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Beyond Primary Education:
Challenges and Approaches to Expanding Learning Opportunities in Africa

Parallel Session 5B

Distance Education and Open Learning

Use of ODL in post-primary education in Africa: Extending basic education to include lower secondary education

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List of Abbreviations

ACDE	African Council for Distance Education
ADB	African Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
BGCSE	Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education
BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
CIFFAD	Consortium of International Francophone de Formation a Distance
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
DEASA	Distance Education Association of Southern Africa
DSD	Digital Satellite Device
EADEA	East African Distance Education Association
EDC	Emlalatini Development Centre [Swaziland]
EFA	Education for All
EMMA	Educational Mass Media Agency [Ethiopia]
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IAE	Institute of Adult Education [Tanzania]
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
JSC	Junior Secondary Certificate
LDTC	Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
LMET	Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training
MCA	Mauritius College of the Air
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMEC	Mozambique Ministry of Education and Culture
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NOLNET	Namibian Open Learning Network Trust
ODL	Open and Distance Learning

SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-CDE	Southern African Development Community- Centre for Distance Education
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WADEA	West African Distance Education Association
ZME	Zambian Ministry of Education

1.0 Abstract

This paper is a critical review of selected ODL interventions at post-primary school level in Africa. The purpose of the review is to show the state of ODL on the continent and shed some light on its potential to address problems of educational access, equity, and quality at post-primary school level in African countries. The experiences drawn from the various cases reviewed will inform participants of the upcoming ADEA conference to be held in Maputo in May 2008 on the opportunities that exist to extend basic education to include lower secondary education through ODL strategies.

Over and above focusing on four cases of good practice in ODL, namely NAMCOL, BOCODOL, Mindset, and the Education Mass Media Agency in Ethiopia, the review also flagged ODL implementation in several other countries in Africa. Drawing from the experiences of these countries, the paper argues that ODL is gaining momentum on the continent as a strategy for broadening access, and has the potential to provide quality education to large numbers of learners. In spite of this optimistic view it presents, the paper also warns of the many challenges that African countries face in implementing such a strategy at systemic level. These challenges include addressing quality issues, achieving enough buy-in from stakeholders, overcoming constraints posed by limited bandwidth, and developing appropriate funding models that ensure sustainability of the innovations.

Based on the experiences of the reviewed cases, the paper recommended that for ODL to succeed in meeting the educational needs of millions of deserving learners on the continent, governments need to take full responsibility to plan, support, and facilitate implementation of such innovations at systemic level.

2.0 Executive summary

This report is a review of selected ODL initiatives at post-primary school level in Africa. The main purpose of the review is to show the state of ODL on the continent and shed some light on its potential to address the attendant problems of educational access, equity, and quality at post-primary level in African countries.

Education is viewed as a potent mechanism for tackling the multiple scourges of social dislocation, poverty, conflict, and marginalization, and for achieving the MDGs. It has become evident on the continent that existing high cost secondary education systems that were designed to educate a small elite cannot cater for a much greater population of youth in such a way that prepares the necessary human resource expertise for the growing economies of Africa. Neither can these systems prepare the youth for the fast-changing global economies that call for ability to engage in lifelong learning. "In this environment, linear expansion of existing systems is not an option, especially given the constraints on public resources available for secondary education."[1]

By reviewing the implementation of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) interventions in selected African countries, the paper draws lessons from these experiences and informs participants of the 2008 ADEA Biennale in Maputo on opportunities that exist to extend basic education to include junior secondary through the use of ODL strategies.

The report is organised into 14 main sections. Section 1 is an abstract of the report. Section 2 gives a brief overview of the entire report and is followed by section 3, which is the introductory part of the report. Section 4 shows how the report is organized. Section 5 gives the state of secondary education in Africa, and by so doing, brings out some of the typical problems experienced in providing this level of education in many countries on the continent.

Section 6 deals with key challenges of secondary education provision, and is followed by section 7, which deals with conceptual aspects of open and distance education.

Section 8 discusses some of the ODL interventions implemented in different parts of Africa as a way of addressing problems of access at secondary school level. The section shows the growing popularity of ODL amongst educationists and education planners in African countries.

Section 9 of the report examines the implementation of ODL in four contexts in Africa, the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL), the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL), Mindset Network in South Africa, and the Educational Mass Media Agency (EMMA) in Ethiopia. This section shows the key elements of ODL in these contexts; such as forms of delivery, beneficiary groups, management of the systems, scale of operation, and the role of government. From this section, it becomes clear that ODL is implemented differently in the different contexts on the continent.

Section 10 gives eight lessons that are learnt from the cases reviewed. The first is that there is dire need for providing a second chance to thousands of youth who either drop-out or fail to make it at secondary school level in many countries in Africa. The second is that ODL can offer large numbers of learners quality post-primary education. The third lesson drawn from the cases is the importance of government commitment to open learning and distance education if access and

[1] SEIA Synthesis report: Draft 5 February 2007, p.1

quality are to be achieved. Fourthly, the importance of putting in place sound funding mechanisms in order to achieve quality delivery is underscored. The fifth lesson is that collaboration, partnerships and sharing within and between countries can go a long way in developing capacity on the continent as well as avoiding unnecessary and costly duplication of effort. Lesson six is that ODL systems seem to be more suitable for learners who are above 16 years of age; who have the discipline to engage in a high level of self-motivated learning. The seventh lesson drawn from the cases is that ODL seems to be more appropriate for accommodating marginalized groups in African societies, like girls and the rural youth. Both NAMCOL and BOCODOL enrol significantly larger numbers of female than male students at post-primary level. Lastly, curricula should be relevant to learners' needs and should not differ significantly from that of conventional schooling.

Section 11 flags other ODL interventions implemented in many other African countries like Mozambique, Kenya, Zambia, Mauritius, and Malawi. The section shows a trend where ODL is gaining more buy-in on the continent. More efforts and greater investments are being made into the area of distance education as countries become more aware of the potential this mode of delivery has in catering for large numbers of learners with different learning preferences and needs.

Section 12 reflects on some of the challenges that emerge from the review. One challenge is that special analysis of learners between 16 and 19 needs to be done to determine whether success rates of this sub-group are comparable to the larger group. Furthermore, there is little experience of whether even younger groups of learners, i.e. those between 12 and 16 years of age who increasingly constitute the age range of junior secondary students in conventional schools, can benefit from distance education provision. The second challenge is overcoming the scepticism amongst policy makers towards this approach to education. The third but related challenge is that of ensuring that wherever it is introduced, adequate planning is done, basic infrastructure is put in place in advance of the intervention, and sufficient support is provided from government and the private sector. The fourth challenge is that of limited bandwidth that places constraints on Internet connectivity in African countries. This has a bearing on the effectiveness of sharing resources between providers in different countries. Lastly, there is need for considerably more emphasis to be placed on understanding the actual costs of the different distance education initiatives in Africa and on this basis, develop robust funding models that contribute to the success of ODL innovations.

3.0 Introduction

Education is a potent mechanism available to Africa for tackling the multiple scourges of social dislocation, poverty, conflict and marginalisation and for achieving the continent's human development goals. Africa has embraced and is committed to the goals of 'Education for All', which have been aligned to and underpin the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) framework for education and training.[2] Faced with the persistent challenge of providing quality primary education and gaps in coverage of secondary education, most African countries

[2] Statement from the All-Africa Ministers' Conference on Open and Distance Education held in Cape Town, 1-4 February 2004.

are still very far away from achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[3]. It has become evident on the continent that existing high cost secondary education systems that were designed to educate a small elite cannot cater for a much greater population of youth in such a way that prepares the necessary human resource expertise for the growing economies of Africa. Neither can they prepare the youth for the fast-changing global economies that call for ability to engage in lifelong learning. "In this environment, linear expansion of existing systems is not an option, especially given the constraints on public resources available for secondary education."[4]

This paper reviews the implementation of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) interventions in selected African countries at post-primary level. The purpose of the review is to draw from the experiences of the case interventions and inform participants of the upcoming ADEA conference to be held in Maputo in May 2008 on opportunities that exist to extend basic education to include lower secondary education through Open and Distance Learning strategies. Lessons gained from cases studied provide empirical evidence on whether ODL can help African countries address equity issues, expand access to quality junior secondary education in cost-effective ways, and alleviate poverty by empowering young people through education and skills training. An important aspect of this review is to show the significance of ODL in addressing the above-mentioned challenges of equity, access and poverty alleviation at junior secondary level.

4.0 Organization of the paper

This paper is organised into thirteen main sections. The introductory section above has spelt out the aim of the paper. Section five below highlights the state of secondary education in Africa and surfaces some of the key problems faced in providing secondary education in many countries on the continent. Section six deals with some of the challenges countries face in providing quality post-primary education to increasing numbers of learners coming out of the expanded primary school systems. Section seven provides some conceptual clarity on "open learning" and "distance education". Section eight then provides an overview of ODL initiatives implemented in different parts of the continent. Section nine reviews the four selected cases of NAMCOL, BOCODOL, EMMA, and Mindset. It also highlights the key aspects of ODL in these contexts, and is followed by section ten which identifies some of the main lessons drawn from the case experiences. Section eleven provides a picture of the general trend of ODL in Africa. It does so by flagging several ODL initiatives implemented in different countries on the continent, and the rationale behind them. Following the section on ODL trends is section twelve, which identifies some of the challenges faced in implementing ODL in the reviewed countries. The last section is the conclusion of the paper.

5.0 The state of secondary education provision in Africa

Whilst significant progress has been made by many countries towards increasing access at primary school level, secondary education provision has not expanded at rates fast enough to allow absorption of the majority of primary school graduates. Due to limited resources like schools, classrooms, teachers, and learning equipment, serious bottlenecks have been experienced at post-primary level in many African countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 70 million children of

[3] See Appendix 3 for the MDGs

[4] SEIA Synthesis report: Draft 5 February 2007, p.1

secondary school age are reported to have no access to secondary schooling.[5] In the SADC countries alone, this figure was reported to have been 8.7 million by 2003. [6]Limited access at secondary school level is coupled with worryingly high levels of inefficiency of education systems. In Mozambique, for example, 71% of those who graduate at the end of the primary cycle transit to the first grade of lower secondary - but just 2% enter the last grade of upper secondary education. In Malawi, the comparable figures are 87% and 18%; and in Zimbabwe 72% and 6%.[7] In SSA, of those who enter lower secondary, less than one third survive to upper secondary. In SSA, 35 countries have secondary school GERs[8] that are below 40%, and 15 below 20%. On average, the Sub-Saharan African region has a secondary school GER of 25%, compared to the Arab States with 60%, South and Western Asia with 52%, the Pacific with 65%, and Latin America and the Caribbean with 83%.[9] Clearly the glaring gap between SSA and other developing regions is cause for great concern as it has obvious implications for economic growth. Given the limited facilities for secondary education that bedevils most countries, significant improvement of such low GERs remains remote on the continent, for as long as countries rely on conventional models of delivery. Table 1 shows transition rates to junior secondary school and access to the last grade of upper secondary education for selected countries on the continent.

Table 1.1: Transition rates to JSS and access to last grade of upper secondary

Country	**Primary to junior secondary school transition rates (as %)**	**Access to last grade of upper secondary school. (as % of those who enter junior secondary school).**
Lesotho	76	17
Madagascar	58	5
Malawi	87	18
Mozambique	71	2
Tanzania	18	2
Zambia	64	15
Zimbabwe	72	6
Botswana	94	44
Mauritius	79	32
Namibia	88	30

[5] Lewin, K.M. (2007:1) Expanded access to secondary schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa: Key Planning and Finance Issues, DFID/University of Sussex

[6] The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Preparation Report: Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Capacity-Building Project, February 2006

[7] The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Preparation Report: Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Capacity-Building Project, February 2006

[8] Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is one of the statistical concepts used to measure access in a given system of education. It is a term that compares the total number of learners enrolled in a system (irrespective of their age) to the right school age population in a country. The right school age is defined in accordance with the norms of the country in question.

[9] Lewin, K. M. (2007) op. cit.

South Africa	99	45
Swaziland	86	24

Source: The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Preparation Report: Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Capacity-Building Project, February 2006.

The differences between countries in terms of access to secondary education remain very striking on the continent. Botswana, Cape Verde, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa enroll more than 80% of the population of the relevant age in junior secondary whilst countries like Burundi, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Niger and Rwanda enroll less than 20%.[10]

It is worth noting that some of the impediments to progression to secondary education do not necessarily have to do with inadequate provision of post-primary education by national education systems, but are directly linked to the perceived relevance of curricular, the quality of education offered, and the rigid nature of mainstream school systems. Demand and supply factors interact to become long-lasting obstacles to enrollment and retention of particular social groups in African societies; the poor, the rural, the physically handicapped, and girls. These are some of the critical factors constraining participation at post-primary level and countries need to find ways of addressing them if significant progress is to be made towards the achievement of equity.

6.0 Key challenges in post-primary education provision in Africa

Given the limited participation rates at post-primary level highlighted in the foregoing paragraphs, it is clear that the key challenge in education in Africa is to achieve EFA targets and the MDGs by 2015. Countries are struggling to provide quality secondary education to many of the graduates coming out of the primary school systems. Thus, there is dire need for countries to expand secondary participation in ways that are affordable and cost effective if the challenges posed by poverty are to be addressed on the continent. For this to happen, it is necessary that universal secondary education be achieved. African countries also have to work towards diminishing inequalities in access that presently limit social mobility and skew income distribution in their societies. As will be shown later in this analysis, access to secondary education is determined mainly by socio-economic background in most African societies. Analysis shows that the often-reported national statistics on access and transition mask important trends that are along socio-economic, geographical, and gender lines. Whilst learners from privileged groups usually manage to participate in secondary education in large numbers, their disadvantaged counterparts are normally pushed out of the systems by social and economic factors that are beyond their control. Thus, because of the life chances secondary education brings to the recipients, the latter group, by missing out on secondary education, endures limited social mobility in life, and inevitably misses out on better prospects of disentangling themselves from the shackles of poverty. Ultimately then, the challenge to democratize access to secondary and higher education is the challenge to plan for and work towards maximizing equitable distribution of resources in order to realize equitable social development in African countries. In this sense, the prospects of meeting

[10]The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Preparation Report: Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Capacity-Building Project, February 2006

the MDGs by most countries on the continent remain very remote, unless some drastic measures are taken to re-frame traditional approaches to educational provision. Evidence is available to show that traditional modes of delivery, in which learning has to take place in classrooms, learners have to follow particular learning time-tables, and teachers have to stand in front of a class, cannot cope with the growing demand for secondary education. Clearly, formal school systems are oversubscribed and cannot provide secondary education to all who need it. Neither can governments raise enough resources to build more schools that can accommodate the increasing large numbers of learners who need this level of education. At the same time, failure to accommodate the colossal numbers of learners churned out from expanded primary school enrollments in some meaningful secondary education activity means failure to maximize the benefits of the large-scale investments that many countries have already made in primary education. Both the social and individual returns of such primary education investments stand to be severely diminished if they are not augmented by equally sound investments at secondary and tertiary education levels. Further more, the extension of basic education to include junior secondary education entails achieving almost 100% transition rates from primary to secondary school grades. Given the limited secondary school facilities in most African countries, the biggest challenge in achieving this target lies in the quality of education that can be provided to these learners. It is in light of this problem that high quality Open and Distance Learning (ODL) approaches to secondary educational provision need to be considered very seriously as an option in developing Africa.

7.0 Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

In dealing with Open and Distance Learning, conceptual clarity is important, as there are different interpretations of distance education and open learning. In order to strike some common understanding, it is necessary to explain the two concepts in this analysis.

> Open Learning is a philosophy of learning that is based on the principle of flexibility to increase access to and equity in education. An open learning philosophy implies that a provider will try to find a variety of ways to open access to credible learning opportunities to a diverse range of learners. In this context, learners are allowed to determine what they want to learn, how they want to learn, when and where they want to learn and what to do next in terms of career direction.[11]

At the heart of open learning is enhancement of educational access and achievement through the removal of all unnecessary barriers to learning. It also entails an approach to learning that is learner cantered, rather than teacher or content-centred, and geared to meet the idiosyncratic needs and preferences of individual learners. Open learning is premised on the following key principles:

- Learner-centeredness – This notion is the prerequisite of openness. It acknowledges that the learner should be the focus of the educational process and should be regarded as an active participant in an interactive process. It asserts that learners should be assisted to integrate any new knowledge with their own experiences.

[11] ADEA Working Group on Distance Education and Open Learning (2002:19) Open and Distance Learning in Sub-Saharan Africa; A literature survey on Policy and Practice, ADEA

- Lifelong learning- this principle upholds that learning is continuous in the life of an individual and should directly relate to the life experiences of the individual. For this to happen, the individual has to appreciate the relevance of what is learned and the motivation to learn is intrinsic.
- Learning is flexible – learners choose what they want to learn, how they want to learn, and when they should learn. The central pedagogical elements of individual differences, individual learning styles and learning preferences not so well provided for in formal systems are taken care of in open learning.
- Throughout their learning process, learners should be provided with adequate support in order to enable them to experience academic success. Whilst studying is a personalised experience, structures and systems should be in place for learners to fall back on whenever they experience difficulties.

Thus open learning is an approach which observes the ideals of learner-centeredness, lifelong learning, flexibility of learning provision, removal of barriers to access learning, the recognition of prior learning, the provision of sound learner support, the construction of learning programmes in the expectation that learners can succeed, and the maintenance of rigorous quality assurance over the design of learning materials and support systems. [12] It is worth noting that in the application of these principles, many tensions will emerge: thus, for example, it has been found that providing too much flexibility can diminish the chances of success of a learner

The common usage of open learning together with distance education tends to create the false impression that the two are synonymous. It needs to be pointed out here that although there is some overlap between the two, they refer to different things. Distance education focuses on the pedagogy/ andragogy, technology, and instructional systems design that aim to deliver education to students who are not physically "on site". In distance education, learners are separated from the instructional base or teacher, either in space or time, for a significant portion of their learning.[13] This type of education employs a collection of methods in order to provide structured learning. As an approach, distance education does not preclude face-to-face contact; on the contrary, it provides learners with a range of support mechanisms that allow them to interact with content independently, at the same time accommodating occasional face-to-face interactions. In distance education, learning does not necessarily have to take place at school or in the presence of a teacher; neither does it have to be based on a "group structured" programme. There is freedom of space and time, and there is also much learner flexibility in the learning process. Distance education can thus give practical expression to many open learning principles. However, distance education programmes that have rigid curricula, enrolment and assessment schedules or that require compulsory attendance at certain times and at certain places with no back-up mechanism for those who cannot make it, can actually be experienced as quite closed learning experiences. So what we need to advocate is the use of a range of distance education methods that can give effect to open learning principles – open distance learning rather than open and distance learning.

[12] Ibid. p.20

[13] ADEA Working Group on Distance Education and Open Learning

8.0 Current ODL initiatives in Africa

Literature shows that distance education is not a new phenomenon in Africa and has played an important role at all levels of educational provision: at tertiary level through the Open Universities of Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Universities of Dar-es-Salam and South Africa; at secondary school level, through open schooling in Mozambique, Namibia and Botswana and more recently as announced in Zambia; at teacher education level whereby dedicated institutions have been established, such as Domasi College of Distance Education, in Malawi, and the Mauritius College of the Air/Open University, with other initiatives implemented through the mainstream or development partner systems. At primary level Interactive Radio Instruction has also been used across the Region, for example in Malawi, South Africa and Zambia.[14]

There is wide acceptance of Open Distance Learning at all levels of education in Africa. The deployment of Open and Distance learning (ODL) is gaining popularity with African governments and educationists because it has proven to be both cost effective (where large numbers of students are involved) and potentially of very high quality. Numerous organisations that are dedicated to the development of distance education have been established over the years on the continent. Amongst these organisations are the West African Distance Education Association (WADEA), the East African Distance Education Association (EADEA), the Distance Education Association for Southern Africa (DEASA), and the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE). These associations have played a critical role in coordinating distance education activities and in developing ODL capacity in their respective regions. In recent years, these organisations seem to be more and more realising the potential there is for developing distance education through forging collaborative linkages among countries, mutual co-operation in human capacity development, and sharing scarce resources. The activities of these organisations seem to be charting a new path for distance education on the continent. The objectives for DEASA, for instance, are:

- To encourage exchange of expertise among member institutions as efficiently and widely as possible;
- To exchange information and material on distance education and to promote cooperation among member institutions
- To promote educational activities and opportunities for those who are not part of the conventional educational system;
- To seek assistance from national governments and international organisations in the furtherance of distance education; and
- To present and advocate for the interests of distance education to government funders and policy-makers.[15]

[14] Neil Butcher &Associates (2006) Finnish Cooperation Programme with SADC within the Framework of Open and Distance Learning: A Project Preparation Report Prepared for the Finnish Embassy

[15]ADAE Working Group on Distance Education and Open Learning, (2002:122)

These objectives are being translated into action through a programme of activities that are assigned to member institutions that come from seven countries within the Southern African region.[16] Each member country institution develops an action plan to follow over a specified period of time in executing the assigned task and there is periodic review of progress made on these tasks by the organisation. This process is significantly pushing the frontiers of ODL in the region.

At a conference of African Vice Chancellors held at Egerton University in Kenya on 22-24 January 2004, the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) was established with the specific mandate to develop distance education on the continent. Some of the goals ACDE seeks to achieve are:

- To promote open and distance learning, flexible learning and continuing education in Africa;
- To promote research and training in open and distance learning in Africa;
- To contribute to the development of policies essential to the advancement of open and distance learning;
- To foster continental and global collaboration in open distance learning;
- To provide a forum where individuals, organizations and governments can deliberate on policy matters on open distance learning;
- To promote the development of appropriate methods and technologies in education and training relevant to open and distance learning;
- To provide a forum for interaction, sharing and dissemination of ideas on open distance learning. [17]

There was commitment at the conference to empower African communities through the development and implementation of high quality ODL systems on the continent. An important point to note from the conference and through the formation of ACDE is the realisation by the participants who are some of the influential educationists on the African continent that mainstream education systems cannot be the answer to achieving secondary and tertiary education for all. If meaningful development is to be realised, open and distance education has to be given greater attention at the various levels of the education systems. The spirit of the conference regarding the place open and distance education should be accorded at all levels of education in Africa is clearly captured by Pityana:

> We have noted the context in which ODL has taken root in Africa. We observe that with peace and democratization, there is population growth, rising prosperity, a thirst for knowledge, a need to bridge the skills gap, all in the context of rising expectations, diminishing resources. Conventional education will never be able to meet the demands as no resources are available to meet the demands to redress the situation. This is a golden opportunity for open distance education. [18]

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[16] These countries consist of the following: Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

[17] Pityana, N.B (2004) OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING IN AFRICA: Access, Quality, Success. A paper presented at the All-Africa Ministers' Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education held in Cape Town, 1-4 February 2004

[18] Ibid, p.6

The formation of the ACDE and the commitment expressed by the conference participants towards the development of distance education demonstrate that local universities are convinced of the increasing importance of ODL as a more viable strategy for educating the masses of young and unemployed people on the continent. This local expertise is a key resource that countries should exploit in order to develop sound ODL systems that are relevant to particular national contexts. The activities of ADEA in guiding and supporting policy on secondary educational access through ODL are an important development to note on the continent. Investments made by the Association in gathering empirical evidence on the use of ODL in broadening educational access at various levels of the education system, and in holding constant dialogue with key policy makers at conferences clearly show the attention ODL is receiving in Africa.

Over and above efforts invested by the afore mentioned distance education organisations, there are several open and distance education interventions that have been initiated and supported by leading international organisations like UNESCO, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), African Development Bank (ADB), Consortium of International Francophone de Formation a Distance (CIFFAD), and ICDE. The Commonwealth of Learning, in partnership with the SADC-CDE based at BOCODOL in Gaborone, initiated a Regional Open Schools Consortium, sponsored by COL. This development has not only increased awareness of the potential of ODL approaches to ameliorate problems of access, it has also conscientised participating countries on the benefits of collaboration in implementing ODL initiatives. Current membership of the SADC Open Schools Consortium comprises the following institutions:

- SADC – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE);
- Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning (BOCODOL);
- Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC);
- Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (LMET);
- Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE);
- Mauritius College of the Air (MCA);
- Mozambique Ministry of Education and Culture (MMEC);
- Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL);
- Emlalatini Development Centre (EDC) in Swaziland;
- Mindset Network (MN) in South Africa;
- South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE);
- Institute of Adult Education (IAE) in Tanzania;
- Institute of Continuing Education (Open University of Tanzania); and
- Zambia Ministry of Education (ZME).

It is evident from the membership of the Regional Open Schools Consortium[19] that distance education has attracted a lot of attention in the Southern African region. The membership of the Consortium is open and there is a high possibility of more institutions within the region joining. The different institutions place due emphasis on different areas, depending on the particular needs of the country. The majority of them offer a variety of forms of distance learning interventions at post-primary level. As appendix 2 shows, BOCODOL, NAMCOL, LDTC, MCDE, MCA, MMEC, EDC, and Mindset all offer ODL interventions at post-primary level, and with the aim of expanding access and enhancing the quality of education. The main target groups are learners who

[19] Details on the operational principles of the consortium and the activities of member institutions are provided in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively

drop out of the conventional systems prematurely, for various reasons, youth who missed out on this level of education, and adults who still want to attain qualifications at secondary level. Thus, a dominant characteristic of most of the institutions is that they target a very wide and diversified clientele base in their countries. Apart from catering for general secondary education, they also provide skills training to out-of-school youth in order to increase their employment opportunities. The vision of the Open Consortium is to:

> Provide a vehicle to initiate, design, and implement collaborative projects to develop high quality distance education programmes (and accompanying materials drawing on different media as appropriate) at secondary level, which are designed to secure sustainable livelihoods for the citizens of Southern Africa's states. Through its projects, the Consortium will facilitate peer-to-peer networking amongst open schooling practitioners, and use collaborative project work for ongoing capacity building of these practitioners. [20]

The commitment to open and distance education by the various organizations cited above is a clear indication of the changing terrain of this approach to education on the continent. Whilst this form of education has been used in various countries in Africa for some time, what seems to be new is the importance it is now receiving, not only as a way of enriching conventional systems, but also as an alternative form of providing secondary education. There is realization amongst education planners and policy makers of the benefits ODL can make towards improving the quality of formal education by providing traditional schools with learning materials. The new phenomenon of increasing cooperation, coordination and shared common vision of purpose and direction in distance education on the continent seems to show the extent to which the continent has been convinced of the possibilities that lie in this approach in solving problems of access to education. These concerted efforts are attempts at addressing the long-standing weaknesses of ODL initiatives and institutions that have operated as isolated pockets of excellence on the continent, but without significant impact at national level.

In this analysis, four cases are used to illustrate how ODL has been successfully implemented in order to enhance access at post-primary level as well as in enriching formal schooling. These cases are in Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia and South Africa. The cases illustrate four key elements of open and distance education initiatives on the continent; how ODL has been implemented as an alternative route for providing secondary education for different groups of learners, how ODL has been used as enrichment of the formal secondary education system, the place of ODL in increasing secondary education access in the respective countries, and policies guiding implementation of ODL in the three countries. From the experiences of these countries, key challenges, trends, and prospects that exist in broadening secondary school access through open and distance education in Africa will be drawn. Lessons will be drawn from these case experiences in order to inform policy on ODL in Africa.

[20] Opening Schooling in Southern Africa through Collaborative Educational Programme Design and Open Educational Resource Development: Proposal to the Hewlett Foundation, p.22

9.0 Case studies

9.1 Introduction

There are a number of successful examples of ODL implementation at post-primary school level that already exist in Africa. Some of these initiatives demonstrate how ODL can contribute towards enhancing access and quality provision at post-primary education level. These initiatives include the NAMCOL, BOCODOL, SADC-CDE, Mauritius College of the Air, and Mindset.

9.2 NAMCOL

The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) is a publicly funded institution that was established through an Act of Parliament in September 1997[21] with the mandate of providing learning opportunities for adults and out of school youth. As a parastatal educational institution, NAMCOL is governed by a Board of Governors that is appointed by the Minister of Education. The Board is accountable to the Government and to other stakeholders and therefore maintains a very credible system of internal control of the operations of the College. Through its prudent management practices, NAMCOL has developed policies that regulate financial management, procurement procedures, learner support, organisational values, information technology, and quality assurance. The College's core activity has traditionally been its programme of Alternative Secondary Education which enables, amongst others, the following target groups to complete their secondary education:

- Adults who have never completed their formal schooling
- Learners who have not succeeded in the formal education system, and
- Un- and under-employed people.[22]

The overall objectives of NAMCOL are:

- To contribute towards the social and economic development of Namibia by upgrading the educational level of adults and out-of-school youths;
    - through programmes of open learning
    - by designing, developing and offering programmes to address the diverse educational needs of such adults and out-of school youth; and by providing opportunities for adults and out-of-school youth to upgrade their professional and vocational skills as well as their level of general education, to attain economic self-development and managerial skills for the sound management of inter alia, rural societies and non governmental organizations
- To broaden access to education by establishing and maintaining tutorial centres in the various regions of Namibia for those Namibians who have been deprived of formal education or vocational training or who are too old or for other reasons are unable to engage in conventional school-based education;
- To create opportunities for open learning through the use of modern instructional techniques, including but not limited to the media, and utilization of technological equipment.

[21] Mensah, F.J. (2005:2) NAMCOL Case Study; South African Institute for Distance Education

[22] Mensah, F.J. (n. d.) Open Schooling: Broadening access by distance education: The Namibian experience, Namibian College of Open Learning.

- To provide guidance or counselling services to those seeking admission into the programme of open learning as well as to learners already involved in such programmes.
- To provide an effective collegial governance structure that encourages active participation of all its constituents and reflects the collective input of such constituents.
- To co-ordinate with other bodies, institutions, organizations and interest groups in order to facilitate co-operation and encouragement of an inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approach to open-learning; and
- To seek and promote co-operation with regional and international institutions providing education.[23]

The mandate and objectives of NAMCOL show that the institution was established in order to support national development efforts through contributing to the creation of a knowledge society. The institution achieves this by providing access to secondary education for youth who are out of the formal secondary school system and adults who missed out on secondary education. As in most African countries, formal education in Namibia is very much examination- oriented, and learners who fail to meet the required points in grade 10 cannot proceed to grade 11; neither do they get the opportunity to repeat. Every year thousands of these learners find themselves on the streets with no prospects of further education or finding a job. So, NAMCOL is a solution to this problem. Many of these learners register with NAMCOL and many succeed in gaining the required points to proceed to grade 11 and are able to re-join the conventional system. Traditionally, the College has offered an alternative secondary education which leads to the following qualifications:

- Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) – This examination is taken mostly by Grade 10 learners and it is set and marked nationally.
- The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) – This is a school-leaving certificate taken mainly by learners in Grade 12 and it is externally accredited.

An important point to note is how ODL at NAMCOL is well articulated with the conventional education system in Namibia. ODL students follow a parallel curriculum to the conventional one; they sit for the same examinations as their mainstream counterparts, and they can re-join the formal school system after scoring the required points through NAMCOL at grade 10. NAMCOL courses and examinations are heavily subsidised by the government as a way of broadening access for the poor. Learners have to qualify to meet the requirements of the National Examinations, Assessment and Certification Board for them to be allowed to sit for examinations.

All learners registered for Grade 10 (JSC) or Grade 12 (IGCSE) courses with NAMCOL receive the following services:

- One day (5 hours) orientation workshop,
- Copy of the NAMCOL Good Study Guide
- A full set of NAMCOL study guides and or textbook for each subject,

[23] Review of the role of NAMCOL, SAIDE, p.13

- Two hours of face to face tuition per week in each subject
- Two vacation workshops per year (these are meant for learners who are unable to attend weekly face to face contact sessions)
- Three assignments (set nationally but marked by local tutors) per subject per year.
- Supervised study halls (where available)[24]

Since 2003, learners who pursue the Alternative Secondary Education Programme can opt to attend weekly tutorials for two hours per subject (open contact) or study entirely on their own (open non-contact). This is the flexibility that makes the learning programmes convenient for the learners. In terms of scale of operation, NAMCOL is the biggest single provider of secondary school education in Namibia and by 2005, its total enrolment had grown to 26 826.[25] The institution's impact in increasing participation at secondary level can therefore not be underestimated.

Analysis of student enrolments at NAMCOL reveals that by 2004, there were significantly more girls (66%) than boys (34%). Table 2 below shows the distribution of NAMCOL learners in 2004 by age:

Table 1.2: Registered Learners by Age, 2004

Age Group	No. of registered students	% of registered students
<16	12	0.05
16	23	0.09
17	226	0.90
18	1107	4.40
19	2810	11.16
20-24	14704	58.40
25-29	4045	16.07
30-34	1307	5.19
35-39	521	2.07
40+	422	1.68
Total	**25177**	**100.00**

Source: Mensah, F.J. (2005:14)

In terms of age, only 0.05% of the students were under the age of 16, 16.46% were between 17-19 years, 58.40% between 20 - 24 years, and 1,68% were 40 years and above. Thus, the majority of the students registered with NAMCOL are youth aged between 20 and 24 years.

[24] Allsop, Terry and Memkoa, Ephraim (2005:17). Review of the Role and Function of the Namibian College of Open Learning. Unpublished Report.

[25] Mensah, F. J. (2005:4) NAMCOL Case Study Commissioned by SAIDE.

9.2.1 Key aspects of ODL at NAMCOL

One of the most important aspects of NAMCOL is that ODL was embraced by the government as a national strategy for increasing access at post-primary level. Thus open learning is regulated and supported by well- articulated policy in Namibia and there is support from the government in terms of funding ODL initiatives as well as administratively. Unlike in other African countries where such initiatives are the responsibility of small institutions that struggle to operate at reasonable levels of scale, ODL initiatives in Namibia have had a significant national impact in providing alternative access to Junior and upper secondary education. Apart from policy, ODL is also well articulated with the rest of the education system, both in terms of the school equivalence curriculum as well as in terms of the examination systems. This makes it easy for learners to cross from one system to another so that the perception of distance education as a second rate option is alleviated.

It should also be noted from the above description that NAMCOL provides extensive learner support, mainly at its de-centralised learning centres. To enhance the quality of learning further, NAMCOL is also resorting to the use of communication technologies in its delivery processes.

Another important aspect of ODL in Namibia is the importance that is placed on collaboration and partnerships amongst ODL institutions. The establishment in 2000 of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNET) by the Namibian government, with the specific purpose of coordinating ODL activities in the country and ensuring that quality control mechanisms are put in place, shows the commitment of the government to transforming the education system of the country by supporting ODL, and its realisation of the importance of collaboration in developing quality ODL systems. The key functions of NOLNET were:

- Assisting in defining appropriate policies for the promotion and implementation of ODL activities;
- Promoting cooperation between ODL institutions and their equitable sharing of resources for mutual benefit;
- Developing quality control mechanisms and structures for standard setting in ODL;
- Advising ministries and other funding bodies to ensure equitable and effective allocation of resources to ODL activities;
- Assisting in the promotion of a good image of ODL in Namibia; and
- Providing advocacy for ODL activities at all levels.

Through NOLNET the ODL institutions have so far managed to strengthen their collaboration and current activities include:

- Collaborating in the training of staff to provide services and support to the distance education students of all signatory institutions;
- Ensuring access for the students of all signatory institutions to the facilities and services of each institution according to an agreed framework of principles;
- Coordinating publications and information provision about the activities, courses and services of all signatory institutions; and
- Cooperating in providing advice and/or counseling to prospective students.

The benefits of such collaboration and sharing of resources between institutions lie in the development of quality and cost-effective ODL programmes. Such coordination efforts are lacking in most of the countries implementing ODL in the region. Structures like NOLNET and other management structures like the Board of Trustees and the Management Committee through which the Ministry of Education participates in the ODL activities of providing institutions are important elements in the effective implementation of ODL in Namibia.

As highlighted before in this paper, the significance of NAMCOL in making ODL maintain a felt presence in the country is evidenced through its enrolment of 25 292 learners by 2004. Of this total enrolment in that year, 13 309 were enrolled at Junior School Certificate level whilst 11 809 were at International General Certificate of Secondary Education.[26] In the same year, 88% of Grade 10 and 75% of Grade 12 learners passed their examinations. [27] Given that about 53% of the total enrolment was at Junior Secondary level and the high pass rates being achieved at this level, the contribution of the College in enhancing the extension of basic education to include junior secondary cannot be overemphasised. It is however, worth noting that the majority of these learners are youth who are above the normal school-going age. The main role NAMCOL is playing in Namibia is providing youth who have either failed through the formal secondary education system or for one reason or another, have missed the opportunity to gain secondary qualifications a chance to acquire a secondary school qualification. Appreciation of this service by the beneficiary groups is well - captured in the SAIDE review report:

> Learners that were interviewed felt that if it was not for NAMCOL, many of them would be a lost generation either loitering in the streets with nothing to do or engaged in criminal activities. As far as they were concerned NAMCOL was a 'rescuer'. It offered them hope for the future.[28]

In spite of some of the misgivings expressed by some people about distance education, the beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the relevance and appropriateness of the NAMCOL programmes. Thus, in terms of the main policy thrust, ODL initiatives are primarily targeting young people who need a second chance to attain secondary qualifications.

9.3 Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL)

The Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning was established through an Act of Parliament in 2000. The College's mandate was to expand education and training opportunities for out-of-school young people and adults by using distance education methodologies.[29] BOCODOL's mission is "to empower Botswana with education and skills through open access to quality, innovative distance learning programmes and the promotion of a culture of life-long learning". [30] This educational strategy is in line with the country's economic goal of transforming the country from an agro-based to an industrialised economy that thrives on the high-level skills of a

[26] Mensah, F.J. (2005:12)

[27] Allsop, Terry and Memkoa, Ephraim (2005). Review of the Role and Function of the Namibian College of Open Learning. Unpublished Report.

[28] Ibid, p.19

[29] Nage-Sibande, B. (2005:8) The Development of Distance Education in Botswana and its Importance for Current Developments

[30] Ibid, p.8

knowledge society. Thus, at national level, the key aim of education is to raise educational standards at all levels by making it more accessible to larger numbers of people. As a dedicated distance education institution, BOCODOL tries to achieve this educational goal by providing alternative secondary education and training to those learners who are not accommodated by the formal school system; the poor, the rural, the physically handicapped, and other socially-marginalised minority groups in the society.

In terms of governance, the College is run by a Board of Governors that is appointed by the Minister of Education who presents the College's Annual report to Parliament. Under the Board is a Director who is responsible for the overall organisation and co-ordination of the day-to-day operations of the College through several organs that include:

- An Executive Management, made up of the Director, two Deputy Directors and an Assistant Director.
- College Management comprising the Executive Management, Managers of Departments and Regional Centres as well as heads of units and sections.

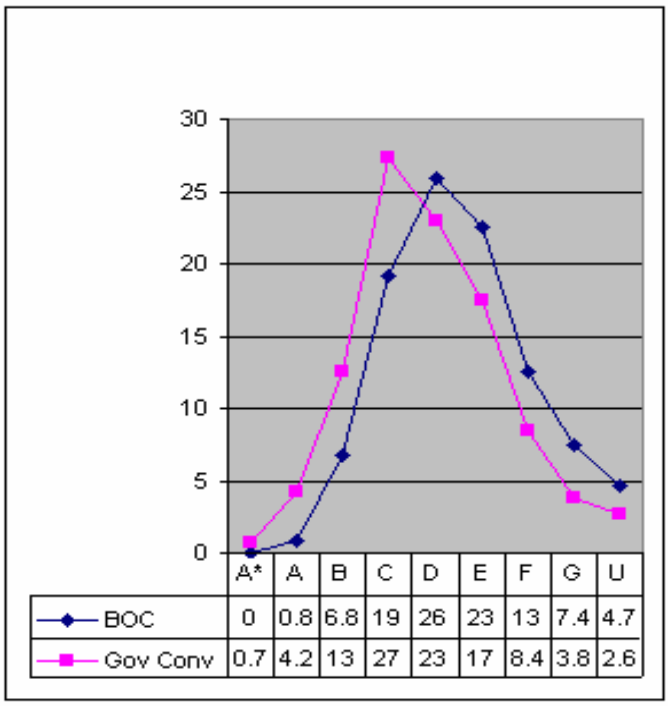
Thus, management structures are such that the activities of the College are closely monitored and supported by the government to ensure that they remain in tandem with the overall development plans of the country. The government also supports the College through a grant system, although the expectation is that in the long run, the College should be self-sustaining through cost-recovery measures. The College's cost-recovery strategies target courses in the vocational, management and professional areas whilst secondary school courses are set to remain affordable to the large majority of people who still need them. The government is committed to continue subsidising ODL at secondary level for the unforeseeable future as a way of moving towards universal secondary education in the country. There is evidence to show that distance education courses are cheaper per learner than full-time conventional courses. A study conducted at BOCODOL in 2003 showed that the average annual cost per student in a government senior secondary school was P6351.53 while it would cost in total P94901.45 to produce a similar BGCSE course for distance learners, thus making the cost per learner far less than that of conventional education.[31] Although it is often claimed in the literature that distance education is cheaper than full-time conventional education, it is the view of this report that more rigorous analysis is required in order to show the relative cost of ODL programmes in particular contexts. This view is based on the fact that the behaviour of costs is largely dependent on contextual drivers that vary from context to context.

BOCODOL offers programmes that target learners who are out of school but wish to continue their schooling by upgrading or accessing higher levels. These programmes are at three main levels; Junior Certificate (JC), Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE), and Vocational/Management courses. The first two categories, which are school equivalency programmes, are the mainstream offerings of the College. These programmes are also examined and accredited by the Botswana Examinations Council, a semi- autonomous institution under the Ministry of Education. Thus, the Council predetermines the quality of examinations and BOCODOL ensures compliance as per the internal quality structures. BOCODOL students sit for the same examinations as their conventional counterparts. An important point to note is that the performance of BOCODOL students in public examinations is comparable to that of conventional students in government schools. At BGCSE level, for instance, performance in examinations was

[31] Amey, F (2005::4) Learner support case study: BOCODOL, SAIDE

reportedly 91.9%, 97.2% and 95.3% for 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively.[32] Figure 1 below shows that BOCODOL performance at BGCSE is almost on a par with government schools even though the quality of its results is still slightly lower.

Fig.1.1: Proportion of Grades awarded



	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
BOC	0	0.8	6.8	19	26	23	13	7.4	4.7
Gov Conv	0.7	4.2	13	27	23	17	8.4	3.8	2.6

Source: BOCODOL (2005:40-41) cited in Nage-Sibande, B. (2005:10)

Like at NAMCOL, the majority of students at BOCODOL are youths aged 16-25 years, and females (68%) outnumber males (32%) by a very wide margin. [33]In 2002, just two years after its inception, the College enrolled about 7000 learners in the school equivalence programmes. By 2005, it had realised a cumulative student body of 21000 of whom 20% were enrolled at Junior Certificate whilst 80% were at the BGCSE.[34] The College has the capacity to take about 2000 learners through examinations annually at JC and BGCSE. These figures show the contribution BOCODOL is

[32] Nage-Sibande, B. (2005::9)

[33] Amey, F. (2005:6) Learner support case study: BOCODOL

[34] Ibid

making in expanding access to secondary education in the country. Like in the NAMCOL case, though there is a significant number of learners enrolling at Junior certificate level, most of them are above the school-going age.

BOCODOL operates throughout the country through 5 regional centres and 75 fully functional learning centres that are located in urban, rural and remote areas. The centres are located in secondary or primary schools where they share the facilities through a principle based on the recommendations of the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE 1994) on shared use of resources.[35] A protocol agreement signed with schools also enables the learning centres to access such school facilities as telephones, faxes, photocopying machines, offices, and storage places for materials. Thus, BOCODOL operations are planned in such a way that they are well integrated with other supportive institutions and structures in the country so as to maximise utilisation of already available infrastructure. The elements of collaboration and partnership in order to maximise sharing of scarce resources is evident at BOCODOL.

9.3.1 Key aspects of ODL at BOCODOL

Like in the NAMCOL case, an important aspect of BOCODOL is the government's decision to embrace ODL as a national strategy not only for broadening access to general post-secondary education, but also for vocational skills development. Because of this political commitment to ODL, financial and administrative support is offered to BOCODOL and relevant support structures are established to allow sharing of scarce resources and collaboration with related institutions. Learners are supported through grants and subsidised fees in order to ensure affordability and maximise access. The support from the government is very critical in enabling BOCODOL to develop quality programmes that are managed well. The performance of distance education students is dependent on the sound management of programmes and the quality of student support. As was shown in figure 1, BOCODOL students are generally performing comparably well. The challenge for improvement in this regard is however, also evident in the reported results.

Assessment and certification of the BOCODOL learners is the same as that of conventional students. This gives the institution some credibility in terms of its academic standing in the country. The institution is also playing a very important role in terms of addressing equity issues, through its enrolment of students from some of the marginalised groups of society. It was reported in this paper, for instance, that 68% of its students are females whilst only 32% are males. This trend probably shows that the large number of female learners who could be out of school for various socio-cultural reasons have been provided with a safety net through BOCODOL ODL programmes and now stand better chances of realising high academic achievements in their lives. These learners can make meaningful contributions in the economic development of the country.

9.4 ODL in Ethiopia and at Mindset

An important claim made at the beginning of section eight of this paper is that distance education is an old phenomenon on the continent. Several examples can be cited to substantiate this claim, and one such example is that of Ethiopia. Distance education in Ethiopia dates back to the 1960s and until recently, the Educational Mass Media Agency (EMMA) was responsible for coordinating the production of radio and television programmes to support secondary education. The EMMA

[35] Amey, F. (2005:1-2) Learner Support Case Study: BOCODOL

developed radio broadcast programmes for different learners at different levels, for junior secondary school, which is the main focus of this paper, and both radio and television were used to transmit lessons. The main purpose of the radio and television broadcast programmes was to supplement and enrich the formal school curriculum as well as to support distance education secondary equivalence programmes for out-of-school youth and adults.[36] By the 1990s, the EMMA was running 5 subjects on television, 6 subjects on radio and 11 subjects through print for junior secondary grades 9-10. [37] In 2000, EMMA secured a special agreement with WorldSpace to make use of one broadcasting channel on AfriSat exclusively for use in Ethiopia.[38] This development was primarily meant to improve the quality of transmission and to maximise its programme reach to disadvantaged learners in remote rural areas, some of which were falling in transmission shadow areas. As Rumble reports, the satellite could also transmit multimedia information so that text, audio, video, and graphics could be downloaded to a radio and passed in turn to an attached computer. [39]The overall effect of this was improvement of the quality of broadcast transmission throughout the country, including remote rural areas, and it enabled learners to take advantage of the broadcast lessons irrespective of their geographical location. These technological developments show how technology-enhanced distance education can enrich formal schooling even in rural set-ups where facilities and learning resources are usually poor. This aspect is critical in so far as addressing rural-urban disparities in terms of quality educational provision is concerned, a problem that is prevalent in most African countries. Technology-supported instruction can help mitigate the negative impact of shortage of textbook resources, poor quality of teaching, and teacher absenteeism; common constraints faced in most rural schools in African countries, particularly in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

As alluded to in the foregoing paragraph, distance education in Ethiopia has also played an important role in catering for out-of-school youth who need a secondary education qualification. By 2000, there were 8500 students enrolled in the secondary school equivalency programme in Ethiopia and interestingly, most of these learners were studying at grades 9-10. [40]This figure had risen to 14291 by 2003, a trend that shows the increasing popularity and contribution of distance education towards increasing access to junior secondary education in the country. There is a high likelihood that shift in government policy in relation to the School Leaving Certificate Examination may lead to greater numbers of learners registering in the School Equivalency Programme. The School Leaving Certificate Examination which used to be written at Grade 12 is now written at the end of Grade 10. This policy shift is coupled with the Programme Action Plan for the Education Sector Development Plan 1 (ESDP) that emphasises the role of distance education in opening up opportunities for study. Given the limited number of secondary school facilities in the country and a gross enrolment rate of just over 13% at secondary school level, [41]there is definite need to expand distance education if opportunities are to be provided for massive numbers of youth to attain

[36]Tilson and Bekele 2000 cited in Rumble,G. (2003:20) Sub-Saharan Africa Multi-Country Assessment of The Use of Distance Education and Information and Communication Technologies in Education, Joint International Council of Open and Distance Education (ICDE) world Bank.

[37] Ibid

[38] Ibid

[39] Ibid

[40] Rumble, G (2003:3)

[41] Ibid, p.23

national school leaving qualifications. Growing investments in improving broadcasting technologies in the country show a clear upward trend and distance education is likely to benefit and be able to play an increased role in this respect.

The Ethiopian case illustrates how radio and television technology can be used to enrich formal schooling as well as to enhance distance education for out-of-school youth. A similar case worth mentioning here, where communication technologies are used to support formal learning at secondary school level is that of Mindset in South Africa. Mindset has developed two enrichment interventions, Mindset Cabanga and Mindset Learn, which are targeted at primary and secondary school learners respectively. The innovations involve the development of high quality digital learning materials at Mindset headquarters in Johannesburg, which are then delivered through satellite to schools. The materials are sent to a digital storage device (DSD) that is installed at school and teachers are able to access these materials any time from the school DSD through television sets or through computers installed in classrooms. The materials are used for enriching teaching and learning in the classroom, thus making learning more exciting for learners. Mindset Learn materials are designed for Grades 10, 11 and 12 and they are mainly in Business Studies, English Language, Life Sciences, Maths Literacy and Physical Science. Apart from using them during lessons, learners can also access the materials online and interact with them as individuals or in groups. They engage in activities that are specially designed and can get immediate feedback on their responses to the activity questions, thus making learning active. According to a senior official at Mindset, although the materials are primarily meant for learners to interact with during the conventional school learning process, teachers are finding them very helpful in equipping them for their teaching.[42] The same official from Mindset indicated that where the materials are being used, both learners and teachers are very excited about them. Thus, apart from being used directly by learners, the other benefit of this intervention is that the expertly developed materials support weak teachers in improving their teaching. Over and above the pedagogical benefits derived from the innovation, modern communication infrastructure like televisions, computers and satellite receivers put in the school makes school life more attractive to learners, and learning becomes more learner-centred and activity based.

The fundamental reason for bringing in the Mindset innovations at this stage of this paper is to try and show how different technologies can be used to enrich formal learning, especially in contexts where there is either shortage of textbook resources or where schools are staffed with un- or under qualified teachers. Whilst the supportive technology is predominantly the radio and television in Ethiopia, in the Mindset case both digital satellite television and computer supported modes of delivery are used. The significance of the technologies used lies in their potential to facilitate interactivity in the learning process, an important pedagogical aspect in any learning encounter. Although there have been recent initiatives to develop more Interactive Radio Instructional programmes in Ethiopia, supported by USAID, the level of learner interactivity is limited when compared to computer-supported instruction. The latter can allow two-way interaction with the learner, as was explained to be the case in the Mindset initiative where learners can access the materials on the Internet. In this case, provision of feedback during learning provides both motivation and learning pathways to the learner.

[42] Information provided through telephone interview with a senior official at Mindset: Interview date 26/10/2007

9.4.1 Key aspects of ODL in Ethiopia and at Mindset

The experiences of the two cases of Ethiopia and Mindset where technology is used to support open learning show that the technological dimension of ODL is a critical factor to consider in making investment decisions in Africa. This is primarily because of the need to ensure that if technology is to be used as a strategy for expanding access at junior secondary school, the strategy can only be worthwhile if that expansion is coupled with quality. This is particularly so in countries like Ethiopia, where junior secondary is pegged as the secondary school leaving level. If the quality of education is poor, masses of learners walk out of the school system without any meaningful literacy, numeracy lifelong learning skills. In planning distance education, it is therefore important to plan how quality is going to be enhanced and to weigh the costs and benefits of whatever investment is made to support the system.

The second issue emerging from the two cases of Ethiopia and Mindset has to do with scale of operation. Where a very small proportion of learners participate in such interventions, the cost per head becomes prohibitively high. It is necessary to reduce the cost of running such distance education initiatives by developing policies that promote large enrolments. Not only should the cost of putting in place the requisite infrastructure be considered, but of equal importance is also the cost of maintaining that infrastructure over time so that it continues to be fully functional and can serve many generations of learners. This does have the effect of lowering the per capita investment costs in the long run. This aspect has particular relevance where donor support is involved in the initial setting up of the interventions. Governments should always be involved in donor-initiated initiatives right from the start, and should put in place plans that will enable them to continue sustaining the initiatives when donors withdraw.

In the Ethiopian and Mindset initiatives discussed above, there is a gap in terms of how successful the innovations have been in enhancing quality learning. As Rumble notes of the Ethiopian experience, no figures are available to show the relative performance of learners going through the secondary school equivalency programme.[43] The interviewed official from Mindset indicated that in some provinces in South Africa, like Western Cape, all senior schools are using the enrichment materials in their teaching, and many have established computer labs where learners can access the materials on the Internet. In the Gauteng province, her estimation was that between 100 and 200 schools are making use of the materials. She however, admitted that no study has been made to establish whether learners in participating schools are performing any better in examinations than their counterparts in non-participating schools. There is need for undertaking evaluation in some of these initiatives in order to establish their impact on learner performance. Linked to this point is the need for establishing the cost effectiveness of such technology-intensive innovations so as to guide policy makers on the appropriateness of such interventions at national level. Whilst it may be true that schools are using the materials, there is no clear evidence that the materials are being used effectively enough to yield benefits that warrant the significant investment made. The sustainability of such initiatives in the long run rests on the scale of benefits the wider education system derives from them. A key point to note in this regard is the importance of developing financial models that shed light on the most appropriate strategies to invest in in particular contexts.

[43] Rumble, G. (2003:23)

10.0 Lessons to be learnt from cases reviewed

There are fundamental lessons that can be learnt from the issues discussed in this paper. The first is that there is great need in most African countries for providing a second chance to thousands of youth who either drop-out or fail to make it at secondary school level. In many African countries the transition rates from primary to secondary school are very low. In others where the transition rates are relatively high, there are still a large number of learners whose grades preclude them from continuing their education. These unfortunate learners are victims of circumstances that are not of their making. They fail because the provision of secondary education is of low quality, or the systems lack adequate capacity to cater for the deserving numbers, or because their socio-economic backgrounds preclude their continuing with secondary education as offered by inflexible traditional delivery systems. Countries therefore need to put plans in place to cater for these colossal numbers of youth who constitute their human resource base.

Secondly, NAMCOL and BOCODOL demonstrate that ODL can offer large numbers of learners quality post-primary education. Both institutions have succeeded in achieving this by developing high quality learning materials, providing ongoing support to students through tutorial and regular assessment. Moreover, through establishing learning/tutorial centres throughout the country, over 100 in Namibia and about 75 in Botswana, it has been possible for the institutions to reach large numbers of geographically spaced learners, including many in very remote rural areas. The Mindset and Ethiopian cases also show that use of technology allows distance education interventions to reach geographically dispersed populations in rural environments, although the biggest challenge is the high cost of putting in place the requisite infrastructure in schools.

Thirdly, it is evident from the cases that clear commitment to open learning and distance education by governments is critical if access and quality are to be achieved. Such commitment needs to be supported by well-integrated policy that guides implementation of ODL strategies and allows articulation with the conventional national education system. In Ethiopia for instance, the New Educational and Training Policy of 1995 clearly stated the need for having non-formal education in the country, from low grade to higher education level, through distance education (envisaged to complement the formal education system).[44]

Fourthly, ODL systems need to have sound funding mechanisms in order to enable them to deliver quality services that are competitive with conventional systems in terms of their costs per graduate. Systems that are run on shaky funding can never deliver quality programmes. Poor quality ODL systems lose the confidence of both parents and learners, lose professional credibility, and defeat the whole purpose of empowering the masses. Alternative forms of secondary education need to demonstrate to parents and learners that they offer quality education. Both NAMCOL and BOCODOL show positive signs of being reasonably resourced on an ongoing basis.

Fifthly, given the scarcity of resources on the continent, collaboration, partnerships and sharing within and between countries can go a long way in developing capacity on the continent as well as avoiding unnecessary and costly duplication of effort. In this regard, the idea of open education resources becomes an attractive option to pursue.

Sixthly, it appears that ODL systems are suitable for learners who are above 16 years of age; who have the discipline to engage in a high level of self-motivated learning. Such older learners normally have other commitments that preclude them from attending conventional schools.

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[44] Seyoum, A. A. (2003: 1) in SAIDE. OLTDE: *Open Learning Through Distance Education*, Vol. 9 (2) pp.8-13

Young learners under the age of 16 find difficulty in managing self-learning, unless special learner support mechanisms are put in place. This aspect has implications for where the greatest investments should be made in terms of ODL post-primary provision. It is also important in helping to determine the purpose ODL initiatives should serve in given country contexts, whether they should primarily be for providing alternative options for attaining secondary educational qualifications or for enriching the formal school curriculum or, perhaps a blend of both.

The other lesson that emerged from the review is that ODL seems to contribute quite significantly in providing a safety-net for marginalized groups of learners, especially girls. Both BOCODOL and NAMCOL enrol significantly larger numbers of female than male students. One interpretation of this pattern is that these are some of the learners who find it more difficult to participate in formal systems and in the absence of alternative options provided by ODL institutions, such learners would not be participating in any meaningful education programme.

Lastly, curricula should be relevant to learners' needs and should not differ significantly from that of conventional schooling. Apart from allowing comparable qualifications within a country, articulation of ODL systems with conventional schooling allows learners the freedom to move from one system to another, as need and opportunity arises.

11.0 ODL trends in Africa

The cases reviewed in this study demonstrate that open and distance learning is gaining increasing importance on the continent, as countries grapple with increasing participation at various levels of the education system, including the Junior Secondary school level. There are many other ODL interventions that have been implemented in different countries in Africa, which have not been reported on in this paper. Most of these interventions target various disadvantaged groups that have low participation rates in conventional secondary education systems. Worth mentioning in this category of interventions is the Open and Distance Learning Project in Mozambique implemented in the remote Northern province of Nampula where it is estimated that 70% of the nearly 3 million inhabitants are illiterate. Secondary school facilities are severely limited in this province, with 12 thousand learners attending only 13 secondary schools in the province.[45] The ODL intervention at secondary school level, which is supported by DFID, is targeted at a multiplicity of audiences:

- Those who left the education system after completing Grade 7, either due to lack of schools or due to the necessity to work in order to make a leaving, and who cannot now participate in the formal school system.
- The disadvantaged groups within the society, like women, the physically handicapped, and orphans.
- Adults who missed out on the opportunity to study.

In this project, ODL is implemented on a pilot basis with the aim of developing strategies that can be used to address low enrolment rates at secondary school level nationally. The government of Mozambique has come to believe that distance education is the only option that can be used in the country in order to provide large numbers of learners who come out of the primary school system

[45] Romiszowski, A. (2003 :15) Secondary Education Project by Distance Education: Audience Analysis and Baseline Study.

with secondary education. Thus, a clear national policy and strategy for the development of distance education in the country was developed.

In Malawi distance education is widely used at secondary school level to provide many learners who cannot be accommodated in the formal school system access to secondary education. In Kenya, the newly developed Secondary Education Strategy places considerable importance on distance education as the most suitable strategy for achieving universal secondary education in the country.[46] The Mauritius College of the Air has a division of Distance Education whose main mandate is to provide continuing education based on distance education principles. [47] The Zambian Open Secondary Classes is reportedly playing a key role in providing access at secondary school level, particularly in the remote rural areas. In 1990, out of 11 138 learners enrolled at secondary level through the Open Secondary Classes, 29.6% were studying in the predominantly rural provinces of Luapula, Northern, North Western, Eastern and Western Provinces. [48] Thus, Open Secondary Classes are making a significant contribution towards addressing issues of equity and access in the country.

Thus, the general trend of ODL in Africa is that of gradual buy-in by more and more countries. Although the approach has been used for some time in some parts of the continent on a small scale, indications are that more efforts and greater investments are being made into the area of distance education as countries become more aware of the potential this mode of delivery has in catering for large numbers of learners with different learning preferences and needs. With rapid technological advancement taking place on the continent, greater potential is realized for open and distance learning systems to reach large numbers of secondary school learners in dispersed locations, including remote rural areas. The reality of the limitations of conventional instruction in facilitating the goal of universal access has forced policy makers, practitioners and scholars to advocate for more innovative approaches to reach the unreached.

12.0 Key challenges

Although ODL seems to hold a lot of promise for African countries, there are a lot of challenges associated with this strategy, particularly if it is to be used for extending basic education to junior secondary school level.

The first challenge has to do with the target group of learners. As the two cases of NAMCOL and BOCODOL showed, there is considerable evidence that providing secondary schooling through distance education can be successful for youth. However, most of these learners are above 20 years. A special analysis of learners between 16 and 19 would need to be done to determine whether success rates of this sub-group are comparable to the larger group. Furthermore, there is little experience of whether even younger groups of learners, i.e. those between 12 and 16 years of age who increasingly constitute the age range of junior secondary students in conventional schools, can benefit from distance education provision. Implementing distance education for

[46] Secondary Education Strategy in Kenya, Republic of Kenya, March 2007

[47] ADEA (2002) Open and Distance Learning in Sub-Saharan Africa

[48] Siaciwena, R. (n.d. :107) Zambian Open Secondary Classes. In Open Schooling: Selected Experiences, Commonwealth of Learning. pp.103-112

children between 12 and 16 years may require special support systems to ensue that learners derive benefit out of it.

The second challenge is overcoming the scepticism amongst policy makers towards this approach to education. There is need for showing, through empirical and rigorous study of good practice, that distance education is an alternative and cost effective form of education. This demonstration should be increasingly nuanced in that it should be clear on the particular model of distance education utilised, the target group of learners, and the political context, including policy and funding.

The third but related challenge is that of ensuring that wherever it is introduced, adequate planning is done, basic infrastructure is put in place in advance of the intervention, and sufficient support is provided from government and the private sector. There should be integrated policy frameworks to guide and regulate distance education activities so that they articulate with the rest of the education system in the country, both horizontally and vertically.

The fourth challenge in most African countries is the limited bandwidth that places constraints on Internet connectivity. This has a bearing on the effectiveness of sharing resources between providers in different countries.

Lastly, there is need for considerably more emphasis on understanding the actual costs of the different distance education initiatives in Africa and on this basis, develop robust funding models that contribute to the success of ODL innovations.

13.0 Conclusion

This paper set out to establish the state of ODL in Africa, and show, through selected cases, opportunities that exists for expanding secondary school access through ODL strategies. The paper argued that there is growing interest in the use of ODL as a strategy for addressing access and equity on the continent. Several examples of organisations devoted to the development of ODL on the continent were given; examples of initiatives implemented in several countries were cited. These initiatives include the SADC Open Schools Consortium consisting of institutions from about 10 countries within the region. The particular cases of NAMCOL, BOCODOL, Ethiopia, and Mindset were reviewed in detail in order to identify key characteristics of ODL in terms of the beneficiary groups, scale of operation, management approaches, quality of delivery as indicated by the relative performance of learners, and the role of government. Drawing mainly from the experiences of Namibia, Botswana, Ethiopia, and Mindset (South Africa) the paper showed that ODL can be used to expand access and address equity issues by providing quality education to large numbers of learners in geographically dispersed areas. There is a general trend where most countries in Africa are implementing distance education interventions at secondary school level in order to expand secondary school access. Whilst this approach seems to hold promise, there are several challenges that go with it, especially if it is to be implemented at national level. These include formulating appropriate policies, addressing quality issues, achieving buy-in from stakeholders, overcoming the constraints of limited bandwidth, and developing appropriate funding models to ensure the sustainability of the innovations. There is need for countries to collaborate and share if they are to develop sound distance education systems that can provide quality secondary education to larger numbers of learners in cost-effective ways. After all, Maths and Science curricula do not vary much from country to country for example, so it should be possible at least in these two learning areas to develop learning materials of the very highest

quality to support distance learners but also add quality to traditional classroom-based teaching. The focus of such ODL initiatives needs to be informed by the contextual needs of the various countries; whilst some may use the strategy to support conventional learners through enrichment, as is the case with Mindset Network in South Africa, others may need to use it as an alternative route for providing a parallel secondary school curriculum as is the case in Namibia. Use of this strategy at junior secondary school level poses the unique challenge of age. This review shows that where ODL has been implemented with success at secondary level, it has mainly involved older learners who are well above 16 years of age. The study also revealed that where ODL has registered success, governments have taken the responsibility to plan, support and facilitate implementation at systemic level and institutions have collaborated rather than competed.

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15.0 Appendices

Appendix One: Open Schools Consortium – Operational Principles

1. Consortium members will comprise any organization that is able to added demonstrable value to achieving the objectives of the Consortium.
2. The SADC Centre for Distance Education will take responsibility for housing the Consortium and coordinating its activities. As part of this, a governance structure representing all Consortium partners will be established to oversee Consortium activities.
3. Within the framework of SADC CDE coordination, project management agencies will be identified to manage specific projects as these are secured.
4. From the outset, Consortium members will be committed to diversifying the sources of income being tapped to fund Consortium projects.
5. Project partners will be expected to identify – during project design and funding proposal development – precisely what resources and support they will require to be able to participate effectively in collaborative projects and other Consortium activities.
6. All participating partners will be expected to enter into contractual agreements to demonstrate their commitment to the collaborative objectives of the Consortium and ensuing projects. They will also be expected to dedicate time and resources to projects, for which they will be financially supported.
7. Clear roles and responsibilities will be identified and agreed by all Consortium partners. In particular, Consortium members will be required to participate actively within agreed communication structures, at country and regional level.
8. Consortium partners will be required to make clear commitments to using the results of collaborative projects in their day-to-day operations.
9. The Consortium will place significant emphasis on careful programme design during project planning.
10. Project budgets and ensuing resourcing of participating Consortium members will be sufficient to meet the full requirement needed to implement projects successfully.
11. Time frames for collaborative projects will take consideration of the time required to facilitate effective collaboration and project delivery.
12. Capacity building for Consortium members will be built into all collaborative projects.
13. Quality assurance mechanisms will be built into the operations of the Consortium and its projects.
14. Monitoring and evaluation will be built into all projects, with strong commitment to critical reflection.
15. Links will be established with accreditation bodies to ensure that the products of collaborative projects form part of accredited programmes in the countries of Consortium partners.
16. Members will put their collective expertise to the service of the Consortium's projects. Consortium projects will build on existing initiatives, harness existing capacity, and draw on existing materials as relevant during project design and implementation.
17. Materials developed through collaborative projects will be designed in such a way that they can be easily adaptable to different contexts.
18. The Consortium will establish an appropriate, online knowledge base to ensure that the results of collaboration are shared across the region and continent.

19. Advocacy strategies will be developed to promote distance education and open learning for secondary and vocational programmes.

Appendix Two: General Information on SADC Open Schools Consortium Members

SADC – Centre for Distance Education

The SADC Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) is an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) centre of excellence in Southern Africa. The Centre's main function is to build ODL capacity within the region at all levels; pre-tertiary or secondary school to tertiary level. SADC-CDE intends to assist the region to widen access to education provision through various projects and programme's prioritized in its action plan. The result is expected to be the accelerated facilitation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that all Southern African countries have committed to. SADC-CDE started operating from 1st June 2005 and already a number of projects have been lined up for the region. The Centre hopes to get maximum support from the regional institutions in terms of participating in all arranged activities and availing expertise on short term attachments / secondments to its office for identified projects and activities. The SADC-CDE offices are located in Botswana at Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (Bocodol) along Garamothose Road, plot number 39972/1. Botswana also hosts the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat.

Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning (Bocodol)

Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (Bocodol) has been formed to improve access to learning opportunities on a nation wide scale for the out of school young adults. Open learning seeks to break down the barriers to personal development by providing flexible learning environments, enabling people to study what is relevant to their needs, at a time and place convenient to them. The learners learn from specially designed study materials which use a combination of different types of media, methods and communication technologies, rather than through direct face-to-face mode of instruction as in conventional schools. In this way distance education allows them to study at home or in their workplace, at their own pace without having to leave their families or job commitments. The college is also faced with the task of broadening types of courses it offers to include vocationl, professional management and other programmes in addition to Junior Certificate (JC) and Botswana General Certificate in Secondary Education (BGCSE).

Lesotho - Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC)

The Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre was established to make formal and non-formal education available mainly to the underprivileged people of Lesotho through the use of distance teaching methods. The government has applauded the efforts of the LDTC to ensure that education becomes accessible to all Basotho. The Director of LDTC, Mr. Sechaba Seutloali is concerned that presently the LDTC operates in only six districts and intends to broaden the reach of the institution to cover all the ten districts in the future. One group that the LDTC has been directed to target by the government are the 15% of those children who are still out of school (many are herd boys) and

it is through distance education that the government believes this group can gain access to education.

Lesotho - Ministry of Education and Training

In order to respond adequately to the challenges facing the economy of Lesotho through a credible TVET system, the following are the Vision and the Mission of Technical and Vocational Training in Lesotho:

Vision

It is the vision of TVT that by 2006 the TVET system in Lesotho will:

- Be demand driven;
- Be creative and responsive to the needs of its stakeholders;
- Apply research and development to meet national skills development needs;
- Provide competent, effective and efficient people and
- Enable a competitive economy to impact locally, regionally and globally.

Mission

It is the Mission of the Ministry of Education and Training to collaborate and work with all its stakeholders through TVD in order to:

- Manage and administer TVET effectively and efficiently;
- Develop and assess the achievement of national TVET standards;
- Ensure that national TVET standards meet industrial and educational requirements and
- Achieve the TVET objectives within an agreed financial strategy and framework.

Malawi College of Distance Education

The Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) provides education to more than 150,000 active students and its enrolments are growing annually. In Malawi more than two-thirds of secondary education takes place using Distance Education methods and consequently the MCDE plays a vital and crucial role in educating the nation's children.

Vision: An empowered developed and development nation through the use of Open and Distance Education.

Mission: To provide quality, accessible and affordable education and training at all levels in Malawi through Open and Distance Education for national economic development.

The MCDE identifies its key challenges as lack of human and financial resources and a lack of equipment and transport.

Mauritius College of the Air (MCA)

The Mauritius College of the Air is a centre for the production of educational audio-visual material. It also hosts a resource centre from which local and foreign educational audio and videotapes are programmed for broadcasting, distributed to primary and secondary schools and disseminated to the public. The MCA incorporates a Division of Distance Education which offers a selected number of Open and Distance Learning Programmes and courses to adults in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Mozambique - Ministry of Education and Culture

The Ministério da Educação e Cultura (Ministry of Education and Culture) faces the enormous task of coordinating education in Mozambique. While great improvements have been made in recent years in raising enrolment levels in primary education it is estimated that 1 million school going age children are still not attending school, 37% of the population in this age group. Another concern is that school completion rates are very low. It is estimated that only 4 % of girls and 5 % of boys are attending courses in the secondary level.

Namibian College of Open Learning (Namcol)

The Namibian College of Open Learning (Namcol) is a parastatal, educational institution which provides learning opportunities for adults and out-of-school youths. The College was first established in 1994 and is today an autonomous body under the direction of a Board of Governors. Namcol has grown to become the largest tertiary institution in Namibia with 27 000 students making use of their facilities. Namcol is also a proud member of both NOLNET and DEASA, which are bodies in place to promote the usage of distance education, not only in Namibia, but also the SADC region.

Mission

Namcol is committed to providing wider access to quality educational services for Namibian learners and other customers using a variety of open learning methods.

Vision

Namcol strives to be a world class institution of excellence, accessible to all, with committed professional staff, educating people through an innovative range of ODL programmes, providing quality services in a sustainable manner.

Swaziland - Emlalatini Development Centre

This centre offers programmes at Junior Certificate level, '0'level Cambridge and Higher International General Certificate for Secondary Education. Programmes are provided through workbooks, tutorials (face-to-face), radio and telephone/postal. There are six study centres where the learners can be attended. Some of these centres are also Rural Education centres, which are

used by the adults for their life skills learning. The rural education centres are in high schools and Emalalatini benefit from the infrastructure and personnel. The high school teachers can be used as part-time tutors and thus the learners can get maximum support service. Emlalatini plans to increase the number of subjects offered, negotiate with television station to view their programme, increase the number of subjects taught through the radio, improve the ICT used in the distance education mode of learning (i.e. buy new computers connect Emlalatini to Internet, etc.). The Institute also plans to revamp its print shop and buy new printing machines to enable it to continue with the production of high quality material and also raise funds for the Institute.

South Africa – Mindset Network

Mindset Network is a non-profit South African organization which aims at the personal, social and economic upliftment of all Africans through the delivery of quality education on a mass scale. It develops, packages, and distributes effective video, multimedia and print educational content via a dedicated educational satellite datacast network.

Mindset Network aims to address in a holistic manner the key educational issues, which face Africa in schooling, health and livelihoods. Mindset's initiatives in these areas also align with Government priorities in e-Learning. The Mindset Network portfolio of initiatives includes Mindset Learn (schooling at FET level), Mindset Health, Mindset Cabanga (primary schooling), and Mindset Livelihoods.

Mindset has a unique set of competences which allow it to impact effectively on the education sector:

- Proven capability and capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale multimedia content development projects;
- Understanding of the key instructional design requirements needed to ensure that skills development content leads to economic growth;
- A wide and growing network of partners to guarantee use and sustainability of the products of Mindset Livelihoods;
- An extensive intellectual property base of content that can be re-deployed to support livelihoods education; and
- South Africa's most innovative technical platforms for cost-effective distribution of educational multimedia content.

South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE)

The South African Institute for Distance Education was formed as an educational trust in July 1992. Its explicit brief is to assist in the reconstruction of education and training in South Africa. It promotes:

- Open learning principles;
- The use of quality distance education methods; and
- The appropriate use of technology.

SAIDE works closely with policy makers and providers of educational programmes to translate these approaches into practice.

Tanzania – Institute of Adult Education

The Institute of Adult Education aspires to have a nation with sustainable high literacy rate, learning and reading habits. The institute strives to create and promote a favorable and enabling learning environment for all those who access via the non-formal educational system. To expand and provide quality continuing and non-formal education programmes. Since then IAE became a semi autonomous institute it has been charged to:

- Train adult educators and extension service workers to meet manpower needs of the country.
- Organize and coordinate continuing education activities.
- Provide advisory consultancy service on adult education to government and non-governmental organizations and communities.
- Offer mass education including gender education by providing reading material seminars and education mass campaigns.
- Conduct research and evaluation.
- Plan, network and disseminate adult education information and innovation.
- Advise government NGOs, CBOs and other institution on development of curriculum and study materials related to adult education.
- Help Tanzanians understand the national policies and thereby be able to participate fully in implementing community development programmes.
- Conduct examinations and grant diplomas certificates and other awards of the institute.
- Organize and participate in conferences, workshops and seminars related to the duties of the institute.

Institute of Continuing Education (Open University of Tanzania)

The Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) is the arm of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) for developing, promoting and undertaking the provision of continuing lifelong leaning through the open and distance learning (ODL) mode.

The mission of the institute is to develop and disseminate knowledge and skills required for the enhancement of competencies and efficacious solutions of the economic and social problems of our society.

ICE has the mandate to pursue its goals through different strategies including:

- Designing and providing educational programmes
- Organizing short courses, seminars, workshops and conferences
- Providing adult education lifelong education programmes
- Conducting programmes for youth in development
- Cooperating with Government and other agencies in areas of research, extension services and training in distance education and open learning
- Coordinating Gender and HIV/AIDS activities of OUT

Appendix 3: Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
Goal 5: Improve maternal health
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
Goal 8: Develop global partnerships for development

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved 19/10/2007