

AuthorAID Workshop on Proposal Writing

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The Literature Review: A Foundation for a Proposal

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Some Reasons to Search the Literature When Writing a Proposal

- To help determine and document the need for what is being proposed
- To help see what work already has been done and thus what remains to be done
- To identify approaches to consider using in the proposed work
- To see what funding sources others used
- Other

Some General Suggestions

- If appropriate, use more than one database.
- Consider asking librarians for guidance.
- Keep good records of what you found, so you can easily cite it.
- Consider using reference management software (for example, EndNote, RefWorks, or Zotero).
- Accurately present the cited content. (Note: Your peer reviewers are likely to know the literature. And they might be the authors of some of the works cited.)

Accessing Relevant Literature

- Many articles—even in journals that are not fully open access—are openly accessible through journal websites.
- Resources from INASP increase developing-country libraries' access to journal content.
- Articles of interest sometimes can be found in institutional and other repositories.
- Authors' websites sometimes contain articles or links to them.

If all else fails . . .

- If you want a paper or chapter but can't obtain it a usual way, perhaps contact the author. Many authors are willing to share copies of their work.
- Also consider contacting the journal editor. Editors of small journals might be especially willing to help.
- If you still can't obtain the item, consider contacting an international colleague who might have access to it. For example, an AuthorAID mentor might be able to help.

Discussion Questions

- For librarians:
 - What advice do you have on searching the literature when preparing to write a proposal?
 - What main resources would you recommend to people doing so?
- For other attendees:
 - What ideas and questions do you have about searching the literature in preparation to write a proposal?

A Few Examples of Resources

- African Journals OnLine (AJOL): <http://www.ajol.info>
- Other “Journals Online” Collections: see <http://www.inasp.info/file/4fd988568504d4bcfa2f4cd855a07d45/jols.html>
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): <http://www.doaj.org>
- Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.com>
- PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>

Thank you!