



OPENING UP ACCESS TO RESEARCH

How EIFL's training helps advance open science

PhD candidates at the 9th International PhD
Summer School, held in June 2025, by Kaunas
University of Technology in Lithuania.
Photo by Jonas Klėmanas.

“What I especially like about EIFL’s training and resources, is how they marry open science theory with practical skills. Open science can sometimes be very abstract. But EIFL’s training makes it practical and interesting.”

– EGLĖ JUODĖ, INFORMATION MANAGER AT THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AND DATA AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY, LITHUANIA

To support research, teaching and learning, EIFL advocates for an enabling policy environment for open science, the establishment of open public infrastructures for the publication and sharing of research in open access (OA), organizes train-the-trainer activities and develops resources to support open science training.

Open science is an approach that makes research processes and data open and transparent at all stages of the research, from planning to dissemination of results. It has become widely recognized as contributing to better and more efficient science and innovation. Major European research funders, like the European Commission (EC), and growing numbers of national research funders now mandate or encourage open science for the research they fund. In 2021 EIFL took part in drafting the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, and contributed to the toolkit developed to facilitate implementation of the Recommendation. As a result of these developments, the need for open science training surged.

EIFL began conducting OA publishing training in 2004, and has steadily expanded training to include a broader range of open science skills and competencies — for example, research data management and sharing and other digital research skills.

Since 2017 EIFL has focused on training open science trainers in Europe (as part of EC-funded projects) and in EIFL partner countries. We led the training in two major European open science initiatives, the FOSTER project and OpenAIRE, and participated in the EOSC Future, DIAMAS and ALMASI projects as course developers and trainers.

We organized webinars on open science topics and skills, week-long online and in-person bootcamps, and developed resources to support open science trainers. A particularly well used resource was the *EIFL Research Literacy Training Programme Outline for Librarians*, and we published a third edition in 2025. In 2024 we began building a Community of Practice (CoP) for open science trainers in our partner countries that today counts over 80 members. We host monthly meet-ups for CoP members to share training experiences and support each other.

We asked open science trainers from EIFL’s network to share their experiences of providing open science training in their countries.

OPEN SCIENCE TRAINING IS MAKING ITS MARK IN ETHIOPIA, GHANA AND ZIMBABWE

Getnet Lemma Tefera is a professional librarian at Addis Ababa University (AAU) Libraries and a lecturer at AAU. He is also EIFL OA Programme Coordinator for the Consortium of Ethiopian Academic and Research Libraries (CEARL), EIFL’s partner library consortium in Ethiopia.

Getnet recalls EIFL’s long-term partnership with CEARL, dating back to 2008, and involving several projects. Among these projects was the development of a three-module open science course that is still being used for training of researchers, PhD students and librarians in CEARL member institutions.

AAU Libraries provides researcher training twice a month. “The training is usually related to open science — research data management (RDM), archiving data and articles in OA repositories, and publishing in OA journals. Mostly, our learners are early career researchers. On average we have 200–300

students per session. Training can be longer than two hours, and for practical sessions we use the computer lab. We also regularly provide training for librarians and research administrators, because they are the people who support the science community.”

Open science training is making its mark, said Getnet. “These days, you can meet any researcher and start a discussion on open science, and they can engage. In the past, some researchers were hesitant to publish in OA because they thought the quality was poor. Through our training and awareness-raising, this has changed.”

“Through EIFL’s training we learnt about the importance of data repositories for sharing research data. We drafted a policy that was approved by the university, that tasked AAU Library to conduct RDM training for AAU research grant recipients. Archiving is increasing, and we now have over 500 datasets and 57 dataverses in the AAU Research Data Repository.”

In Zimbabwe, **Josiline Chigwada** is University Librarian at Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) and also serves as EIFL OA Programme Coordinator in Zimbabwe. In addition to providing open science training for faculty and students at CUT, Josiline organizes and conducts training for the 20 member institutions of the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (ZULC), EIFL’s partner library consortium.

“In the early years, our concern was the establishment of institutional OA repositories and OA publishing. Through a project with EIFL (2005) we established an institutional repository at the University of Zimbabwe. This was the first in the country and today, after much advocacy,

awareness-raising and training, all ZULC member universities have institutional repositories. Our focus is now more ensuring that the repositories are well used, and our training for faculty, students and librarians also includes RDM.

“As part of my own learning I regularly attend the EIFL CoP open science trainers’ meet-ups. Engaging with open science trainers from other countries is very useful for me. During the discussion people share best practices and what has worked for them; challenges and how they have dealt with them. So if you look at it from the Global South perspective, most of us are facing the same challenges and solutions will be similar too.”

Richard Bruce Lamprey, College Librarian at the College of Science at Kwame University of Science and Technology (KNUST), is EIFL Country Coordinator in Ghana, and also regularly attends meetings of the EIFL CoP for open science trainers.

“The meet-ups provide opportunities to learn new training methods, from trainers in different countries. I have had valuable input into how to motivate senior researchers to practice open science, how to advocate with managers for institutional support, and approaches for integrating open science into policies and academic curricula.”

An experienced open science trainer, Richard has provided training, mostly for early career researchers and PhDs at KNUST, on OA and responsible publishing; research quality and journal evaluation; grant writing with open science compliance; reference management tools, and AI and research. In addition, Richard provides introductory open science training during annual induction courses that are mandatory for newly-hired university staff. “We

train about 100 new staff a year, and as they get into their jobs, they come back for further open science training," he said.

POLICIES DRIVE OPEN SCIENCE TRAINING AT KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND VILNIUS UNIVERSITY IN LITHUANIA

Eglė Juodė, Information Manager at the Department of Scientific Information and Data at Vilnius University (VU), and **Marjan Monshi**, a data manager at Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) library and PhD candidate at the Institute of Materials Science at KTU, conduct open science training for faculty and students at their universities. Both are active participants in the EIFL CoP for open science trainers and regularly attend the monthly meet-ups.

In 2022, VU adopted an open science policy, and followed up with a policy implementation plan in 2023 that makes VU Library responsible for providing open science training. The April 2025 update of KTU's open science policy includes mandatory Data Management Plans (DMPs) for PhD students. In addition, in 2025 the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL) made open publishing of articles and data mandatory for all RCL-funded research.

All these developments have escalated the demand for open science training.

Eglė estimates that VU library's Department of Scientific Information and Data trains an average of 500–1,000 people a year, with requests coming from all directions. "Requests can come from the top, for example, the university management asked us for training on the RCL requirements. Sometimes the need comes from researchers, for example if I get questions on the same topic over and over, I organize training on that topic. We also train and set assignments involving open science for many PhD candidates.

"When I started working at the library, I did not even know what open science was. I learnt a little bit from everywhere, from conferences, videos on YouTube. I used resources from the FOSTER open science website, OpenAIRE and EIFL.

"Through participating in the EIFL CoP meet-ups for open science trainers I learnt how to make my online training interactive. A training session on data management led by Milica Ševkušić (EIFL OA Programme Project Coordinator) stands out. Both her outlook and the way she structured training were inspiring. I now plan training using her structure, and I often use Mentimeter (an interactive training tool that engages learners), especially with PhDs."

Marjan learnt her open science skills while completing an RDM course for PhDs that KTU Library developed with support from EIFL. "It was through this course that I began my open science journey," said Marjan. "For the first time, I wrote a DMP and learnt how to properly store, manage and share my research data."

Marjan wanted to be involved in tasks related to open science because she understood its relevance. When the KTU Library announced that it was looking to hire a data manager to join its team, Marjan applied and was hired for the position. The library also engaged her in training researchers. "To learn more about open science, I joined the OpenAIRE train-the-trainer Bootcamp. This event was transformative — we learnt the theory and practice of open science, and also how to train researchers.

"Now, for me, the most important space for learning about training is the EIFL CoP open science trainers meet-ups. The participants are from different countries in Europe and Africa, and we openly discuss the challenges we are facing, and share solutions and best practices. I also share resources that I receive from the meet-ups with the librarians and the other data managers at KTU. One of the most useful resources is the *EIFL Digital Research Literacy Training Programme Outline for Librarians*.

"Inspired by the collaborative spirit of the EIFL meet-ups, we have activated our Open Science Community at KTU with monthly meet-ups with researchers," said Marjan.

COMMUNITY DRIVEN OPEN SCIENCE TRAINING IN SERBIA

In Serbia, there is an informal but well-organized community of 70–80 open science trainers,

mostly consisting of research librarians. Two energetic contributors to this community are **Ljiljana Radisavljević**, Librarian at the Institute for Vegetable Crops, and **Obrad Vučkovic**, Head of Library Services and Repository Manager at the Vinca Institute of Nuclear Science, University of Belgrade. In addition to providing open science training in their institutes, Obrad and Ljiljana train nationally in Serbia and both have trained at regional and international open science training events organized by EIFL. They are also regular participants in the EIFL CoP meet-ups of open science trainers.

The informal trainers' group in Serbia provides a safe environment for younger or less experienced trainers to practise their training skills, give presentations to more experienced trainers, and receive suggestions for improvement.

"I cannot say enough how important the connection with EIFL is. I feel much closer to people doing the same thing all over the world," said Ljiljana.

Both Obrad and Ljiljana emphasised the importance of the resources created or co-created by EIFL in their training. "EIFL develops resources with the real-world constraints faced by trainers in less wealthy countries in mind, helping the trainers to deliver high-quality training despite limited funding and staff capacity," said Obrad.

In 2024 the government of Serbia adopted the Open Science Platform 2.0, which updates the original 2018 policy. The policy mandates OA to all publications and research data resulting from publicly-funded research, and requires institutions to align with these principles.

"After that, our open science training became more dynamic; researchers would bring practical questions to training, for example, 'We are about to publish, what can we do to make it open science?' and we would work with them to find solutions," said Ljiljana.

FACTS ABOUT EIFL OPEN SCIENCE TRAINING

FROM 2004 TO 2025

374,300+

people trained in open access, open data and open science

1,500+

training events organized and led

100+

open science trainers in EIFL's network in Africa, Asia and Europe

70+

countries in Africa, Asia and Europe reached

23

bootcamps organized / co-organized for open science trainers

FROM 2023 TO 2025

18,800

views of EIFL open science resources

16,700

views of webinar recordings

4,400

downloads of EIFL open science resources

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