

**CDS/ISIS & Web Publishing  
Natural Resources College  
Lilongwe, Malawi  
August 28<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.**

**Theme ‘*GENEISIS as a tool for powerful Web Applications*’**



**Summary of Findings and Conclusions:**

Within the framework of the implementation of the 2006 Communication Regular Programme activity on strengthening capacity of libraries, archivists and other information providers and related institutions to disseminate knowledge and promote lifelong learning UNESCO Harare Cluster Office and in consultation with the National Commissions of Botswana, Malawi and Zambia, a CDS/ISIS & Web Publishing training was organized at Natural Resources College, Lilongwe, Malawi. August 28<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. The theme of the training was ‘*GENEISIS as a tool for powerful Web Applications*’.

The training aimed to capacity-build librarians and information practitioners from the region in the use of advanced CDS/ISIS features and introduce them to Web Publishing by manipulating GENEISIS application. Overall objective was to equip participants with

adequate practical knowledge so as to enable them to efficiently carry out CDS/ISIS Web Publishing projects.

A total of 14 participants identified by the respective Cluster National Commissions attended the training, with 11 coming from Malawi (South, North & Central regions) and single participants from Mozambique, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The course concentrated on the use of WINISIS (cds/isis windows version), basic use of the Internet and its protocols, application of the Open Archives Initiative-Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (oai-pmh) in Digital Library creation, optimization and information sharing within the context of the region. There was hands-on training on the use of GENEISIS in creating query forms and dynamic web-pages to interact with CDS/ISIS databases.

Training inauguration was jointly conducted by the Malawi National Commission Chairman and Permanent Secretary in Ministry of Education, Mr Matope and the Director and Representative of the UNESCO Harare Cluster Office, Prof Juma Shabani. Mr G. Kaliwo, Regional Communication and Information Advisor also attended the training.

## **Introduction**

The CI Regional Adviser, Documentalist and Secretary CI undertook a mission to Lilongwe, Malawi to conduct training on CDS/ISIS and Web Publishing held at the Natural Resources College.

## **Background**

Following a number of introductory training workshops on CDS/ISIS in the past three years, the proliferation of organizational websites and the development of CDS/ISIS web-based tools, there has been a demonstrated need to enhance capacity building in this particular field in order to promote full exploitation of these technologies among information practitioners in the region. Interaction with these practitioners in past workshops has further demonstrated the need for advanced training in the use of CDS/ISIS and in particular web-based technologies such as GENEISIS in order to promote the development, creation and uploading of databases onto the internet to promote access to an array of developmental information. This development has also seen the proliferation of virtual libraries (VL) or digital libraries (DL) especially by those organizations that have web presence.

In order to redress this new challenge, Zimbabwe ISIS User Group (ZIMISIS) undertook the task of developing training materials for CDS/ISIS and Web Publishing with which it seeks to train a number of practitioners in and around the region in the use of CDS/ISIS and GENEISIS. In this regard, the UNESCO Harare Cluster Office's Communication and Information Sector organized a week long training workshop held in Lilongwe, Malawi from August 28 to September 1, 2006 to train information practitioners in the country in CDS/ISIS and GENEISIS.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of the training was to build the capacity of librarians and information workers from the region in the application of web technologies to information management particularly using the GENEISIS tool with CDS/ISIS databases to create web-compatible query forms and upload them onto the World Wide Web. Other concepts incorporated included;

- Familiarize participants with the concepts of web publishing
- Facilitate understanding of web publishing and practical knowledge on web publishing process
- Offer hands-on experience to develop CDS/ISIS web based databases
- Help participants develop practical skills in the installation of web based software for creation and implementation of CDS/ISIS web based databases

Additional objectives of the training were:

- to provide practical comprehension and strengthen the use of CDS/ISIS especially in Malawi and other cluster countries;
- to promote the sharing of information resources;
- to assist in the formation of the Malawi ISIS user group (MALISIS)

## **Outputs:**

14 participants received hands-on training for 5 days in database design, uploading of databases using GENEISIS, Web Publishing, Internet Protocols, CD Publishing, Open Archives Initiative-Protocol for Metadata Harvesting and maintenance, security and networking. The participants acquired advanced skills in manipulating CDS/ISIS and GENEISIS.

Importantly, the Malawi ISIS User Group (Malisis) was established, and mandated to continue holding further training on CDS/ISIS.

## **Participants**

The training comprised of 14 participants from the Cluster countries, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion the training was effective but the general consensus was that there is need for more time to consolidate the concepts especially GENEISIS. Although the level of understanding of the concepts by participants differed, the training managed to impart basic practical technical concepts which built a platform for further exploration at an individual level. Despite equipment failure and lack of connectivity other solutions were put in place, for instance manipulating offline websites. Importantly, there was high optimism that the Malawi ISIS User Group would be constituted and operational by end of September. Of concern was the gender balance, only 2 were female participants and

more consideration should be given to those directly involved in daily application of the concepts.

### **Recommendations**

- Follow-up training to consolidate concepts via the concerned NATCOMs
- Encourage setting-up of effective ISIS User Groups in the Cluster countries
- Encourage institutions with little resources for ICTs to seek assistance from organisations such as Computer Aid International
- to produce a DVD from the recording done
- NATCOMs need to revise their selection criterion for participants especially for this kind of specialized training