



THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL (UKZN)
LIBRARY SERVICES CORDIALLY INVITES ACADEMICS,
RESEARCHERS, STUDENTS, AND STAFF TO A WORKSHOP ON:

THEME

ELEVATING YABELANA
REPOSITORY FOR GLOBAL
VISIBILITY: **UKZN INSPIRING
RESEARCH EXCELLENCE.**

SAVE THE DATE



WEDNESDAY,
15 APRIL 2026



09H00 -12H00
(SAST)



PLATFORM:
MICROSOFT TEAMS

“TURNING DEPOSITS
INTO DISCOVERIES”

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INSPIRING GREATNESS

PROGRAMME

- ⦿ **09H00 - 09H05:**
Programme Director: UKZN's Principal Librarian Core Services: Nonjabulo Ngcobo.
- ⦿ **09H05 - 09H10:**
Welcome Address: UKZN's Library Director: Dr Nonhlanhla Ngcobo.
- ⦿ **09H10 - 09H20:**
Brief on UKZN's Strategy on Repositories in Research visibility: DVC of Research:
Prof Anil Chuturgoon
- ⦿ **09H20 - 09H40:**
Maria Coter from Figshare (Digital Science): Figshare for data: Yabelana, the repository enabling open research
- ⦿ **09H40 - 10H00**
Mary Farrell from Figshare(Digital Science): From Data to Discovery: Maximizing Your Research Impact with Yabelana.
- ⦿ **10H00- 10H10:**
Break
- ⦿ **10H10 - 10H35:**
Kirchner van Deventer from the University of Stellenbosch. SUNScholarData Case Study: Lessons in Institutional Integration. A practical roadmap for bridging institutional silos.
- ⦿ **10H35- 11H00**
Sean Carte from Durban University of Technology: Open Access and Institutional repositories.
- ⦿ **11H00 - 11H05:**
Break
- ⦿ **11H05 - 11H30:**
Dr. Nokuthula Mchunu from NRF: Towards a continental Open Science Vision Making African Knowledge Accessible and Visible.
- ⦿ **11H30- 11H55:**
Dr. Erwin Sieben from University of KwaZulu-Natal. Experience using Yabelana as a Data Repository.
- ⦿ **11H55 - 12H00:**
Vote of thanks by Portfolio Manager: Dr. Roshini Pather from University of KwaZulu-Natal.

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS BIO

MARIA COTERA

**(RESEARCH WORKFLOW SOLUTIONS MANAGER –
EMEA AT DIGITAL SCIENCE (FIGSHARE))**

Maria supports open science and responsible and impactful research by developing strategic relationships which bring academic research workflow solutions (Figshare data and institutional repositories and Symplectic Elements CRIS) to universities across the entire EMEA region, including Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the UK. A former academic librarian, Maria has been active within IFLA: the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, the global voice for librarians and library users, for over twenty years. She currently serves on the SCORE standing committee, the scholarly communications section of IFLA.

MARY FARRELL

**(CLIENT SUCCESS, GLOBAL LEAD AT
FIGSHARE)**

Mary is an experienced professional in libraries, information management and publishing with a keen interest in open access research and sustainability. With over 15 years experience, Mary has supported library and researcher teams with maximising use of their repository and journal submission workflows. As Client Success, Global Lead at Figshare, Mary oversees and manages the client relationship from initial onboarding through to ongoing support, training and engagement; ensuring each repository is utilised to its full potential.

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS BIO

KIRCHNER VAN DEVENTER

(MANAGER: RESEARCH DATA SERVICES AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)



Appointed to current role in July 2025, having previously served as the Manager of the Carnegie Research Commons since 2019. His professional focus involves the strategic oversight and development of data-related services, with a specific emphasis on Research Data Management (RDM). Kirchner leads initiatives related to data curation, preservation, and the implementation of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Inter-operable, and Reusable) principles.

He plays a key role in supporting researchers and postgraduate students through platforms such as SUNScholarData and SunDMP, providing guidance on data management plans, research data policies, and data citation. Before joining Stellenbosch University, Kirchner worked at the North-West University Libraries in Potchefstroom as a Faculty Librarian for Education Sciences. He holds a BA in Humanities, a BA Honours in English Literature, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Science. His work is central to fostering a robust RDM community and ensuring institutional adherence to international data standards.

SEAN CARTE

(LIBRARIAN: DIGITAL SERVICES AT DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)



Sean Carte is an accomplished information and knowledge management professional working at the Durban University of Technology. He has a background in Network and Systems Administration, Software Development, Systems Integration, with vast experience SirsiDynix Symphony ILS/Oracle on Red Hat Linux, as well as Repository Systems Management using DSpace/PostgreSQL on Ubuntu Linux.

Sean also holds an M.A. in English, Postgraduate Diploma in Library Information Services, to supplement his many Information Technology certificates.

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS BIO

DR NOKUTHULA MCHUNU

(DIRECTOR: INTERNATIONAL GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION OF THE NRF)



Dr. Mchunu is an expert in fungal genomics and biotechnology, holding a doctorate and extensive experience in utilizing data-driven approaches to solve environmental challenges like water pollution. Over a 15-year academic career at the Durban University of Technology and as a Senior Researcher at the Agricultural Research Council, she has spearheaded critical research in pathogen surveillance, cannabis, and African legume genomics.

Her international profile includes research appointments in the USA, Sweden, China, and Malaysia, and she holds the distinction of being the first recipient of the South Africa-China Young Scientist Programme. Beyond the lab, Dr. Mchunu is a prominent advocate for Open Science in Africa, focusing on democratizing scientific knowledge and building global research partnerships. She is dedicated to scaling research infrastructure, policy development, and popularizing STEM within local communities to ensure equitable access to science across the continent..

DR ERWIN SIEBEN

(SENIOR LECTURER AT UKZN)



Dr Erwin Sieben first came to South Africa in 1998 to start working on his PhD and to get experience with working on ecology on a 'grander' scale than is generally the case in Europe. He joined a team working on the ecological restoration of wetlands for postdoctoral project in 2005 and afterwards stayed on as a lecturer in Botany at the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus. Here he started working on a vegetation database for wetland vegetation in 2008, which was published by the Water Research Commission in 2014. In 2016 he joined the Environmental Sciences in UKZN's Westville Campus and continues to publish work on wetlands and occasionally other ecosystems.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Wetland ecosystems
- Ecosystem services
- Vegetation ecology
- Landscape ecology
- Environmental monitoring
- Ecological restoration
- Bio-geography