

# Introducing OER Africa

## Partnerships for Effective Collaboration

UNISA Library Open Scholarship Seminar  
Pretoria, South Africa  
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# Partnerships

- Relationship between individuals or group... characterised by mutual co-operation and responsibility ... for the achievement of a specific goal
- ...a formal agreement between two or more parties that have agreed to work together in pursuit of common goals



Global Partnership

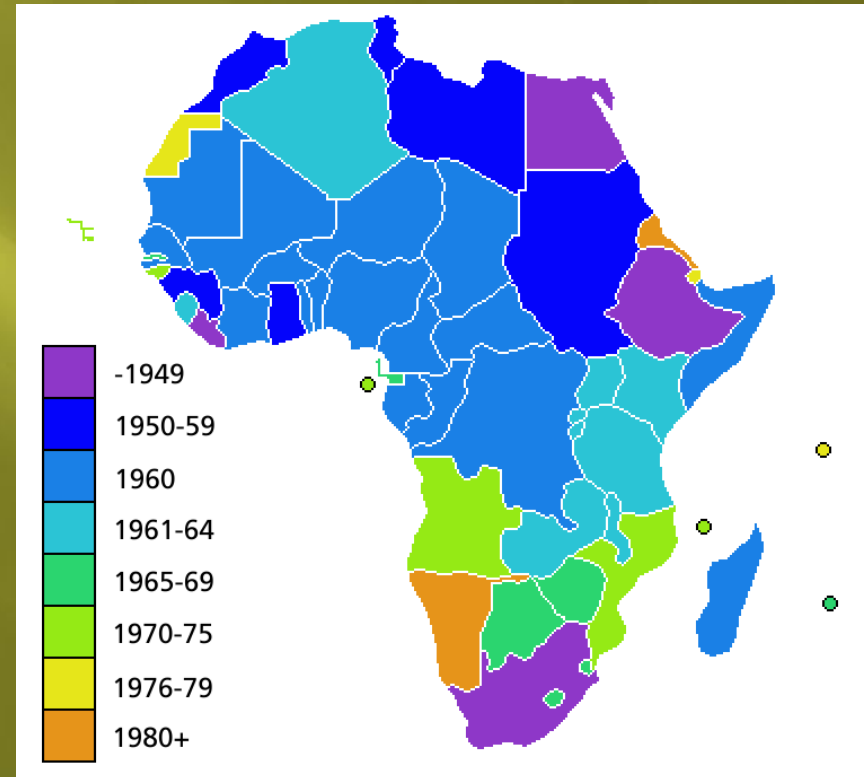
By  
Tanzanian cartoonist Ally Massoud

# Who we are

- **OER Africa** is an innovative new project, headquartered in Nairobi, under the auspices of SAIDE.
- Established to play a leading role in driving the development and use of OER in Africa.
- Provides a common conceptual framework for SAIDE OER-related activities
- Current funding from the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation and others, to harness African experts and expertise to deploy OER to the benefit of Africa's higher education systems.

# National sovereignty in Africa

The Year When African Countries Gained Their Independence	
1847	Liberia
1951	Egypt
1956	Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco
1957	Ghana
1958	Guinea
1960	Chad, Benin, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Togo, Zaire, Somalia, Congo, Gabon, Cameroon
1961	Sierra Leone, South Africa (recognized as the Republic of South Africa, the indigenous people (Black Africans), were living under apartheid, and thus not truly independent)
1962	Algeria, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda
1963	Kenya, Tanzania
1964	Malawi, Zambia
1965	Gambia
1966	Botswana, Lesotho
1968	Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Swaziland
1969	Guinea-Bissau, Libya
1975	Angola, Cape Verde, Comoros, Mozambique, Sao Tome
1976	Seychelles
1977	Djibouti
1980	Zimbabwe
1990	Namibia
1994	Indigenous Africans — Black Africans — free from apartheid in South Africa
Source: Africa is Not a Country, It's a Continent by Dr. Arthur Lewin	



# The OER Concept

- Educational resources that are freely available for use by educators and learners, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees.
- OER is *not* synonymous with online learning or e-learning;
- Within an African context, it is anticipated that many of the resources produced – while shareable in a digital format (both online and via offline formats such as CD-ROM) – will be printable.

# Problem / Theory of Action

- African higher education institutions seriously structurally under-funded for the core function they are expected to discharge.
- Therefore, corresponding paucity of institutional and individual capacity to teach in many domains of higher education.
- Existing faculty overtaxed in time and ability to teach, reducing time available for ongoing program and materials development.



# Problem / Theory of Action (2)

- Many higher education programs on the continent have inadequate funds to run programmes and meet the educational needs of enrolled students *as well as* cover the costs of faculty time required both to design and run quality learning experiences.
- Too few learning resources for learners and lecturers in African universities, and many of those available are too expensive to be purchased by universities or students.

# Problem / Theory of Action (3)

- Much existing content available to and within African universities based on weak and largely outmoded educational design principles.
- Limited ICT infrastructure to gain access to up-to-date information available on the Internet and participate in inter-institutional, geographically dispersed collaborative activities.



# A Vision for Higher Education in Africa:

- **Vibrant, sustainable African higher education institutions that play a critical role in building and sustaining African societies and economies, by producing the continent's future intellectual leaders through free and open development and sharing of common intellectual capital.**

# Why do we exist?

- **OER Africa** believes that OER can positively support development and capacity of higher education systems and institutions across Africa.
- **OER Africa** is concerned that – if the concept and practice of OER evolves predominantly outside and for Africa – we will not be able to liberate its potential.

# Key Assumptions

OER holds potential:

1. To increase availability of high quality, relevant and need-targeted learning materials;
2. To reduce the cost of accessing educational materials;
3. To allow adaptation of materials and possibly contribute to enabling learners to be active participants in educational processes;
4. To achieve collaborative partnership of people working in communities of practice, preferably across/within institutions;

# Key Assumptions (cont'd)

5. To build capacity in African higher education institutions by providing educators with access, at low or no cost, to the **tools** and content required to produce high quality educational materials.
6. To be successful and sustainable, development of OER cannot be a sideline activity within a university.
7. OER Africa seeks to facilitate the design of OER that can work **immediately** and add educational value within the current ICT infrastructure constraints of any participating institutions.

# OER IN ACTION

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# Our Operational Approach

- **Wherever possible, to try to build relationships with existing networks of African education systems, institutions, and educators, and provide support of different kinds to the networks, to institutions, and to individual educators:**





# WORKING WITH PARTNERS

## *TO CREATE OR ADAPT?*

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# Health OER: to create – and share!

- Partnership between KNUST, UG, UCW, UCT, UM & OER Africa
- Objective was to bridge identified gaps
- Materials produced range from videos to PDFs – (boils & knives)
- Results of collaboration include cross institutional exchange of knowledge, skills and expertise
- Growing the network as next step

# Growing an African Health OER Network

## Objectives:

- To strengthen the intellectual & policy infrastructure within and between African institutions in order to grow a vibrant *Health OER* network
- To systematically draw in more African and global participants to create, adapt, share and use OER to the benefit of health education in Africa
- To develop models of collaboration and sustainability that can be replicated in other regions of the world

# Introducing



- 18 month pilot project whose objective is:
  - ❖ to bridge gaps identified in curriculum for African MSc in Agriculture
  - ❖ to enrich the resulting resources through outreach with the community and through student intervention
- Regional focus on the RUFORUM Agriculture Information Communication Management Program (AICM) and the Collaborative Masters Program in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE).

# IN SUMMARY

# Dispelling Some Myths

- Content = education
- Good content will overcome institutional capacity constraints
- OER should be a process of voluntarism
- OER will make education cheaper in the short-term
- Openness automatically equates with quality
- OER is about e-learning



# OER Africa Activities

## Structured Institutional Engagement:

- Initial OER Sensitization & Exploration;
- Policy Reviews to support development supportive institutional environment;
- Materials Audits;
- Proof of Concept Pilots in support of the reinvention of African higher education program curricula;
- Regular & ongoing communication / relationship-building.

“Give a man a fish; you have fed him  
for today.

Teach a man to fish; and you have  
fed him for a lifetime.

Teach a man to sell fish and he eats  
steak.”

Author unknown

# Thank you

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