

Open University of Tanzania

Case studies on African OER initiatives in
higher education



Introduction

The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) is an open and distance learning (ODL) institution, operating through a network of 30 regional centres and ten coordinating centres spread throughout the United Republic of Tanzania and beyond the country borders to other parts of Africa.¹ OUT has engaged in several open educational resources (OER) initiatives, starting from 2008 when it began working with OER Africa.



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This case study considers the broader implementation of OER at OUT, and in particular *'The Institutionalization of OER Practices Project'*, a collaboration between OER Africa and OUT, that ran between 2008 and 2016.

OER Africa collaborated with the OUT management team, the OUT Institute of Educational and Management Technologies (IEMT), and the OUT Library to implement the activities of the *Institutionalization of OER Practices Project*. The project was framed by a Participatory Action Research approach designed to share and disseminate the project outcomes.² The project focused on the following:

1. developing an OER Policy,
2. developing and piloting OER material,
3. conducting capacity building seminars and workshops to sensitize staff about OER, teaching, and research, and
4. preparing scholarly publications.

OUT was involved in other OER initiatives focused on developing OER and received support from other organizations including the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in developing its OER Policy. Thus, where available, additional information on these activities and efforts are also noted below.

This summary is based on a desktop review, a questionnaire completed by a representative at OUT, and interviews with three representatives from the university (from the library department and the Institute of Educational and Management Technologies).

Description

OER policy

OUT identified the need for a policy to guide best practices around OER. With the support from OER Africa and COL, OUT embarked on a policy review and development process to support OER

¹Open University of Tanzania. History of the University. Retrieved from <https://www.out.ac.tz/history-of-the-university>

²OER Africa. Open University of Tanzania (OUT). Retrieved from <https://www.oerafrica.org/our-networks/open-university-tanzania-%E2%80%93-out-tanzania>

adoption and implementation. The university OER policy was initially contained in the subsection of the ICT policy. In 2014, OER was given further prominence by developing a dedicated separate policy. In 2016, the university passed the OER policy, which was intended to provide a comprehensive institutional OER policy, accompanied by strategies to guide OER development, integration, use, and hosting at OUT. The intention was to ensure that OER are integrated into teaching, learning and research at the university. The policy defines the scope, roles, responsibilities and legal requirements for managing and developing OER. It also guides the university in the course of performing its functions including:

- coordination of resource creation,
- effective and efficient utilisation of resources,
- rationalisation of proper usage of licenses, and
- harmonisation of rules and regulations for the entire university system to ensure security of resources and fair access to resources.

This policy advocates that in developing materials for students in its ODL programmes, staff should, as a matter of course, consider OER as sources to integrate and in turn be prepared to share learning materials adapted/created as OUT OER. It also advocates for sharing research and official publications on an open access basis.

The policy document outlines several policy statements and strategies to ensure effective implementation of the policy objectives. The policy statements are as follows:

- *OUT management shall promote and reward all efforts towards the creation, integration, re-using, re-purposing and sharing of OER.*
- *The OER material developed/adapted must be in harmony with a self-learning ODL structure.*
- *The OUT community will be committed to the philosophy of OER in building capacity and positive attitudes for effective OER creation and OER integration in the development and delivery of courses.*
- *Faculties, institutes and directorates shall plan and implement academic activities involving the creation and use of Open Educational Resources.*
- *OUT shall actively endeavour to evaluate, review and update institutional policies to incorporate OER values.*
- *OUT shall create an Open Access Advisory Board.*
- *Ensure timely availability of up-to-date and quality OER to meet the increasing student enrolment.*
- *OUT shall recognise and adhere to existing intellectual property policies.*
- *OUT shall put in place a mechanism for recognition of efforts exerted in creation, development and integration of OER.*
- *OUT shall recognise the supportive role of information and communication technology (ICT) in OER, development and use by ensuring access, security and capacity building in ICT.*
- *OUT shall establish an open access online repository for learning resources, research outputs (including masters and doctoral studies) and official publications.³*

OUT hopes this policy will help it realise OER's potential to support educational transformation and the principle of right to education for all. It also sees OER as becoming essential to the

³ Open University of Tanzania (OUT). 2016. OUT Policy on Open Educational Resources (OER). Dar-es-Salaam: OUT.

successful operation of the university. The policy addresses both open licensing of teaching and learning materials and open access for research and official publications. Significantly, the policy stipulates that all OUT OER teaching and learning materials will by default carry a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC) licence. The default licence for selected research and official publications is Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs (CC BY-ND).

In addition, the university began reviewing and revising existing institutional policies to make provision for OER. According to the university representatives interviewed, the university ICT policy was amended to accommodate OER. The OUT 2019 ICT policy specifically mentions OER in creation and adoption of OER, open courseware and massive open online courses (MOOCs) and educational resources. The policy thus facilitates the accessibility of content, allowing for open access of content.⁴

Another policy that was reviewed and amended was the OUT Learning and Teaching Material Policy (2020). One of the objectives of the OUT Learning and Teaching Material Policy is to develop quality OER and participate in developing MOOCs. The policy provides guidelines for developing OER outlining specific standards, viz., Instructional Design and Pedagogy, Pedagogy, Language, Technical Design, Layout (Visual Design), and Assessment.⁵

OUT's Quality Assurance Policy (2016) was also amended to set standards for OUT material released as OER. It identifies several strategies to support OER and ensure its quality. The policy outlines operational procedures through which production and consumption of OER will ensure quality of education at OUT. This includes ensuring the following:

- only materials that have been peer reviewed can be released as OER,
- a percentage of OUT materials should be OER,
- OUT OER are available only on specified websites,
- OER developers have access to relevant infrastructure,
- individuals developing OER material should be an expert in the subject area,
- OER developers should work in teams, and
- all potential OER developers should attend at least a minimum number of trainings including in-house training on best practices for developing OER.⁶

All these policies are currently implemented at the university. OUT representatives highlighted that the various policies have been effective as they help increase awareness and understanding of OER, and provide guidance around using OER. Staff members from the Institute of Educational and Management Technologies have provided CDs explaining what OER is and hardcopies of the OER policy to all faculties. They assume that all departments are aware of the policies. They highlighted that it is difficult to know whether staff were still developing OER as this falls under the responsibility of faculties, and are thus unaware of the number of OER materials developed after the passing of the OER policy. The Directorate of Research, Publication and Innovation (DRPI) oversees all materials published in the university, but efforts from the researcher to gather information on OER developed was not successful. One OUT representative also highlighted that some courses are in the process of being converted to OER, and thus staff may be at different stages in the process of converting materials to OER. The representatives interviewed acknowledged that there may be a need for periodic awareness raising around policies due to staff turnover.

⁴ Open University of Tanzania. (2019). Information and Communication Technology Policy

⁵ Open University of Tanzania. (2020). Policy and Operational Procedures on Learning and Teaching Materials Development and Management.

⁶ Open University of Tanzania. (2016). Quality Assurance and Control - Policy and Operational Procedures

Developing and adapting OER

OUT developed and adapted OER as part of its involvement in various projects. OUT worked with the African Virtual University (AVU) and several other African universities to develop OER which were made available to all participating learning institutions in Africa. The initiative involved drawing expertise from various universities and developing material in the sciences, mathematics, ICT, and education. The purpose was to create updated materials in subjects where there was a dearth of resources. The materials were available in print and electronic formats (online and on CD), and are available on the AVU website. One of the reported advantages of the initiative was that it brought together subject experts from participating institutions in Anglophone and Francophone Africa, and these materials were shared with all the institutions, with no restrictions on how to use them. At OUT, students and lecturers used these materials to supplement the available textbooks to support learning. These materials are currently still used by students.

During orientation or face-to-face training for undergraduate students we normally show them those materials and how to access them because our staff participated in developing them... some material are stand-alone key reference materials, because they are compatible to our curriculum. It depends on the tutor – some tutors recommend them as key reference materials, and others as supplementary material.⁷

OUT is a founding member of Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA), an international research and development initiative for teachers in sub-Saharan Africa that led to the production of OER for primary and secondary schools. (See the case study on TESSA for more details on this initiative). The materials that were developed are being used for OUT's diploma in primary education as supplementary resources. As with the AVU initiative, OUT gained experience in developing materials, and those who participated in the project shared their experiences with other staff members.

OUT was also involved in a project with the World Bank, where the purpose was to support science, language, and education at OUT. One of the activities of the project was to develop learning materials relevant to the project (materials relevant to science, education and languages). During implementation OUT developed study materials as OER, which were then hosted on OUT's library website. Some materials were stand-alone materials, while others supplemented key reference materials. It is unclear how many resources were created and to what extent these materials are still being used.

Within the *Institutionalisation of OER Practices Project*, OUT also developed and piloted OER material. Five modules in a professional development course on digital fluency were developed, with each module comprising four to five topics:

1. Digital Fundamentals: Basic Computer Concepts; Digital Editing; Internet Fundamentals; Virtual Learning Environments; Multimedia Fundamentals.
2. Working with OER: OER Concepts; Creative Commons Licensing; Mixing, Adapting and Reusing OER; OER Production.
3. Learning Design and Development for Online Provision: Models, Frameworks and Processes; Learning Design; Learning Development; Modes of Delivery; Learning Analytics.
4. Academic Integrity in a Digital Age: Introduction to Academic Integrity; Intellectual Property; Promoting Academic Integrity; Data and Information Privacy.

⁷Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugui (Open University of Tanzania), 18 October 2021

5. Storage and Access of Digital Resources: The Nature of Digital Resources; Storage of Digital Resources; Access to Digital Resources; Content Management Systems.

The process of developing the modules involved three approaches: preliminary meetings of stakeholders, capacity building workshops for course developers and reviewers, and workshops for actual course design and development. Each module was developed using innovative learning design methodologies using OER, while still adhering to the regular OUT institutional processes. The modules are in two forms: a Word document and a Moodle course. All modules underwent quality improvement processes.

The digital fluency courses are open to anyone to access in the OUT learning management system and institutional repository. Whilst the OUT representatives interviewed did not have specific usage statistics, one OUT representative highlighted that she had communication with a staff member who had used it. Ongoing use is not tracked or documented by the university and OUT will need to conduct a poll to get feedback from its staff as to who is using the digital fluency course.

As part of the *Institutionalisation of OER Practices Project*, two of OUT's ODL courses, viz., Philosophy of Education and Teaching (OEF 101) and Commercial Law (OLW 304) were identified as suitable for being converted into OER.⁸ The process involved addressing copyright clearance and permissions to openly license the content. Five participants (three OER specialists and two subject matter experts who were OUT lecturers) were involved in a five-day retreat to convert the two courses. The specialists also advised on the institutional workflow process and adapted some elements of dScribe (OER publishing process from the University of Michigan) which describes the process of converting curriculum materials to OER.⁹ These materials were uploaded to the [institutional repository](#). The two courses in Philosophy of Education and Commercial Law are still currently being used as core course materials.

Capacity building

A review of project documentation revealed that OER Africa also facilitated several capacity building seminars and workshops to raise awareness about OER and its potential for improving pedagogical practice. During the policy development and review process, OUT held workshops to raise awareness of OER among members of the university community, as the concept and idea was unfamiliar to most of them. Further, as part of the process of developing and adapting OER, workshops around the design and development of the OER were held, and support was provided to create new material and convert existing courses to OER. For example:

- Capacity building workshops were held in April and October 2013 for the digital fluency course. These workshops were facilitated by a representative from OER Africa, and focused on promoting capacity in the areas of OER and Instructional Design, promoting knowledge of Moodle using the Leicester University 'Learning Design in the Open' methodology and the 7Cs OER template resources. The workshops had approximately 40 participants.
- In May and June 2014, two workshops were conducted around the actual design and development of the 'Academic Digital Fluency' OER course. Prior to the workshops, an electronic survey on the proposed course was conducted to solicit inputs from OUT academic

⁸Mushi, D., and Mallinson, B. (2016). Early Experiences of the Course Conversion to OER Process at Open University of Tanzania. Retrieved from <https://oerafrica.org/system/files/12293/oeglobal2016paper78.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=12293&force=1>

⁹ OUT Educational Technology Department (2015). UNESCO-COL Chair Activities report

staff regarding the expected content of the course. Findings from the survey determined the focus areas of the course.¹⁰ These workshops were attended by approximately 40 participants.

- In November 2014 and January 2015, OER 'experience sharing workshops' were held, recognising the importance of sharing OUT staff members' experiences of OER, and especially the lessons learnt through participating in various OER projects. The objectives of the workshops were to analyse the status of OER at OUT, to share lessons learnt in OER creation, development and production, OER integration and use, and OER hosting and dissemination. Other objectives were to discuss the rationale for an institutional OER policy and identify a suitable work-flow process for developing OER.¹¹ The workshops were organized in two phases. The first phase focused on a survey of the status of OER at OUT. The second phase was on lessons learnt from participating in the various OER projects, the rationale for the OER policy, and OER development work-flow models. For the first phase (November 2014), 30 participants attended, whilst for the second phase (January 2015), there were 26 participants including three presenters and three members of the university secretariat.
- In 2015, an OER Policy Formulation workshop, attended by 35 participants (excluding those on the university secretariat), was held. The objectives were to raise awareness on the role and relevance of OER, understand the current status of OER at OUT, raise awareness on the importance of institutional OER policy, revise the draft OUT OER Policy; and discuss issues of quality assurance, the role of ICT in OER, intellectual property, and hosting and dissemination of OER.¹²
- In January 2016, an OER Policy Formulation workshop was run by OER Africa and supported by COL. The workshop, attended by 47 participants including three presenters, focused on developing an OER policy for OUT.
- A 2016 Capacity Building workshop on OER Policy was attended by 30 OUT Staff.

Research and publications

Based on its work in OER, OUT prepared approximately 15 scholarly publications which were published in various journals in Tanzania and internationally. Some of these resources are available via the [institutional repository](#). These publications described the various OER initiatives and the lessons learnt from them. The papers detail activities to raise awareness of, and implement OER at OUT. They also share insights on the position, challenges and potential for promoting OER in African ODL institutions. Some papers specifically focus on the experience using the digital fluency course. One paper considered the feasibility of integrating OER for professional development of lecturers at OUT. The study sought to understand realities of OUT from lecturers' perspective for effective integration of OER in the professional development of lecturers at the university.

Strengths and achievements

One of the main achievements from this initiative was that an institutional OER policy was developed, and amendments were made to other policies to include OER. Whilst it was reported

¹⁰ Nihuka A. Kassimu, Mbwette Tolly S. A, Kihwelo Paul F. (2014). Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiative at the Open University of Tanzania: Challenges and Lessons Learned. The Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2014 - Proceedings

¹¹ Muganda, C.K., Samzug, A., and Mallinson, B. (2016). Empirical-Based Analytical Insights on the Position, Challenges and Potential for Promoting OER in ODeL Institutions in Africa (AVU Conference Paper)

¹²Open University of Tanzania. Report on OER Policy Development Workshop Phase 1 - Workshop on Development of an Institutional OER Policy Of OUT, May 25 To 29, 2015.

that these policies continue to guide the development and usage of OER materials at OUT, efforts to gather statistics to support this were unsuccessful.

Awareness and understanding of the concept of OER has increased among academic staff, resulting in OER reportedly becoming more integrated with institutional practices. The OUT representatives interviewed highlighted that the advocacy aspect was very important in raising awareness of OER and the workshops and seminars provided capacity for staff members to be more active OER users. The result of this was that staff developed themselves professionally to improve their pedagogy.

Importantly, buy-in was achieved and both OUT lecturers and leadership were willing to integrate OER for professional development of lecturers. During the initiative, the university also had the relevant ICT infrastructure and customised Moodle platform to support the work done.¹³ All OER developed are hosted in the university's institutional repository.

Training in OER is embedded in information literacy training conducted by the library in each academic year:

In the library we conduct orientation for staff and students. One of the components is to orient them on OER which are freely available - in addition to online journals, e-books. Something that has been beneficial is information retrieval skills – retrieving relevant OER for their disciplines, embedding these resources in their courses.¹⁴

OUT also prepared an online guide for students on how to access OER. This guide is hosted on the university library page, and details how students can access various resources including OER. The guide is used during orientation sessions which are conducted every two months (via face-to-face sessions or online via Zoom), where students are introduced to the guide and shown how to navigate the various sources of information.

OUT has also established partnerships and collaborations with other universities and institutions such as Dar es Salaam College of Education and OER Africa:

The project taught us about OER and allowed us to disseminate this information to other institutions. OUT has been involved in a number of activities assisting other units in establishing ODL activities. We assist them on how to develop materials, including how to adapt and use existing OER.¹⁵

OUT developed a new course on digital fluency and converted two existing courses into OER. The initiative had a positive impact on teaching and learning at OUT. Students are using the available OER in their academic work. For example, the course on Philosophy of Education is available via OUT's Institutional Repository. This module was developed by an expert within the university and forms part of a core course in the curriculum. These courses are used, and the knowledge gained from the process of developing and adapting is also reportedly being used when new materials are developed.

¹³ Nihuka, KA., and Mallinson. B. (2015). Towards Integration of Open Educational Resources for Professional Development of Lecturers At The Open University Of Tanzania

¹⁴Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

¹⁵Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

One of the courses we developed –the digital fluency course – is being used to ensure that all academic staff are taught and understand the process. We have converted two courses from OUT, we expect that we'll be able to convert more. In developing new study materials, some aspects of OER are taken on board.¹⁶

The digital fluency modules have been shared with the public and the broader community is able to access and adapt them.

Challenges

Despite the numerous successes, the university also faces several challenges. One of the challenges, particularly at the start of the initiative, was to convince staff about the value of OER, to change their mindsets, and to address concerns around the quality of resources:

There are some academic staff who at the outset were saying that OER are there, they're available, but are we sure of the quality? There was a reluctance from some staff to recommend the OER to their students because they think that they are not of good quality. The fact that the OER are available freely – they are suspicious of the quality. Academics were worried about licensing their materials as OER.¹⁷

The university recognises the need to continuously sensitize staff around the measures in place to assure quality. For example, it has a Quality Assurance Directorate that is responsible for ensuring that materials and publications go through a peer review process. The OER courses in philosophy of education and law went through peer review and the author was asked to incorporate some of the comments raised by blind reviewers. Nevertheless, there are still some who are sceptical of quality, which the quality assurance aims to address. It was highlighted that changing mindsets is a long and continuous process:

We are making some efforts to mainstream OER in our curriculum. We believe that with time and with the kind of training which we offer to our staff there is a likelihood that the mindset with regard OER will change – it will take time...We encourage by showing some materials which we hosted in our institutional repository (library page), OER which staff are using. With time mindset[s] will change.¹⁸

It is not only at the university level that increased sensitization is required. The university also recognises the need to engage publishers:

We also observed that there is... conflict between publishers and institutions that are developing OER. Publishers are afraid that they will need to close, but we assured them that this should not be taken as a challenge, but as an opportunity for both parties.¹⁹

¹⁶Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

¹⁷Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

¹⁸Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 18 October 2021

¹⁹Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

OUT representatives highlighted that there was a need for discussions with publishers to find solutions, recognising that 'OER and Open Access are here to stay, but the publishing industry also needs to survive'.²⁰

OUT also needs to raise awareness of OER among other education bodies, including accreditation bodies. The university thus invites relevant bodies and officials to workshops to sensitize relevant bodies about OER:

Issue of accreditation bodies, regulators – most are not familiar with OERs because they come from a conventional background, so they look at it with suspicion. As a university, when we are hosting a workshop, we invite people from the ministry as well as from accreditation bodies, so they would slowly begin to understand OER.²¹

In developing course materials, the institution faces a shortage of trained instructional designers – this is a challenge faced within the country and not just the institution. Thus, the demand for instructional designers is high.

Further, while most staff have a general understanding of OER, more expertise is required in practically integrating OER into teaching resources, searching for and identifying OER, and understanding open licensing. Another related challenge is the need to develop expertise in writing and editing course materials.

The process of designing and developing an OER course is often quite challenging because it is an 'added load' to the lecturers, and demands team work.²² A university representative also noted that, due to the tight schedules of staff, much time was required to convert existing resources to OER.

We had a team of OER champions – the training was being conducted to enable them to convert courses. The training that we gave them has not produced what we expected – maybe because of time. We need some time to make sure that we organize these sessions and provide training.²³

A further challenge is that the use of OER among students is not as high as the institution would like, but it continues to raise awareness of OER among students. This challenge is exacerbated by poor internet connectivity in the country, particularly for students living in remote areas.

Lessons learnt

One of the main lessons learnt was the role that the presence of an OER policy plays in driving and supporting OER practices. OUT's policy makes provision for incentives to develop and adapt OER:

²⁰Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugui (Open University of Tanzania), 18 October 2021

²¹Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugui (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

²²Nihuka A. Kassimu, Mbwette Tolly S. A, Kihwelo Paul F. (2014). Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiative at the Open University of Tanzania: Challenges and Lessons Learned. The Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2014 - Proceedings

²³Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugui (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

*Sustainability depends on the availability of policies, and the policy is there. It is our assumption that it will survive. If **someone develops OER, it is recognised as criteria for promotion**. It has been embedded in our policy. It makes it possible for staff to produce OER. We also attach an incentive to creating or adapting OER. The individual is given a monetary incentive.²⁴*

However, without evidence of how the policy is currently being implemented, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the policies.

Another related lesson was that strong university leadership is essential to ensuring project success. OUT created an OER team, as well as OER champions, to support OER processes at the institution. The OUT OER team were well supported by the university management which helped ensure that project activities were funded and implemented:

One of the main lessons from OUT, particularly the experience of developing the digital fluency course was the important role of management support throughout the process.

The OUT management was always in the driving seat and whenever things seemed to be not moving or going slow, the top management would either convene meetings or require an immediate explanation or clarifications.²⁵

Similarly the role of the coordinating unit namely the Institute of Educational and Management Technologies and the individual coordinator cannot be under-estimated as they were the ones who made sure that regular meetings are convened, management is kept informed of the progress, writers are taken to the workshop when required, reviewers are kept informed when drafts are ready and reminded reviewers when to submit their comments but more importantly, partners and trainers are also well informed and, when required, are invited for training or progress review meetings. In the same vein partners such as Saide played a very critical role in the success of the preparation of the OER course material on academic digital fluency at OUT. Without their support, may be OUT would not have reached this far and at this pace we were able to move.²⁶

A further key lesson was the importance of continued advocacy in raising awareness of OER, and the necessity of workshops and seminars to capacitate staff members to use, develop, and adapt OER. It is significant that learning gained via the various projects has reportedly been transferred to other units within the institution and to other institutions.

Several lessons were learnt by participating in OER creation, development and production. These include having the necessary ICT skills and competencies, having a plan to guide OER development activities, having the requisite funding for the required resources and to support activities, capacity

²⁴Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

²⁵ Nihuka A. Kassimu, Mbwette Tolly S. A, Kihwelo Paul F. (2014). Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiative at the Open University of Tanzania: Challenges and Lessons Learned. The Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2014 - Proceedings

²⁶ Nihuka A. Kassimu, Mbwette Tolly S. A, Kihwelo Paul F. (2014). Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiative at the Open University of Tanzania: Challenges and Lessons Learned. The Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2014 - Proceedings

building to enhance knowledge about OER and skills in developing and producing of OER, and having the necessary quality assurance processes in place to ensure the quality of OER produced.²⁷

Regarding integration and use of OER, author 'buy in' or willingness to adapt/adopt OERs in their modules needs to be addressed because there may be changes in the ways they are used to doing their work. Changing the mindset and encouraging acceptance of OER is important.²⁸

Having external partnerships (such as with OER Africa) provided much needed expertise, support, and guidance.

Collaboration with other stakeholders e.g. COL, OER Africa, UNESCO. Working together with external partners, we managed to learn and we learnt from them. We also had support from ACDE [the African Council of Distance Education]. OER appears as one of the topics for people to write papers on.²⁹

Another key lesson learnt was the need for strong teamwork to ensure success.

As a university, we need to work as a team in creating and developing these resources. It involved a number of people from different faculties and institutions. The crucial thing we learnt is that we can always succeed if we work together, and there is success in unity.³⁰

The team at OUT that was interviewed felt that a national or regional policy may be beneficial in raising awareness of OER beyond the institution:

When we formulated the policy, it only catered to OUT, but we felt that we needed to have a national OER policy because the way it is now, OER is more known to academic staff and students of OUT, but very few people outside of that are aware of OER. So we thought that we need to come up with a national OER policy. If possible, we need to come [up] with a policy to cover all East African countries.³¹

Further, they felt that OUT could play a key role in sensitizing other universities in Tanzania on using OER.

OER is key in supporting the university activities. OUT should take a driving seat in developing OERs and sensitizing other universities in Tanzania to consider the possibility of using OER.³²

²⁷ Muganda, C.K., Samzugi, A., and Mallinson, B. (2016). Empirical-Based Analytical Insights on the Position, Challenges and Potential for Promoting OER in ODeL Institutions in Africa (AVU Conference Paper)

²⁸ Muganda, C.K., Samzugi, A., and Mallinson, B. (2016). Empirical-Based Analytical Insights on the Position, Challenges and Potential for Promoting OER in ODeL Institutions in Africa (AVU Conference Paper)

²⁹ Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

³⁰ Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

³¹ Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

³² Interview with Shadrack Mbogela, Doreen Mushi, and Dr Athumani Samzugi (Open University of Tanzania), 14 July 2020

Conclusion

Key implications from this case study for effective continuous professional development (CPD) are:

- 1) The presence of an OER policy that can support professional development efforts.
- 2) University leadership and support are important in ensuring the success of initiatives.
- 3) There is a continued need for advocacy and to raise awareness of OER. In particular, it may be worthwhile focusing on issues of quality assurance and to reach more stakeholders including those from relevant education and government bodies.
- 4) Partnerships are vital in providing expertise, support, and guidance.
- 5) Expertise is still required in instructional design, writing and editing.
- 6) It is important to track OER development and use to assess the impact of initiatives.



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