The UNESCO OER Recommendation and Open
Knowledge
An Overview for African Librarians

African Library and Information Associations and
Institutions (AfLIA)
Neil Butcher and Associates

July 2023

UNESCO OER Logo

In 2012, UNESCO contracted with the graphic designer, Jonathas Mello, to design a logo that would convey the meaning of open educational resources (OER). The logo has a Creative Commons licence, which allows for adaptation, including translation.[1]

The logo has been translated to numerous languages that are available on WikiEducator along with instructions on how to add new languages.[2] However, none of these are one of the more than 1,500 African languages spoken on the continent.

AfLIA put out a call to the WhatsApp group it moderates with OER Africa to ask African librarians to translate open educational resources into their languages. Nkem Osuigwe, AfLIA Director of Human Capacity Development and Training wrote this:

> *Colleagues, here is the OER logo. We are looking at using the logo translated into African languages as the cover for the UNESCO OER Recommendation Overview. So....kindly share the translation of Open Educational Resources in your language here and we will edit into the logo. Imagine your language not being represented in this global document!!!*

> *Remember, it's a marathon, not a sprint*!

Librarians had many questions and several challenges—are they meant to translate the three words with no context? In some cases, their language had no word for "open." What is the difference between free and open? In one instance, a librarian couldn't type an accurate translation because she did not have a font with the necessary diacritical marks. It also emerged that the Kiswahili translation for OER in Kenya is not quite the same as the one for the Swahili spoken in Tanzania. The words are the same, but the order in which they appear is different. The WhatsApp group also learned that, in Kenya, they refer to the language as Kiswahili, but in Tanzania it is Swahili. Finally, OER does not always translate easily to three words, which will require adjusting the logo. This has been an important learning experience for all of us.

AfLIA now has translations in 16 African languages, and more are still arriving. It has applied for membership in WikiEducator and will add all African languages that it can when permission is received. See Appendix One for a table of African translations of OER.

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[1] Global OER logo, https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/global_oer_logo_manual_en.pdf
[2] UNESCO OER logo translations, https://wikieducator.org/UNESCO_OER_logo_translations

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1. Acronyms

ABADCAM	Cameroon Association of Librarians, Archivists, Documentalists and Museum Curators
ADOL	African Online Digital Library
AfLIA	African Library & Information Associations & Institutions
AUC	African Union Commission
BLA	Botswana Library Association
CC	Creative Commons
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
GLA	Ghana Library Association
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KLA	Kenya Library Association
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LIAZ	Library and Information Association of Zambia
LIS	Library and Information Science
MALA	Malawi Library Association
MILL	Molteno Institute of Language and Literacy
NBA	Neil Butcher and Associates
NIWA	Namibian Information Workers Association
NLA	Nigerian Library Association
OEP	Open Education Practices
OER	Open Educational Resources
SCESCAL	Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

TESSA	Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
TLA	Tanzanian Library Association
UN	United Nations
ULIA	Uganda Library and Information Association
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
ZimLA	Zimbabwe Library Association

2. Foreword

Headquartered in Accra, Ghana, the African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA)[3] was founded in 2013 and registered as an independent international non-governmental organization (INGO) under the laws of Ghana in October 2014. AfLIA is the trusted voice of the African library and information community in Africa's development. It drives equitable access to information and knowledge for all.

AfLIA has a strong collaborative relationship with Neil Butcher & Associates (NBA), which commissioned AfLIA to write this Overview of UNESCO's Recommendation on Open Educational Resources for African librarians. Both NBA and AfLIA believe that libraries are frequently overlooked in discussions about open education and OER, as is Africa more generally. Librarians cannot play an active role if they do not fully understand the significance of open licensing to their work. The Overview evolved into this document to explain the pertinence of open licensing, the OER Recommendation, and give examples on ways in which the Recommendation can be used by librarians. We hope that this and subsequent work will help enhance the visibility of African librarians.

This overview was strengthened by input from librarians who reviewed an early draft before and during the AfLIA conference. When librarians reviewed the Overview before and during the AfLIA conference,

If you would like more information on AfLIA, please write us at info@aflia.net. We would be delighted to engage in conversation with you. In addition, please contact us if you have questions about this Overview or would like to add content.

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Dr. Helena Asamoah-Hassan
Executive Director

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Date

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[3]https://web.aflia.net/5th-aflia-conference-7th-african-library-summit-registration-open/

3. Introduction

With 212 member institutions, coming from public, community, and tertiary governmental institutions, as well as library associations and NGOs that define themselves as library related, AfLIA has built a robust network.

To lay out the location of libraries in Africa, AfLIA and the Technology and Social Change Group of the University of Washington has mapped 1,888 libraries spread across the Continent.[4] We know that this is an undercount of the number of African libraries. For example, even though only 11 Academic libraries are listed on the figure below, there are obviously many more. Please visit the footnoted site and add your library if it is not there already.

Figure 1: African libraries according to AfLIA's African Library Sites
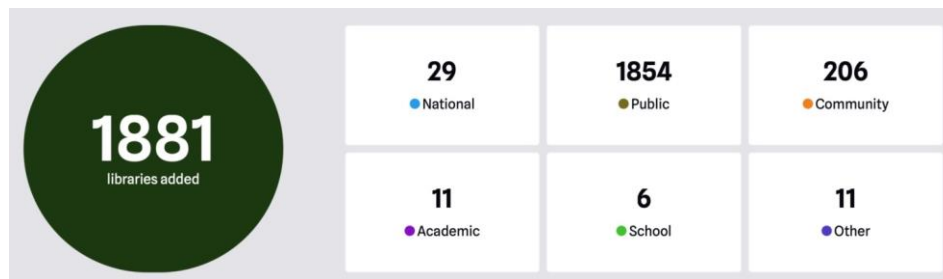
AfLIA convenes biannual conferences, library summits, short courses, and webinars. Participation is both in person with some virtual sessions.

AfLIA is strongly committed to open knowledge and learning. It advocates for the understanding and use of open licenses. Many of the webinars and courses offered to AfLIA members focus on concepts of open knowledge. AfLIA's virtual early literacy course for librarians is an example of this commitment. Two cohorts of librarians have already passed through the course. A third cohort is planned for October 2023. AfLIA's collaboration with Wikimedia has led to a project on promoting open knowledge practices in African libraries. AfLIA also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Figshare to work with librarians on data management.

Education is empowerment and librarians must show that they can play a role in achieving Goal Four of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which aims to:[5]
> *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*

For Africa to achieve the SDGs, educational systems and materials must be rejuvenated in line with current best practices and tailored to reflect African realities. Learning should become functional so that young people will be exposed to modern-day knowledge and skills, and they

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[4] https://africanlibrarysites.org/
[5] https://www.sdg4education2030.org/the-goal

can leave school with the requisite capacity to ensure their economic future. These innovations should meet the specific needs of different communities on the continent. According to Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, African Union Commission, there is a learning crisis in Africa. Some children are in school, many are not:[6]

> *Being in school is not equal to learning and the gap between what our children and young people are learning and what our children, communities and economies need is growing. The breadth and depth of this learning crisis on the continent means the conventional approach to education needs to be complemented by a more radical approach that focuses on enhancing learning outcomes.*

The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 aims at:[7]

> *reorienting Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation, and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels".*

The word "open" does not appear in in the AUC's Continental Education Strategy for Africa. Librarians are mentioned, but only in reference to promoting literacy programs. Openly licensed educational content and librarians could enable more equitable access to quality resources, but only if governments, the development community, and other stakeholders pay attention to open educational resources (OER), open access, and other forms of open learning and research. The UNESCO OER Recommendation is intended to do just that.

This Overview considers one global instrument aimed at facilitating openness, the UNESCO OER Recommendation, and carefully inspects it as it relates to the different library types in Africa and the user communities the libraries represent. It will explore each Action Area of the OER Recommendation to help African librarians develop a deeper understanding of OER, including the kinds of open content that will resonate with library users. OER is consonant with other equally important principles for librarians—access to equitable, suitable, and relevant content for easy sharing and interoperability of knowledge within Africa. Our discussion of the OER Recommendation will not be comprehensive; it will focus directly on the role African librarians can play.

The Overview is divided into four parts:
- Discussion about OER, licensing, and the role of the UNESCO OER Recommendation for librarians
- Traditional open knowledge acquisition and dissemination in Africa
- African Libraries as Agents of Openness
- Summing up and recommendations

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[6]https://au.int/fr/node/37888
[7]https://ecosocc.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2021-09/continental-strategy-education-africa-english.pdf

4. The Significance of OER and Open Knowledge More Broadly for Librarians

A. Defining OER

OERs are learning, teaching, and research materials in any format and medium that either reside in the public domain or are under copyright and have been released under an open licence.[8] A World Bank Toolkit on open licensing defines OER as follows:[9]

> OER are learning, teaching, and research materials in any format and medium that either reside in the public domain or are under copyright and have been released under an open licence. The term 'open licence' refers to a licence that respects the intellectual property rights of the copyright owner but provides permissions for users to access, re-use, re-purpose, adapt, and/or redistribute educational materials.
>
> Open licences do not replace copyright. Instead, they revise 'all rights reserved' licences to 'some rights reserved' licences. **A broad spectrum of legal frameworks is emerging to govern the use of OER. Some of these only allow for use of the materials in their original form, but others make provision for users to adapt and translate resources**. [Emphasis by the authors.]

Because OER licences allow educational materials to be shared, revised, and adapted, they have a multiplier effect.

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[8] https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies/oer
[9] *Butcher, N, Levey, L, and von Gogh, K. (2022). Open Licensing in Education: A World Bank Toolkit. Washington DC: The World Bank.* https://www.earlylearningnetwork.org/system/files/resourcefiles/Open Licensing Toolkit FINAL V2.pdf

Figure 2: OER has a multiplier effect[10]
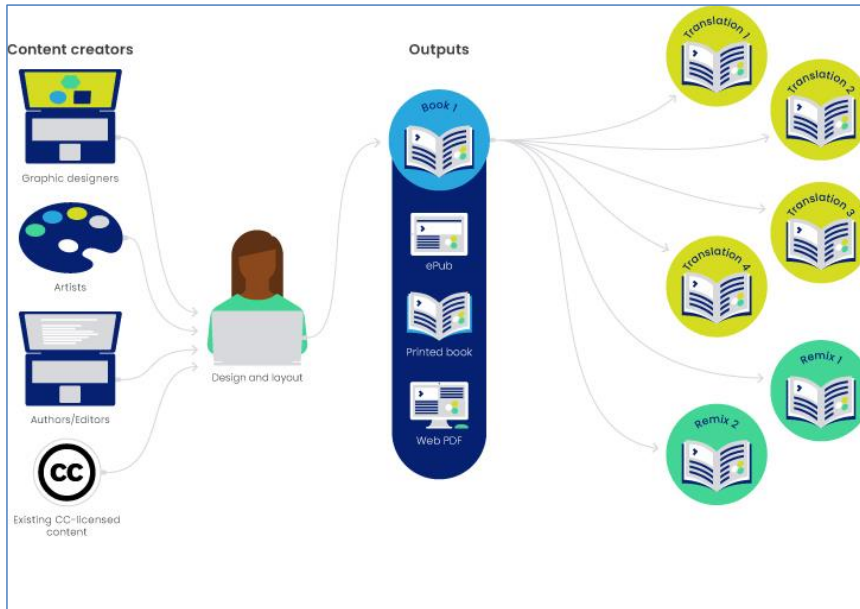
Before writing this Overview, AfLIA wanted to understand how much librarians understand about OER. It surveyed 600 librarians in 23 African countries to ascertain their familiarity with OER and issues to include in this resource. We used champions from each of the countries to ensure that as many librarians as possible would complete the questionnaire. More than two thirds of the librarians returned the questionnaire, although not all of them responded to every question.

Many of the librarians were able to classify the kinds of content that are consonant with an OER, but numerous were less clear about the meaning of open licensing. They had used open licences to write and translate storybooks or to create content on Wikipedia and sister projects organized by AfLIA. But although almost 46 percent of the librarians wrote that they had created OER content for use in the classrooms, many gave a URL for resources that others had written. In addition, many librarians skipped this question entirely. The respondents had a superficial knowledge of OER and open licensing, but not a deep one.

A detailed discussion and description of this survey will be found in Appendix Three.

B. OER 5Rs

OERs can include lesson notes, curriculum, course outlines, and other course materials (assignments, quizzes, projects), textbooks, images, video clips and audios made by an

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[10]Butcher, N, Levey, L, and von Gogh, K. (2022). *Open Licensing in Education: A World Bank Toolkit.* Washington DC: The World Bank https://www.earlylearningnetwork.org/content/open-licensing-education-world-bank-toolkit

instructor, lecturers, or students to help learners understand a topic more clearly. These materials are openly available for use by other educators and students, without any payment.

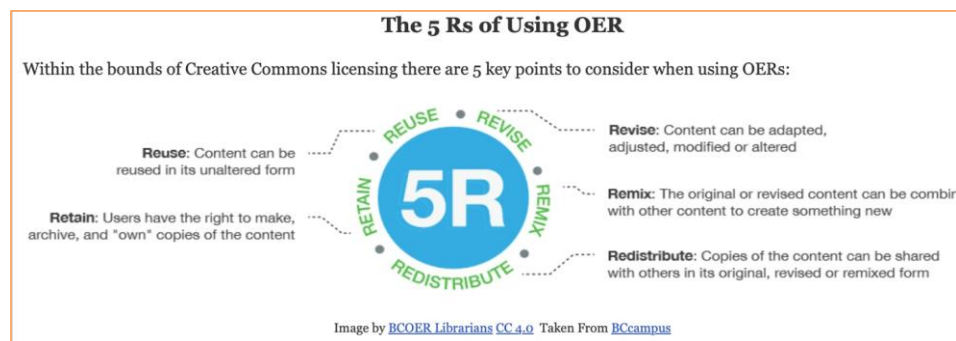David Wiley was the originator of the 5Rs term, with which he delineated the characteristics of what he believes must be fully adhered to for a resource to be considered truly open. According to Wiley, they can be **r**eused, **r**etained, **r**evised, **r**emixed, and **r**edistributed.[11] The figure below shows the 5Rs and outlines their uses.

Figure 3: The 5Rs[12]

The 5 Rs of Using OER

Within the bounds of Creative Commons licensing there are 5 key points to consider when using OERs:

REUSE • REVISE
RETAIN 5R REMIX
REDISTRIBUTE

Reuse: Content can be reused in its unaltered form

Retain: Users have the right to make, archive, and "own" copies of the content

Revise: Content can be adapted, adjusted, modified or altered

Remix: The original or revised content can be combin with other content to create something new

Redistribute: Copies of the content can be shared with others in its original, revised or remixed form

Image by BCOER Librarians CC 4.0 Taken From BCcampus

While this is very useful, many content creators do not want their work adapted for good reasons. Some do not want to allow others to translate their work because of pedagogical reasons. Ubongo Kids and the Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy (MILL) are two examples. MILL restricts its resources to a non-commercial and non-derivative (CC BY-NC-ND) licence so that the integrity of its *Vula Bula* literacy materials methodology can be retained. Ubongo has similar concerns about adaptation of its videos and televisions programs.[13] Thus, not all openly licensed resources will necessarily enable all of the 5Rs.

C. Unbundling open knowledge for librarians

The ethics of democracy, which promote access to information, together with sharing of information for accountability and public good, can be assumed to be part of the underlying principles of open knowledge because democracy cannot thrive without full access to information. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Articles 19, 26 and 27 support the opening and sharing of knowledge, including within the context of education, as a fundamental human right.[14]

Access to knowledge can be copyright protected or open. Libraries ensure that pertinent information is made available within their communities because these libraries are filled with print materials suitable to multiple generations. Books are available to users for reading or borrowing, but most of them are copyright protected. Now, however, with the growing availability of digital technologies, African libraries can employ the concept of openness to use the Internet to access

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[11] https://nsufl.libguides.com/oer/5rs
[12] https://nsufl.libguides.com/oer/5rs
[13] See *Closed or Open? Ubongo's Switch from Copyright Protected to Creative Commons Licensing*. *https://www.earlylearningnetwork.org/system/files/resourcefiles/Ubongo policy brief 1611.pdf*
[14] https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

information and disseminate African information, using open licences. African Storybook[15] is an example of how young children can read stories in their own languages and see them translated to still more underrepresented languages. University institutional repositories make available research available from Africa with open licences.[16] Farmers can obtain timely information on farming techniques, such as the Rice Knowledge Bank[17] and Farm Better a mobile app for smallholder farmers in developing countries.[18]

Below is a figure that shows the three types of licences used for all kinds of material. They range from knowledge that is completely open to that which is fully closed.

Figure 4: The open-copyright spectrum[19]

Public Domain

Copyright Ownership Waived.

Author gives away rights to the public.

It is not mine. I give up my right as an author. You don't even have to cite me although I would appreciate it.

Open License

Copyright Ownership Retained.

Author grants rights in advance.

It is mine. But I Do allow you to take my material. No need to ask for my permission to use it because it is already granted. Just ensure to make a proper attribution to me.

All Rights Reserved Copyright

Copyright Ownership Retained.

Author does NOT grant rights to the public.

It is mine. I do NOT allow you to take this material and repurpose it. You definitely need to ask for my permission to use it.

Most Open   Most Closed

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[15] https://www.africanstorybook.org/
[16] See OER Africa's Open Knowledge Primer for a discussion of African institutional repositories. https://www.oerafrica.org/resource/open-knowledge-primer-oer-africa-revised
[17] http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org/
[18] https://www.farmbetter.io/
[19] Riverside Community College, https://library.rcc.edu/c.php?g=734342&p=5850978

Table 1: Four Stories about openness and challenges with children in libraries[20]

"A smile should always be my trademark, welcoming children into my library requires me to be friendly, courteous, down to earth by embracing and treating all the children without any preference as a result of educational background, financial status or ethnicity etc. most children in the nearby community near the library are unable to read and write and are fluent in the local language spoken." — **Debrah Mulenga Mwango, Zambia**
"We have challenges when it comes to borrowing because most parents discourage their children from borrowing fearing that they may not be able to keep the books safe." — **Myson Kayira, Malawi National Library Service**
"You can imagine how intimidating the traditional library environment used to be 'strictly no making noise', which child would think of leaving home to go visit the library? Definitely no one at all… I think even before a child gets to the library the library security personnel would gladly chase them away for fear of disturbing adult clients." — **Debra Mulenga Mwango**
We encourage learning through play during the afternoon hours because that is when children are a little bit tired of reading. Hence, they concentrate less. We spread mats and give toys to the young children. We also give molding clay for children to create short words or build small things using the clay. For the elder children we give them puzzle to fill in missing letters. We also give children Rubik's cubes which broaden their minds with problem-solving skills" — **Leah Njeri Mugo, Kenya National Library Service**

D. Licences Matter: Their Role in Content Creation and OER[21]

Open licences do not replace copyright; they provide a way for content creators to allow others to use material without requesting permission. They make knowledge accessible, rather than keeping it hidden or restricted by paywalls or other mechanisms.

Open licences are more than publishing educational resources and allowing them to be read and shared. They include making room for different pathways to enable building on knowledge and/or adapting it for reuse in line with specific needs. Open knowledge means that it is easily accessible and available without restrictions, costs, or conditions. Open knowledge can be in different formats—print, digital, online, video, audio, etc. Open licences require full attribution of the content creator, except for resources in the public domain.

Open licensing underpins all components of open knowledge systems because it makes possible the free use, distribution, adaptation, and translation of resources without requesting permission. The Creative Commons (CC) licences[22] are the most widely used open licences in education and publishing.

CC has created a range of easy-to-use copyright licences that offer a simple, standardized way to give people permission to share and use an author's creative work — within the usage restrictions of the author's choice. Some licences are very permissive and allow adaptation; others

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[20] These stories come from the summary report on cohort one of the AfLIA early literacy course. Go to https://web.aflia.net/the-early-literacy-development-course-outcome-and-experiences-from-cohort-1/
[21] This section relies on the revised and updated edition of *Open Knowledge Primer for African Universities*, which was published in May 2023 and is available here: https://www.oerafrica.org/content/revised-open-knowledge-primer-african-universities
[22] About the Licenses. (n.d.). Retrieved November 30, 2018, from https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

are more restrictive and permit users to read and distribute, but not to adapt. [23] Licences permit the copyright owner to determine the extent to which others are allowed to reuse material. Figure five, below, shows how a licence moves from the most permissive to one that does not allow any modifications or any commercial use.

There are seven licences. Six build on the CC Attribution licence (CC BY), which allows users the most rights. Six require that the content creator or publisher receive full credit for the work. The seventh covers material in the public domain.

The licences are:
- Public domain (CC0) allows full sharing and adaptation, without attribution, either because the material is already in the public domain or because the author has waived all rights.
- Attribution (CC BY) allows sharing and adaptation for any use, including for commercial purposes.
- Attribution-share alike (CC BY-SA) allows the user the same rights, but content **must** be licensed under identical terms as the original CC resource.
- Attribution-non-commercial (CC BY-NC) gives the user the same rights as CC BY, but not for commercial purposes.
- Attribution-non-commercial-share alike (CC BY-NC-SA)
- Attribution-no derivatives (CC BY-ND) gives the user the right to distribute content, but not to alter it in any way.
- Attribution-non-commercial-no derivatives (CCY BY-NC-ND) gives the user the same rights as CC BY-ND, but not for commercial purposes.

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[23] Go to https://creativecommons.org/licenses/ for an explanation of the different licences.

Figure 5: CC symbols explained[24]
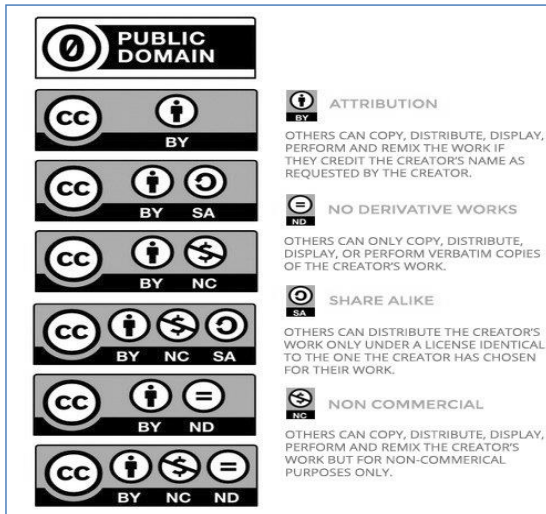
Most open access journal articles carry a CC BY licence, which means that they can be adapted. But many are available only in PDF format, which makes changes very difficult.

E. Openly licenced OERs and open access

OER Africa has a large range of OERs created in Africa in agriculture, foundation skills, health, and teacher education.[25] African Storybook is mentioned above. Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. (TESSA) is an OER with teacher education resources aligned with the curricula of several African countries.[26] Although aimed at teacher educators and students, many of the resources are applicable to librarians.

Go to OER Africa's Open Knowledge Primer for African universities for information on open access, open data, OER, and open science in Africa.[27]

F. Openly licenced images

Technology has made it easy to create images and share them online. Some of those images are open; they can be edited for specific purposes and freely used. For example, Wikimedia Commons[28] is a repository of more than 91 million freely usable media files (images, sounds, videos). However, some of the media files may have different requirements such as need for attribution or to link the license to its content.

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[24] https://theindiedesign.co/creative-commons-royalty-free-public-domain-licenses/
[25] https://www.oerafrica.org/oer-courseware
[26] https://www.tessafrica.net/
[27] https://www.oerafrica.org/resource/open-knowledge-primer-oer-africa-revised
[28]https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Creative Commons also has a page called Openverse with links to various openly licensed media sources. Wikimedia Commons[29] is a repository of more than 91 million freely usable media files (images, sounds, videos). However, some of the media files may have different requirements such as need for attribution or to link the license to its content.

There are very few openly licensed Africa-related platforms for images. Some images may be found on the Creative Commons and Wikimedia sites, discussed above, but neither platform is African. Michigan State University in the United States has created an online platform called the African Online Digital Library (ADOL).[30] All of the content is freely available; but licensing on some resources is uncertain. Google Arts and Culture created an online platform for the National Museums of Kenya and several other African museums.[31] Content is free but is not openly licensed.

African Fossils Online,[32] which does carry a Creative Commons licence, houses a collection of fossils and artifacts found mostly at Lake Turkana in East Africa. It is partnered with the Turkana Basin Institute, the National Museums of Kenya, Stony Brook University, and the National Geographic Society.

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[29] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
[30] http://www.aodl.org/
[31] https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/national-museums-of-kenya
[32] https://africanfossils.org

G. The UNESCO OER Recommendation and its relevance to Librarians

Figure 6: AfLIA poster of action areas in OER Recommendation

UNESCO has worked on OER since 2002[33] to build consensus on the principles of creating and using educational content that is free to use, share, and adapt without requesting permission. These efforts bore fruit with the unanimous adoption of the UNESCO OER Recommendation[34] by member states at the organization's General Conference on 25 November 2019.

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[33]Open Educational Resources (OER). (2020, May 13). Retrieved July 31, 2021, from
https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies/oer
[34]http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49556&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

The OER Recommendation is significant to all stakeholders interested in and committed to providing appropriate high-quality educational content, particularly given its status as a UNESCO instrument. This means that governments are required to report every four years to the UNESCO General Convention on their progress in implementing the Recommendation, which provides a clear opening for discussions about the value of harnessing OERs as a key pillar of educational policy implementation. The OER Recommendation is also relevant to donors that fund education, not only because OER can enhance the value of their investments, but also because the government partners with which the funders collaborate will now bear responsibility for implementing OER in their country.

The UNESCO OER Recommendation urges member States to:[35]

> *Apply the provisions of this Recommendation by taking appropriate steps, including whatever legislative or other measures may be required, in conformity with the constitutional practice and governing structures of each State, to give effect within their jurisdictions to the principles of the Recommendation.*

It goes on to suggest implementation within appropriate government bodies and to report on progress towards achieving its objectives.

There are five areas of action in the OER Recommendation, on which governments are expected to report. They are capacity building and training; supportive policies; effective, inclusive, and equitable access to quality OER; sustainability; and international cooperation. They are discussed below, with each one's relevance to African libraries.

Action Area One: Capacity building and training

The UNESCO OER Recommendation calls on member states to:

> *Strategically plan and support OER capacity building, awareness raising, use, creation and sharing at the institutional and national levels, targeting all education sectors and levels*

Capacity building includes training and raising awareness to the value of OER, which encompasses understanding the limitations and exceptions of using copyright protected material in education.

Status of capacity-building and training for African librarians

- AfLIA has played an active role in training and awareness building, not just in OER but in the whole body of open knowledge. A table outlining these activities will be found in Appendix Two.
- Very few national or regional library associations have been involved in capacity building or training in OER for librarians.
- The AfLIA WhatsApp groups for university and early literacy librarians exchange information on webinars and other activities amongst members of the group. They have become a Community of Practice (CoP).

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[35] https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-open-educational-resources-oer

The AfLIA/OER Africa WhatsApp group is open to all African librarians at: https://chat.whatsapp.com/D4jyviSp76H4LLuSPbaYCq. African librarians are encouraged to join the group and ask questions or seek assistance for implementing and/or teaching about OER, Open Licences and/or Openness as a concept. Librarians also use the group to notify members of upcoming events, as in figure eight below.

Figure 7: Webinar notice on higher education WhatsApp group

~ A H Abdu +234 813 010 8257

SPEAKERS

CJ Ivory
University of West Georgia

Benson T. Ali
American University of Nigeria

Dr. Gleda Cox
University of Cape Town

Dr. Binta Ladan Farouk
Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano

Convener

Sule Hamma Library of the Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Capitalizing on Open Educational Resources (OER) to Improve Educational Performance in Resource-Limited Setting
Time: May 9, 2023 11:00 AM West Central Africa

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82075410484?pwd=S1JjZVl4Y1dCbTZtaEFkVGpmNngwUT09

The webinar advertised on the WhatsApp group (figure 7) and elsewhere was held at a Nigerian university in the north of the country. Speakers were primarily librarians from the northern universities. These universities were hard hit by closures because of COVID 19 and Boko Haram.

WhatsApp group members asked for a recording of the webinar. A recording and access to all the presentations will be found here: https://gofile.io/d/zoPOzG.

One librarian who participates in the WhatsApp group recommended the establishment of a formal CoP, something like Open Con, which was established to make research and education more open and equitable.[36] Establishing a formal organization, in multiple countries, requires funding and staff for administration, management, and activities. Is there a better way to accomplish these objectives, using the AfLIA-OER Africa WhatsApp group as a model?

Some individual librarians move ahead on their own to promote open knowledge and raise the capacity of their colleagues to use OER. David Koech, another WhatsApp group member, and a

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[36] https://www.opencon.community/

Commented [NB2]: Is this all about the text in the box? If so, it should all move to the box as part of the example in the box

Commented [LL3R2]: I moved the text to below the figure. Also explained the webinar more precisely.

This text is about a librarian who wants to establish a CoP. The box below is about inserting open licensing into LIS curricula. Not the same thing. I added a caption to the box.

librarian at Kabarak University in Kenya has created a curated list of OERs from all over the world. He includes all subjects included in each repository.[37]

What kinds of OER capacity building do librarians need?

Librarians should be able to train their members to use open content and to understand how to find, evaluate content, and help their user communities. These can range from early literacy for young children; help for students, academics, and researchers at the tertiary level; and assistance to adults to find and use relevant content.

Doing this requires knowledge of:
- The concepts entailed in open licensing for all levels of education and lifelong learning.
- Why open licences and OER are important.
- How to identify high-quality open content and where it can be found for different user groups.
- How to evaluate open content.
- How to curate open content and links to it. Curation can include everything from simple lists, files, and notes to university institutional repositories.
- How librarians can create, use, adapt, and promote open licensing.
- The significance of the UNESCO OER Recommendation to African libraries.

AfLIA and other library associations and networks have done one-off capacity building. But there has been nothing that is integrated into a library curriculum or short Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program that is recognized by the librarian's employer.

In the AfLIA-OER Africa WhatsApp group, there have been active exchanges on including open knowledge in Library and Information Studies (LIS). One participant from Nigeria gave two options:
- Change the LIS curriculum, with all the bureaucracy that this alteration would entail.
- Include OER and open practices during lectures into which these concepts can be slotted.

This librarian went on to comment that LIS faculty would require training to carry out any option. And the question remains who will organize these train-the-trainer workshops.

Box 2: How open licensing can be incorporated into library education

Another WhatsApp group member, a lecturer who teaches children's literature as a course for final year students at the Federal Polytechnic in Nigeria has learned the rudiments of open licensing and its applicability for children's literature. In the next LIS intake in the Polytechnic, students will be taught about open licensing, its place in children's literature and how libraries can grow their resources for children in English and in local languages. According to this lecturer, it is more practical to include the topic within the already existing curriculum, as it will enrich what the students learn as well as expose them to the possibilities of open licensing for educational materials and supplementary reading texts for children.

AfLIA will focus sustained attention on the importance of open licences as a critical aspect of open knowledge. A course on Openness is being developed with OER Africa. The course will take librarians through the different layers of openness and the possibilities that exist within the concept and practice. This is in line with a statement in the UNESCO OER Recommendation:

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[37] https://librarymattersinitiativeafrica.mystrikingly.com/blog/open-educational-resources-oer

The application of open licenses to educational materials introduces significant opportunities for more cost-effective creation, access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation, redistribution, curation, and quality assurance of those materials, including, but not limited to translation, adaptation to different learning and cultural contexts, development of gender-sensitive materials, and the creation of alternative and accessible formats of materials for learners with special educational needs.

A librarian who commented on the draft Overview pointed out that the UNESCO quotation above is pertinent to the entire document because it:[38]

Touches on most of the challenges of educational systems in Africa that can be mitigated with OER. For example, the lack of infrastructure to produce learning resources locally; the prohibitive prices of foreign resources that are in many cases far from relevant to local content; financial constraints to purchase educational resources, etc.

Box 3: A librarian's OER capacity building checklist

How can librarians build capacity for OER? They can:
√   Create awareness about OER and its potential benefits in driving quality education.

√   Librarians can become ambassadors of OER as professionals, who can answer enquiries about OER, open licenses, and open knowledge in general. The library can draw up a list of potential questions and answers to circulate among students and faculty members as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about OER and open licensing. Libraries can also create a 'Help Desk on OER' where all library users can be assisted to understand OER better.

√   Bridge the knowledge gap on OER by using every opportunity to explain how open licensing does not rob authors and creators of their intellectual and artistic outputs. Leaflets explaining OER in a nutshell can be created and kept in the lobby of libraries. Libraries can also run displays on OER.[39]

√   Help faculty and students learn how and where to find and identify high-quality OER resources. They can also "spice it up" with evaluation tips on using the 5Rs. A crucial step would be integration of OER and Open Licensing into teaching new students the use of the library, information literacy, and research methods. Libraries can also compile lists of OER for different disciplines and circulate such lists to the different faculties.

√   The library can work with students and teachers to facilitate the creation and sharing of OER by making accessible information resources on the different types of licenses, how to remix and revise OERs, including how to translate appropriately in their local languages.

Action Area Two: Supportive Policies

Policies provide the principles, guidelines, clarity, and consistency that undergird processes and actions in organizations and institutions. They ensure that values, goals, and expectations align. Policies are an important indicator of OER practice. They stimulate and provide the enabling

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[38] Comment in AfLIA-OER Africa WhatsApp group.
[39] OER Commons an OER brochure with a Creative Commons licence. It can be used as a PDF and also adapted. Go to: https://oercommons.org/authoring/54371-oer-brochure/view

environment for the adoption and sustenance of OER. When promulgated and implemented they provide policymakers and practitioners appropriate guidelines for writing, release, and utilization of openly licensed materials.

The UNESCO OER Recommendation action area on policy calls for:[40]
> *Encouraging governments, and education authorities and institutions 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…*

Most libraries in Africa do not have OER policies, but many have open access policies, which incorporate the principles that would be included in an OER framework. Table 2 presents some examples of policy setting in Africa on behalf of open access.

Table 2: Four open access policies

Institution	Description
Government of Ethiopia	The government of Ethiopia adopted a national open access policy in 2019. The policy also includes open access to the data obtained from the research. The open access platform is hosted by Addis Ababa University and managed by Solomon Mekonnen, the university's open access coordinator.[41] There is both a National Academic Digital Library of Ethiopia[42] and Ethiopian Journals Online.[43]
Kenyan universities	Two excellent Kenyan institutional repositories include the University of Nairobi[44] and Kenyatta University.[45] Both institutions also have open access policies.
Nigerian Journal of Life Sciences	The Nigerian Journal of Life Sciences, which is published by the Faculty of Life Sciences, at the University of Benin, has an open access policy.[46]
University of Cape Town	The University of Cape Town open access policy was first approved by the University Council in 2014. There have been several revisions, most recently in 2020.[47] The University Library hosts Open UCT, which includes the content of the university's open content, including OERs.[48]

Because OER is yet to take root in many educational institutions across Africa, Dr. Nkem Osuigwe asked about creating buy-in from university leaders, academics, researchers, and students, first to create a culture of sharing and then drawing up OER policies:[49]
> *Will the faculty understand 'Open' immediately? How long do the librarians think they need to convince lecturers about OER? In addition, policies should not be unilaterally created by authorities without consultation with the implementers.*

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[40] https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-open-educational-resources-oer
[41] https://blog.okfn.org/2019/10/09/ethiopia-adopts-a-national-open-access-policy/
[42] https://nadre.ethernet.edu.et/
[43] http://ejol.aau.edu.et/
[44] http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/
[45] https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke
[46] https://www.unibenlsj.org.ng/index.php/njls/njls_oa
[47] https://uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content_migration/uct_ac_za/39/files/Policy_Open_Access_2020.pdf
[48] https://open.uct.ac.za/
[49] Personal WhatsApp communication to Lisbeth Levey, 17 April 2023

Box 4: An illustration of problems with unilateral initiatives

Nigeria is a case in point on the failure of OER buy-in. The National Universities Commission (NUC) drafted a national policy on OER for higher education in Nigeria; university libraries were asked to create a website to house the OER. The library efforts were unsuccessful for several reasons, including a lack of understanding of what constitutes an OER. The policy is yet to be adopted and implemented. Starting from the bottom up in creating and driving OER policies might be a more viable avenue for Africa instead of the reverse method whereby governing authorities at different levels of education create policies that may or may not reflect the realities of the diverse institutions under them.

Library-related topics to include in a university OER Policy

Major points to be included in a university library's OER policy include the steps below. Additionally, consult the policies listed in box 5 below.

- Communication and outreach activities by the library to create awareness about OER and buy-in should be clearly stated in the policy.
- Training is crucial for the successful adoption of OER for teaching and learning in Africa. How will librarians be trained? Will there be physical, online or hybrid training options? Can libraries set up a help desk for OER, so that those who have challenges or want to use and learn how to embed video or audio clips can be taught? The policy should be clear on the roles libraries can play.
- Will an OER repository be created where none exists? Will the library work with the lecturers and students to upload their OERs to this repository? Many academic librarians already have experience with creating and maintaining an open access repository and curation of content. Repository responsibilities need to be stated in the policy as part of the implementation plan/process.
- Because librarians already have considerable experience evaluating the content in their libraries, they should be involved in both evaluation and how resources are indexed. Questions to ask: What should any OER have? For example, author(s) name? license used? Attribution of where the knowledge in the material was taken from. Will the name of the institution be inscribed on each OER that emanates from students and lecturers of that institution?

Box 5: Examples of University OER policies

Below are a few institutional OER policies that academic librarians may want to consult as they consider their own institution's policy for approval by university authorities. One is in Scotland and one in Bangladesh. The others are African. But remember that policies cannot work if they are not implemented as well as written.
- √ University of Edinburgh
  https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/openeducationalresourcespolicy.pdf
- √ Bangladesh national OER policy—page one is in Bengali; the policy is in English
  http://shed.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/shed.portal.gov.bd/notices/7b7773cd_7ab0_462b_89e2_0a2bf4c647f2/199.pdf
- √ Open University of Tanzania https://www.oerafrica.org/system/files/12584/out-open-education-resources-policy-final.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=12584&force=1
- √ Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
  https://websys.knust.edu.gh/oer/pages/sections.php?siteid=knustoer&mid=23&sid=151

OER policy considerations as they impact public libraries

What about public libraries? According to AfLIA;

Some policies are internal documents, and the management staff of a public library can draw such up and then send to the supervising authority for ratification. They will need to clearly justify why there is need for such a policy and why they think the 'side' they have chosen in promoting and supporting OER is the right way. Understanding the UNESCO OER Recommendation and quoting from it will be a great door-opener for libraries. It may or it may not get political at the point of approval by the supervising agency/authority. But clearly explaining all the factors, 'both sides of the coin', benefits and disadvantages can help to pull the policy through. Implementation is key. The draft policy could also include the steps that the library must take in implementing policy.

In South Africa, the Nelson Bay municipality issued a library services policy in 2017, which includes policy related to public libraries, such as users, usage and borrowing policies, accessibility, collection development, ICT, services, cataloguing, etc.[50] There are no references to open licensing, but openly licensed content can be inserted in several sections related to acquisition, collection development, and ICT.

At the Pennsylvania Library Association's 2016 Annual Conference, librarians Carolyn Blatchley and Wendy McLure made a presentation on library policies. Their checklist of what library policies do will be found in box 6 below.

Box 6: What library policies should do[51]

√ Translates values and priorities into action
  o Introductory statement tied to goals
√ Provides a tool to do the job.
  o Understandable
  o Trainable
  o Review
√ Ensures equitable service
√ Establishes a legal framework for library services

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[50] Library Services Policy, Nelson Bay Municipality, 2017, https://www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za/datarepository/documents/library-services-policy-adopted-30-nov-2017.pdf
[51] Carolyn Blatchley and Wendy McLure, Policy Checklist: Basic Policies for Every Library, PaLA Annual Conference, October 16, 2016, https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.palibraries.org/resource/collection/29F7E88D-50BE-4057-9EF3-E65066F1EDB2/Policy_Checklist_Handout_Slides.pdf

In stressing the importance of library policies, the American Library Association (ALA) posits:[52]

> *Libraries have a responsibility to meet the information needs of everyone in their communities. To do so, they must promote and protect users' intellectual freedom and ensure that the delivery of library services to the community is fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory. This can be achieved only if the library has developed and adopted formal, written library policies and procedures. Written policies are essential because they provide a legal framework for the operations of the library and provide a bulwark against claims that the library or its staff is acting in violation of its mission or the law.*

What are the costs?

Any OER policy should be clear about costs. Issues particularly relevant to libraries, include:

- Are there cost implications for training, publicity etc.? Can the institution or library afford such costs? (Sustainability is discussed in more detail below.)
- Who will be affected by the OER policy in the institution or community? This needs to be clearly defined, as some authors will believe that open licensing will impact negatively on their income. For example, in some higher institutions, lecturers publish books and sell them to students. How will the introduction and adoption of the OER policy affect them? Will the policy advocate to include only lecture notes as OER or will it incorporate other materials?
- **No supervising agency or institution will approve funding anything that they do not clearly understand.**

Action Area Three: Inclusive and Equitable OER

Action Area Three calls for:

> *Member States are encouraged to support the creation, access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation, and redistribution of inclusive and equitable quality OER for all stakeholders.*

Attention to issues pertaining to language, gender, physical ability, socio-economic status, the vulnerable, indigenous people, and those living in rural areas are all included in this action area. Rather than attempt a comprehensive discussion, we have instead highlighted a few examples of activities included in this action area that are particularly relevant to librarians.

The role of translation

English is by far the most widely used language for scholarly communication. For storybooks, there is a dearth of stories by Africans, for Africans, and about African children who look like themselves.[53] In 2018, AfLIA ran a survey of public libraries in 18 African countries to prepare for its early literacy development course. It found that the number of storybooks in local languages is very small.[54] English dominates. Some call this language colonialism; others use the term linguistic imperialism.

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[52] American Library Association, The importance of Library Policies, https://www.ala.org/advocacy/importance-library-policies - :~:text=Libraries have a responsibility to,equitable, and non-discriminatory.

[53]African Children Deserve Stories about Themselves: The Intersecting Roles of African Authors, Illustrators, Communities, and Languages in Story Creation. https://www.earlylearningnetwork.org/system/files/resourcefiles/African Children Deserve Stories about Themselves presentation.pdf

[54] Key points in AfLIA early literacy survey. https://web.aflia.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Highlights-of-findings-from-Early-Literacy-Development-Survey-findings.pdf

AfLIA is actively working with and encouraging its early childhood librarian members to translate stories to mother tongue. Collaborating with StoryWeaver and in honour of World Book Day 2023, AfLIA held two webinars to motivate librarians to translate a set of stories into 15 African languages, at a minimum. Africa has more than 1,500 languages and AfLIA is pushing to add stories in all these languages to its digital library on StoryWeaver.[55]

During the second webinar, librarians read aloud their translated stories. Eighteen librarians, representing seven countries, and twelve languages participated in this AfLIA marathon. Stories were translated into local languages in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, and Egypt.

Figure 8:AfLIA flyer on World Book Day
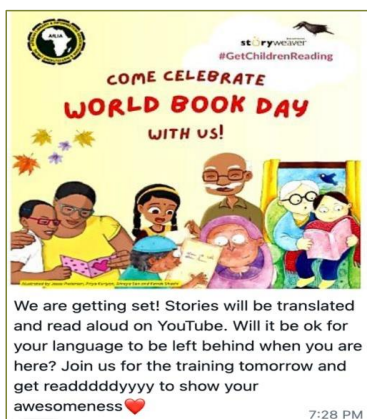
Translating stories is an excellent start, but librarians must take the following into account to ensure that their translations are high quality:[56]

- AfLIA encourages librarians to use Google Translate as a backup, but to always double check the translation because Google's system does not handle certain diacritical marks properly. Nor do its translations always convey the true meaning of an idiom or content more generally. Cultural nuances can also be a problem. These caveats are true not only for early literacy librarians and users, but also for users throughout the educational system.[57]
- Librarians should carefully read the stories before translating.
- They might want to translate with others who speak the same language and can catch something wrong or lacking in the translation.

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[55] https://storyweaver.org.in/search?query=aflia

[56] See also *What Makes a Great Translation? Recommendations for Storybook Versioning*, REACH Project South Africa, 2018, https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/796781612866301952/pdf/What-Makes-a-Great-Translation-Recommendations-for-Storybook-Versioning.pdf

[57] Aremu Adeola, Jr. wrote in 2020 about problems with Google Translate in *Lost in translation: why Google Translate often gets Yorùbá-and other languages—wrong.* *https://rising.globalvoices.org/blog/2020/11/20/lost-in-translation-why-google-translate-often-gets-yoruba-and-other-languages-wrong/*

- Read the story out loud in English and in the translated language to hear how it will sound to young children.
- Go back to the translation to make corrections.
- Stories should be read and evaluated by those who understand local languages. Librarians can accomplish this within story hour programmes when parents/guardians/caretakers attend.

In the past few years, experts and other stakeholders have explored how open knowledge can incorporate local languages for easy access and usability by all. This includes course materials, stories, and other content of relevance to local communities. For example, if a communal water pump malfunctions in a rural African community, individuals, whether schooled or unschooled, should be able to read or listen to information in their local language to repair the pump. Lanfrica, a language focused search engine,[58] and Masakane[59] are two African organizations working to strengthen African AI research to make African languages findable and visible. Both are volunteer organizations and would welcome help.

Serving library users in marginalized and indigenous communities

StoryWeaver has programmes for children in indigenous and marginalized areas. It refers to these efforts as hyper local digital libraries. StoryWeaver's work in West Bengal might resonate with many African librarians and educators:[60]

> *Suchana, a non-governmental community organization based in Birbhum district of West Bengal, India has been promoting learning among tribal children through their mother tongues in the early years. Both Santali and Kora have a rich oral tradition but no children's books. Teachers who teach children who speak Santali and Kora are usually completely bereft of resources for early literacy development. Prior to 2014 and the launch of StoryWeaver, they had developed 15 educational resources in these languages. The collaboration with StoryWeaver allowed them to translate 105 books into Santali and 100 into Kora within a short span of two years. All these storybooks are published on StoryWeaver and can be used by others as well. 10,000 copies of 20 titles have been printed and distributed to government schools, pre-schools, and other organizations in the region.*

This kind of hyper local library is an activity that AfLIA members might build in their own communities. Librarians know the languages their communities speak for which there are few or no resources. They could also talk with teachers to find out more about under-represented languages within the school system.

Accessibility for the physically challenged

Accessibility for the physically challenged is another issue that impacts on inclusive and equitable education. In 2022, a student at the University of Buea in Cameroon wrote about his library:[61]

> *The library is inaccessible to blind students because there are no books in Braille, nor are there audio recorded materials. Infrastructure-wise, it is also not accessible to people in wheelchairs. Some of these students with disabilities are not even aware of the school library, just because things are not well explained to them.*

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[58] https://lanfrica.com/about
[59] https://www.masakhane.io/
[60] https://lt4all.elra.info/proceedings/lt4all2019/pdf/2019.lt4all-1.44.pdf
[61] https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=202211161601561

Commented [NB8]: Again not clear why this is in a text box?

Commented [NB9R8]: I won't make this comment again as the boxes persist throughout and their use does not make sense in relation to the content presented

Commented [LL10R8]: I've done a few things. I've put captions for each box. Every box has the same background color now. I've deleted some boxes and added the text into the body of the overview. I think that the remaining boxes make sense.

Commented [LL11]: I deleted machine readable. It's possible to do machine readable copy for curricula, data, etc. But it's not something with which a librarian will engage. I did keep the references to the two AI groups in Africa.

A 2020 study of libraries in Lagos State, Nigeria, confirmed that libraries have numerous physical barriers in terms of access to the various floors and sections, the height of tables, and the rest rooms.[62]

African librarians at all levels of the system may not be able to do very much about their library's physical layout, although they could work with their institutional leadership to search for ways to make all floors of the library accessible with ramps, make the height of tables more user friendly to wheelchair users, and other innovations.

African librarians have more control over their collections and can be sure to include content that meets the needs of the physically challenged. Bookshare[63] is a resource to obtain content for the visually impaired. Bookshare believes that it can make reading easier because of the formats it uses. The library has over one million books in its collection; in the United States, it operates through a special copyright exemption and is open to other countries, depending on their copyright laws. It is also possible to access freely available content in Bookshare, which is open to all. You must click on freely available content in the advanced search screen. It is also possible to search to ascertain the books that can be obtained in your country, but there are many that are copyright protected.

The Bookshare collection of freely available children's books lists over 500 titles, but many will not be relevant to African children. Specifically, from Africa, the children's books include a collection of 35 titles from Book Dash in different formats.[64]

Figure 9: Example of Book Dash title and formats

Title	Author	ISBN	Copyright	Features	Action	Publisher
Mina and the Birthday Dress	Ndidi Chiazor-Enenmor	9781928377375	2017	🖼 AD))	Read Now ✓ DAISY with Images Download Other formats DAISY Text Only BRF EPUB Word	Book Dash

Bookshare may be most relevant for learners at the secondary- or university-level who can read English.[65] There are over 800 textbooks available, including those of Siyavula, which produces

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[62]Nkiko, Christopher Dr; Idiegbeyan-Ose, Jerome Dr; Ilo, Promise Dr; Osinulu, Ifeakachuku; and Ifijeh, Goodluck, "Accessibility of Library Facilities by Wheelchair Users: The Case of Libraries in Lagos State, Nigeria." (2020). Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 4189.
https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/345180602.pdf

[63]https://www.bookshare.org/cms/

[64]https://www.bookshare.org/search?libraryToSearch=bookshare&title=&author=&isbn=&publisher=Book+Dash&synopsis=&bookKeywords=&booksToSearch=FREELY_AVAILABLE&narratorName=&maxAudioDuration=&qualities=PUBLISHER&qualities=EXCELLENT&_containsImages=on&_containsImageDescriptions=on&artifactFormat=&language=&country=&grade=&sortOrder=RELEVANCE&disableSortOrder=TITLE&categories=Children%27s+Books&_categories=on&search=Advanced+Search

[65]https://www.bookshare.org/search?libraryToSearch=bookshare&title=&author=&isbn=&publisher=&synopsis=&bookKeywords=&booksToSearch=FREELY_AVAILABLE&narratorName=&maxAudioDuration=&qualities=PUBLISHER&qualities=EXCELLENT&_containsImages=on&_containsImageDescriptions=on&ar

South African aligned textbooks in math and the sciences. Visually impaired students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects are particularly in need of special reading help because they must be able to understand graphs and images. The DAISY format,[66] used by Bookshare can help do just that and more.

The US copyright exemption results from the UNESCO Marrakesh Treaty for persons with print disabilities, of which AfLIA and other library associations are strong proponents. The Treaty is only useful, however, in countries that have endorsed it in their copyright law and where the technologies, such as Braille and DAISY, are available. In addition, Marrakesh makes copyright protected content available to the visually impaired only. It is not possible for readers who do not have impairments to make use of this content.

It is, of course, more complicated than it sounds. Bookshare has branched out in Africa and may be able to offer technical assistance. Martin Kieti in Nairobi, Kenya, is leading the Book Share outreach effort in Africa.[67]

Box 7: An accessibility checklist

√   Know your user community.
√   Identify their needs in terms of using your library.
√   Catalogue what the library can do to meet those needs.
√   Ascertain your country's copyright policy in terms of the Marrakesh Treaty
√   Identify resources that will serve the whole library community.

Action Area Four: Producing and Implementing Sustainability Models for OER

Action area four is aimed at producing and implementing sustainability models for OER:

> *Member States, according to their specific conditions, governing structures, and constitutional provisions, are recommended to support and encourage the development of comprehensive, inclusive, and integrated OER sustainability models.*

The ability of libraries to offer openly licensed content requires adequate funding for technology acquisition and use, procurement of suitable content, and appropriate training from the authorities to which they report. A 2013 paper for the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) evaluated the sustainability of libraries[68] and began by setting forth what a library does. These functions are pertinent to the kinds of services and resources libraries offer their users.

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tifactFormat=&language=&country=&grade=&sortOrder=RELEVANCE&disableSortOrder=TITLE&categories=Textbooks&_categories=on&search=Advanced+Search
[66] DAISY and its consortium was established to find a common solution in the creation of a new digital talking book system, the DAISY Format. DAISY now work with mainstream ebook formats and supports training around the world.
[67]https://benetech.org/blog/benetech-expands-bookshare-global-library-network-africa/
[68]https://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/114/1/115b-karioja-en.pdf

Commented [LL14]: You asked for a checklist.

Commented [NB15R14]: But you haven't included checklists systematically for each section (there isn't one for policy above) so I suggest you delete this one or else develop it fully with reference to the content presented
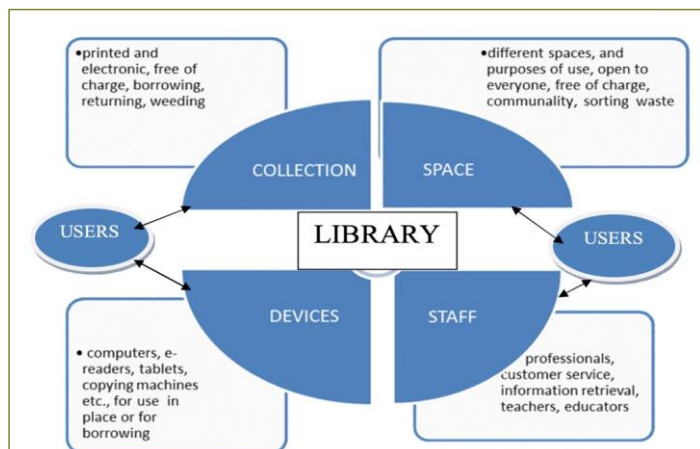
Libraries can help make the case for using openly licensed content by tracking the information and data bulleted below for reporting purposes. It will be easier to make an argument about why these types of resources should be a part of a library's collection policy if policy makers know how widely libraries are used and content required. This holds true of all types of libraries, from public and community libraries to university and research libraries.

- The type of openly licensed content available to users. These can be OERs, open access journals, institutional repositories, storybooks, etc. An approximation of numbers would also be helpful.
- The role of open licensing in accessing relevant content in your library and in languages the reader understands.
- The kind of content users request, which could be met with openly licensed material.
- Services and programs for users and staff, using openly licensed resources.
- User surveys to ascertain which services, programs, and content they most appreciate, the kind of technology used in the library, and what the technology is used for. These surveys will help libraries identify the kinds of material library members want so that searches for relevant openly licensed resources will correspond to needs.

Figure 11: Statistics available from MIT

For university libraries that have an institutional repository, data on utilization would be useful. DSpace, which is the program most academic libraries use, allows the library to collect several statistics and make them available to the public. Not all African libraries take advantage of this feature, however. The figure on the left shows the kinds of data the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) makes available for its repository.

Commented [NB16]: These are two different issues and should be unpacked separately to make it clear which data point pertains to which

Issue 1 seems to be of far greater importance than issue 2 but is largely not covered

And maybe it's beyond the scope of this document so maybe the list should be reduced to focus on open licensing

Commented [LL17R16]: I've focused on openly licensed. You're right it also dovetails with the OER Recommendation. I've also revised the text.

The type of metrics pertinent to libraries and their administrators depends on what the library wants to convey, and there may be other data that we have missed. We also realize that libraries must compete with other institutions or departments to divide scarce resources. However, having metrics by which a library can be assessed can assist in making an argument about why libraries matter and why openly licensed content should be part of a library's collection. .

In a 2021 article titled *Public Libraries and Development across Sub-Saharan Africa: Overcoming a Problem of Perception*, the authors make the point that development agencies and libraries share many common goals but are frequently overlooked as development partners. The authors point to the importance of collecting and sharing data. Information of this sort is as important to development agencies and other funders as it is for engaging with government agencies:[69]

> *Collecting and openly sharing data on the output and impact of public libraries is a first step in this work, but these efforts must also be augmented through increased marketing and networking by libraries. Libraries need to build internal capacity to use data to drive advocacy efforts and attract funding from development donors.*

Furthermore, African libraries working with AfLIA can form CoPs to share best practices, opportunities for joint creation, production and translation of resources, funding and partnerships, challenges, and options for improvement within their institutions/user communities. These communities, which will be linked together through AfLIA and its partners in the open education ecosystem, will drive not just the production and use of OER but also its organization. Organization entails design of suitable metadata and tagging systems that will make the discoverability of materials easier. This strategy has great potential in birthing integrated, cost/benefit and sustainable models of OER creation, use, sharing, and funding in Africa. It may also help in the creation of standards within countries and across borders on the continent.

Librarians can also champion sustainable and integrated models of OER by promoting open licensing to ensure the inclusivity and the rights of marginalized communities. In the sections above, we describe StoryWeaver's hyper local libraries and AfLIA's efforts to help librarians translate children's stories into African languages. The 265 stories on the AfLIA page in StoryWeaver complement those available on African Storybook, particularly for languages such as Ewe, which is spoken by approximately 20 million people in West Africa, but only 11 stories in African Storybook are in that language. There are 28 Ewe-language stories translated by AfLIA. AfLIA is also training librarians on Wikipedia, with a goal to incorporate more African voices.

Box 8: OER sustainability checklist

√ Librarians can work with instructional designers to help teachers choose the right format for their OER, keeping in mind the audience(s) the content is meant for.
√ Many disciplines overlap. Librarians can encourage collaboration across departments and faculties in creating and sharing OER.
√ Plagiarism is not allowed in OER. Librarians can serve as 'checkers' for plagiarism, accuracy, and the correct attribution for OER produced at their institution. This will lead to a culture of excellence and build trust in the efficacy of such materials for driving quality education.

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[69] Young, Jason C., Lynch, Renee, Boakye-Achampong, Stanley, Jowaisas, Chris and Sam, Joel. "Public Libraries and Development across Sub-Saharan Africa: Overcoming a Problem of Perception" *Libri*, vol. 71, no. 4, 2021, pp. 419-429, https://doi.org/10.1515/libri-2020-0096

Commented [NB18]: The Overview is flipping wildly between OER, open licensing, and openness with no conceptual clarity

It is also not being systematic in considering what types of libraries it is addressing

The consequence is that I have no idea what sustainability issues are intended to be covered in this section

Commented [LL19R18]: I changed the reference to openly licensed as opposed to openness. The concept note addresses all libraries in the AfLIA network. We're very clear when any text or ideas relate specifically to university or to public libraries. There's also a lot of crossover between the types of libraries. The bullets on page 30 are relevant to universities and to other libraries.

Commented [NB20]: Really? How will this happen?

Commented [LL21R20]: Above we give a StoryWeaver example. AfLIA is also working with librarians on translating stories into African languages from ASb and SW. It is also collaborating with WikiMedia on incorporating more African content in Wikipedia. I've added some text.

> √ Librarians can develop strategies for wider use of OER as alternative and affordable course material solutions.

Action Area Five: Reinforcing International Cooperation

Action Area Five addresses promoting and reinforcing international cooperation. The Recommendation calls on member States:

> To promote the development and use of OER, Member States should promote and reinforce international cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, whether on a bilateral or multilateral basis.

How does this action area apply to librarians and their associations? AfLIA is a continent-wide convenor through its conferences, workshops, webinars, and short courses. With assistance from NBA, AfLIA produced the first ever African short course for African librarians on early literacy acquisition, using African resources as teaching materials. Other examples of AfLIA's commitment to OER and open licensing are given above.

Additionally, AfLIA is now the coordinator of SPARC Africa. SPARC is an important organization for university and research librarians because its mission is to share knowledge through open access, open education, and open data. Most important university and research libraries are members of SPARC. AfLIA could play a role in reaching out to SPARC, particularly its European Network of Open Education Librarians (ENOEL). Granted SPARC Europe and ENOEL are focused on European libraries, but they may well be interested in an exchange of information. ENOEL resources also look to be relevant to AfLIA and, by extension, to its member libraries.[70]

Librarians could leverage on existing regional organizations in Africa such as the African Union, of which AfLIA is a partner institution, to promote the development and use of open licenses for libraries.

AfLIA could compile available current policies and regulations that guide creation, adoption, and use of open licensing in libraries in other regions outside of Africa for adaptation by African libraries.

Library associations at the national level such as ABADCAM (Cameroon), BLA (Botswana), LIASA (South Africa), LIAZ (Zambia), GLA (Ghana), KLA (Kenya), MALA (Malawi), NIWA (Namibia), NLA (Nigeria), TLA (Tanzania), ULIA (Uganda), ZimLA (Zimbabwe), and others could also be key in the promotion of OER and open learning at their conferences and meetings. In-country OER peer review groups could be formed and sustained by national associations and then linked up through AfLIA as a regional support network for review of OERs in Africa.

5. Traditional Knowledge Acquisition and Dissemination in Africa

In *Nature and Function of Logic in African Epistemology*, Dr. Ejikemeuwa J. O. Ndubisi discusses seven categories of traditional knowledge acquisition and dissemination in Africa:[71]

- Perceptual knowledge

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[70] https://sparceurope.org/what-we-do/open-education/enoel/
[71] https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol19-issue11/Version-5/G0191153236.ZK04_JHSS.pdf

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Commented [LL22]: I beefed up this section a little bit, including explaining the importance of SPARC. It is known as SPARC. I don't think anyone remembers what the acronym stands for.

- Common sense knowledge
- Old age knowledge
- Inferential knowledge
- Mystical knowledge
- Oral tradition
- Holistic knowledge

Some types of knowledge are open. These can be transmitted and passed on orally from one generation to another either formally or informally. Mystical knowledge, however, is only open to individuals who mediate between their people and the 'divine.' It is important to understand the differences and respect them. The role of traditional knowledge is important for dialogue about open licensing in Africa because these stories are told and carried down through generations. Traditional open knowledge, as is discussed below, can be openly licensed for sharing and adaptation.

H. Traditional knowledge that is closed

Knowledge that is exclusive for specific activities or groups, may or may not, have anything to do with divinity, such as masquerade groups that are used for the preservation of culture—accepted norms, ordinances, the regulations of communities, law keeping, and entertainment. Knowledge about the customs, regalia, language, songs, and words of the masquerade groups are only passed on to those who join the groups. Initiation into some of the masquerade groups such as the Ekpo Masquerade in parts of the riverine areas of Southern Nigeria are accompanied with coming-of-age rites for young boys or passage into age grade groups. These masquerade and age grade groups are strictly for males. There may be penalties for divulging knowledge to outsiders. Present day urbanization, however, may have watered down the flavour of mysticism of this type of knowledge in many parts of Africa.

Commented [LL23]: I added these sentences to reinforce why this section on traditional knowledge is relevant to the OER Recommendation.

Commented [LL24]: You asked about numbering and lettering. When I set up the template I used letters and the Word default is to do them in alphabetical order. I am loathe to change things now.

Commented [NB25R24]: But this is a sub-heading for section 4, so it should presumably be 4A not 4F?

Commented [LL26R24]: Tell that to Microsoft. I don't think it's worth fiddling with sub-heading numbers.

Figure 12: Ijele Masquerade[72]

Figure 13: The Ekpo Masquerade enchanter[73]

[72]https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ijele_masquerade_performance.jpg
[73] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Ekpo_Masquerade_enchanter.jpg

These two masquerades may be "closed," but there are Wikipedia articles about them and images for them. Librarians might want to speak with elders in their community to ascertain whether stories such as these can be told.

I. Traditional knowledge that is open

Except for mystic knowledge, most traditional knowledge in Africa is open and is driven by 'oralcy' - that is, passed on by word of mouth. Children are openly taught wisdom, morals, social values, beliefs, skills, habits, and cultural ideals of their own communities and families, which promote harmonious communal living through stories. These stories can be retold and added upon without restrictions or anyone claiming or asserting intellectual property rights that hinder others from sharing such stories. In African communities before the advent of electricity, and in rural communities today, after farming, fishing, or other activities, at the end of the day, communities gather under the moonlight, around communal or family fires, and exchange stories of what happened in the farms or pass down family history or cultural heritage. These can be enshrined in songs, such as the Oriki of the Yoruba tribe, or folktales. Participation is usually a part of this story telling. Community members, including children, join in the call and response components of the stories and songs.

Oral storytelling in Africa has always been a traditional way to pass on knowledge gained over centuries. In an interview with Bill Moyers, the Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe, describes the importance of storytellers:[74]

> *If you look at the world in terms of storytelling, you have, first of all, the man who agitates, the man who drums up the people — I call him the drummer. Then you have the warrior, who goes forward and fights. But you also have the storyteller who recounts the event — and this is one who survives, who outlives all the others. It is the storyteller, in fact, who makes us what we are, who creates history. The storyteller creates the memory that survivors must have — otherwise surviving would have no meaning… This is very, very important… Memory is necessary if surviving is going to be more than just a technical thing.*

Achebe also wrote children's stories based on Igbo oral folk tales because he wanted his daughters to read about their traditions: *The Flute*, *The Drum*, and *How Leopard Got Its Claws*. Stories were and continue to be passed on from generation to generation.

Oral storytelling is Africa's natural way of openly preserving and passing on human knowledge, community history, insights, and ensuring that the collective memory of families, lineages or community is not lost. It is now written down, as well, as Achebe did for his Igbo folk tales.[75]

African children's librarians use storytelling and community elders to engage the interest of children. The 2023 World Read Aloud Day for African libraries helped librarians to understand that "Africa got here first', implying that Africa is way ahead of other regions of the world in orally telling stories to children. In Ethiopia, for instance, the elderly play an important role in community libraries.

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[74]https://www.themarginalian.org/2016/11/16/chinua-achebe-bill-moyers-interview/
[75]These stories are not openly licensed, however.

Figure 14: Ato Solomon with his grandson and holding the two traditional tales he wrote down.

AfLIA put out a notice on its early literacy and the AfLIA-OER Africa WhatsApp groups to ask whether use or collect traditional content in their libraries. Below are the results.

Box 9: More examples of how African libraries work to capture traditional cultures

Nkem Osuigwe of AfLIA wrote: *The library where I started my work in Enugu, Nigeria had audio cassettes of masquerade dances, but I do not know if the playback mechanisms for them are still available or if they were moved to other formats.*
Antonetta Sipho Madziva of Zimbabwe One of the learners from the second cohort in the AfLIA short course on early literacy wrote: *On a few occasions we have had authors who talk about their books, indigenous knowledge systems, other traditional traditional activities. Otherwise, children's librarians tell or retell stories, taking turns with the children.* *In the libraries in the city of Bulawayo where I work, we use IsiNdebele mainly for telling and retelling stories. English is also used since it is the language for teaching other subject areas. There are also a few places where people prefer using English.* *Please note that other areas in Zimbabwe use different mother languages.* In my case ,storytelling is basically in IsiNdebele.
Alick Kachulu of the Malawi National Library Services and the second cohort of the early literacy, wrote about a UNESCO-funded activity in Malawi:

> *In a project, funded by UNESCO,, an old person composed a story of any type in Chichewa (the local language) to tell children, who come to the library every weekend*
>
> *The children are encouraged to attend the sessions by giving them snacks.*
> *It's like a history thing because in the past we used to go to our grandparents after school in the night for folktales, so this project is like retaining that old days to children.*
>
> *The project started in 2014, and we don't know when it will end. It started in as a pilot, whereby people to go around Malawi to understand language differences and organize real story tellers... However, due to financial constraints the project failed to reach out to all branches. Now it only happens at the headquarters of Malawi Library Services in Lilongwe.*

Khadija Issa Twahir, Librarian of the Lamu Fort Museum Library in Kenya wrote that in her library they collect traditional knowledge - songs, stories, sermons etc. They are in the process of converting them to mp3 and will use CC licenses to make them open to the public. Khadija was a learner in the Widimedia course.

Amaka Nwofor of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Nigeria wrote:
> *There is a collection of local content resources in the cultural heritage corner of the Kenneth Dike state central e-library. The LIS department also collaborated to add some of the oral history record projects of her students to the resources. But they have not been processed for open access.*

Amaka is a member of the AfLIA-OER Africa WhatsApp group.

The above examples are informal and anecdotal. A Google search pulled up many references to using African stories in US libraries, but none for African libraries using traditional stories. African American folk tales derive from the African tradition of storytelling, which slaves brought with them to the Americas, and they are still being told today.[76] Most of the Google search results for African storytelling **in** Africa were of research about traditional storytelling not of African libraries using these techniques.

AfLIA has worked on preserving traditional cultures. In 2017 its public and community libraries section organized a continental display fiesta with the term of "My Africa, Your Africa, Our Africa," with a contest based on photos and posters. Contestants were asked to:[77]
- Create a display of books and other resources, such as textiles, pictures, painting, sculptures, musical instruments, farm instruments, and cooking utensils.
- Gather information on the history of your community.
- Consult, engage, and collaborate with community elders, groups, unions, etc.

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[76] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_folktales
[77] https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/aflia-public-community-librar-nkemdilim-osigwe-ph-d/

Figure 15: Anambra State Library Board poster[78]

The Anambra State Library Board in Nigeria created the poster in the figure above. There are also YouTube videos of people who toured the exhibition and of librarians who explained the artifacts to visitors.[79]

This library system continues to work on preserving traditional culture and language. It holds an annual celebration, Asusu Igbo Ga Adigide (The Igbo language will endure), for members of the community to promote the Igbo language and culture, including Igbo-language books and teaching.[80]

This library board appears to be an exception, however, and AfLIA did not follow up afterwards with similar festivals. The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted many library operations, but it is now possible for African librarians to be more systematic in introducing African traditions of storytelling and culture into their libraries, beyond the few examples above.

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[78] https://twitter.com/AnambraLibrary/status/857949102524559363

[79] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mu-GLt_CIE

[80] https://www.absradiotv.com/2021/11/26/anambra-library-board-celebrates-asusu-igbo-ga-adigide-in-awka/

How can African libraries help to preserve this heritage?[81] Below are some ideas from AfLIA:

- Request children to go home to interview their parents and caregivers about traditional storytelling. The children would then retell in the library what they are told. Questions for them to ask include:
    - Did your elders tell you stories after the workday was done?
    - Who told the stories?
    - What were they about?
    - Do you remember these stories?
    - Would you like to come to the library and tell them to the other children?
- Do you, as a librarian, remember the stories that your elders told you. Have you retold these tales during story hour in the library?
- Keep records of the stories told by elders, the children, and you.
- TESSA has several ideas on how to use the community and environment as a resource for children. Although aimed at schools, the ideas can be adapted for librarians.[82] Give it them a try and let AfLIA know what you think on the WhatsApp groups.
- Instructors in LIS courses can integrate traditional storytelling into their courses on early literacy and encourage students to use these stories in story hours.
- Public libraries can use World Literacy Day to promote traditional storytelling.

In preparation for publishing this Overview, AfLIA has also written a checklist for librarians to follow.

Box 10: AfLIA checklist for collecting African knowledge

Step 1
√   Identify the existence of folktales, songs, wise sayings in your community.
√   Find out the local history of your community and those who are likely to know the different perspectives of past events that were not recorded.
√   As much as possible, research historical events.
Step 2
√   Set up interviews by phone, email, community gatherings, or one on one.
√   Explain that the purpose of the interview is to collect knowledge about the community including folktales, songs, wise sayings and local history for the purpose of sharing your information widely.
√   The library may be the best place for physical interviews.
√   The bullets on the previous page give detailed interview questions.
√   Ask interviewees to sign with their signature, thumb print, or some other way, which should be signed before the storytelling/interview starts. The form will state clearly the purpose, how the information collected will be processed and used. You will find a draft form written by AfLIA in Appendix Five.
Step 3

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[81] See *Harnessing Indigenous Knowledge through Community Involvement in Public Libraries in South Africa*, Maned Mhlongo for a detailed discussion of the importance of collecting traditional knowledge by public libraries and the role of local communities. Go to https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347551385_Harnessing_Indigenous_Knowledge_through_Community_Involvement_in_Public_Libraries_in_South_Africa
[82] https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=153795

√	Determine how the knowledge gathered can be processed and stored. Audio tapes become unusable when the playback devices for them, as well as the audio and video formats are no longer available.
√	Audio can be transcribed and translated from the local language to English and vice versa and uploaded online. You may choose any of the Creative Commons Licenses to ensure that access to the knowledge is open.

Figure 16: AfLIA poster for librarians based on the checklist in box 10

Although many African universities have collections on African national traditions and culture, this content has most often not been made available digitally. The University of Cape Town's Special

Collections Section is a rare exception. The collection contains printed and audio-visual materials on African studies and a wide array of other specialised subjects.[83]

AfLIA has some suggestions for academic librarians on promoting national traditions.

Box 11: Tips for academic librarians who want to publicize traditional cultures

√ Work with IT and other staff to digitize relevant content and create a separate community in your institutional repository.

√ Produce pamphlets, posters, or leaflets on how faculty members and students can collect African traditional knowledge across disciplines to submit to the library for preservation and access. There are numerous questions on page 39 that can be adapted.

√ Run exhibitions of Library resources of African traditional knowledge and highlight what may be needed especially local history of communities within the municipality, State or region. If possible, a map could be mounted on a wall with icons representing the traditional knowledge from communities. The work at the Anambra State Library Board is an excellent example of the kind of content that should be included in an exhibit.

√ Discuss with faculty members, researchers, and students what resources are missing, especially local history of communities within the municipality, state or region.

√ Plan how gaps can be filled.

J. How Educational Systems Conflict with Traditional Knowledge

The educational system in Africa was initially established to provide manpower for colonial administrations. It was without recognition of and integration into the culture, history, philosophies, and values of African knowledge systems, and without attention to the need for sustainable development of the continent. Many students now study courses in tertiary institutions made up of theories and concepts that have no direct bearing on their immediate environment. Classroom resources do not fully depict African realities, nor do they seek to provide solutions to development challenges. Knowledge about Africa is inadequately presented. Students in many African countries are still being taught with a Eurocentric curriculum. In a 2022 article, Welly Minyangadou Ngokobi wrote about French-language schools in Africa:[84]

> *Having attended French schools across the African continent, I argue that Eurocentric curricula have been constructed to perpetuate a harmful single story: in my experience as a learner, history classes always maintained African countries' etiquette of post slavery nations bound by poverty; French classes indoctrinated us that French literature can only be white and European, and rarely—if ever—shed light on acclaimed French and Francophone authors of color who have greatly contributed to the French patrimony.*

African indigenous knowledge, which could help grow the cultural identity of young Africans, can provide solutions to agricultural and climate-based challenges, and provide a quality and transformative education that is relevant for the development of Africa.

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[83] http://www.specialcollections.uct.ac.za/
[84] On Decolonizing the Curriculum: Thoughts of a Black Pre-Service Teacher, Welly Françoise Elysabeth Minyangadou Ngokobi, McGill University, Currere Exchange Journal, 2022, https://cej.lib.miamioh.edu/index.php/CEJ/article/view/157

Furthermore, as children learn to speak, they first grasp concepts as well as gain understanding of the world around them in their mother tongues, but they go to school and begin to learn how to write and correctly express themselves in English, French, or Portuguese. This creates some confusion. Children are likely to unconsciously separate what they learn at school from what happens at home. This can lead to non-internalization of learning, where examinations and assignments are passed through rote learning and cramming without practical applications. Decolonizing education would mean indigenous, postcolonial reforms, which would lead to dismantling the scaffolding of knowledge, values, structures, and systems. Africans would thus not see themselves in what they are taught and what they learn in schools at all levels of education. Librarians may not have a role in determining school curricula, but they can use stories for young children in mother-tongue languages, as AfLIA has trained librarians to do in webinars and short courses.

Open licences and OER present a clear pathway and possibility to address deficiencies in teaching and literacy. They can ensure that Africans have equitable access to learning and reading materials that reflect who they are and that are available in their mother tongues. African libraries can play significant roles in making these resources available.

6. African Libraries as Agents of Open Knowledge

Libraries exist to provide stakeholders content that they want to know or enjoy. Whether it's children who want stories that interest them, students who require educational content, or farmers who want to have up-to-date information on prices or crops. Librarians should be at the forefront as advocates for widening people's access to information and knowledge. Libraries can promote the well-being of their users and are a mark of social responsibility to the community. Libraries can help level the inequity of opportunities, bridging the gaps between the haves and have-nots, and engendering a democratic society. The concept of openness can find a ready home in libraries as openness aligns with the core principles of those libraries that wish to help users acquire information resources in different formats and make content available to all.

Libraries can promote and protect the right and freedom to know, to learn, and to gain access to knowledge. Librarians should come to a greater understanding of the different components of openness and how openness can be used to ensure better access to information and qualitative education. Openness may start with babies and storybooks but goes on to adults, open science, and all the other categories of knowledge.
.
Importantly, keeping the library doors open and making it obvious that everyone is accepted within reinforces the concept that libraries should be open by default.

Nkem Osuigwe remembers the powerful effect her first visit to a library had on her and its significance. This library was open to a little girl who needed a welcome place to spend some time. Her first library visit made her into a librarian. Dr Osuigwe recalled her introduction to storytelling: As a young five-year-old in post-civil war Nigeria, she was dropped off at a public library in Enugu, Nigeria, by her mother who had walked far to visit the market and couldn't keep an eye on two small children while shopping. When they arrived at the library, it was story hour. She remembers the occasion clearly:

An old lady was reading a story about a competition between the sun and the wind to know which was stronger. This old lady would go from one side of the room to talk as the sun, and then she would go to the other side of the room and speak as the wind. The way

she told the story, her body movement, her facial expressions… That encounter changed my life, opened something inside of me…

Figure 17: Instilling the love of books in Uganda

Figure 18:Student roundtable, Antigua

7. Summing up and Recommendations

Irrespective of talk by different governments on prioritizing education, educational inequality abounds in Africa. There is an evident lack of policies and practices that enable equitable access to quality educational resources, materials, and tools by every student. Traditionally, education systems have classified students according to performance in examinations, assignments, and projects. Excellent academic performance relies to a large extent on the availability of classroom texts and supplementary reading materials as common resources meant for learning for all in the

class for examinations, assignments, and projects. However, many teachers and learners will not be able to access or afford the required learning resources due to the commodification of knowledge through proprietary licenses in knowledge production and consumption. This then becomes a barrier to achieving quality and transformative education that speaks directly to the development needs of Africa.

African librarians can:
- Adapt existing quality openly licensed resources for library users that are infused with African realities and/or are in African languages.
- Use their knowledge of the different communities their users come from to select, adapt, write, and translate content.
- Use available technologies to create open Africa-centric learning content without provincialization of knowledge, concepts, and education in general. The library in Lamu, for example, is recording traditional content and will make it available with Creative Commons licences.

These three points will make learning and teaching materials more easily available to all, irrespective of social or economic status. They will also go a long way in driving transformative education that can translate to innovative solutions for the continent's development challenges.
The UNESCO OER Recommendation provides a framework that African libraries can use to reconfigure their collections and activities to have more resources in local languages that are inclusively available using open licenses.

The recommendations below are arranged according to the UNESCO OER Recommendation action areas.

Capacity building
- African librarians should seek to continue learning about open knowledge and the possibilities that the concept provides for quality and inclusive education and the decolonization of learning content.
- Libraries of all types lead the charge in training their user communities to have a balanced understanding of open licenses and OERs.
- African library professionals should understand how to ensure quality assurance for the OER created in their institutions and user communities.
- African librarians should receive more training. At the university level, they require better skills to become efficient scholarly communication librarians so that they can do the job effectively. Other librarians require better skills to communicate with stakeholders on the importance of open education. At all levels, librarians need appropriate administrative infrastructures.
- AfLIA can help librarians learn how to create posters and publicity materials, such as the ones created by AfLIA and others in this Overview..

Policy-setting
- Librarians need to advocate for and work with other stakeholders within their user communities to draw up policies that will create a viable environment for the creation, adoption, use, reuse of OER.
- AfLIA should conduct a desk review of public, community, and academic library policies worldwide to ascertain what is relevant to African libraries.

<u>**Equity and Access**</u>
- AfLIA should continue working with librarians on translation of storybooks and refine techniques, as discussed on pages 26-27 above.
- AfLIA should continue working with librarians to translate terms relevant to OER to local languages. Translating the OER logo and the 5Rs gave the librarians a deeper understanding of what the concept means. These translations may also be useful in explaining open licensing to local communities that are not comfortable in English.

<u>**Sustainability**</u>
- AfLIA should work with public, community, and academic libraries to develop a reporting template to enable African librarians to understand and document the key points for gathering information on OER in their user communities. AfLIA's collaboration with both Figshare and WikiData should be of use.

<u>**International cooperation**</u>
- African library associations, working with AfLIA, should open and maintain conversations on the UNESCO OER Recommendation, to explore and monitor the state of OER implementation in their institutions and user communities. These conversations will also delineate possible expected and current challenges and best practices. They will build the resilience of OER advocates and make recommendations on how to develop and maintain platforms of openly licensed educational materials.
- African library associations should work with AfLIA to ensure that African librarians are included in all conversations and discussions about OER and open learning.
- Working with its membership, AfLIA should develop a reporting template to enable African librarians to understand the key points for gathering information on OER in their user communities.
- AfLIA should open high level dialogues with the African Union and governments at the national level on the implementation of the UNESCO OER Recommendation.

8. Appendix One: The Term OER in African Languages

Table 3: African-language translations of OER

Language, Country, and Name of Submitter	Translation
Ashanti (Twi), Ghana Doreen Appiah, AfLIA	Nhomasua Ho Nnɛɛma a Wobue
Ateso, Uganda Barbra Apolot Soroti University, Uganda	Iswamaeta lu asioman lu epukoro
Dagbani, Ghana Sadik Shahadu Dagbani Wikimedia User Group	Baŋsim bobu du' noya din yooi ti so kam
Ga, Ghana Sarah Fixon-Owoo Ghana Wikimedian	Nikasemɔ he nibii ni agbele
Igbo, Nigeria Okwuoma Dumebi Chijioke, National Library of Nigeria	Akụrụngwa agụmakwụkwọ meghere emeghe
IsiNdebele, Zimbabwe Antonetta Sipho Madziva Senior Librarian Bulawayo Municipal Libraries and Nee Msimanga Mzilikazi Memorial Library Bulawayo	Infundo lemithombo yolwazi engelamigoqo
Kiswahili, Kenya David Kipchirchir Koech Kabarak University	Rasilimali wazi za elimu
Luganda, Uganda Drake Tamale Librarian, Uganda Christian University	Ebikozesebwa mu byenjigiriza ebiggule/eby'obwereere
Nupe, Nigeria Fatima Abduldayan, Federal University of Technology, Minna Chairperson, Nigerian Library Association	Kpe Emanwo Kpikpe
Setswana, Botswana Lynn Jibril, President, Botswana Library Association	Meamuso ya thuto e e butsweng
Shona, Mozambique Tendayi Madziya. Universidade Alberta ISCED (UnISCED), Mozambique. AfLIA representative for Portuguese speaking Countries	Dzidzo neRuzivo Pachena
Swahili, Tanzania	Rasilimali za Elimu ya Wazi

Language, Country, and Name of Submitter	Translation
Esther Simon Ngamba Tanzania Library Service Board	
Tshivenda, South Africa Pfano Makhera University of Pretoria, South Africa	Zwishumiswa zwa pfunzo zwi sa badelwi
Tyap, Nigeria Levi Kambai Tyap Wikimedia User Group	Nkyang Tat-a̱pyia̱ Ma̱sa̱t
Yoruba, Nigeria Blessing Babawale Amusan, Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science, Federal Polytechnic, Ede	Àwon oun èlò èkó aláìnígbèdéke

9. Appendix Two: AfLIA Open Knowledge Activities

• Activity	• Description
• OER webinars and short online courses in collaboration with OER Africa	• AfLIA has collaborated with OER Africa on a series of webinars and short online courses to both raise awareness and train librarians in OER and Open Access. These have included: • Training in finding open content, adapting open content, creating open content, and open access publishing. The tutorials on which this training was based are online at the OER Africa site.[85] • AfLIA and OER Africa ran a survey in August-September 2021 to find out the level of awareness about OER and the particular aspects of Openness that librarians need to know. 73 librarians from 57 different institutions across 12 African countries took the survey. The major findings were that there is lack of awareness, knowledge, and advocacy skills as pertains to OER, and importantly, lack of institutional policies and management support for OER. AfLIA and OER Africa ran a webinar on Artificial Intelligence, its relevance to Africa, and open knowledge. A previous webinar included one on open knowledge. The two organizations are now planning a short course on the meaning of open education for librarians.
• AfLIA and data management for libraries	• AfLIA has carried out several activities in regard to data management for African libraries. These have included: • AfLIA collaborates with Wikimedia Foundation in a number of areas including Wikidata. AfLIA has taken on four Wikimedians to:[86] • *…develop a learning framework (curriculum, modules and learning materials} for a Wikidata course and train English and French participants, taking into cognisance the digital skills set, internet facilities/penetration, African meanings, values and learning milieu in the continent.* • AfLIA has an MoU with Figshare, a data platform for research, to promote open data awareness in Africa. AfLIA Executive Director,Dr. Helena Asamoah-Hassan, said about the MoU and its importance to Africa: • *We are excited to enter into this strategic partnership with Figshare, to work on collaborative activities that support awareness of open science and data repositories, and to support the research and education communities in Africa.* • • *Open data has the potential to drive innovation, economic growth, and social development by enabling individuals and organizations to make more informed decisions. However, in many African countries, access to open data is limited, and there*

[85]https://www.oerafrica.org/book/learning-pathways-open-education-online-tutorials
[86]https://web.aflia.net/aflia-takes-on-four-wikimedians-for-the-wikidata-project/ and
https://web.aflia.net/aflia-receives-a-grant-for-promoting-open-knowledge-practices-in-african-libraries-through-wikidata/

| • Activity	• Description
	is a lack of awareness and understanding of its potential benefits. • *Through our open data initiatives, we aim to support African higher education and research institutions, ultimately contributing to a stronger open science ecosystem in Africa for the benefit of our communities, and the world.*
• AfLIA Fifth Biennial Conference, May 2023	• AfLIA has organized several panels on OER and open knowledge, including one half-day workshop on the UNESCO OER Recommendation at the May 2023 AfLIA conference. There will also be a two-day workshop sponsored by AfLIA/SPARC Africa on library publishing after the conference.
• Early literacy short course for African librarians	• AfLIA has collaborated with NBA on developing and running a course on early literacy development. The course trained public and community librarians in eighteen African countries to understand and practice techniques for teaching children vocabulary development, print and phonemic awareness in mother tongue and English. The course led participants to a deeper understanding of how to prompt the creativity of children as well as how to use open licensing to increase appropriate reading resources for the target age group through the translation of existing stories into mother-tongue languages. • Following completion for the first cohort, AfLIA revised the course in response to technological difficulties experienced by the librarians and additional lessons learned from the first cohort. AfLIA expects to offer the course again in October 2023.

10.   Appendix Three: AfLIA Overview Survey

Before writing this Overview, AfLIA wanted to understand how much librarians understand about OER. It surveyed 600 librarians in 23 African countries to ascertain their familiarity with OER and issues to include. We used champions from each of the countries to ensure that as many librarians as possible would complete the questionnaire.

Four hundred and thirty-three librarians responded to the questionnaire, coming from a range of different kinds of institutions, although most were from academic libraries.
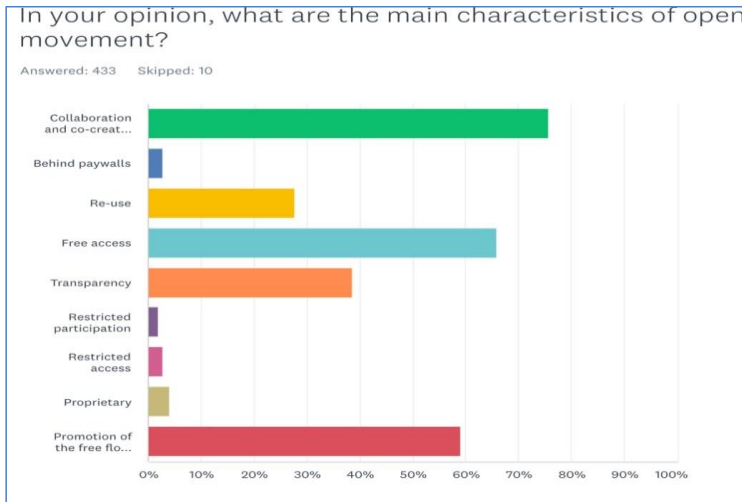
Figure 19: Where do the respondents work?
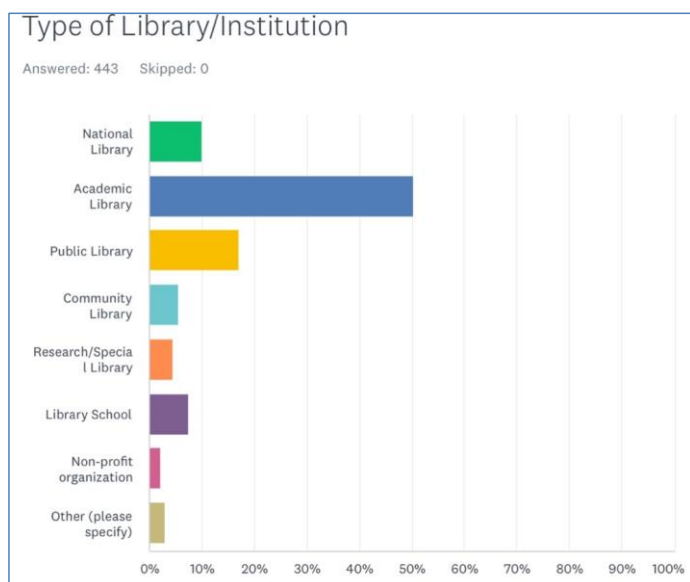
Most respondents have undergraduate or postgraduate degrees; there were a few PhD's and librarians with diplomas in the group.

Many of the librarians were able to classify the kinds of content that are consonant with an OER.

Figure 20: Openness for librarians

In your opinion, what are the main characteristics of open movement?

Answered: 433   Skipped: 10

But these same librarians were not all certain about the concept of open licenses.

Figure 21: Open licenses

How familiar are you with Open Licensing?

Answered: 425   Skipped: 18
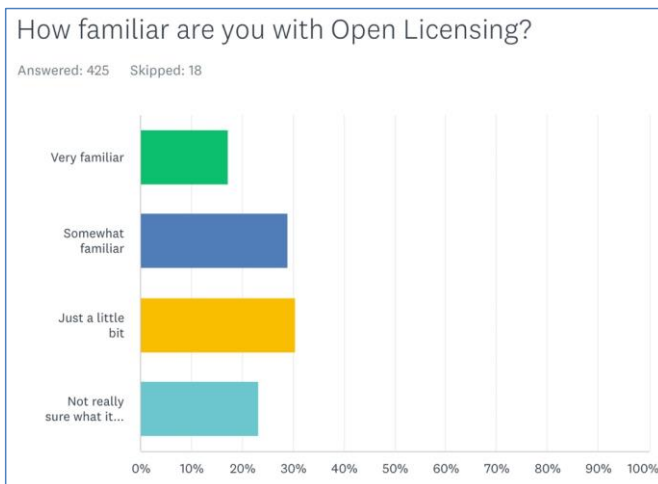
The picture is a little less clear when we get to specifics. Most librarians have used open licensing to write or translate storybooks or to create content on Wikipedia and sister projects. Almost 46 percent of the librarians told us that they had created content for use in the classrooms (light blue

bar). But when asked for the URLs on classroom content, many gave a URL for resources that others had written. In addition, please note that many libraries skipped this question entirely.

Figure 22: The kinds of content
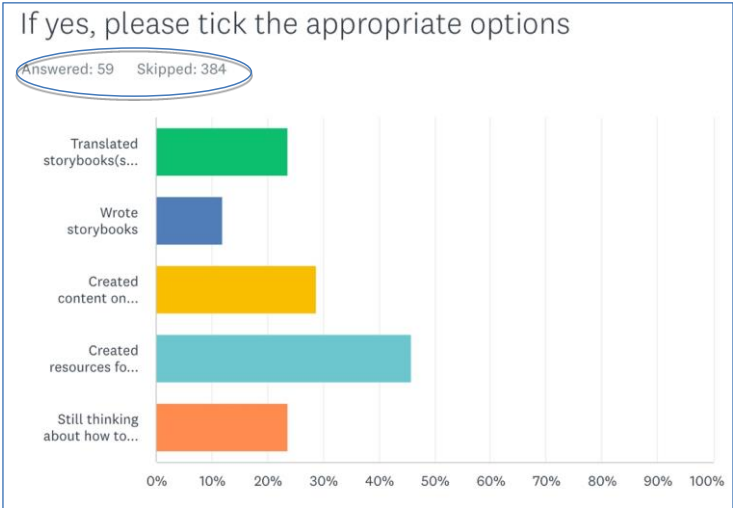
11.   Appendix Four: Technical Skills Required to Work on Implementing OER

Wikieducator has an excellent article on the different skills needed for work in OER.[87] Some of these skills have been discussed in this Overview, but it is a good idea to look at them outlined in their entirety in the WikiEducator document. In many cases librarians will need to collaborate with other staff in their institution, such as IT professionals and/or consult with experts nearby.

Several librarians asked specifically about technical skills necessary. Below is an extended quote from Wikieducator.

> **Technical expertise**. This set of skills is tightly connected to the skills of materials design and development. Increasingly, resource-based learning strategies are harnessing a wide range of media and deployed in e-learning environments, facilitated by the ready availability of digitized, openly licensed educational content. This requires skills in:
> - Advising institutions on the pros and cons of establishing their own repositories, as well as advice on other possible ways of sharing their OER;
> - Creating stable, operational Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and content repositories;
> - Supporting educators to develop courses within already operational or newly deployed VLEs;
> - Developing computer-based multimedia and video materials.
>
> **Expertise in curating and sharing OER effectively**. This includes:
> - Technical skills to develop and maintain web platforms to host OER online, as well as to share the content and meta-data with other web platforms;
> - Ability to generate relevant and meaningful meta-data for OER;
> - Knowledge of and the skills to deploy standardized global taxonomies for describing resources in different disciplines and domains;
> - Website design and management skills to create online environments in which content can be easily discovered and downloaded.

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[87]
https://wikieducator.org/A_Basic_Guide_for_OER/Appendix_9:_Skills_Requirements_for_Work_in_Open_Educational_Resources

12. Appendix Five: Local Knowledge Interview Consent form

Below is a draft consent form prepared by AfLIA. The form will have to be adapted, as circumstances warrant. The librarian should also be ready to translate the form to a local language.

We are asking you to participate in an interview for the collection of local knowledge [folktales, songs, wise sayings and local history] by the library….*(name of the library).* The interview is meant to collect knowledge that will be stored in the library and made accessible to all to learn and understand about this community's culture and history.

You will be asked questions regarding [*If possible, insert the particular areas you want the resource person to talk about].* The Library selected you as a resource person because *[state why the person was selected eg because you are the eldest in your clan/because you were a member of the well known dancing group/because you were the first or second or the only living head teacher of the community's primary school*].

The interview will take approximately [ ] minutes. This interview will be [audio/video] recorded.

Please note that your participation is voluntary and that we will pause the recording if you wish to talk about personal issues that you will not want to be of the recorded interview.

The recording will be transcribed, and you will be acknowledged when the library catalogues and shares the interview.

Signing or thumb printing this consent form means that you understand and agree that the interview will be recorded, transcribed, and made available through the library. It also means that you agree to be acknowledged as the library shares the knowledge and others may quote your words and ascribe such to you.

For any questions about the interview or related matters please call *[phone number of librarian]*

_____   _____

Resource person's name and Signature or thumbprint   Date

_____   _____

Library staff's printed Name   Signature