Baseline Study on the Current State of Open and Distance Learning in Cameroon

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**Abbreviations**

**COL:** Commonwealth of Learning  
**ICT:** information and communication technology  
**MOOCs:** Massive Open Online Courses  
**ODL:** open and distance learning  
**OERs:** open educational resources  
**UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The Republic of Cameroon is a Central African nation on the Gulf of Guinea, bordered to the north by Nigeria, to the east by Chad and the Central African Republic, and to the south by Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville). Cameroon is a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), as well as the African Union.

In 2011, the Cameroon population was 20 million. People between the ages of 15 and 60 constitute 58% of the population, with an annual growth rate of 2.4% (Republic of Cameroon, 2013). Cameroon’s Education Sector Strategy Paper observed that, for the 2010–2020 period, the annual growth rate was predicted at 2.1%, corresponding to a yearly increase of about 420,000 inhabitants. This increase is high among the youth. Since the youth account for more than 50% of this population, it can rightly be expected that demand for education should rise, requiring the government to respond accordingly, by opening more schools, providing infrastructure and equipment, and allocating human, financial and material resources.

In six decades, the urban population rose at an accelerated rate, from 14% of the country’s total population in 1950 to 58% in 2010. This trend is expected to continue between 2010 and 2020. The population is unequally distributed throughout the territory: the extreme gap between regions ranges from 1 to 6. This generates disparities in education. For 2013, the World Bank estimated Cameroon’s Gross National Income per capita at US$1,170 (using the Atlas method), with GDP growth of 4.8% per annum (World Bank, 2013).

Although originally colonised by the Germans, present-day Cameroon became a League of Nations mandate territory after the defeat of Germany in World War I. For administrative purposes, the territory was split between the French and the British, a division that was only resolved in 1961 when the two parts were re-united in an independent federal republic. Although there are over 250 indigenous languages in Cameroon, the colonial legacy is still evident in the use of European languages for administrative purposes. Of the country’s 10 regions (see Figure 1), the Northwest and Southwest regions are predominantly English-speaking, while the rest are French speaking. Cameroon is a member of both the Commonwealth of Nations and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).
1.2. **Overview of the Education System in Cameroon**

Cameroon is a bilingual country, with English and French as the official languages. Because of this, education is provided through two distinct sub-systems. At pre-university level in the Francophone sub-system, there are two years of *préscolaire* followed by six years of primary school, leading to the *Certificat d’Etudes Primaires* (CEP). Those who successfully complete their primary schooling may progress through one of three streams: a four-year first cycle of general secondary education leading to the *Brevet d’Etudes de Premier Cycle* (BEPC), a four-year course of technical education leading to the *Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) or a two-year programme of post-primary school in vocational subjects. Those who succeed in the first cycle may enrol for higher secondary education: either a *lycée général* (three years) or a *lycée technique* (three years), depending on which stream they followed at the lower level.

In the Anglophone sub-system, scholars follow a similar programme in the nursery (two years) and primary (six years) schools, leading to the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC). Some primary school leavers then opt for post-primary education, while others opt for secondary technical schools, pursuing a programme comparable to their Francophone counterparts, including a four-year first cycle followed by a three-year second cycle. However, those who get into general secondary schools in the Anglophone sub-system study for five years before sitting
for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level examinations. Successful candidates may study for two years before attempting the GCE Advanced Level examinations. Those who successfully complete the first or second cycle of secondary education in the Anglophone or Francophone sub-systems may apply for either enseignement normal or teacher training college, which is also part of pre-university education. Vocational training takes place in different institutions and forms a separate stream that is distinct from the education system.

Entry into higher education institutions is direct, with no competitive entrance examination for holders of the Baccalauréat or GCE A/L. For entry into higher training schools of the public service (as well as into certain private institutions), candidates must succeed in a competitive entrance examination. Higher education is sub-divided into three levels in compliance with the BMD system (Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctorate) adopted in 2007. The Bachelor degree takes three years, the Master’s two years and the Doctorate three years.

Literacy and non-formal basic education offer alternatives for education and training in the non-formal sector. Literacy covers activities aimed at acquiring the ability to read, write and count, and at developing daily life skills and income-generating activities (IGA). Non-formal basic education is designed for children with no schooling or who are early drop-outs, to enable them to continue with school (if they have what it takes to do so) or to solicit vocational training in a given discipline. Adult literacy activities take place in formal literacy centres (CAF), while those related to non-formal basic education for unenrolled children are done in non-formal centres for basic education (CEBNF).

Table 1 indicates that enrolment is on the increase at all levels of education. According to the Rapport d’Etat d’un Système Educatif National (RESEN; 2013), the Secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) rose from 32% in 2006 to 47% in 2010, attributed to broader access (public and private) for this level of education. University enrolment overtook the global population growth rate and the school-going age group (19–24 years), resulting in a spiralling of the GER and the number of students per 100,000 inhabitants. The ratio recorded a 6-point variation between 2006 and 2011. It stood at 6.4% in 2006, rising to 11.8% in 2011, whereas the number of university students per 100,000 people rose from 725 to 1,228 in the same period. This indicates that if access to higher education is not widened, most students will be deprived of higher education — which is a gross violation of human rights.
Table 1: Enrolment rate in high schools and institutions of higher learning for both private and public sectors, for the five years 2006–2011

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary General High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public</td>
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<td>64 819</td>
<td>92 073</td>
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<td>284 762</td>
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<td>305 892</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>36 010</td>
<td>36 282</td>
<td>43 568</td>
<td>46 526</td>
<td>64 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>15 619</td>
<td>23 352</td>
<td>39 961</td>
<td>30 411</td>
<td>37 949</td>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>100 580</td>
<td>114 141</td>
<td>131 378</td>
<td>148 796</td>
<td>173 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>10 445</td>
<td>12 783</td>
<td>15 775</td>
<td>19 468</td>
<td>23 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111 025</td>
<td>126 924</td>
<td>147 153</td>
<td>168 264</td>
<td>196 461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Education (Technological and Professional)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>15 130</td>
<td>16 731</td>
<td>26 219</td>
<td>29 696</td>
<td>34 586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>5 946</td>
<td>7 277</td>
<td>8 981</td>
<td>11 083</td>
<td>13 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21 076</td>
<td>24 008</td>
<td>35 200</td>
<td>40 779</td>
<td>47 768</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Internal efficiency, which measures the progress of students in various cycles compared with the number who complete the cycle within the stipulated number of years, indicates that state-owned universities have very high repeat rates: 30% on average for the first four levels of study. Some differences, albeit not very significant overall, exist depending on the faculty. Level 4, however, has very low repeat rates (18% against 32% on average) for the first three levels (RESEN, 2013; Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper, 2013). Some researchers have attributed the high repeat rates to overcrowded classrooms. In most public universities, classrooms constructed to accommodate 300 students sometimes host up to 700 or more. In this kind of situation, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is negatively impacted.

As the demand for higher education increases, financial resources are hard to mobilise, especially at a time when the cost of raw materials is in constant decline in the world market. The state’s contribution to the financing of education is relatively low: about 15% of public investment budget.
Measured over the past five years, expenditure on the education system gave pride of place to secondary education which uses up almost half of public expenditure on education. Primary education accounts for 35%, tertiary education for 14% and vocational training less than 2% (relying on primary and secondary school teachers to beef up its staff). This structuring is significantly different from the regional average which allocates 45% of public funding to primary schools, 32% to secondary schools and 21% to tertiary education. (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper, 2013, p. 40)

Fees for attending public universities are very low (FR50,000, or about USD100), but private universities charge more, depending on the programme of study. On average, most private universities charge a minimum of CFA FR400,000 (about USD800 for Bachelor degrees and as much as CFA FR 1 million (USD2,000) or more for a degree in medicine. However, there are no minimum or maximum fees fixed for private universities. Since the cost of attending public universities is relatively lower than to attend private institutions, most parents enrol their children in public universities, hence an increase in demand.

With limited financial resources and the increasing demand for higher education, there is a need for the government to seek alternative means for education delivery. If the trends in the demand for education as shown in Table 1 continue, then the government might not be able to provide enough quality and accessible education to all citizens. In anticipation, open and distance learning (ODL) offers an alternative cost and effective form of education. ODL can:

- expand the limited number of places available in universities,
- reach a wider student audience,
- meet the needs of students who are unable to attend on-campus classes,
- provide continuing professional development to graduates,
- be used to meet the demand for lifelong learning,
- involve outside experts who would otherwise be unavailable (for example, if there is a lack of trained teaching personnel relative to the demand, teachers are geographically concentrated and teachers with expertise are in short supply), and
- improve access to education for women who have been treated as second-class citizens as far as development is concerned.

1.3. Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

ODL has two concepts.

Open in the educational context may be perceived as a philosophy of learning that is based on the principle of flexibility, aimed at increasing access to and equity in education. Institutions that practise open learning philosophy offer a variety of ways to open access to credible learning opportunities for a diverse range of learners. In this context, learners are allowed to determine what, how, when and where they want to learn. The South African government defines open learning as follows:
Open learning is an approach which combines the principles of learner-centredness, lifelong learning, flexibility of learning provision, the removal of barriers to access learning, the recognition of prior learning, the provision of 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. South Africa is able to gain from world-wide experience over several decades in the development of innovative methods of education, including the use of guided self-study, and the appropriate use of a variety of media, which give practical expression to open learning principles. (South Africa, National Department of Education, 1995, p. 9)

Distance learning may be broadly defined as a flexible form of education characterised by the:

- **separation of the teacher from the learner** in time or space, or in both;
- **use of a variety of media** to bridge that separation, including print, radio and television broadcasts, video- and audiocassettes, computer-based learning and telecommunications;
- **provision of two-way communication**, which allows for tutor-learner and/or other learner interaction;
- **possibility of face-to-face meetings** for tutorials, learner–learner interaction and laboratory or practice sessions; and
- **use of industrialised processes**, where there is a division of labour that contributes to reduced unit costs through economies of scale (COL, 2000, p. 2).

Among the more commonly used terms related to ODL are the following: correspondence education, home study, independent study, external studies, continuing education, distance teaching, adult education, technology-based or mediated education, learner-centred education, open learning, open access, flexible learning, and distributed learning.

A learning institution may be constituted as an entirely distance learning institution (single mode) or as part of an existing conventional university education (dual mode). ODL has the potential to assist Cameroon in:

- **expanding access to higher education**, by enabling those who cannot be accommodated in conventional universities to continue their studies;
- **ensuring equity for marginalised groups**, by reaching out to people living in remote areas, those working in the home and other hard-to-reach groups;
- **preparing youth and adults for sustainable livelihoods**, by providing training in vocational skills, entrepreneurship and other competencies to those outside the formal education system;
- **reducing the costs of education**, by strictly managing costs and realising the economies of scale that characterise ODL (open universities can reduce government expenditure per student and make further study more affordable); and
• **ensuring quality in education**, with proper attention to quality assurance processes (open universities can offer a good education and sometimes a better education than that available through the conventional system because of a rigorous quality assurance mechanism) (COL, 2008: 4).

Due to numerous socio-economic challenges facing the world, many people are unable to attend on-campus regular courses, and so are deprived from access to education. The fourth Sustainable Development Goal recommends that policy-makers ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Inclusive and equitable quality education can be achieved, if adequate measures are in place, to widen access to learning. Developing ODL facilities can be one strategy of achieving this goal. Besides, ODL is becoming an accepted and indispensable part of mainstream education prompted by: the need to make learning more accessible to a wider population; the growing need for continual skills, upgrading and reskilling; and advances in technology that have made it possible for teaching to be conducted at a distance.

Most governments are cognisant of the potential of ODL for fulfilling the fundamental rights of all people to education and meeting the need to incorporate it within the framework of human capital development. It will be practically impossible for the Government of Cameroon to guarantee a seat for all students seeking higher education in on-campus or conventional universities given the the global economic environment and the financial constraints facing the country.

1.4. **Rationale for This Study**

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an agency in the Commonwealth of Nations. Amongst its numerous programmes, COL assists governments within Commonwealth countries to widen access to education for sustainable development through the use of ODL. Cameroon, being one of the 54 Commonwealth countries in the world, is yet to fully embrace this form of learning. Meeting in Mauritius in May 2014, COL Focal Points from Africa and the Mediterranean Regions reviewed the state of ODL in their respective countries and proceeded to map out their strategic plans for 2015–2018. The report from Cameroon demonstrated that although the country is making some progress in the domain of ODL, it lacks an ODL policy framework, a national body to manage distance education and expertise in the field of ODL. To address the issues raised, it was important to establish the baseline situation.

1.4.1. **General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to establish the current situation of ODL in Cameroon.
1.4.2. Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study sought to:

- describe in detail Cameroon’s educational context in relation to the development of ODL in higher education;
- analyse institutional preparedness in terms of availability of infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the 21st-century learner at country and institutional levels, as well as the current use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support distance learning;
- analyse individual institutional reports on the status of ODL, with emphasis on credibility, progress made, employability and entrepreneurship, challenges, and strategies to overcome those challenges; and
- explain how different institutions integrate sustainable development and gender issues in ODL course production and delivery.

1.5. Research Questions

To achieve the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the current situation of ODL development in Cameroon’s institutions of higher learning, and to what extent do ODL policies fit into broad education orientation?
2. What are some of the measures put in place to respond to the changing needs of the 21st-century learner at country and institutional levels, and to what extent is ICT used to support ODL?
3. What is the current status of ODL at the institutional level in terms of credibility, progress made, employability and entrepreneurship, challenges and strategies to overcome those challenges?
4. How do institutions integrate sustainable development and gender issues in ODL course production and delivery?

1.6. Scope of the Study

This study was limited to some ODL initiatives in the Ministries of Education, public and private universities in Cameroon.
2: Trends in the Delivery of Distance Education

2.1. Trends from Sub-Saharan Africa

From the Sub-Saharan Africa perspective, among young people aged 20 or younger, 30 million are qualified to attend universities but there are not enough places for them. This number is projected to increase to 100 million by 2020 (Allen, 2010). “In order to serve the number of youths qualified to enter university in 2020, a major university would need to be opened every week” (Atkins et al., 2007). This indicates that the demand for education, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, is greater than the existing and planned academic institutions can accommodate.

In the same vein, the Republic of Cameroon’s Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper (2013, p. 63) postulates that “with 270,300 students (or 1,318 for 100,000 inhabitants), a 63% rate of secondary-to-university transition and 84.4% of GCE Advanced Level students enrolling in state universities, enrolment in Cameroon’s higher education will double in ten years.”

Furthermore, research findings on education provision in the previous decade indicate that there was an unprecedented demand for higher education. Going Global (2012) reported that in 2007 there were 150 million tertiary students globally, representing an increase of 53% over the previous decade. In 2012, the number increased to 165 million, with a projected rise to 263 million in 2025. Looking back at the continent of African, it can be observed that tertiary enrolment doubled between 2003 and 2011. In the decade that started in 2000, the number of international students from developing countries grew from 2 million to 3.6 million — an increase of nearly 80% over the previous decade.

Between 1991 and 2006, the number of students registered in African higher education institutions increased by 16% but the expenditures on education rose by only 6% (World Bank, 2010). Since education financing is not commensurate with the growth in demand, it is clear that governments in Sub-Saharan Africa will not be able to build, staff and resource universities and teacher-training facilities to meet the demand for the next 5, 10 or 20 years. Moreover, statistics indicate that despite the escalating admissions, Sub-Saharan Africa still has only 6% of the population aged 25–34 in tertiary education, while in the United Kingdom and United States, 60% and 70%, respectively, of eligible students have access to higher education (Sawahel, 2014).

Commenting on the situation, Daniel (2010) strongly suggested that universities not be monumental but, rather, that policy-makers should devise alternative means to provide tertiary education in ways that maximise fitness for purpose and minimise cost to society. These remarks, in a nutshell, advocate for a new form of education delivery that is cost-effective and open to all and that accommodates huge number of learners at little cost. The practice in most developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, including Cameroon, has been to construct huge
infrastructure to contain learners without bothering to know whether those learners have enough resources to bear the different expenses entailed.

The increasing availability of ICTs and open educational resources (OERs) are offering new opportunities to institutions offering ODL programmes (Atkins et al., 2007). They are exploring their potentials for the enhancement of learning outcomes. Today’s students are technology savvy. They enter higher education already accustomed to the use of various technological tools (laptops, smartphones, social media, tablets, Internet, etc.). The students are immersed in online media and immediate access to digital information. Most of them are developing interest in 24/7 access to learning materials and instruction. The developments in ICT have brought a major impact to the way we teach and learn. There is an increasing trend towards online learning. In 2010, 6.1 million students around the world were taking at least one online course (in the U.S., that was 31% of all higher education students).

As technologies become more accessible, both developing and developed countries will move further towards online and distance provision to satisfy learners’ desire for lifelong learning as an approach to the achievement of a fulfilled life. Kanwar (2013) perceives Africa as the most dynamic eLearning market on the planet. In the last two years, many countries in Africa have embarked on new government-backed initiatives to integrate learning technology into education and training. The continent has an average of 15% of online enrolments, with Senegal (30%) and Zambia (27%) leading.

Acknowledging the potential of distance education, the Government of Cameroon recommends that “to lighten training based on physical presence, innovative approaches such as distance learning or hybrid education (like the recently developed Virtual University in Yaounde) will be encouraged” (Cameroon’s Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper, 2013, p. 63).

2.2. ODL Initiatives in Cameroon

Efforts to introduce ODL in Cameroon began over four decades ago. In 1998, COL financed a baseline study on the state of ODL in Cameroon, as a response to a request made by the Ministry of National Education (Peku, 1998). The study reported that attempts were made to use distance learning in Cameroon’s educational system between 1967 and 1994 to address the problem of falling standards of education largely blamed on the lack of qualified teachers and access to education at all levels. The programme, which targeted both qualified and unqualified teachers, sought to upgrade them professionally. The study observed that the programme failed mainly because of poor funding and non-availability of appropriate learning materials.

Peku (1998) further remarked that, at the level of higher education, the Higher Teacher Training College Yaounde, had a distance education programme designed to improve the competence of teachers to teach French as a second language. However, that programme eventually failed. The most efficient distance education programme in the country in the late 1990s was offered by the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences, University of Dschang. The faculty offered diploma
programmes through distance learning. The management and organisation of the programme was similar to that in any programme in most developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Apart from these formal programmes, there were other informal short-term programmes meant to achieve specific goals around the country. The major recommendation of the baseline study was the creation of a National Technical Committee to draw up an action plan to roll out ODL in the country. Since 1998 when the baseline study was carried out, no other study has been conducted in Cameroon to evaluate the level at which the recommendations have been implemented. However, some efforts have been made to improve the existing situation.

2.2.1. Barriers and Enablers in ODL Implementation

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) identifies a number of limitations to the development of distance education programmes. Among them are: a low level of political support for distance education by political authorities in Africa; the failure of the public service to recognise distance learning in its assessment of employee qualifications; the lack of professionally trained distance learning personnel; the lack of follow-up and support programmes; and the limited budgets and poor domestic infrastructure. People engaged in delivering distance education programmes must first understand the conditions (social, economic, political and technological) prevalent in developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (Carty, 1999).

Another researcher argues that the operational effectiveness of ODL has been below expectations in Sub-Saharan Africa in part because of a lack of policy coordination with other efforts, such as the provision of adequate resources, the development of supporting infrastructures and the education and training of ODL users (Kinyanjui, 1998). At the organisational level, ODL and its associated technologies have often been introduced without a clear understanding of organisational cultures and contexts, including the political, economic, physical, social, technological and trade environments. As a way out, Kinyanjui suggested that decision-makers in all areas work together to gain a clear and informed understanding of the policy processes and the contextual factors at the organisational level. A great part of the responsibility to fast-track social changes using distance education and other technologies rests with the national governments to establish a general framework for a national policy on ODL.

Government should explicitly recognise distance learning as an effective education approach, grant equivalence to degrees, diplomas and certificates obtained through distance learning, and draft supportive funding policies for distance education institutions. In countries such as South Africa, the government spent more than 50% of the subsidy granted to traditional face-to-face institutions on ODL. In Australia and the UK, funding is standard regardless of mode; while in Canada, ODL providers sometimes receive higher funding. Whatever the policy framework, there is general recognition that, at the institutional level, there should be excellence in design, development and delivery of ODL courses, systematic staff
training, reward systems, effective learner support systems, and sound use of technologies (Kinyanjui, 1998).

Furthermore, any ODL system should be characterised by a number of components used to evaluate its competence and credibility. These include the mission, the courses and curricula, teaching strategies and techniques, learning materials and resources, communication, support delivered locally, the students and staff management sub-systems, effective management and administration, housing, equipment and evaluation (UNESCO, 2003).
3: Methodology

This section describes the research design, sampling technique, target population, data collection instrument and analysis methods.

3.1. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive qualitative research design technique in the collection of qualitative data, using survey structured questionnaires with open- and close-ended questions.

3.2. Population and Sampling

This study targeted officials in the Ministries of Education directly involved with policies related to the development of ODL in Cameroon, resource persons operating in the domain of ODL, and those responsible for ODL in public and private universities across the country (Table 2). A purposeful sampling technique was used to identify the participants, institutions and universities offering ODL courses and individuals serving as resource persons.

Most distance learning units in universities are staffed with the Programme Coordinator and the assistant serving as permanent workers. The other personnel are faculty members who are not fully attached to the unit. Based on this preliminary information, the study targeted 30 participants from the institutions, the pool of resource persons and the Ministry of Higher Education.

Table 2: Universities that took part in the study

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<th>University</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Buea</td>
<td>Buea-South West region</td>
<td>Male: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Dschang</td>
<td>Dschang-West region</td>
<td>Male: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Yaounde I</td>
<td>Yaounde-Centre region</td>
<td>Male: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Yaounde II</td>
<td>Soa-Centre region</td>
<td>Male: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Douala</td>
<td>Douala-Littoral region</td>
<td>Male: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maroua</td>
<td>Maroua-Far North region</td>
<td>Male: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Ngaoundere</td>
<td>Ngaoundere-Adamawa region</td>
<td>Male: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT – University (dual mode)</td>
<td>Yaounde-Centre region</td>
<td>Male: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Monica University (dual mode)</td>
<td>Buea-Southwest region</td>
<td>Male: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Institute of International Development</td>
<td>Maroua-Far North region</td>
<td>Male: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, some individuals were purposefully selected to participate in the study. Table 3 presents the number of resource persons involved in the study.

**Table 3: Resource persons in the field of ODL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number of Resource Persons</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Dschang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Bamenda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Buea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. **Data Collection Instruments**

Two sets of questionnaires were developed for the baseline study, focusing on the objectives of the study and the terms of reference. The questionnaires were developed by the consultant based on emerging themes from the literature review. After several reviews, they were pilot tested with individuals not taking part in the study and forwarded to the Higher Education Specialist at COL for further review. Suggested comments were integrated and pilot tested again before the final administration of the instrument.

3.3.1. **Institutions’ Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were administered to ODL programme coordinators and resource persons in the field of ODL. Items on this questionnaire addressed, for example:

1. Name of the institution
2. Learning mode (single or dual)
3. Educational background of the respondent
4. Demographic data of the respondent
5. Institutional policies in ODL
6. Institutional missions and vision regarding the use of ODL
7. Issues related to standards of ODL, recognition, accreditation and quality assurance
8. Institutional preparedness and availability of infrastructure that meets the changing needs of the 21st-century learner
9. OERs, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and mobile devices for delivery of courses and services to learners
10. ODL experts such as instructional designers, course writers, learner support personnel, and educational technologists
11. ODL as a delivery mode, staffing, enrolments, etc. (respondents were asked to include individual institutional reports on the status of ODL as an addendum covering progress/achievements, challenges and ways/strategies of overcoming challenges)
12. Integration of sustainable development issues in ODL
13. Gender mainstreaming in ODL (types and quality of learning materials used for ODL and their gender responsiveness)
14. The learning outcomes for employability and entrepreneurship through ODL.

3.3.2. Administrators’ Questionnaire

These questionnaires were administered to administrators in the field of ODL working in the Ministry of Higher Education. Items on this questionnaire included the following:

1. Name of the department
2. Educational background of the respondent
3. Demographic data of the respondent
4. National policies in ODL
5. The ministry’s policy framework for OERs, MOOCs and mobile devices for delivery of courses and services to learners
6. Procedures for tracer studies on learning outcomes through ODL

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The baseline study on the status of ODL in Cameroon was conducted between January and March 2016. To achieve the study objectives, data were collected through desktop research (analyses of existing documents and websites) and structured open- and close-ended questionnaires, administered to purposefully selected institutions offering ODL courses in Cameroon.

1.6.1. Desk Research

Criteria for identifying the required documents were developed based on information gathered from publications related to ODL in Cameroon, ODL-related seminars at the regional and international level, databases of UNESCO, COL, the OECD and the World Bank, Distance Education Clearinghouse, and the researcher’s own experience. Print documents (policy documents, strategic plans, regulatory texts and business plans) related to ODL in Cameroon were also sourced and collected from the Ministry of Higher Education and institutions.

1.6.2. Structured Open- and Close-Ended Questionnaires

Two sets of structured open- and close-ended questionnaires were formulated and used in collecting data from targeted institutions, resource persons and officials in the Ministry of Higher Education. The selected institutions for the survey included both public and private, single-mode
and mixed-mode, and conventional and ICT-based eLearning institutions. The instruments were anonymous and participants were reassured that their identity would not be revealed. Research assistants were recruited, trained and dispatched to the field to collect the data.

3.5. **Data Analysis Method**

The framework analysis approach was used to process the qualitative data. The framework uses an analytical process made up of five stages: familiarisation, identifying thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation.
4: Presentation of Findings and Discussions

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study. It begins with the presentation of the institutions that took part in the study and demographic information about the participants from the different institutions and about the resource persons. Thereafter, each research question is answered based on the information emerging from the analysed data collected through the interviews.

4.1. List of Participating Institutions

As Table 4 shows, a total of 10 universities took part in the study: 7 were state universities and 3 were private universities. Within the seven state universities, two operating in dual mode are responsible for developing their own ODL materials. The other eight dual-mode institutions work in collaboration with foreign universities to offer their courses locally through an eLearning platform.

Table 4: Institutions and the nature of ODL offering in Cameroon

<p>| University             | Faculty/School                  | Programme/Year of Establishment | Remarks                                                        | Homepage URL                                  |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|                                                               |-----------------------------------------------|
| Buea (UB)              | Faculty of Education            | Bachelor in Education           | Self-develop ODL material                                    | <a href="http://www.ubuea.cm/">http://www.ubuea.cm/</a>                         |
| Dschang (UD)           | Faculty of Agronomy Sciences    | Diploma in Agriculture          | Self-develop ODL material                                    | <a href="http://www.univ-dschang.org/bienvueu-f-bienvueu.html">http://www.univ-dschang.org/bienvueu-f-bienvueu.html</a> |
|                        |                                 | Started in 1991                 |                                                               |                                               |
| Fotso Victor           | Faculty of Technology           | Bachelor in Computer Science     | Delivers courses in collaboration with Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) | <a href="http://www.citi.cm/iutfv-bandjoun/">http://www.citi.cm/iutfv-bandjoun/</a>           |
| University Institute   |                                 | Started 2005                    |                                                               |                                               |
| of Technology          |                                 |                                 |                                                               |                                               |
| Bandjoun               |                                 |                                 |                                                               |                                               |
| Yaounde I (UNYAO I)    | National Advance School of Public Works Yaounde | Masters in Environmental Management and Sustainable Development; Masters in Environmental Impact Assessment and Corporate Social Responsible | In collaboration with: The University of Purdue (Calumet, USA); The University of Ca Foscar of Venise (Italy); Ecole Burkinabé du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics (EBBTP) (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso) | <a href="http://www.enstp.cm">http://www.enstp.cm</a>                          |
| National Advanced      | National Advanced School of      | Professional Master’s in         | In collaboration with Agence universitaire de la Francophonie | <a href="http://polytechnique.cm/">http://polytechnique.cm/</a>                     |
| School of              | Telecommunication;               | Telecommunication;               |                                                               |                                               |
| Yaounde                |                                 | Started 2012                    |                                                               |                                               |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Faculty/School</th>
<th>Programme/Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Homepage URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National and Sub-regional</td>
<td>Certificate in Electronics and Instrumentation;</td>
<td>Certificate in Electronics and</td>
<td>In collaboration with Birla Institute of Technology and Science, India Madras; Indira Ghandi National Open University India Amity Delhi; and Birla Institute of Technology; Pan-African Virtual University</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ctic.cm">http://www.ctic.cm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Universities of Cameroon</td>
<td>Certificate in Data Base and Information Systems;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters in Information Technology;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s in Business Administration (International</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Started in 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaounde II (UNYAO II)</td>
<td>Masters in International Cooperation, Humanitarian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.irimcuy2.net">http://www.irimcuy2.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action and Sustainable Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Started in 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced School of Mass Communication (ASMAC)</td>
<td>Research Masters in Information and Communication Science</td>
<td>In collaboration with James Baldwin Information Resource Centre of the USA Embassy</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.essticuy2.org">http://www.essticuy2.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douala (UNIDOU)</td>
<td>Masters in Computer Applied to Geography Information System</td>
<td>In collaboration with Agence universitaire de la Francophonie ; Université Paris Est Marne-la-vallée</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.univ-douala.com/">http://www.univ-douala.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngoundere (UN)</td>
<td>Masters in Geography and Geomatics</td>
<td>In collaboration with Agence</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.univ-ndere.cm/">http://www.univ-ndere.cm/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2. Demographic Information about Participants

In this section, the participants’ demographic information are analysed and presented. As shown in Table 5, amongst the 15 respondents, 5 were females and the rest were males. All the participants hold at least a PhD. The teaching experience of the participants varied: three had taught for at least 10 years; seven had taught for at least 15 years; five had teaching experience of 20 years or more.
Table 5: Participant information, by institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>UB</th>
<th>UB</th>
<th>UB</th>
<th>ENSP</th>
<th>ENSTP</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>UM</th>
<th>UDs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of institution</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic status</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>15+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Participant information, by institution (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>St MU</th>
<th>IUT-FV</th>
<th>UID</th>
<th>IRIC</th>
<th>ICT-U</th>
<th>ASMAC</th>
<th>UD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of institution</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
<td>Dual mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic status</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>15+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To complement the information collected from the different institutions, six resource persons were identified and interviewed as well. Table 6 indicates that four of the resource persons were male and two were female. Two were from the Ministry of Higher Education and the other four were from the universities. The resource persons from the universities are not directly attached to the distance learning unit, but play a key role in ODL at national and international levels.

Therefore, a total of 21 participants took part in the study.

Table 6: Resource person information, by institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Ministry of Higher Education</th>
<th>Ministry of Higher Education</th>
<th>UB</th>
<th>UB</th>
<th>HTTC</th>
<th>UD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic status</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3. **Current Situation of ODL at the National and Institutional Levels**

To explain the current situation of ODL at the national and institutional levels, the following research question was used to collect data that was subsequently analysed.

Research Question 1: *What is the current situation of ODL development in Cameroon’s institutions of higher learning and to what extend does its policies fit into broad education orientation?*

To respond to this research question, information was gathered from publications related to ODL in Cameroon, UNESCO and COL databases, interviews were conducted with resource persons from some state universities, and interviews were conducted with some officials from the Ministry of Higher Education. The findings are discussed below.

4.3.1. **Legal Framework on ODL**

Efforts to introduce distance education in Cameroon began some four decades ago and it was only in 1995 that the idea of incorporating it into the broad education policy was discussed, during the national forum on education in Cameroon.

In response to the recommendations of the 1995 forum on education, a law was promulgated in 1998 to lay down guidelines for the provision of education in Cameroon, and distance education was prescribed as one mode of education delivery (Law No. 98/004, 14 April 1998, Section 23, Article 2). Similarly, in 2001, a law providing guidelines on higher education in Cameroon was enacted and distance learning was envisaged in one of the articles (Law No. 005, 16 April 2001, Article 11:4). The inclusion of a section in each of the laws recognising distance education as an alternative form of learning was a major milestone. It means that any initiative aimed at developing distance learning has a legal framework on which to take off.

4.3.2. **Institutional Policies in ODL**

Distance education has its legal backing in the laws, providing guidelines for education in Cameroon. Its effective implementation requires a detailed procedure on how the entire process will function and how it fits into national development goals. Ideally, the development and implementation of distance education policy should: create an enabling environment for economic and social benefits to be attained, lead to optimum utilisation of resources, encourage development of technological capabilities, and allow procurement decisions to be taken rationally.

Of the 10 universities surveyed, two have institutional policies on ODL. The Ministry of Higher Education as the coordinating organ of universities and institutions of higher learning in Cameroon does not have any policy framework to regulate ODL nationally or institutionally.
All six ODL resource persons interviewed unanimously agreed that a national ODL policy framework is paramount in any distance learning initiative, especially in an era where degree mills (non-accredited universities that issue certificates) are the order of the day. The two institutions with ODL policies — the University of Dschang and Buea — had their policies developed in 1995 and 2010, respectively, to guide the production and delivery of ODL courses. These two institutions develop their own courses with the support of partners who assist faculty in the area of capacity-building. The other eight institutions serve as distance learning centres for foreign universities offering their courses through their institutions. Although they do not have ODL-specific policies, they expressed the desire to develop one.

In 2008, COL commissioned a local consultant to work with the focal points in the Ministries of Education, the National Agency for Information and Communication Technology, and the universities to draft a policy specifying the conditions and structures for the effective implementation of ODL in Cameroon. The drafting exercise was successfully carried out and the final draft was forwarded to the Presidency of the Republic through the Prime Minister’s office for consideration and signature. The enacted copy is still awaited, although some universities have kick-started with the delivery of ODL.

### 4.3.3. Institutional Vision and Mission Statement on the Use of ODL

The vision and mission statement of ODL guide its academic planning and implementation, as well as bring together its members to strive towards a tradition of excellence. Out of the 10 universities surveyed, 2 had developed their ODL vision and mission statement. The University of Dschang, as the oldest provider of ODL in Cameroon, developed its vision and mission statement in 1995. The University of Dschang’s vision statement is to “create opportunities for people, particularly women and agricultural technicians to learn while they earn.”

The University of Buea developed its vision and mission statement in 2010. The vision statement of the University of Buea is “to enable those already in the field to be able to upgrade their skills without necessarily being absent from their places of work.”

Both institutions have kept the vision alive. The University of Dschang has learning centres in 6 of the 10 regions of Cameroon while the University of Buea has learning centres in all 10 regions. The learning centres of the University of Buea are not very effective because students are required to attend tutorials in the main campus for at least a week during the Christmas and Easter breaks and for a longer period during the summer holiday. The other universities (eight) use their main campuses as learning centres. Degrees awarded at the University of Dschang and Buea are signed by the authorities while the degrees from institutions that jointly offer courses with foreign universities are co-signed by the authorities.
4.4. Current Use of ICT to Support ODL

To explain the current situation of ICT to support ODL at the national and institutional levels, the following research question was used to collect data that was subsequently analysed.

**Research Question 2:** What are some of the measures put in place to respond to the changing needs of the 21st century learner at country and institutional levels and to what extent is ICT used to support ODL?

4.4.1. National ICT Infrastructure Development

The Government of Cameroon is committed to developing and increasing the telecommunications network and Internet development through an electronic communications infrastructure development programme. Thus far, a national communication backbone infrastructure has been established, with more than 6,000 kilometres of optical fibre cable laid over the national territory and an additional 50 kilometres of fibre optic laid in the economic capital, Douala, and the capital, Yaounde. This fibre optic infrastructure extends government intranet, Internet Exchange Point (IXP), the Wimax telecommunications infrastructure network and equipped multimedia centres. With a solid and affordable telecommunication infrastructure, eLearning can be easily adopted by institution of learning.

The Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) centre went operational in October 2012, hosting two authorities: Cameroon’s Root Certification Authority and the Government Certification Authority. The National Agency for Information and Communication Technology (NAICT) is intensifying the process of securing Cameroon’s cyberspace with PKI. Key national applications secured with this system include: e-procurement (management of public contracts), e-Guce (management of the payment of importation/exportation dues at the seaport) and the national social insurance system. With secure Internet infrastructure, students can enrol for courses online, thus reducing the cost of travelling to conduct transactions on campus. Institutions can also securely enable students to view confidential information such as examination results online.

4.4.2. The National Electrification Project

Electricity supply in Cameroon is below consumer’s satisfaction, as there are power shortages even in some parts of the major towns, hindering access to ICTs. Despite the efforts made by the electricity corporation (ENEO), some towns can go without electricity for several hours or days. A joint project was started in 2010 to extend the road network and distribution of electricity in 400 localities in the eight regions of Cameroon, to serve an additional 332,000 new subscribers (covering 1.5 million inhabitants). By 2020, the government aims to achieve a 48% country-wide electrification rate, a 75% electricity access rate in urban areas, and a 20% rural electrification rate.
In addition, in March 2015, the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, and the General Manager of HUAWEI Technologies & Co. Ltd, signed a loan convention for USD106 million (about CFA FR 53 billion) to finance phase one of the solar system electrification project for 350 villages in Cameroon. The project timeframe is set for 18 months. Stable electricity supply is paramount in building and sustaining key learning infrastructure in the 21st century. Due to the daunting global socio-economic situation, many learners are opting for online learning for professional upscaling or as a means to reduce the cost involved in attending on-campus programmes, especially for those relocating from one locality to another to pursue education.

4.4.3. Institutional Preparedness and Availability of ICT Infrastructure

Meeting the needs of the 21st century

As ICTs are increasingly penetrating every facet of life, institutions of learning cannot be indifferent to it. The Institute of Digital University Governance in Yaounde is a support unit providing pedagogical and ICT technical support, as well as digital connectivity to the eight state-run universities in Cameroon. The institute comprises an online library, a science and technology centre, and a centre for distance learning. Even though the distance learning centre is not yet operational, it is highly equipped with teleconferencing facilities. Furthermore, the 10 universities surveyed have plans to develop ICT infrastructure to host and deliver eLearning programmes, although none has a clear policy and strategy document indicating clear milestones and how they will be funded. Notwithstanding this, the institutions said they have plans to develop such a document, but the main stumbling block is the tight budget.

OERs, MOOCs and mobile devices in ODL

As Internet connectivity continues to improve across the country, teaching and learning across institutions are increasingly being impacted. This technology has brought about a cultural revolution in which academics share their teaching materials in the form of OERs online, for free. OERs are any teaching and learning resources, from complete courses to recorded lectures, essay questions, discussion topics and reading lists. The resource offers its users the flexibility to “pick and mix” them to suit their own purposes or use them directly. The 10 universities surveyed are aware of the existence of OERs and occasionally use them to support learning. But none of the institution has a policy in place to guide the development and use of the resources.

Regarding the offering of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), one of the 10 universities surveyed started running the programme in 2013 with courses in the domain of engineering. This institution, the National Advanced School of Engineering at the University of Yaounde I, offers MOOCs in collaboration with foreign universities under AUF. The institution does not have any policy documents in place to guide the development and administration of MOOCs. The other
institutions expressed the desire to develop and run MOOCs, but lack the technical skills and the required equipment.

Regarding the use of mobile devices for delivery of courses and services to learners, the 10 universities surveyed are not yet exploring this option. However, they indicated the desire to use mobile devices in the delivery of courses and support to learners. The main stumbling block at the moment is the lack of skills and equipment. The interview further revealed that none of the institutions is using mobile devices to deliver or support ODL.

4.5. ODL Initiatives at Institutional Level

To discuss the progress made in fostering ODL adoption, challenges and strategies to overcome them at institutional level, the following research question was used to collect data that was subsequently analysed.

Research Question 3: What is the current status of ODL at institutional level in terms of credibility, progress made, employability and entrepreneurship, challenges and strategies to overcome them?

4.5.1. Capacity-Building Initiatives

From a review of literature, it emerged that while the uptake of ODL has been slow in Cameroon, capacity-building initiatives have been ongoing. COL has been at the forefront of capacity-building initiatives in Cameroon. COL, in collaboration with the Research Institute for Open and Distance Learning (RETRIDAL) of the National Open University of Nigeria organised training workshops for university staff and Ministries of Education officials. The workshops organised in the University of Buea in 2005 and 2006 brought together 85 staff from the Faculty of Education-University of Buea; Advanced School of Translation and Interpretation (ASTI) Buea; and the Universities of Yaounde 1, Douala and Dschang (Gangopadhyay, 2010; Alemnge, 2015). The workshop programme focused on: course writing and logistics for distance education, with emphasis on the ODL concepts and instructional design; principles and strategies of course writing; course delivery and monitoring; and supporting and assessing distance learners. In 2007, COL, in collaboration with RETRIDAL, organised a regional workshop in Printania Hotel, Yaounde. The workshop brought together 19 delegates from the Ministries of Education in Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leon. The training focused on an eLearning strategy and implementation model (Gangopadhyay, 2010). In 2016, COL updated the capacity of personnel in the Faculty of Education in the University of Buea to improve on the delivery of its Bachelor of Education distance learning programme.

On the other hand, the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie has been organising training workshops for university lecturers of French expression in the University of Ngaoundere and Maroua. The last workshop was held from 20 to 24 October 2014 at the Higher Institute of Sahel in the University of Maroua, Far North region of Cameroon. The training workshop focused on
the conception, development and administration of eLearning courses. Similar workshops were organised in the University of Yaounde I, for lecturers from the University of Yaounde I and Douala.

4.5.2. Institutional Initiatives in the Uptake of ODL

The capacity-building initiatives at the university level contributed enormously in assisting the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences in the University of Dschang to consolidate its distance learning programme, which has distinguished itself as the pioneer ODL programme in Cameroon. It started in 1994 with a diploma programme and has remained at the same level until today. Besides this programme, the university also has a Media Unit and a Campus FM radio station that address the training needs of farmers and extension officers, as well as disseminate information concerning HIV/AIDS prevention in rural communities. The Fotso Victor University Institute of Technology (IUT-FV) in Bandjoun is a polytechnic attached to the University of Dschang. IUT-FV combines ODL and ICT through a series of online degree and Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes supported by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), under the accreditation and quality assurance of a university in Quebec, Canada.

The numerous training opportunities offered by COL also empowered the Faculty of Education in the University of Buea to launch its Bachelor in Education programme (Alemngue, 2015). Since 2007, the programme has graduated 445 students.

Other institutions, such as the National Polytechnique Yaounde, the Advanced School of Public Works Yaounde, and all institutions under the University of Yaounde I, have embarked on offering Master degree programmes in collaboration with some foreign universities. Some lecturers in the National Polytechnique Yaounde also started offering MOOCs in 2013.

From the 10 universities surveyed, one institution — the University of Buea — has made some progress in building the capacity of personnel involved in ODL production, delivery and administration. The University of Dschang, as the pioneer in ODL delivery in Cameroon, has not made significant progress in the process. Prior to the delivery of their first courses in 1995, some lecturers were trained as course writers and facilitators. In 2005 and 2006, they attended a capacity-building programme on course writing organised by COL, in collaboration with the Research Institute for Open and Distance Learning (RETRIDAL). Since then, no other training has been done. Many of those trained have moved to occupy other functions, thus creating vacancies and worsening the poor staffing situation.

Poor staffing is common among all the universities surveyed. All of them are in need of experts in ODL course production and administration. They also expressed the desire to have experts with skills in the production and administration of eLearning courses and management systems, respectively.
4.5.3. Progress, Challenges and Strategies to Improve ODL at the Institutional Level

Regarding ODL achievements and challenges, all of the 10 universities surveyed are dual-mode institutions, offering both on-campus and distance learning courses through print or eLearning. One good practice that emerged from the survey is that all the institutions have a unit that manages distance learning programmes, even though they all reported insufficient staff at each level of the ODL process. The Universities of Buea and Dschang, as the champions in the process, reported significant progress made in students’ completion, which was rated at a minimum of 80% for both institutions.

The major challenge remains that of fully decentralising the learning centres. Students still have to meet at the University of Buea campus for tutorials and examination because of insufficient staff and insufficient funding. With the University of Dschang, students also have to meet on campus for practical and examination. The completion rate for universities offering eLearning courses with foreign universities had an average rate of 60%. The officials remarked that student drop-out from the eLearning programmes is largely blamed on high fees and less motivation because students are most often isolated. Regular electricity interruption and unstable and weak Internet bandwidth also contribute to demotivating some students, who finally back out as the best solution. One other challenge the institutions face is the absence of strategic plans for ODL development, with clearly mapped-out targets and strategies for how success and weaknesses will be measured.

4.5.4. Initiatives to Strengthen ODL Credibility, Employability and Entrepreneurship

Quality assurance (QA) is an approach to managing quality of processes. It aims at applying agreed procedures in order for them to achieve defined standards as a routine. The purpose of QA is to ensure consistency of services and products, and reliability in their delivery and quality.

The survey with the 10 universities revealed that two of them have ODL QA units within the faculty offering the programme. In the other eight institutions, the QA unit of the entire university is extended to cover the distance learning programmes. The weakness of the units is that they operate without any pre-established ODL standard indicators. The University of Buea and Dschang, which produce their own materials, adhere to most of the best practices observed among successful ODL providers. Both institutions uphold that quality in ODL is judged in terms of the learning materials, whatever the medium. They see it as the pivot on which the whole learning enterprise turns. They agree to the principle that a course is more than just the materials; it is also the totality of experience of the learners. About 80% of their students undertake their courses for professional growth and so they regularly provide satisfactory feedback.
The two universities are also aware that it does not enough to create only the conditions for learning: the success of ODL programmes also depends on how well the course production, delivery and student support sub-systems function, and how well they all integrate in operational terms. Underpinning the creation of products and provision of services are processes and operations that are not very visible unless they fail. So, the QA units work closely with all staff members to guarantee a smooth and successful process. Both internal and external evaluations are regularly conducted to ascertain the quality of the ODL programmes and delivery mechanisms. Although these institutions make efforts to respect QA mechanisms, neither of them has a policy document that governs materials product.

Regarding the aspect of recognition and accreditation of distance learning certificates or degrees, all the 10 institutions surveyed referred to Law No. 005, 16 April 2001, laying down guidelines on higher education in Cameroon. This law recognises distance learning as an alternative form of education. All the respondents cited Article 11:4 of the same law recognising distance learning as one form of education delivery in the country. As well, for programmes offered by foreign universities in Cameroon, the officials of both universities co-signed the certificate for accreditation. To further strengthen credibility, the certificates have no inscription that they were acquired through distance learning. So, recognition and accreditation is not an issue.

Nevertheless, the institutions indicated that major challenges remain:

- There is an inability to reach many students due to poor and limited Internet bandwidth and access, especially for those in the rural communities.
- There is an inability for local universities to produce their own courses (for example, the University of Dschang does not offer courses above Diploma level although the university started in 1995).
- Lack of training for staff, equipment and infrastructure are some of the challenges reported by the distance learning units.

**4.5.5. Learning Outcomes for Employability and Entrepreneurship through ODL**

The analysed data from all 10 institutions surveyed revealed that the courses offered are directly linked to employment opportunities. One of the respondents remarked that:

*Employability is of high importance not only for unemployed or laid off individuals, but also for those who are currently employed in today’s turbulent work environment. Besides, 80% of our students are already employed and learn through ODL to upgrade their skills.*
Another respondent upholds said:

*It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to produce graduates with employability skills. The unique thing about our programme is that it is addressed to working agricultural technicians and so the issue of unemployment is mild.*

The courses offered by foreign universities in Cameroon are in areas that are in high demand and are not, or are rarely, offered locally by any institutions. One such course is on environmental management, sustainable development, environmental impact assessment, and corporate social responsibility offered by the National Advanced School of Public Works, Yaounde, in collaboration with the University of Purdue. This course is very relevant to our society, but no local university offers the programme.

Although all the institutions surveyed see the need for their courses to respond to the needs of the job market, only one once conducted a tracer study in the year 2000, to see where its former students are and what they have gone on to do. No such study has been conducted again.

### 4.6. Integration of Sustainable Development and Gender Issues in ODL

To explain the current situation of sustainable development and gender issues in ODL at the institutional levels, the following research question was used to collect data that was subsequently analysed.

*Research Question 4: How do institutions integrate sustainable development and gender issues in ODL course production and delivery?*

#### 4.6.1. Integration of Sustainable Development Issues in ODL

Learning for sustainable development, as defined by COL, is a process that aims to bring about empowerment through learning, in both formal and non-formal settings. COL says that sustainable development also has three key facets: equity and social inclusion (all members of a society, regardless of gender, race or income, have access to quality learning opportunities and can direct their own development); economic empowerment (people have not only the knowledge and skills but also the opportunities for gainful employment and entrepreneurship); and environmental protection (ensuring that social and economic development do not destroy natural resources).

All the universities surveyed integrate only a few aspects of sustainable development issues in their programmes, such as admission into courses, regardless of race and gender. None of the institutions admit students based on the assessment of prior learning and skills. The programmes offered can lead to economic empowerment if one takes the view that education is an end in itself. Some of the institutions offer courses on environmental management, sustainable
development, environmental impact assessment, and corporate social responsibility, all of which contribute enormously to preserving the environment.

4.6.2. Gender Mainstreaming in ODL

Gender mainstreaming from COL’s perspective is a strategy and process for ensuring that both men and women participate equally in decision-making and have access to resources, opportunities and benefits of social and economic development. The data indicates that all the programmes offered in the different universities provide equal opportunity to all members of a community to enrol in any programme of their choice, as long as they qualify. The programmes are design for learners to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to live a healthy and productive life and actively participate in their community, contributing to its long-term development. The programmes also provide girls and women with freedom to access educational opportunities while fulfilling family chores or responsibilities that are generally perceived primarily as being a girl’s or woman’s responsibility. Access to learning resources is on an equal basis.

Among the challenges the different institutions face are: putting in place policies, delivering processes, and learning tools and content that encourage both female and male learners to think and, consequently, to act differently from what they currently accept as the norm in order to expand the opportunities and freedoms for girls and women. If gender equality is integrated in the vision, mission, goals and objectives of each institution, both girls’/women’s and boys’/men’s views, interests and needs will help shape institutional policies, processes and programmes and ensure that gender equality becomes part of the university culture. Both genders will be better represented and their socio-economic needs better met in their roles as leaders and managers, educators and role models, and learners; and they will receive better access to learning and life skills that are relevant to their lives.

1.7. 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was conducted to establish the current situation on the state of ODL in Cameroon. It examined the structure of Cameroon’s educational system, the demand for higher education and the progress made, both at the country and institutional level, to introduce ODL as an alternative form of education. A review of the trends in the demand for higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that many citizens will be knocking on the doors of institutions of higher learning in search of education by 2025. Cameroon’s Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper (2013) highlights that the current demand for higher education in the country will double by 2020.

Cameroon’s income largely depends on the sale of natural resources. In the last few years, the prices of these resources in the world market have been on a downward trend. Owing to this continuous global economic downturn facing countries that rely entirely on raw materials for
sustainability, Cameroon will not be able to provide seats in conventional universities for all citizens seeking higher education.

A strong recommendation from experts in the domain of ODL is to consider the ODL form of learning, which is very cost-effective as an alternative to conventional systems of curriculum delivery. The laws laying down guidelines for Cameroon’s national and higher education, published in 1998 and 2001, respectively, recognise distance education as an alternative form of learning. The Education Sector Strategy Paper published in 2013 also underlines the need to develop ODL as a strategy to resource the increasing demand for education in the country.

Several initiatives have been taken by development partners such as COL to help the government develop a national policy to coordinate the effective implementation of ODL in Cameroon. Given that the draft policy document has never been ratified by management, it is important that the process be relaunched, while incorporating new societal demands that have emerged since the draft was produced and submitted in 2008.

The operational effectiveness of ODL has been below expectation in Cameroon, in part because of a lack of policy co-ordination with other efforts, such as the provision of adequate resources, the development of supporting infrastructures and the training of ODL providers. It is the government’s responsibility, in cooperation with the ministries in charge of education, to put in place the enabling environment for the effective uptake of ODL. This could be achieved through the creation of a National Technical Committee responsible for drawing up action plans to develop ODL in the country. The National Technical Committee could be hosted by the Technical Secretariat in charge of coordinating implementation of the education sector strategies.

Government should explicitly recognise distance learning as an effective education approach and draft supportive funding policies for distance education institutions. In countries such as South Africa, the government spent more than 50% of the subsidy granted to traditional face-to-face institutions on providers of ODL. In Australia and the UK, funding is standard regardless of mode, while in Canada, ODL providers sometimes receive higher funding. Whatever the policy framework, there is general recognition that, at the institutional level, there should be excellence in design, development and delivery of ODL courses, systematic staff training, reward systems, effective learner support systems, and sound use of technologies.

Any effective ODL system should be characterised by components that attest to the system’s competence and credibility. These include the vision and mission, the courses and curricula, teaching strategies and techniques, learning materials and resources, communication, learner support delivered locally, the student and staff management sub-system, effective management and administration, housing, equipment and evaluation (UNESCO, 2003). About 80% of the institutions surveyed lack most of these components.

Although learning centres exist in the 10 regions, students still travel from all the regions to the main university campus for tutorials. This practice lacks learner support delivered locally and
makes the ODL delivery process inflexible. It is therefore recommended that providers of ODL revise their institutional policies to incorporate the missing components and make them fully operational. At the institutional level, distance learning units should be clearly distinguished from other departments. ODL should have its own strategy and separate budget to roll out its activities in order avoid the confusion of who manages the funds generated from ODL programmes, as reported in most institutions.

The ubiquitous nature of the Internet, OERs and mobile devices offer an opportunity for the country to explore its potential in the delivery of ODL programmes. Opting for ODL through the use of eLearning and mobile devices will be very cost-effective because it will build on the existing telecommunication infrastructure that the Government of Cameroon embarked on developing in the last five years. Although most of the institutions surveyed are already exploring course delivery through eLearning with their foreign partners, none of them is using OERs and mobile devices to support learning. It is highly recommended that institutions begin the process by formulating policies that support the use of OERs and that they develop their employees’ capacity to deliver and support learning through mobile devices.
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APPENDIX 1

Institutions’ Questionnaire on Open and Distance Learning

Kindly read each of the questions carefully before proceeding to respond to them. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is a broad concept that can mean different things to different individuals. For the purpose of this questionnaire, ODL refers to a form of learning in which the learner is separated from the instructional base or teacher, either in space or time, for a significant portion of their learning. The learner may use a variety of media, including print, radio and television broadcasts, video and audio cassettes, computer-based learning and telecommunications. This questionnaire has been developed to establish the current situation of ODL in Cameroon. The outcome will guide the development of effective policies strategic plan, programmes and services for sustainable quality learning in Cameroon.

Part I: Personal Information:
Mark an “X” in the box that corresponds to the right response and provide written responses to questions that require detailed feedback

1. Name of your institution _________________________________________________

2. Type of Institution: Single Mode □ Dual Mode □

3. Academic Status: BSc □ MA □ PhD/Ded □

4. Gender: Female □ Male □

5. Teaching Experience: 10–20 □ 21–30 □ 31+ □

6. Your Role in ODL within or outside the institution:
________________________________________________________________________

Part II: Current State of ODL

1. Institutional policies in Open and Distance Learning (ODL)
Does your institution offer learning through distance education? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, do you have any institutional policies on Open and Distance Learning Yes ___ No ___
If yes, when was it published? ___________________ please give us a copy

2. Institutional missions and vision regarding the use of ODL
What is your institutional mission and vision regarding Open and Distance Learning?
Please state them:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
When did your institution start offering Open and Distance Learning? ______________________
Year ____________ Students enrolled ______________ Success rate ______________________

3. Issues related to standards of open and distance learning, recognition, accreditation and quality assurance.

Is there a unit in your institution that guarantees the quality of open and distance learning provision? Yes_____ No_______
If yes, list some of the activities they do to enhance the credibility and quality of ODL
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What is the public perception on open and distance learning in your institution?
Please share a few examples:
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What are some of the challenges faced by your institution in implementing open and distance learning? Please list them:
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What are some of the quality assurance policies in your institution? Please list them:
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What are the institutional policies that govern learning material production and adoption? Please list them:
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

4. Institutional preparedness and availability of infrastructure which meet the changing needs of the 21st century learner and current use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support distance learning

Does your institution have ICT policy to support distance learning? Yes_____ No_____
If yes, what are your institution’s strategies in the use of ICT to support distance learning? Please list some of the targets and deadlines:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

5. Open Educational Resources (OERs), Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and mobile devices for delivery of courses and services to learners

Does your institution use OERs to support learning? Yes_____ No_____
If no, does your institution have plans to use OERs to support distance learning? Yes_____ No_____
Does your institution offer Massive Open Online Courses? Yes_____ No_____
If no, does your institution have plans to offer Massive Open Online Courses? Yes_____ No_____
Does your institution provide mobile devices to deliver courses? Yes_____ No_____
If no, does the institution have plans to use mobile devices to deliver courses? Yes_____ No_____

6. ODL experts such as instructional designers, course writers, learner support personnel, educational technologist, etc.

Does your institution have instructional designers? Yes_____ No_____
Does your institution have course writers? Yes_____ No_____
Does your institution have in place a training programme for instructional designers, course writers and managers of ODL? Yes_____ No_____
If yes, how many times a year do they engage in the training programme? Please explain:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

If no, are there plans to put a training programme in place? Yes_____ No________

What is your institution’s training needs in the ODL material production and delivery management chain? Please list them:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Does your institution have partnerships with other institutions or organisations? Yes_____ No_____

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If yes, please list them and provide a brief description of the nature of partnership:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Are there support systems put in place to assist distance learners? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please provide a brief description of some of the support systems:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Does your institution use any form of technology to support distance learners?
Yes ______ No ______
If yes, please provide a brief explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

7. **ODL as a delivery mode, staffing, enrolments etc. (and include individual institutional reports on the status of ODL as addendum covering progress/achievements, challenges and ways/strategies of overcoming challenges)**

Does your institution have a comprehensive report that shows the progress of ODL?
Yes _____ No _____
If yes, provide us with a copy. If no, proceed with the following questions.

Does your institution offer both residential and distance learning programmes?
Yes _____ No _____

What is the enrolment and staffing situation of personnel working in the distance learning unit?
Please provide the figures

- Students’ enrolment
- Instructional Designers
- Course writers
- Course facilitators
- Programme administrators
- Technology staff
- Management staff

What are some of the achievements recorded since your institution started implementing ODL?
Please list them
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
What are some of the challenges encountered in implementing ODL since your institution started implementing ODL? Please list them:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What are some of the strategies put in place to overcome the challenges? Please list them:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

8. **Integration of sustainable development issues in ODL**

Has sustainable development been integrated or infused into programmes and courses offered in your institution? Yes______ No______

If yes, please give examples:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

9. **Gender mainstreaming in ODL (types and quality of learning materials used for ODL and their gender responsiveness)**

Does your institution have a gender mainstreaming policy? Yes_____ No______

If yes, please provide a brief explanation how the mainstreaming is done.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

How are gender issues reflected in the development of ODL materials produced in your institution? Please provide a brief explanation:
10. The learning outcomes for employability and entrepreneurship through ODL.

What are some of the concrete steps your institution has taken to strengthen the credibility of ODL? Please list them:

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

How does your institution prepare learners for employability and entrepreneurship?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

How often does your institution undertake tracer studies on their graduate employability and entrepreneurship engagement?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What are the key findings of your recent tracer studies regarding their employment destination?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Thanks for taking time off to respond to the above items
APPENDIX 2

Ministry Officials Questionnaire on Open and Distance Learning

Kindly read each of the questions carefully before proceeding to respond to them. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is a broad concept that can mean different things to different individuals. For the purpose of this questionnaire, ODL refers to a form of learning in which the learner is separated from the instructional base or teacher, either in space or time, for a significant portion of their learning. The learner may use a variety of media, including print, radio and television broadcasts, video and audio cassettes, computer-based learning and telecommunications.

This questionnaire has been developed to establish the current situation of ODL in Cameroon. The outcome will guide the development of effective policies, strategic plans, programmes and services for sustainable quality learning in Cameroon.

Part I: Personal Information: Mark an “X” in the box that corresponds to the right response and provide written responses to questions that require detail feedback

1. Name of your Department_________________________________________________

2. Academic Status: BSc ☐ MA ☐ PhD/Ded ☐

3. Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐


5. Your Role in ODL _________________________________________________________

Part II: State of ODL

1. National policies in Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

Does Cameroon have a policy on Open and Distance Learning? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, specify the year it was published__________________________________________

If no, what in your opinion can be the inhibiting factors? Please specify

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Does the Ministry have a dedicated National ODL Policy aligned to other policies within the Ministry and country? Yes _____ No _____

If there is a policy, what is the purpose of the policy? Please provide a brief explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What are the key focus areas of the policy? Please provide a brief explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

If there is no policy; How would a National ODL policy help Cameroon? Please provide a brief explanation:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What is the access rate in Cameroon higher education?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What is the success rate in Cameroon higher education?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What are some of the accredited institutions in Cameroon offering courses through open and distance learning? If yes, list the institutions:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

If no, what in your opinion can be the inhibiting factors? Please specify:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
What are some of the measures put in place to reach the disadvantaged learners in rural and urban slums?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2. **Open Educational Resources (OERs), Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and mobile devices for delivery of courses and services to learners.**

Does the Ministry of Higher Education have a policy on the production and distribution of Open Educational Resources (OERs)? Yes______ No______

If no, does the Ministry have plans to draft a policy to guide the production and distribution of OERs? Yes_____ No_______

Does the Ministry of Higher Education have a policy on the use of mobile learning devices in education? Yes_____ No_______

If no, does the Ministry have plans to draft a policy to guide the use of mobile devices in learning? Yes_____ No_______

Are there institutions in Cameroon offering Massive Open Online Courses? Yes______ No_______

If no, does the Ministry have any policy framework to guide the delivery of MOOCs in Higher Education? Yes______ No_______

If yes, what are some of the highlights of the policy framework on the delivery of MOOCs? Please list them:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What are some of the measure taken in the policy document to guarantee the quality of MOOCs? Please list them:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
3. The learning outcomes through ODL.

What are some of the concrete steps that can be taken to strengthen the credibility of ODL? Please list them:

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

How does your institution prepare learners for employability and entrepreneurship?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

How often does your institution undertake tracer studies on their graduate employability and entrepreneurship engagement?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

What are the key findings of your recent tracer studies regarding their employment destination?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Thanks for taking time off to respond to the above items/questions
Glossary

**blended learning** is a teaching and learning approach that is a blend of different methods, technologies and resources to improve student learning. Some examples of blended learning are flipped classroom, online interaction followed by face-to-face teaching, and online learning supplemented by face-to-face practical.

**Commonwealth of Learning (COL)** is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. Hosted by the Government of Canada and headquartered in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is the world’s only intergovernmental organisation solely concerned with the promotion and development of distance education and open learning. COL is helping developing nations improve access to quality education and training.

**Course writer** is someone who has both expertise in a subject matter course and the ability to write in a way that communicates effectively with learners at distance.

**Distance education** is a mode of teaching and learning characterised by separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place for the most part of the educational transaction. It is mediated by technology for delivery of learning content, with the possibility of face-to-face interaction for learner–teacher and learner–learner interaction, the provision of two-way didactic communication, and the acceptance of industrial process for division of labour and economies of scale.

**Dual-mode institution** refers to an institution that offers learning opportunities in two modes: first, using traditional classroom-based face-to-face for students on campus; and second, using distance methods for students off campus. The same courses may be offered in both modes with the same examinations, but the two types of learners (on-campus and off-campus) are regarded as distinct.

**eLearning** is an umbrella term that refers to the use of any digital device for teaching and learning, especially for delivery or access of content. eLearning can take place without any reference to a network or connectivity. The digital device used by the learner to access materials need not be connected to a digital network, either a local area network or to the Internet (or even to a cellphone network if a tablet is used as a terminal or access device).

**Higher education** (HE) is education provided by universities, vocational universities, community colleges, liberal arts colleges, technical colleges, and other collegial institutions that award academic degrees.
Information and communication technologies (ICTs) refer to a range of technologies and tools used to create, collate and communicate information and knowledge. ICTs are used in daily life to prepare documents, talk to others by phone, listen to radio and watch television. Some ICTs are one way, while others facilitate two-way communication. Some can include only one medium (telephone); others can handle more than one medium (computer and television).

Institutions of higher learning are university colleges (public or private) providing tertiary education for both undergraduate and graduate degrees but which do not have full university status and powers — for example, to award a postgraduate degree in their own name. They normally do not do research, but this depends on the country context (in the Cameroon many do carry out research).

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is an online course available for large enrolment on the open Web, where open largely refers to open registration, and not necessarily courses in open licence.

Mobile learning is the provision of education and training using mobile devices such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), tablets, smartphones and mobile phones. While learning is not mobile, it is about teaching and learning through use of mobile devices, anywhere, anytime.

Online learning is eLearning with a mandatory involvement of a digital network that a learner needs in order to access at least part of the learning materials and services. Online learning is network-enabled teaching and learning that allows the learner to have increased interaction with the content, teacher and other learners.

Open and distance learning (ODL) is a system of teaching and learning characterised by the separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place. It uses multiple media for delivery of instruction, and involves two-way communication and occasional face-to-face meetings for tutorials and learner–learner interaction.

Open educational resources (OERs) are (as defined by the OER Paris Declaration 2012) any “teaching, learning and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions. Open licensing is built within the existing framework of intellectual property rights as defined by relevant international conventions and respects the authorship of the work.”

Open learning is learning that involves policies and practices of openness in entry requirements (with minimal or no restriction on qualifications), choice of courses, place of study, and
time of study. It is an educational philosophy where learning can happen anywhere, anytime, from any resource.

**Quality assurance** in higher education refers to the use of mechanisms to ensure that each institution provides courses of an appropriate university-level standard for the intended students; and that the institution itself maintains standards at an appropriate level. Quality takes into account the offerings of similar courses at other universities, government requirements, student feedback and staff wishes.