Policy Recommendations

Enhancement of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity through OER

For information http://langoer.eun.org - langoer@eun.org

AUTHORS

MARIT BIJLSMA, ALASTAIR CREELMAN, GARD TITLESTAD,

PROJECT PARTNERS

Cor van der Meer, Marit Bijlsma, Fryske Akademy, The Netherlands (Project coordination)

Katerina Zourou, Giulia Torresin, Ioannis Lefkos, Web2Learn, Greece (Project management)

Elena Shulman, Viola Pinzi, Jim Ayre, European Schoolnet, Belgium

Sylvi Vigmo, Linda Bradley, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Malgorzata Kurek, Anna Skowron, Jan Dlugosz University, Poland

Vaiva Zuzeviciute, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

Gard Titlestad, Annais Malbrand, International Council for Open and Distance Education, Norway

Alastair Creelman, Anne-Christin Tannhäuser, Linneaus University, Sweden

Sanita Lazdina, Ilga Suplinska, Rezekne Higher Education Institution, Latvia

FOLLOW US

Twitter **#LangOER**

Slideshare **LangOER**

Mendeley **LangOER: OER and languages**

Diigo Group **Best content in OER and languages**

Facebook **LangOER Teachers group**

langoer@eun.org

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 (OER) hold out the promise of supporting the teaching and learning of these languages in Europe and consequently inclusion and quality education for all. In addition, OER can offer an important way forward in maintaining Europe's linguistic diversity. "Languages serve as a bridge to other people and open access to other countries and cultures, promoting mutual understanding. A successful multilingualism policy can strengthen the life chances of citizens".[1]

Enabling LUL communities to actively take up OERs can also generate another number of welcome transformations that include, "the change of mind-set towards teaching and learning methodology; new channels to obtain education; and opportunities for knowledge sharing."[2]

OERs and Open Educational Practices (OEP) are relevant for all sectors and levels of education in LUL, and especially in the case of endangered languages and regional and minority languages. For those languages, OER/OEP are particularly relevant, simply because these communities of speakers are relatively small in number, they typically lack financial resources and they often encounter a dearth of learning materials. OER can help to overcome the scarcity in educational resources in lesser used and minority languages and promote language equity and language diversity.

However, even as the number of policy proposals to support OER uptake have grown and the benefits are more widely recognised, thus far there have been only sporadic efforts to explicitly address the opportunities and challenges of OER policies aimed at European LUL communities.[3]

Against this background, this document gives an overview of the three top level policy recommendations and explains how different stakeholders can take concrete steps to enable LUL communities to actively develop, exchange and take up OERs and OEP.

---

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/multilingualism/linguistic-diversity_en
[2] UNESCO, 2016, p. 228. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244365e.pdf
[3] https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/OER_Policy_Registry

Lifelong Learning Programme

Policy Recommendations

The recommendations from the LangOER project are suggested on the basis of studies and observations made by European countries over the last three years and the finding that licensed, quality OER and OEP are relatively poorly developed in LUL communities.

Following discussions about initial recommendations at the LangOER conference from 26-27 September 2016 and the consultation webinar held on 2 November 2016, the project has revised these and now suggests the following top three level recommendations to be taken forward as part of a consultation process.

1. Develop a well-functioning OER lifecycle – "create-access-use-adapt"

Concrete steps which can potentially be taken are:

1. To develop and implement a strategy for OER, in particular addressing quality OER for grades, degrees and diplomas.
2. To publish all publicly funded online educational material under an open license.
3. To make a commitment to and organise public procurement of OER.
4. To organise calls for proposals with action lines addressing specific issues highlighted in the LangOER recommendations, including research that provides evidence on OER impact and benefits at EU member state level.
5. To stimulate development of multilingual environments (platforms), that give the opportunity to add subtitles or to make other versions of learning material (i.e. to facilitate adaption).
6. To create a system on a university or governmental level that will take responsibility to keep open educational resources up-to-date in terms of content.
7. To create materials in easily transposable file formats (to facilitate re-use and adaptability).
8. To stimulate social media content curation of open educational resources (e.g. Pinterest, Twitter).
9. To support R&D on translation from English and other world languages to LUL.
10. To revitalise the commitment to OER, that is expressed in Opening Up Education, with a particular focus on OER in LUL (as a means of maintaining cultural and linguistic diversity).

2. Provide professional development and support for teachers

Concrete steps which can potentially be taken are:

1. To include training on the creation and use of learning resources (with a particular focus on OER) within initial teacher education and continuing professional development programmes for teachers, including via online platforms (MOOCs).
2. To establish guidance, tools and toolboxes for all relevant aspects of OER, in particular how OERs can support 21st century teaching and learning skills.
3. To train regional and minority language educators on the use and benefits of open educational resources.
4. To provide support to teachers and school leaders via the creation of a network of OER Ambassadors.
5. To put in place frameworks that ensure a holistic approach to formal, non-formal, informal and lifelong learning.
6. To link open educational practices to the career spectrum: e.g. by working with an open badges system, pulling together skills which are discipline or practice specific.

3. Community and network building for quality learning outcomes

Concrete steps which can potentially be taken are:

1. To support knowledge sharing events and peer exchange and capacity building networks at a regional, country and pan-European level.
2. To ensure collaborative open learning within and among institutions for sharing quality learning materials, for example by using social media.
3. To provide incentives for collaboration, good practice and knowledge sharing.
4. To organise workshops between regional and minority stakeholders, educational stakeholders and majority language OER initiatives to foster further collaboration.
5. To collaborate with other institutions and stakeholders in stimulating a community of practices for OER.