A brief review on the use of ODL in Swaziland

ODL in Swaziland is used for the following purpose.

1. To increase access to Tertiary Education

In Swaziland there are many high schools compared to tertiary institutions. The total annual output of learners who complete high school education far outnumber the number of available spaces in tertiary institutions. This leads to a high number of high school graduates who fail to access tertiary education.

What the Swaziland Government has done to arrest the above situation

To address the issue of lack of access to tertiary education, the Swaziland Government has seen it wise to open an alternative route for learners to access tertiary education by establishing ODL institutions in the country.

The following are the ODL institutions that have been established to offer tertiary education through Open Distance Learning and these are:

(a) The Institute for Distance Education (IDE)

The Institute for Distance Education is a wing of the University of Swaziland, which was established to complement the services provided by the University of Swaziland.

The Institute for Distance Education offers an alternative route to Swazi students to access tertiary education by accessing it through Distance Learning mode.

Programmes offered by the Institute for Distance Education are the same as those offered by the conventional university, i.e., the University of Swaziland. Under this arrangement, both full-time and part-time students follow the same programme and write the same examinations which have the same weighting. The only difference is that it takes a little longer for part-time students to complete a diploma or degree programme compared to a full-time student.

(b) Institute for Development Management (IDM)

The Institute for Development Management (IDM) is a tripartite training institution jointly owned by the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Kingdom of Swaziland. IDM offers in-service training courses to government employees of the three countries
through both ODL and brief contact sessions. Of late, IDM has started offering tertiary education programmes to students of the three countries through ODL. Under this arrangement, learners enrol and pursue programmes from certificate to degree level.

(c) Amadi/Midland State University

Amadi/Midland State University is a private university that has established a campus in Swaziland. It offers its programmes through ODL thus complementing the good work done by both the University of Swaziland and the Institute for Development Management in terms of developing the human capital for the three countries.

2. The use of ODL to increase access to Secondary Education

In Swaziland, we have a large amount of students who, for various reasons, do not complete their high school education. At times, even those who happen to complete their high school education do not perform well in their end of year final Examinations. This compels those students who have not done well in the final examination to seek another chance to improve their symbols in order to enhance their prospects of gaining access to tertiary education. The normal school system could not offer such an opportunity no matter how willing. The question is what Government did to arrest the situation.

What Government has done to address the above?

To address the above issue, the Swaziland Government has established an ODL Institution to cater for this particular need. The Emlalatini Development and Education Centre provides learners with an alternate route to access Secondary Education. Under this arrangement, learners pursue their secondary education programmes through ODL.

3. Top Priorities

1. Upscale and expand the Child Friendly School (CFS) project to cover all high schools in the country.

2. Sensitize stakeholders on the benefits the country can enjoy in implementing the VUSSC Transnational Qualifications Framework.

3. Launch and implement the newly approved Swaziland ODL Policy.

4. Sensitize and capacitate ODL practitioners on the content and legal implications of the OER Copyright Policy.

5. Strengthen the livelihoods skills to members of rural communities and provide them with skills to eliminate hunger and poverty.
4. What COL can do to support our national Agenda

COL can assist us as follows:

- Fund some of our National Agenda e.g. up scaling and extending the Child Friendly School (CFS) programme to cover all our high schools. In particular, to hold capacity building workshops for our stakeholders (high school teachers).
- Provide us with some technical assistance, i.e., consultants to assist us in implementing the VUSSC Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF).
- Provide capacity building to our key partners so that they become more effective and more efficient in driving our agreed agenda.
- Support us (financially and materially) in our collaborative initiatives with our different partners where issues pertaining to the advancement of COL are concerned, e.g., sponsoring our clients to participate in COL conferences/meetings.

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