

Cape Town Open Education Declaration

Read the article at <https://edtechbooks.org/-wNtQ>

Background

Five years following the monumental UNESCO forum in 2002, the Open Society Institute and the Shuttleworth Foundation convened a meeting in Cape Town to which thirty leading proponents of open education were invited to collaborate on the text of a manifesto about how OER should be funded and supported. The Cape Town Open Education Declaration was released on 22 January 2008. The declaration garnered over 2727 signatures of support from many different countries and institutions.

Key Points

The declaration urged governments and publishers to make publicly funded educational materials available at no charge via the internet. It takes that the Purpose of OER is to make materials accessible in areas with low funding and nourish a participatory learning, creating and sharing culture needed in rapidly changing societies. In addition, OER facilitates collaborative, flexible learning that empowers teachers to benefit from one another.

The declaration addresses the roles of educators as well. In order to increase the reach of OER, educators and learners should actively participate in making OER a priority by creating, using, adapting, and improving OER materials. Educators should also focus on building education around collaboration, discovery and knowledge creating.

Lastly, the declaration calls on funders and policymakers to make OER a priority by using taxpayer dollars and then releasing the materials to the public in open content and in widely-accessible formats so that use and editing are encouraged.

Discussion Questions

1. Take a look at the breakdown of countries who signed the declaration. How may the country demographics have affect on the development of open courseware?
2. How do differences in culture affect the purpose and implementation of open courseware?
3. If governments pay for OER but it is produced by educators, who decides and owns the copyright law? Are there other models of funding other than government funding?
4. If schools used OER that teachers collaborated on, how would that change the dynamics of funding, research, and learning?
5. What would happen if everything the declaration called for actually occurred?

Additional Resources

Examine the missions of OER-funders.

Check out the Shuttleworth Foundation at this website: <https://www.shuttleworthfoundation.org/>

Check out the Hewlett Foundation at this website: <http://www.hewlett.org/>

Read the World Bank Report on countries' educational expenditures here: <https://edtechbooks.org/-xUJU>



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