

From policies to implementation of open distance learning in Rwanda: a genealogical and governmentality analysis of what and how

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The purpose of this paper is to analyse the interplay between policy formulation and implementation in terms of the present historical and cultural practices of open distance learning (ODL) in Rwanda. This paper draws from a genealogical and governmentality analysis. The paper examines government aspirations as depicted in policy statements starting from 2001, a year aligning with the beginning of the Government of Rwanda's Vision 2020. This Vision aims at transforming the country from an agrarian to a knowledge-based and technology-led society. The analytical process is developed in conjunction with a scrutiny of perspectives underpinning the historical-specific relations of ODL implementation in higher learning institutions over the five years, namely 2012 to 2016. The findings reveal some clash of priorities between conventional and ODL programmes. Though policies extol ODL potential to increase access and improve quality in higher education, implementing institutions adopt a contentious approach to cope with a dual mode. The study suggests some ideas to close the gap between policy formulation and implementation.

Keywords: genealogy, governmentality, higher education, open distance learning, policy analysis, Rwanda.

Introduction

The Government of Rwanda recognises that open distance learning (ODL) should be used in higher education in order to offer a second chance to those who have been unable to benefit from conventional higher education, and to increase access to education for students from under-served remote areas (MINEDUC, 2008). In fact, the number of students wishing to pursue their studies in higher education has increased sharply over the last 20 years: their enrolment shifted from 4,100 in 1994 to 87,013 in 2014. According to statistics from Higher Education Council (MINEDUC, 2015b), the majority of students in higher learning institutions (HLIs) are enrolled in day programmes (62%). Evening and weekend programmes represent 36%, while students in eLearning programmes account for 2%. This tremendous increase was mainly due to the success of a fee-free 9-year basic education in place since 2003. The demand for higher education has constantly increased. For example, during the academic year 2014-2015, more than 19,024 eligible candidates applied to study at the University of Rwanda (UR). Only 9,443 applicants (49.6%) were admitted. These are top performers added to a huge number of secondary school graduates who qualify and wish to attend higher education but have not been included. The demand for higher education was expected to rise even higher with the implementation of 12-year basic education that was introduced in 2012. Different Government policies and strategic plans have recommended ODL as one of the strategies that can address this growing demand for higher education. This study will try

to investigate how policies and strategic plans have been translated into concrete actions by ODL implementing agencies, challenges, gaps and perspectives.

Strategizing organisational configuration

Experience has shown that countries in the world adopt different strategies in order to increase access to higher education. Some countries create dedicated ODL institutions to offer programmes of study at a distance. Such institutions depend on economies of scale for becoming financially self-sustained. The outstanding examples of such institutions are open universities and some of them stand as mega universities and count more than 100,000 students. Some countries set up virtual universities which vary from being strictly universities that offer programmes online or just departments offering a programme online. The African Virtual University falls under this category. Some other countries prefer a dual mode with a combination of delivery methods such as online, face-to-face and distance learning. Some universities put in place departments dedicated to ODL with their own academic staff to delivery programmes. However, some other universities establish a small unit with the main responsibility to coordinate ODL activities at the university level. Such a unit does not have their own staff to run courses through ODL, but it relies on other departments' staff already offering courses in a traditional face-to-face mode. The UR adopted this last option. Thus, this section will reflect a theoretical ODL configuration of such a unit within a university.

Mintzberg (1978, 1992, 1994) suggests considering universities as professional organisations. Accordingly, such organisations comprise five parts (Figure 1). At the base is the *operating core*, within which experts or professionals including lecturers and researchers perform the basic work of the organisation, namely teaching, research and community outreach activities. Mintzberg explains that the operating core is the key and the biggest part of a professional organisation. In professional organisations, the prime coordination mechanism is based on standardization of skills whereas emphasis is on training of specialists, horizontal job specialization, vertical and horizontal decentralization.

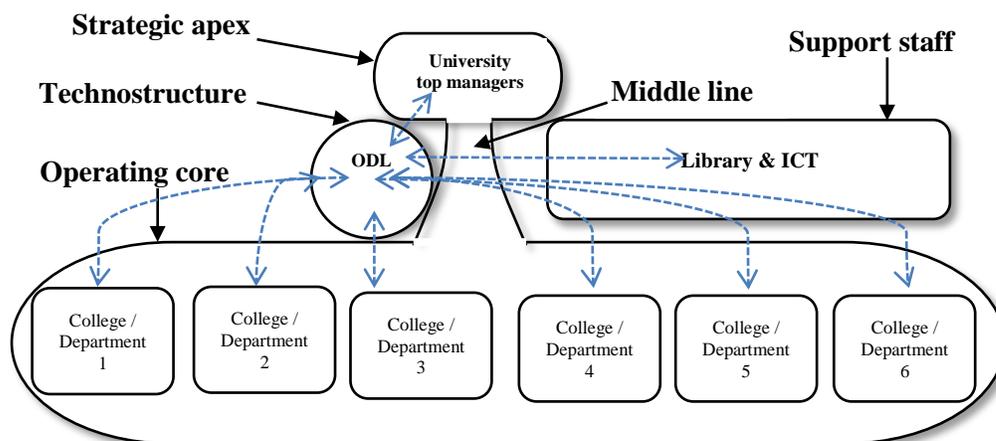


Figure 1: Adapted from the five parts of a professional organisation according to Mintzberg (1994)

At the very top of a university hierarchy, vice-chancellors and their deputies form *the strategic apex*. The duties of these top managers lie in ensuring that the organisation achieves its mission in an effective way. They address both the needs of the environment inside and outside the university. Other administrative managers who link and coordinate information from the strategic apex to the operating core make up *the middle line*. Then, the *support staff* at a university is also considerably an important part. It is composed of a great number of units all specialised to provide support to the functioning of the operating core indirectly. These include for example, a library, a bookshop, computer and printing facilities, student restaurants, a financial department, estate units, and a cafeteria.

To the left of the middle line stands *the technostructure*. In dual mode institutions offering programmes in distance education and face-to-face formats, this part of a university is composed by analysts and experts who use their own techniques to facilitate and provide support to the work of lecturers and researchers in terms of ODL. Figure 1 illustrates the flow of information between an ODL unit and other related departments and shows how ODL analysts and experts are empowered by the top managers to whom they report. They benefit a *selective decentralisation* in order to be able to exercise their expertise across all academic departments offering programmes through ODL by designing, planning and/or changing their work and by training academic staff who does it.

Analytical process according to the Foucauldian tool box

Two concepts are central to the Foucauldian tool box: genealogy and governmentality. The former emanates from a Latin term “*genea*” which means birth. From the Foucauldian perspective, genealogy reflects the history understood as non-linear trajectories of interruptions and irregularities (Foucault, 1977). In other words, focus is on determining situations that shape history of the present. Andersson and Fejes (2005, p. 599) puts it as follows: “genealogy is an analysis of ideas in the present time. These are traced back in time and the circumstances in which they emerged are analysed.” In this line of reasoning, I used genealogy to examine policy statements concerning ODL in Rwanda. I have tried to identify ODL discourses emerging from these statements, namely accessibility, relevance, quality, scale, sustainability, affordability, technology and inclusion. These discourses were selected purposely because they were the key areas of interest in the UK Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education and Reform (SPHEIR) except, inclusion.

The second concept from the Foucauldian tool box that guided this analytical process is governmentality. It entails a “decentralised way of governing through institutions and the subjects” (Andersson and Fejes, 2005, p. 600). In other words, governmentality implies a process of exploring aspirations/rationalities on how governing is to be conducted. In this paper, what to govern are ODL systems. The point is to understand how implementing institutions lead ODL systems or how they behave in relation to policy statements as a set of norms expressed by policymakers. The analytical process articulates therefore on what and how to govern depending on “a range of multiple tactics” in play (Foucault, 2003, p.237). According to Dean (1999), the rationalities of governing involve different techniques/tactics that form people’s conduct and this is conveyed through their thoughts, aspirations, beliefs and behaviours vis-à-vis their regimes of practice and institutions.

In this paper, discourses were used as starting analytical points and at the same time, they were explored while trying to answer the following questions:

- What are the discourses emerging from policy statements on ODL?
- How were they constructed in the actual practice of ODL?
- What rationality of governing is the ODL actual practice based on?
- What governing techniques are adopted in relation to these discourses?

The empirical material was composed of 13 policy and strategic plan documents formulated from 2001, a year corresponding to the launch of the Government of Rwanda's Vision 2020. For the analysis of actual implementation of ODL, a report on *a Baseline study on the status of ODL in Rwanda* (Mukama, 2016) was critically analysed to trace back the circumstances of ODL practice over the five-year period, 2012 – 2016.

ODL discourses emerging from policy statements

Looking closely into how ODL discourses are related to in different policies and reports analysed (Table 1 and Figure 2), two clusters of discourses are identified. The first cluster is composed of accessibility, quality and technology. This cluster implies that ODL is considered as a technology that can contribute to the expansion of access and provision of quality education. The second cluster relates to the four remaining ODL discourses, namely relevance, affordability, scale and sustainability. This cluster conveys a more technocratic aspect of ODL in practice.

Table 1: ODL discourses across policy documents and reports

	Accessibility	Quality	Relevance	Affordability	Scale	Sustainability	Technology	Inclusion
Vision 2020	x	x	x				x	
EDPRS II	x						x	
NICI III	x	x					x	
SMART Rwanda Master Plan	x	x					x	
7YGP	x						x	
Task force on higher education financing	x	x				x	x	
Task force report on Open University	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Working group report on ODL	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ESSP	x	x					x	
ICT in Education Policy	x	x					x	x
ICT in Education Master Plan	x			x			x	x
National ODeL Policy	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Code of practice for ODeL provision		x					x	
Total	12	10	4	4	2	4	13	4

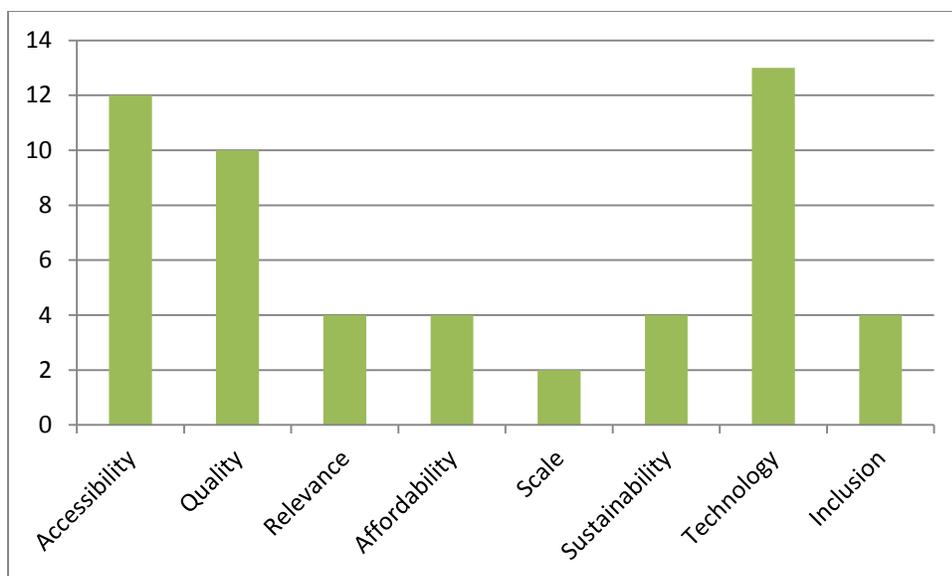


Figure 2: Frequency of ODL discourses in public policies and reports

Figure 2 illustrates clearly that the discourse of technology is present in the 13 policy documents and reports analysed. Accessibility and quality are mentioned in 12 and 10 documents respectively. Relevance, affordability and sustainability are cited in 4 documents while scale is present in two technical documents, namely the Task Force on Open University and the Working Group on ODL reports. All the eight ODL discourses are referred to in these two last reports. The national ODL policy relates to all discourses except scale.

ODL – an enabling technology for accessibility, quality and relevance

The 13 documents analysed consider ODL as a technology that will enable fast tracking capacity development of Rwandan citizens into skilled human capital who, on their turn, can accelerate the socio-economic development of the country. For example, in 2001, Rwanda launched its Vision 2020, a policy for which purpose is to change the country from an agrarian to a knowledge-based and ICT-led middle-income society by 2020. The policy highlights that distance learning will play a central role in increasing access to quality education tailored to the needs of the country: “To promote efficiency and continuous upgrading of skills, appropriate programs will be launched in the national institutions aimed at on-the-job training, in-service training and distant learning” (MINECOFIN, 2000, p. 13). The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2 (EDPRS 2) does not explicitly refer to ODL but it states that the country will “leverage ICTs in education in order to accelerate skills development” (MINECOFIN, 2013, p.71).

As a strategy to achieve Vision 2020, Rwanda set up four five-year rolling National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plans starting from 2001. NICI III (NICI-2015 Plan, 2011–2016) and SMART Rwanda Master Plan (2016–2020) place emphasis on service delivery (Government of Rwanda, 2001, 2005, 2010, 2015). The education sector organised skills development through six main projects including ODL.

In terms of skills development projects related to the education sector, the purpose of ODL in NICI III (NICI – 2015 Plan) is to provide access to lifelong learning opportunities and to increase quality education for all: “This project aims to leverage ICTs in order to provide second chance educational opportunities to all citizens through Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) programmes that further improve the quality of education in Rwanda” (Government of Rwanda, 2010, p. 33). The SMART Rwanda master plan (2016 – 2020) extended the same project for the next five years (Government of Rwanda, 2015).

The period of the 7-Year Government Programme (7YGP) coincides with the second term of the president Paul Kagame, 2010–2017 (Repubulika y'u Rwanda, 2014). During this period, the Government planned to reform the delivery mode in the education system: 30% of subjects in secondary schools and 50% of modules in higher education would be delivered through ODL. Similarly, the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) considers ODL as an innovative strategy that can contribute to meeting increased demand in access and quality in higher education (HEC, nd, MINEDUC, 2013).

ODL – catalysing affordability, scale, sustainability and inclusion

The more policies and related documents are narrowed to ODL practice, the more ODL discourses are disclosed. In addition to the three discourses mentioned in the previous section, sustainability is underlined in other policies: the ICT in Education Policy (MINEDUC, 2016a) highlights the need to build capacity and competency in the production of appropriate content, and the training of instructors in ODL. The NICI III had planned to train 100 ODL instructors and the target was to produce an annual output of at least 10,000 graduates through ODL since 2013.

The task force on higher education financing established in January 2012 by MINEDUC recommended the creation of an Open University of Rwanda (Lwakabamba et al. 2012). This was seen as one of the mechanisms that could contribute to addressing high demand, equity and quality in higher education while responding to government financial constraints. As far as ODL is concerned, the ICT in Education Master Plan (MINEDUC, 2015b) acknowledges that ICT will help Rwanda to build an ODL system that will allow increasing access to higher education at a cost that is within the means of students and parents. This Master Plan targets to double the number of students in higher education through ODL by 2018. The same document states that the Government will put in place accessible and assistive technologies to ensure students with disability have access to quality education.

In March 2012, MINEDUC set up a task force to assess the feasibility of creating a College of ODL within the UR. In 2013, a working group on ODL was put in place and produced an ODL operational framework and a related business plan. The reports of these two committees indicate that ODL would be implemented gradually from a pilot to a large scale in order to ensure lasting impact of the programme. These two reports proposed ODL transformative solutions that would allow cost-effective and affordable programmes. These are the only two documents that advocate for scale (Mukama et al. 2012, 2013). The National ODL policy reflects all the ODL discourses except scale (MINEDUC, 2016b).

Three points can be stated as a conclusion to this section: firstly, ODL is regarded as an innovative solution and a technology to expand access to lifelong learning while improving quality of education. Secondly, explored at a more technical level, ODL seems to be interpreted as a system that requires to pilot and adopt solutions that need to be relevant, affordable, sustainable and inclusive. Finally, ODL is understood as a mode of distance learning delivery that uses ICTs and which involves an appropriate institution composed among other things with ODL instructors, students, and programmes.

ODL in practice

How are the ODL discourses constructed in the actual practice? What rationality of governing is the ODL actual practice based on? And what governing techniques are adopted in relation to these discourses? To answer these questions, I have explored a report on the *Baseline study on the status of ODL in Rwanda* (Mukama, 2016). In the following paragraph, I will analyse different techniques of governing ODL one by one with emphasis on public initiatives.

Distance Training Programme – IYAKURE

One of the first initiatives in ODL was called the Distance Training Programme (DTP), translated in Kinyarwanda as IYAKURE (literally meaning “offered from distance”).

The DTP was introduced in Rwanda in 2001 through the former Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), currently the College of Education. At the beginning, the programme aimed at upgrading in-service secondary school teachers in pedagogical skills and alleviating the shortage of teachers.

The programme was initiated in the aftermath of the genocide against the Tutsi that was perpetrated in 1994. Until 2006, the DTP was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID). Afterwards, it became one of the regular programmes offered by KIE. When public higher learning institutions merged in 2013, KIE and Rukara College of Education merged and formed the College of Education (CE) under the UR. Thus, the School of ODL was created within the UR-College of Education to coordinate UR ODL initiatives.

To date, the School of ODL offers six diploma programmes in the DTP. Since the creation of UR in 2013, the DTP number of enrolled in-service teachers has oscillated, as shown in Figure 3.

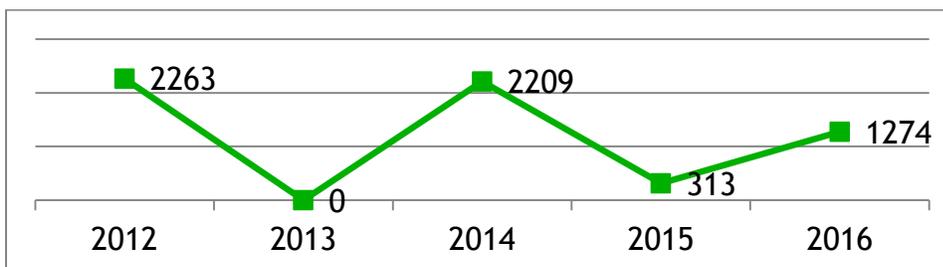


Figure 3: *In-service teacher enrolments in the Distance Training Programme, 2012 – 2016*

Figure 3 shows sharp variations in accessibility across different years: the highest enrolment took place in 2012 with 2,263 in-service teachers who registered in the programme. The year 2013 coincides with the launch of the UR as one state university; it seems that there was no in-take during that year.

The figure 3 shows also that in-service teacher enrolments increased again in 2014, up to 2,209, and sharply decreased to 313 before it rose again to 1,274. It is not clear why this sudden change in enrolment occurred. However, the *Baseline study on the status of ODL* raises some challenges related to accessibility of the DTP. Firstly, the School of ODL does not have its own academic staff working within the School to develop programmes and teaching materials. The School relies on other schools' lecturers to deliver the DTP courses. These courses are most of the time extra and unpaid workload for lecturers. The ODL working environment is consequently set in such a way lecturers give priority to conventional programmes on the detriment to the DTP. This clash of priority is also a concern expressed by Mukamusoni (2006) and the task force report on ODL (Mukama et al., 2013).

Secondly, so far, the DTP focuses exclusively on upgrading the educational level of under-qualified in-service secondary school teachers. The programme has not been scaled up to other potential students from other streams of study. Finally, the DTP relies on print-based distance learning model. This model seems to be very expensive. Thus, the DTP suffers from high costs of textbooks production and printing, and challenges to update old texts or errors.

In their study conducted on the practices and challenges of the DTP at the former KIE, Ndayambaje, Bimenyimana and Ndahayo (2013) summarize the challenges of the DTP in the following points: failure of using ICTs, limited resources such as library access and textbooks, poor record and learner support systems, inadequate number of staff and facilities, student dropout and failure.

Tele-Education

The School of ODL at the UR has inherited a Pan-African e-Network project known as Tele-Education. This project started at the former KIE but the leading and coordinating country of the Pan-African e-Network project is India.

Figure 4 shows that the highest student enrolment in Tele-Education from 2012 to 2016 has been in 2016 with 293 students. The lowest enrolment was registered in 2012 and 2015 with 159 students for each year.

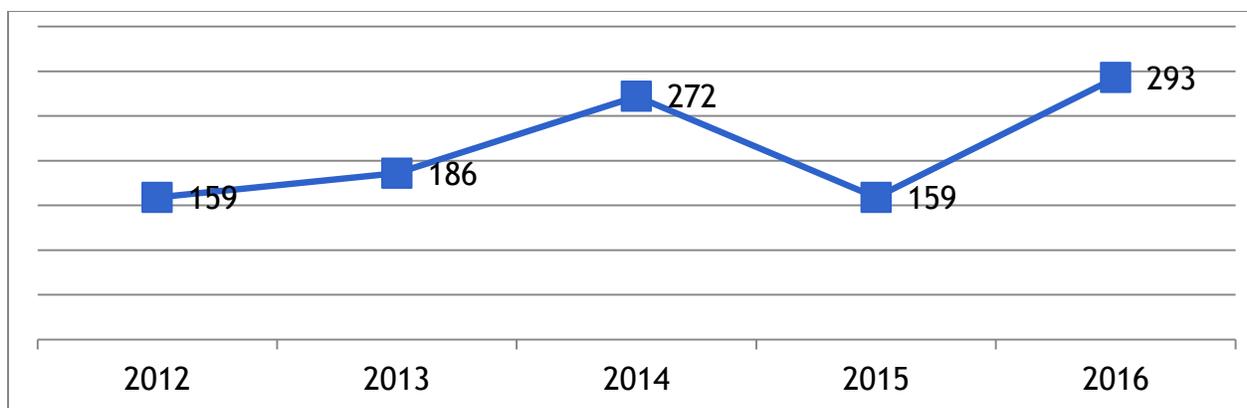


Figure 4: Student enrolment in the Department of Tele-Education, 2012 – 2016

Given the Government of Rwanda’s aspiration to deliver at least 50% of programmes through ODL by 2017 in higher education and double higher education student enrolments in 2018, Figure 3 and 4 demonstrate that a lot needs to be done to increase accessibility through ODI and to make the programme sustainable. The *Baseline study on the status of ODL in Rwanda* indicates some constraints of Tele-Education in the country: firstly, the project depends on Indian universities capacities in terms of ICT infrastructure, programmes delivery, technology competences and awarding power.

Secondly, accessibility is a challenge in Tele-Education. The project has a limited capacity of the learning centre (in terms of seats, rooms, and ICT infrastructure). In fact, students attend class though lecturers are at distance. They encounter a problem to be connected anytime and everywhere in order to be active in their learning. Finally, the small local Internet bandwidth narrows the capacity to upload the Pan-African teaching-learning materials for many students at the same time.

Blended Learning

In 2012, the Ministry of Health (MoH) initiated a blended learning programme for upgrading associate/enrolled nurses working in the national health system (A2 nurses) to registered nurses with a university diploma (A1 Level). The programme started in five schools of nursing and midwifery (Kagbaya, Rwamagana, Nyagatare, Byumba and Kibungo) that were then reporting to the MoH. The formation of the UR as a single state university in 2013 coincided with the transfer of these five schools from the MoH to the MINEDUC. Three of these schools became then part of the College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS) at the UR, namely Nyagatare, Byumba and Kibungo. By the time of writing this paper, a negotiation between the Government of Rwanda and the Catholic Church was going on in order to integrate the two government-subsidised schools of nursing and midwifery (Kagbaya and Rwamagana) within the UR. In practice, the five schools follow a blended learning mode: 60% of programmes are offered at distance through an e-Learning platform, Moodle; 40% are dedicated to face-to-face sessions. The students meet at the above-mentioned schools for lectures and supervised practice.

The *Baseline study on the status of ODL in Rwanda* reports that student enrolment in the blended learning programme at the schools of nursing and midwifery increased gradually from 168 in 2012 to 490 in 2014. The figures then decreased sharply to 319 in 2015 and to 96 in 2016. Moreover, the study mentioned above reveals that blended learning at these schools was not under the supervision of the School of ODeL, though the latter was supposed to coordinate all ODL initiatives within the UR. This can indicate some discrepancies within the coordination and governance of ODL activities at the UR.

African Virtual University (AVU)

The AVU is a pan-African intergovernmental organisation established in 1997 with a mandate to increase significantly access to quality higher education and training through ICTs. Phase 1 of the AVU (2005–2010) set up two learning ODeL centres in Rwanda, one in the former National University of Rwanda, the other in the former Kigali Institute of Science and Technology. Although four ICT-integrated bachelor of education in mathematics and science degrees, and 73 modules of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, ICT basic skills, and ICT integration in education and professional courses were created in Phase 1, the *Baseline study on the status of ODL in Rwanda* could not find the statistics of enrolments of students in AVU programmes.

In the AVU multinational Phase 2 Project, the ODL Centre of the UR–College of Science and Technology was renovated and rehabilitated. A diploma/bachelor’s degree in applied computer science was validated by the UR–College of Science and Technology. A tuition fee-free certificate programme in peace management and conflict resolution was under development.

An institutional framework as a technique to govern ODL

Access and inclusion may depend on the organisational configuration. There are different levels of intervention in ODL in Rwanda, ranging from policy development to regulation and implementation.

The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has jurisdiction in primary, secondary, professional, technical education, and higher education. It has oversight responsibility for policy development, and monitoring & evaluation. It has the power to delegate responsibility, and to review roles and responsibilities of supporting institutions or organisations that have a stake in ODL initiatives in Rwanda.

The Rwanda Education Board (REB) has the Department of ICT in Education and ODL, responsible for the overall implementation and supervision of ICT in education and ODL activities, including coordination of provision of infrastructure and technical support, capacity development, teacher training relating to ICT in education and ODL, and an oversight responsibility for ODL provision. REB jurisdiction is limited to the 12-Year Basic Education (pre-primary, primary and secondary education). On the REB structure, the Department of ICT in Education and ODL is located at the same horizontal level as the other five departments of the institution namely, Education Quality and Standard; Examination and Accreditation; Higher Education Student Loans; Curriculum and Pedagogical Materials; and Teacher Development and Management.

The University of Rwanda created the School of ODL under the College of Education. This School has an oversight responsibility for ODL provision at the UR. It has the mandate to provide an administrative and academic expertise to colleges, schools and departments that offer academic programmes through ODL.

According to the theoretical framework, both the Department of ICT in Education and ODL at the REB and the School of ODL at the UR are technocratic units settled within institutional operating core. This seems to be both theoretically and practically a pitfall for professional organisations such as REB and UR. The mandate of the Department of ICT in Education and ODL and that of the School of ODL is mainly based on planning, formalising or standardising the work of other departments or schools. The technostucture and the operating core play different roles in a professional organisation. Horizontal job specialisation within the operating core does not allow units located at the same horizontal level to coordinate the work of each other. Lunenburg (2012, p. 5) explains why: “university professors [and] teachers perform in classroom settings in relative isolation from colleagues and superiors, while remaining in close contact with their students.” This statement can explain partly why hosting technocratic units within the operating core makes the former conflicting and ineffective vis-à-vis other parallel units of the latter.

Conclusions

From the policy perspective, ODL in Rwanda is a high priority in transforming Rwandan citizens into human capital that can boost the socio-economic development of the country. National policies and strategies, including Vision 2020, NICI plans, SMART Rwanda Master Plan and the 7YGP, identify ODL as one of the innovative strategies that will contribute to capacity development at all levels. The MINEDUC policies and strategic plans point to ODL as becoming a key to meeting increased demand in access to higher education while maintaining and improving quality of education.

The question is how these policies are being translated in action as far as ODL is concerned. A number of initiatives have been introduced. The School of ODL has been created to coordinate ODL initiatives within the UR. The School inherited the existing programmes of the DTP, Tele-Education and Blended Learning. It seems that there was no serious investment in ODL despite the target of the 7YGP to offer at least 50% of courses using ODL by 2017. Furthermore, it seems that so far the practice of ODL in Rwanda has not served as a solution to double the number of higher education student enrolments by 2018 and to promote inclusion despite the policy aspirations to provide quality education to all students irrespective of age, gender, geographic location or physical disabilities.

The highest student enrolment in ODL at UR was 2,971 in 2014 in a country of more than 11 million inhabitants. In 2016, the total student enrolment declined to 1,663. These student enrolments pertain to some challenges to achieve economies of scale in a dual mode. Nkuyubwatsi (2016) criticises the ODL system at the UR by claiming that it is governed by the practices of a conventional institution. In fact, the existing dual mode has produced a clash of priority between the ODL and ordinary workload of academic staff belonging to other schools. In a professional organisation such

as the UR, it would be very difficult for the School of ODL, which is located under the College of Education, to coordinate ODL initiatives located at a higher or at the same horizontal level. It is more likely that without a strong ODL institution, most initiatives will remain sporadic despite a number of partnerships with other collaborators. In fact, the ODL requires different regulatory frameworks, management and administrative processes. For example ODL students register by module throughout the year, rather than annual registration for conventional programmes. This provides flexibility for ODL students, but also ODL requires different student support systems, and students work to a different timetable.

The following recommendations are proposed to enable concrete steps to be taken to strengthen credibility and improve the learning outcomes for accessibility and inclusion through ODeL in Rwanda:

To effect the sustainable implementation of ODL in Rwanda, aligning with the government's policies and strategic plans, it seems that Rwanda would need to create an institution dedicated to ODL. This would help overcome the problems of clashing priorities in institutions implementing dual mode education delivery. This new institution would serve as a one-stop centre for ODL initiatives, making it clear to ODL partners and stakeholders who is responsible for what. The new institution would also be able to develop working practices that are different from those of a conventional university. If a dual mode is preferable, then professional organisations such as the UR and the REB could set up technocratic units with a selective decentralisation, i.e. delegation of decision-making power to operate across all institution without depending on one of them.

The new ODL institution could establish the courses to offer – Choice of subjects would be determined by (a) government policy and how the institution's work is to complement what the conventional institutions offer, (b) what is easiest to mount as distance learning and what is more difficult and more expensive, (c) what skills shortages are identified in Rwanda at the time, and (d) what new jobs and professions the country expects to fill with newly graduates from this form of mass education. It could also explore the possibility of introducing a flexible combination of modules into degree, diploma or certificate programmes. For example, it would make sense to develop some modules that can accommodate students enrolled in very different programmes. The more module-sharing the institution can have between programmes, the economies of scale can be achieved for a larger output of students.

Quality education and inclusion through ODL will depend to a large extent on capacity building strategy for ODL staff – ODL is not just a technology or a mode of delivery. It requires expertise in management, eLearning courses design and development, interactive multimedia learning materials, student support services, online interaction, course development, use of open courses and open educational resources, delivery and assessment, and so on. Capacity building should identify the roles, responsibilities and know-how expected of management, academic staff, technical staff and students. Thus the Government will need to put in place assistive ODL technologies that can contribute to equipping a critical mass of the population with knowledge,

skills and attitudes in order to become highly competitive in the global market, regardless of their background.

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