Ethiopian telecom has dramatically reduced the price of mobile call. This has been considered as an opportunity for mobile based content delivery plans in Ethiopia, enabling factor for the utilization of the fast growing mobile penetration (70%) rate in the country.

- In her presentation, a senior representative from the Malawi government responsible for providing the ICT infrastructure and networking facilities, briefly outlined the current activities, and future plans, of the Malawi government in laying out the broadband network and ICT infrastructure in the major cities and district towns in Malawi. It was evident that these ICT infrastructure and facilities will be instrumental in building the DPLAf.
- A presentation by a local entrepreneur who explained how commercial applications could be built to provide cultural heritage content to meet the specific needs of specialist users.

Group discussions: The second half of the day comprised intensive brainstorming and group discussions. Three groups were formed with participants from a mixed range of institutions. Each group was monitored by one or two project team members (PI or Co-I). Each group focused on one of the three user groups – school teachers and students, remote communities, and young people – and discussed what needs to be done,for making digital information accessible to these communities, in terms of:

- ICT infrastructure and support
- Regulations and policies
- Financial and human resources

At the end of the discussions lasting for about 3 hours, each group presented the key points of their discussions that included the following:

1. ICT and infrastructure: The broadband network connections and IT support that is currently being made available in the city and at district level, by the Ministry of IT and

Communications as part of the eGovernment initiative in Malawi, will be immensely useful in making digital information available to people. Mobile penetration in Malawi is increasing (currently at 35% penetration), but it is expensive for common, especially rural population

2. New regulations and policies have to be developed to support the activities of the National Library and National Archives of Malawi to work with various ministries and government departments in their efforts to bring digital content to classrooms in a user-friendly way

3. Financial and human resources will be required to make the digitised information accessible to people to meet their specific purpose, like education, health and social developments, etc.

Day 2 (Wednesday 19th September): Key points arising from day 1 were discussed in more detail in course of five hour group discussions that took place on the second day of the event. Two groups were formed, one focusing on the primary schools and the other on secondary schools in Malawi.

Each group was asked to prepare an outline project plan for co-designing digital learning materials, based on the digitised content held at the National Library, National Archives and National Museum, for delivery to school children in Malawi using the digital infrastructure put in place by the e-Government initiative.

The key objective of these group discussions was to understand what needs to be done to make the digitised content available at the memory institutions of Malawi suitable for teaching different subjects in primary and secondary schools. The group discussions were moderated by the project team members, and the aim was to develop a draft project outline that can be discussed later with various stakeholders for further progress and possible funding support. Each group was assigned with the following tasks:

- T1: Identify user groups in two schools that can benefit from digitised content on cultural heritage and government records (archival materials) held in the National Library, National Archives and National Museum of Malawi
- T2: Prepare a list of user requirements - teachers and children – with reference to T1
- T3: Propose a suitable means to engage with the school teachers in understanding the user requirements and for preparing the digital teaching materials for the school children
- T4: Identify different kinds of digitised content that would be used to prepare the teaching materials. Also identify how you see yourself and your role in co-designing the digital learning materials.
- T5: Prepare an outline project plan listing each task, people, resources, etc.
- T6: Present a brief report

At the end of the day, each group came up with an outline project plan, a list of activities and recommendations. It was revealed that a variety of content including photographs, letters, correspondences, maps, books and manuscripts, etc., have already been digitised, or are in the pipeline for digitisation in the Malawian memory institutions. It was also revealed that a number of staff members at those institutions have the relevant expertise that would be useful for co-designing the digital teaching materials using ICT and media skills. However, additional resources would be required to cover for the staff time, teachers' time, and ICT support/resources for design and development of the required teaching materials. Some legal and policy-related support would be required from the relevant government departments with regard to copyright clearance, changes in the school curricula for using the digital materials in teaching different subjects, etc. Similarly, resources would be required for training of school teachers. It was suggested that design and media specialist, cartoonists, etc., would add value to the teaching materials to be developed through the project. Key points from the groups discussions were noted, and an outline project plan was developed.