![UNESCO logo - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization]

Call for Joint Action:

Supporting Learning and Knowledge Sharing through Open Educational Resources (OER)

The global Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted learning and knowledge sharing worldwide, at its peak affecting 1.57 billion learners in 191 countries. In this unprecedented context, Open Educational Resources (OER) represent a crucial means to support the continuation of learning in both formal and informal settings.

OER are 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[1], permitting no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.

OER provide a promising solution to access, create and share knowledge and support learning for learners of all grade levels, as well as for teachers, teacher trainers and educators, parents, educational policy makers and governmental bodies. Beyond this, they carry value for a wide range of constituencies, including cultural institutions (such as libraries, archives and museums) and their users, researchers, civil society organizations (including professional and student associations), publishers, the public and private sectors, intergovernmental organizations, copyright holders and authors, as well as media and broadcasting groups. They can help meet the needs of individual learners, including persons with disabilities and individuals coming from marginalized or disadvantaged groups, and effectively promote gender equality as well as incentivize innovative pedagogical, didactical and methodological approaches.

In the framework of the OER Recommendation, adopted by its General Conference in November 2019, UNESCO's Member States committed to promote the use of OER for the open sharing of knowledge and learning, in the following areas:

(i) **Capacity building and use of OER**: This includes developing the capacity of all key education stakeholders to create, access, re-use, re-purpose, adapt, and redistribute OER, as well as to use and apply open licenses in a manner consistent with national copyright legislation and international obligations;

(ii) **Developing supportive policy**: governments, and education authorities and institutions should be encouraged to adopt regulatory frameworks to support open licensing of publicly funded educational and research materials, develop strategies to enable the use and adaptation of OER in support of high quality, inclusive education and lifelong learning for all, supported by relevant research in the area;

---

[1] Open license refers to a license that respects the intellectual property rights of the copyright owner and provides permissions granting the public the rights to access, re-use, re-purpose, adapt and redistribute educational materials

(iii) **Effective, inclusive and equitable access to quality OER**: supporting the adoption of strategies and programmes including through relevant technology solutions that ensure OER in any medium are shared in open formats and standards to maximize equitable access, co-creation, curation, and searchability, including for those from vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities;

(iv) **Nurturing the creation of sustainability models for OER**: supporting and encouraging the creation of sustainability models for OER at national, regional and institutional levels, and the planning and pilot testing of new sustainable forms of education and learning;

(v) **Fostering and facilitating international cooperation:** supporting international cooperation between stakeholders to minimize unnecessary duplication in OER development investments and to develop a global pool of culturally diverse, locally relevant, gender-sensitive, accessible, educational materials in multiple languages and formats

We underscore the important role of the Covid 19 Global Education Coalition launched by UNESCO to design and deploy inclusive distance learning solutions. Access to OER is fundamental for ensuring learning continuity. The Dynamic OER Coalition, a multi-stakeholder group of partners dedicated to sharing expertise for the implementation of this Recommendation, will facilitate and support joint actions.

Today we are at a pivotal moment in history. The Covid-19 crisis has resulted in a paradigm shift on how learners of all ages, worldwide, can access learning. It is therefore more than ever essential that the global community comes together now to foster universal access to information and knowledge through OER. Our joint action aims at managing the challenges of this and future pandemic crisis' for learners, as well as to laying the foundation for integrating systematically best practices to increase the sharing of knowledge for the post-Covid-19 future of learning.

Therefore, in the spirit of a joint implementation of the OER Recommendation, UNESCO calls on the global community to support the use of OER for sharing learning and knowledge openly worldwide with a view to building more inclusive, sustainable and resilient Knowledge Societies.

Moez Chakchouk
Assistant Director-General for
Communication and Information

Stefania Giannini
Assistant Director-General for
Education