Some thoughts about sustainable OER
It's all about ownership!

Zone 42 (Ben Janssen, Jan-Bart de Vreede, Robert Schuwer)
Agenda

- Frame of reference
- Why ownership?
- Realisation of ownership
- A case from The Netherlands
Our frame of reference for the issues of sustainability and ownership consists of the following notions:

- Sustainability of OER (Wiley, 2007)
- OER are common pool resources (Hess & Ostrom, 2001)
- OER are digital commons (Schophuizen, 2022)
- OER are public goods (Wiley, 2020)
Sustainability of OER initiatives

“… the ability of a project to continue its operations. And certainly, the idea of continuing is a critical part of the meaning of sustainability (…..).

The definition of sustainability should include the idea of accomplishing goals in addition to ideas related to longevity.

Hereafter, sustainability will be defined as an open educational resource project’s ongoing ability to meet its goals.”

(Wiley, 2007) (emphasis added)
OER are:

- Common Pool Resources: goods that typically possess a natural or engineered system of non-excludable resources
- Public goods: non-excludable and non-rivalrous
- Digital Commons: managed and maintained by communities of users/producers
The question of ownership

- Collections of Open Educational Resources
- **Goal**: creating *ongoing ability* (enduring value) → **sustainability**

- **Ownership**: taking responsibility for creating and sustaining value
Sustaining value: business models

- Through public funding (Bccampus)
- Through internal funding (U. of Edinburgh, U. of Southern Queensland, UK Open University)
- Through endowments/donations (Wikipedia, OpenStax College, Khan Academy)
- By participating in an OER network (OERu, African Health OER Network)
- By offering services to learners (Khan Academy, Lumen Learning, Siyavula, OpenStax)
- By relying on OER authors (Jörn Loviscach)
- By producing OER on demand (federal textbook programme in Brazil)
- Through sponsorship/advertisement (Global Text Project)
- By offering learning-related data to companies (Hootsuite Academy)
- Community-based model (Educred.ro, OER communities in OSGeo)

- Ownership beats finance

(Tili et al, 2020)
Community-based model

- The members of the community jointly bear the production and maintenance costs of OER, with those materials also being accessible to others outside the community.
- Variations are situations in which students also produce materials, whether or not in co-creation (Open Pedagogy).
- Non-financial incentives necessary in order to acquire and retain participation, for example recognition, the desire to see one's own material improved, efficiency through sharing the workload, etc.
- Contributions by members in various forms (engagement)
Sustainability community

Institutionalized sharing knowledge

Incubator

(Büchel & Raub, 2002)
Summarized

- Business model
  - Is needed for
  - Is type of
  - Takes
  - (Professional) community
    - Is needed for

- Ownership
  - Sustainable OER-initiative
    - Is needed for
  - Recognition
    - Conditions
      - Experiencing value
        - BON/BPN
          - Is needed for
          - Management support
            - Is needed for
How to translate this to a working practice

• Wikiwijs Platform
  – More than 150K interactive online lessons created (CC-BY and CC-BY-SA)
    – 6M direct visits per year
  – Plus local copies within learning environments
  – Direct links with more than 80 collections
  – Open licensed and open standaard connections to all LMS platforms
Ownership within our communities

• First we facilitate a discussion on a common definition of quality

• Step 2 is a homepage “this is us and what we think is important”

• We make it possible to “certify” materials by a community

• We recognize and reward ”creators and owners”

• We encourage ownership of metadata (for other materials as well as their own)
Colophon

References


