



Arab States Research and Education Network

## ASREN Newsletter

March 2019, Issue 36

*“ASREN is a non-profit company with limited liability (GmbH) and is officially registered in Germany, under the umbrella of the League of Arab States. The main goal is to connect Arab institutions among themselves and to the globe through high-speed data-communications networks. Such networks will enable sharing and access to a variety of R&E services and applications in addition to utilization of highly sophisticated and technologically advanced computing resources available only at very few institutions in the world.”*

### In this issue

Register now for the LIBSENSE-III Workshop 1

WACREN2019: time to go beyond! 3

Report from the LIBSENSE Repository Workshop II 5

## Register now for the LIBSENSE-III Workshop

Register now for  
**LIBSENSE-III Workshop**

**Tunis, Tunisia**  
26-28 April 2019

The Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) invites Librarians, Library consortia and NRENs to register for the upcoming LIBSENSE-III workshop to be held in Tunis, Tunisia, during 26-28 April 2019.

This workshop is organized in conjunction with the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) and EIFL as part of the LIBSENSE Initiative, convenes library and NREN stakeholders in the West and Central

African region to explore how repositories can operate embedded in NREN e-infrastructure and provide a foundation for an innovative, open, distributed and networked resource for scholarly communication and open science in Africa.

Prior to the workshop, a survey will be sent out to librarians in the Higher Education libraries in the Arab Region under ASREN regional network. The workshop will discuss and analyze the results of the survey with regards to higher education sector librarians view of the enabling and constraining factors of their practice as information resource managers, especially regarding the development, implementation and maintenance of open access repositories.

This event follows the first LIBSENSE-I workshop that took place in Novemebr 2018 in Zanizibar in the region of Ubuntunet Alliance and the second LIBSENSE-II which is taking place in Accra 11-12 March 2019 in the region of WACREN. As ASREN is the regional network for the Arab region, the workshop will include all Arab countries.

### **About LIBSENSE**

Towards improving the capability for African

Higher Education Librarians to collaborate with NRENs in achieving Better information management capacity, the African Regional Research and Eduaction Networks (Ubuntunet Alliance, WACREN and ASREN) planned the LIBSENSE (Library Support for embedding NREN services and e-Infrastructure) project. The project funded by the European Commission under the AfricaConnect2 Project in collaboration between in support of EIFL and COAR.

### **Objectives**

- Define a collaborative agenda for libraries and NRENs
- Achieve improved information management capacity
- Federation of open access repositories across the African regions.
- Build a community of practice for open access and open science

### **For more information about the LIBSENSE:**

<https://spaces.wacren.net/display/LIBSENSE/Home>

### **For registration:**

<http://asrenorg.net/?q=content/libsense-iii-workshop>



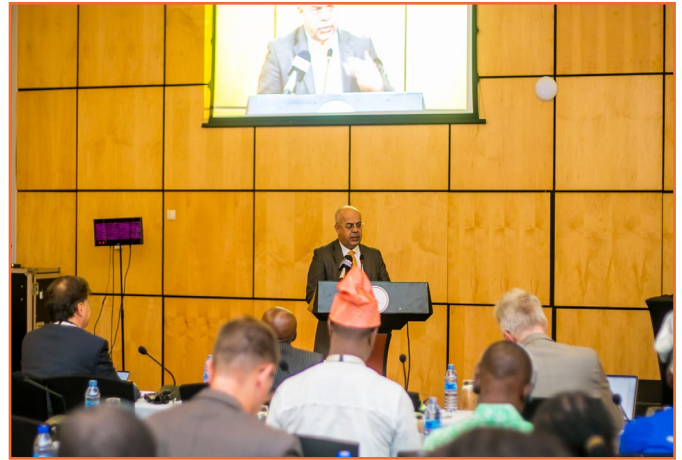
## WACREN2019: time to go beyond!



Arab States research and Education Network (ASREN) participated in the annual conference of West and Central Africa (WACREN), which was held in Accra, during 11-15 March 2019. Executive Director of ASREN, Yousef Torman sent a goodwill message at the high level opening session and chaired one of the main sessions discussing NREN issues including strategies for optimizing REN impact.

“Last year, we asked the community to unleash their potential as we launched our new network. This year, it is time to go beyond...”

The week of 11-15 March provided room for a variety of activities, from librarians and NRENs collaborating on repositories during the LIBSENSE workshop, to AfricaConnect2 coordination meetings, to knowledge exchange during the annual WACREN conference. This year, Ghanaian NREN GARNET hosted the conference in the capital city of Accra. Representatives of several NRENs, institutions, universities and other relevant organisations from West and Central Africa gathered during



the two-day conference and presented ideas, challenges and opportunities whether it was during a session or the breaks.

“The Africa we want!”

The first day of the conference kicked-off with an opening ceremony, including inspiring words from WACREN’s CEO Boubakar Barry as well as GARNET’s chairman of the board Clifford Nii Boi Tagoe who highlighted that all bodies should cooperate to create the Africa we want. This was followed by African Internet Pioneer Nii Narku Quaynor engaging chant saying “when I say AfREN you say connected!”. An empowering and inspiring start of the conference one would say! After welcome remarks and goodwill messages, the two Internet Hall of Fame inductees Erik Huizer (GÉANT CEO) and Nii Narku Quaynor (WACREN Chairman of the Board) opened up the knowledge sharing floor with a discussion on the importance of global collaboration to support national research and education development.

5 sessions were spread over the 2 days





each containing 4-5 paper presentations. A variety of topics were discussed, ranging from repositories and open science, end-user engagement, data security, World Bank collaboration, several tools for specific fields of research, digital services, and the role of NRENs amongst others. The lunches and coffee breaks offered excellent room for further discussions which always appear to be essential as time flies during the plenary sessions. Curious to read more about the papers? Not to worry, we have got them here for you.

A conference in West/Central Africa wouldn't be complete without a dinner allowing for informal networking, brainstorming and of course some dance moves. A big thank you to GARNET and WACREN for

hosting a great dinner at 233 Jazz club, inviting attendees to get acquainted even better, which is key to collaboration and cooperation, especially when both parties are located geographically far apart.

“There is no reason why we can't educate children in Ghana. The future of Ghana is in OUR hands.”

And that is how the conference was powerfully closed. Emphasis was laid on the fact that countries, in this case Ghana, can do many things to keep their youth attracted to study and work in their own country rather than going abroad due to lack of opportunities.

*Source:* <https://blog.geant.org/2019/03/27/wacren2019-time-to-go-beyond>

## Report from the LIBSENSE Repository Workshop II



The second LIBSENSE workshop took place on March 11 & 12, 2019 in Accra, Ghana. The workshop was organized by WACREN (West and Central African Research and Education Network), in conjunction with EIFL and COAR, with support from OpenAIRE and the NII in Japan.

LIBSENSE is an initiative aimed at developing collaborations between libraries and research and education networks (RENs) in Africa to support open science. Open science, an international trend aimed at sharing research outputs widely, is transforming science and greatly increasing the impact of research. Although global in nature, there are important local and regional aspects of how open science is implemented. Services, policies and infrastructure that may be appropriate in the “global north” do not necessarily resonate with other regions.

LIBSENSE is working to develop sustainable and relevant approaches for open access and open science in the African context. This was the second of three LIBSENSE workshops. The first workshop was held in November 2018 in Zanzibar, Tanzania at which the overall framework for collaboration between African libraries and NRENs was defined.

At the second workshop, participants finalized and endorsed a template for a Terms of Reference (ToRs) for joint activities across these the two communities. The template defines four key areas of collaboration: social change, infrastructure, capacity building, and value-added services, and provides examples of specific activities. Participants in the Accra workshop, who mainly came from West and Central African countries, identified priority activities and next steps for implementing the Terms of Reference in their countries. These discussions were supplemented by information collected through a survey of open science activities in African libraries.

One concrete outcome has already resulted from the LIBSENSE initiative. WACREN is planning to develop a shared hosting service for repositories in their region. The service is modelled on the approach of the National Institute of Informatics (NII) in Japan, which currently hosts a majority of the Japanese university repositories. NII and WACREN will work together to pilot and implement this repository over the coming year. Other priorities identified were capacity building, policy templates and adoption, repository harvesting and discovery, and amplifying success stories.

To support national repository initiatives in Africa, the LIBSENSE initiative drafted and discussed templates for data exchange model agreements that cover the data acquisition policy for national/regional repository/aggregator and data usage policy. And to ensure interoperability across African repositories, draft metadata guidelines have been released for public comments and we welcome your feedback.

Another aim is to have LIBSENSE evolve into an active African community of practice for librarians and RENs related to open science. By the end of the third meeting, there will have been participants from all regions of Africa. Through LIBSENSE, this pan-African community can share experiences and information, laying the foundation for their leadership in the implementation of open science in their country.

Registration is open for the LIBSENSE III workshop hosted by ASREN at the Hôtel El Mouradi Gammarth in Tunis, Tunisia from April 26-28, 2019.

Source: <https://www.wacren.net/en/news/report-libsense-repository-workshop-ii>

**Arab States Research and Education Network**

TAG-Org GA Building  
46 Abdel Rahim Al-Waked Street, Shmeisani, Amman, Jordan  
P.O. Box: 921100 Amman 11192, Jordan

**Email: [info@asrenorg.net](mailto:info@asrenorg.net) |  **ASREN****

**[asrenorg.net](http://asrenorg.net)**



This project is funded  
by the European Union