

OER Policy Workshop, West Bengal State University, West Bengal, India

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Speech by Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, Commonwealth Educational Centre for Asia (CEMCA),
New Delhi, India

Dear colleagues,

- Vice Chancellor Professor Mahua Das
- Dr Sushanta Banerjee
- Dr Barnali Roy Choudhury
- And, other senior officials of WBSU

My salutation to each one of you!

- We are gathered to discuss, deliberate upon and arrive at a consensus on an OER policy specific to the State University. I wish to congratulate for taking this first, but very important step in the life of your university. It is a landmark occasion for you and for the OER community at large!
- Although the term OER was coined officially in 2002, COL has been a proponent of the concept for many years, prior to the UNESCO event for we believed in the benefits that OER brought to the education system, especially the higher education system in particular.
- Since 2002, we have seen many developments with regard to the OER movement at the global level, especially in the last decade or so.
 - The Paris Declaration and the Mozambique Communique in 2012; the Incheon Declaration in 2015 that set the SDG agenda for goal 4; the Kuala Lumpur Declaration in the following year, followed by the Ljubljana Action Plan and the Ministerial Statements in 2017, followed by the global recommendations on OER in 2019.
 - Since the last decade or so, COL has helped almost all of the 33 state-run Open Universities around the world, and a number of Directorates of Distance Education in conventional Universities to develop their OER policies and practices.
 - In this run up, among the handful of conventional universities, we have the WBSU developing the policy – alongside Vidyasagar University in West Bengal, India. This is commendable!
- COL has developed its own template, in consultation with various institutions that includes the following:
 - Preamble
 - Definitions
 - Policy Declaration
 - Policy Objectives
 - Policy Statements
 - Scope
 - Applicability
 - Copyright licenses

- Quality Assurance
- Review System
- Liabilities
- Implementation arrangements within the institution
- As you develop your own policy, it is important for you to consider the following:
 - Understand the potential of OER
 - Determine your own University's vision and how it plays out with the OER policy:
 - Reducing the barriers among disadvantaged groups
 - Reducing the cost of access to educational resources
 - Improving the quality and relevance of learning content
 - Personalising learning for individuals
 - Provision of content in local languages
 - Lifelong learning possibilities of your learners
 - Equity, inclusion and diversity of your learners
 - Define how OER can bring in innovation in teaching/learning practices.
 - Decide if or how you would prepare your university for the emergency response and such teaching/learning practices.
 - Identify gaps within the university in terms of making educational resources available to the learners.
 - Develop a Policy accordingly, to address aspiration, needs and challenges:
 - Selecting a licensing framework is important
 - Integrating OER into the curriculum design and delivery is key
 - Developing a repository and making it dynamic is pertinent to sustainability
 - Ensuring that quality assurance procedures are in place
 - Supporting capacity building of faculty members and other key staff
 - Developing a research/evidence based approach
 - Constituting some governance for the whole process
 - Determining the implementation
 - Launching of the policy