Learning for Development
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The Virtual University

Fact or Fiction?

What can it do?

Paul West
Director, KM & IT

Sir John Daniel
President & CEO
Greetings from Sir John Daniel

John Daniel
President & CEO
Commonwealth of Learning
“In the spirit of the 21st century I suggest that it will be a network rather than an institution – a network with multiple nodes of activity. We are not trying to create a new institution with its own brand name but to find ways to reinforce the institutions and the developments that are already taking place in your countries. A common theme of the responses of ministers to my request to tell me about their priorities was the ambition of strengthening their existing post-secondary institutions.”

Sir John Daniel
“We need to help institutions and education systems to leapfrog their use of technologies in much the same way that cellular phone companies are helping countries to expand access to telephones and the internet. This will involve educators working and collaborating online with colleagues from across the globe on a daily basis.”

Paul West
Our aim

How can we give billions of people living in poverty, access to learning and training?
The Challenge

1. Demography:
   7-8 billion (50% young) in developing world by 2025

2. Discrepancy:
   Developed = Post-secondary participation are 40% plus
   Developing = Post-secondary participation are 10% minus
The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid

C. K. Prahalad

4 billion people
C.K.Prahalad

*The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*

‘for companies with the resources and persistence to compete at the bottom of the world economic pyramid, the prospective rewards include growth, profits and incalculable contributions to humankind’
C.K. Prahalad

The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid

A post-secondary participation of 35% within this group would yield 150 million additional learners, far more than total current enrolments worldwide.
C.K. Prahalad

*The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*

‘radical innovations in technology and business models’

‘an ideal of highly distributed small scale operations married to world-scale capabilities’
C.K. Prahalad
The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid

‘helping people improve their lives by producing and distributing products and services in culturally sensitive, environmentally sustainable and economically profitable ways’
Does eLearning fit the bill?

We are not just talking about online learning, but rather online collaboration by educators.
Technology

Communication links are dramatically altering the way that poor villages in the developing world function.

What more could it do for educators who embrace the online world?
Can educators take advantage of the opportunity???
The most promising innovation

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs)

Open educational resources, open source software and tools
The most promising innovation

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs)

We need to apply to teaching and learning, the same basic principle of sharing that underpins academic research.
Barriers to sharing courseware

- ‘Not invented here’
- Copyright issues
- Non-digital formats
Three Generations of Open Educational Resources

1. MIT Open Courseware
2. UKOU Self-instructional
3. VUSSC Collaborative OERs
THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

A major supporter of these developments
The Virtual University is not donor-driven development
Cost of this Project:

Approx USD 130,000
The way to provide sufficient added value

• Form an online community
• Grow that community
• Make VUSSC part of your normal job
• Schedule time for VUSSC every week
Role of governments in eLearning

DO
create the right context to support education initiatives

DON’T
block education initiatives
A Barrier to Learning – Bandwidth limitations

“developing country institutions can pay over 100 times more for Internet access than in the industrialised world.”
Can partnerships and collaboration help developing countries develop their HE systems?
“our aim must be to combine connectivity with learning resources so as to create a global intellectual commons, accessible to the whole of humankind”

Sir John Daniel
“you are engaged in something very important”

Sir John Daniel
Thank you!

Paul West
& Sir John Daniel

Commonwealth of Learning
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