Adopting equity, diversity and inclusion in a GO-GN project – listening to participants' recommendations

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Abstract

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has been a growing topic within the Open Education community, and some would argue that it has been underpinning the OE discourse since the beginning. However, access to free and online resources alone cannot be considered equitable, diverse and inclusive. For example, most open resources are only available in English, which limits access and reach for many learners around the world (Willems & Bossu, 2012).

EDI has been driving the Global OER Graduate Network's (GO-GN) agenda since its foundation in 2013, but it was only in 2018 when its first project directly related to DEI was developed. The first phase of GO-GN EDI project focused on EDI practices in Open Education in Africa. Findings of this first stage informed the initial GO-GN guidelines for EDI (Bossu et al., 2019). The findings of phase 1 have also been used as a foundation for phase 2, which focused on EDI in Latin America.

GO-GN currently supports 116 PhD candidates and alumni registered at universities in 26 countries, however, of these members, only 30% conduct their research in the Global South (Weller et al., 2021). The concern is there that, even with all the efforts put into place to be open and a willingness to be diverse, the Global South is still under-represented within this community, which means that GO-GN is not reaching those who could potentially benefit the most from being part of the network. To address this gap and assist the fulfilment of its mission, GO-GN has embarked in a quest to push the EDI agenda by implementing some of the recommendations suggested by the participants of the above projects.

This presentation will explore key findings of these two EDI projects and present a plan for the implementation of some of the recommendations which include increasing support for Global South scholars and researchers in Open Education through a mentoring scheme that would help them to disseminate further their work. This would help to build capacity for GO-GN as well as increase the diversity of work being disseminate through the network. In this presentation, we will also provide an update on the progress of the implementation plan. Conference attendees will be asked to engage and provide their suggestions and views on the plan. We hope that this project will assist better representation from the Global South in GO-GN, and that we have the strategy and implementation tools in place to fulfil our aims in an intercultural, connected and open world.

References

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