The OER World Map: 
Suddenly grown up – and now?

Presentation proposal, prepared for OE Global 2018
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1. Introduction
The OER World Map is the most ambitious approach of the OER community so far to collect data about and for itself. The Hewlett funded project started 2014 and its progress was presented at the Open Education Global Conferences in Banff 2015, Krakow 2016 and Cape Town 2017. Last year we described the OER World Map as “a project in its adolescence”, which had begun to provide real value to its users. Now, in 2018, we are pleased to report the project has reached a kind of maturity, both in terms of the provided functionality, and in regard to its approach to community- and business model development.

2. The German OERInfo Site
One major challenge of the project - which arguably still has to be overcome on a global scale - is the development of a sustainable global OER community who both use the OER World Map and contribute by maintaining their data. Throughout 2017 our work concentrated on the question how the platform can support the development of a regional OER community in one country. Our assumption is that the model developed in Germany can show what is possible with the implementation of the platform in other countries.

At its core of the model is an “OER Country Map”, which only shows OER World Map data geographically located in Germany (https://open-educational-resources.de/karte/). The OER Germany Map is integrated in the newly developed OER information site called OERinfo (https://open-educational-resources.de/). As part of the recently started OER funding programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (https://oerworldmap.org/resource/urn:uuid:3f11c6d-b74a-4aa4-83b3-b4148bfdb82) an editorial office was installed, which currently is staffed with 0.5 full-time employee. Editing data is done collaboratively by our online editor together with the community.

Additional to the OER Germany Map two further elements have proved to support data collection on the OER World Map: The cooperation with OER related events; and the publication of (printed) publications and reports.

As part of the current OERinfo programme, multiple workshops and events related to OER take place in Germany at the moment. On the one hand, the OER World Map is used to collect and document these events (https://open-educational-resources.de/veranstaltungen/kalender/). On the other hand we learned, that the awareness created by a major event like the OER Festival 2017 (https://oer-worldmap.org/resource/urn:uuid:df9bce84-065-f4014-b028-e317ebc5b133) provides a good environment for data collection with the OER World Map.

As far as publications are concerned, we already made good experience with the development of the printed OER Atlas 2016 (https://oerworldmap.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/oer-atlas-2016-komplett.pdf). As one part of the OER Festival 2017, the OER Atlas 2017 will be published. The OER Atlas combines selected articles on OER with profiles of all major OER services and projects currently active in Germany. We found the printed form to be especially well accepted by policy makers.
A similar approach was taken with the UNESCO IITE report “German OER Practices and Policy – from Bottom-up to Top-down Initiatives” (https://oerworldmap.org/resource/urn:uuid:c74b6e56-fe19-4dfe-bb50-4d946d27faa8), which was created for the 2nd OER World Congress in Ljubljana. While the current version of the report can be downloaded as a PDF document, we are currently working on an extended HTML version of the report, which includes links to the OER World Map entries of all mentioned entities. By combining narrative reporting with integrated primary data, we hope to increase the usability and reliability of the document. This is a step towards a new form of OER reporting, which overcomes the restrictions of presenting only a snapshot, which is outdated shortly after its publication.

3. Global roll out, partnering & sustainability

In 2018 the project focuses more strongly on the global use of the OER World Map. Following the German prototype we offer members of the OER World Map Country Champion network and other partners to implement country maps in their websites. According to our experience, this approach has the advantage that it brings the World Map into the local community instead of expecting the local community to move to the World Map.

Also we hope that running a country map by themselves will motivate our partners to increase resource commitment to the project and install editorial offices by themselves, which can be done at reasonable cost.

The country maps will be a central element of the developing OER World Map product portfolio, which can support our partners in providing high quality information on the state of OER on a regional level. Other instruments, which already are available, or will be available soon, are the OER World Map Kibana installation (https://oerworldmap.org/kibana/), which allows to create customized statistical aggregations of the data as well as the interlinked reports, mentioned above.

In order to make effective use of the product portfolio, a strategic partnership programme will be started by the beginning of 2018. One part of a future sustainability model of the OER World Map could be based on this strategic partnership programme: strategic partners will be able to make use of the product portfolio for free so that barriers for entrance are low. Nevertheless the idea is, that our partners should look out for opportunities to monetize services, e.g. by creating a next level country report and selling it to their government. In this case a small percentage of the revenue should flow back for platform maintenance and development.

Probability seems high that the demand for high-quality information on OER activity will grow in the near future. UNESCO recently started a project together with the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) which aims at the development of indicators to support the evaluation of the state of prevalence of OER on a national level. One identified challenge so far is, that the needed data will hardly be available. The OER World Map constitutes the most developed system currently available to address this challenge effectively.

4. Bottom-up functionality

All that has been said so far focuses mainly on how the OER World Map can assist policy support processes like OER reporting and the creation of statistics. Nevertheless we do not intent to follow a top down only approach, but expect that the full potential of the platform will not be released before top-down and bottom-up meet in an integrated approach. According to our community-development-plan, finding strategic partners will be only part of the challenge, the other part being to attract a significant number of community users to join the platform.
One indirect strategy for addressing the end user community will be supporting partners in the development of regional user communities. Another way will be to increase our direct marketing activity. But probably the most effective way to support community development will be to design a platform, which fits the needs of the community. In order to do so, we are currently working on a range of new functionality, which will make the OER World Map more powerful than ever before:

- **Front End:** Before the end of 2017 we will implement a new major front-end version, which includes many new functionalities like an improved landing page and increases both usability and performance of the site.
- **Translation:** Within the scope of the OERinfo-project, we translated the map into German. Other translations like Spanish, Portuguese and French will follow soon.
- **Lighthouses:** By the end of the year users will be able to like entries and mark good practise examples as lighthouses. This will allow to identify the most important projects and services easily. Also it will provide a way for users to contribute to the success of the project in an easy and fast way (implemented on beta: [https://beta.oerworldmap.org/](https://beta.oerworldmap.org/)).
- **Social Networking:** We are currently considering the implementation of several new social networking functionalities including a timeline and following of accounts. In the long run, we imagine that the OER World Map could develop into an open marketplace, which supports projects and people in finding what they need to be more effective in the implementation of OER.

## 5. Conclusion

The OER World Map, one of the most ambitious projects within the field of OER today, provides growing value for its customers. In order to prepare breakthrough on a global scale, we will start a strategic partnership programme and increase social networking functionality of the platform. The presentation gives an overview of the state of the platform-, community- and business model development within the project.