Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally (FGSOERI)

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO

Regional Policy Forum for Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, Thailand
23-24 April 2012

REPORT
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Background
The project *Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally (FGSOERI)*, is organising six regional policy forums (RPF), one in each UNESCO region, between January and May 2012.

The fifth regional policy forum, for Asia and the Pacific, was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 23 to 24 April 2012.

This RPF was co-organised by UNESCO (HQs and UNESCO Bangkok Office) and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). Sponsorship for the event was provided by PICO, a company that is implementing a publicly funded Teacher TV programme in Thailand.

The present report conveys the recommendations that Asia and the Pacific made to the project and details the Asia-Pacific inputs to version 5 of the Paris Declaration, which was drafted after the RPF, posted with the invitation to comment until 29 April and then finalised for presentation to the RPF for the Arab States on 7 and 8 May 2012.

Participants

(Annex 1: List of participants).

The programme was structured so as to promote a dialogue between governments and practitioners.


Information base
Replies to the Survey
By the time this RPF was held the project had received replies to the Survey from 19 Member States from the Asia-Pacific Region: Australia (different jurisdictions), Brunei Darussalam, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand (including Cook Islands), Pakistan, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam.

All participants were given the draft Declaration v.4 produced after the Europe RPF, as well as a background note for the project and a flyer for the 2012 World OER Congress. A dedicated web-space (http://oercongress.weebly.com) was created for the project and is being updated regularly, as each Regional Policy Forum occurs.

**DAY 1: 23 April 2012**

**Opening Ceremony**

Mr. Etienne Clement, Deputy Director, UNESCO Bangkok, opened the Forum on behalf of UNESCO and put the Regional Policy Forum in the context of the overall OER project.

Ms. Churairat Sangboonnum, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, and Secretary-General of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO welcomed the participants and said how pleased she was that the government of Thailand had been able to assist with the hosting of the Forum.

**Presentation**

Following the Opening Ceremony, Sir John Daniel, President and CEO of COL, and Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic, Senior Consultant COL, gave the background, objectives and elements of the project and provided a brief analysis of the replies to the survey that had been received from the region.

(http://www.col.org/resources/speeches/2012presentations/Pages/2012-04-23.aspx)

**Keynote presentation: OER in Asia Pacific: Trends and Issues**

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Ishan Sudeera Abeywardena, Senior Lecturer at the School of Science and Technology, Wawasan Open University. He summarized research that had been sponsored by IDRC (International Development Research Centre) on the use of OER by institutions in a number of countries in the region. This complemented the responses from governments in reply to the COL-UNESCO Survey.

**Plenary Discussion: What is OER and why OER should become a matter of public policy?**

Facilitated by: Sir John Daniel, Project Director

Ms. Zeynep Varoglu (UNESCO) & Ms. Trudi Van Wyk (COL) introduced the Basic Guide to OER developed by UNESCO and COL. Many of the questions in the subsequent discussion had answers in the FAQ section of the Guide, particularly in regard to specificity of OER and the different forms that they can take as well as the role of Creative Commons and other open licenses.
Panel Discussion 1: Voice of practitioners - Policy issues and recommendations from practitioners in school & higher education

Chairperson: Dr. Molly Lee (COL)
Panelists:

- Ms. Hye-Kyung Yang, Principal Researcher, KERIS, Korea
  She reported that the development of ICT in Education in Korea had its origins back in 1966 in a wider reform agenda with the concept of openness at its heart. Because Korea’s private eLearning industry was weak, the government took the initiative of funding the development of some 100,000 multi-media resources by teachers and invested in training. Korea considers that it is important for countries to produce OER as well as using them and has an effective system for sharing the responsibility for quality control between the central and regional governments.

- Dr. Sitansu S. Jena, National Institute of Open Schooling, India (NIOS)
  His presentation focused on the work that has been done by the Commonwealth Open Schooling Association (COMOSA) to create a framework OER policy that can be adapted for use by the 30 member institutions of the organization.

- Prof. Naveed Akhtar Malik, Rector, Virtual University of Pakistan
  Reporting on the work of the Virtual University of Pakistan, he said that it was not an Open University in the conventional sense but produces video and internet resources using the expertise and resources of other universities. These resources are open to all citizens and in this way the VUP complements the existing universities.

- Dr. Jianjun Hou, Dean of School of Distance Learning, Peking University
  He described the work of the Association of Chinese Universities for Open Learning Resources. This was established in 2010, involves 103 universities and has 2,000 courses on-line. He stressed that universities had an ethical obligation to share their knowledge, noting that OER provided good publicity for institutions and encouraged a participatory culture. The major challenges were sustainability and staff motivation as well as assuring quality across a wide range of course topics.

- Prof. Taerim Lee, Director, Institute of Distance Education, Korea National Open University
  She reported that KNOU was using OER to address the challenge of education and training for the large cohort of 40 to 50 year olds approaching retirement. This “Smart U 4050 New Start” programme already has 80 courses running, some of which are also available in English, Chinese and Japanese.

These presentations were followed by a lively discussion period which touched on many of the issues raised by all the speakers.
Panel Discussion 2: Voice of practitioners - Policy issues and recommendations from practitioners in information literacy and open licensing

Chairperson: Dr. Susanne Ornager, Advisor of CI for Asia, UNESCO Bangkok

Panelists:

- Dr. Kamolrat Intaratat, STOU, Thailand
  She spoke about the work done in Thailand to spread information literacy to grassroots communities via tele-centres for the purpose of earning a livelihood, welfare or self-actualization. She stressed the point that people need relevant information and education.

- Ms. Jane Hornibrook, Creative Commons, New Zealand
  She explained the 6 open licenses under the Creative Commons, namely, (i) attribution, (ii) attribution/share-alike, (iii) attribution/no derivatives, (iv) attribution/no commercial use, (v) attribution/no commercial use/share-alike, (vi) attribution/no commercial use/no derivatives.

- Mr. S. Dunaisingh, Assistant Project Officer, Open School Unit of National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka
  He spoke about open schooling for out-of-school children in Sri Lanka and the need for open learning materials and improved ICT infrastructure to improve the quality of education.

- Mr. Ari Juliano Gema, Creative Commons, Indonesia
  He stressed the need for awareness raising among various stakeholders about copyright and open licensing.

The discussion that followed touched on the issues of cultural imperialism, open licensing, open data and the distinction between open educational resources and open learning approaches.

Panel Discussion: Voice of policy makers - Policy issues and recommendations from governments

Chairperson: Mr. Ishan Sudeera Abeywardena

Panelists:

- Mr. Minh Do, Programme Director, The Viet Nam Foundation (VOER)
  He reported on the two phases of the Open CourseWare project, noting the vital role of government since all Vietnamese universities are under a Ministry. A good model for courseware development combines content development, community development and technology development. Each of these components must be strong and complement the others. While the idea of OER is popular, it is more difficult to convince teachers to contribute to the movement.
• Prof. Nizam, Secretary for the Board of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia
He described how OER respond to some of the challenges of education in a huge country with a scattered population and large disparities of age participation rates in higher education. The government has promoted the use of eLearning and Open Distance Learning through a decree and OER are used in both higher education and K-12. He noted that the INHERENT network had given Indonesia good infrastructure and facilitated resource sharing.

• Dr. Kasititorn Pooparadai, Director of Policy Research Division, NECTEC, Thailand
She talked about the Smart Learning ICT policy and the community centres in Thailand, highlighting the need to provide a different range of skills to various groups such as youth and teachers, the need to develop electronic content in local languages and sign language for the deaf. The challenges in Thailand include legal issues, publicly funded resources and institutional arrangements as well as motivation for content providers and more attention to specific disability groups.

• Ms. Cheri Moana Robinson, Manager, Secretariat, National University of Samoa
She presented some specific cases of OER activities in Samoa, elaborated on the role and responsibilities of government to support OER. The challenges of OER include quality assurance of OER, relevant policy on the development and use of OER, improved IT infrastructure, change management, and training of qualified staff.

• Ms Sriranjani Ranganathan, Programme Associate, IT for Change, India
She emphasized the point that creating OER is closely linked to the use and availability of open, public applications and tools and government needs to provide the policy framework for the adoption of open standards.

The discussion that followed raised issues on changing mindsets towards online learning, online journals and the need to change the procedure in assessing the performance of academics and accreditation of educational courses in higher education institutions.

**DAY 2: 24 APRIL 2012**

**Presentation: Why the Paris Declaration?**
Ms. Zeynep Varoglu gave a short presentation about the June 2012 World OER Congress at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. She noted the Congress was directed to Ministers and Senior officials from governments. There will also be a parallel event, the Open Exhibit Seminar for practitioners. The Congress has three objectives: to adopt the Paris Declaration on OER, to showcase best OER practices and to mark the 10th anniversary of the 2002 UNESCO Forum at which the term OER was coined.

She then gave a brief summary of version 4 of the Paris Declaration and invited participants to divide into three break-out groups, each including both government officials and practitioners in order to provide the Asia-Pacific input to the Declaration as the basis for version 5 that will be presented to the Arab States RPF in May.
Group Discussions: Report back to plenary
After the break-out sessions there was a short plenary session at which each group presented its conclusions.

Wrap-Up and Way Forward
In his concluding remarks Sir John Daniel detailed the next steps in the project and expressed his great pleasure at the richness, the outputs and the high standards of the discussions.

The next steps are:
- The redrafted Paris Declaration v.5 will be made available for comments until 29 April on the OER Congress Weebly;
- The finalised Declaration v.5 will be presented to the Arab States Forum for further input in May;
- A draft of the Declaration reflecting the input of all Regional Policy Forums will be submitted to the International Advisory and Liaison Group (IALG) at its meeting on 11 May 2012. This Group will also constitute the Drafting Group at the Congress itself.
- A Summary Report from the Asia-Pacific Forum will be produced and posted together with the Declaration v.5 and will constitute the input from Asia and the Pacific.

(Annex 3: Paris Declaration v.5)

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(with input from Molly Lee, Consultant)
2012-04-25

Annexes:
1. List of participants
2. Agenda
3. Paris Declaration v.5