



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL Open Access Case Study

Students for Open Access in Poland

Katarzyna Rybicka, Fundacja Projekt: Polska, Centrum Cyfrowe

Results of the EIFL-funded project, October 2014

“At our faculty researchers publish a number of publications. But we do not have access to them. Sometimes it is even hard to find out that they actually exist. The same thing happens with the scientific works written by students. Open access is not only about increasing citation, which refers to professors and researchers. Through our actions we show a variety of practical benefits of open access, both for students and researchers. Because open access is our common cause.” – Ewa Majdecka, student, Opener Initiative, Institute of Applied Social Sciences at Warsaw University

“In Poland, students get access to the results of research mainly through unauthorized reproduction: scanning and copying. Still only small part of educational materials is available online. Bottom-up initiatives based on the open access idea such as the Open Science Library replace this model by providing access, but with the consent and on rules defined by the authors. Our experience shows that scientists are willing to share their knowledge, you only need to create favorable conditions in order to make it more visible.” – Klaudia Grabowska, project coordinator, Open Science Library

“Implementation of open access in Poland is necessary not only to adapt Polish learning system to European standards. It is primarily an opportunity to increase innovation flowing from the free exchange of knowledge. And the possibility of reducing the cost of studying and research.” – Alek Tarkowski, Centrum Cyfrowe Projekt: Polska Foundation, Creative Commons Poland

INTRODUCTION

Open access (OA) is gaining popularity among Polish researchers, but it has not yet been promoted well among students. They are a group that can benefit from OA on many levels and may even see improvements in their own academic work quality when OA is practiced. This project consisted of a series of workshops and a promotional campaign focused on the student community – representatives of students councils, journalists from student media, student organizations working in the field of law and young researchers (PhD candidates). The goal was to build an internal capacity of student organizations and connect them with OA advocates in Poland.

The project was implemented by Fundacja Projekt: Polska, Centrum Cyfrowe in partnership with the following organizations: The Citizens of Science, University of Warsaw Library, Polish Culture Institute at Warsaw University; media partners: Tytul Ujednolicony and Bibliosfera.net; and students organizations: Opener Initiative, Student Scientific Group of Intellectual Property at the University of Warsaw, Libertas et Lex Scientific Group and Scientific Group of Library Science Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

- **In collaboration with leading Polish OA advocates a website [Free the Science \(UwolnijNauke.pl\)](http://Free.the.Science(UwolnijNauke.pl)) was launched**, which is a knowledge base on OA for students, librarians, researchers and publishers. Section dedicated to students is based on materials created within the project. OA campaign materials were widely promoted through traditional and social media channels (especially those targeted at the student community).
- **Over 50 graduate and undergraduate students – representatives of student leadership organizations and scientific groups – from universities all over the country took part in series of workshops.** We built a community of the most active students who drive the bottom-up decision-making processes at their universities. And it was the first OA project targeting students in Poland.
- **To celebrate OA Week 2013, OA monographs platform [Open Science Library \(Biblioteka Otwartej Nauki\)](http://Open.Science.Library(BibliotekaOtwartejNauki)) was launched**, which provides tools and a platform for publishing OA monographs. The platform currently has 282 OA scholarly monographs and has been co-funded by the National Audiovisual Institute and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.
- **[Opener Initiative](#) at Warsaw University was established as a result of workshops.** It is a scientific group promoting OA among students and researchers at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences at Warsaw University.
- **With the students' support a [toolkit](#) about the basics of OA in Polish has been created.** It is a collection which includes the following: a presentation on the most important issues of OA, a short animation movie, a brochure, posters, bookmarks and social media posters. All the materials are available under Creative Commons Attribution license, so that everyone can share and remix them to explain why OA is so essential for everyone. The toolkit is available on OA advocacy website [Free the Science \(UwolnijNauke.pl\)](http://Free.the.Science(UwolnijNauke.pl)) and was downloaded over 2000 times since the launch of a website.
- **The project was short-listed to the final rounds of World Summit Youth Award and European Youth Award** – an annual competitions for outstanding digital and social innovating solutions.
- **The voice of students became more visible in the debate on scientific communication in Poland.** The project has successfully engaged undergraduate students and young researchers to collaborate with other students and academic librarians.

ACTIVITIES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND TOOLS

Connecting students and leading OA advocates in Poland: Workshop „Open Access. Free admission to knowledge”, 18-19 October 2013

The advocacy campaign was built around this key workshop. It was a chance for students and young researchers to meet leading OA advocates in Poland. And the aim of the workshop was to create a group of students and young researchers who, through their activities in scientific groups, will promote the idea of OA and will implement OA at their universities. The most active students and PhD candidates from Warsaw University, Jagiellonian University, Wroclaw University, Catholic University of Lublin and the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun have been selected to attend this workshop. The workshop was the first OA event dedicated to students in Poland.

The workshop was divided into two days and two parts: theoretical and practical. The first part was filled with lectures and discussions about the OA and why access to knowledge is beneficial not only for scientists but to the society as a whole. The second day began with a discussion of the basics of copyright and Creative Commons licenses.

With this knowledge participants were ready to work in small groups. Four teams received two sets of tasks: to prepare OA awareness raising campaign and to develop strategies and tools for opening research

output and educational materials at their universities. They had to design realistic plans that could be achieved with the help of their communities.

OA Campaign to reach out to students in Poland, Part 1: October-November 2013

The first part of the campaign was focused around the promotion of workshops. While the idea of OA in Poland has a strong and growing support within the academic and research community, there is little support expressed by students and student organizations. For this reason, we

- Developed educational materials and used social media to reach out to students:

Animation promoting OA in English language: [Open Access. Why Open Science?](#) and [in Polish](#) (with almost 2000 views).
- Article about OA and OA campaign was published in the most important annual magazine for law students – Index published by European Law Students` Association (ELSA). It is an organization that works in 16 academic centers across the country, approximately 1,300 law students and young lawyers. Students` members form European Law Students` Association (ELSA) were supporting out project by promoting dissemination of outputs and results of the advocacy campaign.
- Organised “OA Sprint” on November 25, 2013: Students, PhD candidates, graphic designers and experts of openness gathered together to brainstorm about the most creative ways to promote OA at Polish universities. Based on the projects developed during „**OA. Free admission to knowledge**” workshop, various teams got together to work on graphic material: presentations, posters, bookmarks and a brochure that explain in simple ways the most important issues of OA. As a result they have created a set of materials (the toolkit), which everybody can use and re-use to organize a meeting about OA on their own.

OA Campaign calling students to advocate for OA, Part 2: February – March 2014: “Open Access. You can do it better than hamster”

This campaign addressed young students, PhD candidates and their professors. “Hamster” in the title of the campaign refers to the name of a popular Polish website, which is used for file-sharing among students. Quite often the materials disseminated via this website are there without permission of the authors and in poor quality.

The campaign was calling students to action: to organize meetings with their students scientific groups and to convince their professor to publish in OA. We promoted our OA toolkit which has presentation with notes, a short animation, and a brochure, posters, bookmarks and graphics for social media. Additionally, we were sending printed materials: brochures and posters to all people interested in organizing OA events. All materials produced in the campaign are available under Creative Commons Attribution License, so they can be freely modified and translated.

The campaign was launched under the slogan addressed directly to the students: “Learn online to pass!”

For example, at the meeting in University of Warsaw Library with more than 30 students and academic representatives we discussed institutional OA advocacy. And a fruitful collaboration between students` organizations and librarians from the University of Warsaw Library was established.

The campaign received a good media coverage. Over a dozen opinion pieces, reflections from the campaign and radio interviews (Wikiradio) have been published.

We have also promoted OA within NetWtorek – monthly live-streamed meetings for all interested in the activities of non-governmental organizations and new technologies. In February 2014 we were invited to talk about OA benefits for research dissemination and demystify OA publishing. At the meeting we

presented our OA campaign materials.

Launching Open Science Library

Open Science Library – open access repository of social sciences and humanities monographs – was launched in October 2013 during the Open Access Week. It provides the tools for the wide sharing of monographs through their digitization and online publication, free of charge and of most copyright restrictions. The emphasis is put on the books, which are difficult to access because of small print-runs or being out of print.

But this project is more than that. It also builds authors' capacities to read and negotiate publishing contracts securing the rights to improve dissemination and enhance access. When there is a permission of copyright holders, Open Science Library team digitizes and publishes an online edition of the monograph. The author bears no cost. Books in the Open Science Library are visible on the major search engines and databases like Google Scholar or Google Books. Therefore it helps the authors to increase their citation rates.

LESSONS LEARNT

Students and young researchers have a different viewpoint on OA issues and require targeted communication and slightly differently defined arguments and recommendations. By engaging them to collaborate in every part of the project you can better identify their needs and thereby ensure the successful campaign.

OA is a difficult topic. Thus, we should talk about it using simple and attention grabbing messages.

Workshops are essential part of community building within a network of students and provides them with an opportunity to meet in person. The workshops are also vital to identifying active students and training them as OA advocates.

The role and support of the project partners is crucial when it comes to reaching out a specific audience.

THE FUTURE

The project helped to create a network of students advocating for OA in different universities in Poland. Now our biggest challenge is to ensure continuity and engagement among younger students and keep up with the community building efforts.

The website with toolkit materials is kept up to date and new content is regularly added.

During OA Week (20-26.10.2014) we are planning to re-use promotional materials prepared in the project (especially in English language) to promote OA globally. The success of our materials (graphics and film) in the Polish version promises the popularity of its English version as well.

Thanks to [FOSTER co-funding](#) we will organize more train-the-trainers workshops for those who would like to run trainings about OA for librarians, students and researchers.

Centrum Cyfrowe is also involved in European Commission funded project [PASTEUR4OA](#) (Open Access Policy Alignment Strategies for European Union Research) where we serve as a national key node organization. Through this project we will have other opportunities to advocate for OA in Poland.

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