

Signal: Collaborative Models for Sustainable Open Access Publishing in Africa

Signal Statement

“Open access scales when governance, infrastructure, and professional practice evolve together.”

What We're Seeing

The **EIFL** initiative on collaboration for sustainable open access publishing in Africa documents a **systems-level approach** to strengthening scholar-led publishing across the continent. Rather than centering on article processing charges or isolated platform adoption, EIFL works with libraries, journal editors, and national stakeholders to co-design shared services, governance models, and capacity-building practices that support long-term viability.

This work reframes journals as **public knowledge goods embedded within regional research ecosystems**, emphasizing collective ownership and local stewardship. Open access, in this model, is not a transactional service but a coordinated scholarly infrastructure sustained through collaboration, training, and policy alignment.

Source: <https://www.eifl.org/eifl-in-action/collaboration-sustainable-open-access-publishing-africa>

Why This Matters Now

As global open access mandates expand, questions of sustainability, equity, and control have become more urgent—particularly in regions historically underserved by commercial publishing systems. EIFL's work demonstrates that durable openness depends less on fee models or technical tools than on **institutional coordination and shared governance capacity**, especially where resources are constrained.

This case offers a concrete counterpoint to platform-centric approaches to openness, showing how libraries can function as **long-term stewards of scholarly infrastructure**, not merely access providers.

Connection to Immersive Learning (2025-2026)

For immersive learning and XR scholarship, this signal is highly instructive. Many immersive artifacts—datasets, simulations, virtual environments, and multimodal narratives—sit outside conventional publishing pipelines. EIFL's model suggests how scholarly communities can steward

nontraditional outputs with the same rigor and durability as journals when governance, training, and infrastructure are designed together.

As iLRN advances the Codex, Repository of Immersive Learning Experiences, and Chapter Showcases, this signal reinforces a key lesson: immersive learning infrastructure should be treated as a **shared scholarly commons**, supported by collaborative governance and regionally grounded capacity building rather than one-off platforms or isolated repositories.

Design Implication

Sustainable openness in immersive learning will require:

- Library-led stewardship of digital and multimodal artifacts
- Shared standards, documentation, and governance for nontraditional outputs
- Investment in professional practice and regional capacity alongside technical systems

EIFL's approach demonstrates that openness becomes durable when **ownership, responsibility, and infrastructure are collectively held**.

Signal Metadata

- **Signal Type:** Scholarly Infrastructure & Open Science
- **Primary Source:**
 - EIFL — Collaboration for Sustainable Open Access Publishing in Africa
<https://www.eifl.org/eifl-in-action/collaboration-sustainable-open-access-publishing-africa>
- **Geographic Scope:** Africa
- **Primary Domain:** Open Science · Scholarly Publishing · Library-led Infrastructure
- **Time Horizon:** Near- to mid-term (2024–2028)
- **Confidence Level:** Medium–High (established program with multi-country implementation)
- **Relevance to Immersive Learning:**
 - Governance models for open, nontraditional scholarly outputs
 - Library stewardship of digital and multimodal artifacts
 - Capacity building for sustainable, community-owned knowledge systems
- **iLRN Alignment:**
 - Knowledge Tree (Scholarly Evidence)
 - Codex (Standards & Documentation)
 - Chapters (Regional Ecosystems)
- **Keywords:**
#Africa #PanAfrican
#OpenScience #ScholarlyInfrastructure #KnowledgeCommons
#Governance #Stewardship #CapacityBuilding #Sustainability
#OpenAccessPublishing #MultimodalScholarship #NonTraditionalOutputs
#LibraryLed #CommunityOwned #RegionalEcosystems
#ImmersiveLearning

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