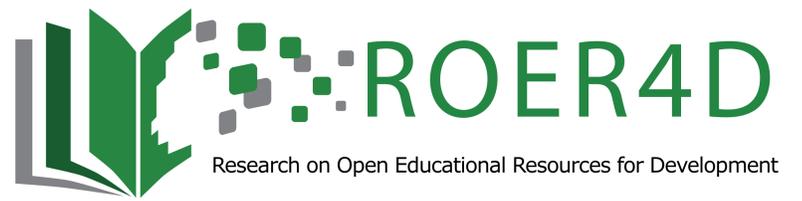


OPEN EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Key findings from the Research on Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D) project

<http://roer4d.org/>



General objective

The general objective of this research project was to improve educational policy, practice and research in developing countries by better understanding the use and impact of open educational resources in secondary and post-secondary education.

Research question

In what ways, and under what circumstances, can the adoption of OER impact upon the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality and affordable education in the Global South?

ROER4D principal investigators: Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams and Patricia B. Arinto

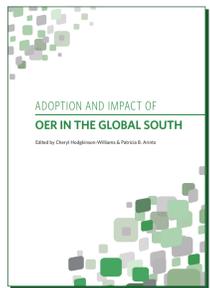
Host institutions: University of Cape Town and Wawasan Open University

Edited volume: <http://www.africanminds.co.za/dd-product/adoption-and-impact-of-oer-in-the-global-south/>

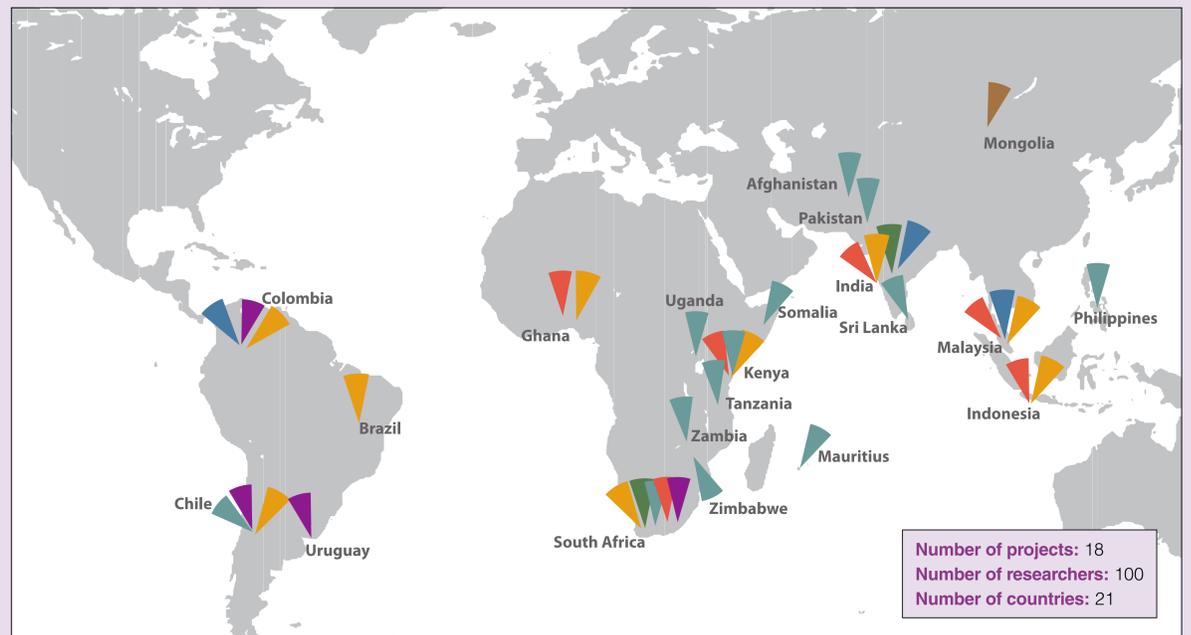
Published data sets: <https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal/index.php/catalog/ROER4D>

Twitter: @ROER4D

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ResearchOERforDevelopment/>



Global South sub-project distribution



Meta-synthesis

Using a meta-synthesis approach, the open educational practices reported on in the sub-project studies were compared to an idealised set of open processes, as outlined in Hodgkinson-Williams' proposed "optimal" Open Education cycle (adapted from Hodgkinson-Williams, 2014; Walji & Hodgkinson-Williams, 2017). Drawing upon Archer's (2003) social realist theory, the objective was to uncover agential decision-making about OER creation, use and adaptation in relation to structural and cultural environments.

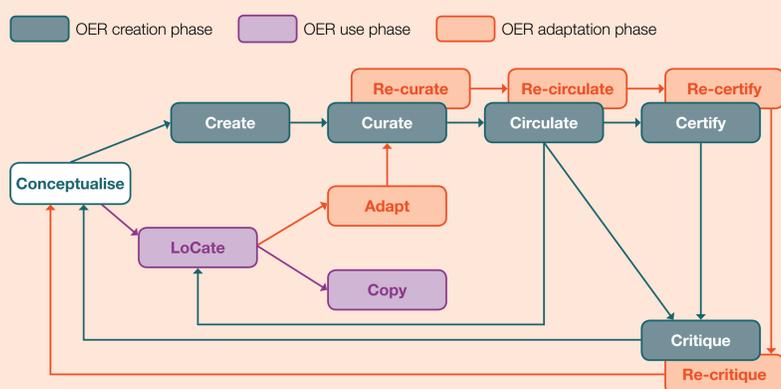


Figure 1: Hodgkinson-Williams' proposed "optimal" Open Education cycle

Table 1: Structural, cultural and agential factors influencing use of OER in the ROER4D studies

(example showing two components of the Open Education cycle)

	Structural factors	Cultural factors	Agential factors
LoCate (find)	Enablers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global, national, provincial or institutional repositories Institutional or project support and guidance Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volume of online resources 	Enablers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OER relevant to context hosted locally Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Searching for OER not the norm Need for quality guidelines 	Enablers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills to search for online materials Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OER awareness and open licensing awareness Time to find materials
Copy (use in original form, "as is")	Enablers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional or project support and guidance OER available in print Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly text-based, while video and audio sought 	Enablers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copying a common practice Relevance of materials Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OER not aligned to curriculum OER not applicable to context 	Enablers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expertise to judge quality Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety about ability to judge quality

Findings

Findings from the ROER4D project (Hodgkinson-Williams, Arinto, Cartmill & King, 2017) show that, in the Global South contexts studied, the maximal open education cycle is incomplete and not conducive to optimising the benefits of OER adoption. There are five key points of disjuncture:

- Limited adaptation of resources. There is a dependence on copying existing OER and a corollary failure to localise.
- Limited re-curation. When instances of OER adaptation do take place, there is inconsistent curation and re-hosting of derivative works on publicly available platforms or repositories, which limits access to derivative OER.
- Limited circulation. Derivative OER are seldom shared, due, in part, to the absence of a specific communication strategy.
- Limited certification. There are limited quality assurance processes.
- Absence of critique. There is a weak feedback loop for continuous improvement of the original or derivative work.

These points of disjuncture are shown in Figure 2.

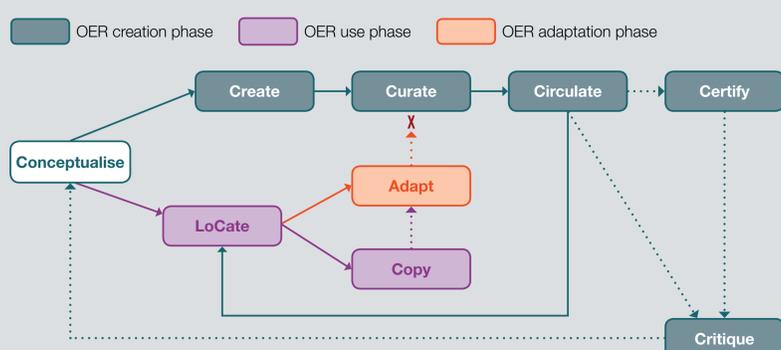


Figure 2: Disjunctures of the Open Education cycle in ROER4D studies

Conclusion

One of the most compelling value propositions of OER is that they can be regularly updated and localised, thus reducing the cost of producing educational materials. ROER4D studies show limited adaptation of OER by educators and students. A number of explanations for this are advanced, including the fact that most of the currently available OER are in English and a certain level of fluency in this language is required to understand and translate these materials.

A disjuncture in the ideal Open Education cycle is noted in the adaptation phase where educators and students seldom re-curate their adapted OER, thus limiting peer review, quality assurance and redistribution. This gap needs to be systematically addressed if materials from countries in the Global South are to become part of the global knowledge resource collection.

Full participation in the OER movement in the Global South requires that certain structural factors be put in place, including a minimum level of infrastructural support, permission to share materials and OER platforms to curate curriculum-aligned OER in local languages. While individual educators and some institutions are sharing OER, this willingness needs to be bolstered by a more profound cultural change where communities of educators and students are given governmental and institutional support to enable OER uptake – especially the creation and adaptation of OER produced in the Global South.

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Contact author: Glenda Cox <glenda.cox@uct.ac.za>
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