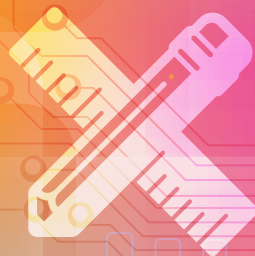




United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Open Educational Resources Programme



Open educational resources (OER) are any type of educational materials in the public domain, or released with an open license, that allows users to legally and freely use, copy, adapt, and re-share.

Policy Guidelines – The UNESCO/COL Guidelines on Open Educational Resources in Higher Education outlines key issues and suggestions for integrating OER into higher education to support quality teaching and learning. The aim of this Secretariat document is to encourage educational stakeholders to invest in the production, adaptation, and use of OER, and to improve the quality of curricula and teaching. This document targets the following five stakeholder groups:

- > Governments
- > Higher Education institutions
- > Teaching staff
- > Students and student bodies
- > Quality assurance, Accreditation, and Academic recognition authorities



Publications – UNESCO creates and extensively distributes general and specialized publications on OER to promote the concept, facts and information related to UNESCO's OER programme. The UNESCO Publication "Open Educational Resources, Conversation in Cyberspace" was the 1st UNESCO publication to be released with an open-license from Creative Commons. The latest OER publication is the *UNESCO/ Commonwealth of Learning Guidelines on Open Educational Resources in Higher Education*.



Events – UNESCO organizes global, regional, and national events including major standard-setting conferences and capacity-building workshops to promote OER. The term open educational resources was created at a UNESCO Forum in 2002. To mark the 10th anniversary of this landmark conference, UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning will be organizing the 2012 World OER Congress in June 2012 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

2012 World Open Educational Resources Congress 20-22 June 2012 / UNESCO

Objectives of the Congress

Through the generous support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and in full partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), UNESCO proposes to organize a World OER Congress to:

- > Showcase the world's best practices in OER policies, initiatives, and experts; and
- > Release a 2012 Paris OER Declaration calling on Governments to support the development and use of OERs
- > Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the 2002 UNESCO Forum that created the term OER;

Lead-up Policy Forums and the International Advisory Liaison Group

UNESCO and COL will be organizing lead-up Policy Forums in Africa, Arab States, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific regions. An International Advisory Liaison Group of Government, IGO, and NGO representatives will be formed to advise on the Congress and the Declaration.

The term Open Educational Resources (OER) was created at the 2002 UNESCO Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries.

Partnerships and global focus – UNESCO is a global organization with Headquarters in Paris, France and a worldwide network of 52 field offices. The OER Programme benefits from a multidisciplinary perspective through work with our Freedom of Expression and Media Development Division programmes in the Communication and Information Sector and other UNESCO sectors: Education, Natural Sciences, Culture, and Social and Human Sciences. The Organization works with a wide range of other partners including:

- Governments
- United Nations system
- Intergovernmental organizations
- Private sector
- Non-governmental organizations
- National institutions.

UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning launched the initiative: Taking OER beyond the OER Community: Policy and Capacity. This initiative was financed with extrabudgetary funds from the Government of the United States, and UNESCO regular programme funds, and the Commonwealth of Learning.

The UNESCO/COL Guidelines on OER in Higher Education were the result of this partnership. UNESCO and COL will also be responsible for organizing the 2012 World OER Congress.

UNESCO is also a participating member of the global consortium planning for the inaugural Open Education Week in March 2012.

In partnership with key European institutions, UNESCO is a member of the Open Educational Quality Initiative (OPAL) to develop a Framework of OER Practices that improve quality and innovation in education.

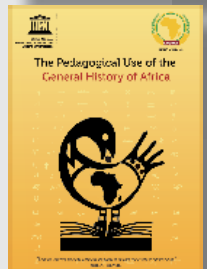
OER Platform – The UNESCO OER Platform is a new, online Platform offering selected UNESCO publications as OERs allowing global communities of practice including teachers, learners, and education professionals to freely copy, adapt, and share their resources.

The 1st UNESCO publication to be made available as an OER is the UNESCO *Model Curricula for Journalism Education* with adaptations by the Polytechnic of Namibia and University of Namibia.

UNESCO will continue to upload new publications to the Platform. For 2012, work has commenced on the UNESCO *Media and Information Literacy Curricula from the Communication and Information Sector and the General History of Africa Curricula* from the Culture Sector.

With the generous support of the Government of the United States of America, the Platform was developed by the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa within the *African Virtual Open Initiatives and Resources (AVOIR) Consortium* comprising of 11 African universities.

<http://www.oerplatform.org>

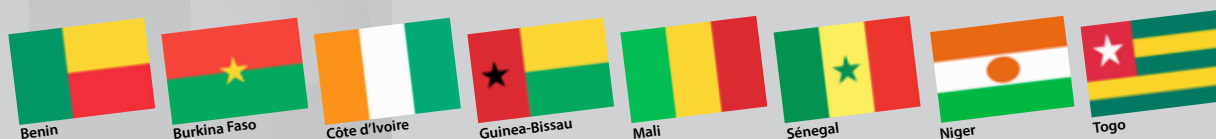


Projects – The UNESCO OER Programme undertakes very large OER Projects in Member States to develop enabling policy frameworks, dynamic and viable OER systems, and extensive capacity-building programmes.

UEMOA Higher Education Project – The Project aims to support an ongoing reform of higher education in the member states of the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA) including: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Mali, Senegal and Togo.

- The UNESCO OER Programme will be contributing to the following expected results:
- OER Policies developed at regional, national, and institutional levels;
- Localized version of UNESCO OER Platform deployed across 8 UEMOA universities with shared and unique courses allowing all other UEMOA and global universities to access, copy, and adapt the learning materials;

- Teachers and learners familiar with using and creating dynamic OERs;
- Large number of available OER courses highlighting Gender Equality or the contribution of women to the field of OERs;
- Large number of available OERs focusing on economic development for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as well as in indigenous languages
- Partnerships established with significant global recognition opportunities between the UEMOA universities and Francophone universities worldwide based on the sharing of unique West African OERs



OER in CIS – The “OER in CIS gateway” was designed by the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) as a part of IITE OER project to facilitate access to open educational resources produced in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The gateway enables easy search of educational content developed for primary and secondary schools, technical and vocational schools and universities in the national languages of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Works are underway to expand the gateway beyond the CIS to other non-English-speaking countries.



<http://iite.unesco.org/oer/>

Due to their 'open' nature, OERs provide Member States with a strategic opportunity to improve the quality of education as well as facilitate policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

OER Community on the WSIS KC –

the OER Community on the WSIS 'KC' (knowledge communities platform) with over 1,600 members is the world's largest global online community of practice committed to supporting the Education for All and MDGs through open educational resources.

The Community offers members a large number of features including:

- > news announcements,
- > web and e-mail discussions,
- > blogs,
- > photo, video and file sharing,
- > and a new Oxford-style Debate function developed by UNESCO

The WSIS KC is based on the free and open-source ELGG social network system and is currently available in:

1. Chinese (through the Creative Commons Mainland China Project)
2. Portuguese (through the Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
3. English
4. French
5. Spanish

www.wsis-community.org



OER Expert Network – To be formed in early 2012, the purpose of the UNESCO OER Expert Network is to provide guidance to the UNESCO OER Programme. The Network will be comprised of world-leading OER experts who will be invited to a special 1-day annual Symposium that will be attached to UNESCO events.

OER Research Chairs – The UNESCO Chair network was established with the aim of promoting interuniversity cooperation, while emphasizing the transfer of knowledge between universities and the promotion of academic solidarity across the world.

- > The OER Research Chairs have 2 functions:
- > Think tanks producing research on the impact of OERs
- > Bridge builders using OER research to link the academic world, civil society, local communities, research and policy-making.

In 2011, there are OER Research Chairs at:

- > Athabasca University, Canada
- > Open University of the Netherlands, Netherlands

The goal of the UNESCO OER Programme is to increase the number of OER Chairs especially from developing countries.



“I am still learning.”
Michelangelo



www.unesco.org/webworld/en/oer

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ICT in Education, Science and Culture Section

Knowledge Societies Division

Communication and Information (CI) Sector