



MALAWI

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Challenges, Opportunities and Priorities for Malawi

Challenges

- Rapid growth of open schooling learners due to limited places in conventional education institutions.
- Untrained ODL practitioners.
- Inadequate institutional capacity.
- Inadequate learner support services.
- Negative perception of Open Distance Learning as a mode of teaching, learning, and training.

Opportunities

- The Government of Malawi is supportive of open and distance learning programmes.
- Policy on ODL developed.
- Draft Strategic Plan in place.
- Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) is a designated SADC ODL Centre of Specialisation for secondary education. MCDE is currently training ODL practitioners from SADC member states in nine (9) ODL key areas as one of building capacity in the region.
- Many learners at all levels (basic, secondary and higher education) demanding education through distance mode of learning.

Status of ODL in Malawi

Demand for education at all levels is growing. Many citizens in Malawi seek education and training in many fields of education through ODL due to limited places in conventional institutions. Both government and private institutions now offer education through ODL. Despite limited resources, the government is dedicated to provide education through this mode. In support of this assertion, the following are some of the current examples:

- Tikwere Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programmes for primary school education offered by MCDE. It was a project implemented by EDC, but handed over to government through MCDE in September 2012. MCDE is now implementing the activities.

- Open Secondary Schooling implemented by MCDE, a department of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. MCDE offers courses for Junior Certificate of Education and Malawi School Certificate of Education.
- Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes offered by institutions other than MCDE:
 - i. Domasi College of Education (DCE): for teacher education for secondary schooling;
 - ii. Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED) through Teacher Training Colleges, for primary education;
 - iii. Mzuzu University through Centre for Open and Distance Education, for various courses;
 - iv. University of Malawi, through its constituent colleges: (a) The Polytechnic for Continuing Education; (b) Chancellor College (e-learning centre); and (c) Kamuzu College of Nursing; and
 - v. Private Institutions – Shareworld Open University for various degrees; Theological Education Extension in Malawi, theology courses.

As said, Malawi College of Distance Education currently provides two programmes at the secondary school level: Junior certificate and Malawi School Certificate of Education through open schooling in 416 Open Secondary Schools (OSSs) housed in government conventional secondary schools. To support open secondary schools, MCDE provides an orientation course in management and practice of ODL for teacher-supervisors in open secondary schools. In addition, MCDE also offers learner support services.

Current Professional Development programmes

Training programmes for professional development:

- Two officers are undergoing a diploma course in ODL at the Open University of Tanzania. Two other officers are going through a Master's Degree in ODL also at the Open University of Tanzania. These are being sponsored by the SADC ODL Capacity Building Project. Unfortunately, the project is phasing out on 31st July, 2014.
- One officer is studying a Master's in Technical Education at the Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi.
- Two officers are pursuing Master's degree courses with Indira Gandhi National Open University

Available infrastructures

1. **Single mode:** Malawi College of Distance Education.

2. **Dual mode:** (i) Domasi College of Education; (ii) Teacher Training Colleges under DTED (Department of the Ministry of Education); (iii) Mzuzu University; and (iv) University of Malawi: Department of e-learning at Chancellor College; Department of Continuing Education at the Polytechnic; and Kamuzu College of Nursing.

COL Activities Implemented 2011-2014

Malawi College of Distance Education

- One officer participated in the workshop to develop country policies on the use of OERs in Southern Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa from 22-24 May 2013.
- Two officers participated in the workshop to develop Quality Assurance policy for Open Secondary Schools (OSSs) in Lusaka, Zambia from 10-14 March 2014.
- Two officers participated in the workshop to repurpose Technical Education Subjects for OSSs in Gaborone, Botswana from 3-7 March 2014.

Mzuzu University

- Conducted an Audit Study to Determine the Effectiveness of the Open and Distance Learning Mode in Broadening and Increasing Access to Education and Training in Malawi.

Proposed Education and Training Priorities for 2015-2018

Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE)

MCDE would like to be assisted in the following areas:

1. Training workshops for members of staff in:
 - (a) ODE philosophy, management, administration, marketing, and planning;
 - (b) instructional design and materials development for Open Secondary Schools: print, audio/visual and other related IT methods;
 - (c) research in ODE;
 - (d) editorial skills; and
 - (e) modern print technology (we print modules for OSS learners).
2. Establish learner-support unit for open and distance learning at MCDE and in our regional offices.
3. Promoting e-learning in open and distance learning.

Mzuzu University

Mzuzu University would like to be assisted in the following areas:

1. Help Mzuzu University and other ODL Institutions to link up with other technology producing organisations at subsidised rates for access and use of relevant technologies or even donation of such equipment.
2. Mzuzu University and Malawi need to build an adequate infrastructure for delivering programmes through open, distance and e-learning. Specifically, we require Satellite Learning Centres with Internet, laboratories, resources, reprographic, and examination rooms in each of the four political regions. COL could help with linking us with potential development partners.
3. Assist Mzuzu University and other ODL institutions in Malawi with short as well as long term training of staff in theory and practice of open and distance learning, including student support services and quality assurance.
4. Help with repurposing print instructional materials into portable audio and visual versions so that learners are able to listen and view lectures at their convenient times using computers and/or android phones.

Domasi College of Education

Domasi College of Education (DCE) would like to be assisted in the following areas:

1. Support the college to conduct research in ODL issues.
2. Assist the college with ICT facilities and software to help in the offering of ODL programmes through e-Learning.
3. Train college staff in data management, soft and hardware management, quality assurance, and monitoring and evaluation of ODL programmes.
4. Support DCE staff to visit other ODL institutions.

Ministry of Agriculture

The Ministry would like to be assisted in the following areas:

1. Improvement of livelihoods programmes through information dissemination via radio and television.

Africa and the Mediterranean Regional Focal Points Meeting
Ebene City, Mauritius
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