

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 5TH CARLIGH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026

THEME: “The Open Movement in Times of Urgency and Rapid Change”

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana · 4th – 8th May 2026

I.0 PREAMBLE

The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH) held its 5th International Conference from 4th to 8th May 2026 at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, under the theme “**The Open Movement in Times of Urgency and Rapid Change.**”

The conference brought together librarians, researchers, university administrators, policymakers, book and technology vendors, publishers and open-science advocates from Ghana, Africa, and the wider international community. Deliberations centered on the urgent need to advance open access, open science, open educational resources (OER), and open research infrastructure as essential tools for equitable knowledge sharing and national development. The conference also marked 23 years of CARLIGH's collaboration with EIFL and partners in advancing open access across Ghana and the sub-region.

After extensive presentations, panel sessions, and deliberations, the conference set out its resolutions in two parts: the observations arising from the deliberations, and the recommendations flowing from them.

2.0 OBSERVATIONS

The conference made the following observations:

Open Science, Open Access and Diamond Open Access

- (a) Open science and open access are not ends in themselves but powerful tools for faster, better, and more impactful research; their advancement is nonetheless constrained by inadequate infrastructure, weak policy support, limited incentives, research-assessment barriers, scepticism, and legal and ethical concerns.
- (b) Diamond Open Access — which charges neither authors nor readers, preserves cultural and linguistic diversity, and aligns with the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science — is the most equitable and sustainable publishing model for African institutions; yet there is consistent reports of low awareness and limited adoption, while editorial, reviewing, and journal-governance work remains largely unrewarded.

Open Research Infrastructure and Repositories

- (c) Open research infrastructure must extend beyond IT connectivity to policies, training, metadata standards, repositories, and persistent identifiers; although awareness is high (87.4%), adoption remains limited owing to limited institutional policies, inadequate ICT funding, and a shortage of skilled technical personnel.
- (d) Only three Ghanaian repositories are currently verified and listed in COAR's international directory.

Open Educational Resources

- (e) OER advocacy in Ghanaian universities is active but fragmented, marked by low sustained participation after training, a bias toward the health sciences, and weak long-term sustainability.
- (f) There is a critical shortage of locally relevant, contextually and linguistically appropriate OER, and the authorship, adaptation, and reuse of OER are seldom recognised in academic promotion and reward systems — weakening incentives for sustained faculty participation and local content creation.

Research Visibility, Open Technology and Inclusive Access

- (g) In the current research environment, impact is inseparable from visibility, and open technologies — open-source platforms (Moodle, Linux, Open Journal Systems), open data, and virtual/remote labs — offer proven means to reduce costs, widen access, and enable local innovation.
- (h) The benefits of the open movement risk accruing only to well-resourced institutions, leaving smaller community universities, emerging researchers, and communities that depend on libraries for learning and development behind.

Staffing, Resourcing and Support of Academic Libraries

- (i) The promise of the open movement rests on well-staffed, well-resourced, and well-supported academic libraries; yet chronic understaffing is prevalent across the sector and is too often masked by reliance on short-term contract appointments.
- (j) The academic and professional standing of librarians remains uneven, with conditions of service, allowances, and representation on governing bodies not consistently aligned with those of teaching staff, even as strong management support proves decisive for library performance.
- (k) Adequate and stable funding is a precondition for quality, yet library budgets are frequently below the level required to sustain digital resources, systems, and services, and to absorb currency exposure on foreign-currency subscriptions.
- (l) Librarians possess moderate open-science knowledge but lack advanced competencies in open-data management, licensing, digital preservation, and research-data management, and are still too often cast as passive gatekeepers rather than active partners in research and learning.

Policy, Legislation and Collaboration

- (m) The comprehensive review of the Ghana Library Authority Act is on-going and presents a timely opportunity to modernise library governance, while the work of regional bodies such as CARLIGH, WACREN, and GARNET continues to advance open science across the sub-region.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Flowing from the above observations, the conference put forward the following recommendations:

Open Science, Open Access and Diamond Open Access

- (a) Institutions should align open-science initiatives with their strategic goals, actively communicate their benefits to researchers, funders, the public, and the private sector, and focus on actionable steps within reach rather than being deterred by challenges.

- (b) Institutions should recognise Diamond OA journals as strategic research assets, intensify education and advocacy to close the gap between awareness and practice, integrate Diamond OA into policy with dedicated multi-year budgets and collaborative funding, and formally value editorial, reviewing, and journal-governance work in promotion and performance systems.

Open Research Infrastructure and Repositories

- (c) CARLIGH should lead the development of an adaptable model open-science policy for adoption by member institutions, and Government, through agencies such as GETFund, should provide sustainable long-term funding for open research infrastructure.
- (d) Institutions with unlisted or technically deficient repositories should take immediate remedial steps and engage relevant international bodies for support and verification.

Open Educational Resources

- (e) Institutions should adopt the five-level OER Advocacy Framework — awareness; access and infrastructure; collaboration and faculty integration; local content creation; and policy and sustainability — and put in place institutional OER policies with formal budgets, contribute to curriculum integration and national OER repositories, a national OER hub, and other collaborative initiatives.
- (f) Institutions should incentivise and formally reward the creation, adaptation, and reuse of locally relevant OER — including within promotion and performance criteria — provide dedicated instructional-design, copyright, and licensing support to faculty, and prioritise indigenous knowledge and local-language materials in national OER repositories to ensure participation is sustained beyond initial training.

Research Visibility, Open Technology and Inclusive Access

- (g) Institutions should adopt persistent identifiers (ROR and ORCID), maintain active repositories, promote open access to research outputs, and deploy open technologies to reduce costs, widen access, and enable local innovation.
- (h) The open movement should be extended deliberately to smaller community universities, emerging researchers, and library-dependent communities, so that open access is translated into *real access for all*.

Staffing, Resourcing and Support of Academic Libraries

- (i) Institutions should pursue a fair, needs-based allocation of permanent library staff — planned against enrolment, service points, and opening hours — guided by a benchmark of at least one professional librarian per 1,200–2,000 full-time-equivalent students according to institutional size, treating short-term contract appointments as a stopgap rather than a steady state.
- (j) Qualified academic librarians should hold academic / senior-member status on terms comparable to teaching staff — including the Book and Research Allowance and related entitlements — and be represented on the Academic Board and relevant committees; the library should be positioned as a full academic department, with the University Librarian reporting to the Principal Officer for academic affairs and supported by an active Library Board.
- (k) Institutions should allocate not less than ten percent (10%) of the total institutional operating budget to the library, maintain multi-year financial plans linked to strategy, and manage currency exposure on foreign-currency e-resource subscriptions.

- (l) Institutions should invest in continuing professional development — spanning financial management, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, digital and data literacy, scholarly communication, and leadership — provide modern tools, systems, and reliable connectivity, and redefine the librarian's role from gatekeeper to active gateway and core academic contributor.

Policy, Legislation and Collaboration

- (m) Government should expedite the review of the Ghana Library Authority Act to modernise library governance and position libraries as dynamic hubs for knowledge, research, and digital learning, and a policy framework carrying the force of law should reinforce the open movement at institutional, national, regional, and global levels — promoting equitable, co-creative partnerships that avoid knowledge extraction and safeguard against policy reversal.
- (n) African institutions should collaborate across borders — sharing publishing platforms, training, and support services and engaging continental frameworks such as the African Union — and CARLIGH should establish a standing stakeholders' working group, drawn from academic libraries, universities, government agencies, research funders, and open-science practitioners, to oversee implementation of this communiqué, track progress, and report to the CARLIGH community.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Participants commended CARLIGH, the host institution KNUST and all partners for organising this timely and important conference, and affirmed the open movement as one of the most powerful levers for advancing equity, democracy, innovation, and sustainable national development in Ghana and across Africa.

The conference called on CARLIGH, government agencies, university leadership, and development partners to implement the recommendations contained in this communiqué with urgency, political will, and sustained commitment — moving from conversation to commitment, and from ideas to implementation.

This communiqué was adopted by acclamation at the end of the 5th CARLIGH International Conference, Kumasi, Ghana, on 8th May 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Conference:



Dr Mac Anthony Cobblah

Chairperson, Governing Council (CARLIGH)



Dr Theresa L. Adu

Chairperson, Management Committee (CARLIGH)

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