

The impact of decentralised alternatives libraries on campaigning for replacement

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Abstract

Libraries of alternatives offer hands-on experience of non-animal teaching and training tools. They enable borrowers to assess products and become familiarised with the range of alternatives available. InterNICHE established the first international alternatives library, known as the Alternatives Loan System, in 2002. It comprises a wide range of software, models, mannekins and training devices chosen for their pedagogical value and potential for replacement. The alternatives cover all disciplines within medicine, veterinary medicine and biology. Borrowers range from teachers through ethics committees to campaigners. The library makes alternatives more accessible and provides a resource for conferences, exhibitions, outreach tours and training. The loans have facilitated implementation, as demonstrated by subsequent purchase and use of alternatives, and replacement of dissections and animal experiments. The positive impact of the resource and the growth and capacity of the InterNICHE network led to the establishment of further libraries in Russia, Ukraine, India, Mexico, Peru, Kenya and South Africa. Each resource has brought the benefits of the international library to the country, with further advantages. Being localised, it is more practical and economic, facilitating significantly increased access. Being managed by the InterNICHE National Contact or Partner, it empowers through new responsibilities; and with an important resource to offer, it strengthens their position nationally. Reflecting further decentralisation and provision of localised resources, each InterNICHE National Contact and Partner across the world has a set of 30 software alternatives. This equips even more campaigners with small but valuable software libraries that complement the Alternative Loan Systems.

Introduction

Libraries of alternatives offer hands-on experience of non-animal teaching and training tools. They enable borrowers to assess products and become familiarised with the range of alternatives available. InterNICHE established the first international alternatives library, known as the InterNICHE Alternatives Loan System, in 2002. It comprises a wide range of software, models, mannekins and training simulators chosen for their pedagogical value and potential for replacement. The loans have facilitated implementation. The alternatives cover all disciplines within medicine, veterinary medicine and biology. Subject to strict conditions, items are free to borrow.

Impact of the Alternatives Loan System

Hundreds of loans comprising thousands of individual usages of alternatives have been made to borrowers ranging from teachers and ethics committees to students and campaigners. The library also provides a resource for conferences, exhibitions, outreach and training. The loans have facilitated implementation, as demonstrated by subsequent purchase of alternatives and replacement of dissections and animal experiments.

Extending the resource

The positive impact of the resource and the growing capacity and range of the InterNICHE network has led to the establishment of further Alternatives Loan Systems in Russia, Ukraine, India, Mexico, Peru, Kenya and South Africa.



Former Indian Minister of State, Jairam Ramesh, trialing items from the InterNICHE Indian Alternatives Loan System, New Delhi, Jan 2010

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Conclusion

The establishment of the Alternatives Loan System had a direct and positive impact on access to alternatives and their implementation internationally. Extending it to a network of libraries has provided an important decentralised resource to further catalyse replacement of harmful animal use and to develop capacity.

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References

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