Defining and Developing 'Enabling' Open Education Policies in Higher Education

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Open Education GLOBAL

Open Education aims to increase **educational access, effectiveness and equity** through **fostering participation and knowledge co-creation**, especially by marginalised and traditionally under-represented groups (Campbell, 2020a; Cronin, 2020).
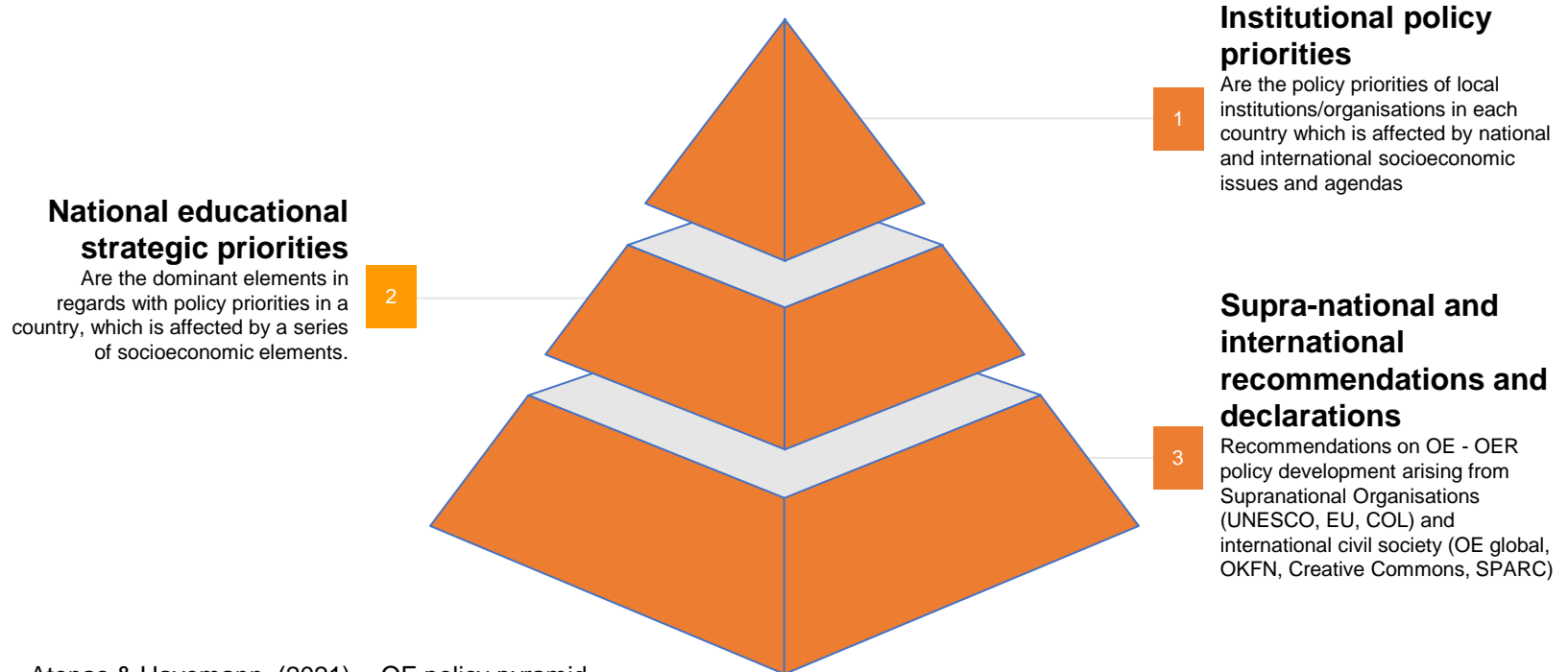
Our brief directly responds to (or aims at supporting) the implementation of the 2019 UNESCO Open Educational Resources (OER) Recommendation that calls on governments and educational institutions to create supportive OER and OE policies. Indirectly, the brief also supports the implementation of the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science.

OE policies can be understood as: **written or unwritten guidelines, regulations and strategies** which seek to foster the development and implementation of **Open Educational Practices**, including the creation and use of **Open Educational Resources**.

Through such policies, governments, institutions and other organisations **allocate resources and orchestrate activities** in order to increase access to educational opportunity, as well as promote educational quality, efficiency and innovation.
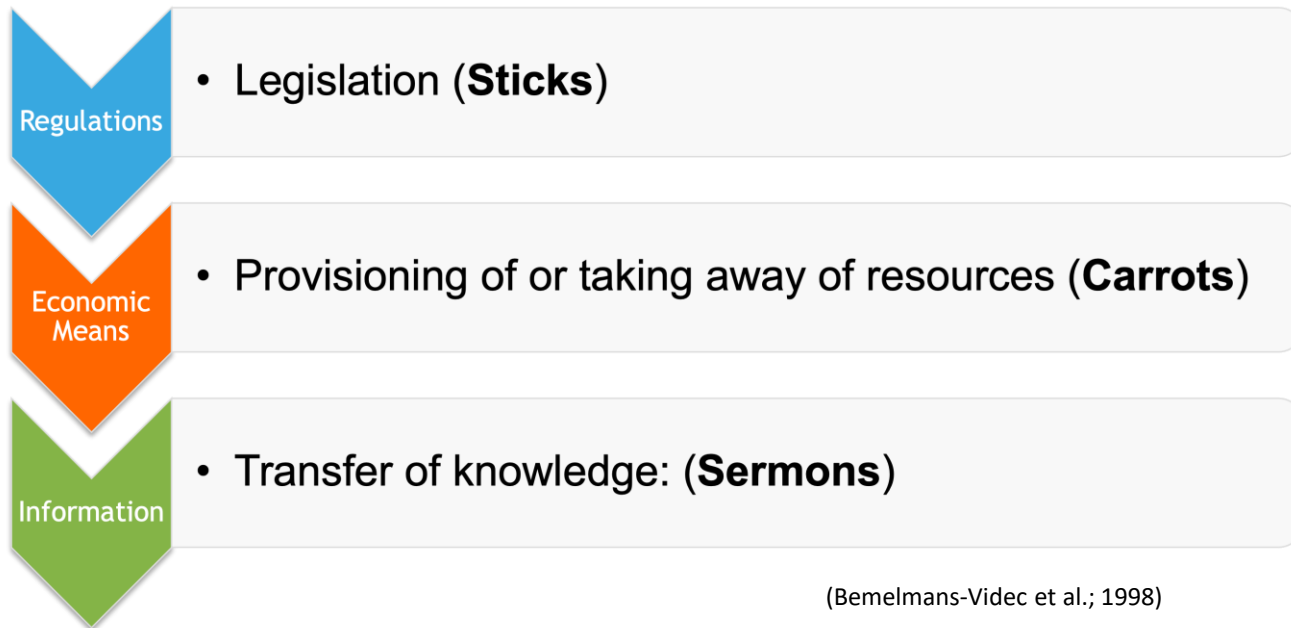
(Atenas, Havemann, Neumann and Stefanelli, 2020, p.3)

OE policy infrastructure

Institutional policy priorities
Are the policy priorities of local institutions/organisations in each country which is affected by national and international socioeconomic issues and agendas

1

National educational strategic priorities
Are the dominant elements in regards with policy priorities in a country, which is affected by a series of socioeconomic elements.

2

Supra-national and international recommendations and declarations
Recommendations on OE - OER policy development arising from Supranational Organisations (UNESCO, EU, COL) and international civil society (OE global, OKFN, Creative Commons, SPARC)

3

Atenas & Havemann. (2021) - OE policy pyramid

Governmental OER Policy

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:

Regulations
- Legislation (**Sticks**)

Economic Means
- Provisioning of or taking away of resources (**Carrots**)

Information
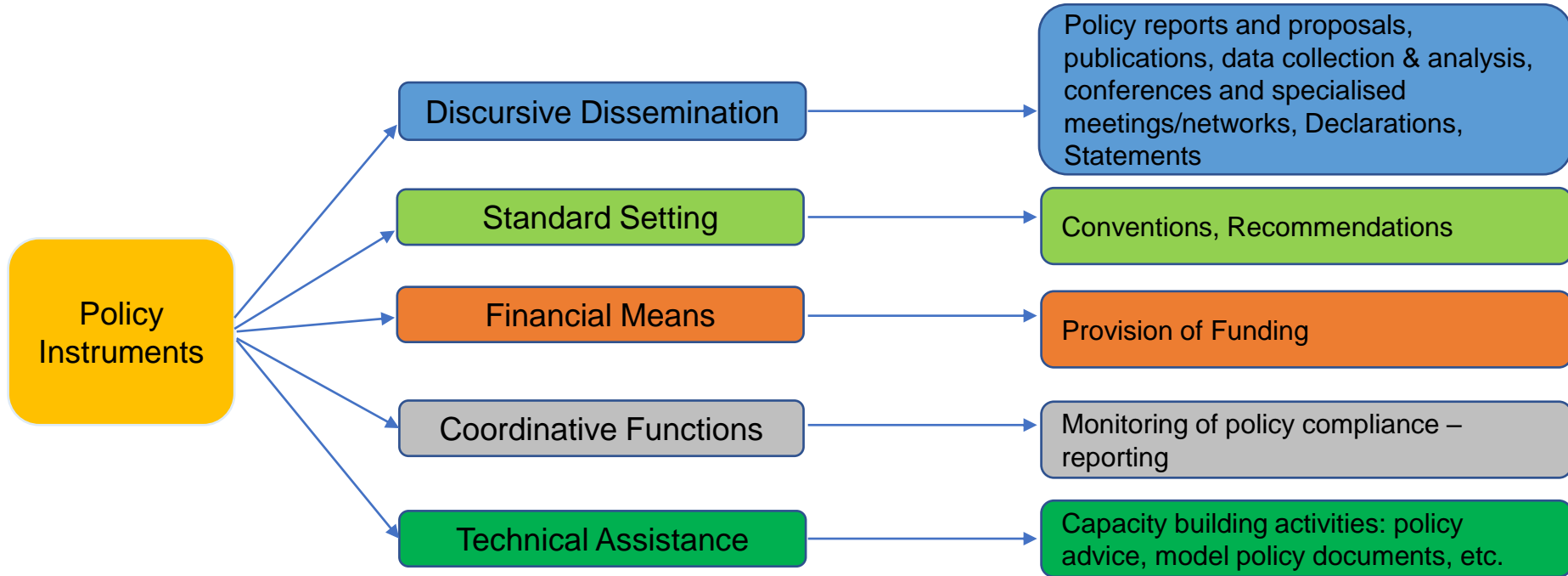- Transfer of knowledge: (**Sermons**)

(Bemelmans-Videc et al.; 1998)

Governmental OER policy is implemented to facilitate the creation, use, reuse and adaption of OER to achieve numerous objectives such as **widening access to education, improve student retention and success rates, reducing costs** and more.

Such policies are adopted as **standalone OER policies or integrated** within broader policy frameworks and domains of openness [eg Open Access, Open Science, Open Data].

(Lesko, 2022)

Policy Instruments

Policy Instruments		
	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)

One of the core aims in OE policy is to catalyse cultural and organisational change; in the case of institutional OE policies these need to be be driven by **social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, and student support.**

(Stagg & Bossu; 2016; Orr, Neumann & Muuß-Merholz, 2017; Campbell, 2020; Atenas, Havemann, Neumann & Stefanelli, 2020)

In a sector which is often currently focused on competition, taking up an OE lens on institutional practices means looking instead for ways to **network, collaborate and share with others**.
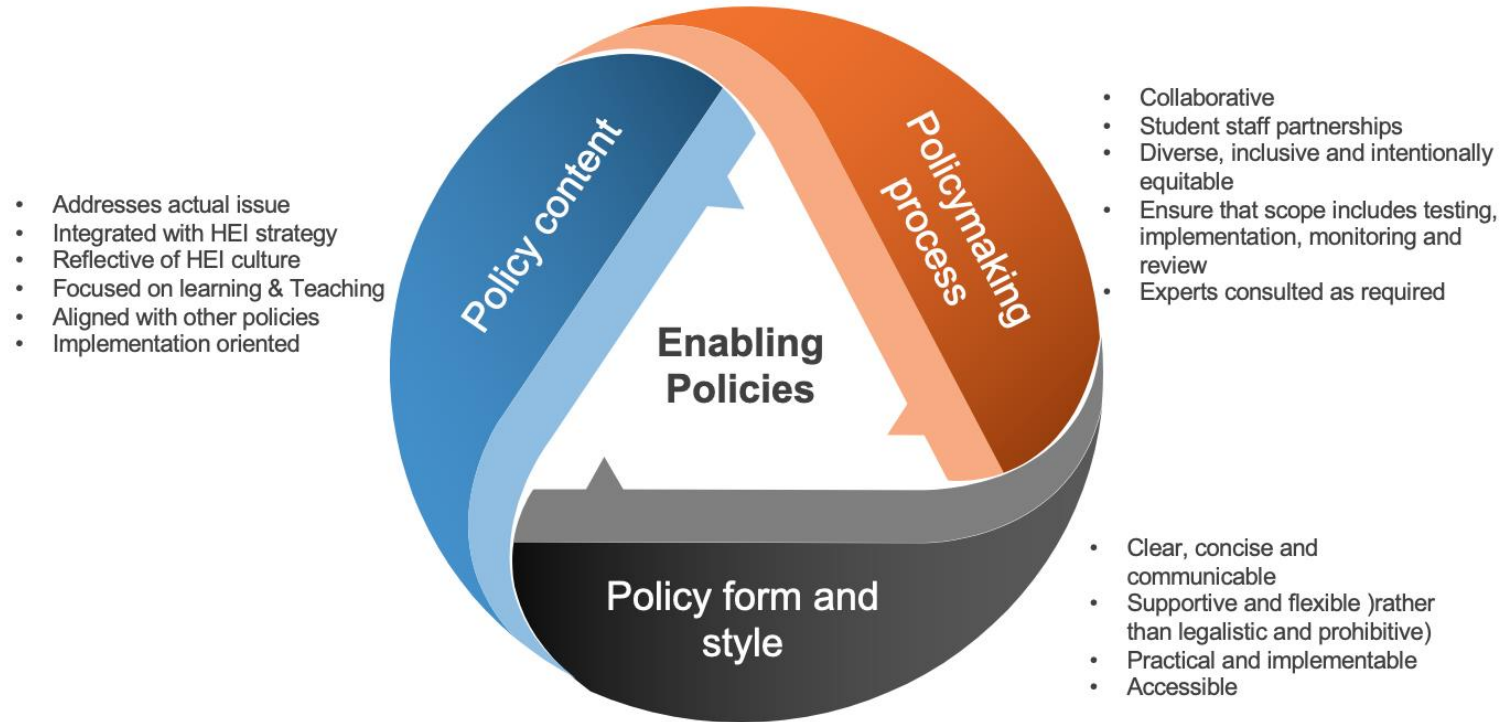
Development of an enabling OE policy through **co-creation** is an opportunity for an organisation to **reconnect with its values** and consider how it can be a force for good in the world.

Assuming that 'openness policies' need to create public value, a **transversal and democratic** approach to policy making is needed. Embedding participatory principles at the heart of the process can **promote successful policy implementation and sustainability.**
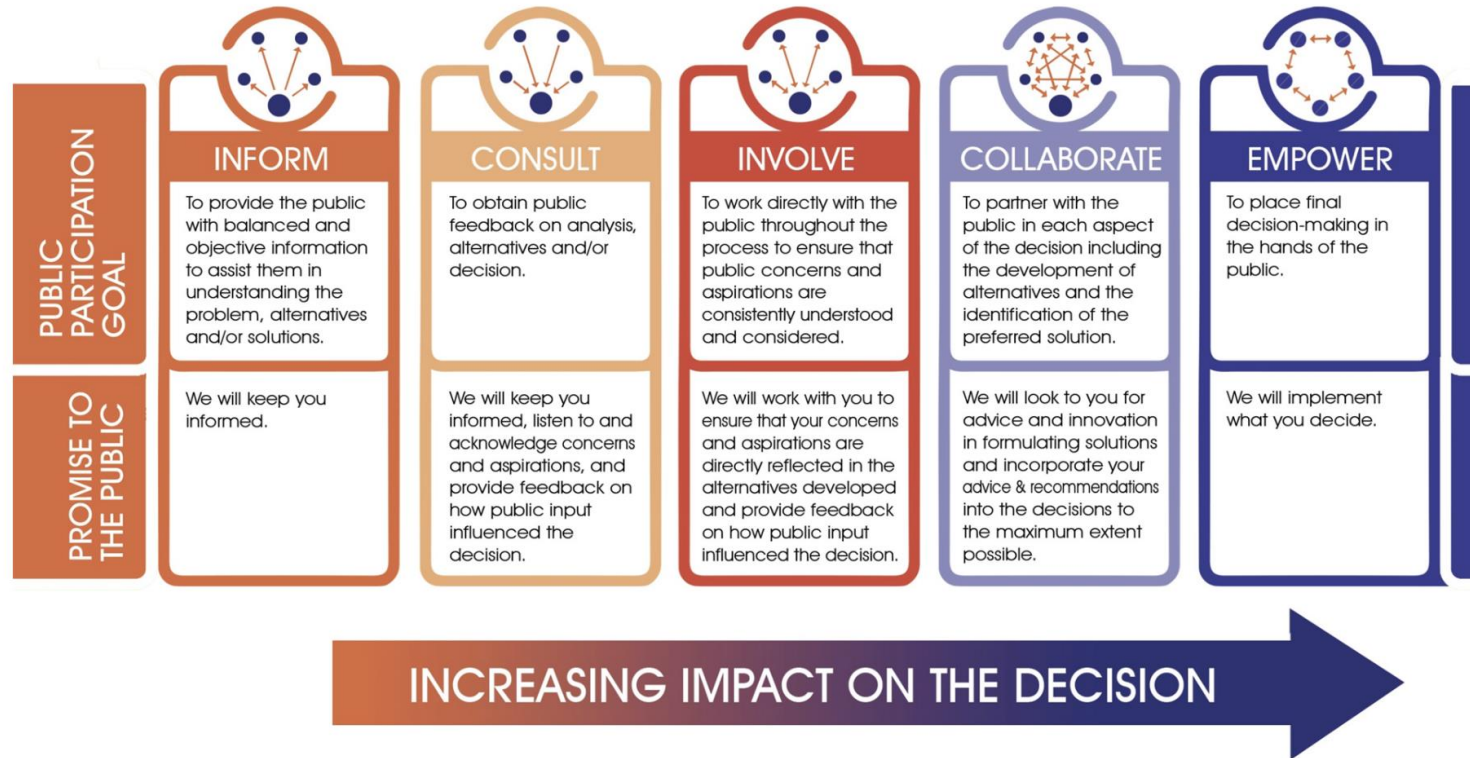
(Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, 2015; Cox and Trotter, 2016; Bryson et al., 2017; Lesko, 2019; Atenas et al. 2020)

Our aim is to encourage as wide a range of people as possible to become policymakers, **opening up conversations** and consultations about **policies focused on or related to OE**.
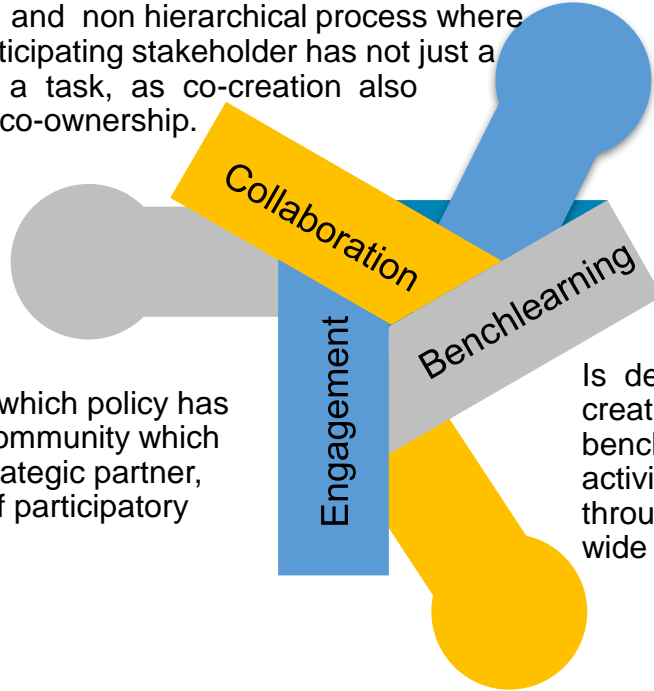
Creating enabling policies

- Addresses actual issue
- Integrated with HEI strategy
- Reflective of HEI culture
- Focused on learning & Teaching
- Aligned with other policies
- Implementation oriented

Policy content

Policymaking process

Enabling Policies

Policy form and style

- Collaborative
- Student staff partnerships
- Diverse, inclusive and intentionally equitable
- Ensure that scope includes testing, implementation, monitoring and review
- Experts consulted as required

- Clear, concise and communicable
- Supportive and flexible)rather than legalistic and prohibitive)
- Practical and implementable
- Accessible

Public Participation Spectrum

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice & recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

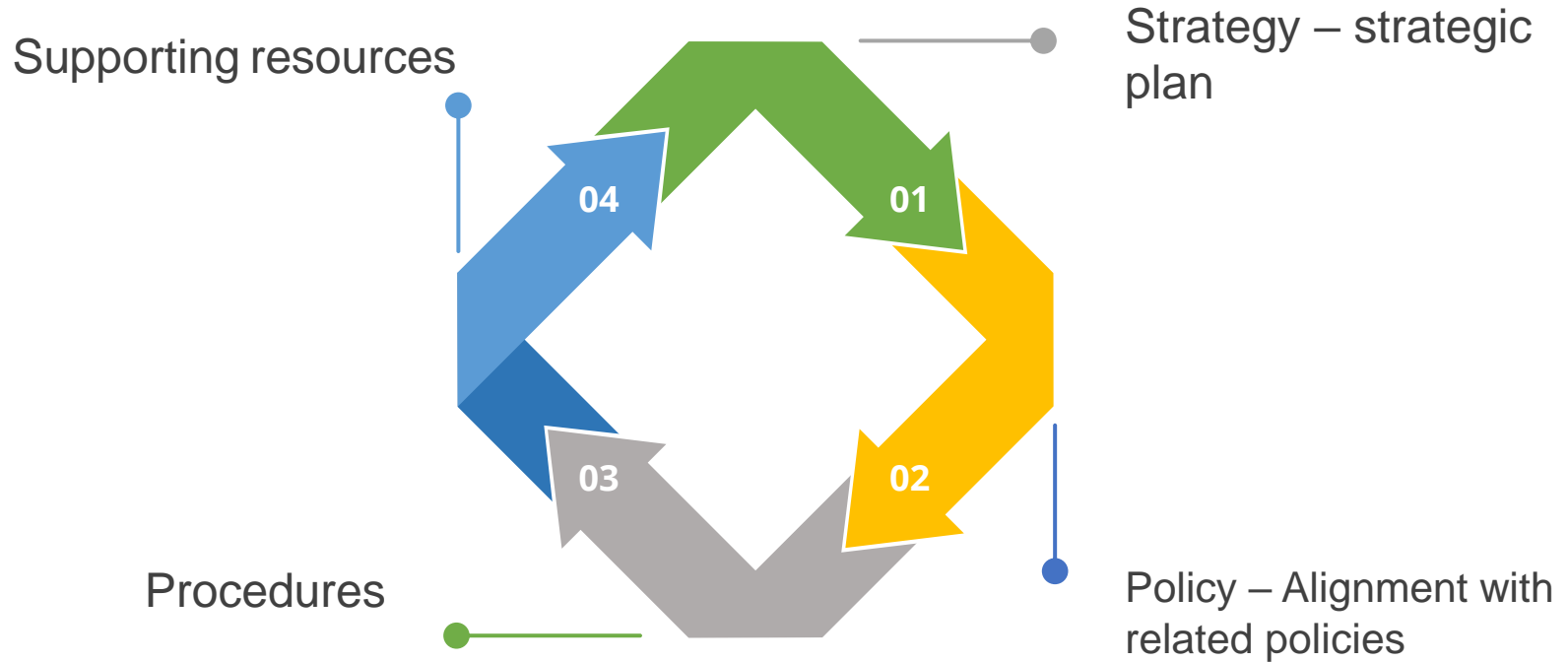## INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

OE policy process

In policymaking can be understood as an equitable and non hierarchical process where every participating stakeholder has not just a voice but a task, as co-creation also includes co-ownership.

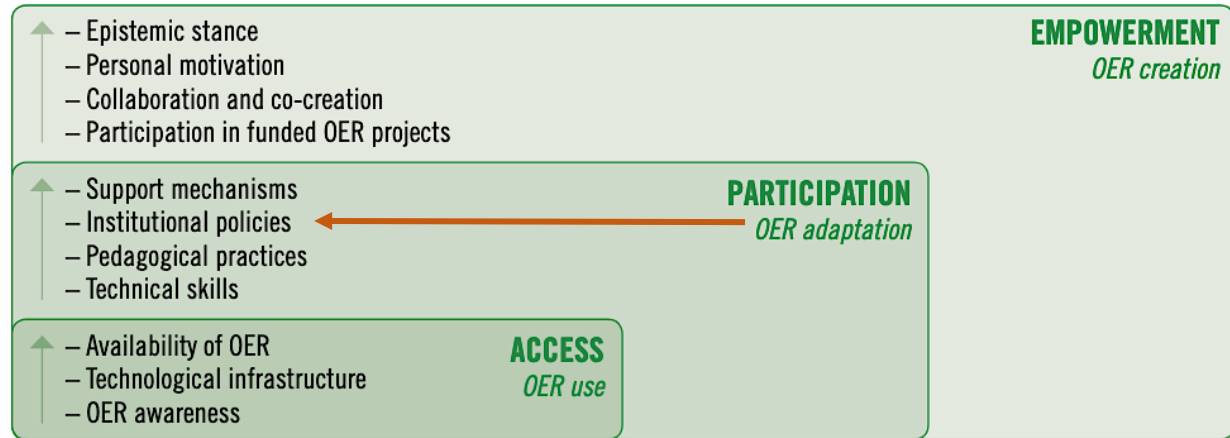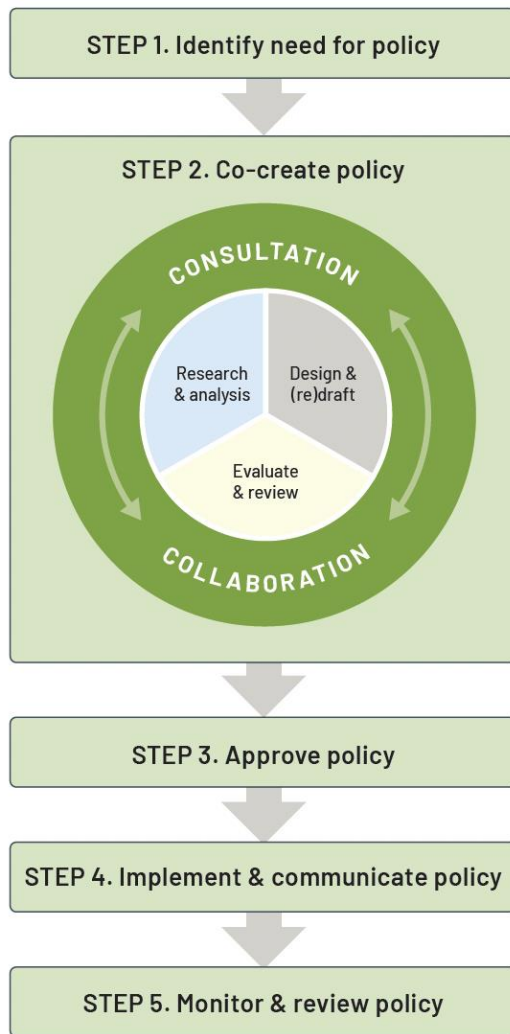**Collaboration**

Benchlearning

Engagement

Is the process in which policy has the input of the community which has become a strategic partner, using a variety of participatory arenas.

Is defined as a process for creating a systematic link between benchmarking and learning activities to identify good practices through comparative learning using a wide range of diverse indicators.
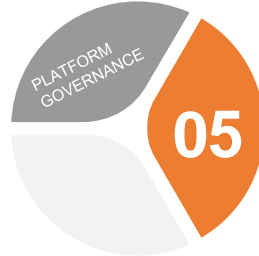
Atenas & Havemann. (2021) - OE policy elements

Policy hierarchy and alignment

STEP 1. Identify need for policy

STEP 2. Co-create policy

CONSULTATION

Research & analysis

Design & (re)draft

Evaluate & review

COLLABORATION

STEP 3. Approve policy

STEP 4. Implement & communicate policy

STEP 5. Monitor & review policy

— Epistemic stance
— Personal motivation
— Collaboration and co-creation
— Participation in funded OER projects

EMPOWERMENT
OER creation

— Support mechanisms
— Institutional policies
— Pedagogical practices
— Technical skills

PARTICIPATION
OER adaptation

— Availability of OER
— Technological infrastructure
— OER awareness

ACCESS
OER use

15

OE Policies should instill and promote models for the rewards and recognition for educators who have integrated aspects of OEP into their teaching
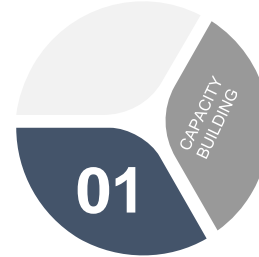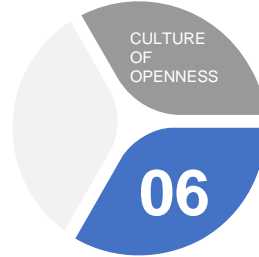
OE can be transformative at academic level, as when a critical mass of impactful activities are visible, a long lasting cultural change can occur within the institutions involved.

OE policies should not neglect the significance of the Open and Digital practices, thus, include a layer of data governance including privacy as a fundamental pillar to enable agency of learners and educators in digital learning environments

For UNESCO (2012), accreditation mechanisms should be adopted to recognise the learning acquired through open courses and OER while recognising by creating adequate mechanisms to assess learners' competences.

OE is about human rights and access to learning, fostering a culture of developing knowledge, promoting understanding across cultures, democratic values, transparency, equity, and social participation.
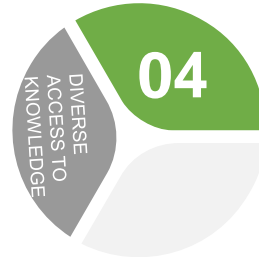
OE is a vehicle for inclusion, therefore, OE policies need to ensure that OERs and platforms prioritise an inclusive and accessible design to ensure these directly benefit and impact, following the article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

OE POLICIES

CULTURE OF OPENNESS
06

CAPACITY BUILDING
01

PLATFORM GOVERNANCE
05

LEARNING ACCREDITATION
02

DIVERSE ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE
04

ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY
03

Atenas & Havemann (2022) - OE policy elements

Ensuring that the policymaking process is diverse, inclusive and intentionally equitable is an essential aspect of enabling policymaking at all stages of the process.

The policy considerations and suggested steps in this policy brief should be understood within the broader context of making change, where **empathy, thoughtfulness, creativity, collaboration and collaborative leadership are required**.

Read the full policy brief

Atenas, J., Haverman, L., Cronin, C., Rodés, V., Lesko, I., Stacey, P., Feliu-Torruella, M., Buck, E., Amiel, T., Orlic, D., Stefanelli, C. and Villar Onrubia, D. (2022) *"Defining and developing 'enabling' Open Education Policies in higher education".* In: UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022, 18-20 May 2022, Barcelona, Spain. Available at http://oars.uos.ac.uk/2481/

Help us co-create the policy agenda

If you work in higher education please respond to this survey which seeks views on how local institutional policies support, shape, enable or constrain open educational practices.

tinyurl.com/openedpolicy

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