Despite a strong rhetoric on equity and access, there is still substantial disequilibrium in the production and availability of OER. These include concerns related to geographical region and language. There has been a consistent concern in regards to a possible form of neocolonialism, with some regions (particularly English-speaking countries) producing while others simply consume open resources. While there is evidence of disparities (Cobo, 2013) and a general sense that Open Education and OER are still in “early stages” in places like Latin America (Yang & Kinshuk, 2017).

In this presentation we will discuss a project aimed to map and increase the visibility of OE/OER in the Global South. The OER World Map was used as a means for the Latin America and South Africa to come together, organizing an methodology that can be shared and reworked. The project revolved around identifying organizations, projects, services and policies in the following countries: Argentina, Brazil (update) Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic, Uruguay. Additionally, the project also included a branch in South Africa. The mapping was carried out on two fronts, with support from assistants and researchers in South America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Uruguay) and South Africa. Out of this coordination, a network has been built, engaging professors, students and activists from both continents.

Phase 01 was composed by the review of projects already published on the Map. The review covered countries involved in the project, and done by the each country’s respective team (apart from Brazil, whose researcher was in charge of reviewing Brazil and the remaining South American countries) The entries were complemented with new metadata where necessary and, in some cases, flagged for deletion. Each step of this first phase was supervised by the project's coordinator and, if necessary, followed by workshops and online classes where the researchers were able to have in-depth discussions on the technical and conceptual aspects of the OER, metadata and mapping.

Next, the students were responsible for revising the work of their fellow researchers, with their work being cross examined by a different country’s team. Through this step, further corrections and revisions were made where necessary. The exception was the South African leg of the project, where due to language barriers the revision was made by the students' university supervisor along with the project's coordinator.

During Phase 02, the researchers were engaged in the collection of new data to be added to the map. The researchers from Argentina, Colombia and Uruguay were encouraged to reach out to experts from their countries, as well as to engage in data gathering through web search and the investigation of institutional databases. In the case of the Brazilian branch, the student was oriented to collect data in countries that seemed to be under-represented on the map, like Bolivia and Cuba. The objective was twofold: on the one hand, the Map would be updated and new projects would be brought to light; on the other hand, by reaching out to experts in their countries the students would bring their communities closer to the Map project, building up connections and strengthening open education networks both nationally and internationally. Finally, the students were asked to review their experience and to write a short report presenting both their findings as well as a self-evaluation.

From this experience, the researchers were able to collect new data on OER projects and add them to the Map (Figure 1), as well as gaining a better understanding of the mechanics of data gathering and validation. The collaborative work among the young researchers provided an opportunity to learn about and enact practices surrounding OER, in addition to being a training effort on the different dynamics of open education initiatives, allowed for a comparative experience of the realities between their countries.
The work of reviewing and correcting the data initially provided in the OER World Map had, at first, a small number of projects mapped. From the cross-review and accompanying work, the researchers developed collective tools and strategies for researching and mapping OER initiatives.

The results of updating data were significant. In only two cases, Ecuador (with 5 projects listed) and Panama (1 project), there were no new projects mapped besides those already available in the Map. In the case of Colombia, for example, entries increased from 13 to 61. In Argentina, the number doubled to 16; in Uruguay, the numbers went from 4 to 22; Chile, from 32 to 34; Dominican Republic, from 08 to 12; Peru, from 29 to 33; Mexico, from 37 to 43; and Costa Rica, from 04 to 05. In South Africa, 28 projects were initially reviewed, and 07 were added.

Specially noteworthy were the findings in the case of two countries seen as underrepresented on the map: Cuba and Bolivia. In both cases, previously to the mapping there were no initiatives listed in the database. After the research done by the project's team, Cuba jumped from 0 to 28; Bolivia, from 0 to 26.

In relation to the original numbers, it was possible to find new communities and initiatives not yet filtered, in an effort that allowed enriching both the database and the variety of projects, and building new networks from the initiative mapping work. The network of students is still active, acting as ‘ambassadors’ in the region and their respective countries and we hope new students can be recruited to continue and expand the ongoing work.
