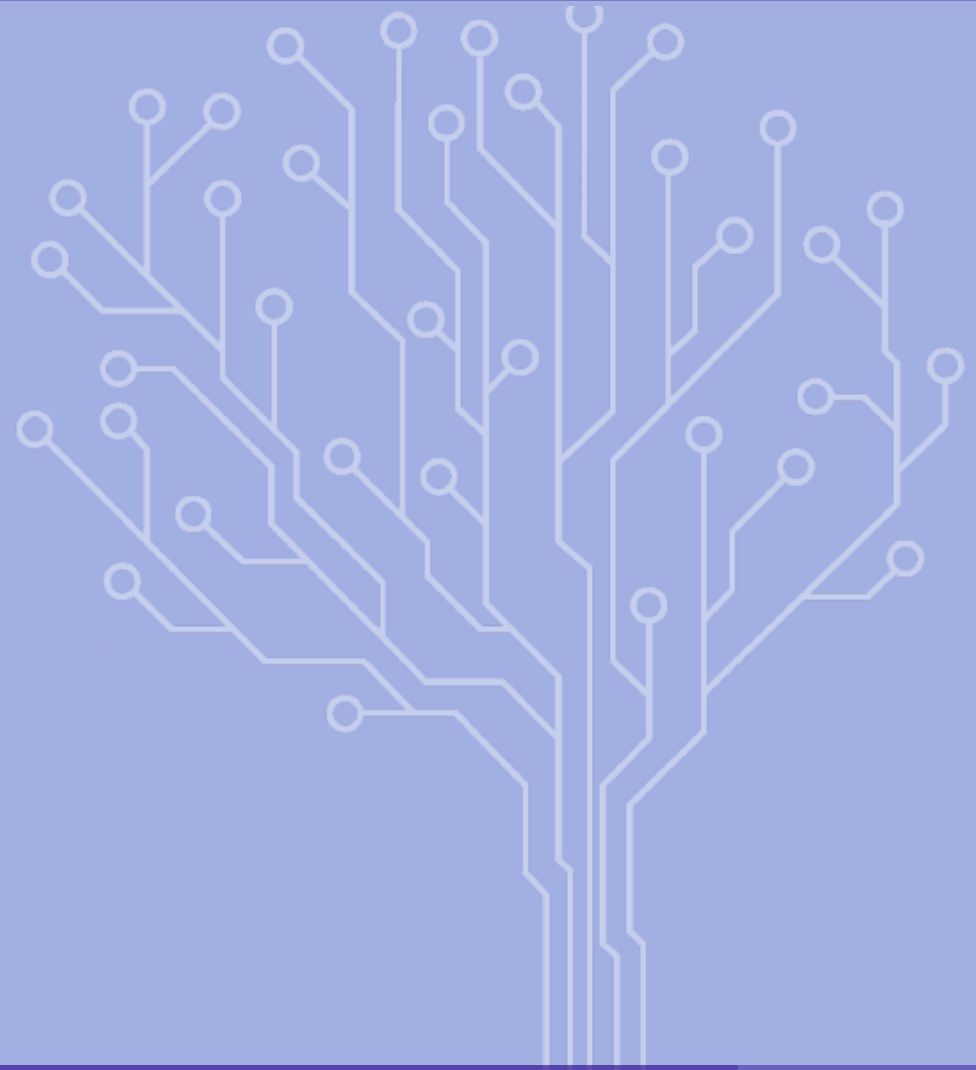


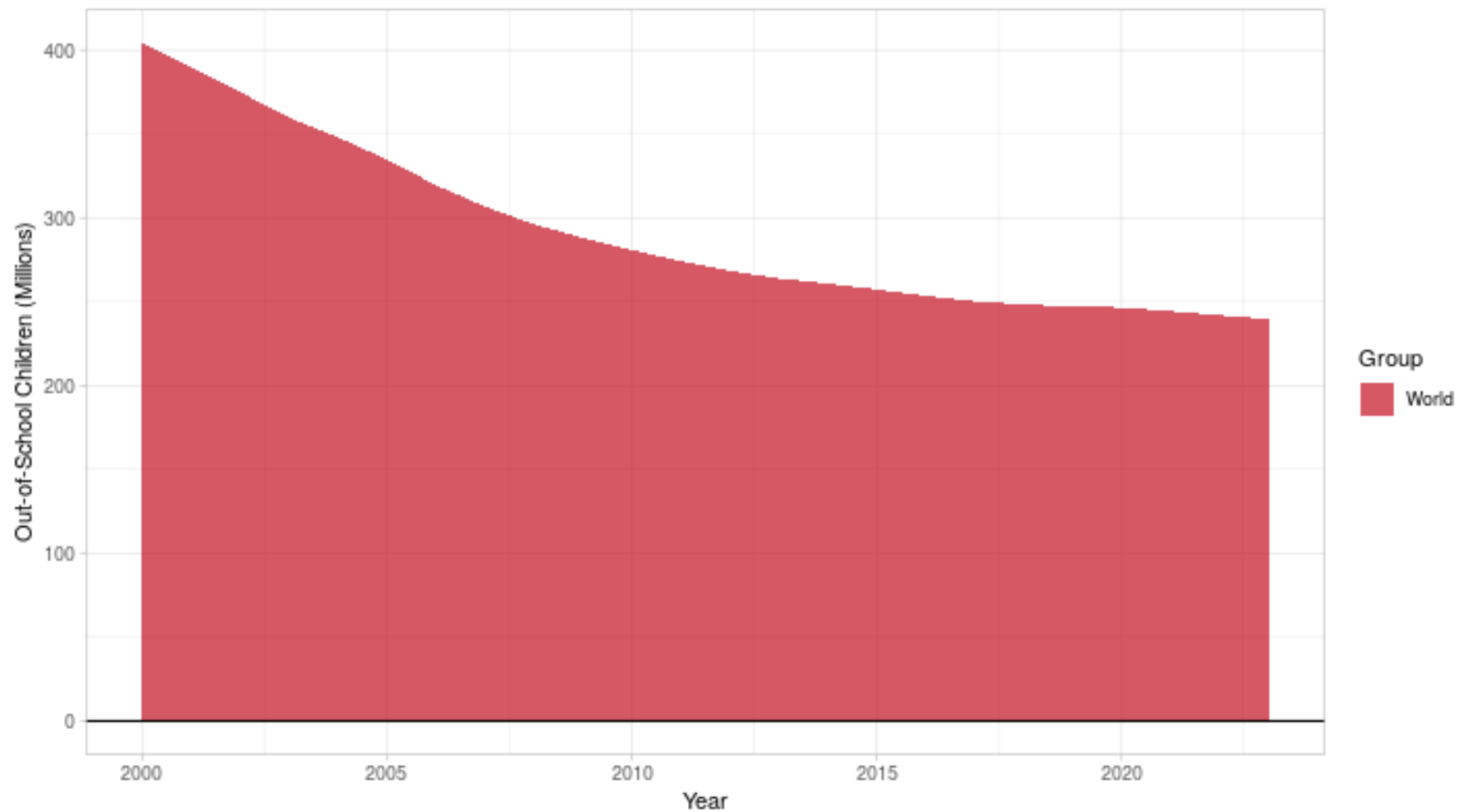
Costing ODL provision for out-of-school youths



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May 2024: ODL Conference BOU, Botswana



Scale of need
(UN UIS, 2016
2024)



What is the scale of the need?



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- **1.6 billion** learners in **188** countries had their schooling disrupted by the pandemic: not all came back.
- According to the World Bank, reporting UIS data, the GER was **77%** in 2022.
- According to Statista, on average, **21.78%** of young people are not in employment, education or training in 2024.

- [Faiola, The Washington Post](#)
- <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.ENRR>
- [Statista 2024 School enrollment, secondary \(% gross\) | Data \(worldbank.org\)](#)

Open schooling principles

- Access for all
- Flexibility and choice
- Quality
- Individual pace
- Affordable ...



Tension 1

Free Education

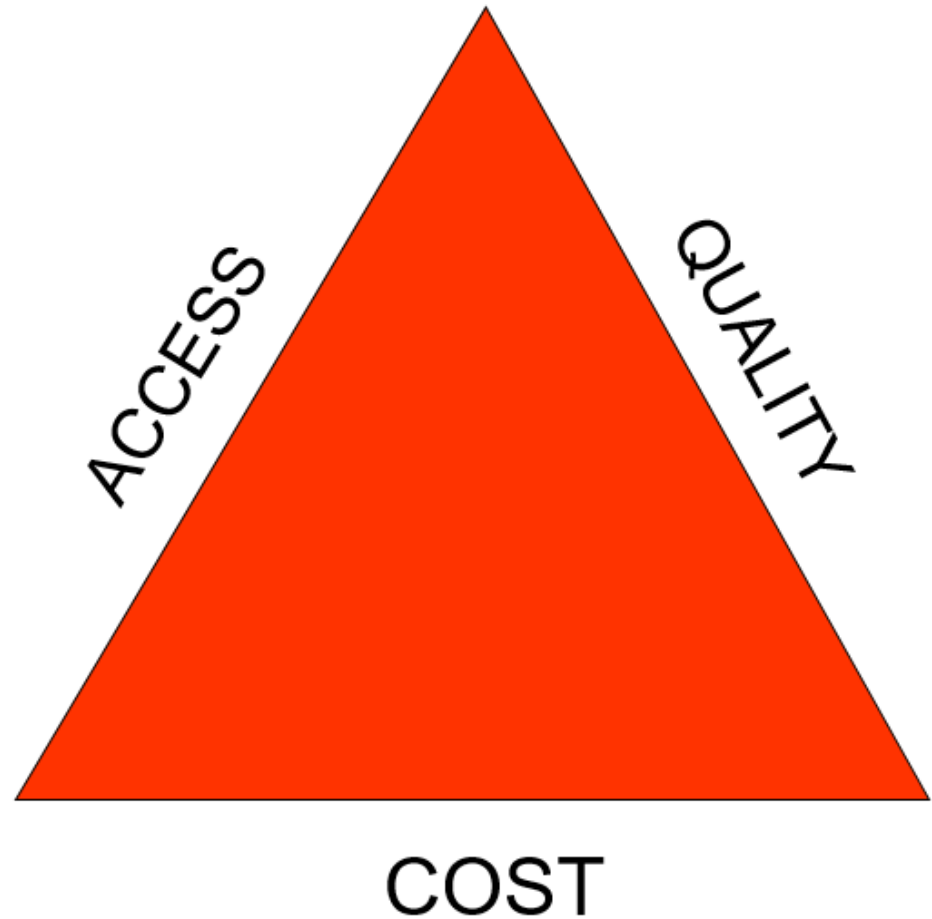
Reliance on
Government Subsidy



The Iron Triangle

Costing scaled ODL Provision

- Quality as exclusion (Tait, 2017)
- Iron Triangle (Daniel, Kanwar, & Uvalić-Trumbić, 2009).



Tension 2

- “a conceptual divide between traditional distance education and online learning” Cleveland-Innes and Garrison (2010, p. 255)
- “We conclude ... open and constructivist distance education can achieve any two of the following: flexible access, a quality learning experience and cost effectiveness – but not all three at once.” Kanuka and Brooks (2010, p. 84)
- Contradiction between traditional distance education concerns with high enrolment programmes leading to economies of scale, and the ways in which digital technology and online learning support cooperation and collaboration for relatively small group sizes. (Hülsmann and Shabalala, 2016)



Tension 3



Instructivist:

teacher chooses and supplies content; students engage with the supplied content, largely independently (even in contact mode, often only about 30% of notional learning time is spent in staff-led and campus-based interactions in many institutions); students then demonstrate mastery in proctored, venue- and content-based examinations.

Constructivist:

teacher chooses and supplies some content but encourages students to supplement this with content they find themselves; through scaffolded activities, students are encouraged to construct and defend their own understandings; students may then demonstrate their learning through proctored, venue- and problem-based examinations, or perhaps more likely, through some form of authentic assessment such as a performance, portfolio or product development.

Tension 4

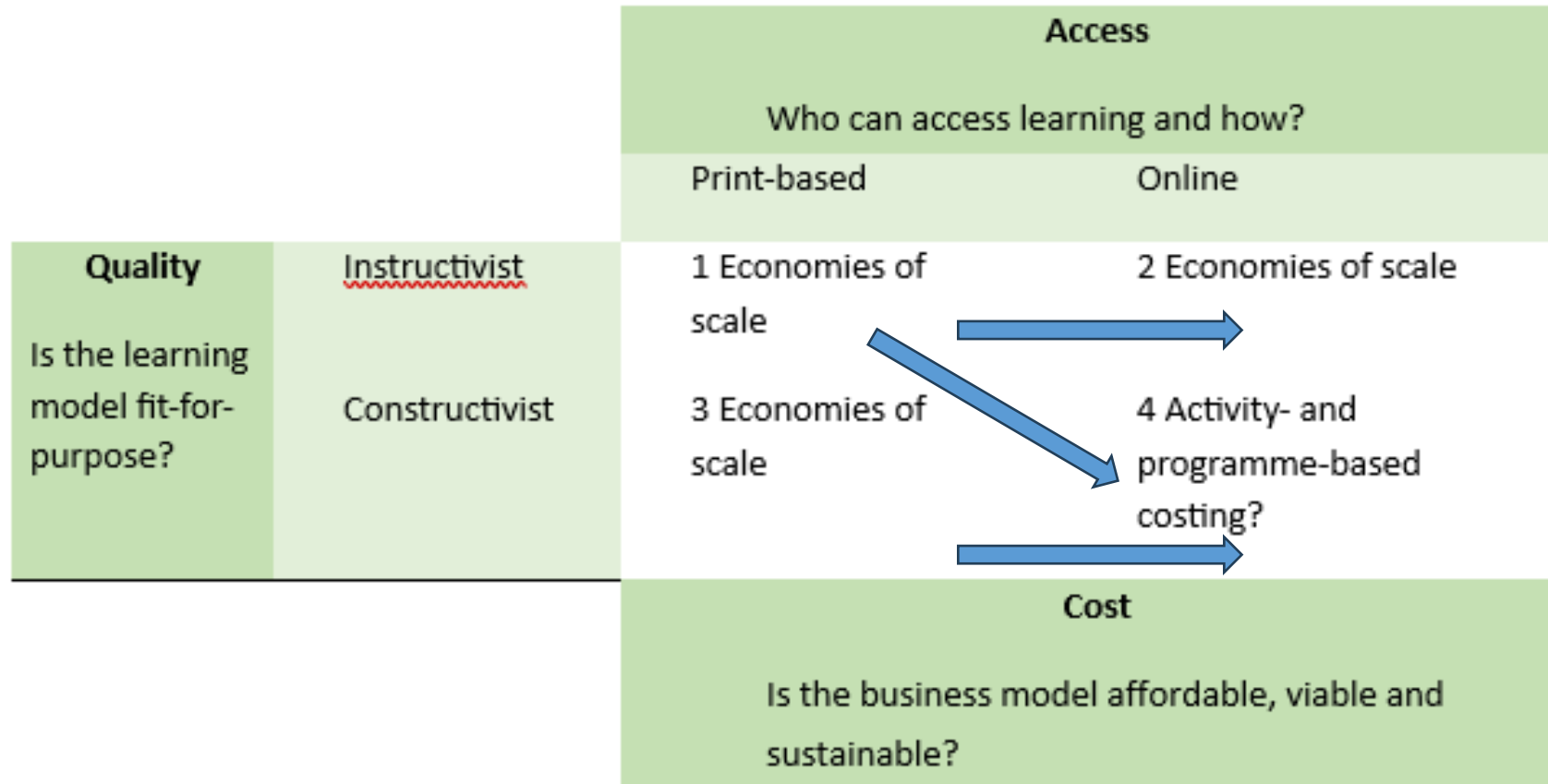
Economies of scale:

deliberate generation of financial surpluses by amortising fixed and sunk costs (e.g. buildings, ICT infrastructure, staff time spent on programme and materials development), over large student numbers in a limited number of programmes

Activity-based costing for cost recovery:

actual costs of provision are calculated and vary from programme to programme and context to context, with provision including some small-scale high-cost strategic programmes and other large-scale low-cost programmes which may or may not be used to generate financial surpluses and to cross-subsidise.

Conceptual framework





Options

- Not to move to Quadrant 4 after all. In fact, some providers might choose not to move, or perhaps more likely given market expectations, to move rather to Quadrant 2 (for example an xMOOC-based model).
- To move to Quadrant 4 but to charge higher fees to cover increased costs per student (an orientation informed by a notion of education as a private good, perhaps).
- To move to Quadrant 4 but to lobby for higher state subsidies or grants to cover increased costs per student (an orientation informed by a notion of education as a public good, perhaps).
- To move to Quadrant 4 but to reduce the demand on full-time staff to mediate support and to explore alternative models such as use of less expensive adjunct part-time staff (as is done at the University of Pretoria) or to enable peer support (as at Peer-to-Peer University and University-of-the-People) or to seek volunteer support (as at OER Universitas) or to employ automation/GAIbots (University of Samoa)



Costing mass education

- “The most important finding is that mass- media distance education could achieve economies of scale and could be designed so that the average cost per student (and to a lesser extent, because of higher drop-out rates, per graduate) could be lower than similar costs found in face-to-face education”. (Rumble, 2012, p. 41)
- : “... in developing countries a combination of traditional mass-media-based instructional approaches with the intelligent use of mobile technologies appears to be more promising than imitating an online class model while having to increase class sizes to an extent that compromises the original instructional intentions of the model”. (Hülsmann, 2016, p. 37)



Bates (2018): 1

The research suggests that scaling with quality requires a delicate balance between:

- team work involving tenured faculty, specialist online experts such as instructional designers and media producers, and adjunct instructors, with full involvement of faculty in all aspects of the design and development of the programs,
- using adjunct faculty as instructors to support program delivery as the enrolments grow,
- managing student-instructor ratios so that adjuncts are not overloaded,
- ensuring the adjunct instructors are adequately trained or experienced in teaching online.



Bates (2018): 2

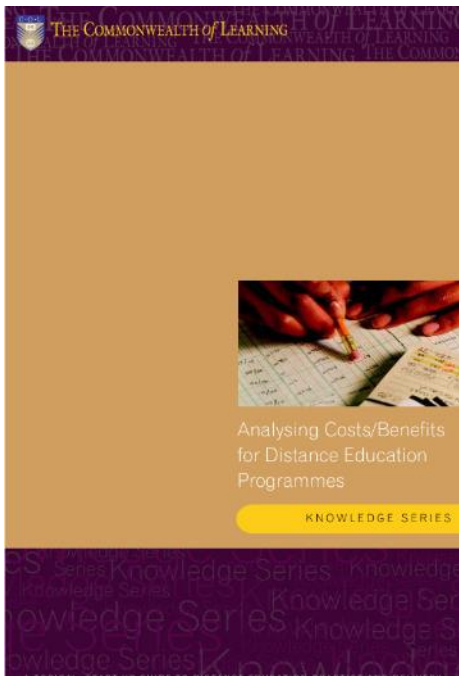
Other important factors in scaling with quality are:

- being sure there is an adequate market demand to justify the scale of online/digital programs you are proposing: good market research is essential,
- being confident that new entrants into the market will not have the scale or quality to capture your market,
- being sure that there is a sufficient pool of available qualified adjunct instructors,
- developing a multi-year business plan that will accommodate losses in the first two years in return for later economies of scale and scope,
- a sympathetic and creative administration that will consider and encourage new funding models.



Time Driven Activity Based Costing

- Historically, incremental models for government subsidies
- Annual discussion on how to fit activities to subsidy
- (a) Non-relationship between the budget and the organisational strategy i.e. the planning and budgeting rift
- (b) imbalance between the demand and supply sides of the budget process
- Time Driven Activity Based Costing (TD-ABC1): The method allows for information about costs of activities, facilitating planning on actual needs. Andalya et al., 2019
- Monograph/Knowledge Product?

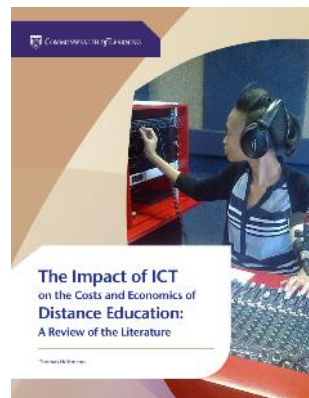
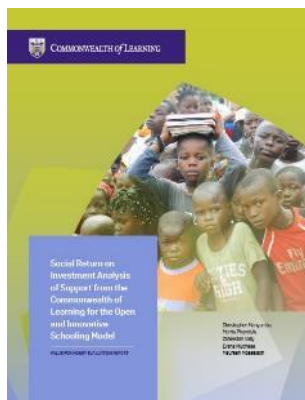


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Open Schooling for Secondary and Higher Secondary Education: Costs and Effectiveness in India and Namibia

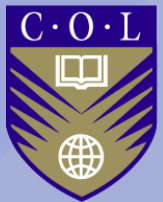
Greville Rumble and Badri N Koul



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Thank you



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