Draft Policy Recommendations - Addendum

Enabling Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Europe through OER

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Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide background information for the LangOER Policy Recommendations. <To be further drafted when content is stable.>

Introduction

Lesser Used Languages (LUL) are the special focus of the LangOER project. In the context of LangOER, the definition of LUL encompasses endangered languages, regional and minority languages (approximately 10% of

Europe's population) and small state languages. Open Educational Resources hold out the promise of supporting the teaching and learning of these languages in Europe and consequently inclusion and quality education for all. Enabling LUL communities to actively take up OERs can generate a number of welcome transformations that include "the change of mindset towards teaching and learning methodology; new channels to obtain education; and opportunities for knowledge sharing[1]."

However, even as the number of policy proposals to support OER uptake have grown and the benefits are more widely recognized, thus far there have been only sporadic efforts to explicitly address the opportunities and challenges of OER policies aimed at European LUL communities[2].

Against this background, LangOER conference participants will debate a draft of policy recommendations on how different stakeholders could take concrete actions that enable LUL communities to actively develop, exchange and take up OERs.

Open Educational Resources and Open Educational Practices

UNESCO defines OER as "Teaching and learning resources in any medium, digital or otherwise, that permit no-cost access, use, reuse and repurposing by others with no or limited restrictions"[3].

A more elaborate and widely used definition, known as the five Rs comes from OER evangelist, David Wiley[4]. OERs allow learners and educators to:

- **Retain** – i.e. no digital rights management restrictions (DRM), the content is yours to keep, whether you're the author, instructor or student.
- **Reuse** – you are free to use materials in a wide variety of ways without expressly asking permission of the copyright holder.
- **Revise** – as an educator, you can adapt, adjust, or modify the content to suit specific purposes and make the materials more relevant to your students. This means making it available in a number of different formats and including source files, where possible.
- **Remix** – you or your students can pull together a number of different resources to create something new.
- **Redistribute** – you are free to share with others, so they can reuse, remix, improve upon, correct, review or otherwise enjoy your work.

When using the term OER, we mean **all aspects of OER**: the production, quality assurance, uptake and use, reuse and learning cultures related to OER.

Why OER – and why OER in Lesser Used Languages?

OERs and Open Educational Practices are relevant for all sectors and levels of education in Lesser Used Languages, and especially in the case of endangered languages and Regional and Minority Languages. For those languages, OER/OEP are particularly relevant simply because of these communities of speakers are relatively small in number, they typically lack financial resources, they often encounter a dearth of learning materials, etc. These conditions explain the current urgent need for teaching materials, skilled teachers,

1 UNESCO, 2016, p. 228. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244365e.pdf
2 https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/OER_Policy_Registry
3 Cape Town Declaration, 2007; UNESCO, 2012; Creative Commons, n.d. a; William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, n.d. quoted in in Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation. Miao, Fengchun; Mishra, Sanjaya and McGrea, Rory, eds. (UNESCO, France: 2016), p. 1. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244365e.pdf
4 https://www.opencontent.org/definition/

teacher support and new ways of teaching. The viability of many languages in Europe will, today and in the future, depend on the possibilities created by new technical and digital developments.[5]

Lesser Used Languages communities are common across Europe. Most European countries' populations are speakers of LUL as their national language (as opposed to dominant world languages such as English). Examples of LUL national languages include Estonian, Norwegian and Romanian. There are also many examples of European states that encompass one or more Less Used Language communities. Examples of these language communities include Frisian, Manx or Sorbian located within a nation-state border or small cross border languages, such as Sami, Basque or Gaelic.

The policy recommendations are designed for audiences representing different levels having distinct roles and responsibilities for OER:

- The EU level
- Nation states
- Regions
- Institutions
- Lesser Used Language communities

The direct benefits from OER are considered to be:

- **Economic savings** – massive cost reduction for educational materials, in particular for students
- **Higher quality of learning material -** easier to update (relevance), diversify and contextualize when open licenced
- **Easier to work with** in daily education - one does not have to observe complicated copyright rules when copying and distributing materials
- **Support 21st century skills** – in particular digital skills, but also collaboration on content, creative and critical thinking in revising and remixing materials and social innovation
- Public funded materials are made broadly available for **public benefit**
- **Opportunities for the EdTech** industry to provide solutions, products and services that maximise the benefits from OER
- **Better return on investment in education**

Open licensing also sends a strong signal for supporting the new Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030: "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning."[6].

Martin Weller, an OER expert, argued in 2016 that OER deliver:

- As good if not better performance
- Increased retention
- Savings for students
- Pedagogical change[7]

In addition to the arguments valid for all languages, promotion of OER in Lesser Used Languages takes into account that:

- Learning in your **own language is most effective** and support the best outcome for learners

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5 For further on this see http://www.dldp.eu/content/project and http://www.meta-net.eu/whitepapers/overview
6 http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda/goal-4.html
7 Weller, Martin. "The Role of Policy in Open Ed", http://blog.edtechie.net/oer/the-role-of-policy-in-open-ed/

- Providing access to learning resources in LUL supports the goal of "inclusive and quality education for all" by making the best of OERs available to learners and practitioners who do not speak or read English, the predominant language of the OER movement at the present time.

We therefore argue that in a world where the uptake of OER is gaining momentum in in only some circumstances[8], decision makers on all levels must give **high priority to have OER in Lesser Used Languages** to defend and develop their citizens learning, creative and cultural capacities in Europe.

What are the barriers for OER?

Open education and OER are priorities under the umbrella of the Open Government Partnership (OGP).[9] OGP is a multilateral initiative which currently brings together 69 participating countries, NGOs and representatives from civil society in a collegial governance. While so many governments (among them many governments from nations with LUL) support the OGP and the benefits from OER are many and significant, why is the uptake still surprisingly low?

We will highlight five issues.

1. First and most important: while you have an education system based on policies favouring the existing protected copyrighted materials, rapid uptake of OER cannot happen without policies favorable for OER.

2. Awareness and understanding of OER is still low among decision makers in education.

3. There is resistance from publishers, policy-makers and teachers.[10]

4. Insufficient teacher support: teachers, and the those teaching the teachers, are key to success – and they need support for capacity building, guidance, and concrete tools for grasping the benefits from OER.

5. Finally, in the case of promoting the uptake of OERs for LUL there are a number of unique challenges and opportunities.

   Certain characteristic of nations and regions using lesser used languages are:

   - Smaller market, population
   - Less volume and variety of original learning resources
   - Often more expensive learning resources
   - Less distance between actors and levels
   - Clear, lucid communities – easy oversight and outreach
   - (Might be) Stronger rationale for governmental intervention
   - (Might be) More favorable conditions for bottom up OER initiatives for national consensus.

These conditions should be considered for increasing the chances for having success, e.g. having a good, holistic policy platform addressing all levels, a program for having teacher's success with OER is easier to implement, oversight and maintenance of national resources easier to conduct, having consensus on implementation for targeted groups should be easier to achieve etc.

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8 http://www.hewlett.org/sites/default/files/Open_Educational_Resources_December_2015.pdf
9 http://www.opengovpartnership.org/
10 Kanwar, Asha "Foreword by the President and CEO, Commonwealth of Learning" in Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation. Miao, Fengchun; Mishra, Sanjaya and McGrea, Rory, eds. (UNESCO, France: 2016), p. vi

When implementing and sustaining OER, there is a number of challenges that need to be met and addressed through sound policies such as:

- Producing, collecting and opening up available resources/repositories
- Access to the increasing resources
- Quality assurance of the resources
- Contextual, cultural and language adaptation of OERs
- Collaboration within and between initiatives
- Technology and solutions that make the use of OER flexible and easy for the users to use.

Many good examples exist on how to address those challenges, for example:

- OER for higher education have to be peer reviewed or approved as a part of curricula to be published in a quality repository
- Institutions collaborate to have easy access to quality OER repositories
- Institutions collaborate in producing and sharing quality OER for courses and programmes.

One should also take note that other, contextual and local barriers might be encountered, for example weak digital skills by teachers and/or learners, and digital divide. It is necessary to address these kind of barriers with strategies for implementing OER.

State of play for OER in Lesser Used Languages

The LangOER project started in the beginning of 2014, and a desk study of the situation for OER in lesser used languages was the first action undertaken. Building on that, when drafting a policy brief,[11] the observation was that:

> At the national level, the landscape for most countries surveyed by the LangOER EU funded project[12] for quality OER in LUL is bleak if the strict OER definition of UNESCO is applied. However, there are some good examples of OER initiatives in Europe like Federica[13] in Italy, Periodica in Latvia (Latvian National Digital Library)[14], NDLA in Norway[15], Scholaris in Poland (most prominent example of state-funded OER platform)[16], RURA in France[17] and Wikiwijs in the Netherlands.[18]

On 11 April, 2016, the UNESCO Executive Board took an important decision supporting the establishment of an OER Normative instrument. UNESCO's Executive board, in its April 2016 document, *Support for the Establishment of a UNESCO Normative Instrument for Open Educational Resources (OER)*[19] has made the link between the needs of LUL communities and OERs potential very clear, stating that, the transformative educational potential of OER depends on:

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11 LangOER publications & reports. Policy Brief - Open Educational Resources in your Own Language, in your Way. (2014) LangOER consortium http://langoer.eun.org/

12 LangOER publications & reports. Open Educational Resources (OER) in less used languages: a state of the art report (2014) http://langoer.eun.org

13 http://www.federica.unina.it

14 http://www.periodika.lv

15 http://www.ndla.no

16 http://scholaris.pl

17 http://www.eul.education.fr/consultation/presentation/present/index.html

18 http://wikiwijsleermiddelenplein.nl

19 UNESCO Executive Board, «Support for the Establishment of a UNESCO Normative Instrument for Open Educational Resources (OER)», April 2016, p. 4: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002442/244241e.pdf
The first milestone will be the next global OER conference, organised by UNESCO in partnership with Commonwealth of Learning, hosted by Slovenia in September 2017.

- Improving the quality of learning materials through peer review processes;
- **Reaping the benefits of contextualization, personalization and localization [emphasis added];**
- Emphasizing openness and quality improvement;
- Building capacity for the creation and use of OER as part of the professional development of academic staff;
- Serving the needs of particular student populations such as those with special needs;
- Optimizing the deployment of institutional staff and budgets;
- **Serving students in local languages [emphasis added];**
- Involving students in the selection and adaptation of OER in order to engage them more actively in the learning process; and
- **Using locally developed materials with due acknowledgement [emphasis added].**

There have been a number of other significant developments since 2014.

- Several universities (in English speaking countries) have implemented OER based curricula up to the Bachelor level – some go up to the Master's level, e.g. Maryland University College, U.S.A. in 2015.[20]
- Several initiatives in North America have documented massive savings for students using OER textbooks, e.g. the Canadian initiative BC Open Textbook Project[21].
- Eleven states in the US are creating OER supporting K–12 subjects aligned with state learning standards.[22] In the US the estimate for K-12 textbooks is eight billion USD. The K-12 OER Collaborative estimates it can be done for thirty million USD.
- Leicester City Council is the first local authority in Europe to give blanket permission to employees at eighty-four community and voluntary controlled schools across the city to create open educational resources (OER), by sharing the learning materials they create under an open licence.[23]
- The alliance for The Global Book Fund[24] – targeting children globally, and (in the long term) all languages are now heading for implementing a massive initiative with support from a number of countries and organisations, a significant part based on an OER cloud solution.
- An extraordinary initiative has been built up by the eight virtual thematic universities in France. The Universités Numériques Thématiques (UNT) is supported by the French government. More than 34,000 quality assured open licensed educational resources have been collected over the span of ten years and are now made available through a search engine. Practically speaking, it means that any French student in all thematic areas can have bachelor and master degrees based on a curriculum from these freely available resources.[25]
- Bottom-up, community-driven initiatives of LUL speakers demonstrate how speakers who actively engage in digital practice can contribute to the linguistic and cultural expansion of their language and meet the challenges of open education. These types of initiatives can either a) be facilitated institutionally or b) be completely bottom-up, thus maintained and expanded by novice and more experienced open education advocates.
  - For the first category, this can be done through an institutionally (state or other) supported community of teachers working with OER and other types of content. Examples are KlasCement, the Flemish social network-like community of teachers, and the Greek i-participate platform enhancing teacher interaction around OER. However, despite their highly social and collaborative dimension, these kind of bottom-up initiatives face challenges such as the risk of waning engagement and lack of motivation in the long run.
  - For the second category, self-sustained communities such as the Khan Academy translators and reviewers or the TED Open Translation community expand content in a number of LUL.

20 https://globalmedia.umuc.edu/2015/08/27/embedded-digital-resources-are-in-traditional-texts-out-at-umuc/
21 https://bccampus.ca/
22 http://k12oercollaborative.org/about/members/
23 http://www.josiefraser.com/2016/03/oer-resources/
24 https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2016/02/08/books-for-every-child-the-global-book-fund/
25 http://www.sup-numerique.gouv.fr/pid33288/moteur-des-ressources-pedagogiques.html

In these types of bottom-up initiatives the question of long-term sustainability has yet to be addressed.
- Finally, communities of LUL speakers may benefit from examples of grassroots initiatives who form digitally enhanced communities for the sake of a shared goal.[26] The release and reuse of OER can be a common goal that will enhance cultural and linguistic diversity through crowdsourced action.

What about the development of OER in LUL?

- First an interesting, but not encouraging observation: the bold initiative for Opening up Education, taken up by the EU in 2013, seems to have lost momentum in 2016 – in contrast with global developments and in comparison, in particular, with North America.
- Second, what we observe from the LangOER project, is that most LUL countries in Europe are lagging when it comes to OER, in particular when it comes to holistic initiatives which in these countries seem to be totally absent.
- For regional and minority languages, the situation is even worse.
- While positive exceptions exist of OER uptake among European LUL communities the main picture is worse, relatively speaking, than in 2014.

Using the innovation adoption lifecycle[27] as an illustration, we place the positive examples from North America and France in the innovators and early adopters group – but most LUL countries in Europe unfortunately are in the laggards group.

This leads us to raise the following question:

Are most countries and regions in Europe, in particular those with LUL as languages, being sidelined in the one of the most innovative developments in education in modern times?
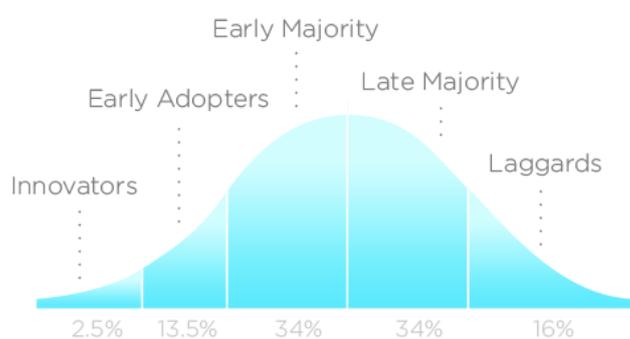
INNOVATION ADOPTION LIFECYCLE

If that is the case, those countries and regions choosing to delay implementation of OER supporting policies, could ultimately lose momentum on a number of other areas related to quality education, innovation in education and the future innovative workforce. One could also question how these countries can afford avoiding OER, and why they might be placing an unnecessary economic burden on students and their families. On top of that, a big group of laggards also contributes to the fragmentation of the market and slows down the overall effect of OER in society. Today, bold investments are needed to increase OER uptake beyond the tipping point.

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26 Examples of grassroots digital activism around endangered languages can be found here:
https://rising.globalvoices.org/lenguas/
27 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology_adoption_life_cycle

Other Relevant Policy Recommendations

In developing the proposed LangOER policy recommendations, we have reviewed a number of other relevant recommendations that have recently addressed the impact and promotion of OER in education. The recommendations presented below helped to frame the current draft although they do not encompass the question of LUL and regional languages.

Recommendations from - Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation

In a 2016 UNESCO publication framed as a "mid-term assessment of how countries and educational institutions have reacted to the Paris OER Declaration" the editors examined how policy initiatives around the world impacted the mainstreaming of OER since 2012 and asked what can be learned from this experience. [28]

Lessons learned from effective policies include:

1. Evidence-based approach to policy formulation helped adoption of OER in the institution. The ideology is that open research provides evidence for both open policy and open initiatives, and then open policy further supports open initiatives.
2. The need to foster a deep engagement with the stakeholders to demystify copyright and OER, continue advocacy efforts on a regular basis and work with the content developers and institutions for capacity building in OER.
3. Formatting an OER policy can have an impact on the education movement, but this depends heavily on the compatibility and maturation of the country's system and OER development.[29]

The publication called on "policymakers in national governments, intergovernmental agencies and donor agencies and foundations; and of OER developers and users" to pay attention to key actions areas including:

1. Promoting OER in technologically disadvantaged regions
2. Reinforcing training for teachers in producing and sharing OER
3. Promoting international collaboration to promote aligning the adoption of OER under the Education 2030 agenda
4. Designing sustainable funding and societal mechanisms to support OER operations
5. Analysing the impact of strengthening the research on OER to provide an evidence base for policy-making[30]

Recommendations from - The POERUP project evaluation of current OER policies in regards to the school sector published in 2014[31]

Communication and awareness raising

1. The Commission should clarify its position with regards to the abundance, or scarcity, of appropriate resources currently available and should communicate clearly this message.
2. The Commission should continue to promote to educational users (leaders, practitioners, students and guardians) the availability and accessibility of open resources created through its cultural sector programmes. The Commission should encourage and support Member States to promote these resources within the context of their sovereign educational aims and objectives.

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28 Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation. Miao, Fengchun; Mishra, Sanjaya and McGrea, Rory, eds. (UNESCO, France: 2016), p.231
29 UNESCO, Open Educational Resources, 2016, p. 226
30 UNESCO, Open Educational Resources, 2016, pp. 230-231
31 POERUP, "Policy Advice for OER Uptake in Schools." June, 2014.
http://www.poerup.info/resources/public%20deliverables/POERUP_D4.2S_Schools_v1.0.pdf

3. The Commission should encourage Member States to do likewise for their domestic cultural sector programmes, to make these available across the European Union and ensure that future programmes do not have unintended legal impairments to cross-border sharing.
4. Member States should promote (within the context of their sovereign educational aims and objectives) to educational users (leaders, practitioners, students and guardians) the availability and accessibility of open resources created through their respective cultural sector programmes.
5. The Commission should encourage Member States to promote the benefits of making resources available to schools (especially publicly funded schools and federations of schools *[and we would add: and schools in RML speaking regions]* under an appropriate open license.
6. Member States should promote to schools (especially publicly funded schools and federations of schools *[and we would add: and schools in RML speaking regions]* the benefits of making resources available under an appropriate open license.

Funding

7. Member States should ensure that budgets for digital educational resources are flexible enough to support the development (and maintenance) of openly licensed materials.

Copyright and licensing

8. The Commission should ensure that any public outputs from its programmes are made available as open resources under an appropriate license. (e.g. a Creative Commons open license - see http://creativecommons.org/licenses).
9. Member States should ensure that any public outputs from their respective national research and teaching development programmes are made available as open resources under an appropriate license (e.g. a Creative Commons open license- see http://creativecommons.org/licenses).

Quality and accessibility

10. The Commission should ensure that access and accessibility are central tenets of all its OER programmes and initiatives.
11. The Commission should seek to exploit its considerable investment in Repositories to help inform greater understanding of the success/fail factors behind OER Repositories and OER – particularly the influence of the various approaches to quality assurance.
12. Member States must require (within reasonable expectation) OER to meet (disability) accessibility standards and ensure that accessibility is a central tenet of all OER programmes and initiatives.
13. Where Member States have Quality Assurance or materials approval processes they should ensure that OER are allowed to be included on approved instructional materials lists.
14. Member States should consider establishing and funding an OER evaluation and adoption panel. This panel should include lead teachers, content experts and accessibility experts.
15. Member States could consider establishing a specialist OER function/post to undertake an in-country cost-benefit analysis to assess the potential savings (or otherwise) which might be achieved through implementing an OER strategy *[and we would add: for all their languages]*.

Continuing professional development

16. Member States should establish (and adequately fund) a professional development programme to help teachers and administrators understand the benefits and uses of OER and open licensing.

Infrastructure

17. The Commission should continue its focus on improving the ICT in education infrastructure in member states (and levelling out disparities of access) so that they are able to exploit potential pedagogical and financial advantages of OER.
18. Member States should continue their focus on improving the ICT in education infrastructure (and levelling out disparities of access) so that they are able to exploit potential pedagogical and financial advantages of OER.
19. Where Member States (or institutions) are providing digital devices they should ensure that all considerations have been taken to maximise the effectiveness (economically and pedagogically) of devices, support and strategy with regards to OER.

Further research

20. The Commission should develop its understanding of how new modes of learning (including online, distance, OER and MOOCs) impact on quality assurance and recognition.
21. The Commission should fund research into the verifiable benefits and disadvantages of OER, with greater efforts to integrate such analyses with its ongoing research on distance learning, on-campus online learning, and pedagogy; and recommend the same to Member States.
22. Future K-12 OER research should explicitly embrace Repositories, Federations, Portals and Tools and should consider off-campus learning (both institutional – virtual schools – and self-directed or home-tutor led).
23. Specifically, the Commission should support extant or future research which seeks to inform greater understanding of the success/fail factors behind OER Repositories and OER – particularly the influence of the various approaches to quality assurance.
24. The Commission should foster research into potentially sustainable business models for OER, [*and we would add: research on what needs to be done in order to sustain the linguistic diversity of Europe*], integrating this with its ongoing research on distance learning, on-campus online learning, and pedagogy; and recommend the same to Member States.
25. The Commission should explore the means by which closer, enduring collaboration can be fostered between Higher Education researchers and the schools sector with the objective of increasing the research evidence-base concerning K-12 OER and developing a culture of two-way discourse and sharing across the sectors

Recommendations from - The POERUP project aimed at shaping Commission policies related to the Higher Education sector[32]

Innovation – new institutions

1. Set up a competitive innovation fund to develop one new "European" university each year with a commitment to low-cost online education around a core proposition of open content. Accreditation of institutions – new accrediting bodies and mutual recognition
2. Foster the development of transnational accrediting agencies and mutual recognition of accreditations across the EU.
3. Reduce the regulatory barriers against new kinds of HE providers.

Quality agencies

4. Quality agencies in ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) should: develop their understanding of new modes of learning (including online, distance, OER and MOOCs) and how they impact quality assurance and recognition; engage in debates on copyright; consider the effects of these new modes on quality assurance and recognition; and ensure that there is no implicit non-evidence-based bias against these new modes when accrediting institutions both public and private including for-profit (if relevant), accrediting programmes (if relevant) and assessing/inspecting institutions/programmes.

Bologna-bis: competence-based not time-based assessment

5. The Commission and related authorities developing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) should reduce the regulatory barriers against new non-study-time-based modes of provision: in particular, by developing a successor to Bologna based primarily on competences gained not duration of study.

Assessment and accreditation of modules

6. Recommend to universities that they should work to improve and proceduralise their activity on APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) including the ability to accredit knowledge and competences developed through online study and informal learning, including but not restricted to OER and MOOCs, with a focus on admitting students with such accredited studies to the universities own further courses of study.

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32 POERUP, "Policy Advice for Universities." June 2014.
http://www.poerup.info/resources/public%20deliverables/POERUP_D4.2U_v1.0.pdf

7. Recommend to the larger Member States that they should each set up an Open Accreditor to accredit studies which could lead to an undergraduate degree.

Funding mechanisms for institutions and content

8. Foster work into standardised syllabi EU-wide for undergraduate degrees in certain professions (e.g. medicine, nursing, mathematics, IS/IT) where this is appropriate for EU-wide action, and in the light of a successful outcome to such initiatives, foster the developments of common bases of OER material to support these standards, including relevant open repositories and (ideally jointly with publishers) open textbooks.
9. Ensure that any public outputs from its programmes (specifically including Erasmus for All and Framework) are made available as open resources under an appropriate license.
10. Encourage Member States to do likewise for their national research and teaching development programmes, including for the public funding component of university teaching.
11. Encourage Member States to increase their scrutiny of the cost basis for university teaching and consider the benefits of output-based funding for qualifications.

IPR issues

12. Adopt and recommend a standard Creative Commons license for all openly available educational material it is involved in funding. The Commission should also recommend this license to all Member States.
13. Study the issues in the modern European HE system round the "non-commercial" restriction and make appropriate recommendations for its own programmes and for member states.
14. Support the development of technological methods to provide more and standardised information on IPR to the users of digital educational content.
15. Mount a campaign both centrally and via the Member States to educate university staff on IPR issues.

Training of academics

16. Support the development of online initial and continuous professional development programmes for teachers, focusing on online learning with specific coverage of distance learning, OER, MOOCs and other forms of open educational practice, [*and we would add: including all languages*] and also IPR issues.
17. Encourage Member States to do this also and recommend the use of incentive schemes for teachers engaged in online professional development of their pedagogic skills including online learning.

Further research

18. Fund research into the verifiable benefits of OER, with greater efforts to integrate such analyses with its ongoing research on distance learning, on-campus online learning, and pedagogy; and recommend the same to Member States.

Recommendations From - Policy brief issued by LangOER to all 54 governments in Europe, 2014[33]:

1. Governments should adopt national policies in support of Open Educational Resources in Less Used Languages.
2. Governments should facilitate in partnership with private, public and the educational sector, marketplaces and collaborative arenas for quality OER.
3. Governments should take the leadership in facilitating the development of open frameworks and standards to ease the ability of OER-repositories and systems to work together (provide and accept educational content, compatible applications and contextualised services).

Building upon the 2014 LangOER Policy Brief

We still think these are sound recommendations, but experience and observations suggest the need for further refinement:

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33 LangOER Publications and Reports, "Policy Brief - Open Educational Resources in your Own Language, in Your Way." LangOER consortium (2014). http://langoer.eun.org/

Related to 1:

- The nation's financial framework for education should specifically address incentives for OER. Incentives could in particular be introduced on an institutional level (e.g. related to the funding of higher education institutions) for collaborative procurement of textbooks and other open licenced resources on a regional or national level and on an individual level for teachers.
- Incorporate OER as a part of quality assurance for quality assurance agencies.
- Governments should give advice and support teachers and academic staff in shifting from personal copyright protection to open licensing.
- Establish and make available toolboxes for producing, adapting and accessing quality OER.
- Ensure that all institutions educating teachers have a sound methodological framework for teachers' competencies and skills in OER.
- Encourage and stimulate (bottom up) OER forerunners for innovation, collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Document and publish evidence of OER benefits.
- Strengthen awareness for OER and OER policies.

Related to 2:

- Organise open competitions for the production and maintenance of quality OER.
- Provide guidelines on how to organise public procurement of OER, e.g. licensed textbooks.

Related to 3:

- Support initiatives for making resources/repositories for OER widely available, e.g. the Global Book Fund and usable in LUL
- Collect and provide concrete guidance on how cultural and linguistic adaptation can take place.

Recommendations from European Parliament, Committee on Culture and Education, study on "Adult Education and Open Educational Resources", September 2015[34]

Quality and accreditation
- National quality agencies, with support from ENQA (for HE) and EQAVET (for VET) should: develop their understanding of new modes of learning (including online, distance, OER and MOOCs) and how they impact quality assurance and recognition; engage in debates on copyright; consider the effects of these new modes on quality assurance and recognition; and ensure that there is no implicit non-evidence-based bias against these new modes when accrediting institutions both public and private including for-profit (if relevant), accrediting programmes (if relevant) and assessing/inspecting institutions/programmes.
- The Commission and related national and international authorities developing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Area of Skills and Qualifications should work towards reducing the regulatory barriers against new non-study-time-based modes of provision, in particular by developing successors to Bologna (HE) and Copenhagen (VET) based primarily on competences gained not duration of study.
- Member States should more strongly encourage (not excluding financial measures) HE and VET providers (especially large state-funded providers) to improve and proceduralise their activity on APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) including the ability to accredit knowledge and competences developed through online study and informal learning, including but not restricted to OER and MOOCs
- Larger Member States should set up an Open Accreditor to accredit students for HE studies which could accrue to a full undergraduate degree and a parallel model, perhaps via 'one stop shops', to accredit vocational competences

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34 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/563397/IPOL_STU(2015)563397_EN.pdf, p. 43=45.

- Member States via their accreditation and quality agencies, should in a phased way reduce the regulatory barriers against new kinds of HE and VET providers, including private non-profit, consortial, out-of-country and commercial.

Staff development

- Member States, with support from the Commission, should support the development of online initial and continuous professional development programmes for teachers/trainers/lecturers, focusing on online learning with specific coverage of distance learning, OER, MOOCs and other forms of open educational practice. These programmes should be available to staff in all kinds of post-secondary public providers and must place open education in the wider context of use of ICT for education & training especially but not only for distance teaching.
- Member States, with support from the Commission, should educate institution staff on IPR issues.
- Member States should consider the use of incentive schemes for teachers/trainers/lecturers engaged in online professional development of their pedagogic skills including online learning.

OER and IPR

- The Commission and Member States should adopt and recommend a standard Creative Commons license for all openly available educational and vocational training material they are involved in funding.
- The Commission and Member States should support the development of technological methods to provide more and standardised information on IPR to the users of digital educational and vocational training content, whether or not it is OER.
- With support from the Commission, groups of Member States should work on the creation of standardised syllabi EU-wide for certain topics where this is appropriate for transnational action; and in the light of a successful outcome to such initiatives, foster the developments of common bases of OER material to support these standards, including relevant open repositories and (ideally jointly with publishers) open textbooks. Such topics could include mathematics, IT (ECDL and coding) and second language learning.
- The Commission should mandate and enforce that any public outputs from its programmes (specifically including Erasmus+ and Horizon, and the LLP programme) are made available with all due speed as open resources under a Creative Commons license, and reinstate material that vanishes later.
- Member States should likewise mandate and enforce that any public outputs from their national research and education/vocational development programmes are made available as open resources under a Creative Commons license; these outputs should include a year-by-year increasing fraction of all institution generated teaching resources produced using public funds.
- Member States should phase out use of the 'NonCommercial' restriction on content.

Costing and other research

- Member States should increase their scrutiny of the cost basis for university teaching and vocational training and consider the benefits of different modes of funding for their institutions (e.g. more based on outputs, such as qualifications and competences, than inputs, such as contact hours and study hours).
- Member States, with support from the Commission, and acting transnationally when appropriate (e.g. where funding regimes are similar across groups of Member States), should fund research into the verifiable benefits of OER, with greater efforts to integrate such analyses with ongoing research on distance learning, on-campus online learning, and pedagogy. This research should include case studies of the existing successful higher education and vocational training providers that teach online in a substantial way using OER and other methods of open education (including but not only MOOCs).

Focus on students

- Member States should promote (within the context of their sovereign educational aims and objectives) to adult learners the availability and accessibility of open resources created through their respective cultural sector programmes.

- Member States should encourage Municipalities to ensure any outputs from their teachers and schools are made available as open resources under a Creative Commons license, especially where these support examinations taken by adults as well as school-age students.
- Specific funding should be devoted to building OER corpora of material in key topic areas of interest to adults. The corpora should be designed ideally for independent self-study, guided self-study (in both the formal and informal sector) and as resources to support lecturers teaching such courses. This maximises the investment in them. Rather than just 'silent' textual materials, the materials should contain audio-visual elements and, for hard to learn concepts, interactive components and quizzes. This to some extent will overcome the barriers that can be found to studying textual material by those whose reading skills in the national language(s) may be less adequate. The areas should include:
  a) Basic Skills: Literacy and Numeracy
  b) **Other-language skills, including national language skills for immigrants and second-language skills for citizens (including Less Used Languages) [emphasis added]**
  c) General work skills: employability, team work, creativity
  d) 21st century skills in ICT (search, report writing, presentations, etc.)
  e) Study skills, including for future vocational/professional development and university study

Questions for Consideration

Question 1:
  a) Copyrighted commercial textbooks are of higher quality than openly licensed material. In addition, having commercial copyrighted textbooks stimulates an innovative marked for publishers.
  b) Open licensed textbook can deliver higher quality than existing commercial copyrighted materials – and at a lower cost. Competitions for producing quality OER can boost the future market for innovations.

Question 2:
- How would you group Europeans countries within the innovation adoption lifecycle related to OER and why?

Question 3:
  a) Most countries in Europe, in particular those with a LUL as a state language and RML regions, are on the sidelines of one of the most innovative developments in education in modern times.
  b) The current situation for OER call for being cautious. We need more evidence that OER works. Forerunners and innovators should pay the price (and take the advantages) while other stakeholders, like LUL countries, wisely are sitting on the fence until developments are more mature.

Question 4:
- In terms of the initial LangOER recommendations in 2014, are these still the three most important recommendation for OER in LUL? Are crucial recommendations lacking – are there serious weaknesses with the suggested recommendations?

Question 5:
- Consider roles and responsibilities, how would you suggest different levels such as the EU, national, regional, institutions and minority languages communities adopt, work with and implement the policy recommendations?