The influence of International Organisations (IOs) on Governmental Open Educational Resources (OER) Policies

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The influence of International Organisations (IOs) on Governmental Open Educational Resources (OER) Policies by Igor Lesko, Herman van den Bosch and Paquita Perez is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
PhD Research Aim: Explore how IOs have influenced the development of governmental OER policies.


Data Collection: Interviews

Phase I: IOs


International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs)/Associations: Creative Commons, OER Africa, OER Asia & Open Education Global.

Phase II: Interviews with policy makers/advisors/experts in 35 countries, states, provinces

Regions and countries included in the interviews:

Europe - 11 countries (Germany, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Malta, Cyprus, the Netherlands and France)

Africa – 4 countries (Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria and Rwanda)

Latin America – 3 countries (Brazil, Colombia and Chile)

Middle East – 1 country (Saudi Arabia)

Asia – 11 countries (Australia, India, Japan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, Nepal, Mongolia, Fiji and Kyrgyzstan)

North America – 2 countries [United States and Canada. United States included two states (Washington and California) and a Federal Department of Education. Canada included interviews in three provinces (British Colombia, Alberta and Ontario)]
Goal of the Presentation: Provide theoretical and conceptual perspectives on IOs on the basis of the literature review.

Main Research Question: How did selected IOs influence the development of governmental OER policies in selected countries from 2002 to 2019?
Concepts/working definitions:

IOs

Organisations that have an established organisational structure and that demonstrate an international dimension through their membership, mission or scope of activities in three or more countries. Such organisations include those established through formal agreements between sovereign states, IGOs, or by non-state actors, such as INGOs and foundations, in the pursuit of achieving common or public goals and objectives.
Multiple OER definitions exist: differences related to the type of permissions (licenses), types of resources (teaching, learning, research), and format of resources (standalone video, audio materials, lectures materials, full courses).

PhD research alignment with the UNESCO OER definition in the 2019 Recommendation on OER - the most up-to-date and endorsed OER definition by the international community:

Learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others (UNESCO, 2019).
Concept: Governmental OER Policy I

1. Multiple and divergent perspectives exist on what constitutes a governmental (OER) policy
2. Policy makers face multiple policy choices (policy instruments) in deciding how to pursue their policy objectives:

- Legislation (Sticks)
- Provisioning of or taking away of resources (Carrots)
- Transfer of knowledge: (Sermons)

(Bemelmans-Videc et al.; 1998)

4. Working definition of a governmental (OER) policy:

Governmental policy is a tangible course of action that is taken by policy makers located within the executive (cabinet) or the legislative (parliament) branch of the government. The course of action involves using different policy instruments such as regulation, economic means and information. Governmental policy is also a process that includes agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Governmental policy is implemented to address challenges or opportunities in different fields, such as education, to affect change.

In the context of OER, governmental OER policy is implemented to facilitate the creation, use, reuse and adaption of OER to achieve numerous objectives such as increase and widen access to education, improve student retention and success rates, reduce costs and more. Such policies are adopted as stand alone OER policies or integrated within broader policy frameworks and domains of openness (Open Access, Open Science, or Open Data policies).
Roles of IOs in higher education policy

Researchers have identified multiple roles that IOs perform that affect higher education policy at global and national levels:

- Discursive activities: producing and disseminating knowledge about HE matters
- Assembling & maintaining transnational policy networks to discuss or build consensus about policy ideas
- Prescribing policy directions and monitoring compliance through standard-setting functions with binding or non-binding implications for policy makers
- Provisioning of funding to establish programs at national levels that address policy objectives articulated at international levels
- Provisioning of direct or indirect policy advice
- Advocacy

These roles affect different governmental education policy processes including agenda-setting, policy formulation or implementation.

(McNeely, 1995; Chabbott, 2013; Mundy, 2002; Shahjahan, 2012; Resnik, 2006; Jakobi, 2009; Joachim & Verbeek, 2004; Balzer & Martens, 2004; Schuller & Vincent-Lancrin, 2009; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Tota, 2014; Jakobi, 2019; Christensen, 2006; Murdie & Hunter, 2017)
IOs AND Education Policy Instruments

IOs possess and utilise different instruments in the pursuit of their policy objectives:

- **Discursive Dissemination**
  - Policy reports and proposals, publications, data collection & analysis, conferences and specialised meetings/networks, Declarations, Statements

- **Standard Setting**
  - Conventions, Recommendations

- **Financial Means**
  - Provision of Funding

- **Coordinative Functions**
  - Monitoring of policy compliance – reporting

- **Technical Assistance**
  - Capacity building activities: policy advice, model policy documents, etc.

(Jacobi, 2019; Shahjahan, 2012)
IOs AND OER Policy Instruments

Working definition:

OER policy instruments are defined for this PhD research as multiple mechanisms of influence applied by IOs that can directly or indirectly affect global and governmental OER policy processes such as agenda setting, policy formulation and implementation. OER policy instruments include discursive dissemination, standard setting, financial means, coordinative functions and technical advice.
IOs and Influence on Governmental Education (OER) Policies: Globalisation perspective:

- The world is interconnected and interdependent
- Public policy making is no longer confined within national boundaries
- National policy makers are interconnected with policy actors beyond nation states: IOs and policy networks
- The process of the policy text production is affected by the processes of globalisation and globalised discourses
- Phenomenon described as emergent global education policy field or community.

(Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Henry et al., 2005)
Prominent and sustained interest in OER policy interventions at a governmental level since 2007:

- 2007: India took on a leading role when it recommended a widespread adoption of OER with the National E-content and Curriculum Initiative (National Knowledge Commission, 2007).

- 2009: The Netherlands: A 5-year national Wikiwijs Program launched in 2009 to mainstream OER across primary and secondary education sectors and, to some extent, across professional education programs. The Program received a total funding of 8 million euros between 2009-2013.

- 2011: In the United States, the Departments of Labour and Education initiated a 2 billion dollar initiative called the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program to develop and share OER in community colleges to support career/workforce training activities through OER.
Growth of Governmental OER policies worldwide II

- **(2011) Open educational resources: Analysis of responses to the OECD country questionnaire**
  - Responses from 34 OECD countries revealed that 16 countries integrated OER within educational strategy documents with 6 countries having explicit OER policies.

- **(2012) Survey on Governments’ Open Educational Resources (OER) Policies**
  - UNESCO, in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), sent an OER survey to all UNESCO and COL member states earlier that year. 40 countries indicated that they already had or were preparing a governmental OER policy.

  - 25 OECD member countries reporting having a governmental policy on OER production and use. The reported governmental OER policies were adopted through different policy instruments, including legislation and regulation, direct or indirect funding programmes and information campaigns.

- **(2017) Policy Approaches to Open Education – Case Studies from 28 EU Member States (OpenEdu Policies)**
  - The study revealed the existence of 18 national-level policies across different education sectors. The identified policies were classified into four types, including policies that explicitly focus on OER or Open Education Practice (OEP) and policies where OER or an open education element, as defined in the JRC’s OpenEdu Framework, was packaged within other policy frameworks. Such open education policies may include ICT in education or learning policies, educational reform policies or national government action plans under the Open Government Partnership Initiative.
Growth of Governmental OER policies worldwide III

  - In preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress in 2017, COL and UNESCO distributed a new survey to governments with the primary goal of mapping the policy landscape with respect to OER at institutional and governmental levels. Out of 102 countries, 55% of respondents confirmed the existence of supportive policies for OER, an increase from 45% in 2012. Of those policies, 41% were reportedly national OER policies.

- (2020) Open Education in European Libraries of Higher Education

- (2020) Report from the ICDE OER Advocacy Committee’s Survey 2020: Implementation of the UNESCO RECOMMENDATION on OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCES (OER)

- As of January 2021, the Open Education Policy Registry lists examples of 311 OE/OER policies, of which 230 are categorised as national, state or international OER and OE policies

- Upcoming (2023): UNESCO OER Recommendation Implementation Monitoring: A New survey will be sent to member states
IOs AND OER Policy Instruments – Examples I

- IOs have played a prominent role in advocating for and supporting the development of governmental OER policies.

- Prevalent OER Policy Instruments: Discursive dissemination (policy reports, publications, guidelines, statements and declarations); Funding (EU programs, foundations); Technical Assistance (policy advice, provision of model policy documents, supporting policy implementation) and Standard Setting (Recommendation)

Examples:

UNESCO and Commonwealth of Learning (CoL)

- (2012) Paris OER Declaration
- (2012) Mauritius Communiqué
- (2015) Incheon Declaration: Education 2030
- (2015) Qingdao Declaration: Leveraging ICTs to achieve Education 2030
- (2016) The 2016 Kuala Lumpur Declaration
- (2019) Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER)
IOs AND OER Policy Instruments – Examples II

European Commission

- (2013) Opening Up Education Communication
- (2017) Going Open: Policy Recommendations on Open Education in Europe (OpenEdu Policies)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- (2007) Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of Open Educational Resources

Organisation of the French Speaking States (OIF)

- (2009) Dakar Declaration on Open Educational Resources (in French)

Additional examples of OER policy instruments can be found on the OER Policy Wiki Page created by Igor Lesko and Leo Havemann as part of OER Wiki Scholars Initiative (GO-GN/Hewlett Foundation):
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources_policy

Next step: Analysis and presentation of results from interviews with IOs.
References


References


Thank you

I am Open to questions or email me at igorlesko@oeglobal.org. Twitter: @igor_lesko