New path for open universities: Responding to Global Issues
Plan

Global Issues
Covid-19
SDG 4
Climate Crisis
Status of ODL Today
New Path for OUs
GLOBAL ISSUES

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

SDG 4

CLIMATE CHANGE

GOAL 4

ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

More at sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal
Closure of campuses

220 million Higher Education students globally affected

Impact of Covid-19: Institutions

- Transition to emergency remote teaching
- Drop in international students (20% in Germany; 16% in US—applications for student visas in Australia dropped by 80-90%)
- Lack of technology infrastructure
- Adverse impact on research—practical and collaborative
- Drop in revenues from fees/budget cuts

Teachers’ perspective

- Live-streamed lectures synchronously (74.6%)
- Presentations sent to students (44.5%)
- Asynchronous pre recorded video lectures available online (32.1%)
- Asynchronous pre recorded audios (20.6%)

Teachers needed more assistance during pandemic.
Students’ perspective

• Heavy workloads
• 50% felt their performance had declined
• Inequitable access to tools and internet
• Psychological and emotional well-being

Learning Inequality during Covid-19

- Learning loss of about three percentile points
- Learners from less educated home 55% more prone to learning loss

Source: https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/ve4z7/
Positive quality rating

- 81% of students were learning online
- 68% of students rated the quality of online digital learning as ‘best imaginable’, ‘excellent’ or ‘good’
- 62% also rated the support they received for online learning equally highly.

https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8338/1/DE%20P1%202021%20student%20data%20for%20HE-FINAL.pdf
ODL for poverty alleviation

• Targeted to 50,000 rural villagers

• Evidence of increase in income, enterprise profit, employment opportunities
ODL for skilling and reskilling

- Learning to learn online
- Providing just-in-time training for livelihoods
- Learner support essential

COL-Coursera Workforce Recovery Programme
Reflection

How can OU’s be better prepared to deal with unforeseen crises?
SDG 4
GOAL 4

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Source: https://www.education-progress.org/en/indicators
Target 4.3
By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Indicator 4.3.2
Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education by sex.
4.3 Progress – OECD Countries

- On average, the number of students pursuing tertiary education has grown continuously...is expected to continue growing through to 2030.
- Progress is uneven: while 11 OECD countries are progressing or record high participation rates, 13 are stable...or are declining.

UNESCO Higher Education Global Data Report

Five dimensions essential for realizing 4.3:
1. Participation in higher education
2. Equity and inclusion
3. Quality of higher education
4. Financing of higher education
5. Impacts of COVID-19 by strengthening online and distance learning.

Source: https://www.whec2022.org/EN/homepage/whec2022-resources
Target 4.7
By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

Indicator 4.7.4
Percentage of students by age group (or education level) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability.
Focus on SDGs

• 'Environmental Awareness Responsibility' module to green the curriculum
• Funding available for SDG based research
• Focus on Quality
Supporting SDGs

• Joined UN Global Compact
• Research and projects on sustainable development such as Agri-food, bio-energy, green technology
• Develop a strategic plan to make SDGs relevant to staff and students
• Monitoring progress towards SDGs at the national level
Preparing students

• SDG’s Design Competition for Students
• ‘Communication for the Sustainable Development Goals’ course
How OUs can contribute to SDGs

Reflection

How can OUs develop global citizens who are lifelong learners?
CLIMATE CRISIS
At the current rate there will be larger and more frequent climate related disasters.

Source: The Commonwealth Secretariat. 'Climate Change'. https://thecommonwealth.org/climate-change
Impact of the climate crisis on education

- Infrastructural damage
- Damage to resource and materials
- Loss of data and records
- Collapse of systems = Out of school youth
Impact of Education on Climate

**DIRECT**

- Emissions from construction of schools/infrastructure
- Emissions from energy use in schools
- Learner emissions

**INDIRECT**

- Emissions from ‘development’ and economic growth associated with higher levels of education in a country
Priorities?

• Resilient infrastructure
• Skills for the blue and green economies
• Promote climate justice
Climate Justice: addressing inequalities

• Countries with harmful gender norms, gender discriminatory education policies are also countries with low levels of climate resilience and high levels of vulnerability to climate disasters.

• Women and girls more vulnerable to disasters

• Girls typically excluded from technical fields and STEM required by the green economy
Lower carbon footprint

- 3x less carbon emissions
- Travel – greatest contributor
- Mode of delivery - determinant

How can OUs raise awareness and inspire action through research and climate literacy?
STATUS OF ODL
33 Commonwealth Open Universities

(2021)
At a Glance

Open Universities in the Commonwealth 2022

- **28** Universities
- **2,745** Programmes
- **24,505** Courses
- **3,460,478** Students

Levels

Levels of education offered:

- (higher secondary) Level 3
- (post-secondary, non-tertiary) Level 4
- (associate degree, technical diploma) Level 5
- (bachelor’s or equivalent) Level 6
- (master’s or equivalent) Level 7
- (doctoral degree or equivalent) Level 8

*Based on the International System for Classification of Education (ISCED)

Two universities offer programmes at all six ISCED levels

Commonwealth of Learning (In press)
All of the OUs offer teaching through open and distance learning.

28 Open and distance learning
13 Face to face
2 Blended learning

17 Online learning
INDIA

- 17 open universities and 110 dual-mode universities offer ODL programmes
- Distance Education Bureau at the University Grants Commission regulates ODL provision
Access, Equity and Quality

• ODL covers 11% of total student enrolment (27% GER)
• 41% of student enrolled in ODL are female.
• 53% students are from rural areas.
• <1% students enrolled at the national open university are persons with disabilities
• Technology innovations, e.g. SWAYAM a govt-sponsored MOOC platform and free quality online resources
In India, new path for ODL to

• Integrate employability into the curriculum
• Adopt innovative assessments in teaching and learning such as micro-credentials
• Focus on digital infrastructure, connectivity, content
• Provide job-oriented courses to women and persons with disabilities in regional languages
NIGERIA

• 15 universities offering ODL programmes
• National Open University of Nigeria has 640,942 students enrolled spread over 90 study centres and 15 correctional centers
• National Universities Commission regulates the quality of ODL through its Directorate of Open Distance and eLearning
Access, Equity and Quality

• Only 40% of students graduating at secondary level get admission to higher education through test conducted by the Joint Admission Matriculation Board.

• ODL students are exempted from JAMB test

• NOUN provides 100% fee waiver for students at correctional centres

• 45% student enrolled in ODL are female.
In Nigeria, new path for ODL by

• Including the disadvantaged
• Offering free online micro-credentials for lifelong learning
• Investing in new ways of assessment
• Providing courses for employability for a future-ready workforce
SOUTH AFRICA

• First distance teaching university in the world– UNISA – started distance education in 1946.
• Enrols over 400,000 students
• 34.5% of total higher education enrolment is in ODL
ODL in post Covid-19

Figure 12. The extent to which ODL is inclusive.
In South Africa, the new path for ODL is to

- Increase access for disadvantaged groups
- Develop human capacity of youth
- Provide access to Internet and devices through national interventions
- Use OER to reduce costs
- Focus on cyber security, data privacy and the safety of networked devices.
Emerging Trends

- Blurring of boundaries between face-to-face and distance learning
- Increasing use of technologies and online learning
- Focus on mental health and well-being
- Regulatory mechanisms for quality distance and online learning
- Micro-credentials for employability
Are these measures adequate and are the trends moving towards resilience?
NEW PATH FOR OUs
• Address ‘learning loss’
• Promote equity and inclusion
• Achieve digital transformation
• Review curricula and pedagogies
• Support psycho-social well-being
1. Towards Lifelong learning

• Simply reforming current education systems ...to meet future skills requirements is not going to be enough....

• Ageing countries ...will need wholesale reskilling of existing workforces throughout their life
"To widen **access** to **quality** education and provide **lifelong learning** opportunities by leveraging on technology...providing a conducive ...learning environment at ...**affordable cost** "

**Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University** aims to be a world-class open university utilizing a distance education system to provide **lifelong learning** for all.

Open University Sri Lanka

"To enhance **access** to high **quality**, **affordable** and relevant education ...and ensure **lifelong learning** opportunities to face challenges in a knowledge society."
2. Employability

- Balance between theory and practice; hard and soft skills
- Engage industry: internships; apprenticeships
- Link QA to employability
- Career support
- Measure capability rather than number of hours

Credit Hour → Range of skills
3. Green learning agenda

**Skills for green jobs**
Skills aimed at fulfilling the requirements of green jobs and supporting the transition to a low-carbon green economy

**Green life skills**
Cross-cutting skills that serve both technical, instrumental, and adaptive, transformative ends

**Skills for a green transformation**
Adaptive skills aimed at transforming unjust social and economic structures

4. Harnessing Technology

- Artificial intelligence
- Blended and hybrid course models
- Learning analytics
- Micro-credentialing
- Open educational resources
- Quality online learning

i. Pedagogy

• Adopt blended approaches
• Integrate pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy
• Continuous feedback and recognition
ii. Assessment

- New methods
- Recognition of prior learning
- Transnational qualifications frameworks for mobility
Micro-credentials

- Short duration
- Modular approach
- Skills based

- Community learning
- Self-paced
- Mentoring support

- Verifiable credential
- Project-based

- Job-ready
- Reduced cost
- Blended with F2F for formal degree
iii. Learner Support

- Online support hubs
- Use of learning analytics
- Keep the human touch
- Focus on mental health and well-being
Sustainable Open Universities?

• Are open universities reaching the unreached?
• Does research and knowledge creation lead to the sustainable development of societies and communities?
• Are open universities providing leadership in modelling sustainable behaviours for the people and the planet?
New Pathway for OUs

Lifelong Learning Redefined
Effective Integration of Technologies
Employability of Graduates
Green Learning Agenda
Supporting SDGs
Reflection
Thank you