



OPENING UP EDUCATION
IN SOUTH-MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

D2.2

STRATEGY FORUM SEMINARS

Coordinator



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About OpenMed

The overarching goal of OpenMed is to raise awareness and facilitate the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices (OEP) in the South Mediterranean region, with a particular focus on Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Palestine.

OpenMed fosters the role of universities as knowledge providers not only to their on-campus students but also beyond the walls of institutions, especially towards disadvantaged groups (e.g. low-income peoples, disabled students, people living in rural areas, learners at risk of low achievement, refugees).

Members of the Consortium

- [UNIMED, Mediterranean Universities Union](#), Italy (coordinator)
- [POLITO, Politecnico di Torino](#), Italy
- [UNIR, Universidad Internacional de La Rioja](#), Spain
- [US, University of Seville](#), Spain
- [COV, Coventry University](#), UK
- [CU, Cairo University](#), Egypt
- [AU, Alexandria University](#), Egypt
- [UCA, Cadi Ayyad University](#), Morocco
- [UIZ, Université Ibn Zohr](#), Morocco
- [BZU, Birzeit University](#), Palestine
- [ANNU, An-Najah National University](#), Palestine
- [AARU, Association of Arab Universities](#), Jordan
- [GJU, German Jordanian University](#), Jordan
- [PSUT, Princess Sumaya University for Technology](#), Jordan

Associate Partner

- [EDEN, European Distance and E-Learning Network](#), UK

More at

<http://www.OpenMedproject.eu>



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Abstract (for dissemination)	During the period November 2016 - April 2017 the OpenMed project organized 4 National Strategy Forum in the partner countries gathering educators and managers from Higher Education Institutions in the country, who provided opinions and consensus on the OER Agenda for the South Mediterranean Universities. The National Strategy Forums took place in Egypt (Nov 16), Morocco (Dec 16), Jordan (Feb 17) and Palestine (Apr 17) and have been organized by local partners in collaboration with the EU partner institutions.

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Executive Summary

OpenMed has been working at the **policy level**, addressing policy development through national dialogues with a wide range of stakeholders, and through setting multi-country strategic actions on the basis of such dialogues, aimed at maximizing the benefits of Open Education to increase the access, the quality and the equity of Higher Education in the region.

During the period November 2016 - April 2017 the OpenMed project organized 4 National Strategy Forum in the partner countries gathering educators and managers from Higher Education Institutions in the country, who provided opinions and consensus on the OER Agenda for the South Mediterranean Universities. The National Strategy Forums took place in Egypt (Nov 16), Morocco (Dec 16), Jordan (Feb 17) and Palestine (Apr 17) and have been organized by local partners in collaboration with the EU partner institutions.

The preparatory briefing document, the programme for the events, general observations about the outcomes, accomplishments and recommendations from the external quality expert are reported on this document.

More information about the NSD can be consulted at: <https://openmedproject.eu/results/national-oer-strategy-forums/>



The National Strategy Forum concept

As part of the [OpenMed project](#), four “OER National Strategy Forums” will take place in Egypt, Morocco, Jordan and Palestine, gathering educators, managers and decision makers from Higher Education institutions in the South-Mediterranean countries.

The **first objective** of these events is to give the possibility to South-Mediterranean Higher Education stakeholders to discuss, revise, and validate the Open Educational Resources (OER) Regional Agenda that is being developed by OpenMed. The **OpenMed OER Regional Agenda** [\[Draft 01 version available here\]](#) is a long-term plan presenting challenges and priorities for opening up Higher Education in the South-Mediterranean countries, outlining possible strategic actions aimed at maximising the benefits of Open Education Practices and the use, reuse and remix of OER for university course development, thus facilitating equity, access to and democratisation of Higher Education.

The **second objective** of the events is to widen participation in Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices in Higher Education in the South-Mediterranean countries, by:

- Promoting the development and adoption of Open Educational Resources and Practices in South-Mediterranean universities, with a particular focus on Egypt, Morocco, Jordan and Palestine;
- Showcasing outstanding cases of OER adoption;
- Fostering networking among policy makers, university leaders, educators and OER experts from Europe and South-Mediterranean countries.

In terms of expected impact, the Forums will:

- **Build consensus** within the academic communities on Open Education principles that will benefit higher education in the South-Mediterranean countries
- **Define a common long-term strategic plan** for the adoption of Open Educational Practices at institutional level, suitable for the South-Mediterranean countries (OER Agenda)
- **Inspire commitment** for immediate implementation of the long-term strategic plan at universities managerial level

1.1. Target audience

The OpenMed OER National Strategy Forums are targeted to:

- *Ministries of Education*, inter-governmental entities, national accreditation agencies, quality assurance agencies, civil society organisations
- University professors and researchers
- Students and student bodies
- University managers
- University Librarians, Technical (IT) staff
- Open Education advocates and experts

1.2. Expected participants

From the OpenMed consortium

- 2 delegates from each EU partner
- 2 delegates from AArU
- 2 delegates from each national South-Mediterranean partner

External participants

We aim to design the room for diversity. We should bring together representatives of the target groups, Open Education advocates and activist, educational experts and champions.

Involvement of other universities

South-Mediterranean partners will act as regional hubs and they will invite 3-4 universities per partner (i.e. non-partner universities, so called “community partners”) from the same country and/or from other countries in the region. A minimum of 6-8 universities (“community partners”) should be represented at each National Strategy Forum.

Community partners are expected to:

- compile a preparatory questionnaire (TO BE DESIGNED)
- provide opinions, strategic input and consensus on the OER Agenda by participating to one (or more) National Strategy Forum

1.3. Benefits for participants

The Forums will provide an opportunity to exchange views and experiences, and to discuss strategic plans for the implementation of OER at national and regional level. Our aim is to develop together a long-term strategy plan and define local paths towards further OER adoption.

1.4. Dates and Venues

Cairo, Egypt - hosted by Cairo University: 30 November 2016

Event Managers: Irene Fahmy & Elsayed Tag Eldin

Marrakech, Morocco - hosted by Caddi Ayyad University: 6-7 December 2016

Event Manager: Khalid Berrada

Amman, Jordan - hosted by PSUT: 1 March 2017

Event Managers: Abdallah Al Zoubi, Sufyan Almajali, Omar Hasan

Birzeit, Palestine - hosted by Birzeit University: 20 April 2017

Event Managers: Rania Qasim & Osama Mimi

1.5. Suggested Arrangements

Overall duration of the Forum: One day

Structure of the Forum

- Overview about the higher educational system in the country (possibly by a representative of the Ministry of Education) and national policies about open and distance education
- Introduction by the local chair and plenary sessions/presentations:
 - short presentation on the OpenMed project
 - main aims of the National Strategy Forum
 - Presentation on Open Educational Resources (OER) and main findings from the OpenMed compendium
- quick Q&A
- Presentations of the draft “OpenMed OER Agenda” and its 5 main dimensions

- Thematic discussions of the dimensions in small groups
- Networking to discuss potential synergies among groups/dimensions
- Reporting back to the plenary audience in 3-5 minutes per group
- Concluding remarks from the local chair and what is next for participants

The one-day public forum will be **followed by half-day internal meeting** among the OpenMed members participating to the event in order to consolidate the findings and report of the event.

1.6. Tips

Here are some tips for the organisation and execution of NSF:

- Mobilise all relevant stakeholders (mid-level management, teachers, researchers, learners, economic and social partners)
- Involve key influential, decision makers (Ministries of HE, Quality Assurance agencies) and people most affected by the change
- Design the room for diversity in order to gather opinions and inputs from all relevant stakeholders
- Embrace integral and inclusive actions, facilitate for a common ground
- Appoint an “event manager”, in charge of planning and executing the seminar, including the logistics and the technical aspects
- Use facilitators
- Record the data and the process (written report)

1.7. Promoting National Strategy Forums

Here are some ideas for promotional activities:

- Send direct invitations to educators and colleagues who share the vision of OER and are or can become OER champions in their institutions. Keep an informal dialogue with them, possibly involve them in the design of the NSF
- Contact community education or on-campus groups and ask them to participate
- Display the NSF banner on your institutional website or blog (banners will be provided)
- Write a piece for the editorial page of your local newspaper or for news websites
- Post or retweet tweets using #openmed in your language
- Direct people to the OpenMed social media sites and website

Egypt OER National Strategy Forum



About

نحو استراتيجية لدعم التعليم المستمر والمصادر التعليمية المفتوحة

Towards a Strategy of Continuing Education and Open Educational Resources

نبذة عن المنتدى

في إطار مشاركة جامعة القاهرة في مشروع "المصادر التعليمية المفتوحة كمنهج متدرج في دول جنوب البحر المتوسط" يقوم مركز جامعة القاهرة للتعليم المفتوح بتنظيم منتدى بعنوان "نحو استراتيجية لدعم التعليم المستمر والمصادر التعليمية المفتوحة" تحت رعاية السيد الأستاذ الدكتور جابر نصار رئيس جامعة القاهرة والذي يهدف الى استعراض الفرص و التحديات التي تواجه مؤسسات التعليم العالي في دول جنوب البحر المتوسط للتوسع في استخدام المصادر التعليمية المفتوحة، و كذلك وضع اطار عام لخطة استراتيجية لتعزيز الاستفادة من ممارسات التعليم المفتوح و المصادر التعليمية المفتوحة لتطوير المقررات الجامعية .

About the Forum

Within the framework of the participation of Cairo University in the project "Open Med- A bottom-up approach for opening up education in South-Mediterranean countries ,"The Open Education Center of Cairo University is organizing a forum under the auspices of Prof. Dr. Gaber Nassar - President of Cairo University ,under the theme "Towards a Strategy of Continuing Education and Open Educational Resources".

The forum aims to review the opportunities and challenges facing higher education institutions in the south Mediterranean to expand the use of Open Educational Resources, and to organize a general framework of a strategic plan to raise awareness and facilitate the adoption of Open Educational Resources and Open Education Practices in the development of university curricula.

Title

Towards a Strategy of Continuing Education and Open Educational Resources

Programme

The Programme can be [downloaded as a PDF document](#) and it is annexed to this report.

[أجندة المنتدى](#)

Date

30th November 2016, 9:00-17.00

Venue

Faculty of Engineering
Cairo University
Orman-Giza
Postal code 12613

Resources

- [Institutional webpage](#)
- [Compendium of Case Studies of Open Education in the Mediterranean](#)
- [OER Regional Agenda for the South-Mediterranean Universities \(open revision\)](#)

Contacts



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Post-event Post

- [Towards a strategy of Continuing Education and OER: Egypt Strategy Forum](#)

Post-event Report

General observations

On the 30th of November 2016, Cairo University hosted the **OER National Strategy Forum for Egypt**, “Towards a Strategy of Continuing Education and Open Educational Resources”, organised in collaboration with Alexandria University, in the framework of the OpenMed Project.

The forum was organised under the auspices of Prof. Dr. Gaber Nassar – President of Cairo University, with the purpose to gather together educators and managers from higher education institutions in Egypt, to review the opportunities and challenges facing higher education institutions in the South Mediterranean

and in Egypt in particular. Discussion was on how to expand the use of Open Educational Resources, and to organize a general framework of strategic plan to raise awareness and facilitate the adoption of OER and OEP in the development of University curricula.

The day started with the welcome speech by the President of Cairo University, Prof. Dr. **Gaber Nassar**, who underlined that [...] learning is not limited to the childhood or to the classroom but goes beyond that to all life stages and across the place borders. What is clearly evident in the last fifty years is that scientific and technological development led to a noticeable change in the concept of learning, and the collection of knowledge is no longer bordered by time or place. And this confirms the importance of joint international projects, to exchange experiences and knowledge and open up the prospect for continued cooperation to promote the concepts of Open learning and Open Resources based on availability, regardless of the limits of place and time.

Prof. Dr. **Elsayed Tag Eldin**, recently appointed Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University, presented the activities of the Open Education Center, and how it is part of a national strategy of Open/Distance Education.

National Policies about Open Education has been presented by Prof. Dr. **Ismail Gomaa** from the Supreme Council of Universities. He underlined that the traditional lecturing strategy with printed materials, made the online programs similar to regular educational programs, also ignoring continued education. Most programs are standardized, and lack the practical component. Concurrently, the country registers a lack of qualified centers for producing educational material (printed or digital), Cairo University and EELU are an exception in the current landscape. Prof. Gomaa highlighted that alternative approaches (e-learning and blended learning) largely improve the current situation, making learning available without boundaries and contributing to solve the lack of direct communication between students and instructors and the academic environment. In this regard, the Supreme Council of Universities has taking an active stand adopting a blended learning strategy which emphasises on learning outcomes.

Prof. Dr. **Ragia Aly Taha**, the Vice President of the National Authority of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education in Egypt, presented the national mechanisms to ensure the Quality of Open Education and Open Educational Resources, followed by a session dedicated to the role of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Supreme Council of Universities to enhance the adoption of Open/distance education, which is fundamental to understand the context in which initiatives take place. The latter speech was given by Prof. Dr. **Rami Iskander**, Director of National E-learning Center.

The afternoon session focused on the presentation of OpenMed background information, the results achieved so far and the discussion around the [OER Regional Agenda for the South-Mediterranean](#), by **Cristina Stefanelli**, coordinator of the OpenMed project at UNIMED. Subsequently, The Compendium was [video-presented](#) by partners at Coventry University, showcasing the different case studies analysed in Egypt.

Dr. **Maha Bali**, associate professor of practice at the Center for Learning and Teaching at the American University in Cairo, discussed open scholarship and open pedagogy for the Egyptian academic. She shared with the audience what she has learned from being an intentional open scholar and pedagogue. Within her classroom, she facilitates and teaches open courses (e.g. DigiWriMo), her students learn openly (www.creativitycourse.org) and they use blogs and twitter. *"I ask questions, post incomplete thoughts, make myself vulnerable"*, Bali said *"and build ideas with others. Openness is an attitude, a state of being in the world"*.

A last presentation was given by Dr. **Zeinab El Maadawi**, from the Faculty of Medicine at Cairo University, on the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in an Emerging Knowledge Society. "The available open educational resources such as MOOCs, developed by leading universities, could be used, adapted and customised according to learners' needs, culture and context," El Maadawi explains. "In this case MOOCs

can be utilised either as a stand-alone model or be integrated in a blended learning format coupled with traditional in-campus teaching.”

Later in the afternoon, the OpenMed delegation had the opportunity to visit the the Open Education Center of Cairo University, and meet the President, Prof. Dr. Gaber Nassar.

Accomplishments

The agenda was carefully followed and the discussions insightful giving a good perspective of the projects in OE in the country, and also the advantages and challenges encountered, pointing towards ways to make advantages good practices and to overcome the challenges faced, such as large numbers of students in HE, with the support of Open Educational Practices.

Recommendations from the External Quality Expert

It is recommended to support the development of Open Education in the country using the regional agenda as a tool for encouraging institutions to adopt these practices to enhance their HE institutions, as it could help these to overcome the challenges that having a large number of students my present for the logistics of teaching.

Morocco OER National Strategy Forum



About

The Morocco OER Strategy Forum is a national seminar aimed at gathering together educators and managers from higher education institutions in Morocco, expected to share information about open education and provide opinions and inputs on the OER Agenda and local roadmap(s).

In addition to Cadi Ayyad and Ibn Zohr universities, other public and private Moroccan universities, Higher Council for Education, Ministries of National and Higher Education, professional bodies in charge of Open Education, are invited to debate and review during this seminar experiences that exist locally or at national level.

During the event, participants are offered the opportunity to know more about the activities and first results of the OpenMed project, and to debate Open Education initiatives and strategies in an Euro-Mediterranean context.

Title

Open Education Day

Programme

The Programme can be [downloaded as a PDF document](#) and it is annexed to this report.

Date

6th December 2016, 9:00-17:00

7th December 2016, 9:00-17:00 (internal follow-up meeting)

Venue

Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco

Av. Abdelkerim Khattabi

Marrakech – CP 4000, Morocco

Resources

- [Petition to support Morocco in achieving the vision of Open Education: the OER Morocco Declaration](#)
- [Institutional Webpage](#)
- [Presentation of the Open Education Day in Morocco](#)
- [Compendium of Case Studies of Open Education in the Mediterranean](#)
- [OER Regional Agenda for the South-Mediterranean Universities \(open revision\)](#)

Contacts



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Abderrahim FEKARI, Cadi Ayyad University



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Post-event Posts

- [Recursos educativos abiertos en el proyecto OpenMed](#)
- [Open Education allows University to be relevant, and to remain relevant](#)
- [Yes We Can Inchallah: Morocco OER Strategy Forum](#)
- [Le bottom-up approche. La déclaration du Maroc](#)
- [50 shades of openness](#)

Post-event Report

General observations

The National strategy forum was well organised, the agenda was followed in a precise and organised manner, there was space for discussion, reflexion and to present different approaches in Open Education.

On day one, the opening and welcoming messages were inspiring, as their focus was Open Education as a human right and a social duty. These were followed by the Presentation of OpenMed background information, which set up the boundaries of action and the roadmap of the project. Subsequently, The Compendium was presented, showcasing the different case studies.

Afterwards, a series of presentations were made which provided and insightful panorama of the state of the arts of Open Education in Morocco, which led to enhance the discussion around the regional agenda that was debated later on day 1. This discussion had a strong focus in the construction of a community of practice around Open Education, as this was understood as core to enhance the scope of the project and to promote the values and adoption of Open Educational Practices in Morocco, opening the door to the possibility of developing a National Declaration on Open Education, which was further discussed on day 2.

On Day 2, the conversation focused on the possibility and feasibility for the partners of start drafting a National Declaration, because as stated by one of the participants *"In certain moments there is important to have a chapeau of action, and will be important to have a common place where everyone (universities) can relate"* and also because *"If Moroccan universities share an open philosophy, Moroccan universities can reach excellence, by constructing upon each other work"*. Therefore, and led by Khalid Berrada and Ahmed Almakari, the participants were involved process of starting the first draft of the Moroccan Open Education Declaration.

Day 2 concluded with a monitoring visit to the project by the National Erasmus+ Office in Morocco

Accomplishments

In relation with the aims and objectives of the forum, it can be said that each one of them was completed and that the general outcome is outstanding as exceeded the expectations of the organisers and of the participants.

The level of organisation, respect and collegiality were exceptional, favouring an environment to discuss, create and reflect in a positive manner.

Recommendations

It is recommended that for the upcoming National Forums, the slides (in digital format) are shared beforehand or straight after the presentations, so everyone can read them before the presentations or revisit them afterwards.

Also, it is recommended to have a shared a space for informal note taking, so both participants and organisers can share ideas and keep a timely record of what has being said during the brainstorming, discussions and Q&A sessions.

Jordan OER National Strategy Forum



About

The **Jordan OER Strategy Forum** is a national seminar aimed at gathering together educators and managers from higher education institutions in Jordan, expected to analyse challenges and priorities for opening up Higher Education in Jordan, outlining possible strategic actions to maximise the benefits of Open Education Practices and Open Educational Resources for university course development.

During the event, participants are offered the opportunity to know more about the activities and first results of the OpenMed project, and to debate Open Education initiatives and strategies in an Euro-Mediterranean context. The participation to the event is free of charge. The working language is English.

Title

Towards a National Strategy of Life-long Learning and Open Educational Resources

Programme

The Programme can be [downloaded as a PDF document](#)

Date

28th February 2017 (10:00-16:30)

Venue

[Princess Sumaya University for Technology \(PSUT\)](#)

Loai Shamout Auditorium

Amman 11941, Jordan

Resources

- [Compendium of Case Studies of Open Education in the Mediterranean](#)
- [OER Regional Agenda for the South-Mediterranean Universities \(open revision\)](#)

Contacts



Abdallah Al Zoubi, PSUT



Sufyan Majali, PSUT



Omar Hasan, PSUT

Post-event Posts

- [Investigadores de la US participan en el 'Foro Estratégico Nacional de Jordania'](#)
- [OpenMed goes to Jordan](#)

Post-event Report

General observations

The National strategy forum was well organised, the agenda was followed in a precise and organised manner, there was space for discussion, reflexion and to present different approaches in Open Education.

On day one, the opening and welcoming messages were presented by Marcello Scalisi, from UNIMED, who quoted Obama's 'yes we can' transforming it to 'Yes we can, inshallah' and by Mashhoor Al-Refai, President, Princess Sumaya University for Technology. They were followed by Cristina Stefanelli, from UNIMED, who introduced the participants to **The OpenMed Project**. The introductions to OpenMed were followed by the presentation of the **Compendium on Open Education Practices and Resources in Jordan** by Sarah Merry and Daniel Villar-Onrubia, Coventry University, UK

The first presentation, **Blended Learning in an Arab Context: Lessons Learned and Unlearned** by Ahmad Majdoubeh, University of Jordan reflected upon the relation with the challenges of massification, as everyone must work together towards creating a synergy within higher education. Also it was mentioned that sometimes technology is ahead of us educators, and we need time to make technology work for pedagogical purposes.

Later, Ahmad Majdoubeh, University of Jordan, presented **Blended Learning in an Arab Context: Lessons Learned and Unlearned** where he stated that if Universities want to move towards blended or online or distance learning programmes to improve education, there needs to be a commitment to have guidance packages to put all the students at the same level as some of them do not have acquired all the skills they need while at school.

Moreover, he was mentioned that it is necessary to consider training and development for academics and support staff, as they will be those supporting Open Learning, therefore they must be continuously trained, but also, to ensure the quality of Open Learning, there must be a robust QA system and close monitoring of the OE development.

The third presentation, **EDRAAK as a Best Practice on Open Education** by Shireen Yaqoub, from Queen Rania Foundation, mentioned reflected about the state of the Arabic content as only 3% of online content is in Arabic and 70% of Arabic speakers are only fluent in Arabic. In regards with the platform Edraak, it has 1 million registered learners, from which 50% have completed or are studying towards a BA, and has issued 75k certificates. In relation with the demographics, the age ranks mostly from 19-26, the highest number of learners are from Egypt, and 40% of the learners are female.

The following presentation, by Joseph Field and Andrew Parker from the British Council, **Language Learning for the Future**, mentioned that currently they are focusing on language learning and online education for refugees as the three main components to the BC offer are MOOCs, online learning and websites, and also the LASER project which is currently working with refugees in Jordan.

After the lunch break, the first presentation from the afternoon session was **Open Educational Practices** at PSUT by Sufyan Al-Majali, from Princess Sumaya University for Technology who focused on OE awareness - via seminars at student and faculty level, improving knowledge and levels of usage of OER explaining to the participants what does OER mean? What does using OER mean for faculty? And explaining the different CC licences to staff during training.

This presentation was followed by George Sammour, from Princess Sumaya University for Technology on **Utilization of MOOCs in Joint/Dual Degrees** as they are running in partnership with Hasselt University in Belgium a joint master's degree. There has been a high degree of acceptance and readiness from management, professors and students in both universities. However, there are some concerns because of concerns about the content and some students had concerns regarding their thesis, because they could not meet the supervisor in person.

To start closing up the day, Fabio Nascimbeni led the discussion from Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (Spain) about, **Inputs from the OpenMed OER Regional Agenda for the South-Mediterranean** on the following areas: Content and licences; pedagogy and practice; Technology; governance and collaboration between institutions.

The main conclusions are related with the correct use of public funds towards providing to learners with Open Content in Arabic, recognising those who are producing open content and accrediting knowledge acquired through OER and OEP, including MOOCs in both formal and informal educational environments. Also, it was mentioned that is important to incorporate openness in teachers' training, to help them to learn the technical skills and competences to find, use, remix and contribute with OER and to engage with and promote OEP, pursuing decentralised or federated solutions to knowledge management- helps to create inter-institutional and regional OER initiatives towards developing institutional and cross institutional flexible certification models, to help to assess, qualify and recognise the learning outcomes of those who have learned using OER and OEP.

Finally, it was discussed that it was important to liaise with regional and international initiatives to enhance visibility of SM region in OE promoting what is being done in the region and sharing good practices, encouraging and promoting academic research networks in open education in Arab.

As reflections, it was mentioned that there are no accredited programmes yet in Jordan, but institutions are accredited, therefore institutions and advocates need to be smart when trying to influence the ministries by showcasing good practice and there are some misconceptions about Open Content for being free means is of bad quality, but by applying strict quality assurance mechanisms, good practices can be documented and used as mean of advocating for policy.

Accomplishments

The agenda was discussed in-depth, lots of ideas were examined and it was a fruitful forum, therefore the objectives of the forum where achieved in a participative a collaborative manner in a outstanding way which promoted a space to reflect.

Recommendations from the External Quality Expert

It is recommended to promote the agenda as an advocacy tool and to share the ideas discussed during the Q&A sessions as these may inspire others as challenges, such massification and training in Open Education are common issues to all partners.

Palestine OER National Strategy Forum



About

The **Palestine OER Strategy Forum** is a national seminar aimed at gathering together educators and managers from higher education institutions in Palestine, expected to analyse challenges and priorities for opening up Higher Education in Palestine, outlining possible strategic actions to maximise the benefits of Open Education Practices and Open Educational Resources for university course development.

During the event, participants are offered the opportunity to know more about the activities and first results of the OpenMed project, and to debate Open Education initiatives and strategies in an Euro-Mediterranean context. The participation to the event is free of charge. The working language is English.

Title

Towards a National Strategy of Life-long Learning and Open Educational Resources

Programme

The Programme can be [downloaded as a PDF document](#)

Date

20th April 2017

Venue

Birzeit University

West bank, Palestine, Birzeit

Resources

- [Compendium of Case Studies of Open Education in the Mediterranean](#)
- [OER Regional Agenda for the South-Mediterranean Universities \(open revision\)](#)

Contacts



Rania Qasim, Birzeit University



Osama Mimi, Birzeit University

Post-event Posts

- [Academic experts explores means to open up education in Palestine](#)
- [10 years and 10 seconds](#)
- [Open Education in Palestine: a tool for liberation](#)
- [Polysemy, Open Education and the glass ceiling](#)

Post-event Report

This forum, organised by the Center for Continuing Education at Birzeit University in collaboration with An-Najah National University, Palestine was a very insightful one. The day started with the words of Abdellatif Abuhijelh, President of Birzeit university represented by Osama Mimi from the Unit for Learning Innovation, Birzeit University, who introduced the audience with the state of the arts of Open Education in Palestine, and mentioned the challenges faced by Educators in Palestine. His introduction was followed by Nedal Jayyousi, Director of the National Erasmus+ Office in Palestine who presented some of the current Erasmus+ projects in Palestine. Afterwards, the OpenMed Project was presented by Cristina Stefanelli, who presented the landscape of the project and its progress amongst the partner institutions.

The last presentation of the morning was titled Why Open Education for Palestine by

Marwan Tarazi, director of the Center for Continuing Education at Birzeit University, who started presenting the panorama of Open Education under occupation, considering that the reality of Palestine has relation with the lack of possibilities of internationalising their HE system because living under occupation means restricted access for students from Gaza to attend West Bank Universities, and also means limited access to the industry, to technological resources and to natural resources, and because their economy is a captive one there is lack of resources for research and for teaching, therefore, Openness is essential to Palestine at philosophical level.

He stated that the region needs strong policies and leadership and also a clear strategy that facilitates accreditation via Open Education but also, he mentioned that Open Education is a tool for liberation, and that is important for Palestine to Open up because if you don't open up someone else will do and because if you don't have an agenda someone else will do.

This presentation was followed by Mohammad AlSubu', from the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission who spoke about Accreditation Policies for Open Education in Palestine who stated that Open Learning is learning without frontiers, however open learning is not the same as online learning but they are complimentary. Also he mentioned that teaching based on research is key to quality.

Afterwards, Saida Affounneh, from An Najah National University, presented the state of the art of Open Education in relation with policy as 87% of the students are happy with using e-learning for learning therefore is important to support students and to develop faculty towards promoting the sustainability of these programmes.

Lately Mohammad Moreb, from the E-Learning centre at Hebron University, presented their model for staff training which included training in pedagogical design for online resources, this model aims at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

The next presentation was by Sarah Merry and Katherine Wimpenny, from Coventry University, UK who presented the OpenMed's Compendium on Open Education Practices and Resources in Palestine, they were followed by Diana Sayej, from the Libraries at Birzeit University, Palestine who presented FADA, a repository aimed at sharing openly licensed materials produced at Birzeit, which include not only bibliographic resources, but OER, images and Open Data sets. Finally Daniel Burgos and Fabio Nascimbeni from Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (Spain) presented the inputs from the OpenMed OER Regional

Agenda for the South-Mediterranean and explained how the agenda is being collectively developing promoting the participation the audience towards enhancing it.

To close an open discussion moderated by Osama Mimi from the Unit for Learning Innovation, Birzeit University, about the National Strategy for Open Education engaged the participants into sharing their ideas and thoughts towards developing and agenda and relevant policies to ensure a sustainable development of Open Education in the country.

Accomplishments

The agenda was carefully followed and the discussions were insightful, the case studies presented provided a clear perspective of the innovation made by Palestinian Universities and challenges they face, but also on how they are intending to promote a sustainable development to ensure the quality of the Open Educational Practices they are developing at the moment.

During the forum it was stated that OpenMed is an important vehicle to push and drive from Open Education, and that is key to promote Open Education to senior management towards raising awareness and ensure that they support the innovation and development of these practices.

Another thing mentioned is the importance of producing content that can be internationalised, towards promoting good practices from Palestine Universities and to join forces with other Palestinian universities and to develop a common action plan working together to promote Open Education inside and outside Palestine.

Recommendations from the External Quality Expert

It is recommended to ensure that there is leadership and guidance to ensure that every university can participate actively in developing Open Education strategies and programmes, and to ensure that the national agenda is guided by the principles, which make Open Education in Palestine a unique case.

It is also important that they present their cases to the ministry and to senior management towards persuading them about the importance of promoting and supporting Open Educational developments, developing a national strategy, as these are key to enhance quality education and to promote good practices.

Annexes

- Programme of the NSF in Egypt
- Programme of the NSF in Morocco
- Programme of the NSF in Jordan
- Programme of the NSF in Palestine