

Open Education in European Libraries of Higher Education

Implementing the UNESCO OER
Recommendation

October 2022

This work was supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

'Open Education in European Libraries of
Higher Education: *Implementing the UNESCO
OER Recommendation*'

Report commissioned by:
SPARC Europe

<https://sparceurope.org/>

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Report DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7244713



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1. INTRODUCTION

Background and objectives

This report presents the results of the third edition of SPARC Europe's Survey of European academic libraries on the topic of Open Education (OE) and Open Educational Resources (OER). The 2022 survey aims to explore what work is being done by academic librarians to implement the UNESCO OER Recommendation three years on from the publication of the Recommendation in November 2019. Moreover, the SPARC Europe survey for 2022 is structured following the five areas of action/objectives as per the UNESCO OER Recommendation. We plan to use the collected data to organise our activities going forward and to provide libraries with Open Education support in the future.

We believe libraries are the natural partners in such an Open Education effort with their strong track record and leadership in advancing Open Scholarship and Open Science (OS) over the last two decades in Europe. In fact, the global OE roadmap has evolved through various declarations and directives: the Cape Town Open Education Declaration, the Open Government Partnership, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and, recently, the UNESCO Open Educational Resources (OER) Recommendation (2019).

This UNESCO Recommendation on OER and its OER Dynamic Coalition and roadmap – of which SPARC Europe is part – maps out ambitious actions and strategies to implement actions that progress the OE agenda in Europe.

To inform the strategic path ahead for libraries in this area, in late 2019, SPARC Europe, in consultation with the European Network of Open Education Librarians ([ENOEL](#)), launched a survey to investigate the current state of the OE/OER offering in libraries in Higher Education in Europe (Proudman et al., 2020). This study continued in 2021 with a second edition of the survey, which generated a new report and a list of recommendations for libraries (Santos-Hermosa et al., 2021). The current report is the updated version, corresponding to the third survey in 2022.

Whilst some libraries in Higher Education have taken on the OE challenge, others are still to do so. The ultimate goal of this research is to increase OE and OER by raising awareness of OE policy and practice in HE institutions and their libraries. The findings will be used to inform the library community about the prospects of collaborating to build a more open and informed education environment facilitating access to educational materials for all.

Survey question set

The question set used in the survey is available in the Zenodo repository (DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.6483064](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6483064)).

The 2022 edition of the survey is designed around the five areas of action of the UNESCO OER Recommendation. It has 34 questions, structured in four main chapters (and nine sections within): statistical data (You and your Organisation), recent developments in OE, the UNESCO OER Recommendation areas, and perceived OER benefits and challenges.

Dissemination

This study consisted of an online survey open for seven weeks (from the 27th of April to the 16th of June 2022). It was distributed to academic librarians across Europe through the SPARC Europe and ENOEL networks and organisations, such as LIBER, IFLA, OE Global, Creative Commons, OCLC, ICDE, REBIUN, and CSUC.

Methodology

The information-gathering tool selected for the design and data collection was the online platform SurveyMonkey. We carried out both quantitative and qualitative analyses as part of this survey.

The questionnaire was designed with optional questions (and some mandatory ones, marked with *). Some were multiple choice, others were based on Likert scales, and there were also open questions to gain additional insights within certain areas.

Specifically, we asked the main individual responsible for OE in libraries to fill in the survey or, if absent, the Library Director. We requested only one response per organisation.

While we generally asked similar questions to aid comparison year on year, variables have changed slightly in some cases.

Data has been extracted from the SurveyMonkey platform in excel format. This platform has served as the basis for the quantitative analysis of each question and for generating the graphs. The workbench ATLAS.ti was used for the qualitative analysis of textual information (coding and classification).

136 responses were analysed from an initial total of 155 responses. Nineteen responses were eliminated from the analysis comprising 9 very incomplete answers, 7 duplicates, and 3 from outside Europe.

It should be noted that many questions were optional, so the number of responses to each question varied. Throughout this report, the total number (n) of responses obtained in each question (Q) is indicated.

Breakdown of survey respondents

This section contains a general description of the survey respondents, their institutions, and their countries of origin in order to know the context of the responses.

Countries

Responses come from institutions based in **28 countries** (Figure 1). The four countries with the most responses include Spain (31), Finland (14), the Netherlands (12), and France (11). Twelve countries see responses from a single institution.

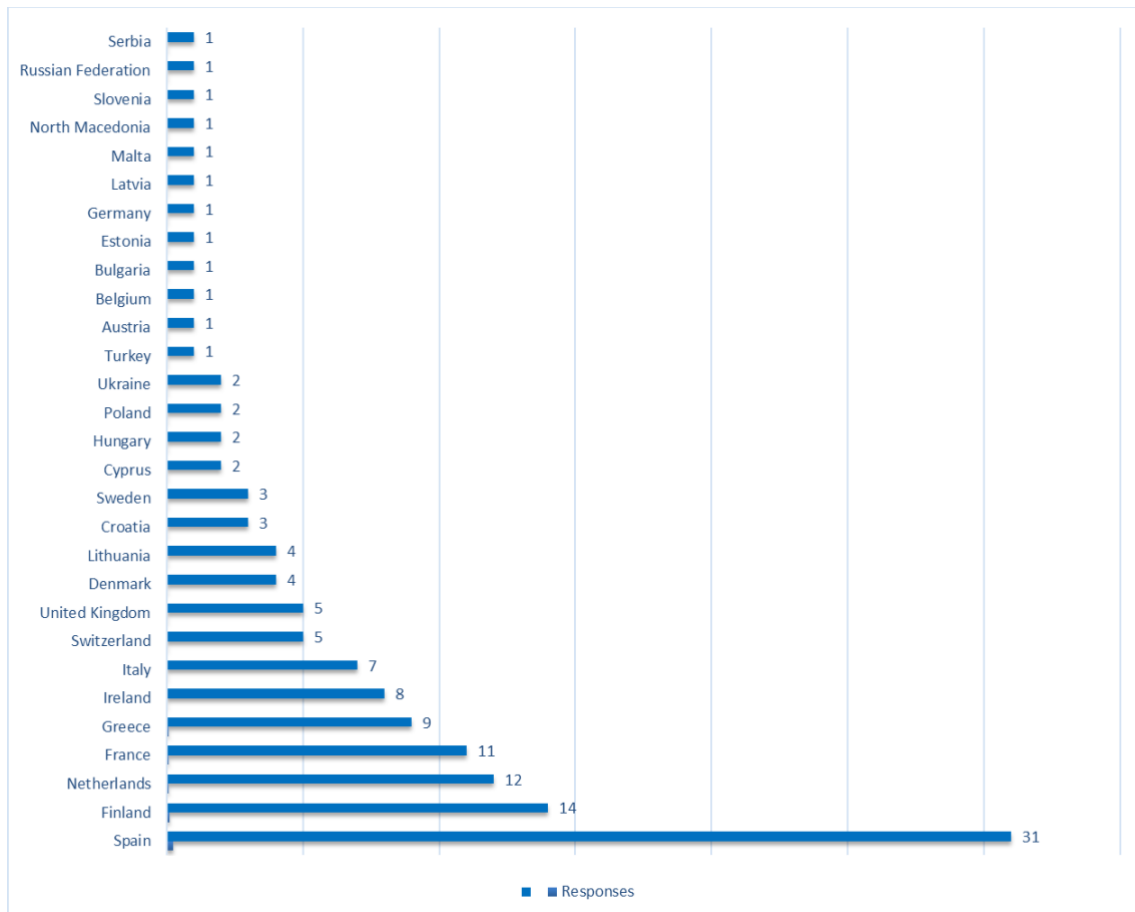


Figure 1: Respondent countries of origin (n=136) — Q2

In the 2020 and 2021 editions of the survey, respondents were mainly from Spain, the UK, and (last year mainly) also from Poland. This year, we have more respondents from the Netherlands and fewer from the UK and Poland.

Institutions

University/comprehensive institution was the most common type of organisation (98 out of 136 responses), followed by technical college (14), specialised institution (8), university of applied sciences (13), specialised institution (5), distance education learning (2), and teaching college (1).

Respondents come largely from universities/comprehensive institutions and technical universities, as in the 2020 and 2021 surveys, although this year, we see fewer responses from teaching colleges.

126 out of 136 institutions participating have shared their names (see Appendix A).

Roles and duration of OE activity

The SPARC Europe survey asked respondents how long they had been working in OE/OER. Half of the respondents (71 out of 136) reported being involved between 1 and 5 years (Figure 2). 70% have been working for more than ten years (13) or 6 and 10 years. The other third includes those working for less than one year (22, 16%) and those who are not involved in OE (18, 13%).

Compared to the results of the last edition, we observed a gradual increment in the total number of individuals active in the area of OE/OER in the 1 to 5-year range. However, this may be because, with the time elapsed between both surveys, those included in 2021 in "less than 1 year" now belong to the group of "1 to 5 years". This somehow confirms Zhang's idea that there seems to be continuous OE growth in Europe in recent years (Zhang et al., 2019).

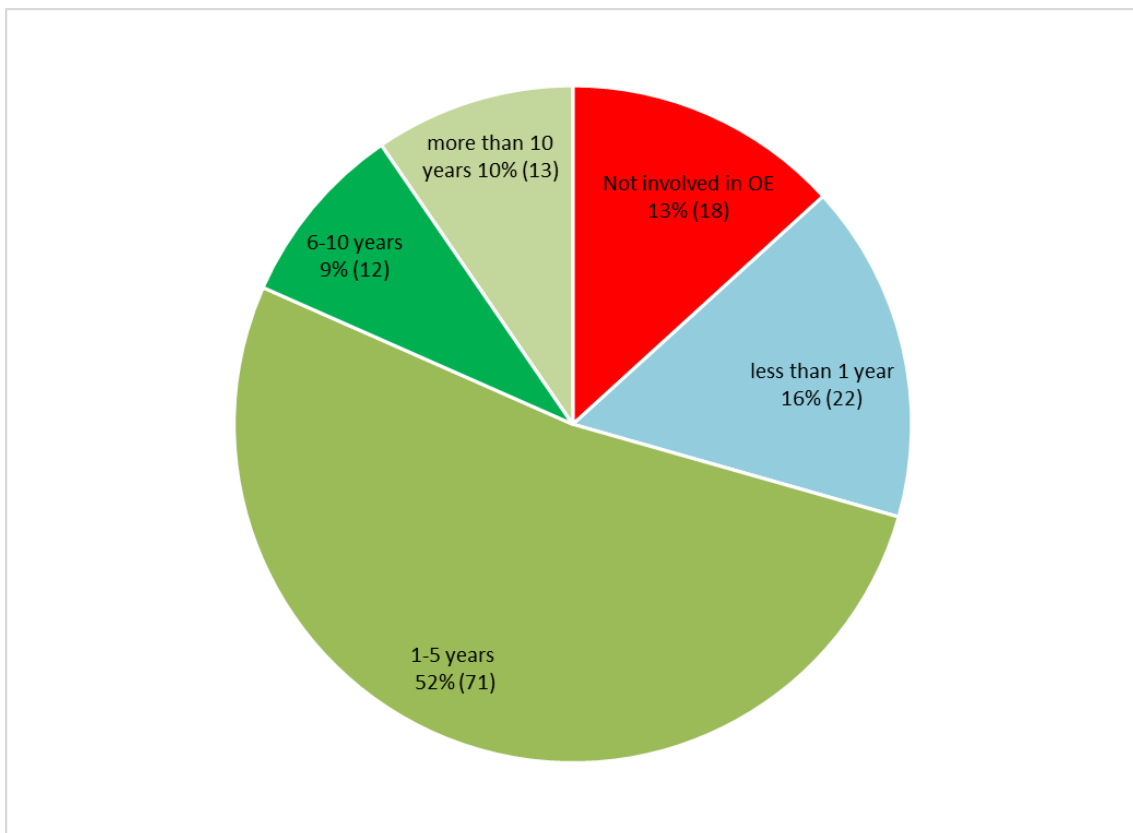


Figure 2: Years working in OE/OER (n=136) — Q5

The majority of respondents report having a more supportive role (78 of 136, 57%) compared to decision makers (51) (see Figure 3). Far fewer, i.e. seven others seem to have both roles (“a combination of a decision maker and supportive role” or “co-decision maker”, as some respondents specify) or other transversal roles (university officer, advisory, specialist).

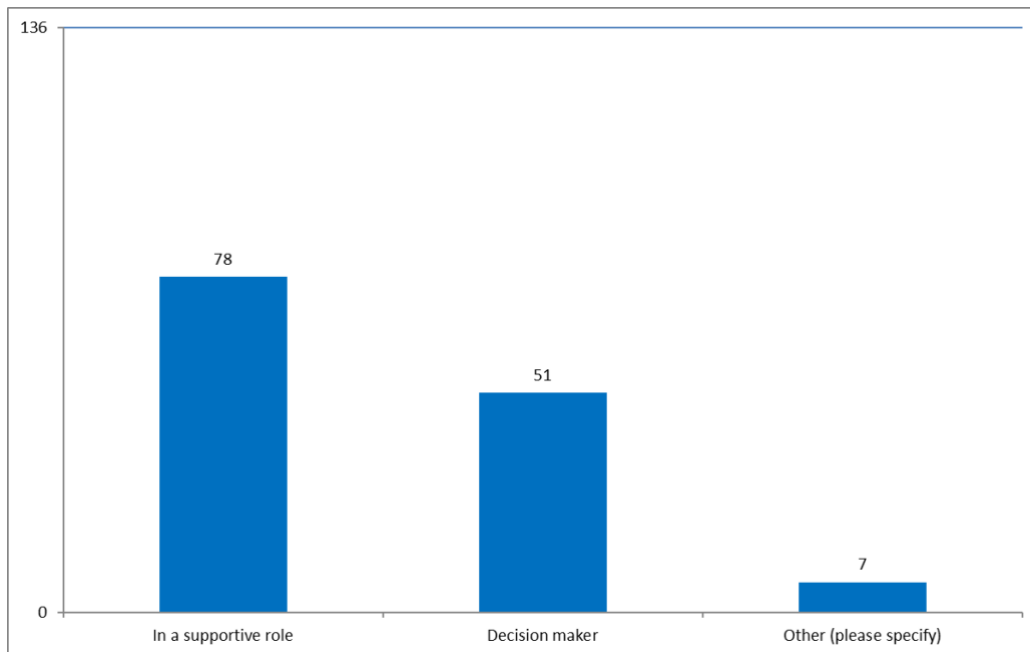


Figure 3: Role in the institution (n=136) — Q4

2. SURVEY RESULTS

2.1. RECENT IMPACT ON OPEN EDUCATION

This survey collected information on two areas that possibly impacted Open Education in the last year: the UNESCO OER Recommendation published in late 2019 and COVID-19.

COVID-19

Considering the impact of COVID-19 on Open Education at institutions (Figure 4), most respondents perceive that the pandemic moderately affected them (49). 39 said that it affected them a lot, and less than one quarter consider that COVID-19 has had little (17) to no impact (10) on their work in OE.

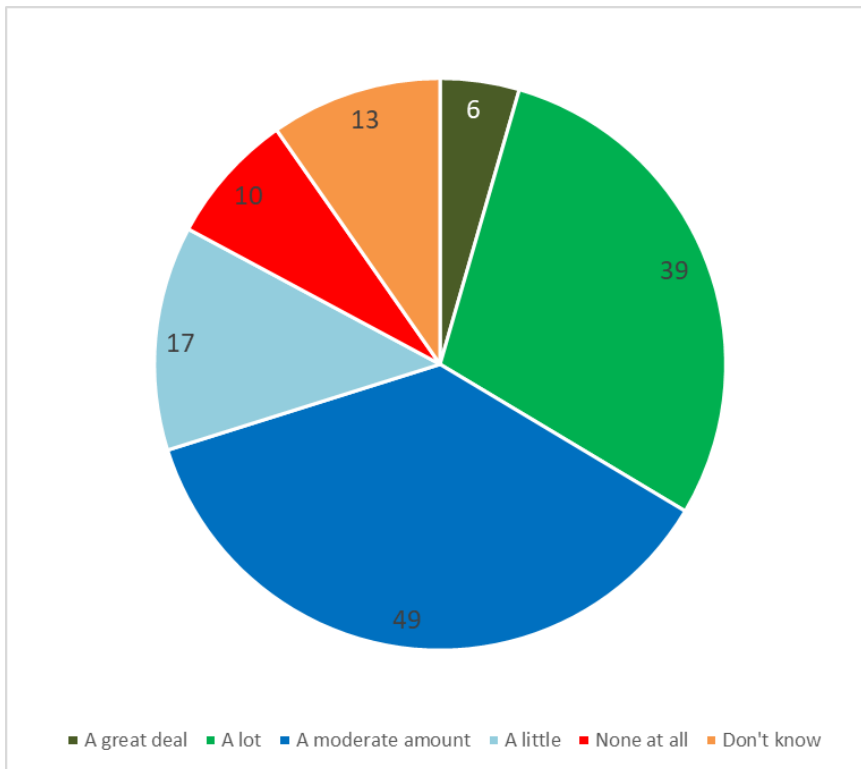


Figure 4: Extension of the effect of COVID-19 on academic institutions (n=134) — Q10

More specifically, Figure 5 below shows that the pandemic had a greater impact in terms of raising awareness of openness and the use of OER than in provoking change in OE policy development. It shows that COVID-19 has brought about a large increase in the awareness of the need for openness reported by 66 (72% of respondents), followed by greater use of OER stated by 51 (56%), and an increase in the creation of OER by a further 45 (50%). This is consistent with last year's survey results.

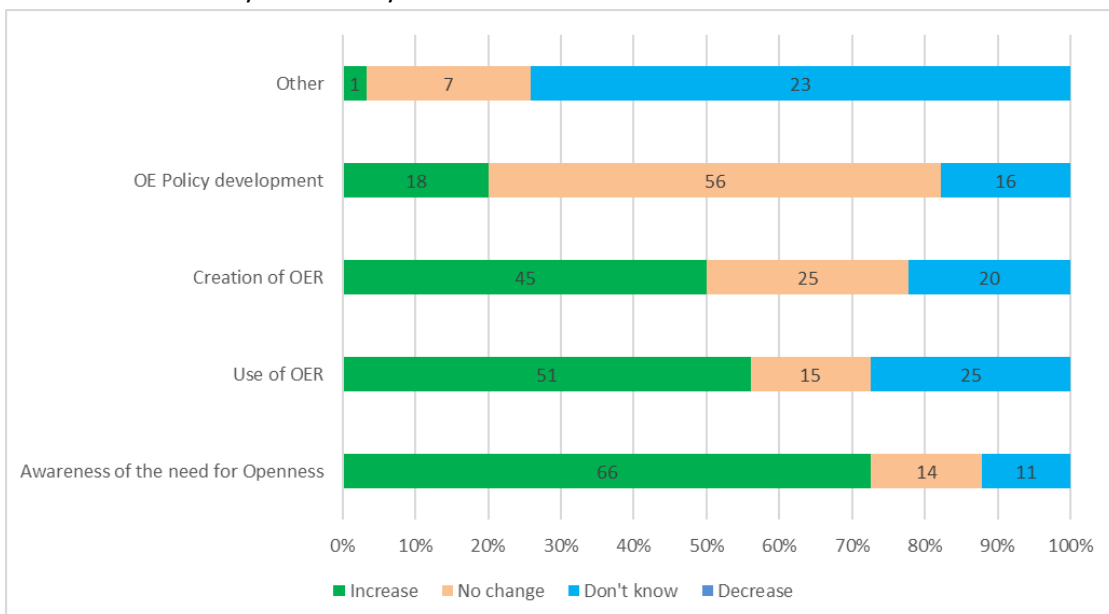


Figure 5. Impact of COVID-19 in academic institutions (n=91) — Q33

However, 60% of respondents concur that there was no change in Open Education Policy development nor in the creation of OER (28%). We see different opinions on the creation of OER: while a third considers there to have been no change, a half do indeed believe that it has increased, which probably reflects the different OE context.

Lastly, one respondent commented: *“The COVID pandemic has highlighted challenges with textbook provision and therefore increased opportunities for engagement with academic colleagues.”*

The role of the UNESCO OER Recommendation

Figure 6 shows a significant and clear familiarity with the UNESCO OER Recommendation (around 73% of the 136 respondents), with more than one-third reporting that they are very familiar with it. Nine per cent of respondents are not familiar with it at all.

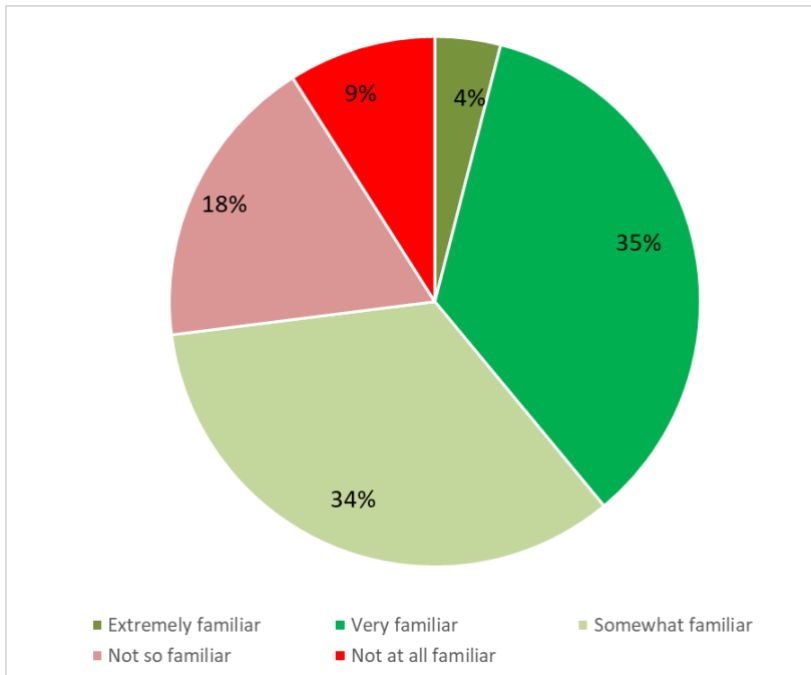


Figure 6: Familiarity with the UNESCO OER Recommendation (n=135) — Q8

Regarding the actions taken by libraries to implement the UNESCO OER Recommendation, Figure 7 shows that 22% have already taken some action — most of them by adapting or reviewing their strategy accordingly. In addition, 45% report that they are discussing options on how to address the Recommendation. Twenty-three per cent still need to take some kind of action.

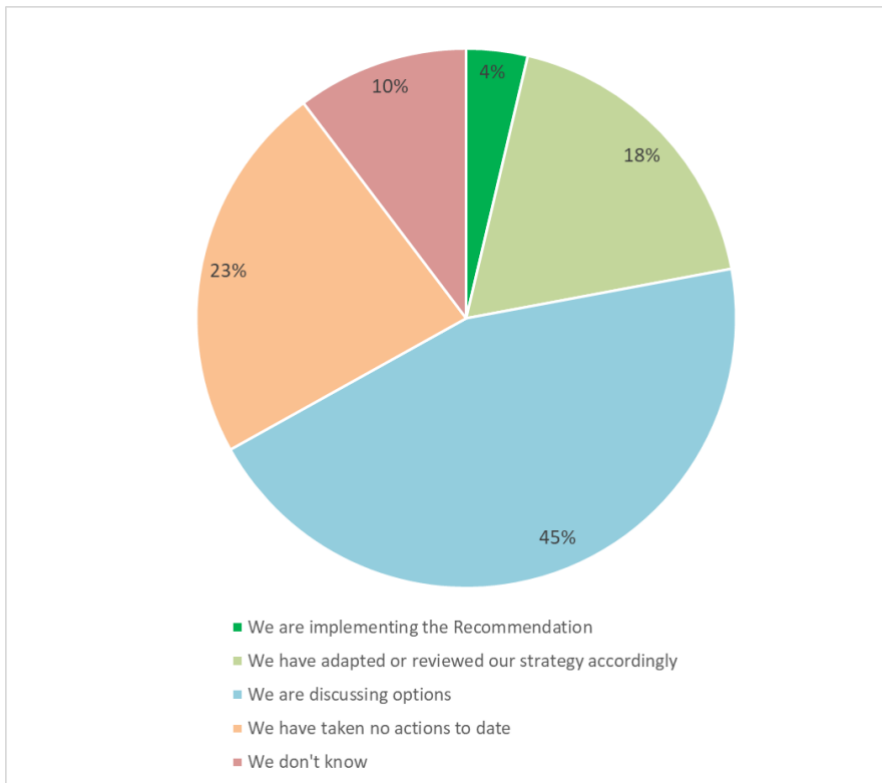


Figure 7: Actions taken to implement the UNESCO OER Recommendation (n=135) — Q9

Compared to last year’s survey, this data shows an increase in knowledge about the UNESCO OER Recommendation since there is a growth in familiarity (61%, in 2021, vs 73%, in 2022) and also a decrease in unfamiliarity (20,6 in 2021 vs 9% in 2022). For more information, see Figure 8. This suggests that awareness of the UNESCO OER Recommendation is increasing in Higher Education.

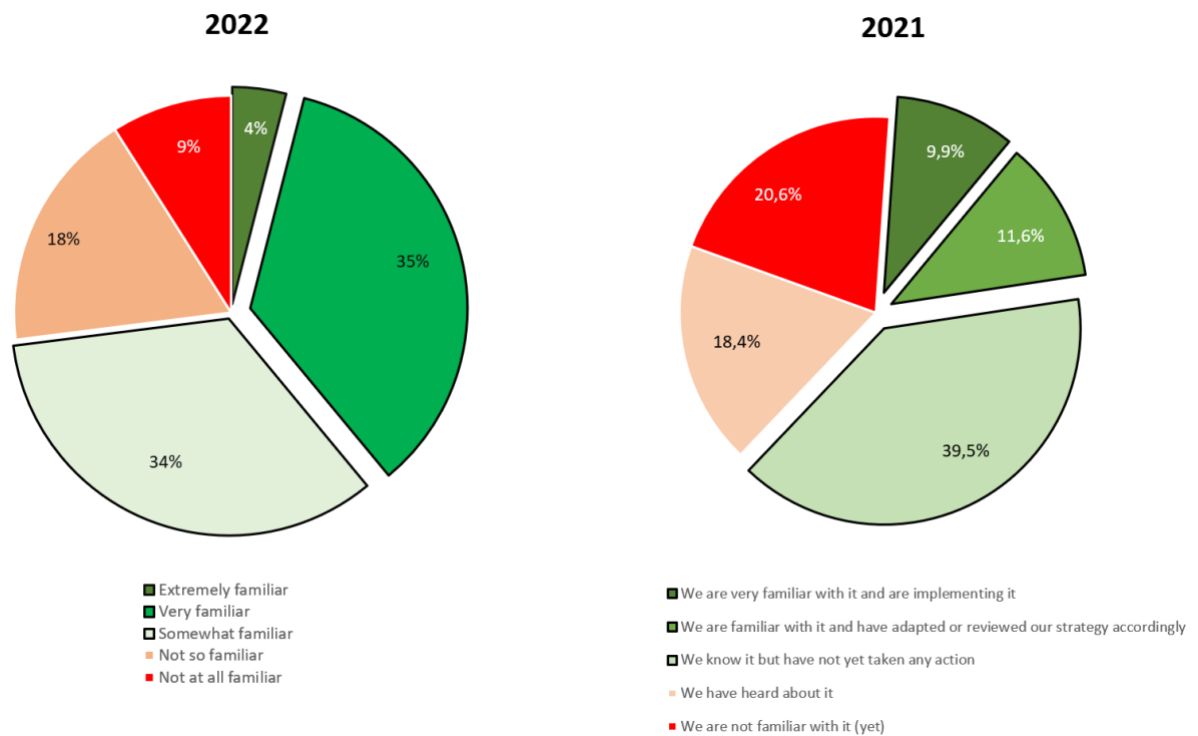


Figure 8: Comparison of familiarity with UNESCO OER Recommendation (Survey 2022 vs 2021)

2.2. Action Area 1. CAPACITY-BUILDING

According to the OER UNESCO Recommendation (2019), capacity-building consists of:

“[...] developing the capacity of all key education stakeholders to create, access, reuse, re-purpose, adapt, and redistribute OER, as well as to use and apply open licenses in a manner consistent with national copyright legislation and international obligations”.

The 2022 SPARC Europe survey addressed this area of action by asking libraries about their engagement with OE, their library OE advocacy activities, and the skills they need to deliver OE/OER services.

2.2.1. Library engagement with Open Education

Regarding the **role of libraries in advancing OE or OER** in their organisations, Figure 9 shows that two-thirds of respondents (67%) take the support or lead. The other third is divided between those who are still deciding (17%), those who do not have a role (11%), or who don't know (5%). These results suggest that most libraries are taking a role in advancing OE (mainly in a supportive way), but there are still some which are still deciding or have not yet or state that they just do not have a role.

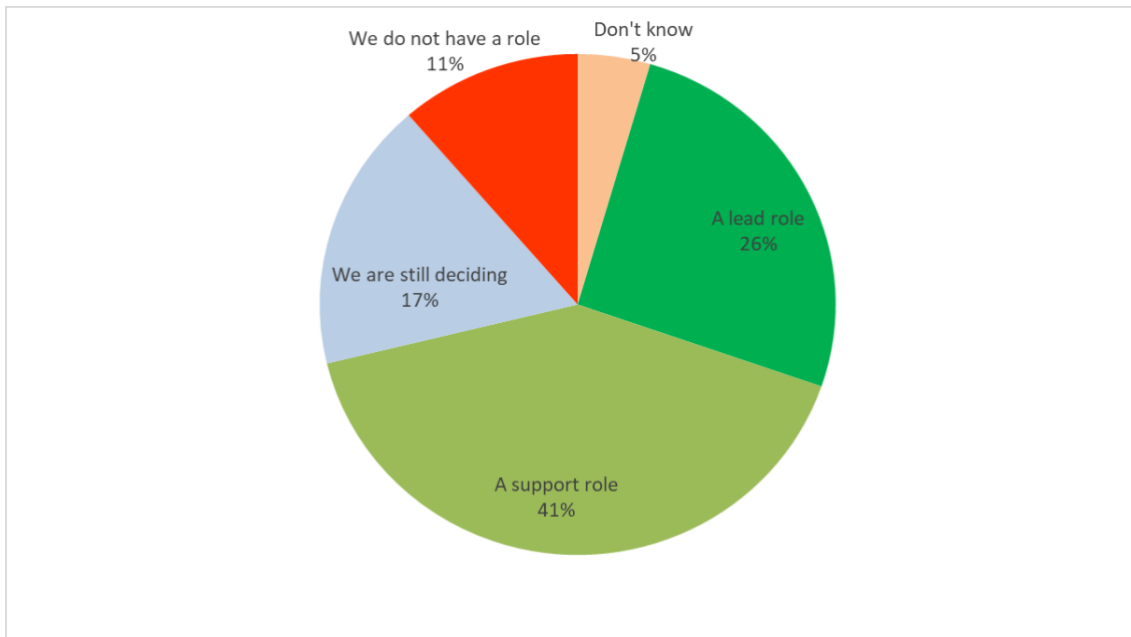


Figure 9: Libraries taking a role in advancing OE/OER (n=134) — Q11

Those **libraries taking the lead or supporting OE** (Figure 10) mostly do it from the Teaching and Learning Support Department (11), followed by Collection Management (5) and Research Support (3). Only three libraries report dedicated Open Education departments. The three departments used least frequently to support OE are senior management (2), scholarly communications (2), and innovation (1). Student services seem not to have a role in this sample since it did not get any response. This data echoes the results of the 2020 and 2021 surveys.

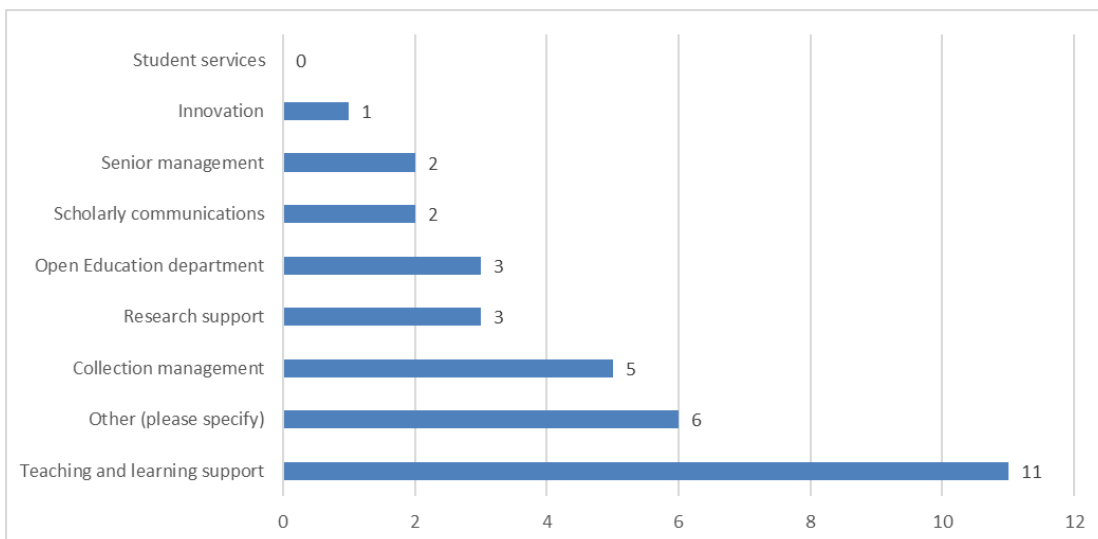


Figure 10: Library departments taking a leading/supporting role in OE/OER (n=33) — Q12

According to the information collected in an open field, some other departments supporting or leading include the following: User's Service, Information Provision and Access, and Educational Support. One library explained the interesting interplay between a range of bodies

at their specific university: *“There is a cross-cutting unit, under the Vice President for Strategy and Digital Education and coordinated by the Library Service. One school library director coordinates it, which is integrated by a broad team, including one project manager, one instructional designer, a team of teaching and learning support specialists from the library, a team of IT specialists in multimedia and learning, and an expert in educational data. Moreover, this unit works closely with other areas at the university, such as the Academic Service and the International Office, among others.”*

Figure 11 shows that more respondents reported not having a formal task force. However, of those who had a formalised organisational body for OE in their institution, more were reported at a library level than at an institutional one. In addition, this year, we see that half of the libraries have a task force and the rest do not. Data also revealed that most of the library-based task forces on OE were in those libraries leading or supporting OE/OER.

These results show an upward trend compared to the 2021 survey since we now see more library-based task forces reported than organisational-wide ones than in previous years.

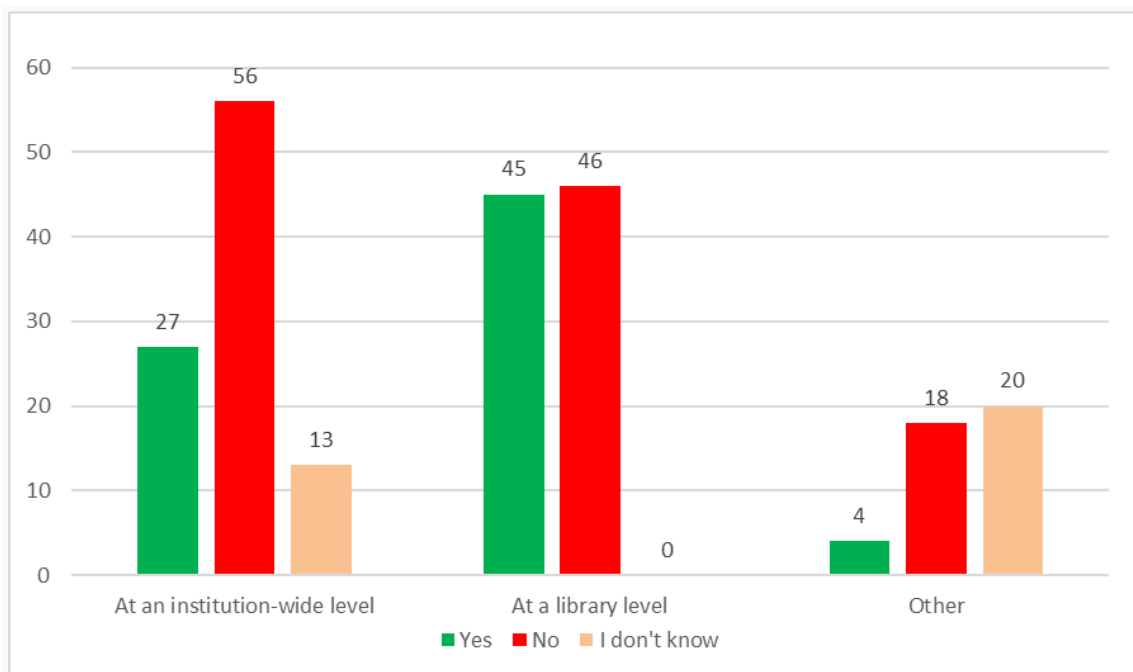


Figure 11: Existence of a task force or committee on OE (n=89) — Q13

2.2.2. Library Open Education advocacy

Respondents were asked to give details about how to advocate Open Education and OER, i.e. on who libraries are, how they work together, or what advocacy resources they utilise when promoting and communicating in favour of OE/OER.

Regarding the **tools, mediums, and events libraries are using to promote and communicate change in favour of OE/OER**, 69 answers were collected. Library training is by far the most mentioned, followed by other channels such as the website and social media, strategic plans and programmes, collaboration through consortia and working groups and through meetings, repositories, and projects. Table 1 shows more details¹ in this respect.

Tool, medium or event	Number	Details
Library Training	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses, Workshops, Seminars, Webinars (with Canvas, Teams, Blackboard) • Training materials (Libguides and OER toolkits) • Specific events (<i>Open Education Week, Open Lunch series, Open scholarship cafes</i>)
Website and social media	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library website • Social media
Strategic plans or programmes	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionally: strategy, policy, new Curricula Plan • Nationally: National programme, National Guide, National Conference of Open Science
Repositories (and other platforms)	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional repositories • Wikiwijs (OER platform created by Kennisnet and the Open University, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Netherland)
Library collaboration	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library consortia • Working groups • Collaboration with associations (SURF and SPARC were mentioned)
Meetings and helpdesk	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting boards • Appointments with stakeholders, e.g. faculty, students, or young scientists • Helpdesk for the academic community
Projects	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aprèn project • Digital Literacy initiative

Table 1 : Tools to promote/ communicate change in favour of OE/OER — Q 15

When comparing these results with our previous surveys, the top ways to advocate OE/OER are consistent since they mainly relate to digital communication (especially, sharing information on social media and the library website) and training. Respondents of this year's survey also provide additional information on strategic plans or programmes as a medium to communicate change in favour of OE/OER.

¹ Note that respondents could provide more than one answer in this question.

Libraries were asked about how they work with other departments (within the library or outside of it) when advocating for Open Education. 60 open-text answers were collected, which have been classified into three main areas:

1. Libraries that referred to other departments or centres they worked with (9) but did not specify how:

Who with (number of responses)	Answers
Educational Department (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Innovation Learning Centre ● Department of education support of the university ● Educational department ● Digital pedagogy department ● Other teaching support services
IT department (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Computer department ● Centre for Information Technology
Other departments (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Office of the University (policy) ● <i>“Different roles at the university”</i>

Table 2: Who with Libraries work together on OE/OER

2. Libraries that just referred to how they work together with other departments, but they don't concretely stipulate which departments (10):

How (number of responses)	Responses
Access to OER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finding sources ● Providing materials
Disseminating OER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Through repositories ● OER on library website
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finding out how to work with OER in a national working group ● Discussions ● Advising on Creative Commons licences
As part of a strategy/Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy ● Working group for Open Science Policy

Table 3: How Libraries work together on OE/OER

3. Libraries that stipulated how (actions) and who they work with when advocating for Open Education. The 41 responses can be grouped into six main areas (in order of frequency), including: dissemination; training; creation of training materials; training activities; as a part of a strategy/plan; with Open Science; and awareness. Indicated in the below table are also the levels of collaboration (internally, within the library,

within the institution, such as with other departments, or outside the institution). See Table 4 below for more details.

How		Who with	
Type of action	Detail	Level of collaboration	Detail
Dissemination (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repository Discovery systems OER on website 	Within the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other colleagues Library systems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OER as part of reading lists development 	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OER university service (CENT) Support and advice service of the teaching activity Teaching support departments and interested academic individuals Other departments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting OE across organization 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty
Creation of training materials (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open informative OER material Guides for teachers Training materials OER Toolkits 	Within the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other librarians
		Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty Academic and Innovations departments Services that support teaching and study programmes
		Outside the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a part of UNA, European cooperation network Other libraries (REBIUN Network)
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing training about OE/OER 	Within the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other colleague librarians
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OER Workshops Seminars 	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University quality of distance education centre (IUED) The innovative pedagogy vice-rector at the university Academic department
		Outside the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital open university as a partner Other libraries

activities (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses and textbooks • Information literacy at different levels in the educational programmes • Monitoring their OE/OER materials published. 	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty • Social Science faculty libraries
As part of a Strategy/Plan (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Task Force 	Within the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group of librarians
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education policy committee for OER awareness • Open Action Plan which includes general context of the evolution from OER to OE 	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate of Education Policies and Review office • Training department, Multimedia Lab and academics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice dean
With Open Science (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OS activities, including OER 	Within the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other librarians
		Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Science Policy Officer
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional working group
Awareness (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings 	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational resource services and the computer services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating 	Outside the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with an OE champion • collaborative Community of Practice called the Learning Technologist's Forum

Table 4: How and who with libraries work together on OE/OER

To summarise here, we observe that libraries are carrying out various kinds of actions, and they are working with a range of units within the library, in the institution and outside. Some of the most common actions identified relate to the dissemination of OER (through repositories and other platforms, websites, etc.) and providing training on OE/OER (through workshops, seminars, etc. and the creation of guides and other materials). In those cases, libraries mainly work with teaching support, academics and faculty departments. Other advocacy actions relate to a strategy or plan and libraries' work with decision-makers, such as

directorates and vice deans. As was also pointed out in the survey of 2021, libraries are working with Open Science colleagues (with different library members but also with Open Science officers and institutional working groups). Lastly, libraries continue raising awareness and promoting OE/OER across the organisation through meetings and inside communities of practices.

2.2.3. Library Services and Skills

The level of involvement of **those working or liaising with libraries in the advancement of OE/OER** differs across Europe (see Figure 12). In general, if we look at regular and ad-hoc liaison together, libraries are collaborating with academic departments and faculty most, followed by students. If we split the results by level of involvement, we observe that:

- On a regular basis, libraries mostly work with regional or national networks/communities/consortia (42), other libraries (37), and e-learning/distance education (31). On an ad-hoc level, the top bodies that liaise with libraries are again the previous three (with 42, 35 and 32 responses, respectively) plus teaching and learning centres (27). Beyond these, libraries also work with research centres or services (25), international networks/communities/consortia (25), Vice-rectorates or equivalent (24), and students, e.g. undergrads and postgrads (24) and academic departments (23). The rest of the bodies listed obtained less than 20 responses. E-learning/distance education and faculty departments, regional or national networks/communities/consortia, and other libraries are the top bodies that liaise with libraries in the advancement of OE/OER the most on both a regular and ad hoc basis.
- Libraries reported that the bodies they do not work with are mainly graduate schools (36), senior administration (32), legal departments (32), communication offices (30), student services (29), and assistive technology or disability Services (26). These results are coherent with the previous ones since they are generally the bodies obtaining fewer responses as they are working on a regular or ad-hoc basis.
- Assistive Technology (15 indicated that they don't know and 11 said N/A), Graduate Schools (15 said they don't know and 10 N/A), and ICT Staff (13 said they don't know) are – for libraries – bodies that are largely absent in supporting OE. The reasons for this could include being less known, used, or less applicable for some.
- Finally, a respondent filled in the 'other' field, adding that for their institution, *“OE is done outside of the library, but with a dedicated Open Science team”*.

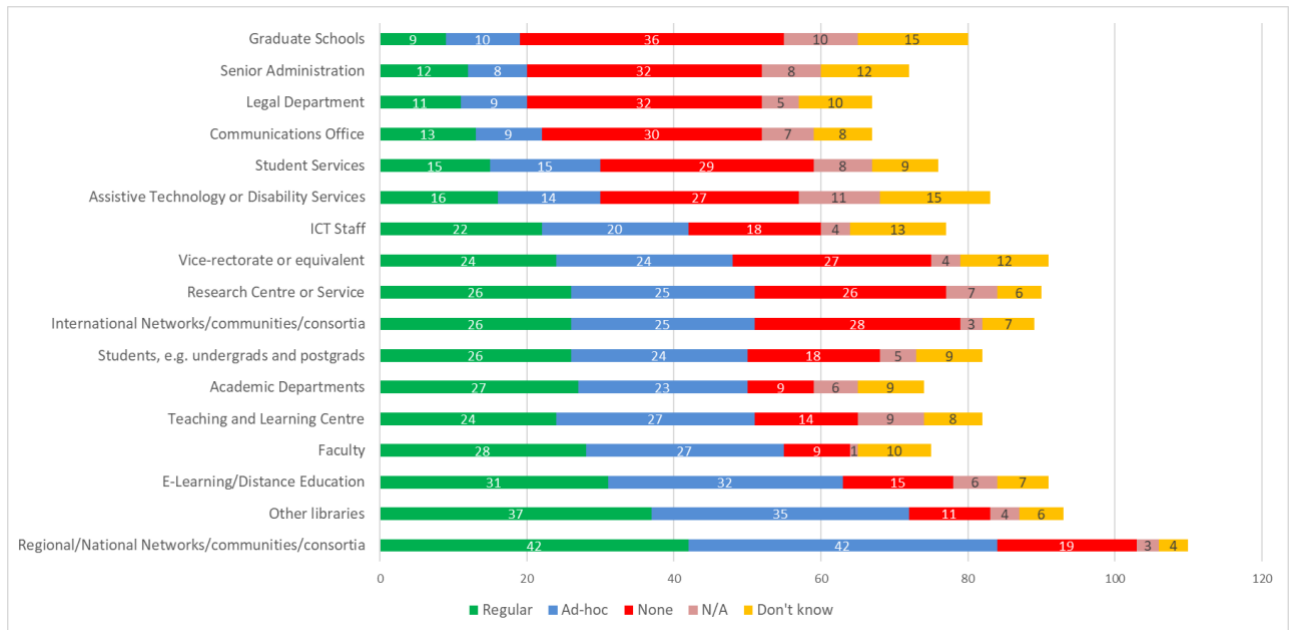


Figure 12: Level of liaison on OE/OER with other departments (n=110) — Q18

Comparing these results with those obtained in the 2021 edition of the SPARC OE survey, the e-learning/distance education department, faculty, and other libraries continue having high levels of responses. Results are similar for ad-hoc level liaison. On the other hand, this year's additional inclusion of Regional/National Networks/communities/consortia, an option not available in the last survey, seems to be key as a collaboration partner of libraries in OE/OER. This is because it was considered — on a regular or ad-hoc basis — by 76% of the total respondents answering this question.

Services

Libraries were asked about the services they provided related to Open Education and OER services. Figure 13 shows that the three top services are: advice on copyright and open licensing (96), information literacy including OE (86), and training/education (80). These are followed by management & storage services (69), discovery services (65), collection management/dealing with education publishers (61), metadata to index digital resources (56), and OER co-creation (55). The least popular areas are OER provision (20), course pack provision (11), and participatory design (10).

Two libraries reported that none of the listed services applied and four more specified that they also provide OE/OER services nationally (one, that collection management is organised on a national level, and another is involved in a national pilot to exchange course material between educational institutes).

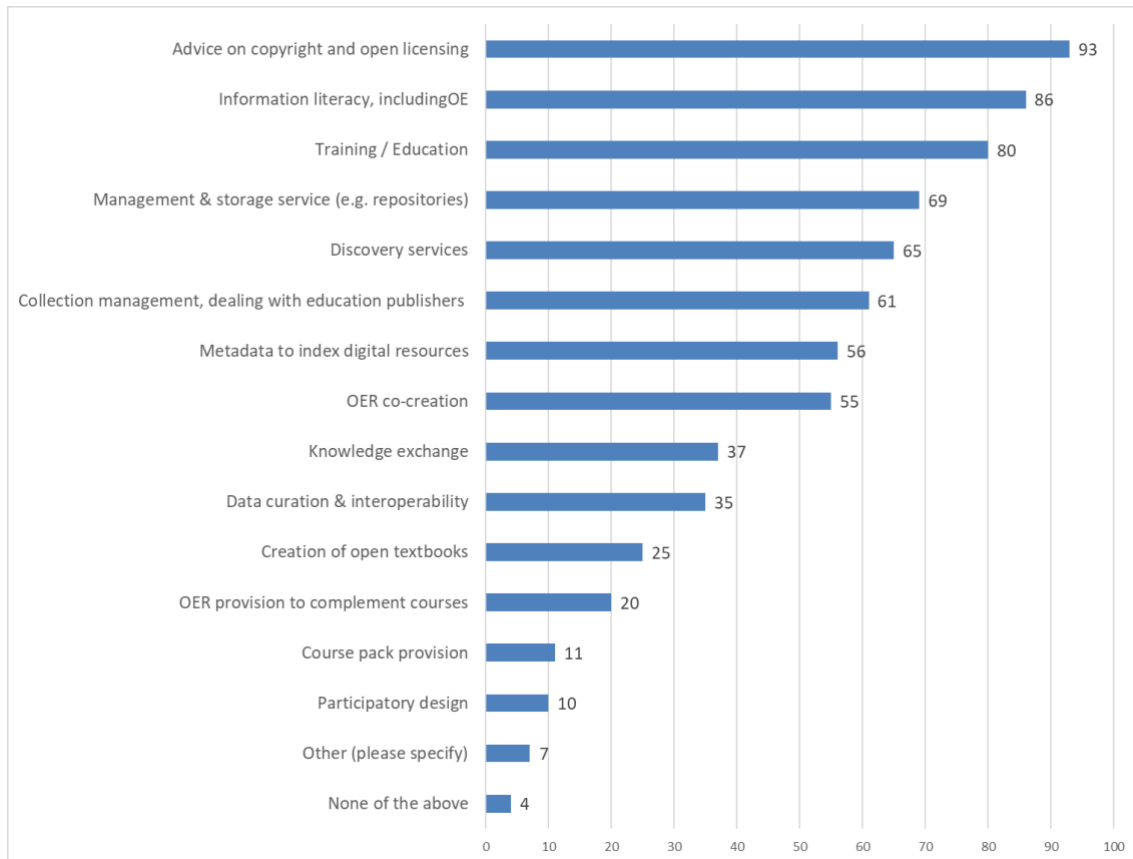


Figure 13: Provision of OE/OER services (n=110) — Q16

Results are aligned with the previous 2021 and 2020 surveys in the sense that libraries are providing more OE/OER services in areas that are close to their core work and fewer services in those areas furthest from their traditional tasks and more related to teaching. However, some differences were also observed. For instance, knowledge exchange is now situated lower in the list of services offered (in the ninth position), while in 2021, this was in the first position. This shift should also be observed in the future since it can suggest a change of priorities in the OE/ OER services offered by academic libraries.

Skills

Survey respondents were asked to what extent their library had the skills to support Open Education (Figure 14) with choices ranging from ‘full skill set’, ‘many skills’, ‘limited skills’ to ‘no skills’ or ‘Don’t know’.

In general, respondents considered themselves as having a higher level of ‘many skills’ than ‘full skills’ in almost all the areas covered by this survey. This was except for information literacy and OER provision to courses, which got the same number of responses on both levels.

The three top areas in which libraries report having a full set of skills to support OE are information literacy, including Open Education (36), training (27), and management and storage services such as repositories (25). These same three areas are also the ones that

obtained the most responses in ‘many skills’ (36, 27 and 26 respectively), with the only difference being that the area of copyright and open licences (57) is in the lead this year and well ahead showing more competence in the area.

We also see libraries consider that they have fewer skills in the areas of the creation of open textbooks, OER provision of courses and participatory design (Figure 13), which are also the ones that obtain the lowest number of responses (between 9 and 24). These areas are further from the more traditional roles of libraries. They are, at the same time, also more related to teaching, as was also confirmed in the 2021 survey.

The only difference with respect to the last survey is that in 2022 we see few respondents reporting ‘limited skills’ and almost none on ‘no skills’. One might conclude that libraries are becoming more confident with their skill set or improving their competencies in these different areas.

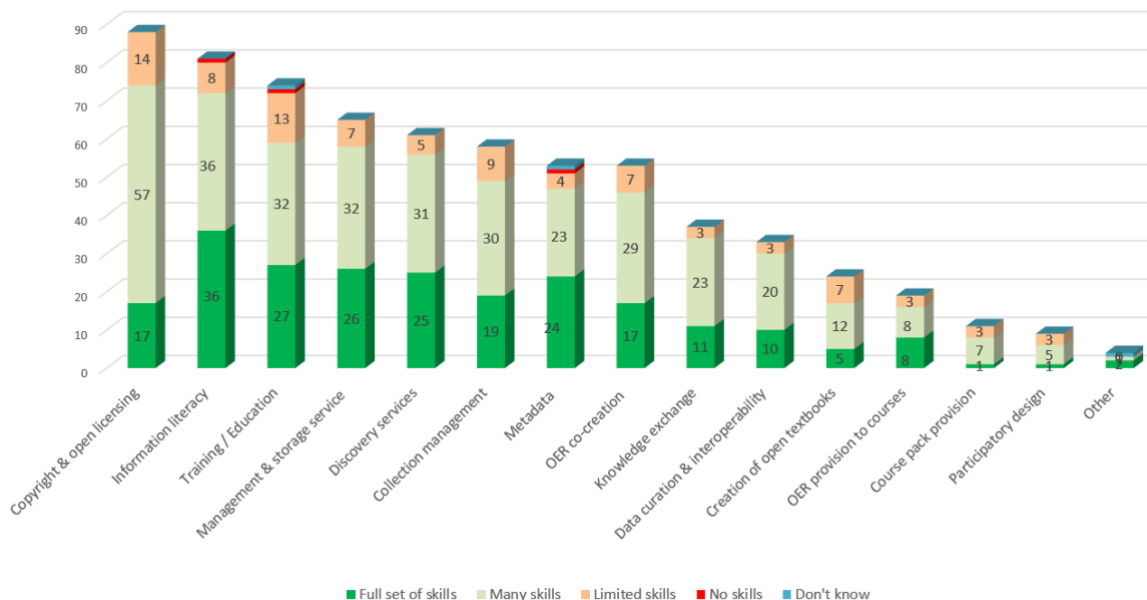


Figure 14: Library skills that support Open Education (n=93) — Q17

2.3. Action Area 2. DEVELOPING SUPPORTIVE POLICY

According to the OER UNESCO Recommendation (2019), developing supportive policy is about:

“[...] encouraging governments, and education authorities and institutions to adopt regulatory frameworks to support open licensing of publicly funded educational and research materials, develop strategies to enable the use and adaptation of OER in support of high quality, inclusive education and lifelong learning for all, supported by relevant research in the area.”

The SPARC Europe survey investigated the local, regional, and national policy contexts of OE policymaking in Europe and the role of the library within that. In the survey, we define policy as a written document that stipulates the expectations related to Open Education for an institution or country. Policy leads to the creation, increased use and/or support for improving OER. We define policy here as an institutional policy document, laws, rules, green papers, white papers, roadmaps, declarations, and funding programmes.

OE Policies

Twenty of the 110 institutions that answered this question reported having a policy that addresses OE in some way (Figure 15), and 14 shared specific information on these policies, which are listed in Appendix B. A further 26 institutions stated that a policy is under development, and 21 reported that one is under consideration. Thirty-five institutions indicated that they do not have an OE policy, and eight were unsure whether a policy existed.

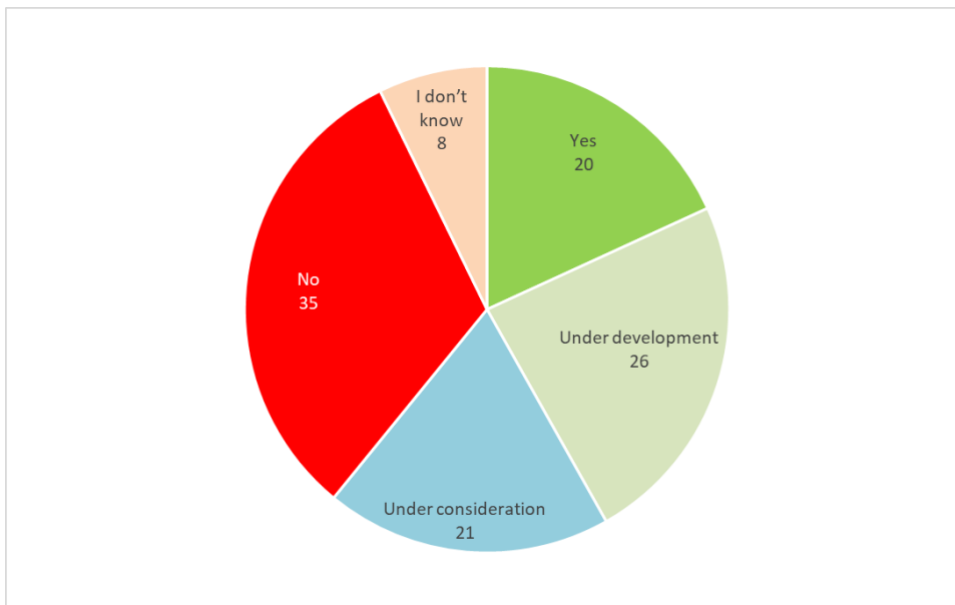


Figure 15: Existence of an OE policy (n=110) — Q19

Of those 46 institutions that have a policy or that have one under development (Figure 16), only 6 are standalone policies dedicated to Open Education, whereas 30 are part of a larger overarching policy. Of these, 34 indicate library involvement in the conception of the OER policy (Figure 17). The library was involved in conceiving 6 of the standalone policies and 13 of the policies, which are part of a larger one. See Appendix B for the list of institutions that have reported having policies.

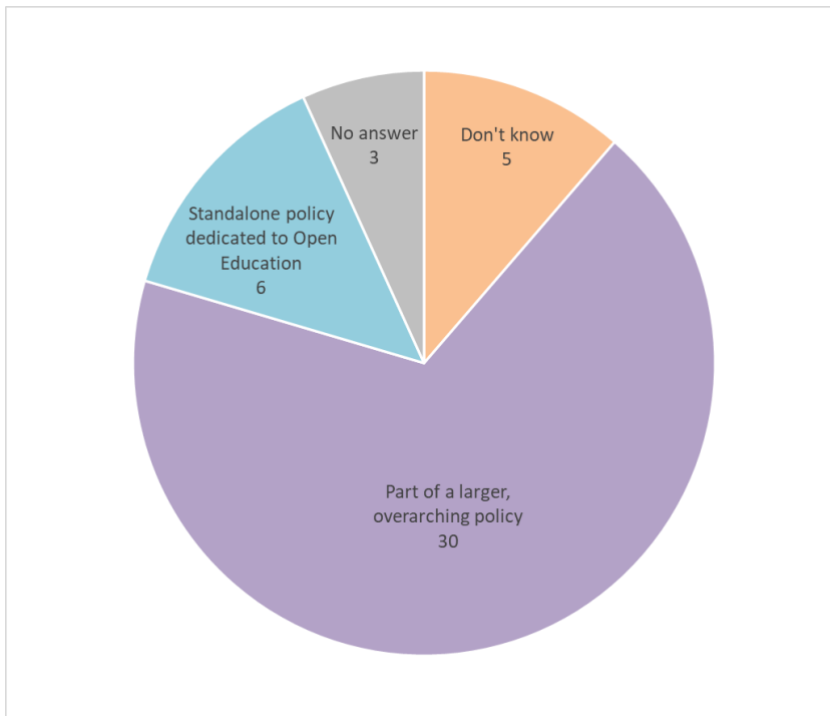


Figure 16: Kind of OE policies (n=44) — Q20

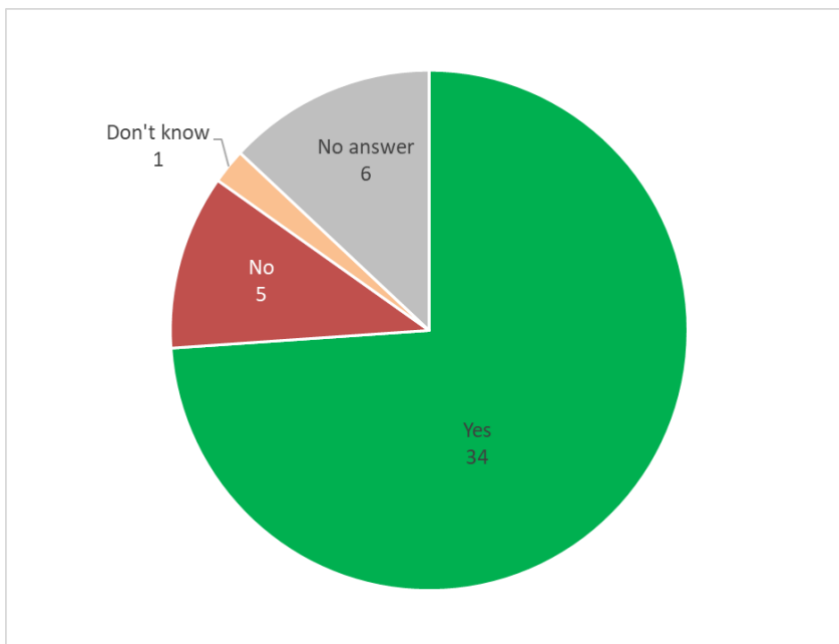


Figure 17: Library involvement in policy conception (n=46) — Q21

Comparing the current survey with the results of the 2020 and 2021 surveys, although fewer policies were reported now (20 vs. 27 in the last surveys), two new institutional policies are reported to have been recently approved but are still unavailable in English (see details in Annex A). In addition, this year, libraries report policies are increasingly part of a larger or overarching policy participation in OE policies (30 vs. 17 in 2021, and 14, in 2020). In addition, there has also been twice as much involvement in the conception of OER policies (34 vs. 22 in

2021, and 11, in 2020). These results could indicate possible trends in policy development, which should be observed over time.

2.4. Action Area 3. ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY OER (Q22-25-26)

According to the OER UNESCO Recommendation (2019), effective, inclusive, and equitable access to quality OER is:

“[...] supporting the adoption of strategies and programmes including through relevant technology solutions that ensure OER in any medium are shared in open formats and standards to maximize equitable access, co-creation, curation, and searchability, including for those from vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities...[] ensuring access to OER that most suitably meets both the needs and material circumstances of target learners and the educational objectives of the courses or subjects for which they are being provided...[ensuring that the principle of gender equality, non-discrimination, accessibility and inclusiveness is reflected in strategies and programmes for creating, accessing, re-using, adapting, and redistributing OER].”

Relating to the UNESCO OER Recommendation, the survey asked whether libraries take proactive steps to provide/create relevant OER that are designed to be: Sensitive in relation to different ages, races, genders, socioeconomic statuses, etc.; Culturally equitable (embodying the values, policies, and practices of all people); Linguistically diverse (e.g. in local languages and in at least one second language); and Accessible to meet both needs and material circumstances of target learners (e.g. available offline, in printed version, etc.). An ‘Other’ field allowed respondents to add additional activities. Respondents deal with encouraging effective, inclusive, and equitable access to quality OER in different ways.

Comparing the results obtained in each of the four areas, Figure 19 shows that most design OER to make resources more accessible for a range of users (66 out of 103). For example, one respondent shared that *“all of these steps are integrated in the university's practices and the library is part of them, so we help if needed. However, the library's supportive role is mostly on accessibility issues”*.

Beyond accessibility, the other three categories (Figure 18) saw slightly fewer respondents designing culturally equitable OER (40), making them accessible in local languages and in more than one language (linguistically diverse) (56) or sensitive to DEI areas such as age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. (42).

In contrast, a considerable number of libraries reported that they do not take proactive steps to provide diverse OER (44), design resources in more languages (40), or make them culturally equitable (41) as indicated by the red bars in Figure 17.

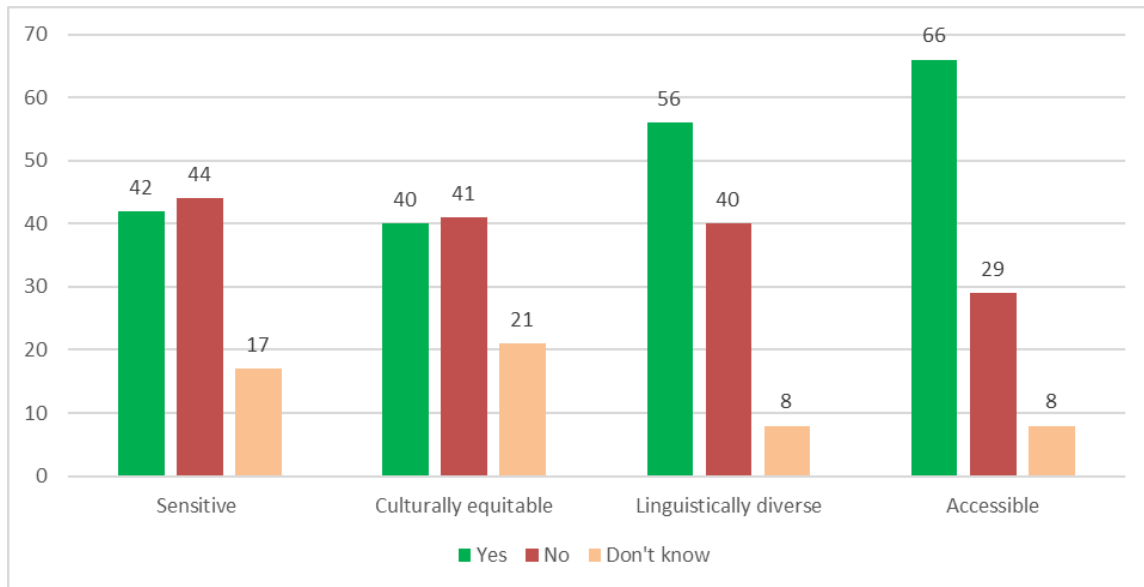


Figure 18: Steps to provide/create relevant OER (n=105) — Q22

On deeper analysis of this data, 27 of 105 respondents reported addressing all four DEI areas. These come from Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. Twenty out of those 27 libraries answered that effective and inclusive access is reflected in OER strategies and programmes, which indicates that DEI seems to be addressed in the strategy of some organisations.

Figure 19 shows that while 41% of respondents promote effective and inclusive access to OE/OE strategies and programmes, 24% consider it not applicable, 19% do not know, and 16% do not at all. Most of those libraries that promote DEI in OE/OER strategies do it as part of an institutional-wide programme or in accordance with the institutional strategy (concretely, 59%). The rest ensure this in collaboration with their DEI Office (28%) or via a working group (1%).

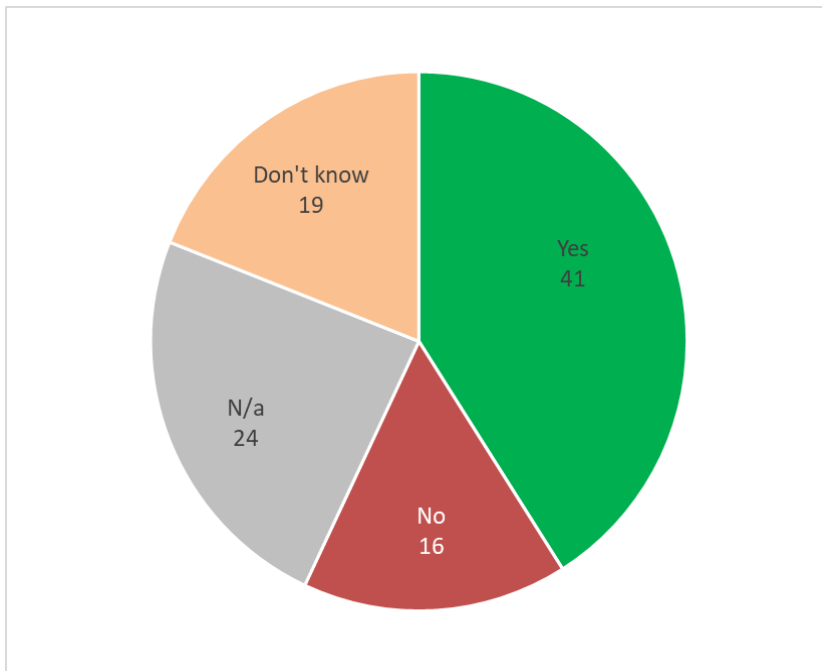


Figure 19: Libraries promoting DEI in OE/OER strategies (n=100) — Q25

According to some open answers, those institutions not promoting DEI report that this is due to not having a specific DEI strategy or programme at the library nor the institution, they just follow the institutional framework, or they are not at this stage. Two respondents express a future intention to do more by saying, *“We hope that in the not too distant future, as part of an institutional-wide programme or in accordance with the institutional strategy”* and *“We would hope to address all of these fully over time, but we are in the very early stages of providing and creating open material.”*

Finally, comparing data on DEI with last year's edition of the survey, the results are very similar. The DEI aspect that libraries are addressing the most continues to be accessibility. One of the open responses reinforces this idea by saying: *“All of these steps are integrated in the university's practices and the library is part of them, so we help if needed. However, (the) library's supportive role is mostly on the accessibility issues.”* In conclusion, libraries will need to carry out more work to address DEI needs to meet the goals of the UNESCO OER Recommendation.

2.5. Action Area 4. SUSTAINING OER

According to the OER UNESCO Recommendation (2019), nurturing the creation of sustainability models for OER deals with:

“[...] supporting and encouraging the creation of sustainability models for OER at national, regional and institutional levels, and the planning and pilot testing of new sustainable forms of education and learning.”

The survey addressed this action by investigating library financial and human resources dedicated to OE/OER.

When libraries were asked about the number of FTE (full term equivalent) staff members dedicated to working on OE/OER (excluding Open Access, Open Scholarship or Open Science), Figure 20 shows that around 43% (44 out of 102 responses) have less than 1 FTE. The other two-thirds are divided between those with more than 2 FTE staff (22 with 1-5, 2 with 6-9 and 2 with more than 10), and those who have no personnel (28) or Don't know (4). This shows that, in general, very limited human resources are dedicated to OER at present in libraries of Higher Education.

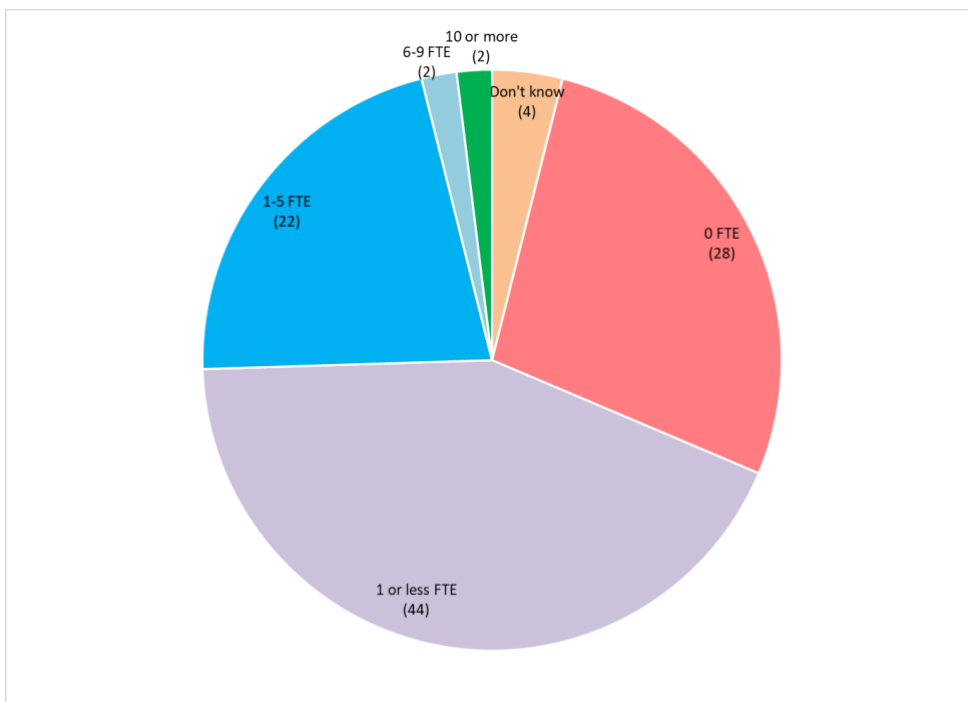


Figure 20: Number of library FTE dedicated to OE/OE (n=102) — Q27

As far as financial resources are concerned such as grants programmes or seed funding to encourage the creation of OERs (Figure 21), only 13 stated that they have one with 60 respondents (or 58%) reporting *not* having one. Of those 13 institutions with a grant programme, we see grants that cover the following kinds of projects:

- A pilot as part of an education innovation programme at the university;
- Funds for Open textbooks;
- Open Science Programme;
- Open Science projects that include OE/OER;
- Libguides projects funding;
- MOOC projects;
- Teaching Innovation and Development Plan;
- Teaching projects that help create OER.

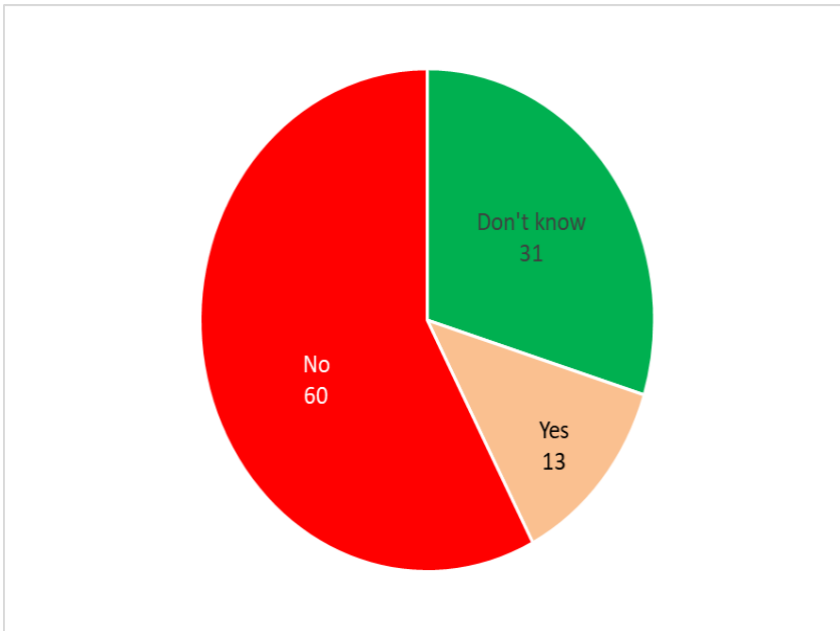


Figure 21: Existence of OER grant programme (n=104) — Q28

When libraries were asked where they acquire seed funding for Open Education work (Figure 22), 54% (out of a total of 95 respondents) reported there was a library budget, 24% have other institutional budgets, 13% came from a national/regional or European project (half each one), and 6% was from 'other' (such a local project fund that was mentioned by one respondent). The rest 23% don't know.

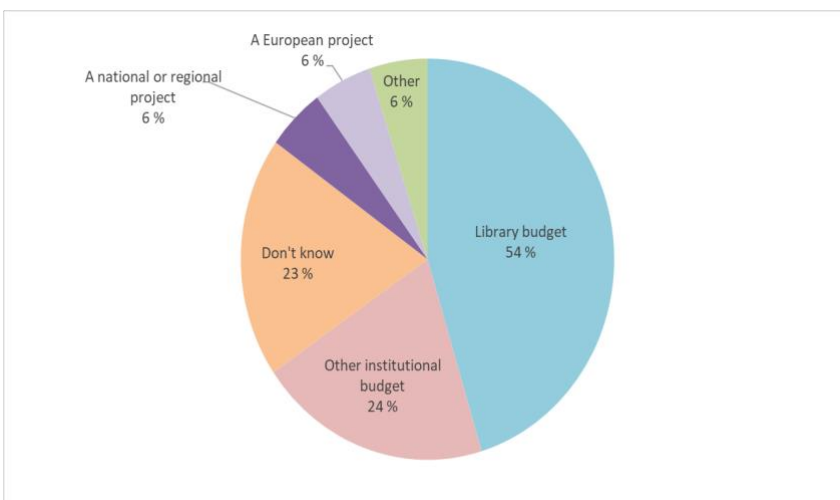


Figure 22: OER Funding provenience (n=100) — Q29

Comparing this data with that of the previous editions of the survey, the number reporting having a grant programme was similar. However, a question introduced this year asked libraries where they acquire seed funding for Open Education work, and 54 respondents out of 100 indicated the library budget.

2.6. Action Area 5. PROMOTING AND REINFORCING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

According to the OER UNESCO Recommendation (2019), fostering and facilitating international cooperation should consider:

“[...] supporting international cooperation between stakeholders to minimize unnecessary duplication in OER development investments and to develop a global pool of culturally diverse, locally relevant, gender-sensitive, accessible, educational materials in multiple languages and formats”.

Survey respondents were asked if their libraries were involved in creating, maintaining, or participating in OE networks or programmes. In general, it can be observed (Figure 23) that just as many libraries participate in networks as do not. Less of them are involved in projects. More specifically, 46 out of 102 respondents reported they were involved in networks and 30 in projects /programmes.

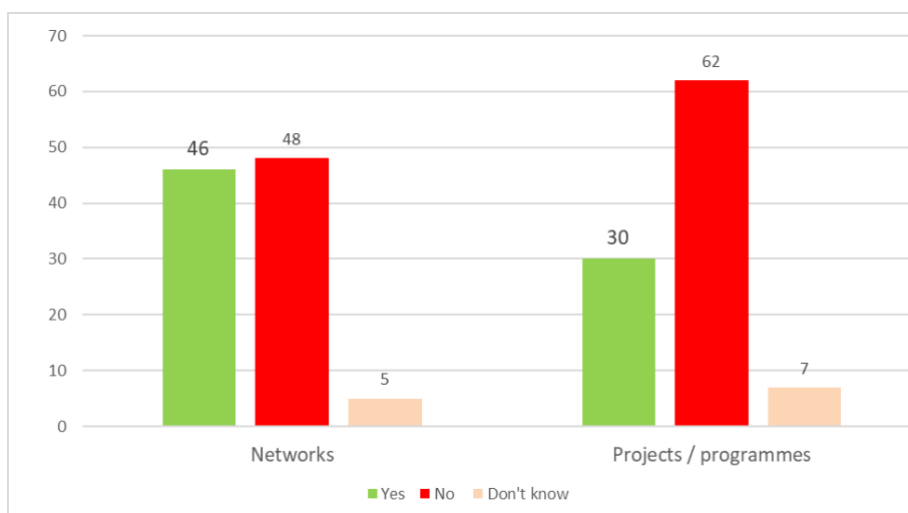


Figure 23: Library involvement in OER networks and projects/programmes (n=102). Q30

32 libraries provided more information about OE/OER projects/programmes and networks they were involved in. While networks are named in Table 3, the few projects mentioned include:

- CeOS_SE Project — Citizen-Enhanced Open Science in Southeastern Europe Higher Education Knowledge Hubs;
- Earth Observation (EO) Data Project;
- National Initiatives for Open Science in Europe – NI4OS Europe Project;
- The SPARC Open Education Leadership Programme;
- YUFERING Project;
- Wikimedia Project.

Networks	Libraries	SPARC Europe's ENOEL (European Network of Open Education Librarians)
		LIBER OER group
		Working group of academic Libraries, Open and Online Education (B-OOO) - Netherlands
		REBIUN (Spanish Network of Universities Libraries)
		SHB/UKB working group (consortium of Dutch libraries)
	Universities	Enlight Network (European University Alliance), in a working group of Open Science and OER
		YERUN (Young European Universities Network)
		YUFE (Young Universities for the Future of Europe)
		UNICA (institutional Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe)
		Aurora Alliance
	National	Finnish national open education expert panel
		National library working group Open & Online Education
		National networks of Open Science and Open education
		SURF's special interest groups (SIGs) - IT in Dutch education and research
		Edusources (platform for digital (open) educational resources for Dutch education)
	Repositories and Platforms	Wikiwijs (platform for the use and development of OER in education)
		OPENAire (open scholarly communication infrastructure to support European research)
		MERLOT
	Other	The diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) Office

Table 6. Networks in which Survey respondents' libraries are involved

These results are consistent with those of previous editions of the OE Survey where libraries seem to be more involved in networks (national and international) than projects.

2.7. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

The survey also included two questions about the top three opportunities or benefits and the top challenges that libraries identify in supporting Open Education. To analyse the diverse qualitative responses collected, all data was broken down into the following clusters: Policy, Practice, Resources, Culture, and Institutional Environment.

Five larger themes emerged from the responses: Policy, Practice, Resources, Culture, and Institutional Environment:

1. Policy: includes mentions of strategies and policies.
2. Practice: actions to support OE in libraries such as access, quality processes, and ways for creating, using, reusing, and sharing OER;
3. Resources: includes human, financial, legal, technological, and training resources.
4. Culture: in terms of cultural change, awareness, advocacy, inclusivity, or more interpersonal issues.
5. Institutional environment: aspects range from institutional collaboration, incentives and relations, to Open Science and the role of the library.

The total number of instances across all responses is 336, which is composed of 160 opportunities/benefits and 176 challenges. Due to the nature of the qualitative analysis, many of the responses have been coded to multiple themes, so the total number of responses for all themes is larger than the number of individual responses. Many of the topics were mentioned in both the challenges and the opportunities questions, which may reflect the different stages of respondents on their institutional journeys with OER. Some of the themes see more challenges than benefits or opportunities, such as Resources and Culture whereas Practice and Institutional Environment see more advantages than issues. The split between each of the themes and the total number of instances is illustrated in Figure 24.

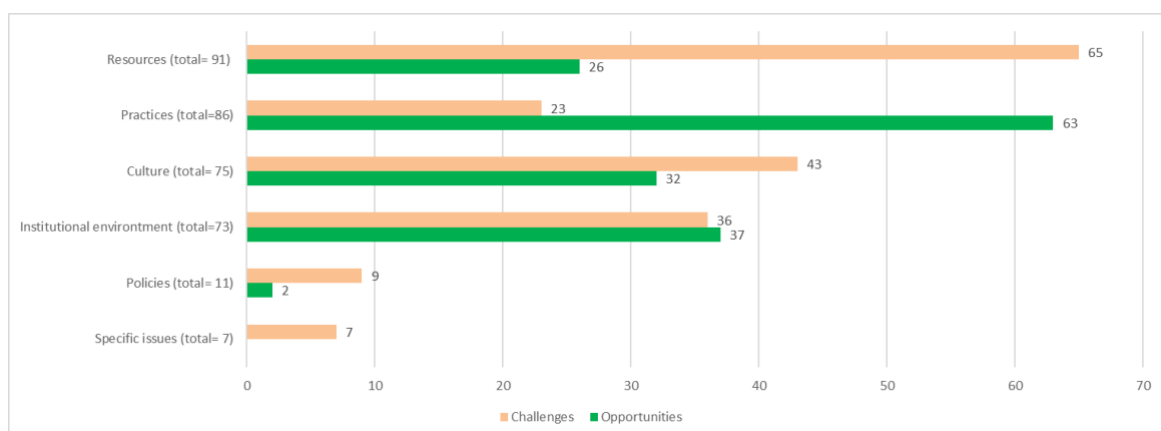


Figure 24. Challenges and opportunities — Summary

2.7.1. Opportunities /Benefits

According to respondents, the opportunities of OER/OE (Table 5) mostly relate to open practices (63), the institutional environment (37), and to culture (32).

On a closer look, we can see that access (42) is by far the most commonly-reported benefit of OER in the sense that libraries report providing learning resources and contributing to the democratisation of education. OER also stimulate institutional collaboration (17), and cross-departmental work (e.g. library connections with faculty) where teachers and students can communicate via a supportive network or through community-building. The third most reported OER benefit relates to cultural change (16), for instance by spreading and transferring knowledge to society. Respondents also consider OER a strategy for empowering the leading role of the library within the institution (15) and as a financial benefit to save costs (14) for students and libraries.

Other benefits reported by fewer respondents relate to open practices, such as the possibilities of reusing OER, wider dissemination and creating OER; OER can reduce teaching workloads (3) and the opportunity to learn new OER skills (4). Gaining better technical solutions or improving interoperability was also reported as a benefit by four respondents. Policies were only seen as a benefit by two libraries.

Subtheme	Number	ANSWERS. OE/OER seen as an opportunity to/ in the sense of:
OPEN PRACTICES (63)		
Access	42	Respondents refer to 'availability', 'accessibility', 'unlimited' or 'better access to the resources', "'expanded access to learning', to 'remove barriers to access', to bring equality in access to education, 'free/open access', 'visibility', 'scalability'
Use and Reuse	9	E.g. possibility to adapt, or to 'suit local purposes'
Sharing and & Dissemination	6	Mainly focussing on 'knowledge sharing' and 'dissemination'
Quality	2	'To help to promote good quality educational materials' and 'continually improving resources'
Creation / co-creation	2	Such as 'developing Wikiwijs-arrangement about OER' and 'co-creation of OER with academics/students'
Open Textbooks	2	As a 'way to leverage in context of ebooks inflation crisis' and as an 'alternative to authoring and editing platform'

THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT (37)		
Institutional Collaboration	17	"Developing partnerships inside the institution": "more connection to faculty", "with students for co-creation", "cross departmental collaboration". Some other reasons to see OER as an opportunity are "to improve communication between teachers and students", "community building", "as a supportive network", etc.
Library role	15	'Powering the leading role of the library within the institution', 'gaining reputation', 'profiling the library and its role in OER', 'reinforce its strategic role in University' and other similar answers
Relation to Open Science	5	One institution summarises this as ' <i>With OE, we complete all the subjects of Open Science</i> '. Some others add OE is a 'support to Open Science', 'engaging colleagues in the wider Open Science Agenda' or 'science evolution'
CULTURE (32)		
Cultural change	15	Cultural changes about Science, Education and Society: ' <i>Inter-silo communication/liaison, including principles of open research/education, integration, social advantage, enrich scholarship, contribution to society, OER can play a crucial role in involving citizens in science projects</i> ', etc.
Awareness & Advocacy	9	' <i>To stimulate our lecturers to spread their materials and results, to inform our visitors about benefits of OE and possibilities of using OER, Awareness for Recognizing & Rewarding the creation of education/al material</i> ', etc
Inclusivity	3	' <i>Diversity, social justice, inclusion, fairness</i> '
Time/ Workload	3	In the sense of ' <i>reducing the time and workload for teachers as authors</i> '
Incentives	1	' <i>Opening the work of the teachers and researchers: possibilities to have recognition of their OE and OER work.</i> '
Quality	1	' <i>Requirements of committees which evaluate our schools.</i> '
RESOURCES (26)		
Saving costs	14	' <i>More affordability (save costs for learners and the Library), budget savings, financial benefits for students</i> ', etc
Knowledge & Skills	5	' <i>Opportunity to learn new OER skills, develop new skills and expertise among librarians</i> ', etc
Technology	4	To find ' <i>better technical solutions, interoperability</i> ', etc
Quality	2	' <i>Adding value for our staff and making knowledge more friendly for students</i> ', etc
Staff	1	' <i>Dedicate team members</i> '
POLICIES (2)		
Policies	2	' <i>Contributing to our institutional Open Science policy</i> ' and ' <i>the new University vision and strategy supports many of the principles of open education</i> '

Table 5. Opportunities/Benefits to support OE

2.7.2. Challenges

Respondents consider resources (65), cultural issues (43), and the institutional environment (36) to be the main challenges facing OE/OER (Table 6).

Resource challenges include libraries reporting a lack of funding and staff (35) as the most frequent challenge, followed by issues with technology (11) by developing and improving infrastructures, for example, and a lack of knowledge and skills (10). Copyright and legal issues (7) was also an area of concern related to resources.

Regarding the second most referred challenge, cultural issues, respondents agree that engaging and motivating faculty and library staff are essential to change the situation (16); this was complemented with the need to invest in more time (13) and raise awareness of OER (12), and the need to invest in more time (11).

The institutional environment also plays a key role when it comes to progressing OE/OER challenges which mainly revolve around the institutional leadership (14) — mostly in relation to the need to create strategies and programmes to support OE. Collaboration and partnerships amongst different departments (10) is an important challenge; as one informant puts it, “[...] it is sometimes hard to start”. Incentives to incorporate OE/OER into professional development was also mentioned by a number of respondents (6).

The challenges that relate to OE/OER practices (23) mainly concern the quality of OER and matters of trust. Promoting OER (4), supporting the reuse and sharing of OER (4), and how to innovate learning to become more open (2) were other challenging practices.

Policies were also considered a challenge by nine respondents. Some specify that policy could be embedded into the university strategy. Challenges that did not fit into other categories focussed on more core library tasks (7).

Needs	Number	ANSWERS: OE/OER seen as a challenge in the sense of:
RESOURCES (65)		
Funding & staff	35	15 responses refer to both, human and economic resources, at the same time. 12 respondents specifically focused on ' <i>financial support</i> ', ' <i>budgets</i> ', ' <i>sustained funding</i> '; which is needed ' <i>to develop infrastructures</i> ', ' <i>activities around OER</i> ' or ' <i>leading librarian/team members</i> '. 8 responses focus on the need for staff, e.g. ' <i>there is not enough staff to work closely with the instructors and support them at a high level (nobody is devoted 100% to this role)</i> ' or ' <i>there is a personnel 'hunger'</i> '. A large number of librarians, due to the war, cannot work at all, or full-time, or are forced to emigrate'
Technology	11	Respondents report technical issues related to platforms; such as ' <i>set-up of IT infrastructures</i> ', development of ' <i>digital platforms and their interoperability</i> ', ' <i>repositories</i> ' and ' <i>homework system/courseware</i> ' and ' <i>articulation with library catalogue</i> '. One refers to ' <i>technical aspects for open textbooks</i> '.
Knowledge & Skills	10	One of the most recurrent aspects mentioned is ' <i>capacity building</i> '; in terms of ' <i>having specific skills about OE</i> ', ' <i>to create, access, re-use, adapt and redistribute OER</i> ' and ' <i>in teacher support concerning licensing, use and re-use, OER-creation</i> '
Copyright	7	All responses relate to licencing and legal issues, <i>including</i> third party learning materials
Time	2	Time was mentioned with respect to needing more time for library staff. One specifies ' <i>for lead librarian and team members</i> '
CULTURE (43)		
Cultural change	16	A large number of respondents identify diverse cultural issues as challenges. Challenges range from ' <i>a lot of parties have to be involved</i> ' to faculty-centred answers such as ' <i>encourage teachers to actively participate in the emerging open education movement</i> ', ' <i>get the teachers/professors engaged to upload their OER material in a busy everyday life</i> ', to library-related ones ' <i>to find people in the library who are enthusiastic enough about OE</i> '.
Time	13	A number of respondents consider the lack of time and personnel resources a challenge, e.g. , ' <i>time poor and no staff exclusively dedicated to OE/OER</i> ', ' <i>no dedicated Library staff and limited time</i> ', ' <i>time/funding for the lead librarian/team member</i> ', ' <i>partners can't always dedicate time</i> ', etc.
Awareness and advocacy	12	Libraries refer to challenges in raising awareness of OER reporting a ' <i>lack of awareness of OE/OER amongst academics</i> ' and a need for ' <i>getting academic onboard</i> ' but also in ' <i>engaging librarians</i> ' and ' <i>reaching a wider group of students</i> '. Despite such challenges, some also report the need to ' <i>communicate that OE is a great step forward - also for the future</i> ' and that ' <i>Communicating benefits and encouraging engagement beyond self-selecting enthusiasts</i> ' be important.
Inclusivity	1	One respondent points out a multilingual challenge, since ' <i>a small number of materials (are) in Polish</i> '
Advocacy	1	Enhancing the advocacy role with regard to Intellectual Property Rights
INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT (36)		

Institutional leadership	14	Challenges with institutional leadership include the need for ' <i>introducing OE vision into the institution</i> ', ' <i>defining specific programs to support OE and developing supportive policies</i> ', etc. They also relate to implementation by providing ' <i>administrative circuits to develop the OE resources</i> '
Institutional collaboration	10	Challenges with collaboration appear between different institutional units, e.g. ' <i>Finding right partners within the university</i> ', ' <i>co-ordination within (the) institution</i> ', ' <i>increase user relations</i> ' and ' <i>connection with the virtual campus</i> '. One respondent also adds that ' <i>collaboration is sometimes hard to start</i> '
Incentives	6	<i>Incorporate OER in professors evaluation processes</i> ' and other kinds of incentives and rewards were mentioned by respondents as a challenge when involving academics in creating OER.
Relation to Open Science	3	'if OER also involves open pedagogy, we are preparing scientists for a future open society and training them to practice open science', '[it] bridges the gap between research and teaching, for e. promoting open data' and 'supporting open access'.
Library role	3	A few respondents also mention the ' <i>difficulty in being recognized in other areas of the University as a key player</i> '
PRACTICES (23)		
Quality	11	Respondents express concerns around OER quality, e.g. ' <i>how to determine what is high quality</i> ' or ' <i>how to assure quality in open content</i> '. They also refer to getting ' <i>the right materials for the target groups</i> ', ' <i>updated resources</i> ' and other ' <i>trust/mistrust matters</i> '.
Access	4	A few respondents refer to increase equity and visibility
Use & Reuse	4	Some others are concerned about ' <i>dedicating support towards faculty on reuse & sharing</i> '
Open practice	2	' <i>Innovative learning</i> ' and ' <i>promoting open learning</i> ' are considered a challenge
Dissemination	1	' <i>Spreading Knowledge</i> '
Inclusivity	1	' <i>Building an inclusive university community</i> '
POLICIES (9)		
Policies	9	The lack of policies and strategic purposes on OE, in the institution and national level, were the major challenge in this section with eight respondents reporting this. Note that one report the need of ' <i>embedding OE in our institutional mission statement / policy</i> '
OTHER CHALLENGES (7)		
Other challenges	7	Some of the other challenges mentioned are more unique. Some relate to libraries (' <i>collection management</i> ', ' <i>offer value-added services</i> ' whilst others with diverse difficulties: ' <i>some Danish publishers won't give access to e-books for library use</i> ' or ' <i>finding and categorizing the interdisciplinary materials can be hard</i> '.

Table 6. Challenges to support OE/

3. CONCLUSIONS

The SPARC Europe report, ‘Open Education in European Libraries of Higher Education’ summarises the results of a survey of the current status of Open Education in European Higher Education Libraries on Open Education (OE) and Open Educational Resources (OER) as of Spring 2022. It provides a snapshot of what European academic librarians are doing to implement the [UNESCO OER Recommendation](#), and we also compare this year’s data with last year’s to see how this has progressed over time.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is still positively impacting Open Education in libraries across Europe. Libraries reported this as still having had a significant effect on both raising awareness of openness and making greater use of OER. We can therefore see that **OE/OER is supporting in times of crisis** and that academic libraries are responding to COVID-19 by providing digital and open resources to their community of users (Temiz & Salelkar, 2020). This situation also aligns with previous studies (Ashiq., 2021; Fasae et al., 2021; Stracke et al., 2022) that have revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting and transforming libraries, their services, and management.

Knowledge of the UNESCO OER Recommendation

The survey shows increased awareness of the UNESCO OER Recommendation (2019) three years after its approval. In fact, three-quarters of library respondents are aware of it.

In addition, this year’s data reports increased action around the Recommendation, with some libraries taking steps to implement it (most of them by adapting or revising their strategy accordingly) and some others discussing options on how to address it. This suggests that the UNESCO OER Recommendation is increasingly being practically addressed by institutions of Higher Education.

UNESCO OER Recommendation areas of action

In general, we can observe that libraries are carrying out activities in all of the five UNESCO areas of action.

Objective 1 — Building capacity

Libraries are building capacity to create, access, re-use, adapt, and redistribute OER through engagement with Open Education, advocating for OE/OER, offering library OE/OER services, and acquiring required skills. Most **libraries are taking a role in advancing OE** (mainly in a supportive way), especially from Teaching and Learning Support Library departments. Nevertheless, one-third of responding libraries still do not yet have a role or still need to decide what role they take in OE. Data also reveals that there is a relation between libraries leading or supporting

OE/OER and being involved in task forces on OE. In this regard, creating more OE committees in libraries could be a strategy for libraries that do not yet have a committee to take up a role in the OE/OER arena in their institutions.

In those institutions where other departments are taking a leadership role in OE/OER (such as the Offices of Open Science or Teaching Innovation) or where there is an organisational-wide task force on OE/OER, it would be important to develop working relationships across the university, including the library, collaborating across internal silos — also noted as an important challenge. This could be an effective way to develop robust and coordinated OE/OER support services across the entire institution.

We can observe that leadership skills are one of the key challenges that libraries still have to face. This has already been identified as a neglected area in LIS professional development (Ashiq et al., 2021). Therefore, more training in this area is essential.

When advocating OE/OER, libraries are undertaking various actions by mainly providing OE/OER training and disseminating OER through repositories, for example. They are working through cross-unit working groups within the library, but also inside and outside the institution. Regarding these last two contexts, institutionally, libraries work together with teaching support departments, e-learning/distance education, and faculty. Outside the institution itself, both regional/national networks/communities/consortia and other libraries appear to be the key partners in OE/OER collaboration, as reported by three-thirds of respondents. This pattern of external collaboration probably indicates that these alliances and networks between libraries and other regional or national institutions are the strategies that may be working best today. Some examples of outputs resulting from such collaboration are the ‘kit de REA’, created by the Spanish universities library network REBIUN (2020), the ‘ENOEL Toolkit on the Benefits of Open Education’ for different stakeholders (available in 16 languages so far; ENOEL, 2021) created by the European Network of Open Education Librarian (ENOEL, 2022) network from SPARC Europe.

We can observe that the OE/OER services most provided by libraries are in areas that are close to their core work (such as advice on copyright and open licensing, information literacy and training/education), which are the ones that respondents consider to have more full competence. On the other hand, there is less provision of services in those areas furthest from their traditional tasks — and more related to teaching — which coincides with those with more limited skills (such as participatory design, course pack provision, and creation of OER). If libraries do not wish to outsource such work, these are areas where more upskilling, training, or new staff would be needed to improve current OE/OER librarian services or to create new ones.

Although we can see that libraries are generally becoming more confident in their skill set or that they are improving their competencies in different areas, there is still a diversity of speeds at which libraries develop depending on the institution or context. For this reason, we still consider that building OE **capacity-in libraries is still a priority** for librarians, their institutions, and library networks.

This is aligned with recent studies (Santos-Hermosa; Atenas, 2022; Cailung, 2020) that show evidence that libraries need continuous professional development in handling and managing OER.

Objective 2 — Developing supportive policies

More than half of the surveyed libraries report their institution already having an OE policy, that they are in the process of developing one, or that one is under consideration. These policies are often part of a larger overall policy rather than a stand-alone one dedicated to open education. Data this year also shows that there is twice the involvement of the library in the conception of OER policies as compared to previous years. This is aligned with a study (Saarti et al., 2020) showing how **some European academic libraries are co-creating and implementing universities' services and policies**. This development shows how libraries are taking more leadership in open policymaking, and we hope that this will continue.

It is also important to notice that our view of this issue is incomplete since it only reflects the responses of those who completed the survey and who are likely to be interested in OE already, as Cronin's research has also pointed out (SPARC Europe, 2021). Our focus should be in engaging those libraries that did not respond to the survey and may need support in developing OER policies. The evolution of these patterns in policy development, along with the active involvement of libraries, should be observed over time.

Objective 3 — Encouraging diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) access to quality OER

Results have evidenced that **accessibility is the most inclusive aspect addressed by academic libraries**, well above others, such as offering diverse, multilingual, and culturally-equitable OER.

The few libraries that reported addressing all four DEI areas do so by following their institutional strategies and programmes. This indicates that it might be easier for libraries to implement DEI issues if driven by the strategy of their organisations. Considering that a good number of libraries reported that they do not take proactive steps to provide diverse and inclusive OER, means DEI OER **needs to be increasingly addressed in the future**. Partnering with other departments and libraries may be a good and efficient way to achieve greater equity in education for all.

Objective 4 — Sustaining OER

In general, **very limited human resources are dedicated to OER** at current academic libraries. It is also not very common to find specific grant programmes among these libraries. These results fully coincide with the two biggest challenges reported by respondents since **the lack of funding and staff** resources appear as some of the biggest issues to be faced. This is not a unique problem for libraries, as other stakeholders have raised the issue. Hence, global solutions should be sought, identifying areas where costs can be saved or where resources can be

efficiently sourced or shared and where a more sustainable OE ecosystem can be developed and maintained.

Objective 5 — Promoting and reinforcing international collaboration

As in previous years, libraries are participating more in OE/OER networks (at national, institutional and library levels), more than getting involved in projects. While strengthening relationships with existing networks or creating new ones, libraries could also seek to work on concrete projects together with them, such as Wikipedia, ERASMUS+ projects, or other smaller projects as part of networks like the ENOEL.

Benefits and challenges

Libraries, in general, find more challenges than opportunities in the areas of resource provision, cultural change, and policymaking. In contrast, libraries see more benefits than challenges in Open Education practices and developments in the institutional environment.

The most significant OER opportunities considered by libraries are increasing access to learning and facilitating a culture change, as well as stimulating institutional collaboration and reinforcing the library's important role in the educational context. As for the challenges, libraries mainly need more funding and staff, technology, and OE-specific skills to push and develop OE.

The voice of academic libraries in this report indicates their willingness and work to change mindsets and collaborate with institutional departments to improve access to and use of learning resources. However, lack of technology, unskilled staff, and financial constraints are preventing the maximum adoption and implementation of OE/OER by more libraries and their Higher Education Institutions. Efforts and actions must go, then, in this direction. For this reason, some recommendations are provided below to help libraries meet the challenges they encounter.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Below, we list some recommendations that emerge from this report. This list is not suggesting general priorities. We would invite you, as a reader, to prioritise them according to your own context.

1. Continue to **raise awareness of Open Education and the UNESCO OER Recommendation** in academic libraries and their institutions.
2. Engage in the **reuse, adoption, adaptation, remixing, and co-creation of OER** together with faculty such as open textbooks, tutorials, videos, etc.
3. **Help create DEI programmes and strategies** to more consistently ensure more equitable, diverse, and inclusive open educational content for all.
4. Work to **create alliances with institutional stakeholders** (faculty departments, pedagogues, innovation units, or CIOs) and international colleagues/networks to develop policies and OE/OER support services.
5. Encourage librarians to **collaborate on OE projects** with colleagues within the institution, as well as with others from outside the institution on regional, national, and international levels, learning from each other and finding solutions to solve local problems.
6. **Provide professional development programmes on OE** for library staff to develop skills in two areas: a) leadership, including soft skills, and b) technical skills on learning design and how to make resources open. We encourage the reuse and adaption of already existing learning paths.
7. Continue working on building and funding a **more interoperable technical OE ecosystem** between institutional repositories and other educational platforms for longer-term sustainability.
8. Explore **sustainable models** to reuse, adapt, and create OER ranging from creating new budget lines for OE projects, for example, or upskilling and hiring new OE dedicated staff, to establishing a grant programme, to collaborating with communities and membership associations.

Acknowledgements

This study was mainly undertaken by Prof. Gema Santos-Hermosa of the University of Barcelona (Faculty of Informació i Mitjans Audiovisuals) for SPARC Europe with support from Marta Bustillo, Paola Corti, and Vanessa Proudman.

We are also grateful to the European Network of Open Education Librarians (ENOEL) members for helping design, test, and distribute the survey to their networks.

This work was supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation:
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Appendix

A) Respondents by country

COUNTRY	INSTITUTIONS
Belgium	KU Leuven Libraries
Bulgaria	Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
Croatia	Juraj Dobrila University of Pula
	University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Cyprus	European University Cyprus
	University of Cyprus
Denmark	Copenhagen University Library
	Royal Danish Library ²
	Technical University of Denmark (DTU)
	University of Southern Denmark (SDU)
Estonia	University of Tartu Library
Finland	Åbo Akademi University (AAU)
	Arcada University of Applied Science (UAS)
	Lapland University Consortium library
	Laurea University of Applied Sciences
	Metropolia University of Applied Science (UAS)
	Polytechnic University of Lappeenranta (LUT)
	Satakunta University of Applied Sciences
	Savonia University of Applied Science (UAS)
	South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Xamk)
	Tampere University Library
	University of Eastern Finland

² It includes University of Copenhagen Library, Aarhus University Library and Roskilde University Library

	University of Helsinki
	University of Jyväskylä
	University of Oulu
France	Arts et Métiers Institute of Technology
	Bibliothèques de l'Université Paul Sabatier
	La Rochelle University
	Mines ParisTech (PSL)
	Sciences Po
	Université de Lorraine
	Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA)
	Université Jean-Monnet (UJM)
	Université Paris Nanterre
	Université Rennes 2
Germany	ZBW Leibniz Information Centre for Economics
Greece	American College of Thessaloniki
	Athens University of Economics and Business
	Hellenic Open University (HOU)
	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
	Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
	School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE)
	University of Ioannina
	University of Macedonia
	University of Patras
Ireland	Atlantic Technological University (TU)
	CCT College Dublin
	Maynooth University
	Munster Technological University (MTU)

	Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)
	University College Dublin (UCD)
	University of Galway, James Hardiman Library
	University of Limerick
Hungary	Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences
	Semmelweis University
Italy	John Cabot University
	Università degli Studi di Milano
	Università della Valle d'Aosta
	Università di Bologna, Library of Navile
	Università di Parma
	Université de Genève
	University of Turin
Latvia	University of Latvia
Lithuania	Kaunas university of applied Sciences
	Kazimieras Simonavicius university
	Mykolas Romeris University
	Vilnius university
Malta	University of Malta
North Macedonia	South East European University
Poland	Gdańsk University of Technology
Serbia	University Library "Svetozar Markovic"
Slovenia	University of Ljubljana, ODKJG (Jože Goričar Central Social Sciences Library)
Spain	Biblioteca Virtual del Sistema Sanitario Público de Andalucía
	Centro Universitario Internacional de Barcelona (UNIBA)
	IE University - Universidad Internacional
	Mondragon Unibertsitatea

	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)
	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM)
	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
	Universidad Católica de Valencia (UCV)
	Universidad Complutense University of Madrid (UCM)
	Universidad de Alicante
	Universidad de Cádiz
	Universidad de Granada
	Universidad de Huelva
	Universidad de Navarra (UNAV)
	Universidad de Sevilla
	Universidad del País Vasco
	Universidad Pablo de Olavide
	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
	Universitat de Barcelona
	Universitat de Girona. Biblioteca
	Universitat de Lleida
	Universitat de Vic
	Universitat Jaume I
	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)
	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)
	Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV)
	Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF)
	Universitat Ramon Llull (URL)
	Universitat Rovira i Virgili
Sweden	Kungl Biblioteket - National Library of Sweden
	Lund University

	University West
Switzerland	Haute Ecole pédagogique (HEP) du Valais
	Haute école pédagogique du canton de Vaud
	Zurich University of Applied Sciences School of Engineering (ZHAW)
	Università della Svizzera italiana
The Netherlands	Delft University of Technology
	Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e)
	HAN University of Applied Science
	Maastricht University
	Radboud University
	Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences
	Saxion University of Applied Sciences
	University of Groningen
	Utrecht University
	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Turkey	Kadir Has University
UK	Manchester Metropolitan University
	University College of London (UCL)
	University of Leeds
	University of Sheffield
	University of York Library
Ukraine	National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (NPDU)
	Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies

B) OE/OER Policies

This table provides further information shared by respondents on institutional policies, national policies or other related policy documentation (strategies, plans, reports)

Institutional Policies

Country	Institution	URL	Detail
Finland	South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences		<i>At the time of the survey, this was not yet online though recently endorsed</i> (according to the respondent's comment)
France	Université Paris-Saclay	https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/sites/default/files/2022-06/brochure-science-ouverte.pdf	Implementation of Open Science's document, which provides an inventory of services and projects implemented, an updated roadmap and an action plan. It includes a section of 'Education and skills': " <i>Ensures that sovereign solutions exist to allow higher education actors and research to maintain control of open science services for publications, data, source codes, videos, <u>open educational resources</u>, etc.</i> "
Ireland	Open NIU Galway	https://www.nuigalway.ie/strategy2025/openuigalway/	<i>Institutional strategy, there is no 'policy' per se</i> (according to the respondent's comment)
Lithuania	Vilnius university		<i>This is not yet translated into English</i> (according to the respondent's comment)
Spain	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	https://biblioteca.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/60-2014-05-27-politica_acceso_abierto_20140527.pdf	OA policy (2014). OE/ OER are not explicitly mentioned

Spain	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya	http://hdl.handle.net/10609/130986	Global Open Knowledge policy (2021). OE/OER are included
Spain	University of Lleida	http://hdl.handle.net/10459.1/45590	OA policy (2012). 2012 There is an OE/OER mention: "It encourages digital and <u>OA educational production</u> ..."
Spain	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	https://ddd.uab.cat/record/89641	OA policy (2012). There is an OE/OER mention: " <i>As regards educational resources, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona encourages to ...</i> "
Spain	University Politecnica de Valencia	https://www.upv.es/estudios/aula-abierta/index-en.html	No policy but Strategy. Website includes information on Open Classroom
The Netherlands	University of Delft	https://research.tudelft.nl/en/publications/tu-delft-open-educational-resources-oer-policy	TU Delft Open Educational Resources (OER) Policy
UK	University of Leeds	https://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22149/a-z-of-policies-and-key-documents/645/open-educational-resources-taught-students	University of Leeds Open Educational Resources. (2017)

National Policies

Country	URL	Detail
Finland	https://doi.org/10.23847/isbn.9789525995404	Open Education and educational resources. National policy and executive plan by the Higher Education and research community for 2021-2025.