

OER Africa

A Rationale for Health OER in Africa

OER in Health Symposium

3rd September, 2008



The Context for Expanding Health OER in Africa

- 80 % of infectious diseases found in SSA.
- Of the 36 million people infected worldwide with HIV/AIDS, more than 72 % reside in Africa.
- Malaria alone kills two million people and reduces the GDP of SSA by one percent every year.
- Tuberculosis has re-emerged causing havoc throughout the continent.
- SSA infant mortality stands at 103 per 1000 against a developed world average of 8 per 1000: Fifty four per cent of this mortality is ascribed to malnutrition.

The Status of Health Education in Africa (1)

- Need for African-based training for health professionals in a culturally relevant setting long been recognized.
- However, initial strategy was (**at least in part**) to train graduates abroad and then ask them to apply their new knowledge and skills when they returned home.
- Rate of return resulted in far fewer numbers of health care professionals than required to service SSA's health sector.
- Subsequent professional and in-service training in health education organized by a variety of African and other institutions – universities, ministries of health, international and bilateral agencies.

The Status of Health Education in Africa (2)

- Training based on models not entirely appropriate to the unique context within which practice was taking place.
- This training also facilitated movement of health care professionals away from Africa to fill the demand in western countries - the 'brain drain'.
- Setting up a training program in an African university that **duplicated** the training undertaken in European or American classrooms *still does not guarantee efficacy or appropriateness* in the African context.
- More recently African health sector has established the need to develop **socially relevant and culturally appropriate training materials and experiences.**

Reasons to Collaborate in Health Education Materials Development

- **OER Africa believes** that OER can positively support development and capacity of higher education systems and institutions across Africa
- **OER Africa is concerned** that if the concept and practice of OER evolves predominantly outside and for Africa, we in SSA will not be able to liberate its potential

How OER Africa can help with this / What is our premise?

- Our focus is on **enhancing competence** through our **Vision** of networked, co-ordinated projects in which we lay emphasis on the following principles:
 - Investment should be in **African faculty** rather than merely the import of materials;
 - **Support** required to Faculty for a CoP to gain traction;
 - To move away from the notion that in an environment of scarce resources, “something is better than nothing” and instead support processes of collaboration around the creation and use of **“something” that is sustainable.**

Health OER Needs identified by African Universities: (1)

- Need to address the challenge of large class instruction in the face of limited tutorial time and small numbers of qualified lecturers / Find new ways of delivering health education content in a format that will enable students to have increased access to the material, e.g.
 - by case based studies using video as the main information stream;
 - by recording demonstration by clinical experts of techniques in history taking, physical examination, and clinical procedures and make this available to students for review and practice in their own time. (Clinical Skills Demonstration)

Health OER Needs identified by African Universities: (2)

- Need to use **appropriate media** to enable Health Education students to appreciate better what they are taught in class, e.g.
 - Collaboratively create and format to be shared **on video**, a comprehensive training module for newcomers to obstetric practice (i.e. all aspects of pregnancy, birth and postnatal care);
 - Need for **Clinical Photography** where demonstration to students of minute structures is difficult, e.g. in ENT (Ear/Nose/Throat)
 - Collaboratively design and develop **electronic resources** that specifically address fundamentals of general physiology required by entry level students (e.g. a theoretical textual basis alongside a program of interactive quizzes, assignments, tutorials, 3-dimensional/video representations)

Health OER Needs identified by African Universities: (3)

- Need to format as OER for use by other African institutions, existing content where African (or other) institution has expertise;
 - e.g. lecture recordings; lecture slide sets saved as PNGs, uploaded, tagged, and searchable online; videos, etc.

The Health OER Initiative:

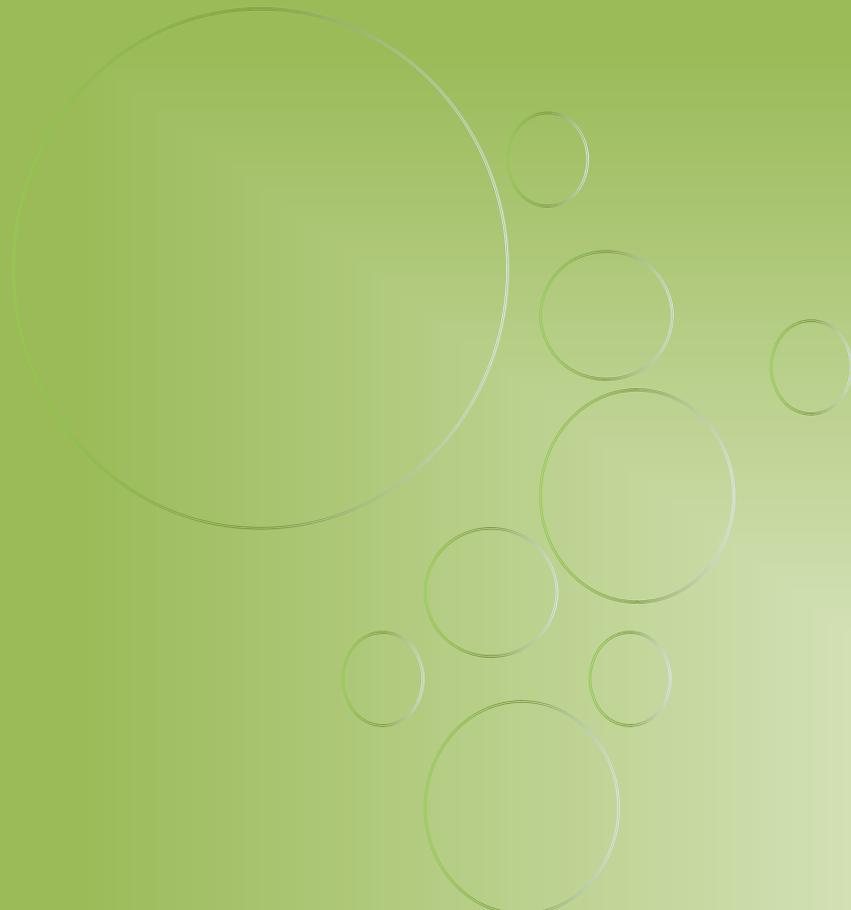
- **OER Africa & University of Michigan - *Health OER***
 - Pilot project to make comprehensive pre-clinical health curricula available worldwide via the Internet made possible by a grant from the **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**
 - Subsequent **project development** in conjunction with **OER Africa** addresses the **explicit needs** of health care education in two distinctly different countries in Africa.
 - Project partners: UG, UCT, KNUST, UWC.
 - Key part of this initiative will be **converting existing educational materials into Open Educational Resources**, which will be available online to participating institutions and possibly to the rest of the world.

Other Health OER Initiatives:

- **The African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF)**
 - Runs several types of courses all of which require fee payment. Materials developed for five of its DE courses exist as OER available on the COL website under the Creative Common Attribution-Share Alike [BY-SA] 3.0 license.
- **OU(UK) Health Education and Training in Africa (HEAT)**
 - Seeks “...to make a significant contribution to a rapid increase in capacity building in the health workforce” in Africa.
- **Johns Hopkins - The Leadership Initiative for Public Health in East Africa (LIPHEA)**
 - To establish long term partnerships between academic institutions in the United States and East Africa

Future Possibilities

- to establish **vibrant networks of African OER practitioners** by **connecting** like-minded academics from across the continent and beyond, to develop, share, and adapt OER to meet the higher education needs of African societies.
- to develop **institutional** health faculty **capacity** through OER collaboration;
- to create a **strong base** of freely available content that will drastically reduce the need to buy expensive health textbooks;
- to establish a base of health care material that is **explicitly relevant** to the needs of African health systems.



Thank you

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