



CAMEROON

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Guidelines from Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

1. Key challenges and opportunities (not more than 3 each) for ‘learning for development’ in your country.
2. Status of distance education/e-learning in your country.
3. Identify (not more than 5) top priorities that you would like COL to take up during the next Three-Year Plan 2015-2018

Key Challenges and Opportunities

1. Absence of a national body to manage distance education.
2. Absence of policy framework.
3. Shortage of local expertise.

Status of ODE in Cameroon

Policies

- A Draft Policy Document for Open and Distance Education for Cameroon is pending approval.

Teacher Education

- The University of Buea runs a four-year distance education programme in Education, which recruits students to study for a Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.). Candidates for training are primary and nursery school teachers seeking career development. Course writing is facilitated through cooperation with the National Open University of Nigeria under the RETRIDOL initiative.

Basic Education

- A workshop on Sensitisation on Open Schooling, co-sponsored by COL was organised in 2009, while another workshop organised in 2010 focused on curriculum design for open schools.

Higher Education

- Two virtual universities went operational in Cameroon in 2010. One national and the other, a sub regional virtual university, were established within the framework of the “Pan-African e-network project”, resulting from cooperation between the Government of India, the African Union and the Government of Cameroon. Masters Degree programmes are offered in various fields. Courses are delivered by

videoconferencing from Madras University, as well as the Indira Gandhi National Open University in India.

- Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), under the accreditation and quality assurance of a university in Quebec, is supporting three universities in e-learning course delivery. Students take online degree programmes at Bachelors and Masters levels: the universities are the University of Dschang (IUT Fotso Victor College of Technology), University of Yaounde I (National Polytechnique) and University of Douala (College of Technology).

Infrastructure

- The Institute of Digital University Governance in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, is a support unit providing pedagogical and technical ICT support, as well as digital connectivity to the eight State-run universities in Cameroon. The institute comprises an online library or documentation centre, a science and technology centre and a centre for distance learning.

Top Priorities for 2015-2018 (not more than five)

1. Developing the capacity and skills of ODL tutors in the teaching and learning process.
2. Finalising a national policy framework for ODL in Cameroon.
3. Follow-up on dual-mode provision at the universities where this already exists and expansion to dual-mode provision elsewhere.
4. Establishment of a national body to manage distance education.
5. Setting up a National Open University as well as open schools.

Latest Developments in Distance Learning in Cameroon

1. Creation of the Centre for Continued Education by Distance Learning by the World Bank placed at the disposal of the four Ministries of Education.
2. Many public and private Universities are offering online courses locally in collaboration with foreign institutions. Such is the case with the University of Yaounde I and Yaounde II, ICT University Yaounde, St. Monical University, Buea, etc.
3. The Pan African University is also offering online courses locally.
4. Two personnel of the Ministry of Basic Education; two from the Higher Teacher College Yaounde, one from the Universities of Dschang and Douala respectively were sponsored by COL to present papers at the Seventh Pan Commonwealth Forum (PCF7) that was held in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2013.

Conclusion

In spite of these developments in the use of e-learning and distance education in Cameroon, the challenge remains the lack of a national regulatory framework to ensure the sustainable growth of Open and Distance Learning in the country. In this respect, the fear is that the vacuum that is being created by this absence of this framework will encourage the dumping of programmes from abroad with the attendant risk of degree mills providing invalid and questionable certificates and diplomas.

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