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UCT launches groundbreaking multilingual book on social justice in higher education



UCT has added another milestone in its efforts for free access and inclusivity in scholarship.
Photo: Lerato Maduna

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has published a new open-access book that places inclusivity, transformation and access at the centre of higher education. The book, titled *Advancing Social Justice Through Curriculum Realignment: Centring Scholarly Communication in LIS Curricula*, challenges traditional barriers to knowledge sharing by making cutting-edge scholarship freely available in four languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and Setswana.

Edited by Dr Andiswa Mfengu, head of the [Department of Knowledge and Information Stewardship \(DKIS\)](#) and Dr Reggie Raju, director of Research and Learning at UCT Libraries, the book draws from the Library and Information Science (LIS) track of the 2nd Global Summit on Diamond Open Access, held at UCT in December 2024. It combines 19 essays by 23 contributors from Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America and Australasia, offering a global perspective on social justice in education and research.

"This book is more than pages and print. It is a vehicle of inclusion, a tool of transformation, and a loud, proud step toward UCT's vision: a future that is accessible, inclusive and deeply rooted in social justice," said Professor Brandon Collier-Reed, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning.

Expanding access and breaking down barriers

Professor Collier-Reed noted that publishing the book in open access removes barriers between universities and society. "It bridges the gap between the perception of universities as ivory towers and the communities we serve. It affirms that knowledge must not only be created for the privileged few but must circulate in every classroom, community and country that can benefit from it."

He added that the multilingual format reflects UCT's transformative agenda. "As a university with three official languages, English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans, this multilingualism reflects our inclusivity goals. Accessibility, inclusivity, multilingualism and transformation are not optional add-ons. They are foundational principles that must guide every publication that bears the iconic UCT name."

A collaborative project

For Dr Mfengu, the initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration and inclusivity. "This collection interrogates the concepts of social justice within the LIS disciplinary framework and examines the relationship between scholarly communication, decolonisation and research impact."

She paid tribute to the authors, peer reviewers, conference partners and UCT Libraries Press who contributed to the project. "The academy thrives on rigorous inquiry and critical engagement. This book reflects those values while also extending the conversation to students, practitioners and communities."

Professor Shose Kessi, Dean of [Humanities](#), emphasised the significance of publishing in multiple languages. "By publishing in multiple languages and open access, you are putting into action the very meaning of decolonisation in knowledge production. You are amplifying voices that have been historically marginalised and expanding the circle of contributors to global scholarship."

Professor Kessi described the book as an example of epistemic justice. "This work not only interrogates existing systems but also dismantles colonial knowledge structures by promoting epistemic diversity. It is a reminder that diversity in politics, academia and society is our strength."

A milestone for UCT Libraries Press

The publication also marks a turning point for UCT Libraries Press, which oversaw the entire publishing process for the first time, from peer review to final production. The achievement

positions UCT as a leader in shaping global conversations around open access, multilingualism and transformation.

"May this book travel far," Collier-Reed said in closing. "May it teach boldly. And may it help build the inclusive future that UCT is striving for, page by powerful page."

Story by Myolisi Gophe, UCT News.

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