OER Africa

Maximising the potential of OER for sustainable higher education in Africa

ACDE Pre-Conference Workshop

Eco Hotel, Lagos

8th July, 2008

OER Africa

Who we are

➢ **OER Africa is an innovative new project, headquartered in Nairobi, under the auspices of SAIDE.**

➢ **Established to play a leading role in driving the development and use of OER in Africa.**

➢ **Seed funding from the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation to harness African experts and expertise to deploy OER to the benefit of Africa's higher education systems.**

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Why Open Educational Resources?

Concept:

➢ **Educational resources for use by educators and learners, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees.**

➢ **New licensing frameworks remove copying / adaptation restrictions**

➢ **OER hold potential for reducing the cost of accessing educational materials.**

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What Potential Lies in OER?

➢ **Access to the means of production enables development of educators' competence in producing educational materials**

➢ **Access to instructional design necessary to integrate such materials into high quality programmes of learning.**

➢ **Principle of allowing adaptation of materials enables learners to be active participants in educational processes**

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How do we Capture this Potential?

➢ **Through the potential of a collaborative partnership of people…**

working in communities of practice

focussed on the four main elements of the OER evolutionary process:

Creation, Organization, Dissemination and Use.

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Dispelling Some Myths

- Content = education

- Good content will overcome institutional capacity constraints

- OER should be a process of voluntarism

- OER will make education cheaper in the short-term

- Openness automatically equates with quality

- OER is about e-learning

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Why do we exist?

➢ **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 will not be able to liberate its potential**

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What is the OER Africa premise?

➢ **To ensure that the power of OER is harnessed by Africans for Africans by building collaborative networks across the continent.**

➢ **To facilitate the aggregation of information and human expertise that produces knowledge**

➢ **There is a need to establish, encourage, and promote African communities of practice for OER that support the entire process of educational design, not simply use of external content**

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A Vision for Higher Education in Africa:

➢ **Vibrant, sustainable African higher education institutions that play a critical role in building and sustaining African societies and economies, by producing the continent's future intellectual leaders through free and open development and sharing of common intellectual capital**

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Our Mission

➢ **to establish vibrant networks of African OER practitioners by connecting like-minded academics from across the continent to develop, share, and adapt OER to meet the higher education needs of African societies.**

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Value Proposition

➢ **By creating and sustaining human networks of collaboration, face-to-face and online – OER Africa will enable African academics to harness the power of OER, develop their capacity, and become integrated into the emerging global OER networks as active participants rather than passive consumers.**

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A proposed approach:

1. **Work together to enhance higher education institutional capacity to design, develop, and deliver quality higher education programmes and materials;**

2. **Advocate the merits of collaboratively creating and sharing intellectual capital in higher education as a mechanism to improve quality and enhance long-term cost-effectiveness;**

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Approach (cont'd)

3. **Establish an online platform** that facilitates African collaboration in OER development and sharing, while **inter-connecting** this platform with the many OER communities emerging globally;

4. **Facilitate** the re-development and reinvention of African higher education programme curricula and course materials in order to ensure that higher education programmes on the continent are of **exceptional quality** and direct contextual **relevance**, producing **world class graduates**.

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SOME QUESTIONS

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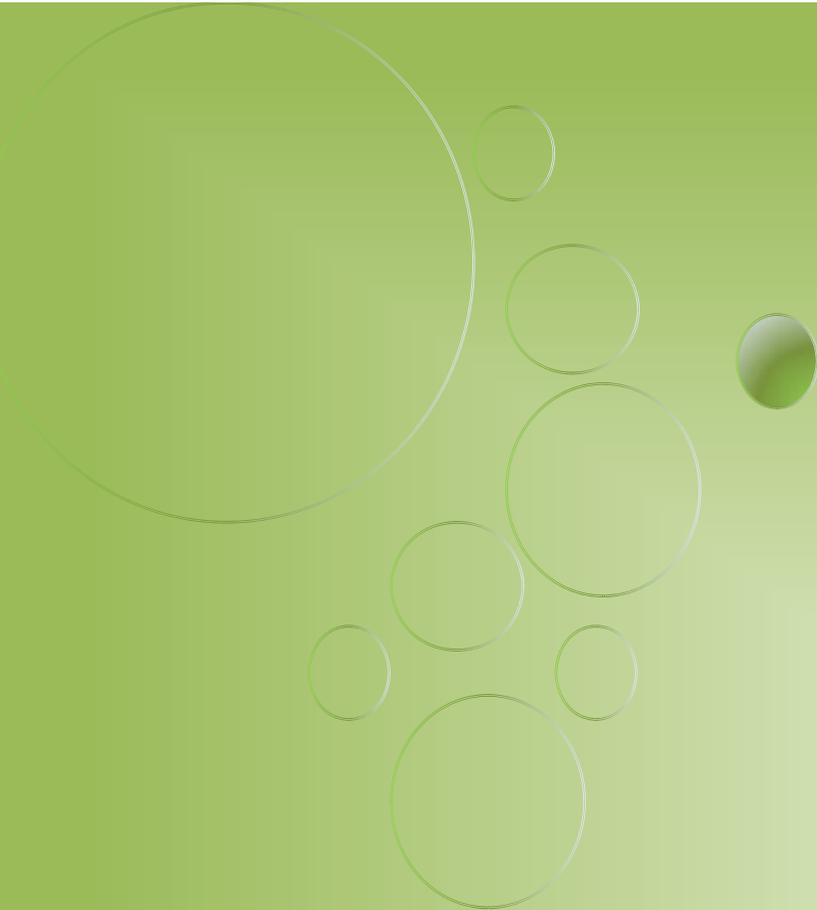
OER and capacity-building

➢ **What capacity do we need to build to enable higher education institutions, academics, and students to take advantage of OER?**

➢ **How can OER help to build stronger institutional capacity in African higher education?**

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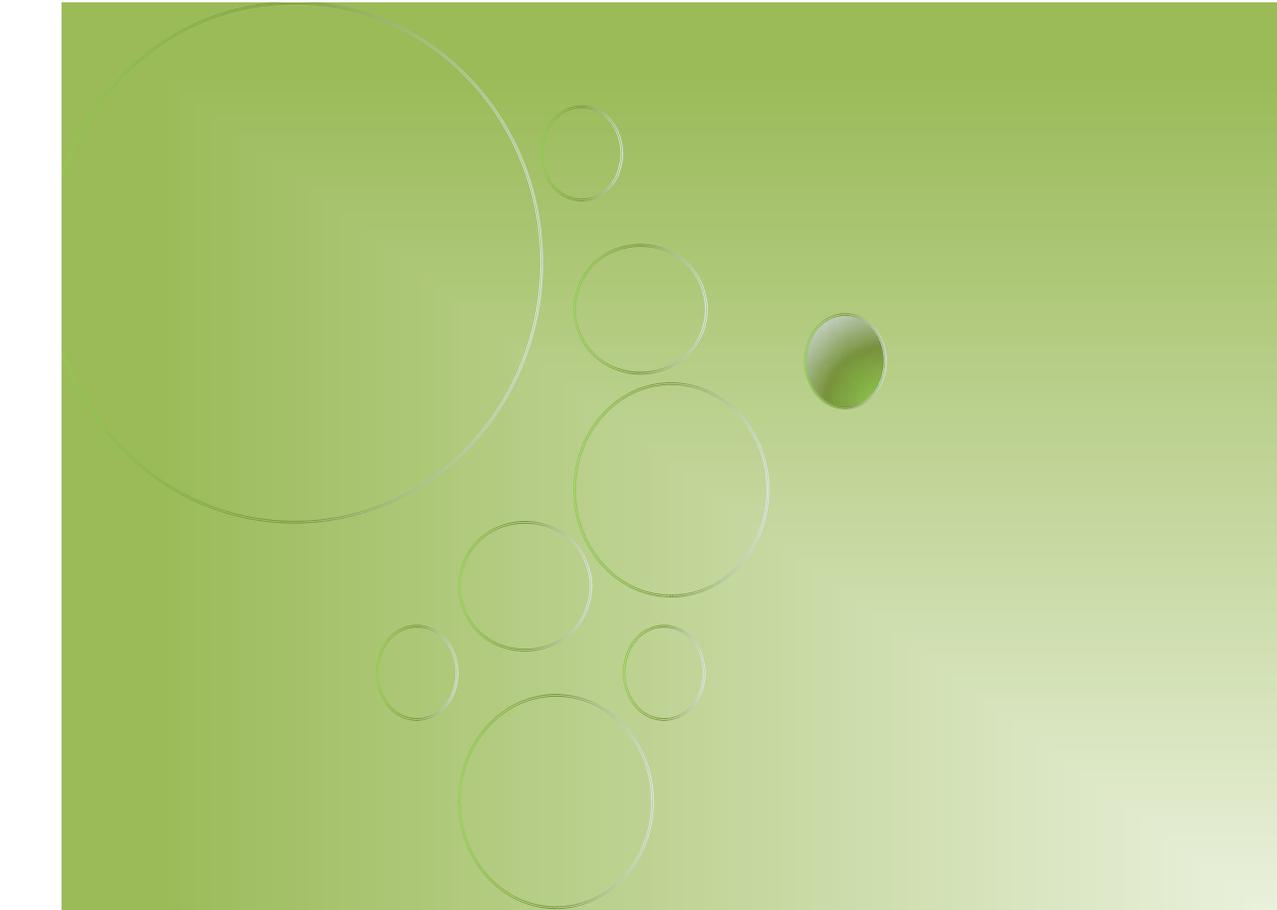
WORKING WITH PARTNERS

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A Partnership Strategy:

➢ **Together, we need to:**

    ➢ **Nurture and establish networks of individuals / institutions and establish a methodology to use OER to tackle their specific challenges;**

    ➢ **Nurture and facilitate collaborative networks that can share and build on these experiences;**

    ➢ **Establish strategic alliances with key players in the field of education.**

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A Possible Way Forward (1)

➢ **Situation Analysis:**

- ▪ **Audit existing educational materials to determine the following:**

  - ✓ **What materials are available and of those, which have been digitised;**

  - ✓ **Which educational materials are in need of updating;**

  - ✓ **What are the gaps requiring development of educational materials.**

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A Possible Way Forward (2)

Development of Institutional Policy Framework

➤ Numerous models, pilots and projects have been introduced within African universities in a bid to make quality tertiary education more widely accessible;

➤ Many have faltered – sometimes due to the absence of a policy framework to guide implementation or sustainability.

➤ Key part of collaborative partnerships is the joint mapping of current institutional policy related to materials development.

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A Possible Way Forward (3)

Objective of Policy Mapping

➢ **Over-arching Policy Framework on OER which:**

  ➢ **takes cognisance of the particular circumstances, Vision and Mission of each participating university and;**

  ➢ **facilitates collaboration with other distance education providers to produce and adapt high quality distance learning materials for use in programmes.**

➢ **This process will be informed by tailored institutional workshops on OER policy.**

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A Possible Way Forward (4)

Tailored Workshops - Sensitisation

➢ **Institutional / Faculty support and recognition;**

➢ **Localization / adaptation / translation;**

➢ **Intellectual property;**

➢ **Quality assurance / Standards;**

➢ **Technology / infrastructure;**

➢ **Financial support / sustainability**

➢ **Materials Development processes;**

➢ **Collaborative partnerships;**

➢ **HR and remuneration policies.**

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A Possible Way Forward (5)

➢ **Development of Institutional OER Policy**
  ➢ Iterative process resulting in cohesive policy document responsive to the institutional needs.

➢ **Development of Partnerships / Collaboration Strategy;**
  ➢ Identification of any other distance education providers in Africa, interested in the co-creation / adaptation of educational materials as Open Educational Resources.

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A Possible Way Forward (6)

➢ **Tailored Workshops - Distance Education OER:**

   ➢ **Facilitation of Distance Education Workshop focussed on the collaborative development and sharing of materials.**

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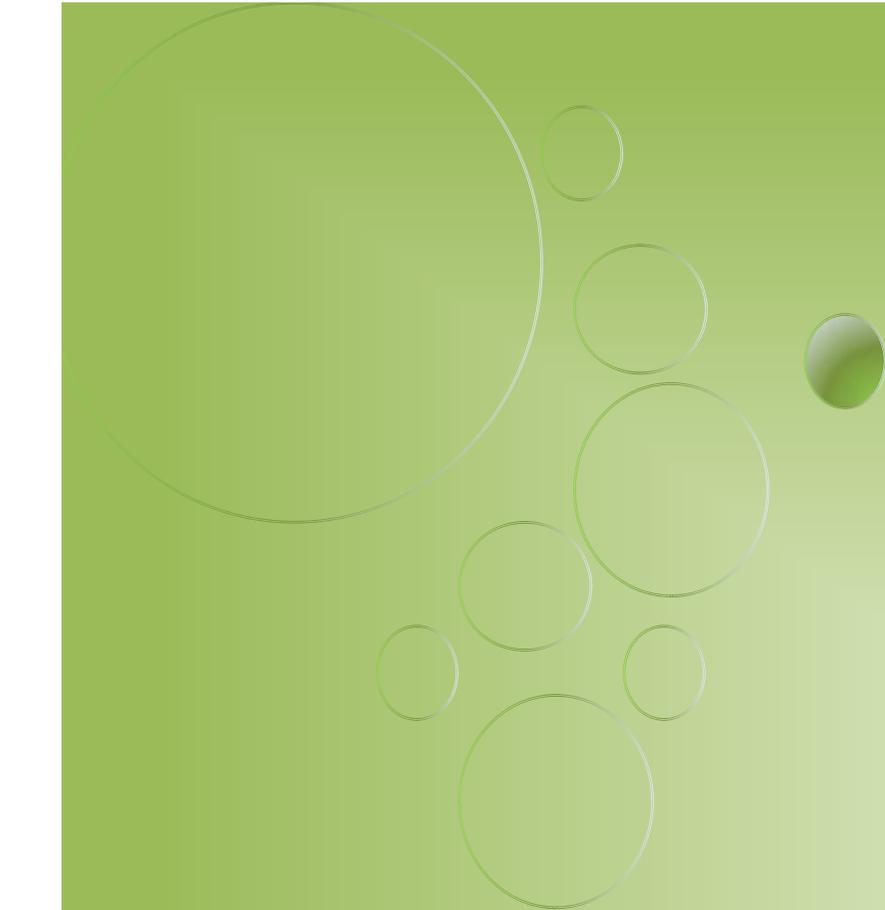
OER RESEARCH AGENDA

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Research Needs (1)

➢ **Identify those areas in which Open Educational Resources could contribute significantly to finding solutions to the key challenges to higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa**

➢ **Investigate the requirements for establishing effective Communities of Practice (CoPs)**

➢ **Identify how these CoPs may support the development and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) in Higher Education Institutions Sub-Saharan Africa.**

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Research Needs (2)

➢ **How OER may enhance existing SSA research networks (NRENs, NGOs, etc);**

➢ **Attitudes towards sharing of Intellectual Property (IP) in African higher education and how prevailing attitudes can be changed?**

➢ **Financial/business models to justify institutional shifts to OER**

  e.g. as a key component of Open and Distance Learning programs

➢ **How can instructional design expertise be captured**

  ➢ **to create meaningful 'explicit' knowledge**

  ➢ **to communicate effectively what is 'tacit' in most education systems?**

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Q & A

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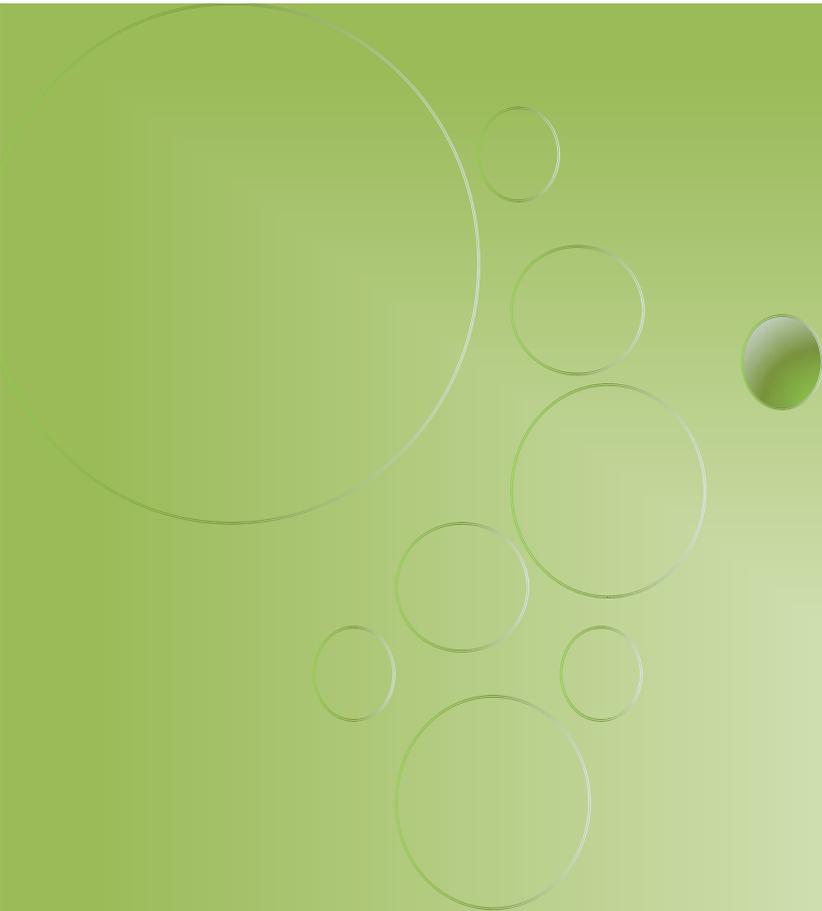
Taking the Process Forward (1)

➢ **Do you agree with the proposed approach outlined above?**

➢ **What do you and/or your institution hope to gain from engaging with OER?**

➢ **Is your institution (or faculty) starting to invest in producing OER or using OER produced elsewhere?**

➢ **If so;**

  ➢ **is this process being used to build your institution's/ faculty's capacity;**

  ➢ **what kinds of capacity are you trying to build, and what effect is that having?**

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Taking the Process Forward (2)

- ➢ **If not, what needs to be done to get your institution to engage in OER?**
- ➢ **What interventions do we need to consider to persuade institutions to implement OER-friendly policies?**

➢ **…**
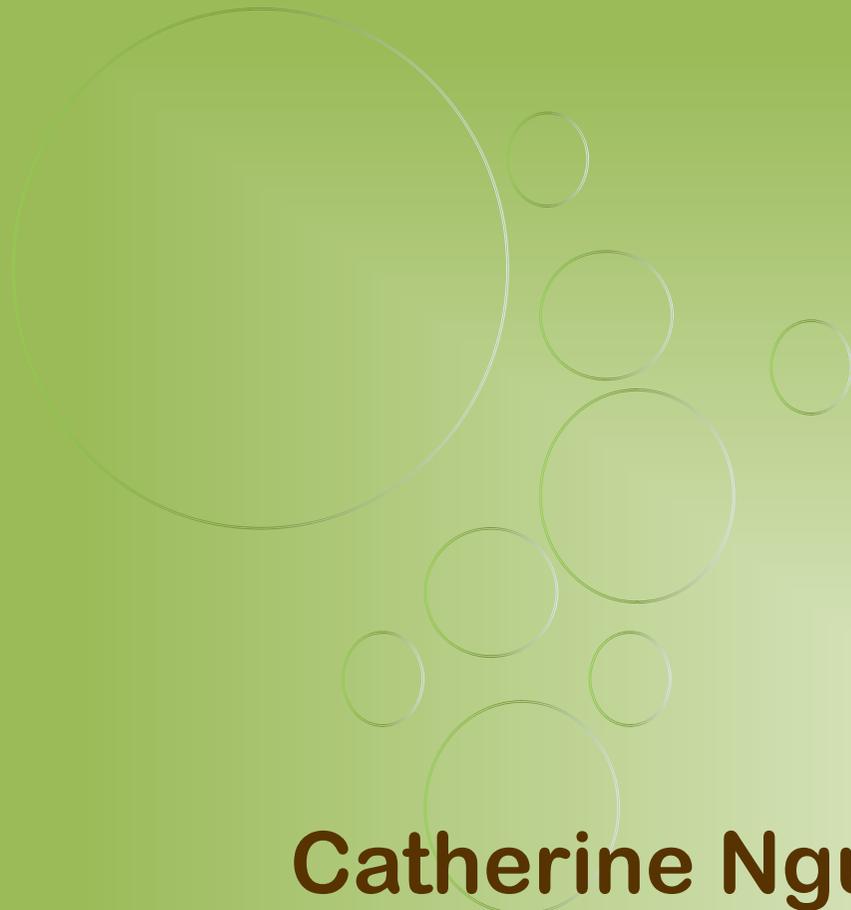
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Thank you

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