

Open Educational Resources in Higher Education: Exploring Access in Resource-constrained Contexts

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This special issue is focused on the topic of open educational resources (OER). The call suggested topics related to OER, such as:

- Education systems.
- Content provision and delivery used for OER.
- ICT4D for OER in Africa.
- Libraries, information and communication technology (ICT) for open distance e-learning and teacher training.
- OER in history.
- Audiovisuals and virtual archives.
- OER for decolonisation.
- Social inclusion and exclusion in the administration and management of OER.
- OER and AI for future open education.

Numerous manuscripts were submitted for consideration to be published in this special issue, but unfortunately, we could not accommodate all of them. Based on the double-blind peer review process, we selected eight stand-out manuscripts for publication in this special issue.

In this issue, we see examples of how AI and open education can be combined to enhance access and build pedagogical innovation. There are also articles on how OER can support post-graduate studies. Libraries are suggested as key locations for OER support and for OER advocacy work. One article focused on the potential of ICT



systems to store, disseminate and sustain OER within often under-resourced institutions, and the creation of OER as an example of engaged scholarship to enable archivists to preserve histories and oral histories of all South Africans.

Some authors explored UNESCO's sustainable development goals and linked these to African contexts where resources are limited. Seven of the eight papers are authored by Africans, and we hope that this recognition of publication will build OER communities at their respective institutions. We also hope that this will fill the gap that exists in OER scholarship from African perspectives. We have so much to learn about how to maximise open education in the African context, and we hope that these cases will guide other researchers and practitioners to research examples that can be shared with the world.

Higher education is required to adapt to new challenges as new technologies are introduced, especially recently, artificial intelligence in new forms such as large language models like ChatGPT. Two of the articles in this special issue set up cases of practical pedagogical activities that can be used in our classrooms.

Of key importance in this special issue were several references to social justice, equity, and decolonisation. Our students enter the very different and often alienating world of higher education and are confronted with curricula and content that they cannot relate to. This is the important position of OER. The affordances of OER allow for the design and re-design of teaching materials for accessibility, local relevance, and the inclusion of the marginalised voices of academics and students.

"Learning content should be finely calibrated to local cultures, societies, languages, histories, literatures, and natural environments" (Cope and Kalantzis 2023).

Reference

Cope, B., and M. Kalantzis. 2023. "The Paradoxes of Open Educational Resources." *Information, Medium and Society: Journal of Publishing Studies* 21 (1).