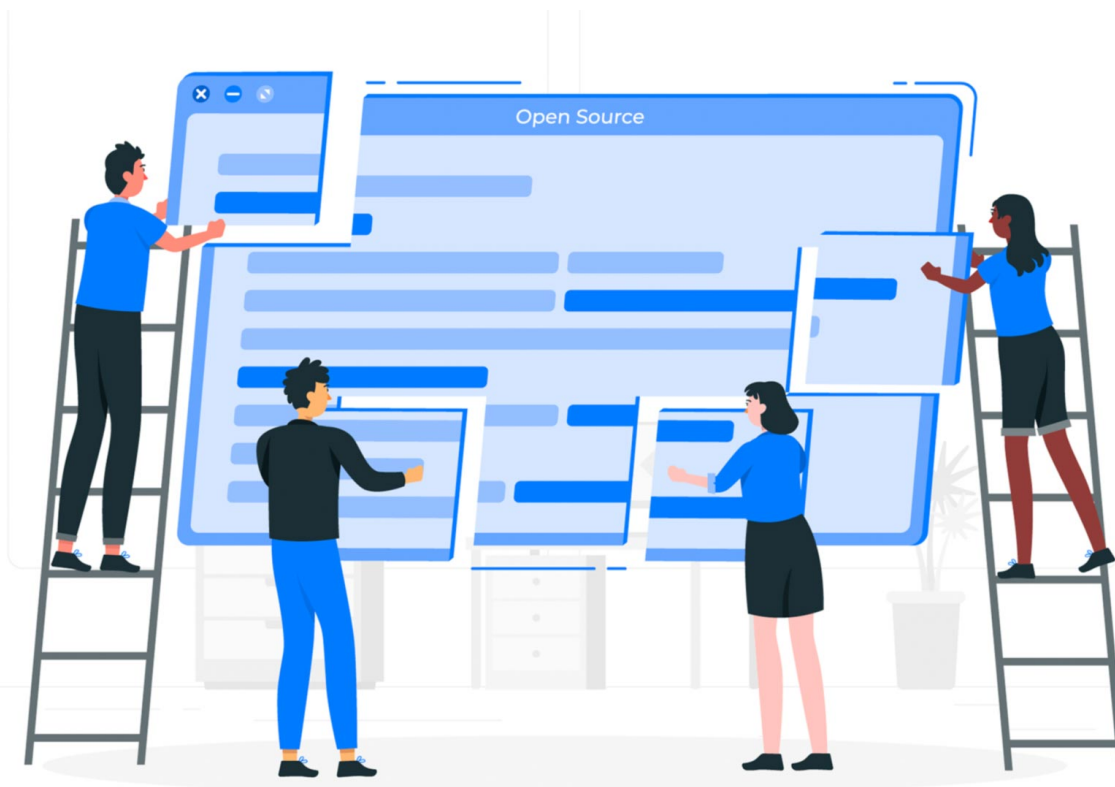# What are open-access Tec resources and why did they get an award?

A **PhD student** and a **teacher** from **Tec de Monterrey** have been **recognized** by an international organization that awards prizes for **open-access educational resources**.

Antonio Canchola, a student on the **Educational Innovation PhD** program, and **María Soledad Ramírez,** a research professor at the **School of Humanities and Education,** have received **Open Education (OE) Awards** in different categories.

These awards are given to initiatives or projects that **promote free worldwide access** to **educational resources** by **Open Education Global**, a non-profit organization promoting **open-access educational resources**.

Two initiatives developed by members of the Tec de Monterrey community were given OE Awards.

A unique Latin American knowledge bank

Antonio Canchola received an Open Repositories **Excellence Award** at the **OE Awards 2020** for creating the **Latin American Educational Calls Bank (RELACE).**

This is a **website** where around a thousand **calls** from **20** Latin American **countries, have been shared** for **conferences**, educational **sessions**, **seminars, workshops,** and **talks.**

"It is totally free; *no one has to register,"* said Canchola, who works together with a **team** of **15 people**, called **curators**, who approve the calls.

*"The curators are **people** focused on **education** who work at **Latin American** universities. There are people from **Tec** de Monterrey, **Ibero**, the **University of Venezuela**, etc.,"* he added.

RELACE was created in **2019** and has received more than **50,000 visits** through the end of 2020.

The project has been funded by Canchola himself, who says that he is **proud** to be **helping** people and happy to see the interest in **RELACE**.

*"So far, there is nothing similar **in Mexico** and **Latin America**. We are the **only bank** of **calls like this,"*** Canchola shared.

Antonio Canchola is the creator of RELACE.

The first to respond to a UNESCO recommendation

María Ramírez received an award in the **Implementation** of **Open-Access Educational Resources Objectives** category at the OE Awards, the first time the category has been included at the awards.

The work was carried out as a result of **recommendations** made by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).**

These inspired the **development** and **exchange** of didactic materials with an **open-access license**, which are available to teachers, students, and researchers from all over the world.

The project, led by **Ramírez** along with **70 other academics** from **11 countries**, resulted in **14 projects** and videos which can now be found in the **Tec's institutional archives**.

*"We were the **first** in the **world** to work on these **projects**. That is why they gave us the award: we were the first to follow **UNESCO recommendations**,"* said the professor.

María Ramírez began working on **open-access resources** in **2002** and has even created a Tec **policy** promoting open-access educational resources.

*"The first thing we did in **2002** was provide **open-access courses**. We do **research**, do **experiments**, and then we apply our knowledge at the **Tec**,"* said Ramírez.

María Ramírez's project is one of the first in the world to meet UNESCO recommendations.

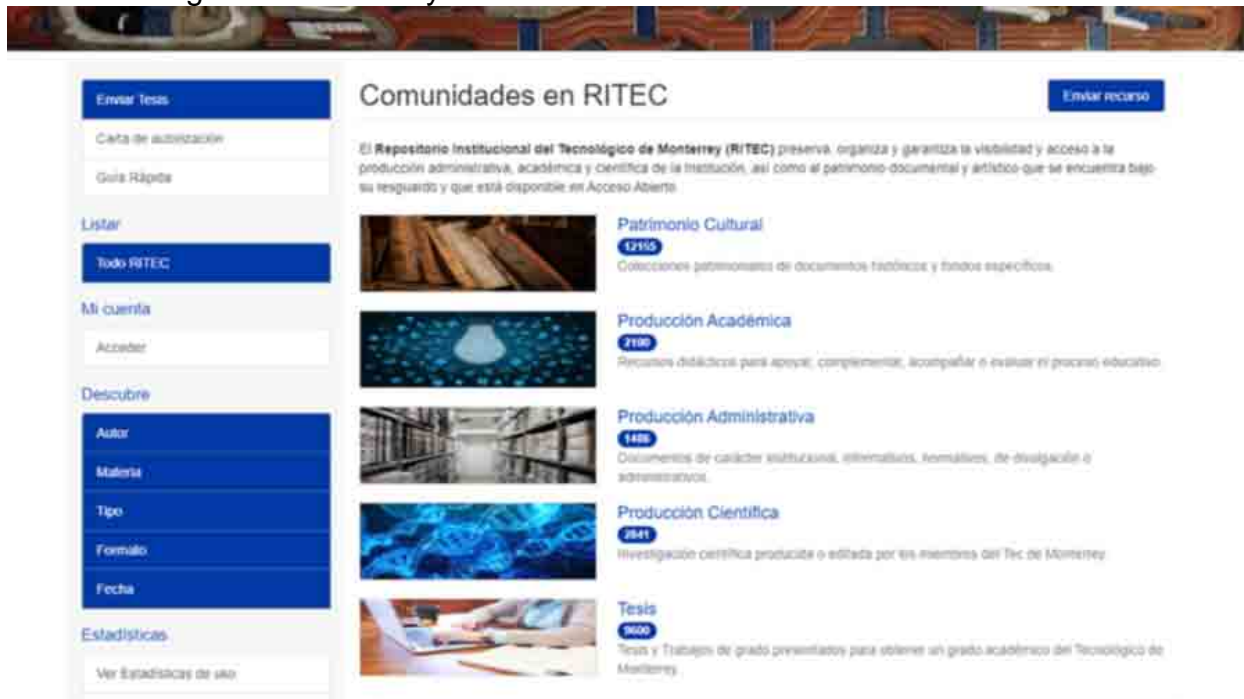**Why are open-access resources so important for education?**

Antonio Canchola and **María Ramírez** explain that **open-access educational resources** are very **important** for the development of **education** and **research** around the world**.**

*"**Open-access educational resources** appeared as a result of the economic pressure of purchasing educational materials. If you need a book about medicine or physics, they are sometimes unaffordable,"* Canchola said.

The graduate student explained that this meant some **resources**, such as **exams**, **materials**, and **courses**, began to be generated for use by researchers or professors via **open-access licenses**.

These **licenses** allow the **use** and, sometimes, the **free modification** of **resources** as long as **recognition** is given to the author.

The Tecnológico de Monterrey Archives.

*"It is an **opportunity** to **democratize knowledge**. Educational resources and activities are **accessible** to **everyone without restriction**, requiring only recognition of authorship.*

*"They can be used in **classes, courses, degree programs**, and educational institutions. This movement is constantly growing bigger and bigger,"* added Ramírez.

Some **universities** and **academic bodies** not only have **archives** of **open-access resources**, but include the creation and promotion of this content in their **policies**.

Both Ramírez and Canchola mentioned that the **Tec** is the **first private university** in **Mexico** to include this concept within its policies.

The open-access resources awards

The **OE Awards** are presented **annually** to people, projects, and open resource initiatives in **4 different areas**.

- "Individuals"

These are **individual categories** which reward those who have made **extraordinary contributions** of open-access educational resources.

- "Open Assets"

This encompasses **tangible materials** and **resources** which can be **distributed** for **free** in an accessible and consistently improvable way.

2. Open Curation / Repository

An exceptional collection of high-quality OER presented after a curation process. More than merely collecting content on a specific subject, strong curation involves carefully selecting content and evaluating it for a specific purpose. Presenting it in a meaningful and organized way that can then be customized and re-shared for future users.

- "Open Practices"

This area rewards **collective behaviors** and **approaches which** improve **access** to educational **opportunities.**

- "Special prizes"

This area recognizes extraordinary **contributions** to the **community**, which may change as a result of different **factors**.

The winners receive a **trophy**, as well as the **recognition of their community** and are invited to the **awards ceremony** in November. The 2020 awards were held virtually due to the **COVID-19** pandemic.

1. Open Resilience Award

This award recognizes exemplary leadership (individual or organizational) and Open Education practices implemented in the context of COVID-19. Activities that clearly demonstrate the implementation of open education practices to address opportunities and challenges arising from COVID-19.

2. Unesco OER Implementation

This award recognizes exemplary leadership (individual or organizational) and practices to support the implementation of the Unesco OER Recommendation. **More about the Recommendation**.

"If you know of an interesting open project, initiative or idea that doesn't fit our award criteria or if you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact us at feedback@oeglobal.org.

YOU'LL DEFINITELY WANT TO READ:

https://tec.mx/en/news/national/institution/world-bank-praises-tecs-academic-adaptation-pandemic