

ITOCA

Future of Libraries at Fiesole Retreat Workshop



Participants of the Librarians Workshop at the Fiesole Retreat conference during the LEGO Serious Play session

		
Location	Target group	Budget
Cape Town, South Africa	14 early-career librarians from Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe	\$20,000/year (2024, pilot grant)



Primary outcome

Support underresourced early-career librarians from low- and middle-income countries through participation in the Fiesole Retreat conference and a dedicated pre-conference workshop, enhancing skills, networking and careers within the global research community.

Overview

Many research libraries are actively redefining their roles to align with their universities’ societal impact goals. Part of the Elsevier Foundation Future of Research Libraries program, the partnership with

Information Training & Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA) aims to contribute to the diverse perspectives essential for greater equity in research.

This pilot supported early-career librarians’ participation at the Fiesole Retreat conference “Connecting Global North and Global South: African Perspectives in scholarly communications” (May 7-8, 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa), and offered a dedicated workshop “Empowering Early Career Research Librarians from the Global South”, to provide critical networking, mentoring and competence-building skills.

Goals

- Foster a dynamic and innovative approach to competence development for early-career librarians
- Develop creative ideas, enhance collaboration and networking opportunities.

Activities and milestones

- Convened the ITOCA-Elsevier Foundation Workshop as a pre-conference event to the Fiesole Retreat. Session included:
 - Understanding the role of research librarians through lectures, case studies, group discussions and a panel with experienced librarians.
 - Using LEGO Serious Play for competence building, including hands-on activities and group reflections to explore and develop innovative ideas, share insights, and collectively brainstorm strategies for improving collection development in their respective libraries.
- The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Charlotte Wien, Vice President of Library Relations at Elsevier, and Lisa Hinchliffe, Professor for Research Professional Development in the University Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the US.

- Workshop participants were featured at the Conference Reception, optimizing their networking opportunities with Fiesole retreat speakers and delegates.

Sustainability and future plans

- Create a proposal for a series of knowledge exchange workshops at key library conferences. such as the 2025 Collection Development in Africa (CDiA) Conference in South Africa, September 21-23, 2025.
- Continue refining the workshop format to boost the involvement of underrepresented early-career librarians.