



COUNTRY PRESENTATION – KENYA

By: Dr. Jeckoniah Odumbe

PRACTICE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF ODL IN KENYA

Background of ODL in Kenya

Since independence various commissions have highlighted ODL as an alternative strategy of delivering education. Ominde Education Commission at independence in 1964/65 recommended the establishment of an advisory commission on ODL in 1976, the Gachathi Report recommended that solution to access of education should involve ODL. This was further recommended by subsequent reports such as the MacKay report of 1981 and the Kamunge Report of 1988.

Though no specific national policy was set up to guide the use of ODL in the country, individual institutions used it to address education needs.

ODL Providers

Some of the major providers of ODL programmes include the following:

1. Kenya Institute of Education running Radio programmes to support both primary and secondary schools.
2. School-based Teacher Development has used ODL to improve teaching and learning in the primary schools.
3. Kenya Institute Special Education is providing in service of primary school teachers on special education by ODL in addition to their regular residential students.
4. University of Nairobi is offering B.Ed(Arts), B.Ed(Sc), B.Sc, B.Com and BA using print materials supported by e-learning materials.
5. Kenyatta University is offering degree programmes using print, video-conferencing and has a centre for Virtual University.
6. Egerton University is offering programmes in collaboration with Open University of Tanzania and Unisa.

7. African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) is offering diploma programmes to practicing doctors.
8. Strathmore University is offering business programmes.
9. Kenya Methodist University is offering Bachelor degree in Agricultural Management.
10. There are also programmes offered by Ministry of Agriculture – Information Centre for the farmer through radio broadcasts.

These programmes have been governed by the policies of individual institutions without any National policy to coordinate and guide them.

However with the collaboration between COL and Ministry of Education a Draft policy has been developed which will guide the provision of ODL and there by ensure quality.

The Objectives of the Draft Policy 2006

The stated objectives are to:

1. Increase access to learning and training opportunities.
2. Eliminate education disparities between age groups, gender and geographical areas.
3. Provide opportunity for the empowerment of the society and economically disadvantaged.
4. Increase and enhance human capacity development
5. Ensure the maintenance of quality and standards in ODL.
6. Encourage collaboration in the development of and utilisation of resources between institutions in order to maximise the use of existing resources.
7. Establish an appropriate administration structure to coordinate and oversee the implementation of ODL.
8. Encourage collaboration between the media houses and ODL providers.
9. Solicit internal and external financial resources.
10. Establish a frame work for periodic monitoring and evaluation of ODL institutions and programmes.
11. Support and encourage the development of required infrastructure.
12. Encourage and support research on ODL and the production of database system on ODL.

13. Encourage the establishment for dissemination of information on ODL.
14. Ensure that intellectual property rights are protected.
15. Establish and encourage the use of Libraries including digital components.

Challenges of expanding Access, Equity and improving Quality

The current Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005 which gives policy direction in the provision of education and training has noted the major challenges.

The Free Primary Education declared in 2003 to enable the country to attain Universal Primary Education resulted in:

1. High Teacher-Pupil ratio in urban and high density areas that need to be addressed by having more teachers.
2. The two-year primary teacher training has been found to be inadequate to equip teachers with skills and knowledge in all seven subjects taught in the primary schools.

At Secondary level there are a great number students qualifying for secondary education due to Free Primary Education:

1. This reduces transition to less than 70% expected in the plan projection.
2. The government intends to upgrade secondary education as part of basic education.

At Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) and Non Formal Education (NFE) there is low participation due to lack of learning facilities and facilitators.

At Tertiary level more people qualify than can be accommodated in middle level training institutions.

At University level less than ½ of those who qualify get admitted to public and private universities leaving the rest unprovided for.

In general government has recognised that it is only with an ICT literate workforce the country would acquire status of knowledge economy.

Prospects of ODL in Addressing Challenges of Education Access in Kenya

The Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005 has therefore identified ODL option to be used in addressing challenges of Access, Equity and quality improvement. The specific suggested strategies are as follows:

1. Enhancing the use of open and distance learning in primary education.
2. In-servicing of teachers in targeted subject areas using open and distance learning.
3. Develop policy framework to guide the provision of ODL programmes.
4. Establish distance education programmes for ACE and NFE learners to reach more people not currently covered by existing conventional programmes.
5. Use of solar power to facilitate the application of ICT even in areas not served by National power grids.
6. Promote Open universities and distance learning institutions to increase learning opportunities particularly in higher education and training.
7. Use of ODL, ICT and e-learning to provide quality life long education in Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET).
8. Integrate ICT education and training into education and training system.
9. Equip schools with computers that would serve the community as well.

Conclusion

The implementation of these strategies of expanding access, equity and quality has emphasised collaboration of the ministry with development partners, international organisations and the private sector.

In the diversification of delivery of education and training to meet the challenges, ODL has been identified to serve a major role of improving and increasing human resource through in-service and pre-service.

A Brief Presentation of
The Practice, Challenges and Prospects of Open and Distance Learning in Kenya
At
The Commonwealth of Learning

Held in
Lilongwe- Malawi.
22ND -23RD May, 2008
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