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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

PLENARY SPEAKERS

Dr. Salwan M. Abdulateef, Open Science Community Iraq (OSCI)

Building Research Resilience through Open Science in Iraq: Challenges, Institutional Practices, and Lessons Learned

Research systems operating in environments affected by political instability, economic constraints, infrastructural disruption, or unequal access to scholarly resources require mechanisms that allow knowledge production and communication to continue under pressure. Open science can contribute to such resilience by improving access to research outputs, strengthening digital preservation, increasing the visibility and connectivity of researchers and institutions, and supporting collaboration beyond individual institutional boundaries. This paper examines the emerging relationship between open science and research resilience in Iraq through a documentary case analysis of national platforms, institutional repositories, scholarly publishing practices, community-led initiatives, regional networks, and global open research infrastructures. The analysis considers the growing digital foundation for scholarly communication in Iraq, including national journal platforms, research management systems, digital repositories, university-level open-access initiatives, persistent identifiers, and improvements in research metadata. Particular attention will be given to the role of Open Science Community Iraq (OSCI) in community-led capacity building and researcher engagement. At the regional level, the paper will examine the contribution of the Forum for Open Research in MENA (FORM) in supporting localized capacity building, regional community development, policy exchange, and the representation of Arab perspectives within the broader international open science movement. The paper will also consider the importance of global open research infrastructures, including persistent identifiers and interoperable metadata, in maintaining scholarly visibility and connectivity. Drawing on these experiences, the paper proposes a Multi-Level Open Science–Research Resilience Framework, comprising four interconnected levels: institutional resilience, community and national capacity, regional collaboration, and global connectivity. The framework positions open science not only as a means of providing access to research, but also as a strategic mechanism for preserving knowledge, maintaining research continuity, strengthening institutional autonomy, and supporting recovery during periods of disruption.

Dr. Amani Ahmed, University of Edinburgh

When Research Infrastructure Collapses: Open Science, Academic Autonomy and Resilience in Conflict

What does open science mean when the infrastructure that makes research possible has been destroyed? Drawing on my lived experience within Palestinian higher education institutions in Gaza Strip and the 2024 report “”Resilience in the Rubble: A Needs Assessment of Higher Education in the Gaza Strip””, this presentation examines how the destruction of universities, loss and displacement of academic communities, and disruption of essential services threaten both knowledge production and institutional autonomy.

The Palestinian experience in Gaza Strip raises fundamental questions about the conditions of openness: who can access knowledge, who can continue producing it, and who retains the authority to determine research priorities? I explore how open access resources, shared digital infrastructure and international research collaboration could support academic continuity, while recognising that access to knowledge alone cannot overcome the loss of laboratories, connectivity, funding and safe working conditions.

At the centre of this discussion is academic autonomy: the ability of Palestinian scholars and institutions to shape their own recovery, sustain their academic communities and lead research responsive to local needs. International solidarity must support this agency through equitable partnerships, meaningful participation in decision-making, and recognition of local expertise and intellectual contributions.

The presentation argues for an approach to open science that connects accessibility with protection, institutional responsibility and sustained investment. Resilience should never become an expectation that scholars endure destruction without adequate support. For research communities across MENA and beyond, the challenge is to build systems of cooperation that preserve knowledge, sustain institutions and uphold the right to produce science under conditions of conflict.

Prof. Rana Dajani, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Open Science in Times of Crisis: Documenting Scholasticide in Gaza

Open science is founded on transparency, accessibility, visibility, credibility, and the free exchange of knowledge. But what happens when the people and institutions that produce knowledge are themselves subjected to destruction and repression? This talk examines these questions through the ongoing destruction of Palestinian academic and scientific life in Gaza and the broader context of decades of injustice and occupation. It asks a fundamental question: How do we document scholasticide; the destruction of a society's capacity to produce, preserve, and transmit knowledge and what responsibilities does the global scientific community have when scientists, universities, laboratories, and research infrastructure are destroyed? Israel, as the occupying and oppressive power identified in this talk, must be held responsible for documented violations and for the destruction inflicted on Palestinian academic and scientific institutions. The devastation in Gaza cannot be understood solely as a crisis beginning in 2023; it must be situated within decades of restrictions on Palestinian academic freedom, movement, research, and access to scientific resources. The consequences extend far beyond destroyed buildings. They include the loss of scientists and scholars, students, laboratories, archives, research data, institutional memory, and international research networks. Documenting these losses is therefore itself an act of open science. It preserves knowledge, makes destruction visible, supports Palestinian researchers wherever they are, and creates an evidence base for accountability, justice, and reconstruction. The talk will critically examine the international scientific community's response and ask what unequal responses to different conflicts reveal about selective solidarity and the universality of open-science principles. Reconstruction must mean more than rebuilding laboratories. It must restore people, institutions, knowledge, networks, academic freedom, and dignity. Open science cannot be universal if solidarity is selective. If knowledge is a human right, then those who destroy the conditions for producing knowledge must be held accountable.

Prof. Islam Abou El-Magd, Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN)

Advancing Open Science in the Arab Region: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Transformative Contribution of Earth Observation and Open Data

The UNESCO Recommendation to promoting open science worldwide adopted on 23 November 2021, during the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris. Open Science is increasingly recognized as a transformative approach to accelerating scientific research and innovation, enhancing research collaboration, and ensuring equitable access to knowledge, data, and research infrastructure. In the Arab region, OS advancement presents significant opportunities to strengthen scientific cooperation, improve research visibility, support evidence-based policymaking, and address shared regional challenges, including climate change, water scarcity, food security, environmental degradation, and sustainable development. The Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) mission is to promote Open Science through regional research and education networking, digital research infrastructure, international collaboration, and initiatives supporting open access, open research data, and knowledge sharing. One of the key challenges facing the Open Science in the Arab countries is the limited policies, fragmented research infrastructures, limited funding, disparities in digital capabilities, insufficient data management practices, intellectual property concerns, and the need for stronger institutional and regional coordination. ASREN a regional organization is playing this role and take care of the regional coordination of open science in the Arab region. Therefore, particular emphasis is placed on the strategic contribution of Earth Observation (EO), satellite data, and geospatial technologies as powerful enablers of Open Science and Open Data access. Freely accessible satellite observations, combined with cloud computing, high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, and collaborative research platforms, would enable for unprecedented opportunities for researchers and institutions to access, process, share, and reuse scientific data. Earth Observation also offers a practical foundation for interdisciplinary research and regional cooperation, particularly in addressing environmental and socioeconomic challenges. This presentation highlights the vision and mission of ASREN and best practices of earth observation for the promotion of regional Open Science ecosystem by connecting research institutions, enabling data-intensive scientific collaboration, supporting interoperable digital infrastructures, and promoting capacity building and data-sharing practices.

Dr. Lamis Elkheir, African Reproducibility Network

Open Science and Research Resilience in Times of Crisis

When crisis disrupts universities and research institutions, the impact extends far beyond the loss of physical infrastructure. Researchers may become displaced, access to resources and training may be interrupted, professional networks weakened, and the continuity of research and knowledge placed at risk. This talk will explore research resilience through the lens of open science, considering how open practices, distributed training, research networks, and communities can help researchers remain connected, continue developing their skills, and participate in research despite institutional disruption. Drawing on experiences from Sudan and capacity-building work through the African Reproducibility Network (AREN), the talk will reflect on both the potential and the limitations of open science in supporting research communities during crisis and recovery.

Prof. Nazik Elmalaika, Sudan Journal of Medical Sciences

Keeping an Open Access Journal Alive in Wartime: Lessons from the Sudan Journal of Medical Sciences

The armed conflict that began in Khartoum in mid-April 2023 destroyed much of Sudan's health and academic infrastructure: medical schools were attacked, internet connectivity failed, and many scholars were displaced or became refugees. For the Sudan Journal of Medical Sciences (SJMS), the journal of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Omdurman Islamic University, founded in 2006, the war threatened its people, platform, funding and connections.

This presentation describes how SJMS kept publishing through the crisis and draws four practical lessons:

1. Prepare before the crisis. An editorial team already built outside Sudan, after COVID-19 and the 2019 revolution, kept the journal running.

2. Keep content beyond the conflict zone. Hosting with Knowledge E and long-term archiving in Portico protected the scholarly record, while editorial control stayed with the journal.

3. Mobilise the community. Donations from Omdurman Islamic University alumni and fundraising by the Sudanese American Medical Association (SAMA) helped meet obligations to the publisher.

4. Widen participation. An open call for board members, a social media editor and visual abstracts broadened engagement.

In 2023, the first year of the war, article reads rose by 85.7% to over 195,000, with readers in 203 countries, and SJMS was accepted into Scopus. Growth has continued: in the third quarter of 2026, article views reached 64,308, up 51% on the previous quarter, and Sudan ranked among the top five reader countries.

The talk concludes with recommendations for journals, publishers, funders and universities on sustaining scholarly publishing in countries in crisis.

Prof. Sari Hanafi, American University of Beirut

Societal polarization and Academic Freedom in the Time of Symbolic Liberalism

In my recent work, I argued that the bulk of the responses of the social sciences to the pathologies of late modernity was defined as being classically liberal but politically illiberal – I call this peculiar combination "Symbolic Liberalism". Corollary to that, we witness a hierarchical polarization in various societies, manifested by the widening of the space between different elites. It is present everywhere including in university campuses and the media where we witness suffocation of academic freedom and intolerance in debates. Interestingly, such intolerance is shown by both the Left and the Right, as it is evident in the subscription to what is known as 'cancel culture' by both camps but to different degrees.

Ms. Amina Itani, Western Australian Museum

When Knowledge Systems Fracture: Designing Resilient Research and Knowledge Infrastructures in Times of Crisis

Research is more open, connected and digital than ever, yet openness alone does not make a research system resilient. Crisis exposes a fundamental vulnerability: access to knowledge depends on interconnected physical, digital, human and institutional infrastructures whose importance often becomes visible only when they fail. This presentation reframes open science through the lens of research resilience, drawing on contrasting experiences across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) alongside selected international comparisons. It asks what happens when research infrastructure is disrupted, and what institutions can design differently before disruption occurs. Conflict, displacement, economic instability, infrastructure failure and inadequate preparedness can disrupt not only access to collections and data, but also the expertise, systems and networks that sustain research. Differences in connectivity, resources and institutional capacity mean that MENA cannot be treated as a single digital environment: removing a paywall does not remove every barrier to participation. Artificial intelligence both expands research capability and introduces new dependencies. AI can extend discovery, translation, analysis and access to scholarly knowledge, but effective participation also depends on reliable evidence, skills, governance, connectivity, computing capacity, data and external platforms. AI may therefore reduce some barriers while introducing or amplifying others. As a practical response, the presentation uses dependency mapping as a diagnostic approach for libraries and research institutions: identifying what critical research functions depend on, locating single points of failure and determining where mitigation is needed. Preservation, interoperability, portability, distributed access, rights preparedness, human capability and disaster planning are considered as interlocking dimensions of resilience. The question therefore shifts from “Is research open?” to “Will it endure?” Interdependence is not itself the problem; unmanaged fragility is. A resilient open-science system must enable research and researchers not only to participate when conditions are stable, but to continue, recover and reconnect when they are not.

Dr. Naeem Muhammad, DataAI

Open Science as a Resilience Strategy: Maintaining Research Autonomy During Times of Crisis

Open Science is often framed as a means to enhance transparency, accessibility, and collaboration. Yet, its most vital contribution may lie in its ability to fortify the resilience of research ecosystems. During periods of conflict, economic instability, and institutional disruption, openness evolves from a standard of good practice into a vital strategy for sustaining knowledge creation, preserving access to information, and maintaining scientific collaboration across borders and institutions. This presentation explores how Open Science empowers research communities to remain resilient under challenging circumstances while safeguarding their autonomy. It examines the strategic role of open infrastructure, community-driven stewardship, and international collaboration in supporting continuity, recovery, and reconstruction. Drawing on international experiences in research policy, data stewardship, and capacity building, the talk offers practical insights into advancing research autonomy across the Arab world.

Prof. Walid Salama, Association of Arab Universities (AArU)

Higher Education Resilience in the Arab Region: The Role of Open Science and AArU Strategies in Times of Crisis and Reconstruction

This talk will be delivered on behalf of the Association of Arab Universities (AArU) at the 5th Annual Forum for Open Research, this keynote position Open Science as a lifeline for higher education resilience in conflict-affected Arab universities. Addressing access disruptions, isolation, and infrastructure loss, the address highlights Open Science as a tool to democratize knowledge, enable swift crisis response, and protect institutional memory. AArU will outline actionable strategies, including shared digital repositories, recovery partnerships, and flexible governance, while calling on the global academic community to replace passive empathy with active solidarity by eliminating technical and financial barriers for regional researchers.

PANELS PRESENTERS

Dr. Arwa Ahmed, Scientific Arab Forum (SAF)

From Open Research to Accessible Science: The Value of Scientific Community in ensuring the future of a resilient MENA region

Research is at the heart of knowledge generation and drives innovation. Making research output openly available accelerates scientific progress especially at times of crisis, but availability alone does not ensure that scientific knowledge is accessible, discussed or used beyond domain-experts. For Arabic-speaking communities, open-access publishing removes the paywall, but linguistic and technical barriers, geographic and institutional inequalities, and limited access to scientific networks and opportunities can remain. These challenges can intensify during conflict, economic instability and other crises, when research infrastructure, education, mobility and collaborations are disrupted and scientific communities become increasingly fragmented. This raises an important question: how can geographically distributed scientific communities contribute to research resilience in the Arab world?

The Scientific Arab Forum (SAF), which started as a response to the COVID-19 public health crisis, aims to build a world-class community of scientists and science communicators with deep ties to the MENA region, strengthen scientific excellence and inquiry, cultivate scientific curiosity, and contribute to shaping science policy across MENA. Its activities illustrate three interconnected dimensions through which the benefits of open research can be extended: accessibility, dialogue, and global participation.

To improve accessibility, SAF publishes Arabic summaries of recent, high-quality open-access research and runs health-awareness campaigns addressing challenges relevant to Arab societies. To foster dialogue, SAF organises conferences and seminars and interviews researchers about their science and career journeys, increasing the visibility of researchers and connecting Arabic-speaking audiences with contemporary science. To encourage participation, SAF organises science-writing competitions that enable participants to engage critically with research and develop their science-communication skills. SAF also enrolls members through a self- and third-party nomination process, to build a broad and complementary membership of outstanding researchers and science communicators.

These activities cannot replace excellent universities, laboratories, repositories or sustained research investment. However, they demonstrate how accessible knowledge, scientific dialogue and opportunities for participation can complement these systems and help knowledge, expertise and scientific connections circulate across geographical and institutional boundaries.

SAF's experience suggests that distributed, virtual networks can be leveraged to build open and connected scientific communities, so scientific knowledge and meaningful connections can remain resilient when conventional systems are disrupted. Governments can then lean on these networks to address emergent problems during times of crisis, and inform the development and execution of long-term strategies that enhance local and regional resilience while ensuring local acceptance by sharing knowledge with society at large.

Dr. Saif AlJabri, Sultan Qaboos University

Support from Arab Academic Institutions for Open Access Publishing and Its Role in Fostering a Culture of Open Access Among Their Faculty Members and Researchers

Open science and open access publishing have become fundamental pillars for advancing the scientific research ecosystem and fostering free access to knowledge, given their pivotal role in enhancing scientific visibility and boosting impact factors and citation rates for research. Amidst rapid digital transformation, academic institutions have emerged as key players in supporting open access publishing policies by providing digital infrastructure, developing institutional repositories, funding publication fees, and offering awareness and training programs for researchers and faculty members. This paper aims to explore the role of academic institutions in supporting open access publishing and preparing their affiliates for it, while highlighting the impact of these efforts on embedding a culture of open science and raising awareness regarding the importance of free access to scientific information and knowledge.

The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach, involving a review and analysis of recent scholarly literature on open science and open access publishing, alongside an examination of institutional initiatives and policies at universities and research centers that have adopted strategies supporting open access. Additionally, the study analyzed international reports and research concerning researcher attitudes toward open access and the challenges associated with its implementation within the academic environment.

The study results indicate that institutional support directly contributes to encouraging researchers to adopt open access publishing and raising awareness of open science principles; furthermore, it positively impacts scientific output rates and enhances the global digital visibility of academic institutions. The results also indicated that providing academic incentives, adopting mandatory or encouraging policies for depositing work in digital repositories, and organizing training programs are among the key factors in fostering a culture of open access publishing. Conversely, the study revealed persistent challenges regarding limited awareness of intellectual property rights, high publication fees in certain open-access journals, and concerns about the quality of some journals. The study recommends strengthening national and institutional policies that support open science, expanding education and training programs, and building partnerships among universities, libraries, and research centers to ensure the sustainability of the open access publishing environment and maximize its scientific and societal impactThe presentation concludes that open science is not merely a means of disseminating knowledge; rather, it can serve as a strategy to enhance scientific independence and resilience, while building research systems that are more equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of Arab societies

Prof. Abulgasem Al Mashaii, Libyan Authority for Scientific Research (LASR)

Building Cognitive Resilience: Challenges of Transitioning to Open Science in Transitional Environments - The Libyan Case as a Model

The transition of academic systems toward Open Science practices represents a strategic lever for achieving knowledge justice and internationalizing scientific output in developing and emerging countries. Amid the rapidly unfolding geopolitical and economic transformations across the Middle East and North Africa, there is an urgent need to reconsider traditional knowledge structures and replace them with more flexible and inclusive models. In this context, the Libyan case acquires exceptional significance as a knowledge model for resilience in prolonged crisis environments, particularly following the Libyan Authority for Scientific Research's (LASR) accession to the Forum for Open Research in the Middle East and North Africa (FORM) as a founding member — a genuine endeavor to reconnect the Libyan research landscape with the global knowledge ecosystem.

Libya sits at the heart of complex geographical, historical, and cultural intersections. It is a nation undergoing an extended transitional phase that has lasted more than a decade, profoundly affecting every aspect of institutional and academic life. Despite possessing a scientific legacy spanning decades of research in petroleum, geology, archaeology, and social sciences, the country's digital knowledge infrastructure has remained fragile and unable to keep pace with the global digital revolution. In the Libyan case, political, economic, structural, and cultural challenges intersect, creating a unique academic environment that demands innovative and flexible solutions — solutions that go beyond direct transplantation of Western models and instead require contextual adaptation that respects local specificities.

LASR's engagement with FORM represents a strategic step toward rebuilding trust in national knowledge institutions and opening channels for regional and international dialogue that facilitate the exchange of expertise and resources. Yet this engagement raises fundamental questions about the readiness of the Libyan academic environment to absorb Open Science practices, about the structural obstacles that hinder this transition, and about how regional partnerships can contribute to overcoming these barriers.

This paper seeks to deconstruct the five primary obstacles that prevent the Libyan research landscape from transitioning toward a comprehensive Open Science environment, and to offer practical policy recommendations.

Dr. Rabab Almuqahwi, RCSI-Bahrain

Enhancing Scientific Research Resilience in the Arab World: The Role of Open Science in Making Arab Medical Knowledge Accessible and Developing AI-powered Translation Tools

Scientific research and medical education systems in the Arab world face multifaceted challenges regarding knowledge accessibility, disparities in digital resources, language barriers, and limited access to databases and educational materials in Arabic. These challenges are particularly acute in environments grappling with economic or institutional pressures or humanitarian crises, where the ability to access and openly share reliable scientific knowledge becomes vital to the resilience and independence of the research ecosystem.

This presentation discusses the role of open science principles in bolstering the resilience of medical research in the Arab world, focusing specifically on Arabic-language medical knowledge and AI-driven technologies. It draws upon prior research comparing AI-powered translation tools for Arabic medical content, as well as a project examining the need for Arabic medical translation and interpretation services in Bahrain. These projects reveal a significant gap: a scarcity of open Arabic medical resources and data—particularly data that reflects the region's diverse Arabic dialects and its cultural and linguistic variety.

The presentation argues that developing open repositories for Arabic medical resources, linguistic and dialectal databases, open educational tools, and reusable datasets could reduce reliance on external resources, support researchers, students, and healthcare institutions, and foster local innovation. Furthermore, open science can enhance transparency in the development and evaluation of AI tools, enabling researchers to compare models, verify their accuracy, and identify biases or limitations. The presentation will also address challenges related to patient privacy protection, ethical data governance, intellectual property, digital sustainability, and the gap between theoretical open access and the actual ability to utilize resources. In conclusion, it proposes a practical framework for fostering an Arab open infrastructure for medical knowledge, grounded in collaboration among universities, healthcare institutions, researchers, linguists, AI developers, and policymakers.

The presentation concludes that open science is not merely a means of disseminating knowledge; rather, it can serve as a strategy to enhance scientific independence and resilience, while building research systems that are more equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of Arab societies

Ms. Joyce Aways, Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Learning Without Borders: Empowering Displaced Students Through Open Educational Resources

Despite being displaced from their homes and campuses, deprived of access to safe learning environments, technical infrastructure, library collections, and other essential educational resources,Sudanese students are eager to engage in their education and continue learning in the face of incredibly challenging circumstances. This session explores how the Information Literacy Librarian at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha supported Sudanese undergraduate female students in continuing their education during the ongoing conflict in Sudan through the strategic use of Open Educational Resources (OER), including the innovative approaches required to sustain learning and academic engagement.

The session will demonstrate how a range of freely accessible OERs were identified, evaluated, and integrated into online instructional sessions to support students from diverse academic disciplines. These resources helped bridge gaps in access to textbooks, scholarly content, and learning materials, enabling students to continue their coursework despite challenging circumstances.

Because the students were scattered across multiple locations, including refugee camps, instruction was delivered online using free and widely accessible digital platforms. Recognizing the technological limitations faced by many participants, sessions were designed to be mobile-friendly and were conducted primarily in Arabic, with English technical terminology introduced where appropriate.

The presentation will highlight practical strategies for using OER in humanitarian and crisis contexts and will illustrate how information literacy support can contribute to educational continuity, resilience, and learner empowerment during periods of conflict and displacement. The experiences shared may serve as a model for librarians and educators seeking to support vulnerable student populations in similar circumstances.

Ms. Favour Ayeni, Federal University Oye-Ekiti

Beyond Open Access: Decolonizing Research Infrastructures for Resilient and Autonomous Knowledge Systems

Open science has emerged as an important approach to improving the accessibility, transparency, inclusiveness, and reproducibility of research. However, making scientific publications and data openly accessible does not necessarily guarantee research autonomy, epistemic justice, or resilience. Research communities operating within economically constrained, politically unstable, or crisis-affected environments may remain dependent on externally controlled publishing platforms, digital infrastructures, datasets, technologies, funding systems, and research agendas.

This presentation examines open science through a decolonial lens, arguing that meaningful openness must extend beyond access to knowledge toward greater agency over how knowledge is produced, governed, preserved, and shared. It explores how historical and contemporary inequalities within global knowledge systems influence research priorities, infrastructure ownership, scholarly visibility, and the recognition of locally generated knowledge.

The presentation proposes a conceptual framework linking open access, infrastructure resilience, epistemic agency, knowledge sovereignty, and local research capacity. It considers how open repositories, open data, open-source technologies, collaborative research networks, and locally governed scholarly infrastructures can strengthen the continuity of research during periods of disruption while supporting recovery and reconstruction afterward.

The central argument is that resilient open science should not simply make knowledge available; it should empower research communities to participate meaningfully in the production, governance, preservation, and reuse of knowledge. Reframing open science in this way positions it as a potential mechanism for strengthening research autonomy and epistemic justice rather than reproducing existing dependencies. The presentation ultimately calls for open science policies and infrastructures that are not only accessible and transparent, but also resilient, locally responsive, inclusive, and capable of supporting greater autonomy in challenging research environments.

Dr. Omar M. Bouzid, Libyan Center for Electronic System Programming and Aviation Research

Building Resilience and Research Independence in the Arab World Through Open Science: From the Libyan Platform to the Smart Arab Platform

Scientific research systems across several Arab nations face a complex array of challenges, including the fragmentation of human capital and research capabilities, weak inter-institutional communication, and limited sharing of data, infrastructure, and expertise—compounded by digital and knowledge divides. These challenges are further exacerbated in contexts of crisis and instability. In this landscape, open science offers potential that extends beyond merely making publications and data accessible; it encompasses the creation of more open, equitable, and resilient collaborative infrastructures and systems capable of sustaining knowledge flow, research cooperation, and knowledge production.

This presentation traces a research trajectory that began with the proposal of the "Libyan Research Communication Platform"—a digital tool designed to address the aforementioned challenges by connecting researchers, institutions, the private sector, funding bodies, and society. It aimed to facilitate the sharing of data, expertise, laboratories, funding, and research problems within an open science framework. This concept subsequently evolved—in a paper presented at a scientific conference in Saudi Arabia—into a proposal for the "Smart Arab Research Communication Platform." This expanded the scope of partnership from the national level to the broader Arab region and leveraged artificial intelligence to analyze big data, identify resources and capabilities, align research needs with available assets, and propose opportunities for research and societal collaboration.

The presentation re-examines this trajectory through the lenses of resilience and research autonomy, asking: How can an open, smart Arab platform facilitate sustained communication, resource mobilization, and knowledge exchange during crises, while simultaneously reducing reliance on external research resources and linkages outside the region? The presentation discusses the platform as a knowledge infrastructure—rather than merely a communication tool—capable of supporting resource discoverability and reuse, minimizing the duplication of efforts, and connecting researchers and institutions across borders.

It also highlights the value of this infrastructure during crisis response, recovery, and reconstruction phases by preserving institutional memory and research data, making expertise accessible, aligning resources with priorities, and enhancing transparency, reliability, and access to knowledge—all while respecting privacy, intellectual property rights, and local legal frameworks.

Finally, the presentation proposes that transitioning from a national platform to an interconnected Arab platform offers a practical pathway to translate the principles of the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science into a regional framework that fosters resilience, autonomy, equity, and the continuity of knowledge production under both normal and crisis conditions

Mr. Nasif Chowdhury, Anwer Khan Modern University

From Evidence to Action: The Role of Open and Transparent Research in Managing Human-Made Crises in Developing Countries

Human-made crises in developing countries create a multifaceted challenge for governments, NGOs, humanitarian agencies, and the affected communities. Often, a quick response is needed using reliable data. In Bangladesh, for example, crises like forced displacement, industrial accidents, environmental degradation, and humanitarian emergencies clearly indicate the necessity of making available and trustworthy research accessible and transparent for effective crisis management. In this research, we study how open and transparent research can contribute to the transformation of scientific evidence into usable knowledge for the management of human-made crises in Bangladesh. We focus our attention mostly on open access to research, open data, transparency in the method, credibility of research, working together with stakeholders, and making decisions based on evidence. The research aims to find out how governments, NGOs, humanitarian organizations, researchers, and local communities get access to and use the research findings during the phases of crisis prevention, emergency, and recovery management. We have suggested a hybrid research approach that combines a survey of stakeholders with a set of qualitative interviews to discover what opportunities, barriers, and institutional problems exist in getting and using open scientific data. The outcome is expected to show that having research more open and easier to find might help the sharing of information, coordination with stakeholders, building trust in the public, being accountable, and making policies based on evidence. The results of the research might act as a guide to the formulation of a practical system that would be suitable in a real-world situation to enhance the practice of open research and the response capability to crises in developing countries like Bangladesh that are hit by human-made crises.

Ms. Stefano Cossu, Harvard University

Pocket Archive: A Low-footprint Solution for Cultural Heritage at Risk

The recent years' attacks on civilian infrastructure and cultural institutions in Middle Eastern and North African countries have exposed more than ever the precarious state of irreplaceable cultural heritage, which ultimately belongs to humanity at large.

In spite of extreme difficulties, recovery efforts are underway to safeguard the remaining artifacts and documents in conflict areas. Some institutions, and many individuals, are fulfilling a critical role in safeguarding cultural heritage and history from permanent loss. However, long-refined ""best practices"" and tools for archiving and digital preservation adopted within the mainstream cultural heritage community may not be the best fit in such scenarios, where access to adequate funds, expertise, equipment, and Internet connectivity are not guaranteed.

Pocket Archive is a non-profit, open source technology project designed to be used in the above described scenarios. It runs on inexpensive or outdated computers, requires a near-zero budget to be implemented, and promotes essential but effective workflows modeled after the aforementioned academic ""best practices"". It serves as a first line of defense against permanent loss of artifacts and documents, which can be implemented quickly by few volunteers while large-scale strategies, connections, and funds are being established.

The Pocket Archive project joins technology with education and strategy to promote a method that can be adopted in many areas where this approach is required to safeguard cultural heritage. The technology is in testing phase. Efforts are underway to start pilot projects in Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, and other high-priority areas.

This presentation will give an overview of Pocket Archive and of the audiences and use cases it can serve. It will provide a current status report and encourage collaboration initiatives.

Dr. Rui da Silva, Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research

Higher education in times of conflict: Mapping the Research Terrain and the Conditions of Knowledge Production

Higher education in conflict-affected contexts has received growing attention in recent years, yet the available knowledge remains fragmented and unevenly distributed across contexts, institutions and research traditions. This paper maps 50 years of academic research on higher education and conflict through a systematic review of 85 peer-reviewed publications identified across seven academic databases and four languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese).

Combining descriptive analysis and social network analysis, we examine the evolution of the literature, the countries and institutions involved in its production, patterns of collaboration, the contexts most frequently studied, and the thematic and methodological structure of the field.

Findings point to a marked increase in publications since 2019, with particular attention to Syria, Afghanistan and Palestine. The analysis also shows uneven geographies of knowledge production and collaboration, with the United Kingdom occupying a central position in international co-authorship networks. Most studies are located within comparative and international education and development, rely predominantly on qualitative approaches, and are organised around themes such as education in emergencies, conflict, peacebuilding and displacement.

The paper argues that higher education remains a relatively marginal, although increasingly visible, concern within education and conflict research. The work provides a more complex view of the role of higher education in the scope of education in conflict, international 'development' and emergencies.

This presentation draws on an article published in Globalisation, Societies and Education, Volume 24, Issue 1 (2026), as part of the special issue "Supporting and learning from universities in times of conflict: Towards resilience and resistance in higher education.

Mrs. Ghada Dimashk, American University of Beirut

Before Knowledge Can Be Open, It Must Survive: Archives, Metadata, and Community Custody as Research Infrastructure in Times of War

Open Science is not resilient simply because its outputs are accessible. It becomes resilient only when the communities that produce the evidence retain power over what survives, how it is named, and who can retrieve it. Palestinian archival history shows what happens when that power is lost. In 1948, thousands of seized Palestinian books were absorbed into Israeli collections and recatalogued as "Abandoned Property"; in 1982, Israeli forces removed the Palestine Research Center's archive from Beirut and later returned it incomplete. In both cases, survival, description, and custody were determined by the institution that controlled the material.

This presentation argues that the same three-part struggle—survival, naming, and custody—now shapes the preservation of Arab crisis documentation. It draws on the Lebanon War Archive, a multi-platform social-media archive developed since October 2023 to document war, displacement, destruction, relief work, and everyday life in Lebanon. Here, survival is threatened by deletion, account suspension, platform instability, and opaque moderation systems, making capture an urgent component of research continuity rather than a task that can wait until conflict ends.

Naming is examined through a retrieval test across the Library of Congress, the Institute for Palestine Studies, and the American University of Beirut. The test demonstrates how authorized vocabularies can distort, disperse, or erase historical experience, including the inadequate description of Palestinian forced-labor camps through the generic heading "Labor camps." Custody is addressed through community-governed and auditable preservation practices.

The paper argues that consent, contextual integrity, and controlled access are not barriers to openness, but conditions of trustworthy Open Science. Libraries, archives, metadata systems, and community repositories must therefore be recognized as core research infrastructure. Those who control what survives, what it is called, and who can retrieve it shape the evidentiary foundation of future research.

Dr. Issam El Birch, Ibn Tofail University

Open Science Against Misinformation in the Arab World

Humanitarian crises such as armed conflicts, pandemics, and economic instability are often accompanied by an “information crisis” marked by misinformation, disinformation, and declining public trust in science. In the Arab world, these challenges are further intensified by unequal access to scientific knowledge, language barriers, and limited visibility of regional research. This conceptual paper explores how open science can serve as a strategic response to misinformation by promoting transparency, accessibility, and collaboration in scientific research. Drawing on literature from science communication, crisis communication, and higher education, it argues that practices such as open access publishing, open data, transparent research methods, and multilingual dissemination can strengthen the credibility and societal impact of research while supporting evidence-based decision-making during times of crisis. The paper further contends that the success of open science depends not only on institutional policies and digital infrastructures but also on researchers’ ability to communicate scientific evidence clearly to policymakers, journalists, and the public. By positioning communication as a cornerstone of research resilience, the paper highlights the potential of open science to foster public trust, combat misinformation, and reinforce resilient research ecosystems across the Arab world during periods of crisis and recovery.

Prof. Khaled Elhalaby, Arab Institution of Knowledge Management

From the Cost of Knowledge to the Sustainability of Knowledge: Toward a Sustainable Economic Model for Open Science in Arab Information Institutions

This research examines the transition from the logic of the "cost of knowledge," which has governed the relationship between Arab information institutions and commercial publishers for decades, to the logic of "knowledge sustainability" advocated by the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. It is based on the premise that open access cannot be sustainable if it relies on shifting the financial burden from readers to authors or on temporary project-based funding that does not ensure the continuity of infrastructure.

The study analyses the economic costs of two models for providing access to scholarly knowledge: the traditional model, based on journal and database subscriptions, and the Open Science model in its broader dimensions, including open access, open data, open infrastructure for archiving and publishing, and open peer review. The research seeks to identify the direct and indirect costs associated with each model and determine which stakeholders ultimately bear these costs.

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, drawing on document analysis, available data, recent literature, and experiences from other countries. The research is expected to produce a preliminary comparative cost matrix for the two models, as well as identify the components of a proposed sustainable economic model and its potential funding sources. The findings are intended to contribute to guiding the policies of Arab information institutions toward the economic sustainability of Open Science.

Prof. Abdelrahman Farrag, Arab Community of Open Access (ACOA)

Open Science in Times of Crisis: Strengthening Research Resilience in the Arab Region

Research systems in several parts of the Arab Regin face growing challenges arising from crises, conflicts, and other forms of disruption that may interrupt the work of research institutions, damage scientific infrastructure, threaten research data and outputs, restrict access to scholarly resources, and disperse researchers and their collaborative networks. Under such conditions, open science should be considered not only as an approach to widening access to and participation in knowledge under normal circumstances, but also as a potential enabler of research resilience and knowledge continuity during times of crisis.

This paper explores the role of open science in strengthening the capacity of Arab research systems to prepare for crises, maintain research continuity during disruption, and support recovery and reconstruction in their aftermath. It examines key components of open science that are particularly relevant to research resilience, including open access, digital repositories, research data management and open data, open digital infrastructures, collaborative practices, and open research networks and communities. It also considers challenges that may constrain their effectiveness in the Arab context, including infrastructure limitations, resource constraints, uneven institutional capacities and policies, and risks to the preservation and continued accessibility of research data and outputs.

The paper proposes a conceptual framework for open-science-enabled research resilience in the Arab Regin, connecting open science practices and infrastructures with three interrelated stages of crisis management: preparedness, continuity, and recovery and reconstruction. It argues that open science can move beyond its conventional role in expanding access to knowledge to become part of a strategic infrastructure for research resilience, helping to safeguard scholarly memory, sustain access to knowledge and research data, maintain connections among researchers and institutions, and support the rebuilding of Arab research systems following crises.

Ms. Janaan Farhat, Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research

Between Choice and Constraint: Family Resilience in Alternative and Interrupted Education

Education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is characterized by high levels of school participation, but questions around equitable access and inclusion remain, particularly for children navigating non-state education or experiencing periods outside formal schooling (Farhat, 2023; Farhat & Mansur, 2023; Ridge, Dingus, & Erfurth, 2022). Some children also learn outside mainstream schooling by choice, including through homeschooling (Farhat, 2024). These experiences can happen for very different reasons, from families choosing to homeschool to financial, administrative, legal, or social barriers that prevent children from remaining enrolled in school.

Drawing on two qualitative studies on homeschooling (Farhat, 2024) and out-of-school children in the UAE (Farhat & Almarzooqi, forthcoming), this presentation looks at how families try to sustain children's learning outside conventional schooling. Rather than treating these experiences as the same, it considers what we can learn by looking at them alongside one another, particularly around adaptation, educational continuity, agency, and resilience.

Across both studies, families took on greater responsibility for children's learning, adapted learning environments, relied on family and community networks, and explored alternative educational pathways. For homeschooling families, this was often linked to flexibility, greater parental involvement, and responding to children's individual needs. For families with out-of-school children, these strategies were more often shaped by financial hardship, unpaid school fees, administrative barriers, and limited access to affordable schooling. Together, the findings highlight both the possibilities and limits of family-led responses to educational disruption, and what these experiences reveal about resilience, access, and inequality in the UAE education system.

Dr. Gali Halevi, CLOCKSS

Preserving Knowledge in Challenging Landscapes: Digital Preservation as a Foundation for Resilient and Autonomous Research Systems

Research infrastructures are increasingly expected to remain resilient in the face of political instability, conflict, economic pressures, technological change, and disruptions to physical and digital infrastructure. Yet resilience is not only about keeping research systems operational. It is also about ensuring that the knowledge produced within these systems remains accessible, trustworthy, and part of the scholarly record over time.

This presentation will explore the role of digital preservation in strengthening the resilience and autonomy of research and higher education systems, with particular attention to scholarly publishing in Africa and other challenging landscapes. Drawing on the experience of CLOCKSS, a community-governed, geographically distributed digital preservation service, the presentation will examine how distributed preservation can help institutions protect their scholarly output from disruption, loss, technological obsolescence, and changes in publishing infrastructure.

The presentation will consider digital preservation not simply as a technical activity, but as an important component of research infrastructure and knowledge sovereignty. When institutions preserve their own scholarly contributions through trusted, independent infrastructure, they strengthen their ability to maintain access to knowledge regardless of changes affecting individual publishers, platforms, institutions, or national infrastructures.

Particular attention will be given to the importance of including institutions from regions that have historically been underrepresented in global preservation initiatives. Recent CLOCKSS collaborations with African universities and university presses demonstrate how expanding preservation networks can contribute to a more inclusive and representative global scholarly record.

The presentation will also explore the relationship between preservation, open science, and resilience: open access can make knowledge available today, but preservation ensures that it remains available tomorrow. Ultimately, the presentation will argue that digital preservation should be considered a core element of resilient research infrastructure and an essential investment in the long-term autonomy, continuity, and diversity of global scholarly communication.

Dr. Jamel Eddine Henchiri, RED Laboratory

The Role of Open Scientific Publications in Research Resilience: A Diamond Open Access Journal in the Arab World

Following a historical and bibliometric overview of the Journal of Academic Finance—covering its origins and objectives—I will examine in detail the various aspects of managing this free, open-access journal, which has been successfully publishing on a regular basis for 17 years. I will focus particularly on the obstacles encountered and conclude with recommendations based on shared experiences.

Dr. Douaa Mugahid, Harvard School of Public Health

Power in Numbers, Protection by Design: Aligning responsible Health-Data Governance with public health research needs in MENA

Health data is growing faster than our rules for using it. A single hospital visit now generates structured records, imaging, lab values, prescriptions, and increasingly genomic and wearable data, and countries with mature digital infrastructure are linking these across whole populations. Abu Dhabi's Malaffi exchange, launched in 2019, already holds records for nearly all of the emirate's hospital patients and connects nationally through Riayati and NABIDH. This matters for research, not only bedside care since disease biology and population health are learned from many patients at once.Aggregate patient data enables research that informs public health policy and health technology development. This makes individual health data records an invaluable societal as well as an individual asset, and managing it to allow long-term usability for personal and public health use is essential. Yet many patient privacy laws were written with the aim of protecting individual patients' privacy, often, while restraining the usability of patient records for public health applications.

In this talk, we re-imagine how health data is governed within healthcare systems fit for the digital health age. We compare the UAE Health Data Space (Federal Law No. 2 of 2019, ie: the Health ICT Law) to both The European Health Data Space (Regulation (EU) 2025/327, in force since March 2025) and the United State's patchwork framework of HIPAA, state law, and private agreements.

We provide recommendations that help strengthen the UAE's health-data governance framework to allow both responsible public health research and respect patient privacy. We argue that this is particularly important in today's world, since MENA populations remain underrepresented in the datasets that generate global medical evidence, so findings may not fit local disease profiles. We argue that building sovereign, well-governed, openly usable health-data systems is essential for health system resilience in the region.

Dr. Bindhu Nair, RCSI-Bahrain

Access Without Walls: Sustaining Research and Knowledge Access During Regional Disruption at RCSI Bahrain

Background:

During the recent period of regional disruption, RCSI Bahrain temporarily shifted university operations online. This created an immediate need to maintain access to scholarly information and continue supporting students, faculty, and researchers without reliance on the physical Library environment. The experience provides an opportunity to present a practical Library-focused case study examining how digital access, remote research support, online teaching, and electronic resources helped sustain academic and research activity during a period of disruption. The proposed case study would focus specifically on the role of the RCSI Bahrain Library in maintaining continuity of knowledge access and research support, while also reflecting on how Open Access and digitally accessible scholarly resources can contribute to institutional resilience.

Aim:

To explore how the RCSI Bahrain Library maintained access to scholarly information and research support during a period of regional disruption and temporary campus closure.

Objectives:

The case study would aim to:

Examine how Library and research-support services were adapted and maintained during the transition to remote university operations.
Identify the digital resources, services, and support mechanisms that enabled continued access to scholarly information and research assistance.
Explore the contribution of Open Access and digitally accessible scholarly resources to continuity of knowledge access during disruption.
Identify challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for strengthening Library preparedness and resilience during future disruptions.”

Dr. Anna Walek, OAPEN

From Access to Agency: Open Access Books as a Catalyst for Knowledge Equity and Research Resilience in the Arab World

Despite significant investments in higher education and research across parts of the Arab world, access to scholarly books and educational resources remains uneven. For many institutions in lower-income countries and regions affected by economic or political instability, the cost of acquiring academic literature is compounded by logistical barriers, where shipping and distribution expenses can exceed the cost of the books themselves. As a result, access to knowledge continues to depend on geography and financial capacity.

This presentation explores how Open Access books can help address these inequalities and contribute to a more resilient and collaborative Arab research and education ecosystem. Drawing on experiences from OAPEN and the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), it examines how regional cooperation among publishers, libraries, universities, funders, and organisations such as ALECSO could expand access to scholarly content while strengthening the global visibility of research produced in the Arab world.

Particular attention will be given to the strategic importance of Arabic-language scholarship. Open dissemination not only removes barriers to access but also increases the discoverability of Arabic research, supports bibliodiversity, and ensures that local knowledge and perspectives are represented in emerging AI-driven knowledge systems. As artificial intelligence increasingly relies on openly available content, creating sustainable pathways for Arabic-language books and educational resources to become part of the global scholarly commons is both a cultural and a strategic imperative.

The presentation argues that Open Access should be viewed not only as a publishing model, but as a mechanism for resilience, equity, regional solidarity, and long-term knowledge preservation across the Arab world.

WORKSHOP

Dr. Firas Al Laban, University of Potsdam
Mr. Jan Bernoth, University of Potsdam

Promoting Shared Understanding and Global Pathways for Open Science

Aligning open science services with institutional policies, strategic and governance objectives is extremely important in order to strengthen national resilience and develop international engagement opportunities. This 2-hour interactive workshop will initially identify challenges within the regional research environment. It will explore how open science policy and institutional strategies can strengthen the resilience of research in emerging research environments internationally.

The workshop activities will give participants the opportunity to:

- Discuss how researchers and academics can effectively participate in shaping open science policy and identifying institutional and regional priorities.
- Explore global policy developments for international collaboration and engagement.
- Examine how international initiatives can reduce barriers, bridge gaps and foster sustainable research collaboration.
- Co-create actionable components of an open science roadmap by synthesizing insights from showcased institutional examples.

The workshop provides a space for researchers and academics to engage in policy and strategic discussions that enable them to:

- Identify institutional needs and regional priorities for fostering open science policies.
- Engage with international initiatives and explore the benefits.
- Develop approaches for international collaboration and knowledge exchange.

The workshop is particularly aimed at:

- Researchers and academics
- Policymakers and open science advocates
- Research infrastructure providers

Participants are encouraged to bring examples and insights from their local institutions regarding open science policies, priorities and key barriers.

F.O.R.M.

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