



## Open Educational Quality Initiative (OPAL)

Final Report

Public Part

## Project information

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# Executive Summary

Although open educational resources (OER) are high on the agenda of social and inclusion policies and supported by many stakeholders of the educational sphere, their use in HE and adult education (AE) has not yet reached the critical threshold which is posing an obstacle to a seamless provision of high quality learning resources and practices for citizens' lifelong learning efforts. This has to do with the fact that the current focus in OER is mainly put on building more access to digital content. There is little consideration of whether this will support educational practices and/or promote quality and innovation in teaching and learning. The project OPAL therefore extends the focus beyond 'access' to 'innovative open educational practices' (OEP). OEPs are defined as practices which support the (re)use and production of high quality OER through institutional policies, promote innovative pedagogical models, and respect and empower learners as co-producers on their lifelong learning path. OEPs address the whole OER governance community: policy makers, managers/administrators of organisations, educational professionals and learners.

The project is supporting the mainstreaming of OEP, and

1. studied and mapped quality approaches and methods for quality and linked them to OEP in order to provide validated European Guidelines for Quality and Innovation through OEP in HE and AE,
2. launched the European Consultative Group for Quality and Innovation through OEP in order to concert existing initiatives, form a multi-stakeholder validation environment, and liaise with existing international networks in order to contribute a chapter on quality and innovation to them,
3. set up the EU Open Educational Quality Clearinghouse in which peer-reviewed OER and OEP were linked and which serves as a (also after the project's lifetime) Register for organisations which want to join the European Charter for Quality and Innovation through OEP, and
4. developed a European Award for Innovation and Quality through OER in HE and AE.

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# 1. Project Objectives

The project “The Open Educational Quality Initiative” (OPAL) started on 1.1.2010 and ended on 31.12.2011. It aimed at raising the quality of Lifelong Learning (LLL) opportunities and experiences by supporting high quality provision of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices (OEPs) in Higher education (HE) & Adult Education (AE) in general, promoting innovation through installing the European Consultative Group for quality and innovation through OEP. The major tasks of the project were

- studying and analysing the use of Open Educational Practices (OEP),
- defining and promoting a charter on Quality and Innovation through OEP,
- setting up an EU Register of organisations joining the Charter on Quality and Innovation through OEP,
- elaborating and validating a set of guidelines, and the EU Open Educational Quality Clearinghouse that based on those guidelines
- peer-reviewing of OEPs on the basis of the guidelines as quality criteria; the OEPs were reported by the registered Institutions and individuals, and finally,
- launching an OEP Innovation Award for the most innovative OEPs that had been reported.

To that extend, OPAL reached the following objectives:

- The project supported the modernization of the European Lifelong Learning (LLL) area by concerting existing initiatives in the field of OER & OEP and promoting a quality and innovation agenda through the use of Open Educational Practices (OEP) within HE and AE institutions. It also clearly contributed to the external dimension of the LLL area by promoting a European agenda to quality and innovation through OEP globally.
- OPAL improved quality and stimulated innovation in HE and AE by providing guidelines for quality and innovation for the OEP governance community (policy makers, management/administration/ed. professionals, learners) to attain high quality through OEP. It improved attractiveness by giving visibility of the achievement of quality to institutions and resources through a European OEP Register & Clearinghouse. It improved accessibility through the promotion of open resources and practices.
- OPAL aimed at reinforcing the contribution of LLL to social cohesion by contributing to social inclusion policies on national and European level through promoting open resources and open practices, quality and innovation in European HE and AE. A whitepaper (D5.4) specifically addressed the contribution of OEP to social inclusion policies on national and European level.
- OPAL contributed to increased participation in lifelong learning, especially for socio-economically disadvantaged groups by concerting and supporting the OER movement and initiatives in Europe, thus promoting universal free access to education resources. In particular, the project encouraged HE & AE institutions to adopt OEP through guidelines, assessment/peer-review services basing on those guidelines, and an OEP award. Thus, OPAL contributed to make HE & AE education more accessible and available for all people.
- OPAL fostered the development of Open Educational Practices in HE & AE institutions. The approach focused essentially on promoting the (re-)use of open educational resources to innovate content, open services, open pedagogies, and more generally, on improving the quality of educational practices in HE & AE by fostering openness. It provided services to support these aims: Guidelines for quality and innovation through Open Educational Practices (WP 4), an OEP Innovation Award (WP7) for encouragement, and an innovation assessment framework for practitioners and specifically for organisations (WP6).
- OPAL promoted Europe-wide cooperation in quality assurance by setting up a European Consultative Group for Quality and Innovation through OEP in HE & AE which will be sustainably hosted after the funding period through EFQUEL and ICDE, and which will serve as multi-stakeholder cooperation point. The European Consultative Group consists of stakeholders of the European OEP governance group, policy makers, persons from management and administration, educational professionals, and learners, all from the HE sector as well as from the AE sector.

- OPAL improved the quality of education and training by identifying outstanding Open Educational Practices, products and processes through self-assessment & peer-review, and making them publicly available through the European Open Educational Quality Clearinghouse. With this action, OPAL encouraged the identification of good practices for OEP through a set of studies and the vivid exchange of good practices through good-practice-guidelines, an open repository of resources, and an award for the most innovative use of OEPs in HE and AE.
- OPAL directly supports several policy objectives from the Education and Training 2010 policy framework:
  - Enhancing quality of higher education (Erasmus Mundus),
  - Enhancing quality and transparency for lifelong learning provision,
  - Enhancing accessibility to high quality learning resources and
  - Using ICT as facilitator for innovation and enhanced quality for HE and AE.
- The project contributed directly to the transversal area by addressing two separate educational sectors (HE and AE) and by working towards a quality and innovation framework of open educational resources and Open Educational Practices.

## 2. Project Approach

Although Open Educational Resources (OER) are high on the agenda of social and inclusion policies and supported by many stakeholders of the educational sphere, their use in higher education (HE) and adult education (AE) has not yet reached the critical threshold. We understood this posing an obstacle to a seamless provision of high quality learning resources and practices for citizens' lifelong learning efforts. We saw the main reason in the fact that the current focus in OER is mainly put on building more access to digital content but there is little consideration of whether the pure availability of resources will support educational practices and promote quality and innovation in teaching and learning. The project OPAL, therefore, extended the focus beyond 'access' to 'innovative open educational practices' (OEP). OEPs are defined as practices which support the (re)use and production of OERs through institutional policies, promote innovative pedagogical models, and respect and empower learners as co-producers on their lifelong learning path. OEPs address the whole OER governance community: policy makers, managers & administrators of organisations, educational professionals, and learners.

		OER Usage		
		Low No OER (re-) usage	Medium OER (re-)usage or creation	High OER (re-)usage and creation
<b>Learning Architecture</b>	<b>High</b> Social practices, Collaboration, Sharing (Reflection in action), <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• „open“ objectives</li> <li>• „open“ methods</li> </ul>	A	B	C
	<b>Medium</b> Dialog, Procedures, Rules (Know-how) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• „closed“ objectives</li> <li>• „open“ methods</li> </ul>	D	E	F
	<b>Low</b> Knowledge transmission (Know that) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• „closed“ objectives</li> <li>• „closed“ methods</li> </ul>	G	H	I

**Figure 1:** The Open Educational Practices Matrix

The Open Educational Practices Matrix, displayed in Figure 1, suggests different degrees of openness in the usage and creation of open educational resources. The span ranges from “no usage” or “OER usage” to “OER (re-)usage and creation”. With these three stages, the scale covers different realities within organisations and/or individual learning behaviour. This dimension of openness in resource usage and creation is set in relation to a dimension of pedagogical practice. The dimension of pedagogical practice is subdivided into three degrees of openness, which represent different stages of openness in teaching and learning frameworks. While there is currently no agreed differentiation on classification levels of “openness” for pedagogical models available, research suggests different aspects of openness of freedom in teaching and learning frameworks. The approach, which we adopted to classify pedagogical models and learning activities regarding their openness follows largely Baumgartner's (2007)<sup>1</sup> approach: teacher – tutor - coach. However, other alternative approaches to classifying learning activities have been taken into account, like the one from Laurillard (1993)<sup>2</sup>, who comes to very similar conclusions. and the approach of Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen (2004)<sup>3</sup> who suggest defining learning metaphors along acquisition, participation and knowledge creation. In our own approach, we also considered the results of the comprehensive analysis of Mayes and. de Freitas (2004)

<sup>1</sup> Baumgartner, P. (2007): Zen and the Art of teaching. Communication and interaction in education. Hagen.

<sup>2</sup> Laurillard, D. (1993): Rethinking University Teaching: A Framework for the Effective Use of Educational Technology, London, New York: Routledge

<sup>3</sup> Paavola, S., Lipponen, L., & Hakkarainen, K. (2004). Models of Innovative Knowledge Communities and Three Metaphors of Learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(4), 557-576.

of for JISC<sup>4</sup>. Following this analysis, pedagogical levels of “freedom” or “openness” have been conceptualized:

- “Low” if objectives as well as methods of learning and/or teaching are rooted in “closed” (only in one way direction), transmissive and reproductive approaches to teaching and learning. In these contexts, the underlying belief is that teachers know what learners have to learn and mainly focus on knowledge-transfer.
- “Medium” represents a stage in which objectives are still pre-determined and given, but methods of teaching and learning are represented as open pedagogical models. They encourage dialogue-oriented forms of learning or problem based learning (PBL) focusing on dealing with developing “Know how”.
- “High” degrees of freedom and openness in pedagogical models are represented, if objectives of learning as well as methods (e. g., learning pathways) are highly determined and governed by learners. Questions or problems around which learning is ensuing are determined by learners (SRL: self regulated learning<sup>5</sup>), and teachers facilitate through open and experience-oriented methods which accommodate different learning pathways, either through scaffolding and tutorial interactions (Vygotskian inspired approaches) or contingency tutoring (Woods & Woods strategies of re-enforcement, domain or temporal contingency).

OEPs are defined as practices within the trajectory, which is delimited by both dimensions: openness in resource usage and creation vs. openness in pedagogical models. Both dimensions can help individuals and organisations to self-assess and position their respective context.

With the reached project outcomes, that we described in paragraph 1, OPAL proved to be of high relevance to the priorities of the European further development in LLL because it

- i) analysed and peer-reviewed the impact of OEP and the use of OER,
- ii) established and provided guidelines for quality and innovation through OEP, which are agreed by a multi-stakeholder European environment,
- iii) raised the potential to reconnect groups at risk-of-exclusion to high quality OEP, and
- iv) established a Consultative Body to foster further wider educational policy goals such as quality, inclusion and efficiency.

Furthermore, the project is relevant to EU policies in LLL because the use of OER in HE and AE has not yet reached a critical threshold. This is mainly due to a focus on 'access issues' and not a change in focus from 'resources' to 'practices'. This has been argued to pose an obstacle to a seamless provision of high quality learning resources and practices for citizens' LLL biography, especially between HE and AE. Therefore, OPAL has been supporting OEP in HE and AE with a better quality and innovative educational practices, establishing a European Consultative Group which worked towards feeding a quality and innovation agenda into existing OER initiatives, and has elevated the projects results onto a EU level of perception. The OPAL study analyses motivators and barriers for OEP from a holistic perspective taking into account views of the OEP governance community. Guidelines for peer-review of practices have been linked into the EU Open Educational Quality Clearinghouse, the EU Charter on Quality and Innovation through OEP has been established and also, a register of joining organisations, and finally, an Innovation Award to support Institutions with outstanding OEPs.

Taking all this into account, OPAL proved to be innovative in at least three regards:

- i) It extended the model of OER with the concepts of quality and innovation into the concept of Open Educational Practices (OEP) where OER are used in innovative educational scenarios to raise quality for HE and AE. Research and experiences show that the uptake of OER demands for a culture of sharing, valuing innovative and social network based forms of learning, and encouraging novel pedagogical models. OPAL combined the concept of OER with the concept of quality and innovation to a new concept, i. e., OEP: Open Educational Practices, which support the (re)use and production of OERs through institutional policies, promote innovative pedagogical models, and learners' empowerment.

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<sup>4</sup> Mayes, T. & de Freitas, S. (2004): Stage 2: Review of e-learning theories, frameworks and models. JISC desk research study. Retrieved on 2010, November 17, from <http://www.elearning.ac.uk/resources/modelsdeskreview/>

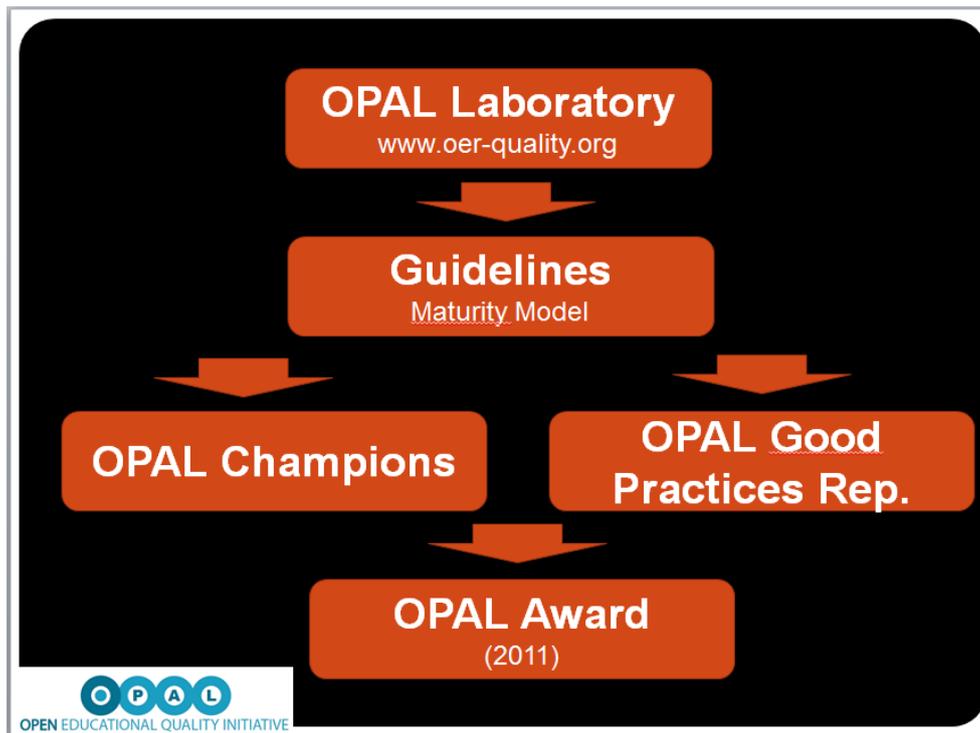
<sup>5</sup> Carneiro, R., Lefrere, P., Steffens, K., & Underwood, J. (Ed.) (2010), *Self-regulated Learning in Technology Enhanced Learning Environments: A European Perspective*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

- ii) It has been focussing on innovation and quality through OEP and thus aimed at the impact of OER-usage in the field of HE and AE. Existing approaches for fostering the use of OER have made achievements by focussing on building access to resources (e. g., MERLOT, MIT OCW, Stanford iTunes, Openlearn of OUUK, Rice University's Opentrain, UNESCO's OER WIKI,, etc.) and licence models (e. g., creativecommons.org). However, a lack of trust, little existing sharing cultures, and acceptance on educators' side hinder OER usage and better access. OPAL built trust by establishing an EU Environment for Quality and Innovation through OEP in the field of HE and AE.
- iii) OPAL built an EU multi-stakeholder environment, which is taking into consideration the OEP governance community in order to root quality and innovation in a deep consensus, concert European activities and provide a European interface to international initiatives. While existing OER initiatives gather large provider institutions of high reputation mostly from outside of the EU (s. above), OPAL proposed for the first time to create an EU multi-stakeholder group of organisations, learners, policy makers and professionals to promote OEP sustainably.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

OPAL focused on four major outcomes and products, which have been developed and put in practice in the project's runtime (see Figure 2):

1. Open Educational Practices Guidelines: the Guidelines serve stakeholders to improve their OEP portfolio by being able to position themselves on a maturity scale and assess their improvement potential for using OER to improve learning and teaching.
2. The OEP Clearinghouse, which is an online Good Practice Case Box.
3. The OEP register in which champion institutions in the field of OEP can present their achievements.
4. The OPAL Award, which awards outstanding achievements in the field of OEP.



**Figure 2:** The main milestones during the OPAL project's runtime

Efforts have been made to ensure the efficient use of resources in the project. Thus, e. g., no meeting hosting fees have been generated, since partners used their own facilities. Further on, the number of face-to-face meetings could have been minimised through the regular/frequent implementation of virtual meetings. The existing commitment of partners to continue working with the topic in terms of promoting a quality label also meant that the project had a much higher probability to seed a quality movement from the start, rather than being a self-contained two year exercise.

OPAL has been supporting the use of OEP in HE and AE towards a better quality and innovative educational practices: Thus, OPAL will have a high impact in particular in the following fields:

- Providing leadership and orientation in the field of OEP in EU through establishment of the EU Consultative Group on OEP
- Better coordination of fragmented initiatives in the field of OER in EU and improved liaison with existing international initiatives in order to propose to them an EU agenda on innovation and quality
- Higher level of integration of learning policies with social inclusion policies through the theme of opening educational resources and practices for all
- Leading role for EU in the field of OEP through a coordinated approach across member states

- Improved EU policy development in the field of OEP for HE & AE, guiding organisations to mainstream OEP in their organisations
- Integration of pedagogical innovation and improved quality through OEP in learning provision of HE and AE
- Increased multilateral cooperation between HE & AE institutions aimed at OER and OEP quality assurance
- Improved trust in the value and validity of OEP, also in degree awarding institutions through validated guidelines addressing institutional OEP stakeholders (OEP governance community) in HE and AE, and through setting up the EU Register for OEP organisations and OER
- Better insight into the organisational governance of OEP through a series of experts' panel studies with successful EU organisations resulting into recommendations and guidelines which are fed into a peer-review system for organisations, resources and an EU level award
- Increased integration of OEP policies into HE and AE institutions

The impact of the project is directed to

- strengthening the OEP governance community in HE and AE (i. e., those stakeholders involved in the creation and management of OEP), as well as
- to EU level, national or institutional policies promoting OEP, or benefitting from use of OEP.

The project produced the following publicly available products, which can be found on and downloaded of the project's website (Table 1):

Deliverable N°	Title	Language version(s)*	Target Language(s)	Delivery Date*	Nature*	Dissemination level*
D3.1	<b>Desk research and case study identification</b>	Eng,		15 Apr 2010	Report	Public
D3.2	<b>Web-based OEP Quality Monitor</b>	Eng,		15 May 2010	Service/Product	Public
D3.3	<b>European Study on OEP acceptance and quality</b>	Eng,		31 Jul 2010	Report	Public
D3.4	<b>Report on the Panel Studies</b>	Eng		19.12.2011	Report	Public
D4.0	<b>Master Quality Guidelines – comprehensive document</b>	Eng		14.12.2011	Service/Product	Public
D4.1	<b>OEP Quality and Innovation Guidelines "Policy"</b>	Eng,		15 Feb 2011	Service/Product	Public
D4.2	<b>OEP Quality and Innovation Guidelines "Management"</b>	Eng,		15 Feb 2011	Service/Product	Public
D4.3	<b>OEP Quality and Innovation Guidelines "Profess."</b>	Eng,		15 Feb 2011	Service/Product	Public
D4.4	<b>OEP Quality and Innovation Guidelines "Learners"</b>	Eng,		15 Feb 2011	Service/Product	Public
D5.2	<b>Roadmap for quality and innovation through OER</b>	Eng,		30 Sep 2010	Report	Public
D5.3	<b>Whitepaper 1 "OEP &amp; Social Inclusion"</b>	Eng,		15 Oct 2010	Other	Public
D5.4	<b>Whitepaper 2 "Policy Support OEP"</b>	Eng,		15 Oct 2011	Other	Public
D6.2	<b>EU Charter for Quality and Innovation through OEP</b>	eng,		15 Oct 2010	Other	Public
D6.3	<b>Self-Assessment for OEP Register "Organisations"</b>	eng,		15 Nov 2010	Service/Product	Public
D6.4	<b>Assessment framework for OEP</b>	eng,		15 Jan 2011	Service/Product	Public
D6.1/	<b>European Register Devel-</b>	eng,		15 Jan	Service/Pro	Public

D6.5	<b>opment &amp; Framework for OECH</b>			2011	duct	
D7.4	<b>First OEP Award and Sustainability Concept</b>	eng,		1 Dec 2011	Report	Public
D8.2	<b>WebSite and OER WIKI</b>	eng,		15 Apr 2010	Service/Product	Public
D8.3	<b>OPAL Publications</b>	eng,		15 Dec 2011	Report	Public
D8.4	<b>OPAL Newsletter Compendium</b>	eng,		15 Dec 2011	Other	Public
D8.5	<b>Workshop reports</b>	eng,		15 Dec 2011	Report	Public
D8.6	<b>Dissemination Materials</b>	eng,		31 Dec 2011	Other	Public

**Table 1:** Public deliverables of the OEP project

### 3.1 Website

The project website has been built a hub for information in the field of OER and open education. A regular flow of information helped to attract a growing number of users.

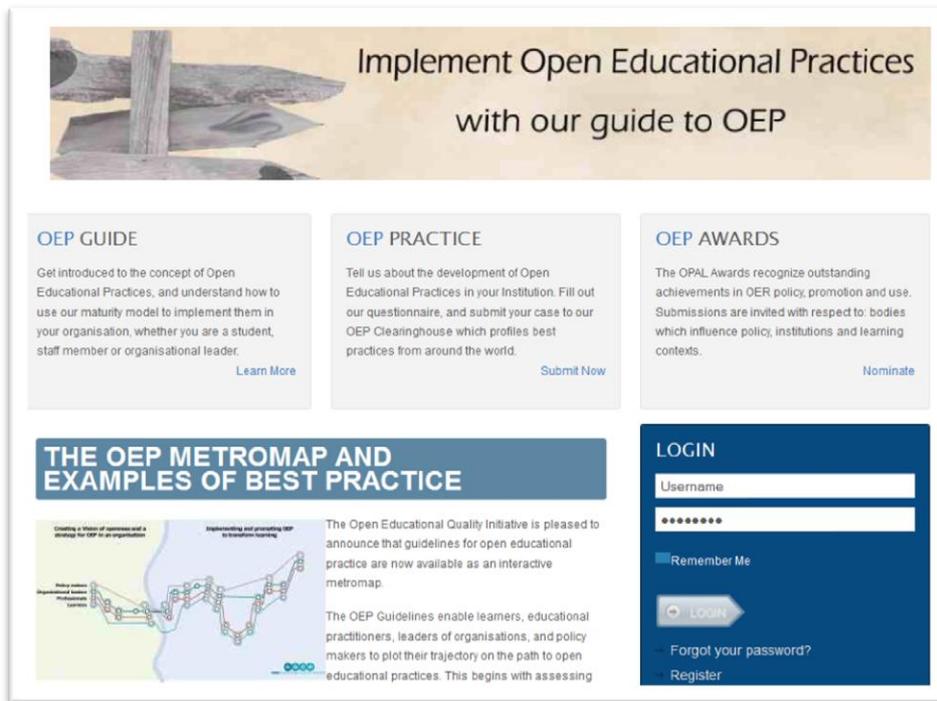


Figure 3: Screenshot of [www.oer-quality.org](http://www.oer-quality.org)

### 3.2 Clearinghouse

The OPAL Clearinghouse is the catalogue of good practices. Each practice, which has been contributed has been checked and reviewed for clarity and language as well as comprehensiveness.



Figure 4: Screenshot of OPAL Clearinghouse

### 3.3 Register for Organisations supporting OEP

The register was attractive to more than 120 organisations to register their data and express support to the idea of OEP. More than 45 organisations also turned in a complete self-assessment.



Figure 5: Screenshot of OPAL Register

### 3.4 The OPAL Award

The OPAL award was awarded in December 2011 before the project came to its end. It was organised through a set of 3 international juries which awarded an OPAL award in 3 categories and also present highly commended cases in these categories.



Figure 6: Screenshot of OPAL Award winners 2012

### 3.5 The public dissemination and networking events

The OPAL initiative launched a series of seminars and workshops throughout the entire project time, both online and face-to-face.

Start date	Event	Place	Number (views, participants (X+ = figures from old website))
01. Jan 10	Publishing material to OEP Facebook page	Facebook	
01. Jan 10	Setting up and maintaining the OPAL website	OPAL website	
01. Jan 10	Posting content to the OPAL website	OPAL website	
01. Apr 10	Introductory video on concept of OEP on website	OPAL website	380
3-May-2010	UNESCO Workshop on OER	Windhoek, NA	50
9-May-2010	Consultation exercise: on a review of OER case studies and associated Open Educational Practices	Cloudworks	1749
26-May-2010	Spotlight topic 1: Shifting from resources to practices	Cloudworks	1092
06. Jun 10	Spotlight topic 2: The Big Shift?	Cloudworks	813
07. Jun 10	Spotlight topic 3: Open Educational Practices and Generativism	Cloudworks	707
09. Jun 10	Workshop Quality and Innovation in Open Educational Practice at the EDEN 2010 Annual Conference	Valencia, SP	30
01. Jul 10	Survey on Open Educational Practices	Email invitation distribution	37000
08. Sep 10	Consultative Group meeting	Lisbon, PT	25
09. Sep 10	Parallel Session: How can open educational practices contribute to better inclusion, innovation and excellence in education? At EFQUEL Innovation Forum	Lisbon, PT	40
2-Oct-2010	E-learning Expo	Athens, Greece	3000
02. Nov 10	Open Ed 2010 - EADTU Workshop on Quality	Bareclona, SP	45
05. Nov 10	Consultative Group meeting	Barcelona, SP	11
08. Nov 10	OPAL Research Workshop @ UNESCO Paris	Paris, FR	31
15. Nov 10	International Conference of Education Research	Madrid, ES	600+
1-Dec-2010	OPAL 1/2 day workshop at Online Educa including presentation of draft guidelines for OEP and initial presentation of clearing house and register	Berlin, DE	50
1-Dec-2010	Publish EU Charter for Quality and Innovation through OEP	Online	58+
01. Jan 11	OPAL newsletters		
15. Feb 11	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIUNESCOE) and Association for Learning Technology seminar: Free and Open Educational Resources - Electronic treasure chest or irrelevance to adult learners?	Leicester, UK	30
15. Feb 11	Education 2011-2021 Summit	Sydney, AU	200
23. Feb 11	OER Foundation Open Planning Meeting	Dunedin, NZ	
3-Mar-2011	Seminar: Open Educational Culture and Open Educational Practices	Lund, SE	150
11-Mar-2011	From Open Educational Resources to Open Educational Practices, "Barriers and Motivators for Using OER in Schools" and editorial in elearning papers journal		10453
17-Mar-2011	OEP Guide Launch (Guidelines for Open Educational Practice		
18-Mar-2011	elearningeuropa.info forum: Open Education: Changing Educational Practices	Online	
23-Mar-2011	3rd eduhub days 2011, Switzerland	Lugano, ICDE	
23-Mar-2011	Switzerland national e-learning conference: eduhub days	Online	50
06. Apr 11	ITK	Hämeenlinna, FI	200
06. Apr 11	Plymouth e-Learning Conference	Plymouth, UK	20
07. Apr 11	Estonia keynote workshop	Tartu, ES	40

Start date	Event	Place	Number (views, participants (X+ = figures from old website))
13. Apr 11	5th Learning Futures Festival, University of Leicester	Online	500
20. Apr 11	Moodle moot	London, UK	200
9-May-2011	Ongoing marketing of OPAL Awards		
25-May-2011	Consultative Group meeting (1a)	Webinar	30
26-May-2011	iUNIG Conference on OER	Graz, AU	100
27-May-2011	Ongoing marketing of OEP register for organizations		
06. Jun 11	International Conference "New Dynamics of Language Learning: Spaces and Places – Intentions and Opportunities"	Jyväskylä, FI	40
06. Jun 11	Launch assessment framework for clearing house OER and OEP (web event)		
07. Jun 11	Consultative Group meeting (1b)	Webinar	20
13. Jun 11	Launch of OPAL Awards		
15. Jun 11	CISTI 2011 - 6th Iberian Conference on Information Systems and Technologies	Chaves, PT	
16. Jun 11	EADTU event @ UNESCO	Paris, FR	
19. Jun 11	2011 Annual EDEN Conference	Dublin, Ireland	20+30
21. Jun 11	OPAL Workshop in cooperation with OERTest and CONCEDE project @ EDEN Conference	Dublin, IE	30
23. Jun 11	Policy seminar (workshop) 1 to validate roadmap for quality and innovation through OER and whitepapers at EDEN Conference	Dublin, IE	
27. Jun 11	ED-MEDIA 2011-World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications	Lisbon, PT	35 / UCP keynote - 80
11. Jul 11	OPAL launches Oxford debate	Online	
20. Jul 11	IADIS International Conference E-Learning 2011	Rome, IT	40+ 35 + 200 flyers
06. Sep 11	18th international conference of the Association for Learning Technology	Leeds, UK	??? Ulf
14. Sep 11	OPAL workshop at EFQUEL Innovation Forum with oer test	Oeiras, PT	
25. Sep 11	The Fourteenth Cambridge International Conference on Open, Distance and e-Learning 2011	Cambridge, UK	
29. Sep 11	2nd International e-Learning Conference,	Belgrade, Serbia	
1-Oct-2011	Compendium of OPAL newsletters		
1-Oct-2011	Publish whitepaper 2 "Policy support OEP"		
1-Oct-2011	Compendium of workshop reports		
1-Oct-2011	Compendium of dissemination materials		
2-Oct-2011	24th ICDE World Conference	Bali, ID	600
12-Oct-2011	OPAL Consultative Group meeting Nr. 3	Online	
12-Oct-2011	The OPAL OXFORD Debate - Mainstreaming the use of Open Educational Practices (OEP) will really transform education	Online	50 initiatives
18-Oct-2011	OPAL Consultative Group meeting Nr. 4	Online	
01. Nov 11	Policy seminar 2 (workshop) to validate roadmap for quality and innovation through OER and whitepapers at UNESCO.	Paris, FR	500 OPAL flyers
30. Nov 11	Online Educa	Berlin, DE	
1-Dec-2011	Presentation of OEP Awards		
1-Dec-2011	Round up of results of OPAL at Online Educa Berlin		
1-Dec-2011	Open access compendium to summarize findings of OPAL		

Table 2: OPAL workshops and seminars between 2010 and 2011

## 4. Partnerships

The OPAL consortium proved to be well balanced with 7 Partners from 7 countries, composed of some of EU's leading universities, international organisations, and associations in the field of Quality (UDE, EFQUEL), OER (UDE, OUUK Openlearn, UNESCO OERInitiative, ICDE), from HE (UDE, OUUK, UCP) and AE (AALTO, UCP). It comprised extensive networks through UDE, EFQUEL (120 members organisations + 5 European networks), ICDE (more than 600 international members, incl. all MEGAuniversities) and UNESCO's network in education and OER.

All partners showed consolidated experience in EU project work and in extra EU-international collaboration and guaranteed capacity to implement their work-plan. The OPAL consortium resulted into the following strengths:

1. The partnership was a multi-disciplinary team of leading researchers in the field of Quality (UDE, EFQUEL, AALTO) and OER (OUUK, UNESCO, ICDE) across Europe.
2. Coverage of the HE sector as well as the AE sector: The consortium consisted of strong partners from both fields (UDE, OUUK, UPC for HE and AALTO, UCP for AE).
3. The partnership brought together leading expertise in the domains of quality and innovation for learning, and build on a sound methodology, since the project partners had been involved in several projects and initiatives dedicated to quality assurance and management of e-learning, as well as innovation into HE and AE (e. g., UDE: Q.E.D., EQO, Triangle; AALTO: UNIQM; UCP: Learnovation RT)
4. The partnership proved to have a high capacity to organise high level events and to involve key policy and research actors, stakeholders, and the public at large (UDE, EFQUEL, UNESCO, ICDE).
5. The expertise in the specific processes that were covered in the OPAL project were contributed: e. g., desk research, organising surveys, and qualitative survey panels, running pilot experiences, identifying and exchanging good practices, as well as building consensus and sustainability around project activities, dissemination, valorisation, and exploitation.
6. Representative coverage: The consortium represented different areas of the EU and of different educational sectors.

### 4.1 Extending the Partnership

The project partnership used its networking capacity to full extend. For all network events, all partners tried to reach out to their own contact networks and drew from them the interested experts or organisations to take part and/or give feedback to the OPAL outcomes. In particular the well-designed tool of the OER Consultative Group has been proved a valuable resource of feedback. The consultative group was meeting two times in year 1, and afterwards decided to hold webinars for year 2, in order to also reach out to other region of the world, such as the Asian-Pacific, the African and the North-/South American contexts. Therefore the partnership committed to organise the double number of consultative group meetings in year 2. Two webinars were held for the European, Middle East and African region and two webinars were organised taking into account the time zone of Pacific and US west coast.

## 5. Plans for the Future

The OPAL project has been a start of a cluster of initiatives, followed by a number of activities and actions, which still continue, amongst them,

- the OERTest project, starting on 2011, January 1<sup>st</sup>, and building directly on the results and partnerships of OPAL
- The CoL/UNESCO OER Guidelines which were published together with the OPAL Guidelines in Summer 2011

The project's direct outcomes in terms of tools and applications will now be sustainably hosted by the coordinator as well as by the European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning. Those tools and downloadable concept documents comprise:

- Open Educational Quality Clearinghouse: A best practices case box online in which users can contribute their own experiences, ideas and concepts. The entries will be reviewed and presented online in a growing repository of success stories in the future..
- Register of Champion organisations in the field of Open Educational Practices: An online database in which organisations can contribute their achievements in the field of Open Educational Practices. The practices can be contributed in form of a self-assessment and will further on be peer reviewed.
- Website ([www.oer-quality.org](http://www.oer-quality.org)): The website will continuously be extended and further developed.
- Guidelines for Open Educational Practices are published in an online space for learners, educational professionals, organisational leaders and policy makers (on the project's website).
- The whitepaper for higher educational institutions leaders keeps available on the project's website
- The whitepaper for policy makers keeps available on the project's website

In addition, the Consultative Group of OPAL will be carried over into 2012. The members have been asked and agreed to continue meeting in 2 webinars and in the frame of an extended Special Interest group, meeting in September 2012, co-located to the EFQUEL Innovation Forum.

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

OPAL has involved around 50 organisational leaders and policy makers into a continuous dialogue and activities around the theme of OEP in EU and beyond. In addition, more than 60 case studies, 120 organisations and more than 100 individuals have contributed the data to the initiative which has processed them into open an educational practice maturity framework. This has contributed to building an EU OEP Quality Environment: Guidelines and consultation for individuals, organisations and policy makers, helping them to define, identify and develop quality for and through OEP. The uptake of OEP will foster coherence in EU's HE & AE sectors and support the Bologna Process.

The project and its concepts have proved of carrying significant EU added value since they have been set into the environment composed by several intertwined EU policies, and in particular aimed to contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon goals, the i2010 initiative, and the Bologna process:

1. The initiative has been composed and has had interaction with the leading universities, international organisations and quality assurance organisations representing different EU countries, networks, sectors and organisational cultures. In this respect, it mirrors the development of OER, which is inherently established by transnational open collaborative work at European and global level.
2. EU and international openness has been part of the mission and core activities of all partners. Most project partners had before already been active in several EU projects and initiatives dealing with quality assurance (in projects, like Q-Cert-VET, EQO, TRIANGLE, SEEQUEL, QMPP, QUAL-C, HEXTLEARN) and OER (in projects like Openlearn Initiative of the OUUK, OER Initiative of the UNESCO).
3. The initiative showed the hesitation of national actors and organisations on national level to commit to OEP in a situation where no nationwide or EU level support for openness in education existed. Trust and acceptance of OEP in HE and AE can only be supported, if good practices, quality guidelines and innovation potential, their transferability and scalability are investigated at EU level (and beyond). In that regard the project contributed a large catalogue of detailed best practices through the best practice Clearinghouse.
4. OPAL has clearly supported the building of an EU LLL arena through a collection of good practices for OEPs. This will lead to further improved provision of and trust in OEP, foster social inclusion through access to OER – both demanded by EU policy and not yet achieved on an EU level.
5. The project finally looked into an important direction and provided services in the field of quality: The improvement of quality of OER and innovation through OEP is not a national or sectorial challenge, but it is a truly pan-EU and international one which had so far not received sufficient attention before the OPAL project.