Distance Education for Human Resource Development in Mauritius: The Way Forward
OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN SMALL STATES: WHICH MODELS?

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Mr Armoogum Parsuramen

Minister of Education
Mr Armoogum Parsuramen

Minister of Education
“This report is about distance education – sometimes called open learning. What, it may fairly be asked, can either do for Mauritius? The country is a 2000 sq. km. island with no distances. Its examination-oriented education system is tightly closed.”

Daniel, 1989
“We admire the patient manner in which Mauritians let external consultants take up their time, first to respond to questions in an interview and then to put out any fires that the consultant’s report may light. As one more in a long line of consultants to education in Mauritius we could not help thinking that the country may be making excessive use of this mechanism. A succession of consultants’ reports creates at least uncertainty, if not confusion. Furthermore, waiting for the next consultant’s report can become a substitute for local decision making and action.”

Daniel, 1989
Distance Education since 1989

What has changed / not changed?

Models for ODL in Small States

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

What next?
WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Virtual education

Open learning

Online learning

mLearning

Blended learning

Distributed education

Flexible learning

e-learning
The Wide Umbrella of ODL

Virtual education  
Open learning  
Online learning  
e-learning  
Open learning  
mLearning  
Distributed education  
Blended learning  
Flexible learning
Two types of learning activities: INDEPENDENT
Two types of learning activities:

INDEPENDENT

INTERACTIVE
The Iron Triangle

ACCESS

QUALITY

COST
# BRITAIN’S TOP NINE UNIVERSITIES

## Quality Rankings of Teaching

based on all subject assessments 1995-2003

*(Sunday Times University Guide 2003)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CAMBRIDGE</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LOUGHBOROUGH</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=</td>
<td>LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=</td>
<td>YORK</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>THE OPEN UNIVERSITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>87%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>OXFORD</td>
<td>86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>IMPERIAL COLLEGE</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ESSEX</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Proposed by Ministers from Small States at the 14th Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education, Halifax, Canada, 2000
Changing Technology

• Connectivity
Changing Technology

• Connectivity

• Open source software
Changing Technology

• Connectivity

• Open source software

• Easy storage
Changing Technology

• Connectivity
• Open source software
• Easy storage
• Mobiles
What does this do?

• Google
What does this do?

- Google
- Instant communication
What does this do?

- Google
- Instant communication
- Reproduction, distribution
What does this do?

• Google
• Instant communication
• Reproduction, distribution
• Mobility
What does this do?

• Google
• Instant communication
• Reproduction, distribution
• Mobility
• Groups
SO WHAT?

• Helps the Virtual U of SSC
• Heralds the 21\textsuperscript{st} century university
The 21\textsuperscript{st} Century University may be based on OPEN LEARNING
“modern open learning can create the collaborative intellectual spaces – virtual and real – that may define the university of the 21st century”
The Virtual University
for
Small States
of the Commonwealth
14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers

Halifax, Nova Scotia – November 2000

• The year of DEVELOPMENT
  (Millennium Declaration; Dakar Forum on EFA)
14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers
Halifax, Nova Scotia – November 2000

• The year of DEVELOPMENT
  (Millennium Declaration; Dakar Forum on EFA)

• The height of the dotcom frenzy
BUILD

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for

Small States

of the

Commonwealth

FROM THE BOTTOM UP
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WHAT?

A network of collaboration

NOT

a new institution and brand
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WHAT?
A network of collaboration

NOT
a new institution and brand

WHERE?
Wherever countries collaborate in the development of learning objects.
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HOW?

To develop collaboratively what might be difficult for any one state to do by itself

TOPICS of COMMON INTEREST:

* Professional development: Education & Health
* Tourism
* Business management, entrepreneurship
* Skills for Youth
* How to do eLearning
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“A special opportunity to develop expertise in online or eLearning”
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USEFUL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

• Better connectivity

• Open Educational Resources
The most promising innovation

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs)

= open course content, open source software and tools
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1. Identify participants and objectives
2. Identify common aims and resources
3. Develop content and systems
4. Implement with learners
WHAT NEXT FOR MAURITIUS?
OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN SMALL STATES: WHICH MODELS?

Sir John Daniel

President

Commonwealth of Learning
SUCCESES IN MAURITIUS

• ODL working well
SUCCESSES IN MAURITIUS

• ODL working well

• Collaboration effective
SUCCESSSES IN MAURITIUS

- ODL working well
- Collaboration effective
- Proactive Government
SUCCESSES IN MAURITIUS

- ODL working well
- Collaboration effective
- Proactive Government
- Open to the future
• Sharing with other countries
Partnerships and collaboration (South-South)
“your model for open and distance learning may transform your institutions in ways that position Mauritius well for the new learning environment of the 21st century”
THANK YOU!