



## **KENYA**

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### **Open, Distance and E-Learning (ODEL) in Kenya**

#### **Background**

The Government of Kenya has been initiating various Reports, Commissions, Taskforces and Committees since independence as a way of addressing issues in education. However, the adoption of ODL as an alternative strategy of delivering education is supported by the Ominde Commission (1964/1965), Gachathi Report (1976), MacKay Report (1981) and the Kamunge Report(1988).

The demand for education in Kenya is high and has been continuously increasing over the last ten years. The reasons could be attributed to the increased population, adoption of Free Primary Education in 2003 and Free Day Secondary Education in 2008 and the Basic Education Act 2013, which has introduced free and compulsory basic education. The solution to the increased demand lies in ODEL.

#### **Reforms in Education**

It has become necessary to align the education sector in Kenya to vision 2030 and constitution of Kenya 2010. This has necessitated various reforms such as Universities Act 2012, Basic Education Act 2013 and Sessional Paper No.14 of 2012 on Policy Framework for Reforming Education and Training in Kenya. The Universities Act 2012 in particular calls for the establishment of a National Open University of Kenya to offer programmes via distance and e-learning mode. In this regard, a committee has been formed so as to operationalise the establishment of the University by the end of 2014.

#### **Policy Initiatives:**

Kenya does not have any specific national policy to guide the use of ODEL in the country. However, with the collaboration between COL and the Ministry of Education in 2006, a Draft Policy was developed to guide the provision of ODEL.

Due to this, open and distance learning programmes are the initiatives of individual local universities, many having embraced this mode of teaching and learning and several have established Directorates and Institutes. These universities are University of Nairobi, Kenyatta, Moi, Egerton, Maseno, Kenya Methodist and Strathmore.

E-Learning initiative is also conducted in these universities. The African Virtual University, initiated by the World Bank in 1996, relies on the use of satellite technology and the internet for delivery of programmes. African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) is offering diploma programmes to practicing doctors and nurses. Odumbe (2008) also notes that some of the major providers include Kenya Institute of Education (Now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development Centre) and Institute of Special Education.

### **Challenges facing the development of ODEL**

The Public Universities Inspection Board (2006) cited the following challenges facing the development of ODEL in Kenya; lack of national policy, lack of expertise, high cost of establishing infrastructure, failure to address learner support systems and inadequate funding. The Sessional paper No.14 of 2012 considers the challenges as poor transport systems, limited places in mainstream education, nomadic lifestyles and inability of working class to attend classes due to their busy schedule.

### **Government policy to address ODL issues**

The Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005 identified ODL options to be used in addressing challenges of Access, Equity and quality improvement. However, the Sessional Paper No.14 of 2012 notes that the government plans to adopt several measures so as to address ODEL challenges; mainstreaming ODL in the education system in Kenya; developing and implementing ODL policy; establishing partnerships and collaborations at all levels; providing capacity of trainers and funds.

### **Livelihoods and Health**

Kenya Aids Intervention Prevention Project (KAIPP):

1. Focuses on improving rural livelihood in western Kenya in areas of agriculture, health and economic development of vulnerable groups. It has been working with COL since 2009 on livelihood and environment. They use gender sensitivity open and distance learning (ODL) and private sector partnerships. It has managed to train people, increase income, boost production, HIV treatment and promoted savings.

2. Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC):

This is a community based organisation formed in 1988 in western Kenya with a focus to address issues of poverty. It deals majorly with issues of women, children, youths, farmers and people with disabilities. The programmes are on adaptive research, information technology, micro-finance, Advocacy and Networking. It has managed to train farmers on modern farming methods and marketing strategies using computer skills, assisting orphans and vulnerable groups and sensitize people.

### **How COL can assist?**

COL can be useful in the following ways:

- Assisting in the establishment of a National Open University of Kenya that is expected to be operational by 2014.
- Development of a national policy on ODEL.
- Integrating ODEL at all levels of education Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, TVET and University.

### **Conclusion**

The adoption of ODEL is key to accessing learning and increasing quality and retention and therefore needs to be adopted at all levels of education. This can be achieved through collaboration and partnerships.

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