3rd UNESCO World OER Congress: 'Digital Public Goods: Open Solutions for Inclusive Access to Knowledge

Inclusive Access to Quality OER: Implementing Effective Quality Assurance (QA)

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Overview

This session explores how to ensure that Open Educational Resources (OER) meet the highest standards for **inclusive** and **equitable** access.
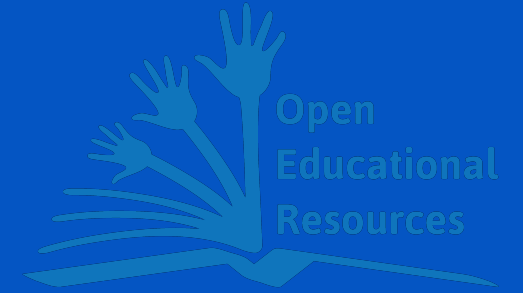
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Why Quality Matters?

- While **OER** have the potential to make resources more accessible, equitable, and affordable, without proper **quality assurance**, their effectiveness and inclusivity can be compromised.

- High-quality OER must meet rigorous standards to ensure that they serve diverse learner populations, support learning outcomes, and align with curricular needs.

Quality Assurance in OER?

Quality assurance in the context of OER involves setting criteria and standards to evaluate, improve, and maintain the quality of these resources.

QA ensures that OER are:

- **Pedagogically sound:** Aligned with learning outcomes and suitable for diverse learners.

- **Technologically accessible:** Available across devices, and compatible with different platforms.

- **Culturally inclusive:** Represent diverse voices, perspectives, and learning styles.

- **Sustainable and adaptable:** Easy to update and use across multiple contexts.

Key QA Components

Content Quality:

Accuracy, clarity, and relevance.

Usability:

User-friendly interfaces, accessible formats.

Inclusivity:

Representation of marginalized and diverse communities.

Accessibility:

Conformity to accessibility standards for all learners, including those with disabilities.

UNESCO Recommendation on OER 2019

- **Provides guidelines for governments and institutions to develop and integrate QA standards for OER.**

- **Offers a foundation for assessing the quality of OER, but more importantly, guides the development of OER that meets diverse learner needs and provides equitable access to resources.**

Best Practices in QA for OER

Incorporating Feedback from Diverse Stakeholders:

- Engage students, educators, and community representatives in the QA process to ensure OER reflect the needs and interests of diverse audiences.

Regular Updates and Continuous Improvement:

- OER should be regularly updated to remain current and relevant. QA should include mechanisms for feedback and revision.

Clear Metadata and Licensing:

- Well-defined metadata and clear licensing terms (e.g., Creative Commons) ensure that OER are easily discoverable and can be reused or adapted as needed.
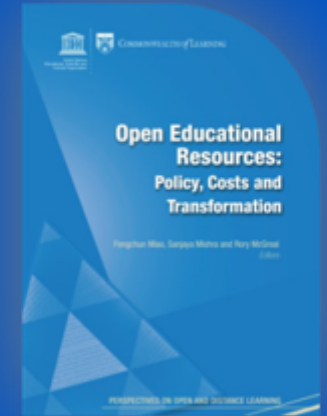
Training for Educators:

- Provide educators with training to evaluate and create high-quality OER, helping them become champions for QA in the OER ecosystem.

Best Practices in QA for OER Achievements

- **RCICT supports the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain to achieve its vision of developing a good educational system to reach a high level of excellence and creativity.**
- **To achieve this vision, the government has advanced its educational system and improved the quality of students' learning outcomes and empower them digitally, developed the level of teachers' performance in teaching and learning, and increase community awareness of educational resources policies.**
- **A regional workshop entitled: "Open Educational Resources Policies" was held in cooperation with UNESCO, 22-24 September 2014, under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Education and chaired by Dr. Miao Fengchen - Chief of the Technology and Artificial Intelligence Unit in Education - UNESCO, Paris.**

Best Practices in QA for OER Achievements

- **Contributed to the second chapter of the UNESCO book OER: Policy costs and transformation in 2016 on Kingdom of Bahrain experience with OER.**

- **Issued guides for digital educational content standards.**

- **Trained teachers and students on digital educational content production programs, resulting in teachers capable of producing digital educational content and licensing it with Creative Commons based on specific criteria.**

Best Practices in QA for OER Achievements

- **"My Digital Library"** Initiative, which is considered one of the digital empowerment projects in education, is concerned with publishing schools' production of digital educational content. This initiative won the ISESCO Award for Open Educational Resources in its first session in 2018 and the Arab Government Excellence Award in the category of "Best Arab Government Project for the Development of Education" in 2023.

Best Practices in QA for OER Achievements

- **In light of RCICT's partnership with the International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI) in Slovenia, affiliated with UNESCO, the Centre regularly participates in the Open Education for a Better World (Oe4bw) program, which focuses on developing OER that support identifying and disseminating the concept at local, regional and international levels.**

- **RCICT "Open Resource Portal in Educational Technology and Creativity" is a common forum for research institutions with developmental visions and goals.**
- **The portal seeks to build research networks in the fields of educational technology and creativity, and to benefit from the expertise of various universities and research institutions.**
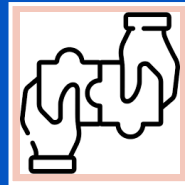
Best Practices in QA for OER Achievements

- The portal is also a regional partner platform that allows for the exchange of ideas and information regarding trends, developments, knowledge and expertise related to information and communication technology.

- The UNESCO Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT) has been selected as the national coordinator for the Kingdom of Bahrain, working on collecting data and preparing national reports related to the first consultation on the UNESCO recommendation on Open Science 2021 for the year 2025.

Moving Forward Key Actions

- **Develop Robust QA Standards**:

- Advocate for the creation and adoption of comprehensive QA standards in national and institutional policies for OER.

- **Build Collaborative Networks**:

- Encourage partnerships between universities, governments, NGOs, and the private sector to create a supportive ecosystem for OER quality assurance.

- **Promote Advocacy and Awareness**:

- Raise awareness about the importance of QA in OER, and ensure all stakeholders understand its role in achieving inclusive and equitable access to education.

Conclusion

- **Inclusive Access to Quality OER**:

  To achieve truly equitable access to resources, we must **prioritize** quality in OER creation and dissemination. By integrating effective quality assurance frameworks, fostering collaboration, and ensuring inclusive practices, we can ensure that OER meet the diverse needs of learners around the world.

- **Call to Action:**

  Encourage everyone to think about how can they contribute to the QA movement in OER, whether by **advocating for stronger standards**, **participating in collaboration** efforts, or **sharing best practices** within your institutions.

We look forward to more of your participation

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