



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Education Sector
Communication and Information Sector

Division for Educational Strategies and Capacity Building
Information Society Division

Intersectoral Project Proposal: Open Educational Resources (OER)

For submission to:

The Government of the United States of America

November 2009

Introduction

At the heart of the movement towards Open Educational Resources is the simple and powerful idea that the world's knowledge is a public good and that technology in general and the Worldwide Web in particular provide an opportunity for everyone to share, use, and reuse it.¹

Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication is one of the overarching objectives of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (34 C/4). This includes harnessing the potential of ICTs for capacity building, as also stipulated by the Declaration of Principles adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society in 2003. More specifically, the WSIS Plan of Action foresees the development of projects to demonstrate the impact of ICT-based alternatives educational delivery systems.

In the area of education, Member States are committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially Goals 2 and 3 relating to Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. As the UN agency directly responsible for education, UNESCO assists in upstream analyses and policy development and downstream capacity building of institutions and individuals.

Fast increasing demand in education and training means that traditional methods will not suffice to take countries beyond UPE into the wider EFA agenda especially as it applies to gender equity, secondary education, young adults, indigenous peoples, those with disabilities and those living in rural areas. Furthermore, alternative strategies are essential to fulfil UNESCO's global priorities for Africa, Small Island Developing States and Less-Developed countries generally.

At the higher education level, UNESCO's 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) revealed that demand for higher education continues to outpace supply as people realise that diplomas and degrees are passports to participation in knowledge societies

In the area of media, UNESCO seeks to increase the capacities of media professionals through high-quality training programmes based on the UNESCO model curricula on journalism education.

Open Educational Resources (OER) present Member States with an opportunity to respond to these imperatives by increasing access to quality educational resources.

UNESCO has an international leadership role in defining and advancing OER. The Education Sector (ED) hosts the *OER Community*² (an international community of interest).

UNESCO has also an international leadership role in strengthening free, independent and pluralistic media and help building capacities in this regard. In addition the Communication and Information Sector (CI) launched the *Open Training Platform*³ to provide access to open training resources.

Both sectors have worked collaboratively in the context of the UNESCO Intersectoral Platform *Fostering ICT-enhanced learning* on both of these initiatives, as well as providing Member States with information, policy advice and guides and identified OER as one of the key areas for joint projects and fund raising.

Building on this collaboration and the specific initiatives already in place, this proposal seeks funding to launch:

- 1) *Taking OERs beyond the OER Community: Policy and Capacity*; and
- 2) *The UNESCO OER Model Curricula for Journalism Education (MCJE)*

¹ Smith, M.S. and Casserly, C.M. 2006. The promise of Open Educational Resources. *Change*, Vol. 38, No. 5, pp. 8-17.

² <http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org/>

³ <http://www.opentrainingplatform.org/>

PROJECT 1: TAKING OERs BEYOND THE OER COMMUNITY: POLICY AND CAPACITY

OERs will not be able to help countries reach their educational goals unless awareness of their power and potential can rapidly be expanded beyond the communities of interest that they have already attracted. This OER Policy Development and Capacity Building Project focusing on developing countries aims to:

- develop the capacity of senior officials and institutional leaders to understand OERs and accept them as a legitimate and attractive alternative to costly books (demonstrate benefits, how copyright works, saving costs etc.).
- develop the capacity of educators to find, adapt, create and use OERs.

The project will focus in the first instance on higher education institutions (universities) in Africa and Asia and the Pacific and will be implemented in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning as part of the Partnership Agreement between the two organizations. It will build on the results of previous and ongoing projects of the two organizations such as the Higher Education ODL Knowledge Base of UNESCO and the Virtual University of Small States (VUSSC) that COL is facilitating. It will link with other organizations active in this field in Africa such as the TESSA consortium of African universities, OER Africa, and Open Learn, UKOU. The project will target decision-makers at systems and institutional level.

Background and Rationale

With the support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, UNESCO has taken a leadership role in making countries aware of the potential of OER. The online *OER Community*, with over 900 members from 109 countries, already links developing and developed countries to share information and experiences across the wide spectrum of OER development and support.

Other international organizations and institutions (e.g. the Commonwealth of Learning) have made the use of OER an important component of their work in higher education, teacher education and secondary schooling, especially in Africa and the Small States.

Despite the progress generated by this activity within the OER community, which has indeed contributed to the wider use of OERs, the OER concept is still not widely known and understood, especially by policy makers and institutional managers. Moreover, it is probable that the flow of OERs is currently occurring mainly in one direction – from the north to the south. Despite some emerging initiatives OERs are still a marginal and donor-driven phenomenon in most of the developing world (Kanwar, Balasubramanian & Umar, 2009). This presents the danger that a potentially important development is perceived as a manifestation of neo-colonialism before it has had a chance to embed itself in Africa and other developing countries.

This is the reason why UNESCO and COL, with support from the US government have decided to pool financial resources and expertise around this project.

Objective:

1. Ensure greater support for the use of OERs created and used both in developing and developed countries by educational decision makers (governmental and institutional)
2. Enhance capacity of educational practitioners in developing countries to create and use OERs
3. Elaborate a mapping of the development and use of OERs in all UNESCO regions

Target Regions:

1. Africa Region
2. Asia and the Pacific Region

Partners:

- The project is lead by UNESCO, Division of Higher Education in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning.
- Other implementing partners (potential): OER Africa, Athabasca University, Open Society Institute (OSI), South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), Hewlett Foundation, Open University UK, Open University Malaysia, EADTU, Regional/sub-regional QA associations...

4 Main Activities:**1. Dossier as basis for workshops and policy debate.**

A solid dossier on evidence that the use and adaptation of existing OERs raises the quality of teaching and/or reduces costs will be prepared. It will serve as basis for workshops and policy advice.

The dossier will include:

- An inventory of ongoing initiatives in the creation and implementation of OERS worldwide generally and in the target regions specifically
- Information on challenges to the creation and implementation of OERs in the target regions
- Overview of the stakeholders involved in the creation and use of OERs in the target regions
- The Mapping Exercise (Activity 3 below) will complement and contribute to the dossier by providing updated information on initiatives.

Based on this dossier, the main stakeholders in the project: UNESCO and COL, in cooperation with OER Africa (and others), will devise an interactive workplan to implement project activities.

2. Capacity Building Workshops (April, May and October 2010)

Objectives:

- Development of OERS by educational practitioners in developing countries in the target regions
- Exploration on how to adapt OERs use to mainstream quality assurance mechanisms

Key players:

- Commonwealth of Learning
- UNESCO
- Regional Quality Assurance Networks and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)

3. Mapping Exercise

Objectives

- Mapping on the creation of OERS: existing established, and existing upcoming (with indication of where the OER was created).
- The information should include what kind of OER is used (e.g. a taxonomy of existing OERs, with examples)

Key players:

- Commonwealth of Learning
- Athabasca University (to be confirmed)
- UNESCO

4. Policy Forum (December 2010)

Objectives

- To bring together decision makers from both developing and developed countries, with a focus on the target regions, to review developments in the creation and implementation of OERs worldwide generally, and in the target regions specifically
- To provide information on the outcomes of the capacity building work done through the project
- To demonstrate links and means to ensure the quality assurance of OERs in use, with a view to sharing best practices in adapting main stream quality assurance practices to OERs.

Key players

- UNESCO, Division of Higher Education
- Commonwealth of Learning

Schedule of Activities:

2010	Activity	
January	Dossier	Mapping Study
February		
March		
April	Capacity Building Workshop 1 (Africa and APA)	
May	Capacity Building Workshop 2 (Africa and APA)	
June		
July		
August		
September		
October	Capacity Building Workshop 3 (Francophone Africa)	
November		
December	Policy Forum (date and location to be confirmed)	

Budget and Workplans :

The budget provided by the US presented below will be supplemented for Project 1 by UNESCO regular programme funds and in-kind and financial contributions from partners (i.e. COL)

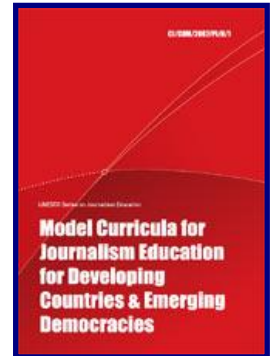
	Funding Breakdown (in US\$)	Total Amount (in US\$)	Months											
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Project 1: Taking OERs beyond the OER Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50,000 (US government) • 50,000 (UNESCO) • 100,000 (COL) 	200, 000												

PROJECT 2: UNESCO OER MODEL CURRICULA FOR JOURNALISM EDUCATION (MCJE)

The *OER Model Curricula for Journalism Education (OER MCJE) Project* significantly extends UNESCO's [Open Training Platform](#) (OTP) with a new OER Section allowing an institution to create their "derivative" copy of UNESCO's OER products starting with the MCJE and to translate, localize, and customize the curricula through Wikis.

The Project will implement specific OER solutions for identified institutions taking advantage of significant in-house and field expertise in developing OERs and established partnerships.

One of the benefits of the Project is the development of the house-wide UNESCO OER Platform that can be freely and easily utilized by all Sectors to create and upload wiki-rized products.



Background and rationale

The Communication and Information Sector(CI) develops global best-practice guides and curricula for communication for development. The UNESCO [Model Curricula for Journalism Education \(MCJE\)](#) is a benchmark model for journalism schools in developing countries to adapt to specific needs.

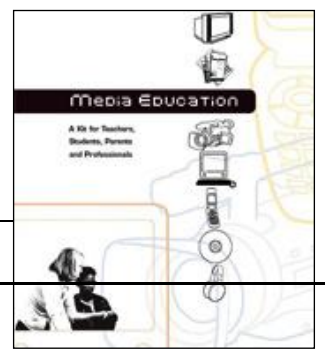
The MCJE has been adapted by more than 30 journalism schools worldwide with the creation of learning objects, teacher notes, student assignments, etc. However, all knowledge on the adaptation including translations into local languages, localization of the curricula of the base learning objects as well as local examples, and customization for various audiences, is only known to the school. Conversely, the knowledge would be lost if the teaching staff were to leave the school.

However, this knowledge is highly valuable to other journalism schools and to UNESCO.

The OTP OER Section is intended to capture this knowledge and make it available to a wider audience. Over time, new institutions would be able to view the 'original' UNESCO curricula and the derivative versions and select the various components of the curricula that best suit their needs. UNESCO would also be able to tap into the expertise and new knowledge to release periodic updates.

Activities

1. Month 1
Extend the *Open Training Platform* (OTP) to create a new *OER Section* including all already available CI Guides and Curricula such as:
 - a. Model Curricula for Journalism Education
 - b. The Net for Journalists
 - c. Media and Information Literacy Curricula
 - d. Freedom of Expression Toolkit
 - e. Regional Repositories on Journalistic Codes of Ethics and Media Accountability Systems
 - f. Education Makes News!
 - g. Media as Partners in Education for Sustainable Development
 - h. Civic Education for Media Professionals



2. Months 2 – 4
Develop the [OER MCJE Wiki](#)⁴ to allow for derivative copies. Demonstrate the prototype Platform at the 2010 World Journalism Education Congress in Grahamstown, South Africa in July, 2010
3. Months 5 – 7
Deploy the OER MCJE in 10 global journalism schools (below) using the original MCJE. This includes capacity-building at the selected school on wiki and free/libre and open-source (F/LOSS) software development and any necessary ICT infrastructure

University	Region
Rhodes University, South Africa	Africa
Namibia Polytechnic University, Namibia	Africa
Makerere University, Uganda	Africa
Indira Gandhi National Open University, India	Asia
Asian College of Journalism, India	Asia
The Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC), Philippines	Asia
Tsinghua University, China	Asia
Divine Word University, Papua New Guinea	Pacific
University of Guyana	Caribbean
Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication (ISIC), Morocco	Arab States

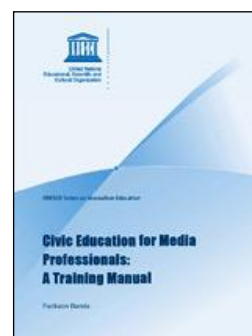
4. Months 8 – 12
Deploy the OER MCJE at 4 additional universities and commence an extensive promotion campaign with UNESCO's extensive Field Office network to develop awareness and membership of the Platform;
5. Months 8 – 12
Develop together with the Natural Sciences Sector (SC) the OER-wiki version of the Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands Encyclopedia
http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4989&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
The OER Encyclopedia would allow the well-connected Marovo Lagoon students to dynamically update content and to allow other Solomon Islands worldwide lagoon communities to freely copy the Encyclopedia structure to copy/build their own encyclopaedias and to track data across the same flora/fauna or to highlight unique specimens
6. Month 8 – 9
Internally promote the OTP OER Section with other UNESCO Sectors especially Education and Natural Sciences to identify additional UNESCO products for OER development.
7. Mon 10 – 11
Commence planning for OER development of identified CI Guides and Curricula and others.



Sustainability

The OER MCJE Project will be sustained by complementary 35 C/5 Regular Programme funding. The project would seek to identify journalism schools with very strong IT Departments, which would be able to offer “mirrors” of the Platform.

Outputs and outcomes



⁴ http://www.unesco-ci.org/wiki/projects/jec/index.php/Main_Page

The immediate outputs of the *OER MCJE Project* are the development of the OTP OER Section allowing institutions to download and upload derivative copies, the enhancement of the first CI Sector OER wiki for the MCJE, and the creation of a pathway for the OER development of additional UNESCO guides and model curricula.

In addition, journalism schools are able to capture and share their knowledge and will have increased their skills in the development of wikis and free/libre and open source software. UNESCO will have increased awareness, use, and updates on the OTP and F/LOSS portals.

The medium term outcomes of the project include significantly increasing Member States' abilities to deliver higher quality education to its citizens by being freely able to access, use, remix and distribute UNESCO's guides and model curricula on the UNESCO OTP.

Budget and Workplans

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Project 2: OER MCJE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50,000 (US government) • 150,000 (UNESCO) 	200,000												
Project Total		400,000												

List of UNESCO Open Educational Resources

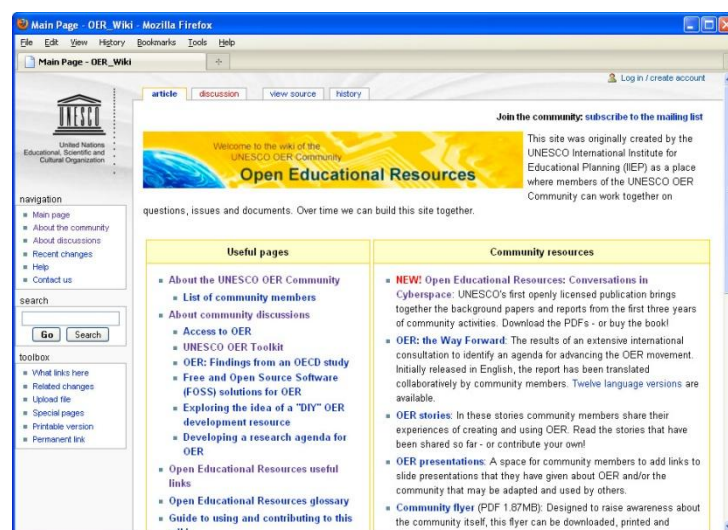
UNESCO OER Community Wiki

Education Sector: The UNESCO OER Community Wiki (<http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org>) is an international online community connecting over 700 experts in 105 countries to share information and discuss issues surrounding the production and use of Open Educational Resources – web-based materials offered freely and openly for use and reuse in teaching, learning and research.

UNESCO OER Toolkit

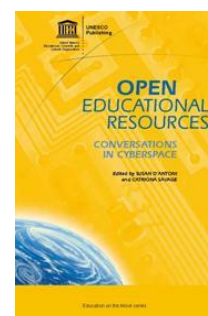
Education and Communication and Information Sectors: The *UNESCO OER Toolkit* (http://oerwiki.iiep-unesco.org/index.php?title=UNESCO_OER_Toolkit) is designed for developing country universities. It draws on experience from institutions around the world to describe in practical terms, how universities can:

- publish Open Educational Resources;
- identify Open Educational Resources and share them with academics and students;
- integrate Open Educational Resources into teaching and learning practices.



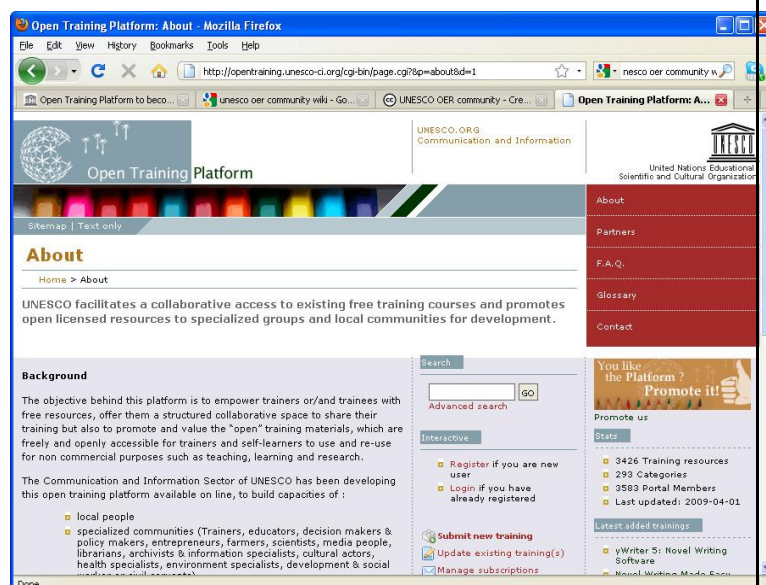
UNESCO Publication OER: Conversations in Cyberspace

Education Sector: UNESCO's first openly licensed publication brings together the background papers and reports from the first three years of community activities.



UNESCO Open Training Platform (OTP)

Communication and Information Sector: The UNESCO Open Training Platform (OTP) (<http://www.opentrainingplatform.org/>) aims at empowering trainers or/and trainees with free resources, offer them a structured collaborative space to share their training, and to promote and value the "open" training materials, which are freely and openly accessible for trainers and self-learners to use and re-use for non commercial purposes such as teaching, learning and research.

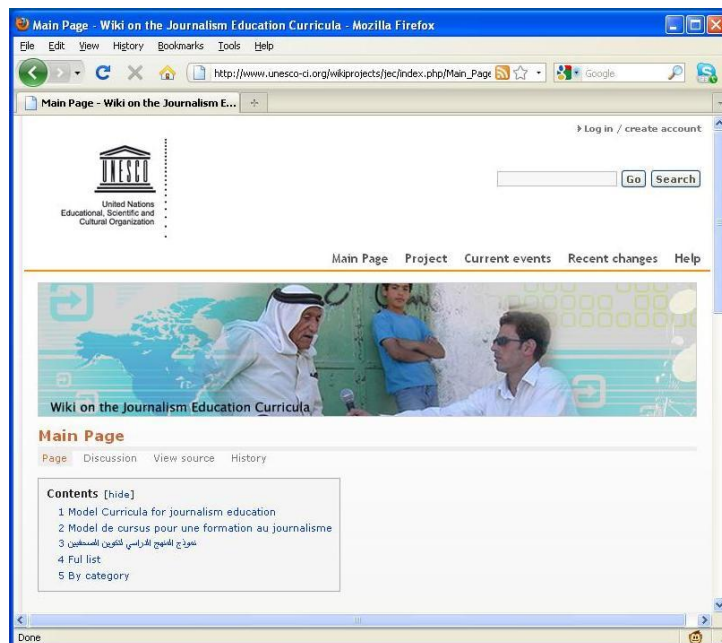


UNESCO Wiki on the Journalism Education Curricula

Communication and Information Sector:
Following the publication of the *UNESCO Model Curricula for Journalism Education* (MCJE), UNESCO created a wiki version (in Arabic, English and French) including the original publication as well as the reference texts.

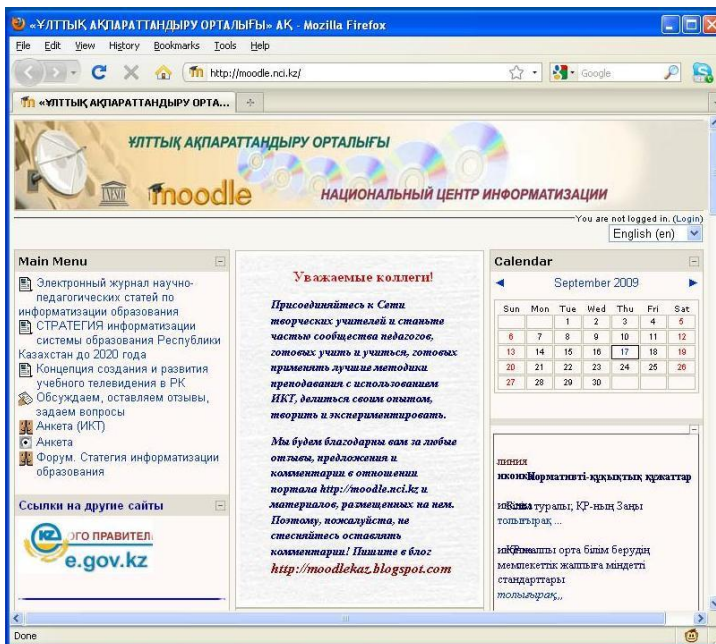
The wiki allows authorized users to suggest books (with online references if possible) in developing and adapting their teaching programmes. Visitors are updated on changes and current events.

http://www.unesco-ci.org/wikiprojects/jec/index.php/Main_Page



UNESCO Online Distance Learning Kazakhstan

Education and Communication and Information Sectors: <http://moodle.nci.kz/> - 14 Open courses in Kazak, Russian and English published for secondary schools in rural areas. More than 3000 teachers increased their knowledge on using OER under ODL system. Moodle software interface translated to Kazak, allowing to education delivery in national languages.



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