

KENYA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Kenya has a long history of distance education. Since independence, a number of commissions and reports have highlighted ODL as an alternative mode of educational provision. For example, the Ominde Commission of 1964/65 recommended the establishment of an advisory commission on ODL; the Gachathi report of 1976 identified ODL as a way of achieving greater access to education; the Mackay report of 1981 and the Kamunge report of 1988 included the use of ODL in their recommendations. The latest Government initiative as contained in Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 recommended the establishment of an open university and the use of ODL in human resource development at all levels.

Kenya has also been a leader in distance education in East Africa. Not only did it offer distance learning programmes at home, it also provided materials and expertise to institutions in Southern Africa such as the Zimbabwe Open University. The University of Nairobi alone through its distance learning B.Sc. and B.Ed. programmes has attracted over 3000 students (2004). Some of the major providers include the Kenya Institute of Education; the Kenya Institute of Special Education; Kenyatta University; Egerton University; African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF); Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Education under school based teacher development; Kenya Methodist University; Strathmore University; and a number of cross-border institutions. In addition, the African Virtual University (AVU) runs programmes in Francophone and Anglophone Africa.

Professor Peter Kinyanjui, a distinguished Kenyan, was an education specialist at COL and subsequently a COL-Fellow. He continues to be a respected ODL stalwart on the continent. There is a Kenyan national on the COL staff.

SUMMARY

During the 2003-2006 period, COL interventions in Kenya relate to ODL policy development, capacity building in teacher training, open schooling/schoolnets, eLearning and poverty reduction. Capacity-building events have been organised within the country and staff from different institutions and

organisations have been supported to participate in training programmes and conferences in other countries.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Strengthening national commitment to ODL through partnership with COL and stakeholder involvement

Although Kenya already had a history of ODL, its ODL initiatives may not have made the maximum impact because they remained dispersed. In February 2004 the then Minister of Education, Professor George Saitoti, called for a coordinated approach and COL responded by supporting the organisation of a National Forum as a first step towards policy development in ODL.

The National Forum organised by COL in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) was held in Nairobi from 12-15 September 2004. Eighty stakeholders took part in the event. The aims of the Forum were to:

- create a general awareness and understanding of the different aspects of ODL.
- bring together the various stakeholders and share information on the different ODL initiatives in the country.
- identify strategies for providing affordable quality education.
- examine viable and appropriate ICT options.
- develop a framework for guiding policy development.

A report is available and a Sessional paper which includes ODL has been passed by parliament. An East African Consultation was held during this event and the recommendations made fed into the development of COL's Three Year Plan 2006-2009.

COL-Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (COL-PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and ICT for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

The Women in the Fishing Industry Project Trust in Kisumu received the award to enable women and other community members in the Lake Victoria region to learn about kitchen gardens and to make use of organic compost to improve their nutrition, health and economic status.

Working with international partners

COL, ComSec, UNICEF Kenya and the MOE Kenya worked together on a “Forum on Flexible Education: Reaching Nomadic Populations in Africa” which was held in Garissa, north-east Kenya as it is an area populated by nomadic tribal communities. Seventy persons attended including some from Somalia and Ethiopia.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Three workshops were organised in partnership with AMREF to produce and pilot materials for upgrading nurses from certificate to diploma level.

COL supported Schoolnet Kenya to conduct baseline research in the use of ICTs in the school sector in partnership with the MOEST.

The Kenya Institute of Education have expressed an interest in using the ODL materials developed by Kyambogo University (KYU) Kampala, Uganda and the International Extension College (IEC) with COL collaboration. (Kenya participated in the course orientation workshop at KYU.)

STAMP 2000+ materials are being uploaded by the African Virtual University on their Learning Object Repository.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL supported the IDLELO 2 Conference held in Nairobi in February 2006 and COL President Sir John Daniel gave a keynote address. A one-day Roundtable on the Status of Learning Object Repositories (LORs) in Africa was also organised to coincide with the event in Nairobi.

A five-day workshop on technical skills development for eLearning was held in Kenya in May 2005.

COL hosted the East African Regional Conference on ICTs and Teacher Training in November 2003 at which possible models for the implementation of a regional initiative on ICTs and Teacher Training was produced.

One Kenyan was supported to attend the eLearning training workshop for Teacher Educators held in Melbourne in June-July 2004.

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum held in Kampala from 28-30 November 2005 which was attended by delegates from Kenya.

A round table on the theme of “Quality Issues in the Use of ICTs for Teacher Education” was held in Abuja from 19-22 April 2005. Kenyan colleagues took part in the event.

COL convened a workshop for course writers in skills training for caregivers working with orphans and vulnerable children in February 2004.

Kenya participated in the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education held in Botswana in October 2004.

Kenya is participating in the New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD) eSchools Initiative which involves 16-20 countries with six schools in each country. The schools are: Mumbi Girls Secondary School, Menengai Mixed Secondary, Isiolo Girls Secondary, Maranda High School, Chavakali High School and Wajir Girls Secondary. COL is working with the monitoring and evaluation of this project.

Three COL-supported Kenyan delegates participated in the 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum held in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004. Minister George Saitoti also participated with colleagues from MOEST.

There was one representative from Kenya at the ODL and Development Institute hosted by COL in Vancouver in 5-7 May 2005.

Three senior administrators from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton attended the 4th Managing Change Conference held at the University of Abertay Dundee from 17-22 August 2003. Two senior administrators from Kenya attended the 5th Managing Change Conference held 8-13 August 2004. One Kenyan participated in "The Abertay Conversation" from 29 June-3 July 2005.

COL organised Management Development Workshops for Senior African Teacher Educators with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore in 2003, 2004 and 2005. In 2003, Kenya was represented by the Principals of Migori Teachers College and Misoriot Teachers College. The principal and deputy principal of Egoji and Shanzu Teachers Colleges respectively participated in the 2004 Singapore Workshop. The following year, Kenya was represented by the principals of Migori and Garissa Teachers Training Colleges.

Under the Young Professionals Program, COL placed an intern at the World Agro-Forestry Centre in 2003-2004. In 2004-2005, three interns were hosted by the African Virtual University (AVU), Federation of Women Educationalist (FAWE) and the World Agro-Forestry Centre. In 2005-2006 COL interns were hosted in Kenya by the AVU and International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF).

COL supported the formation of a consortium of four NGO partners in Kenya to facilitate the "Grassroots Socio-economic Underpinnings: poverty reduction, nutrition, and ODL for Women" (GRASSUP Now) in Western Kenya.

COL supported the East African Consortium on Teacher Training with Kenya as the lead country. The objective was to develop a regional course for training teachers in the use of ICTs in classrooms.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 saw a high level of ODL activity in Kenya. Kenya's partnership with COL has allowed a greater degree of national buy-in for ODL initiatives and has also provided the means for a

significant amount of professional development. The period 2006-2009 calls for a greater degree of consolidation of existing initiatives. This has already been recognised by the Kenyan authorities. In late February 2006, COL was approached by the Kenya MOEST officials to provide sample ODL policy frameworks. The policy has been drafted and COL will be invited to participate in the finalisation phase.

COL has enjoyed a relationship of “social trust” with Kenya as Patrick Spaven observes:

“The Kenyans seem to see COL as their adviser of choice for implementation once they have more detailed action plans for each area. They say COL would be welcome to advise on implementation. It was COL that ‘opened Kenya’s eyes’ to the fact that they had gone off track.” Evaluation Report, May 2006.

This augurs very well for future co-operation.