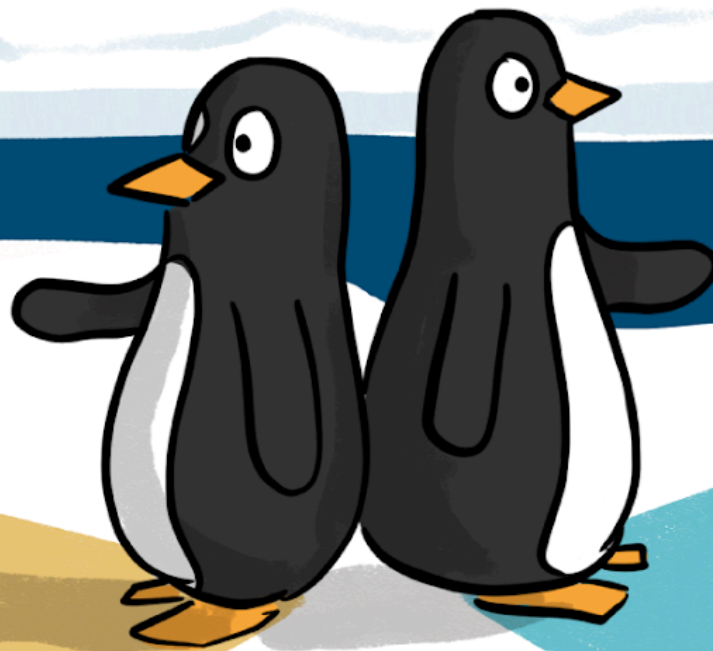


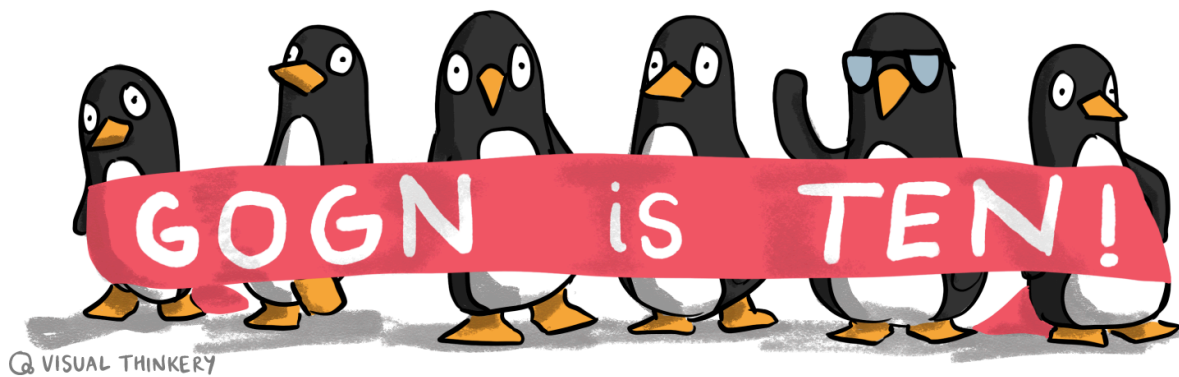
GO-GN at 10

STRATEGIC REVIEW



GO-GN at 10 Strategic Review

v1.0



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Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Introduction	6
Description of GO-GN	6
The purpose of this document	6
How this document was written	6
Co-authorship	7
Role of the Workshop	7
Looking Back: 10 Years of GO-GN	8
The GO-GN Origin Story (2012-2015)	8
GO-GN established at The Open University (UK) (2015-2019)	10
Community Growth & Outreach	10
Incentivising Researchers	12
The Online Pivot (2020-2023)	13
A Community of Care	13
Fellowship Scheme	15
Co-creation of Resources	17
GO-GN Phase IV (and beyond) (2023-2026)	18
GO-GN Strategic Workshop 2023 Outputs	20
Researching Open Education	20
Making best use of the OER Knowledge Base	22
Developing Processes for Mentorship and Collective Support	23
The Need for Critical & Diverse Perspectives	23
Anticipating Future Research Needs	24
Supporting and Developing Open Research	24
Cross-Regional Collaboration	25
Open Educational Practices	26
Mutually supporting Research and Advocacy	26
Overcoming Barriers to OER Advocacy	27
Involving Educators in Research	28
Training and Capacity Building	29
Technology and Infrastructure	30
The Evolving Open Research Ecosystem	30
AI in Education: Opportunities and Threats	32
Open Technologies, Open Values	34
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	36
Understanding Regional Needs	37
EDI at Institutional Level	39
EDI at Community/Network level	40
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Practitioner Level	40
Decolonisation of open education practice and research	41

GO-GN Strategic Direction	43
Evaluating GO-GN	43
Strategy Considerations	48
Capacity & Organization	49
Sustainability & Infrastructure	51
Types of Membership	51
Research Themes	52
Communications and Outreach	52
Future Vision	54
References	57
Workshop Participants	59

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Introduction

Description of GO-GN

GO-GN (Global OER Graduate Network) is a network of PhD candidates around the world whose research projects include a focus on open education. These doctoral researchers are at the core of the network; around them, over two hundred experts, supervisors, mentors and interested parties connect to form a community of practice. The aims of the GO-GN are to:

- raise the profile of research into open education,
- offer support for those conducting PhD research in this area,
- promote equity and inclusion in the field of open education research, and
- develop openness as a process of research.

[GO-GN](#) is currently funded through the open education programme of [The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#) and administered by the [Open Education Research Hub](#) from the [Institute of Educational Technology](#) at The Open University, UK

The purpose of this document

In 2023, GO-GN celebrated ten years of network activity. Inspired by this, a range of events and activities were planned. Much of this focused on facilitating reflection on the achievements of the network and the individuals it comprises, many of whom have completed their doctoral studies over this period. The last decade has also been a time of considerable progress and change for the world of open and online education. As funding for GO-GN was renewed for a further cycle in 2023, this historical watershed invited the network to think about what the future might hold and anticipate how GO-GN could best support its members in the future. In this report we offer a number of strategic reflections and ideas for future activity in diverse contexts under the GO-GN identity and think freely about what will be required of researchers in the coming years. This report summarises what was captured in these conversations between researchers from around the globe, setting out a strategic vision for the future of the network.

How this document was written

This document represents the output from a series of consultation exercises with the members of GO-GN. This included face-to face activities, online discussions, a short survey and online collection tool for suggested content. A draft document was made available for comment with the authoring team, and the final draft was available for members of GO-GN to comment before publication as part of an open editorial process.

Co-authorship

This report is presented as an output from GO-GN, which is a network of scholars. Under the concept of co-authorship that informed the drafting of the manuscript, a collective editorial position is employed. However, it should be noted that not all authors would necessarily agree with all of the positions and suggestions presented. Some of the recommendations in the latter part are highly specific and contextual, while others arise from the statement of more general principles. In the report we attempt to convey the richness of the arguments and ideas and use these to inform strategic positions rather than attempt to resolve every tension or ambiguity into a single consistent argument.

Role of the Workshop

GO-GN regularly holds face-to-face workshops for doctoral researchers in the network. In order to kick-start the process of reflection for the report, and in celebration of 10 years of GO-GN, an extended workshop took place in Edmonton, Canada ahead of the Open Education Global conference, which was organised by Norquest College. This workshop, which took place 13 & 14 October 2023, was organised around the concept of reflecting on the past and strategizing for the future, and comprised the primary data collection activity for this report. Some themes and key questions were suggested as part of workshop activity.

Looking Back: 10 Years of GO-GN

The GO-GN Origin Story (2012-2015)

(This content is based on a [presentation](#) by [Robert Schuwer](#) about the origins and early years of GO-GN.)

GO-GN was started by Prof. [Fred Mulder](#). Fred's career in 'open' started in 1985 at Open Universiteit Nederland (OUNL) where he was one of the pioneers of the computer science department. Fred initiated the first OER project in the Netherlands in 2005. This section is based on Robert's research for his 10th anniversary workshop presentation, reviewing documentary archives for GO-GN (grant requests, reports, presentations, factsheets, outlines, etc.), discussions with key people and personal recollections.

In 2010, Fred stepped down as rector of OUNL and took on a UNESCO Chair on OER. In 2011 there was an OCWC global meeting in Boston, and this was the first mention of the Chair in a presentation of a plan regarding what to do around OER. (Rory McGreal was the other Chair involved.) Jos Rikers, who was the coordinator of the UNESCO programme, was also involved. The key ideas were to focus on supervision and training of PhD students, encourage networking, and good practice in research and knowledge production. Later that year there was a meeting in New York with Rory McGreal to coordinate a plan for action. This included the OER Knowledge Cloud (Athabasca University, Canada) and the Global OER Graduate School (OUNL). These were associated with a mapping of OER initiatives. The rationale behind the school was to expand the OER research base, providing a basis for the introduction and implementation of OER initiatives. A key goal was to improve the evidence base for OER practice and provide more guidance.

A key consideration at this time was the involvement of universities and associated academics, and it was foreseen that institutions and supervisors would become members of the network. The concept was pitched several times to different audiences, including the EADTU strategy meeting in Brussels and OpenEd 2011 in Park City, Utah. The vision was for a decentralised, lightly coordinated network of active members which would make efforts to set up an externally funded grants programme. Funding was first provided by the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture & Science (€120k) and DG Education and Culture of the European Commission (€120k) in 2012 and Hewlett Foundation (\$153k for 3 seminars) in 2013. At this time the support team included Jos Rikers, Marina Pongraz, and Bernardo Tabuenca. Rory McGreal, Susan D'Antoni and Cable Green were also involved in feedback and discussions.

The OCWC conference in Cambridge, UK (16th April, 2012) saw the [formal launch of the network](#) and the rebranding of GO-GN as a 'network' rather than 'school'. This saw the initiation of the core work of GO-GN. The 'GO-GN' moniker was not used at this time, but in every document after this conference the network was referred to as GO-GN.

In December 2012, GO-GN was comprised of 19 experts from 5 institutions, along with 9 PhD students. The first 4 seminars took place after this.

- December 2013 (Cape Town, SA, a simultaneous kick-off event with the ROER4D project)
- April 2014 (Ljubljana, Slovenia - coordinated with Open Education Global)
- November 2015 (Washington, USA - coordinated with Open Education Conference)
- April 2015 (Banff, Canada, coordinated with Open Education Global)

At each of these events, there was a separate GO-GN track alongside the conference. During this time period the number of doctoral members started to grow but the number of supervisors did not. Between 2013 and 2015 the number of doctoral members grew from 15 to 35. Most members at this time hailed from Africa and Europe.

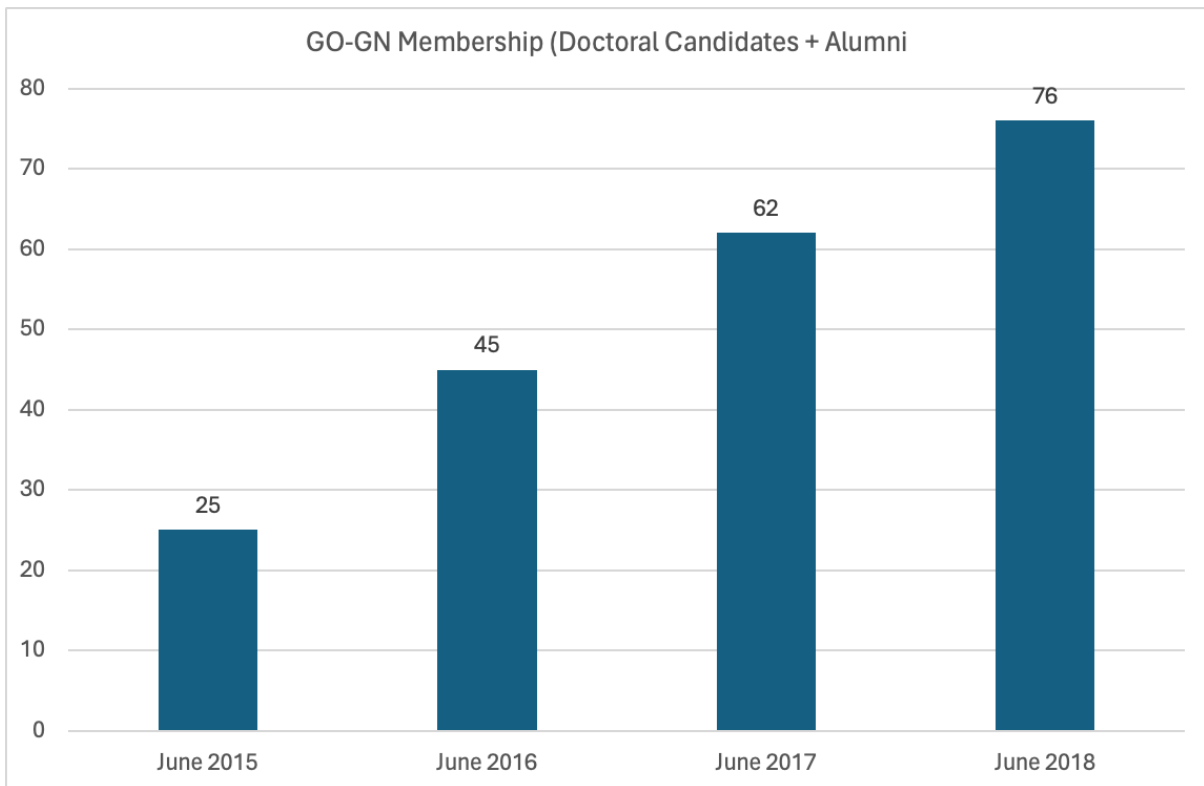
In 2014 Fred retired and the OUNL UNESCO OER Chair was retired with him. Fred contacted colleagues at The Open University, UK in the search for a new home for the network, drawing on the synergies with OER Research Hub. Around the time of the handover, which was pivotal for the OER movement, there was a shift from looking just at OER to a wider range of topics relating to openness (MOOCs, open pedagogy, social justice perspectives, open policies). Most of the PhD projects now incorporate several elements of the rationales that inspired the creation of the network. However, there have been a few shifts of emphasis since the network moved. There nonetheless remains a need for steady growth in the building of research capacity. A key validation is the ongoing support of isolated doctoral students.

GO-GN established at The Open University (UK) (2015-2019)

(Parts of this section are adapted from Weller, Farrow & Pitt (2019))

Community Growth & Outreach

During this period, the central organisation of GO-GN was based around an annual seminar, providing researchers with intensive support. This seminar was associated with a major OER conference, which the researchers also attend. Supporting this annual activity was a set of online activities, including monthly webinars, social media use and newsletters. The central team at the UK Open University also produced guides and resources for researchers. There were in 2019 over 100 GO-GN members, with 20 alumni, covering 16 countries. They had produced approximately 30 publications in peer reviewed journals. With regards to recruitment the GO-GN website formed the basis of online activity. The website was relaunched in September 2015 with a simplified sign-up process, and combined with the Twitter and Facebook accounts, enhanced the GO-GN online profile further. The team commenced a monthly webinar series at this time also, featuring guest speakers, and GO-GN researchers showcasing their work. The Twitter profile in particular was used to share resources, engage on a regular basis with the community and maintain a brand presence throughout the year. It was used to actively recruit members also who were engaged in OER doctoral research. This account was particularly prominent around the time of the annual seminar. Members were encouraged to use the #GO_GN hashtag also to raise its profile and share resources.



During this period, GO-GN hosted 22 webinars scheduled on the first Wednesday of every month. In these webinars established open education experts and GO-GN PhD candidates and alumni shared their initiatives and work in progress. These were open to anyone to attend, and each webinar was recorded and added to the [GOGN YouTube channel](#). Typical attendance at each session was around 30 people, with a similar number then watching the recording subsequently. Traffic to the GO-GN website (<http://go-gn.net/>) averaged around 1200 visitors a month. The [GO-GN Twitter account](#) grew from 209 followers in 2015 to 1369 followers by 2019. In April 2024 the account had 2,441 followers (though it should be noted that a significant number of members left this platform recently).

Incentivising Researchers

Combined with targeted recruitment it was necessary to make GO-GN a clear and attractive proposition for researchers and associate members to join. This was realised through creating useful resources for the community. An [open researcher pack](#) was developed during the OER Research Hub project which included advice, survey questions, an ethics approval form and our own research data under an open licence that could be reused by researchers. In association with the resources were monthly webinars from a range of speakers. In addition to the recruitment and benefit strands, GO-GN also developed two incentives for joining. The main one of these is the fully funded place at the seminar. The second incentive was the establishment of two [GO-GN prizes](#). These rewarded the twin aspects of open research: subject and process: the first being for the best research paper published by a GO-GN PhD student; the second for the best example of open research practice.

The GO-GN Awards were rebranded as The Fred Mulder Awards for Best Open Education Research Paper and Best Open Research Practice and launched in Cape Town in March 2017 to encourage student members to publish their research and engage in open practices. Awards were given at the 2018 and 2019 seminars, after adjudication by an international panel. (In subsequent years - perhaps because of a change in the number of alumni - fewer nominations were received for awards.) Going forward, it would be good to reintroduce a sustainable version of the Awards.

Members described finding GO-GN as a vital element in their support and motivation to completing their studies. The network has now established itself, with influential alumni, and a global reputation. It has provided a significant contribution in establishing a global OER research community as evidenced through active participation in conferences such as Open Education Global, the UK OER conference, the Open Education Conference and events organised by the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE).

GO-GN doctoral members and alumni continued to publish in open access journals during this period, with over 40 publications, and at the OER19 conference 31 sessions were by GO-GN members. 'Open Education: a Beginners' guide' (Jordan & Weller 2017), was produced as an introduction to different aspects of open education and has received over 6,900 views on SlideShare.

The Online Pivot (2020-2023)

A Community of Care

In 2019, the following reflections on GO-GN activity were offered at the Pan-Commonwealth Form (PCF9) of the Commonwealth of Learning:

While this face to face seminar forms the central strand of GO-GN activity it is expensive to realise in terms of travel, organisation and staff time. The number of researchers who can benefit from it is therefore limited as only one event can be accommodated annually. It therefore needs to be supported by extensive and regular online activity to support the network throughout the year and maintain a presence. This is realised through a very active Twitter presence, the regular webinars and a monthly email newsletter. These types of activity fulfil different purposes, the webinars maintain a research profile, the newsletter is a means of sharing news and the Twitter account is used for social interaction with members as well as resource sharing. Allocating sufficient staff time to such activities has been an important component in GO-GN.

These different purposes highlight the second lesson, which is to recognise the significance of the emotional support aspect in such a project. While GO-GN is aimed at developing the intellectual, research capabilities of its members, completing a PhD is an emotional undertaking also, with members often talking about self-doubt, imposter syndrome, loss of motivation, and personal issues interfering with study. The connection with other researchers, and a supportive network has been as, if not more, significant for GO-GN members as the intellectual support, but the value of such work is often difficult to surface through standard metrics. (Weller, Farrow & Pitt, 2019)

These thoughts would become especially relevant in 2020 with the impact of Covid19 making all face-to-face meetings and travel impossible while simultaneously bringing a global multitude of personal, social and emotional challenges. Aside from the disruption caused, it soon became apparent that doctoral students, who often feel isolated and in need of pastoral support at the best of times, were particularly vulnerable to the effects of institutional closures and the impact of lockdowns and other Covid measures. Consequently, GO-GN network activity shifted to a range of online interactions intended to provide a higher level of support.

There were several ways in which the GO-GN pandemic response was coordinated around the concept of developing an informal, yet supportive, community of care, based on open values and practices. These included:

1. Encouraging members to explore openness in their own context
2. Co-production of community resources
3. A continuing focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
4. Developing a Fellowship scheme
5. Facilitating participation in online conferences
6. Co-chairing the OER22 conference

The innovation exploring these activities has characterised GO-GN in its aspect of a 'community of care'. In the 2021 evaluation, members felt GO-GN has supported them during the pandemic very well (81%) with the features of GO-GN most important to members reported as: (1) community of peers, (2) research communications and (3) Research advice on open practices. Throughout the survey members shared a range of comments that highlight the different ways in which GO-GN is important and impactful.

For example, GO-GN's open, collegiate community and support network, offering an alternative to their regular supervisory team:

- *"Hugely valuable emotional support and affirmation of our area of research was available from mentors throughout the journey. More so during my time as a graduate student but continued opportunities to connect and give back are welcomed, and strengths that provided psychosocial support during Covid tough times."* (GO-GN alumni)

Presenting their work in front of the community:

- *"I love that you reached out to me about presenting at one of the webinars. I don't think that I would have volunteered at this point in my research, but it was a wonderful opportunity to talk about my interests and allowed me to network and hone my skills."* (GO-GN member)

Fighting the loneliness in pandemic times:

- *"I suddenly do not feel alone in my doctoral journey. It has encouraged me to submit more academic writing for consideration and nudged me along in my studies."* (GO-GN member)

Or, creating relationships among diverse international members:

- *"I believe that GO-GN has done an excellent job in creating strong human bonds among its diverse international members and that is the strongest asset it has. That is for me what makes it unique and incredibly powerful."* (GO-GN member)

Fellowship Scheme

Nine fellowships were offered to GO-GN alumni during this period, supporting a range of projects around the world. The scheme aimed to encourage and recognise mentoring, content production, and network activity for alumni. Therefore, the scheme intended to foster connections to other networks, promote GO-GN at strategic events and incorporate the outputs of the GO-GN Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) project to encourage applications from the Global South. In that sense the scheme was built on what has worked well previously in recruiting researchers to collaborate with GO-GN but expanded upon this, providing a means to keep alumni involved and recognise their work. The fellowship scheme provided a means of expanding support and increasing the reputation of the Network.

Initially, the scheme launch had to be delayed and reorganised due to the Covid-19 pandemic, to acknowledge that travelling for network promotion and face-to face research could be limited. Therefore, suggested activities fellows could submit proposals for included:

- Undertaking a piece of targeted OER/OEP-related research
- Producing an overview of OER activity in a region
- Strategic events identification
- Fostering connections to other networks
- Promotion of GO-GN at face-to-face conferences and online events
- New GO-GN member recruitment

The Fellowship scheme as a whole is described and evaluated in a [webinar](#) and [report](#) as well as an academic paper (Iniesto et al., 2023). For the 2020 call for participation there were five applicants, four in 2021 and three in 2022. Applicants selected were invited to an interview with the team.

The complete list of fellows successfully appointed during the scheme is as follows: [First cohort \(2020\)](#)

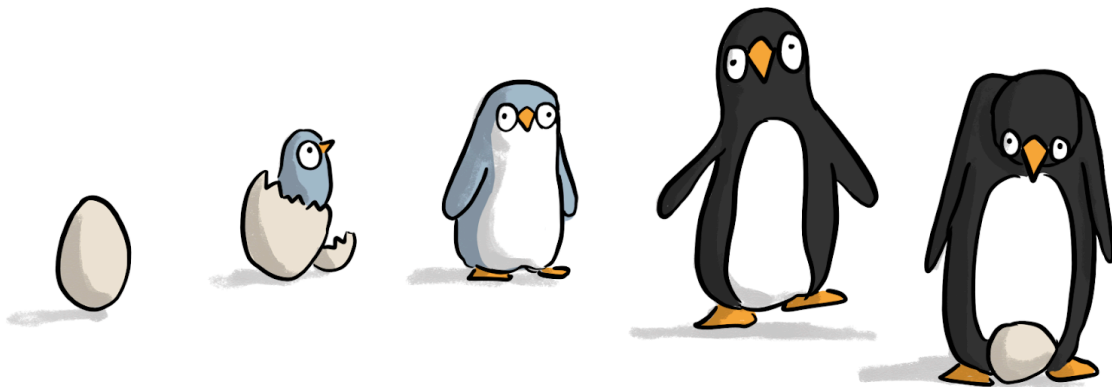
- Jo Funk. Lecturer, Cultural Knowledges at College of Indigenous Futures, Education and Arts, Charles Darwin University , Australia
- Judith Pete. Lecturer and Africa Region Coordinator for Service Learning, Tangaza University, College of Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya.
- Chrissi Nerantzi. Reader in Academic CPD at Manchester Metropolitan University. The UK and Assistant Professor in Education, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK
- Virginia Rodes. Associate Professor Universidad de la República. Uruguay

Second cohort (2021)

- Sarah Lambert. Honorary Fellow. Deakin University. Australia.
- Verena Roberts. Adjunct Assistant Professor/ Sessional Instructor (UCalgary) and Instructional Designer (TRU). The University of Calgary, Thompson Rivers University. Canada.

Third cohort (2022)

- Michael Paskevicius. Assistant Professor. The University of Victoria. Canada.
- Viviane Vladimirschi. Independent Researcher, Educational Consultant and Instructional Designer. E-Connection. Brazil.
- Catherine Cronin. Open educator and open researcher. Independent. Ireland



Co-creation of Resources

There were plans in place before the pandemic to collaborate on a handbook for research methods with a workshop to kick-start the process scheduled for OER20. Activities supporting the writing process moved online with a survey used to capture data from members on their own research and reflections. The [GO-GN Research Methods Handbook](#) was written during the first year of the pandemic and subsequently won the [Open Education Global Open Research Award](#) in 2020. This was followed by the [GO-GN Conceptual Frameworks Guide](#) in 2021 which was conceived of as a companion volume. Between 2020 and 2022 GO-GN also produced a series of Research Reviews where members offered brief critical reviews of recently published research ([2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#)).

In 2023 all of these materials were consolidated (along with other openly licensed content) into the [GO-GN Open Research Handbook](#). This 350-page volume acts as an introduction and guide to doing research in the open education space, and there are plans in place to add to this with additional guides that are also incorporated into the Handbook. Proposed areas for future guides include research supervision, publishing, grant writing and advocacy.

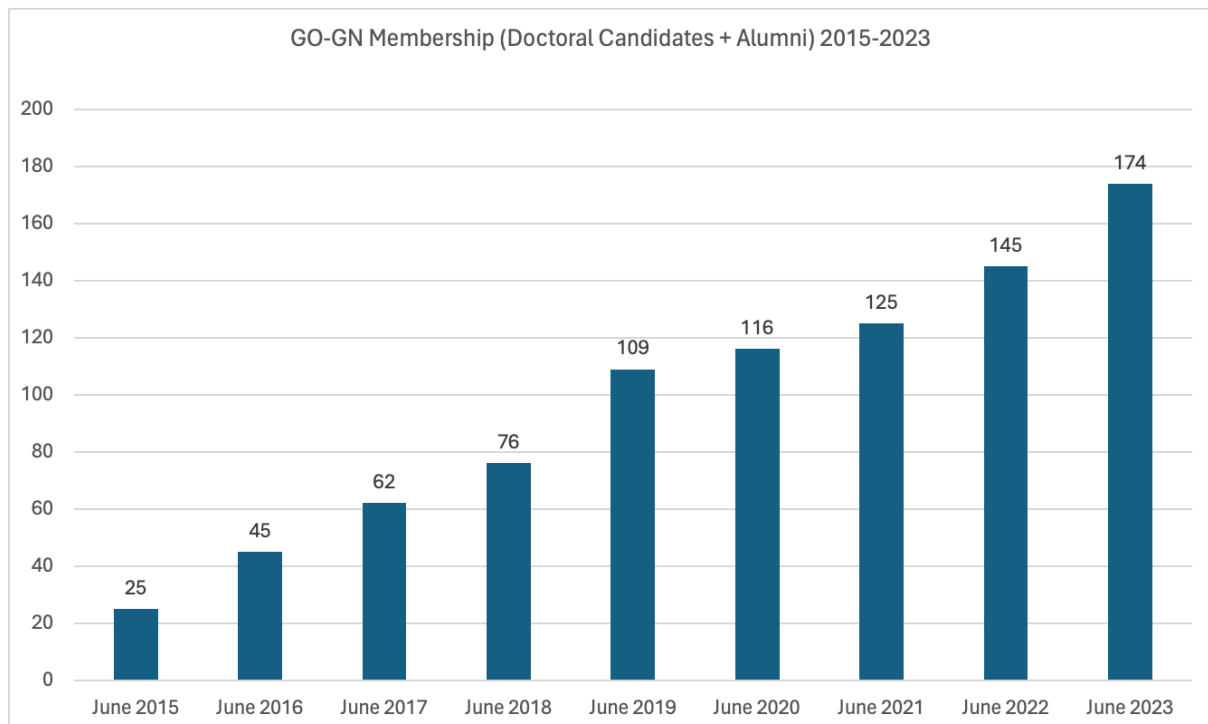


GO-GN Phase IV (and beyond) (2023-2026)

Funding for GO-GN was renewed by The Hewlett Foundation in 2023, allowing the network to continue to operate in its present form for another three years. Phase IV already carries some differences from Phase III. The Fellowships scheme was replaced by a more flexible and agile scholarship programme in February 2024. Applications for scholarship funding can be made at any point and used to support a wider range of activities, including those of non-alumni.

While there is a programme of work described in the Phase IV grant documentation which largely continues the successful activities of Phase III, the 10 year anniversary of the network also afforded an opportunity for looking back, reflecting, and thinking about the future - particularly through the workshop and other activities that took place in late 2023.

GO-GN continues to grow its membership at a consistent rate, and now has almost 200 members who are either doctoral candidates or postdoctoral alumni.



As GO-GN continues to grow and mature, the kind of support that can be offered to individual members evolves. The network also now benefits from a sizable number of alumni and postdoctoral researchers which was not the case in the early years. Conversely, with a larger and more diverse membership the nature of the support that can be provided with a coordination team of the same size perhaps changes and introduces challenges of scale.

Another key question going forward is the extent to which GO-GN should be decentralised and federated into a series of local or continental networks rather than having a single central point of coordination. There are now highly experienced members who have attended a range of GO-GN events, completed their doctoral studies, and/or acted as fellows or other ambassadors.

GO-GN Strategic Workshop 2023 Outputs

The sections that follow summarise a range of discussion points and inputs that emerged during the data collection activities coordinated with the GO-GN 10th anniversary. The outputs are presented in this section by thematic clusters and a summary of reflections from the coordination team follows. During the workshop, a range of techniques were used to generate data, including facilitated discussion, brainstorming, and a [World Cafe](#) dialogue.

Researching Open Education

GO-GN began with a clear focus on OER implementation and research, and this has stayed core to the identity and activity of the network. During the time that administration of GO-GN came to The Open University (UK), there were many discussions about how flexible we should be about admitting doctoral members whose work was thematically about open education but OER was not the main focus. The most obvious examples of this were people studying MOOCs, but increasingly a focus on OEP has emerged. Many are also interested in OER as a route to some other goal, such as social justice or decolonization. Many are also now looking at AI technologies and their potential for developing learning materials or extending educational provision.

Thus far, there have been benefits in accommodating what might be considered cases where OER is not central to a research project, but is part of an overall approach. This encourages the flow of new ideas and concepts into the network, and is inclusive towards those who are potentially on the cusp of becoming a future advocate for OER and other aspects of open. However, this should be balanced against the risk that allowing too much deviance from core open education themes does risk changing the distinctive character and focus of GO-GN. The UNESCO (2019) Recommendation on OER is still the most prominent international strategic and policy driver for open education.

The ideal way forward may be to reach an equilibrium between pragmatism and purism. But this does raise questions around the identity of the network over time, since, if the profile of OER diminishes, GO-GN would need to evolve in a way that recognises this: perhaps by referring to "open education" or "openness" as the central category. These categories are more inclusive, but arguably they are also more diffuse.

These tensions are also reflected in broader research discourses, where there is an acknowledgement that “open education” cannot be reduced to a single vector. For instance, as the following recently proposed framework shows, it is possible to conceptualise open practice in many dimensions, many of which are highly contextual.

Instrumental → Value-driven ↓	OER	MOOC	Open badges	Open networks	Freedom of time	Freedom of place	Freedom of pace	Freedom of program	Open admission	...
Education and innovation										
Improve quality of education										
Pedagogic innovation										
Process improvement										
Increase efficiency										
Increase collaboration										
Marketing										
Widening participation										
Enhance flexibility										
Attract lifelong learners										
Attract new groups (such as foreign students)										
Social and moral values										
Increase affordability										
Enhance inclusivity										
Increase decoloni-sation										
More equality										
More diversity										
Share resources paid by taxpayers										
....										

Framework to define Open Education in a specific context
(Schuwer & Janssen, 2024)

As a global network, the key consideration going forward for GO-GN is to ensure that our concepts can accommodate and support alternate visions of openness. This allows us to continually refine and update concepts while also preserving routes to expand the network. The crucial element may be ensuring that members are aware of these tensions and understand how to frame their work in terms of openness.

Making best use of the OER Knowledge Base

Research into open education is now more mature than when the network started, and this means there is a significant evidence base for researchers to draw and build upon. Suggestions made in this area include:

Adding value to research by:

- Encouraging replication studies in different contexts and geographical locations where there are differences as a result of location.
- Highlight and answer questions in 'so what' sections of each others' work. For instance, Baas et al. (2022) suggests future research which focuses on teacher teams or professional teacher communities.

Improving research communication:

- New approaches to dissemination to reach audiences beyond the open education community, beyond the academic community
- Tools like Research Rabbit visualise citation networks and provide a way to explore research visually
- Translation tools which allow us to communicate outcomes to wider audiences and facilitates involvement. There is a possible application of AI to provide translation of academic research outputs into simplified and readable versions that are relevant to an identified audience; consider how AI may be able to support translation to additional languages to remove barriers of language and access of information in open locations and repositories
- AI translation could also be used to make archived research available in additional languages, promoting inclusivity
- Greater sensitivity to language, cultures and audiences
- Non-traditional outputs to spread dissemination to wider audiences (especially relating to indigenous cultures)

Developing Processes for Mentorship and Collective Support

Although this is not currently within formal scope for GO-GN, some members have expressed an interest in mentor-led models for research. There were different concepts proposed, with some of them being quite informal or spontaneous while others involved coordinated processes which could organise activity at scale. The kind of support a member might benefit from also looks different at alternate stages of an academic career. We have explored the mentoring concept within the [GO-GN Collega Program](#), and this forms a basis for further development in this area.

The Need for Critical & Diverse Perspectives

There was a feeling among many GO-GN members that it is important going forward to retain a critical perspective on research in open education and related areas. This can be understood as a general concern which is realised in several concrete ways, including:

- More creative, engaged forms of inquiry to uncover and discover unheard or muted voices and perspectives
- Expanding the definition of research and knowledge to include multiple ways of knowing and multiple means of representation. Traditional knowledge bases tend to be primarily text-based with little visual, audible, or creative interpretations and representations. How might we re-imagine our knowledge and research work in more accessible and artistic models? How might we expand what counts as 'knowledge'?
- Paying adequate attention to who is being cited, adopt an embracing approach, including non-traditional sources and diverse voices and perspectives
- Rethinking and diversifying research processes on an ongoing basis

Anticipating Future Research Needs

How can we anticipate and describe the research evidence that will be of crucial importance in years to come? Suggestions made in this area include the following:

- Continuing to share reflections and research insights with the wider network so that connections and inspiration(s) can be drawn
- Encouraging members to understand and engage with the depth and breadth of GO-GN community knowledge so that it can be leveraged more effectively
- Finding ways to share updates with the GO-GN community in a rapid and efficient way to promote collaboration and feedback

Supporting and Developing Open Research

How can we ensure that our research remains cutting edge? What new kinds of research questions, data sets, methods and assumptions might be important?

- An emphasis could be placed on research which is closely connected to practise (e.g. evaluation)
- Recognise that research should add value, crossing borders and boundaries and connect different fields
- Recognise that both generalisable and context-specific research are valid
- Foster and nurture experimentation, support novel ideas and rebellious minds that work at the edge, who push the boundaries.
- Finding ways to educate and inform wider networks (especially doctoral supervisors and credential awarding institutions) about open education and its relation to traditional practices
- Build understanding of controlled vocabulary, its impact on discoverability, and how to leverage it
- Consider co-developing and using shared research instruments to improve the generalisability and comparability of research

Cross-Regional Collaboration

We could further support collaboration processes by:

- Promoting collaboration among members in publications and projects
- Creation of group of interest, promote collaboration among members, consider different perspectives and knowledges
- Developing 'hubs' of thematic or regional interest
- Sharing and validating standardised research instruments (surveys, interview guide, observation schemes) that can be used to coordinate research
- Sharing research data to expedite collaboration and mutual understanding



Open Educational Practices

Mutually supporting Research and Advocacy

How can research and advocacy around open education support each other? In many ways this is a communication issue but also requires the development of capacity in both research and representation. Generalisable claims about efficacy are helpful (and in some contexts essential) though sensitivity to the needs of particular audiences is essential.

- Mentors to support processes that take active research to completion
- Small grants that can encourage educator advocates to take part in guided/mentored research projects
- Push ourselves to collaborate with new partners/members of GO-GN
- Researchers to approach educator advocates using more general terminology
- Making use of online connections and focused conversations
- Coordinating and promoting publications
- Use short readable pieces to share information (e.g infographics), with links to full papers
- Making use of existing repositories instead of developing new ones (OEGlobal, OE4BW, OER Africa, Creative Commons, OER Commons)
- Create manageable communities for research projects
- Much advocacy is based on individual interactions, there is a need to leverage communication systems that raise awareness of GO-GN and link to resources (perhaps using institutional communication systems).

Overcoming Barriers to OER Advocacy

There remain significant barriers to effective advocacy for open education. These include lack of awareness; perceptions of quality; unclear or unrealistic expectations; lack of time or resources; misaligned or inaccessible resources; or poor framing of the value proposition of OER. Research has a role in supporting advocacy processes where they are well aligned and harmonised.

- Develop a deeper understanding of the different stakeholders in the OER ecosystem and the different barriers to OER uptake that exist for them
- Developing a GO-GN advocacy toolkit or Guide
- Foreground OER awareness and skills across curricular areas as an integrated digital and media literacy skill development issue relating to copyright, fair use, ownership and authorship of teaching materials being used in K-12 classrooms
- Offering training to educators is perhaps outside the scope of GO-GN, and could duplicate provisions that already exist, but there could be opportunities to showcase open education to teacher educators or otherwise influence teacher training to include awareness of open options (one option here would be a Guide)
- Similarly, some OER could be consolidated or produced that specifically targets teacher educators
- Introducing OER at moments of change (e.g. curriculum reform) or otherwise taking advantage of institutional developments to raise awareness
- Brokering: “Translate” results of research about open practices into manageable and practical artefacts for educators - modelled on knowledge mobilization toolkits
- Translate the results of research into native languages
- Sharing insights for effective communications across and within institutions, with regional advocacy informed by culture (e.g. Vietnam decenters OEP as an option for advocacy; Australia’s economic crisis situates that region for cost centred advocacy)

Involving Educators in Research

How can educator advocates become more involved in research processes? Should they be seen as separate?

- Separating education and research may reinforce hierarchical perspectives on activity
- Open Education for a Better World (OE4BW) provides a model for research advocacy and dissemination of project process and outcomes
- Repositories used by both researchers and advocates
- Finding ways to support advocates in becoming researchers (where appropriate) drawing on personal inquiry and relevance?
- Collaboration through synthesis of available research and tools; creating advocacy toolkits and tools for evaluation
- Developing processes of co creation and codesign that potentiate the engagement among educators
- Magnify and use resources that explain how educators can partner with their students as open co-creators of knowledge which strengthens educator research skills as they work in partnership with students

Training and Capacity Building

What kinds of training needs do open education researchers have going forward?
Who will meet the definition of 'researcher' in the open education space?

- Build on *The GO-GN Research Methods Handbook* (Farrow et al., 2020) to provide additional guidance on using specific research methods for particular types of research questions, encouraging GO-GN members to share their own insights into using various methods
- Consider adding guidance in additional formats, such as an 'ask an expert' podcast or infographics
- Support co creation processes among members and alumni to provide guidance in additional languages for the range of outputs produced by GO-GN
- Expand the number of Guides being produced and open up editorial coordination to members
- Establish a mentoring network similar to the one-to-one sessions offered by GO-GN leaders, but also modelled on the OE4BW model - something that could be distributed across the GO-GN network - similar to the 'ask an expert' sessions could offer mentoring sessions with researchers to match research questions to methodologies and support formal supervision
- Offer guidance in the use of emergent technologies (e.g. AI)
- Educating supervisors on how to support open education research
- Consider creating Massive Open Online Courses to support training needs

Technology and Infrastructure

The Evolving Open Research Ecosystem

Some researchers and research projects increasingly refer to open education initiatives as being part of a wider, connected ecosystem. This ecosystem can be understood to involve increasing numbers of stakeholders across formal and informal education systems. For instance the stakeholder model used in the ENCORE+ project which describes more than 50 types.

How can we understand the features of a functioning OER ecosystem? Do we need to broaden our understanding of what open education connects to? What role does research play in this?

- Identifying other open research initiatives that exist and forming connections with these
- Emphasise the transferability and meta-contextuality of open: open research is something related to research being able to reproduce with the open data, methods and other materials
- Encourage each other to foreground our understanding of what high impact means and how it should be measured and communicated rather than allowing stakeholder driven companies to do so, balancing this with other forms of dissemination (grey literature, blogs, preprints in institutional repositories)
- Recognise the importance of crossing traditional boundaries and collaborative relationships
- Communication strategies and 'marketing' open as an approach - how can we reach out to new stakeholders with clarity and simplicity in our value proposition?
- It should be noted that the ecosystem model is not the only way of looking at OER uptake and implementation: furthermore, defining an ecosystem in helpful ways may be challenging

An example of an ecosystem-wide perspective on OER is provided by the ENCORE+ project. ENCORE+ embraces an understanding of the relevant stakeholders that is ecosystem wide, incorporating perspectives from education and business. The following table summarises a possible view of this ecosystem. UPIG (users, providers, influencers, governance) is a simple stakeholder model which can accommodate a wide range of types and use cases. The presentation here also describes differences of scale (macro, meso, micro). The ENCORE+ stakeholder map was validated through feedback from various groups of relevance at workshops, presentations and online events in the context of the ENCORE+ project.

	USERS		PROVIDERS	INFLUENCERS			GOVERNANCE		
MACRO	MOOC Providers National/ International Education Providers National & International Training Providers Open Education Initiatives	Repositories	Ed Tech Companies Infrastructure Providers Technology Providers	Funders International Development Agencies International Education Partnerships Lobbyists NGOs Philanthropy	Leaders	Broadcast Media	Student Assessment and Testing Organizations Standardization Bodies Quality Assurance Agencies Ministries		
MESO	Companies and Employers Continuous Education Industry and Corporate Sector Lifelong Learning Initiatives Training Providers		Publishers Collections Course Providers Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums Open Access Publishers Open Source Software Communities	Advocacy Groups Charities Education Associations Open Data and Open Science Communities Open Education Communities Professional Associations Professional Organizations Researchers & Scientists Student Organizations: Trade Unions and Labor Organizations			Social Media	Policymakers Management	Local Governments and Municipalities Evaluators Educational Authorities Copyright and Intellectual Property Experts
MICRO	Community-Based Organizations Educators Instructional Designers Learner Support Services Learners Workers		Content Creators Education Technology Startups Libraries Remixers	Accessibility and Inclusion Advocates Advocates of OER Education Consultants Institutional actors Learning Analytics Experts Parents and Guardians Private Foundations and Donors					Copyright/Data Officers Higher Educational Institution decision makers Student Governments

ENCORE+ OER Ecosystem Stakeholder Model

AI in Education: Opportunities and Threats

The opportunities presented by AI for open education research and practice are manifold. The focus thus far has tended to be on the potential impact of AI on educational practice. The disruptive effects of AI were first felt around the assessment of learning where the traditional model which used the essay format was challenged by the ability of generative AI to create texts without the need for more than an initial prompt. A growing awareness that AI will play a central role in education going forward has led to a shift in conversation and perspective.

From a research perspective, AI tools offer opportunities for streamlining and innovating research processes. These could be applied at all stages of the research process, from making literature reviews more efficient; synthesising knowledge; building research instruments; assisting with data collection and analysis; acting as a writing assistant; or creating code for tools and dissemination channels. In each of these aspects, AI can improve the reach, efficiency and application of research. There is a case for training GPTs on open education specific corpuses to improve the quality and relevance of what is created, since a lot of material that might be produced by older engines may be flawed. It is essential for the effective use of such technologies that they are trustworthy and reliable. We may therefore see the emergence of new AI literacies that pertain to research, incorporating areas such as prompt engineering. From an open perspective, part of this could involve training researchers with specific skill sets and approaches that emphasise AIED as a route to empowerment, particularly with respect to social justice and equity, diversity and inclusion. Another potentially important use of such technologies could be to manage communications about research with various audiences, customising and tailoring language for specific stakeholders with a relatively low cognitive load. This in itself can be a route to inclusion and proliferation.

What does an 'open' version of using AI in education and research look like? What kinds of values would it promote? Areas of interest here included:

- Diverse uses of AIED (content creation, supporting vulnerable students, writing support, grading, chatbots, mentoring, tutoring, etc.)
- Values: the commons, public good, social and cultural values, maximising access, collaboration & cooperation, promote fairness and equity
- Customisable and curated AI database for specific disciplines and use cases (which would involve fine-tuning a foundation (general use) model with a custom dataset (this approach usually requires expensive hardware) or prompting an existing model (which means only a limited number of texts can be used))
- Using the affordances of generative pre-trained transistors (GPTs) in ingraining critical thinking practices, practising reasoning skills
- Developing a sense of which AI research tools are reliable and have a potential application in supporting our research

- Providing access to new forms of knowledge from large data which would be resistant to human analysis
- Build course/topic specific AI engines that act as research and content support for students and educators - not only provide textual information, but also as an interactive tutor during the learning process
- What can we learn from the amazingly fast adoption of AI by both students and teachers for the OER movement? AI has been embraced in just a couple of months whereas OER has been going strong for years but it still adopted on a smaller-scale. What can we learn?
- Open AI and Open Pedagogy. What could be achieved if all the disposable assignment time/output was redirected into the population of open AI engines?

The same generative tools can be used to create curricula, lesson plans, activities and open educational resources. AI tools also show some pedagogical benefits in fields like language learning. There are interesting ethical questions around the intellectual property status of GPT outputs, which are often trained on copyrighted materials. (The current convention is that such outputs cannot be copyrighted which technically also means they cannot be released on an open licence but fall into the public domain.)

AI technologies also offer the possibility of new ways of interfacing with computers which can improve accessibility for learners and educators. There is also likely to be a role for AI in supporting the discoverability of OER, but this may be supplanted by improved options for creating bespoke OER instead.

How AIED might incorporate the values associated with open practice remains to be seen. Commonly identified concerns in this area included:

- Protecting privacy (especially for student or personal data) and understanding the full proposed use of data that is introduced into AI systems
- Data governance and management: What cybersecurity solutions are used?
- Transparency: How transparent is the design and implementation of AI?
- Explainability: Can the tool be explained and understood? To what extent? By whom?
- Access: Is AI technology accessible to everyone? If not, how do we overcome this?
- Business models and their associated revenue streams: how do they generate profit? Are there alternatives? Do users need to trade off the data or privacy for the services?
- Choice or recommendation? How is the autonomy of the educator or

researcher being changed?

- High stakes use of AI and risk/impact (e.g. whether higher education is recommended for a particular learner)
- Possibilities for algorithmic injustice or coded bias becoming established in higher education institutions
- The pace of change: in the rush to market, many AI systems are being introduced without testing or evaluation
- Accountability: Who is accountable if things go wrong? If AI is not used wisely, it can undermine trust in vendors, creators, institutions and educators
- Quality and trust issues regarding the output from AI tools
- Lack of clarity regarding safeguarding responsibilities

Open Technologies, Open Values

As new technologies become available to researchers, how can we ensure that we continue to propagate the values of openness? Considerations here included:

- Establishing trust in vendors and creators
- Protecting privacy
- Transparency
- Being able to explain tools that we use
- Staying focused on barriers to access and how these may be overcome
- Working with changing metadata standards to facilitate inclusion of GO-GN research in relevant databases and catalogues
- Understanding technology business models and their associated revenue streams - how do they generate profit, and are there alternatives?
- Retaining focus on values: The Commons, public good, social and cultural values, maximising access, collaboration & cooperation
- Ingraining critical thinking practices
- Prioritising [Diamond Open Access](#) models which are community-driven, academic-led, and academic-owned publishing initiatives where journals and platforms do not charge fees to either authors or readers
- Explore technologies that invite and make easy two-way contributions of knowledge, challenging the traditional forms of dissemination

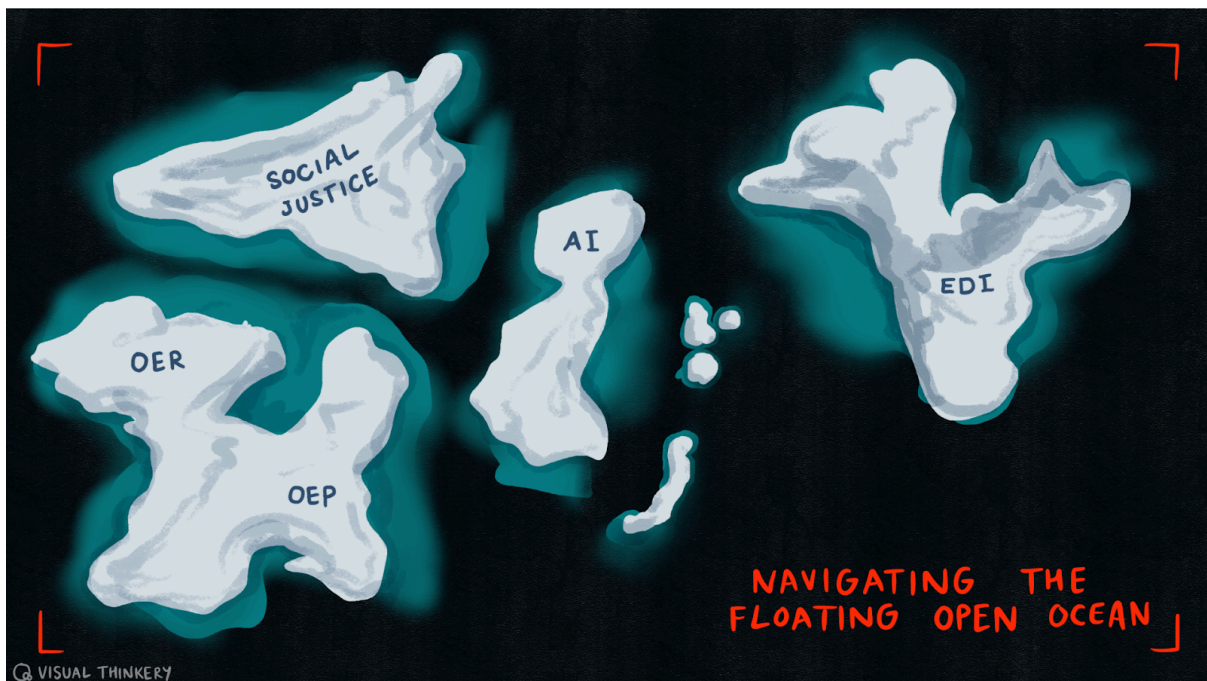
- Place emphasis on access, accessibility and usability of educational technologies that are equitable by design

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

As EDI is now embedded as a central strand in GO-GN, the workshop was used as an opportunity to explore ways in which GO-GN and its members could engage with EDI moving forward. Below is a summary of discussions related to EDI issues, which took place during day 2 of the GO-GN 10th anniversary workshop.

Participants were divided into three groups and each one had the opportunity to contribute and add to each topic. The topics chosen to guide the discussion were:

- The representation and needs of EDI in different regions of the world, including challenges and opportunities.
- EDI for Institutions
- EDI for Practitioners
- EDI for Communities and Networks



Understanding Regional Needs

This topic generated interesting discussions as participants were from many different parts of the world, which provided rich debate and contributions. It is important to acknowledge that concepts of openness may have divergent meanings in diverse cultural contexts. What the GO-GN group might consider open practice, may be called something different in different cultures and parts of the world. What many folks do related to teaching and learning in their cultures may be very open, but not specifically named or conceptualised as such.

It is also important to develop an understanding of fundamental teaching and learning practices, sharing of knowledge, legal definitions of copyright, informal practices related to copyright in different cultures may help inform the work we want to accomplish in partnership with as many groups as possible. The familiar cost angle to OER may not be the most important one in other countries

The concept of 'region' was problematised in the following ways:

- How can we strategize around regional differences? Here consultation should be critical, since the best people to articulate regional differences are those who live in the regions
- How to define any particular region: this is a critical question that needs consultation with knowledgeable local people with a view to arriving at a consensual approach across the whole of GO-GN
- Can 'regions' be a somewhat fluid concept rather than rigidly defined?
- 'Regions' are not always clearly aligned with national borders
- Is 'region' a meaningful place to start?

Other outcomes from this discussion included:

- Seeking opportunities to learn from each other: the need to promote dialogue and collaboration rather than simply sharing knowledge
- Acknowledging that OER have different formats and priorities in different areas (closely tied to copyright law and the relative priority of open education)
- Awareness of OER varies according to level of education and curriculum management
- A lack of familiarity with OER as a concept or construct can only be explored by starting from observation of existing practices
- Acknowledging that incentives to explore OER are not uniform
- Education systems are diverse and cultures vary: education systems within

countries can be very fragmented and uncoordinated

- Students may have a passive approach while pedagogy is teacher-centred: there is a need to respect cultural instances in which this is the case
- Meaningful representation of aboriginal or displaced populations is challenging
- Show awareness of urban/rural divides and design grants that can support the dissemination of OER in areas without connectivity
- Acknowledge and celebrate the courage and energy of our students and faculty, as they push their institutions to broaden their research, teaching and learning experiences
- We can understand factors like economic crisis or lack of infrastructure as opportunity
- A lexicon of different understandings of open based on geographical and cultural differences could support future research

EDI at Institutional Level

Participants were asked to reflect on and discuss issues related to EDI in open education at institutional level. Two distinct themes emerged from this discussion: praxis and research.

Within praxis, the main challenges were:

- Many intellectual property policies within institutions are restrictive, and moving to open content requires significant policy change
- Building capacity often takes place against the backdrop of a lack of support from senior administration
- Understanding how organisations work and how power is differentiated

Ways to overcome these and other challenges include:

- Have regional GO-GN champions that can influence institutions in that region (OER uptake/adoption, research)
- Highlight the work of others (support recognition and promotion and policies that encourage engagement in OER and OEP)
- Connect with and understand existing EDI initiatives and policies at institutions
- Embed and implement EDI in institutional initiatives, calls for change, calls for action, and activities
- Review existing institutional policies so that they can become open practice policies
- Increase visibility of non-Western work
- Understand institutional culture and priorities
- People who are privileged and secure need create opportunities and safe spaces for people to speak up against barriers

Still at institutional level, the main issues related to research were:

- Enculturing intentional citation practices
- Institutions not recognizing non-western or decolonizing epistemologies
- Some institutional repositories don't support archives of preprints
- There's a need to shift mindset and institutional metrics, including what "high impact" means

- Developing a shared idea of EDI: belonging, justice, identity, accessibility
- Focusing on institutional organisation, and developing an awareness of how EDI works
- Supporting multidisciplinary collaboration

EDI at Community/Network level

In this discussion strand, questions related to how EDI should/could support the development of communities of practices and networks were asked to participants. Discussions included Indigenous communities, the GO-GN community itself, and also gender divide in Edtech, including in open education.

Points raised during discussions included:

- Indigenous communities are often community led, co-creation communities
- There's a need to understand differing notions of reciprocity
- Some communities have a very strong awareness of appropriation and commercialization.
- Open licensing was criticised by some as representing the values of the Global North
- [Traditional Knowledge \(TK\) labels](#) could be added alongside Creative Commons licences

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Practitioner Level

Conversations at practitioner level brought together interesting and important developments. Issues/questions that emerged from these conversations were:

- Questioning terminologies - who are the practitioners? All users? Students? Educators? Influencers? Content creators?
- For each group, there is a need for information and guidance
- How to approach those who might be interested in expanding educational access but don't have familiarity with the language of EDI, OER, etc.
- There is a need to present EDI concepts in diverse and creative ways, avoiding the existing forms and cliches of existing guidance
- Foregrounding 'respect' as a concept in research

- Communicate practice in many languages, making use of open licence
- Importance of informed consent regarding people's contributions
- Accessibility and usability of resources
- Modulating the rationale behind what we do as we present it to different audiences
- Increase the discoverability of less visible works
- Support archiving and preprints
- How can we move on from the Western framing of research? What kinds of methods would bring this forward?

Decolonisation of open education practice and research

Data was also collected regarding approaches to conceptualising decolonising research practices, as summarised here.

Imperatives

- Manifestations of Colonial Structures
 - A critical examination of network practices
 - How coloniality influences the decision-making process, resource allocation, and epistemological validity
- Methodological and Epistemological Strategies
 - Theories that can be harnessed to dismantle colonial structures
 - Revisiting methods of academic enquiry
 - How to incorporate diverse epistemologies
- Inclusion of Marginalized Perspectives
 - The limitations of current inclusive strategies
 - Ethical considerations surrounding epistemic agency
 - Methods to validate and include diverse viewpoints

Epistemologies of the South

- A conceptual framework that denounces the suppression of diverse knowledges

- Valorizes successfully resistant forms of knowledge
- Promotes an 'ecology of knowledges'

The Institutionalization of Epistemology

- The institutional apparatus that has obscured the socio-political context of scientific knowledge production
- The consequences for dialogue between scientific knowledge and other kinds of knowledge

Alternatives to Dominant Epistemology

- Recognizing the world's epistemological diversity as an enriching element
- Addressing internal and external pluralities in open education and science
- Inspire alternative ways of being and understanding the world

	Decoloniality		
	Being	Power	Knowledge
Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising authentic human needs • Practising empathy • Tailored or individualised support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledging differences in privilege • Acting to equalise and democratise power • Amplifying marginalised voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creation of knowledge • Sharing of expertise • Pedagogical support • Learning design
Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion • Sharing practice • Emphasising transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of colonial history • Engaging with the legacy of colonialism • Sensitivity to context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of OER • Co-creation • Promotion of open licences • Encouraging adaptation of curriculum
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making minimal assumptions about people or contexts • Openness to dialogue and perspective sharing • Engagement and negotiation as a route to understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid transactional mindset in favour of co-creation and collaboration • Expand opportunities for sharing knowledge and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construe diverse stakeholder activity as (co-constructed) learning • Being prepared to calibrate approach depending on feedback and experience

Supported Open Learning and Decoloniality
(Farrow, Coughlan, Goshtasbpour & Pitt, 2023)

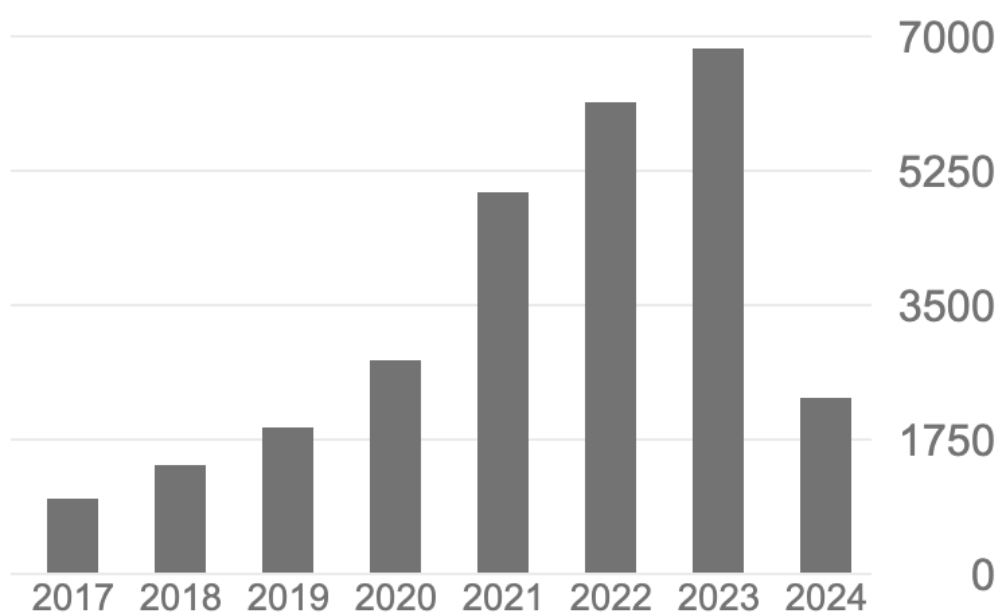
GO-GN Strategic Direction

Finally, this section draws together reflections and insights from evaluation activities carried out with GO-GN members and the coordination team.

Evaluating GO-GN

GO-GN has developed a strong community profile over the last ten years. The growth in membership to almost 200 researchers also sees a significant research profile developing. GO-GN affiliated researchers have recorded more than 30,000 citations with around a third of these coming since 2022.

	All	Since 2019
Citations	30816	25218
h-index	82	72
i10-index	403	349



GO-GN Research Profile on [Google Scholar](#) (June 2024)

Things that GO-GN members think have worked:

- Advocacy, connecting, informing, co-authoring, staying on the cutting edge of research
- All current practices
- Bringing people together
- Efficient and effective communication- super updates on network matters
- Fostering a welcoming community that provides opportunities for sharing work and receiving supportive feedback during the dissertation process.
- Funding of members and alumni to participate in the GO-GN seminars and workshops
- Good researches and support in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Helpful platforms for knowledge sharing and experiences
- Helpful webinars
- Holistic support of PhD students doing research in Open Education
- Joint researches and publications
- Management of GO-GN as a global Network
- Networking and bringing people together, supporting novice researchers with opportunities to speak and share and learn
- Organization of Global meetings
- Special consideration to members and alumni from Global South

"I think GO-GN does a fantastic job of building capacity for people to engage in open education research. By bringing together people from various corners of the world for in-person and online workshops, webinars, conferences, and knowledge sharing, GO-GN is supporting people in building bridges and connections with others that can further advocacy, research, and education. The publications that are created are also very helpful."

We asked if there were areas where more could be done:

- *"I think GO-GN could supervise projects funded by international organizations such as UNDP, World Bank etc. That would be a great opportunity to self fund our activities, create products and expand our network."*
- *"Looking to the future, I think that GO-GN specifically, and open education practitioners in the Global North more broadly, have an opportunity to reframe how work on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is prioritized. I believe EDI should be guiding all other work and research in open education, such that supporting EDI is the foundation of all work in open education and research. EDI should be the starting place, embedded within all other work, rather than a supplemental consideration in projects or initiatives. For example, in the GO-GN Workshop Output Planning document, I think EDI needs to be incorporated into all the sections in that document because EDI is important in research, in technology, and in infrastructure, and not just in OER and OEP. I believe there is opportunity for GO-GN to more explicitly orient its work around supporting EDI."*
- *"Mentoring new doctoral students using GO-GN alumni (I have suggested something like this a few times), also a list of potential external examiners with GO-GN alumni on the website?"*
- *"Not a criticism at all, but I saw a mention about increasing awareness of ed practices that were open, but not identified as such. My bias as an historian: GO-GN might promote more historical awareness of the trends in openness as well as the benefits of obtaining historical methodology skills."*
- *"Perhaps GO-GN can organize its own conference, it can first start online and can be a hybrid/f2f event in the future."*
- *"Providing opportunities to connect and brainstorm in between workshops. Some of the community building depends on individuals finding connections amongst each other, but having opportunities to come together, share updates, receive feedback, etc. in between workshops could be helpful, especially for those new to a group or for those who have not been able to attend. (Though I recognize I'm new and am still discovering all the opportunities and support GO-GN provides)"*
- *Not sure if/how much coordination there was with other organizations and conferences. The timing of the 10th anniversary was close to ICDE 2023 - Maybe try to coordinate so the various orgs spread out their conferences.*
- *Organizing for regional branches*
- *Scholarships for sponsoring some PhDs in Global South*

Key activities going forward:

- *Community building*
- *Funding some PhDs from developing countries*
- *Having regional branches*
- *I am encouraged to read in the draft that GO-GN has an archive - has anyone conducted oral history interviews to expand the archive?*
- *Is there an opportunity for GO-GN to provide funding support for publications or other knowledge translation/mobilization initiatives?*
- *Leading innovation and creativity with OER through curating and disseminating more guides and reports based on member's research and work*
- *Network building, capacity building, and continuing to push the field of open education forward*
- *Resource mobilization*
- *Still supporting the grad students. They need every bit of encouragement, mentoring, financial support, research opportunities, and opportunities to network.*
- *Supervision of PhD students by its members*
- *Support system for PhD students*
- *Supporting doctoral students in their dissertation work and in their post-PhD plans*
- *Supporting doctoral students on their journey, creating opportunities for peer-to-peer support.*
- *Workshops and networking, conference attendance support*

Advice for advocates:

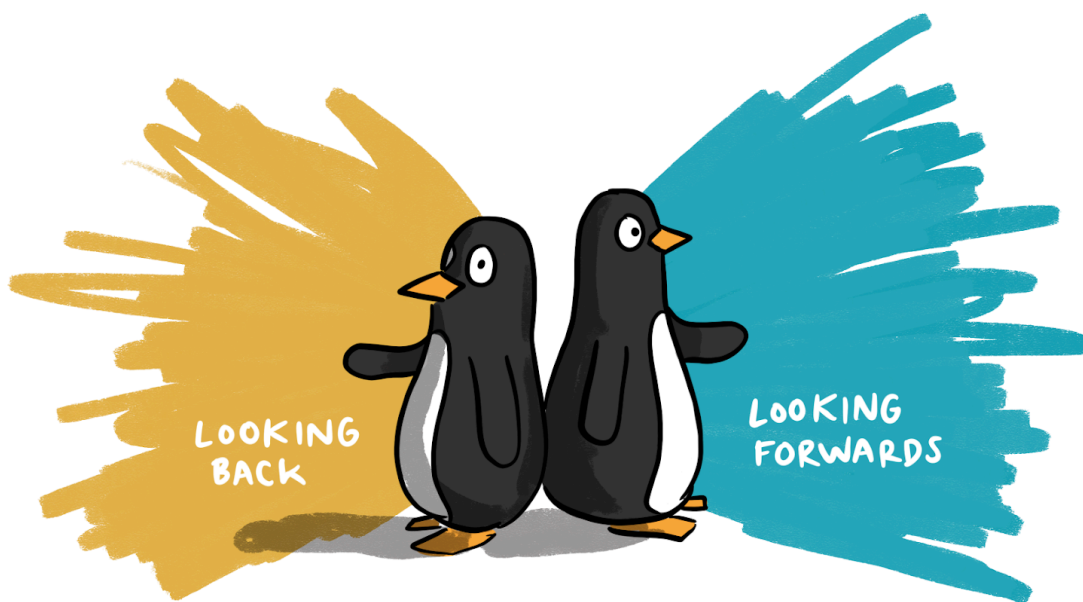
- *"Be open to seeing and engaging with OER as more than a "product" and more like a process—process for access to quality education, which can take many forms in different contexts for different learners and educators."*
- *"Going slowly/slower may bring more people on board? Do we need more patience with each other and the world? Wondering... "*
- *"Join GO-GN :)"*
- *"Open education advocates in the Global North should reflect on reframing how work on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is prioritized. I believe EDI*

should be guiding all other work and research in open education, such that supporting EDI is the foundation of all work in open education and research. EDI should be the starting place, embedded within all other work, rather than a supplemental consideration in projects or initiatives. There is opportunity for open education advocates to explicitly orient their work around supporting EDI."

- *"Perhaps, we can offer badges to people and/or institutions based on their advocacy of open education"*
- *"Your efforts are not wasted!"*
- *Collaboration and partnerships in open education work is key*
- *Joint publications are helpful in nurturing your researchers*
- *Need for joint scholarships in this field*

EDI advice:

- *"EDI does not mean only from the Global North to the Global South unidirectionally!"*
- *"Encourage mentoring opportunities. Maybe pairing up those with DEI expertise and those just starting out."*
- *"One area to consider equity, diversity, and inclusion in relation to OER is in the research methods and approaches. Incorporate participatory research that supports those engaged with OER to contribute to the research to further understanding on how they are using OER and how/if they are being supported by OER."*
- *Collaboration in EDI researches is important*
- *It is crucial to look for scholarships to support EDI implementation in all the regions*
- *Review quality accessibility documents for equity*
- *Live and model as part of open practice?*



Q VISUAL THINKERY

Strategy Considerations

A key challenge for GO-GN and the open education movement more widely is to manage the transition from being a relatively new area of interest to a mainstream research field. Many open education researchers are advocates and/or are motivated to use OER because of their personal values. As the field matures, the need for high quality, objective research has become more apparent, in terms of effective approaches, and also developing a critical mindset within the field (Weller, Farrow & Pitt, 2019). Concomitantly, there is a need for research which, while robust, can describe and share the contextually specific nature of OER and OEP implementation in diverse contexts.

“As [GO-GN] recognizes, equity, diversity, and inclusion is a pressing area in general, including for OER. Research has shown that OER is mostly produced in western contexts (to list a few: Adam, 2019; Buckler, Perryman, Seal, & Musafir, 2014; Wolfenden and Adinolfi, 2019), so there is a pressing need to prioritise the inclusion of more voices, more experiences, and more forms of knowledge in OER. For researchers, this could look like studying OER that is adapted and created in Global South to better support OER localization and contextualization, to understand barriers to engaging with OER, and to work towards solutions to increase access and production of local OER that meets the specific local needs and goals. Only through focusing on the inclusion of marginalised populations can OER facilitate the knowledge partnership as envisioned.”

There is also an interest among GO-GN members in ensuring that our researchers are at the forefront of leading open education research into new areas, including (but not limited to):

- *AI and open educational practices*
- *The potential use of AI in creating OER*
- *Exploring the relationship between creativity and openness*
- *Ways to communicate the OER value proposition according to context*
- *AI and EDI, particularly in the Global South*

Our members also had advice regarding how research into open education should be conducted:

- *Continue the supporting and inclusive vision and practice*
- *Create groups of interest, and promote the creation of frontier knowledge in the matter based on the work of doctoral students*
- *Create national and regional GOGN communities, connected by the network (avoid the fragmentation!)*
- *Keep being amazing!*
- *Maintain global dialogue while attending regional needs*
- *Pluralization of epistemic locales*
- *Promote and support collaboration among members regarding publication, projects, professional development, building together a real diverse network (collaboration at the same level is needed and has to be promoted)*
- *Talk with (not only talk about) marginalised voices*

Capacity & Organization

One important consideration here concerns the capacity of the GO-GN coordination team and the limits of what might be possible with current organisation and resourcing configuration. Options here include expanding the coordination team; moving to a decentralised or federated model of organisation; or some combination of both.

One possible way forward is to run pilots for regional hubs which could offer insights into how alternative organisational structures might work in practice. This could be complemented by a code of conduct which sets out expectations for how network activities are managed. Small scale pilots could help illuminate more of the contextual differences around the world and help GO-GN to navigate. A key tension in open education research is that most expertise and experience exists in the Global North while it is those in the Global South potentially stand to benefit the most from open practices. Many researchers in the network are increasingly

interested in localised knowledge and ways of using OER to address systemic inequity. Coordinating through local hubs may offer a balanced approach, but, as we saw in the results of our workshop discussions, defining 'regions' is not necessarily straightforward. A piloting scheme could facilitate 'bottom-up', authentic coordination.

The central challenge remains how best to support researchers and academics who are at a disadvantage in terms of the barriers they face in income, time, voice, place, and connections. Ideas offered in this strand include:

- Coordination of research across different countries is an area where GO-GN may have untapped potential
- Co-authorship of OER, journal papers, conference presentations
- Including Global South partners in funding proposals
- Finding opportunities for research supervisors with expertise in open
- Continuing to cite, amplify and represent research from the Global South
- Promoting research on relevant topics (e.g., in calls for submissions in conferences)
- Demonstrating greater awareness of the limitations of Global North focused research
- Demonstrating the value of research from the Global South (e.g. show applicability, use in teaching)

The growth in the size of the network presents additional opportunities such as establishing a knowledge base regarding Global South issues (drawing on e.g., Research on Open Educational Resources for Development ([ROER4D](#)) project) to act as a shared research foundation.

Rather than using regional coordination, we could develop a networking concept which promotes activity between researchers rather than introducing an additional layer of administration. This option might see GO-GN offer additional services to members, such as matching of skills or theoretical interests, highlighting job opportunities, or facilitating grant development and participation. Additional workshops could be organised around conference themes or funding calls. GO-GN could also offer (or broker) more formal training in areas of demand, such as leadership skills.

Sustainability & Infrastructure

The extent to which GO-GN federalizes is also connected with the long term sustainability of the network. Costs would increase as the network scales or takes on regional hubs. Diversifying the income grants of the network improves the viability of the network. Financial support could be sought from other foundations or funding bodies. Regional hubs or collaborations could also be supported in applying for funding, or could include the “home hub” GO-GN team as a partner.

Another way in which GO-GN might support sustainability is through provision of key infrastructure. Possibilities such as a GO-GN archive, repository or journal title were surfaced in workshop discussion. While there are costs associated with these they have the potential to add significant value. A GO-GN archive could offer a unique data set to support research, or even to be used in training an AL language model. There is also an advantage here in that the current size of the network means there is ample research to draw on.

In the case of a journal, GO-GN would be well placed to promote research from the network (particularly from the Global South). A GO-GN special issue of an existing journal is also an option, and could perhaps happen annually. Controlling the content of scientific publications would allow for inclusion of untypical or creative contributions, including those deemed not to meet the “Western” standard.

Types of Membership

GO-GN currently offers two membership types:

- Doctoral students who are working towards an Ed.D or Ph.D in the field of open education
- ‘Friends of GO-GN’ including doctoral supervisors, students working on projects outside of the remit of open education, OER experts and advocates

Anyone can join GO-GN, but members of the first category are prioritised for being funded to attend GO-GN activities such as workshops and sponsored places at conferences.

As more people complete their studies, we have a growing cohort of alumni, some of whom have also been part of our fellowship schemes. We often invite alumni to take part in workshops so they can share their experiences of the doctoral process, but administratively they are still treated as ‘doctoral’ researchers. There could be a case for treating alumni a little differently: for instance, focusing on funding calls and publication opportunities which might be considered distracting for those still working on doctorates.

There may also be a case for differentiating membership types in the ‘friends’ group as the network scales, but there would need to be some operational advantage.

Research Themes

There has always been a question regarding the focus of GO-GN research. Should we focus only on those researching 'pure' OER or other things like MOOCs which might not include openly licensed material? There is a balance to be struck between developing new areas of research around 'open' and retaining a distinct perspective. GO-GN has been more focused on open practices in recent years as a response to the direction of members. These can take various forms, such as open policy, OEP, open pedagogy, etc. and often reflect the attention currently paid to wider social and political issues. Many researchers are interested in AI and the implications for open education. (Indeed, the rise of AI has the potential to make the OER value proposition look very different.)

GO-GN researchers use many different theoretical frameworks, epistemologies and methods, and are highly diverse in this respect. Sometimes our alumni (and experts) are several years post-doctoral and their research interests have broadened. There remains a core interest in OER adoption processes and how these may empower different stakeholders, but with a wider sense of potential impacts of using open approaches for self-empowerment. Researchers newer to the network are often using "open" as a lens to examine something that need not involve OER - or even learning outcomes - directly. The manifold interpretations of openness also means that contexts and definitions can vary widely, and many members are asking themselves whether particular theories do much to advance the social good that they see themselves as working towards.

Ultimately, it's for the membership to decide which areas can be prioritised in their research. The idea that GO-GN should somehow impose a dogma on what should be researched seems antithetical to the idea of openness. However, there is arguably a role for the network in attempting to demonstrate the value of open practices to those who could potentially adopt and advocate.

Communications and Outreach

The growth of GO-GN has implications for how we communicate with members. The use of a blog as a central point of coordination remains effective, though we have been looking at ways to make it easier for members to post there (e.g. [SPLOTS](#)). One communication challenge is that the network is now more fragmented across different social media channels as a result of market change. It may be necessary to refresh some aspects of communication strategy, and it will be important to be receptive to member feedback.

It's important to retain dialogue as a key aspect of communications as the network scales. This could include different strategies for different stakeholder types. Ideally, GO-GN would engage to understand and communicate the diverse needs and circumstances of its members. One approach here is the co-creation model which has been used to produce the Guides and The Open Research Handbook. Another is to collaborate through research activities.

Presenting GO-GN at conferences remains a good way of introducing those new to open education to the network. The network has a strong profile at the three main open education conferences (Open Education Global, OERx, Open Education). GO-GN has strategic partnerships with organisations like ALT and Open Education Global, acting as a conference sponsor. These relationships work well to mutual benefit. GO-GN may wish in the future to consider additional strategic partnerships.

Having a strong presence at open education conferences is essential, but risks overlooking those interested in open practice who don't attend the same conferences. There are opportunities to extend the offer of GO-GN to postgraduate students (and others) at additional conferences, capacity permitting. There are also options for creating a poster which could be sent to conferences, or sponsoring members who present about GO-GN in other places.

Our webinar series remains popular and combines presentations from new and established members, guest speakers, and the coordination team.

In response to the growth of the network, it was agreed at the workshop that GO-GN would create a code of conduct that would set out expectations for interactions within the network. This will be shared with members for feedback in 2024.



Future Vision

Broadly, the research interests of members have developed from a 'pure' interest in OER towards wider social issues and applications of OER in recent years. The widening of interests of the network is also related to its increase in size: there are now approximately ten times as many members as when the network was founded, and our membership is much more diverse. This means that there are perhaps a wider range of different visions for GO-GN to accommodate (or prioritise).

We asked members at the workshop about their vision for GO-GN:

- *"My vision for GO-GN is to see it as a global hub with many local networks"*
- *"Self sustaining group of global grad students in open education"*
- *"Lead the field!"*
- *"A community that still first values each other and each other's research and also offers opportunities for collaboration and promotion of research to advance the field of OER globally for improving access to quality education for all"*
- *"To be still relevant, sustaining momentum is not easy and requires collective effort."*
- *"A stand alone network with its members supporting it fully for sustainability"*
- *"At least 5 PhD graduates from Global South and other regions"*

The focus on social issues is often accompanied by a more critical perspective on research processes and the institutions that facilitate them. Implicit here (though not always acknowledged directly) is a critique of power and exploitative capitalism which looks different in different parts of the world. There is consequently a growing interest in educational power structures and critical approaches to pedagogy.

The interest in wider social issues and the rise of researcher-advocates also raises questions about the role of GO-GN. Some members feel that GO-GN could play a more proactive role in supporting advocacy. While there is undoubtedly a case for this, this comes down to a question of identity and mission. GO-GN can play a role in facilitating connections between members and supporting their advocacy efforts, and GO-GN advocates for open practice. GO-GN could also produce a Guide that would provide resources for advocates. But there is a risk here: an advocacy role which is prominent may compromise the identity of GO-GN as a supporter of high quality, 'objective' research and ethical research practice.

One route to enhanced advocacy is to collaborate with other organisations who are more conspicuous in this space. This could be done on an informal basis, but could also form the basis for a funded research project where GO-GN researchers provide an evidence base that is needed to support advocates. More broadly, connecting with other networks can be an effective route to raising the profile and reach of

research. The [Knowledge Equity Network](#) provides an example of where coordinating with other networks may be appropriate.

Many members have expressed interest in a more federated or decentralised operating model for GO-GN in the future. One option for future development is the creation of regional, federated networks within GO-GN, perhaps under the supervision of regional UNESCO Chairs. It seems sensible that the ultimate destination for GO-GN could be as a “network of networks” with many regional chapters or affiliated institutions. There are operational issues to resolve, which we could take the first steps towards addressing through a regional pilot scheme and drafting a code of conduct; but there is also a question of sustainability to be addressed in the longer term, particularly when funding is such a universal issue. Furthermore, GO-GN would need a strategy for retaining a distinct, global remit to complement the sub-networks.

GO-GN has come to define itself as a community of care, and in many ways this is one of the distinctive things about GO-GN. Perhaps a growth in network size risks things feeling a bit more impersonal, but elaborating and supporting a global network (as opposed to a series of regional networks) is core to GO-GN. One challenge here is to find values and frameworks that can apply to the whole network.

Adopting or expressing shared values should not be seen as enforcing one belief system on the whole network: rather, the task is to find approaches that can accommodate the diversity of opinion and tension therein. It may be found that there are a range of frameworks which have different relevance to different members. (Much of the time, the issue of values is raised in relation to working with different stakeholders who don't necessarily share the value of open but act as influencers or gatekeepers.) It should be remembered that, even where interpretations vary, a core commitment to openness is shared by members. As a community, GO-GN recognises that there is a need to practise collective self-care. We should recognise that, despite the extent of our ambition, it is essential that we understand ourselves as fallible human beings trying to do something difficult. It's important to celebrate achievements and be pragmatic while also trying to enact change. GO-GN offers a place for mutual support, friendly criticism and shared experiences.

At a practical level, GO-GN researchers can draw on established ethical codes, such as the San Francisco [Declaration on Research Assessment](#) or the [CARE framework](#) which focuses on four practices of OER stewardship: Contribute, Attribute, Release, and Empower. However, it should be noted that most frameworks originate from the Global North, and additional work is needed to refine and develop these. The [UNESCO Declaration on OER](#) provides an overarching, universal guide to building capacity, developing policy, supporting advocacy, improving access and nurturing sustainability.

Adopting a global perspective may allow GO-GN to function in the role of research coordinator for longitudinal studies or comparisons of implementation of open across different geographical or cultural contexts. With OEP interpreted rather

differently across cases, GO-GN may be uniquely placed to advise and co-plan research across countries, sectors and education levels.

Open education is an interdisciplinary and international discourse. It is important for GO-GN and its members to be in conversation with other sectors and disciplines. This can mean learning and adapting to the language and categories of others in order to unlock the potential of being open in new areas, and finding ways to make connections with our existing work. It can mean modulating our messaging and media in service of effective communication and refinement of the proposition of the network. Speaking with different stakeholders can be augmented through co-creation or adoption of learning materials. Having clear messaging that members can draw on may be helpful here. Similarly, when a potential opportunity for openness presents itself, this would ideally be supported by materials for advocacy or strategy that are endorsed by our membership and easy to find.

For all these issues, high levels of experience, expertise and resources already exist within GO-GN. Unlocking the full potential of the network is perhaps the central challenge we face going forward. In service of this, it's important to reflect on the conditions and events that led us to where we are, and our ongoing positionality. Furthermore, it's appropriate to ask members whether they are able to offer their skills and time for the benefit of others (especially newcomers) in the network; sharing opportunities for collaboration; acknowledging and using privilege; elaborating contextual insights and contributing to strategy.

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