



Mainstreaming Graduate Employability in Higher Education: The Role of ODL

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Outline



The Concept

Why Graduate
Employability?

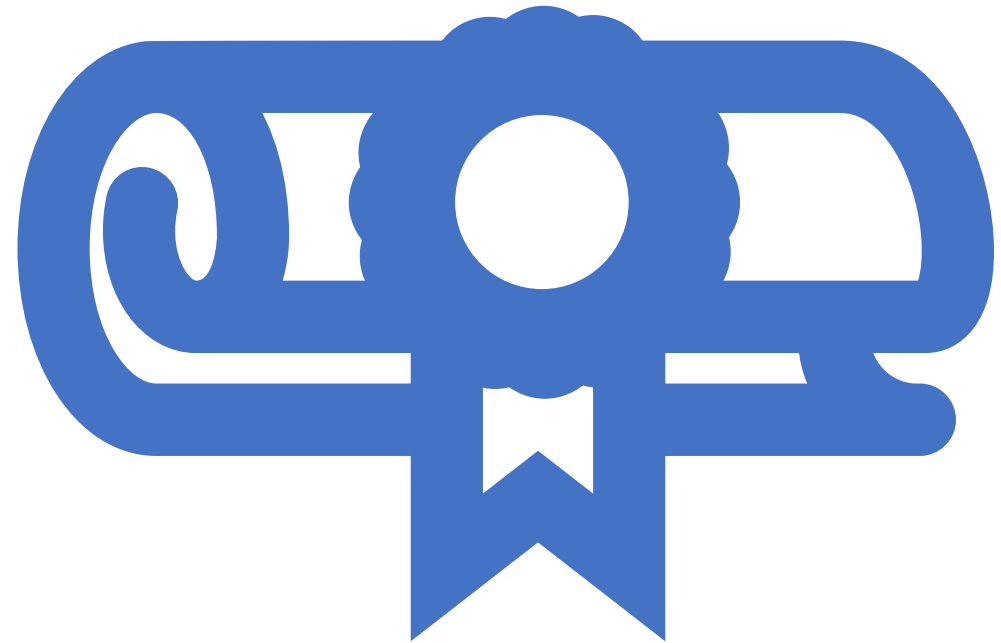
Mainstreaming
GE: Role of ODL



The Concept

- A set of achievements – skills, understandings, personal attributes for success in chosen career.
- An individual's ability to gain and maintain initial employment,
 - Move between roles within the same organization,
 - obtain new employment, where necessary,
 - and/or generally secure suitable and sufficiently fulfilling work

employability means that institutions have supported the knowledge, skills, attributes, reflective disposition and identity that graduates need to succeed in the workforce



Two terms to note....

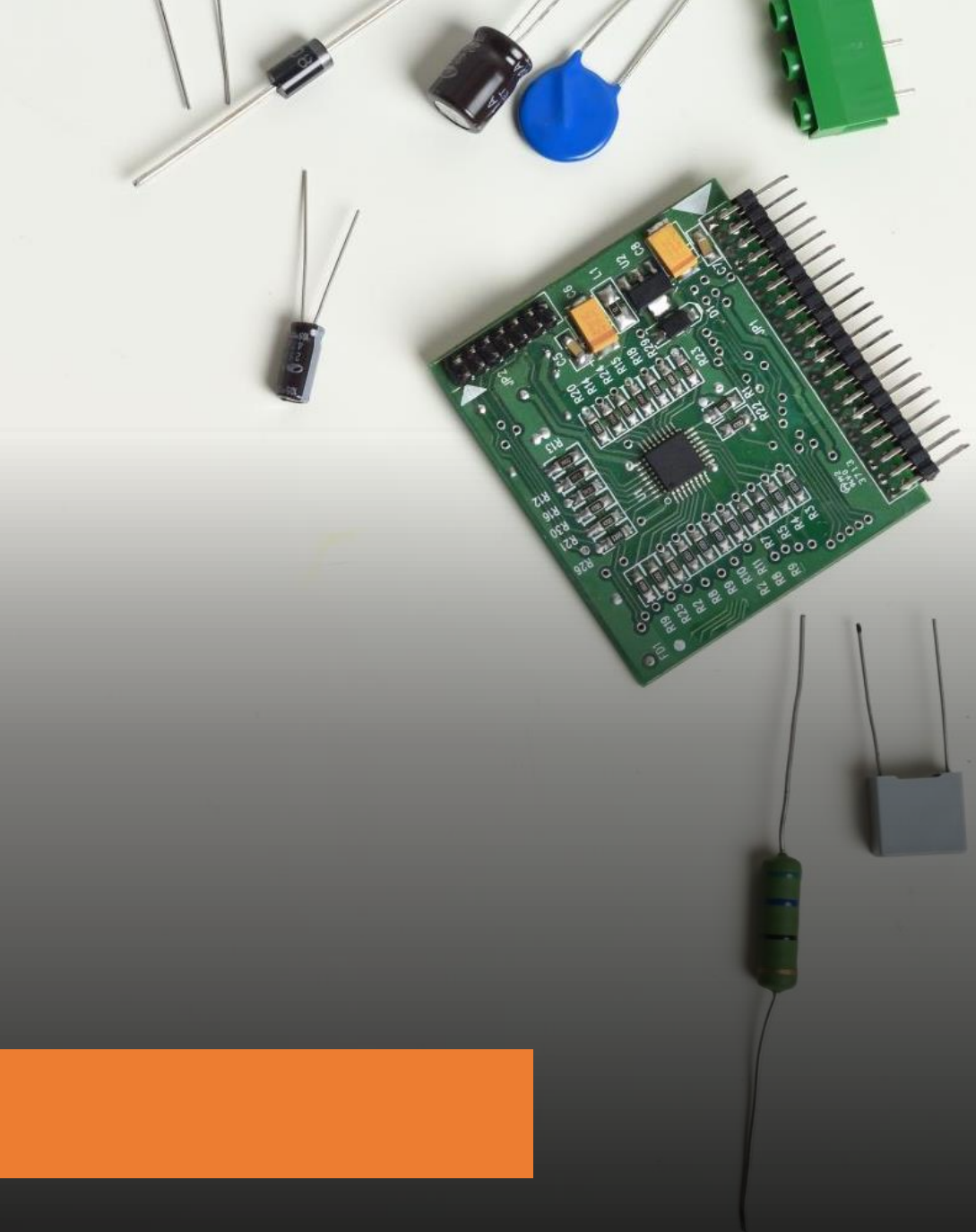
- **Skills** - additional qualities that a graduate needs to have in order to gain and maintain employment
- **Competencies** - the skills have to be demonstrable.

A row of approximately 15 sharpened colored pencils of various colors (brown, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, teal) standing upright against a solid blue background. The pencils are arranged in a slightly wavy line, with some taller than others.

Factors to Consider

- **Social context** - (context-specific needs of different regions)
- **Social change**- influenced by emergence of new technologies and cultural advancement,

Why Graduate Employability

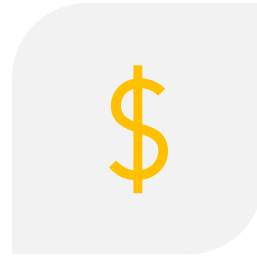




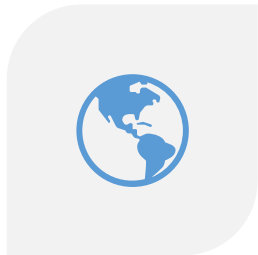
FOR OVERALL WELL-
BEING AND STABILITY



HE PROVIDES PATHWAY
FOR GREATER
OPPORTUNITIES



WILL MY INVESTMENT
PAY OFF?



EMERGING
COMPLEXITIES IN THE
WORLD OF WORK

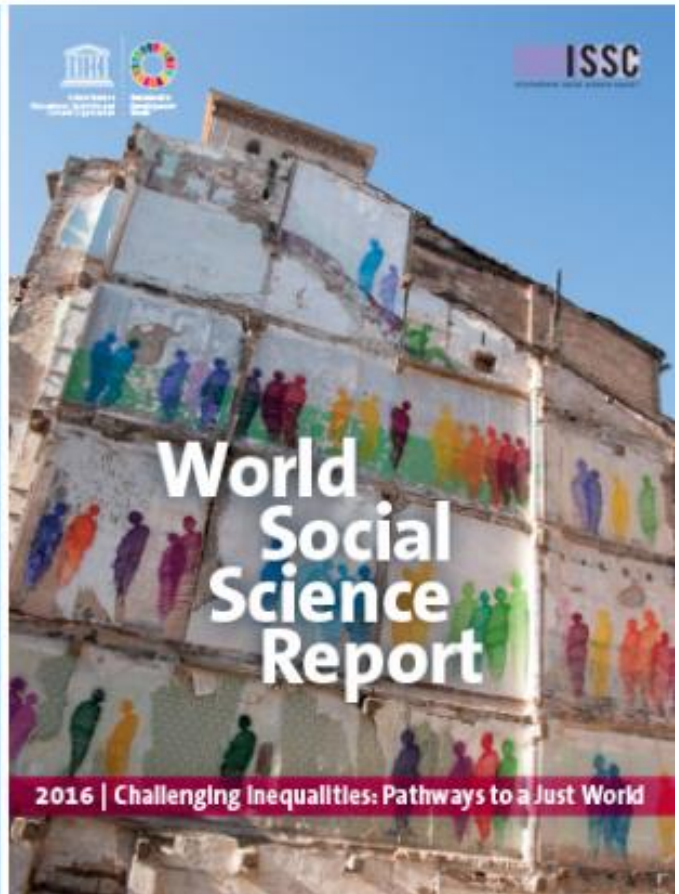
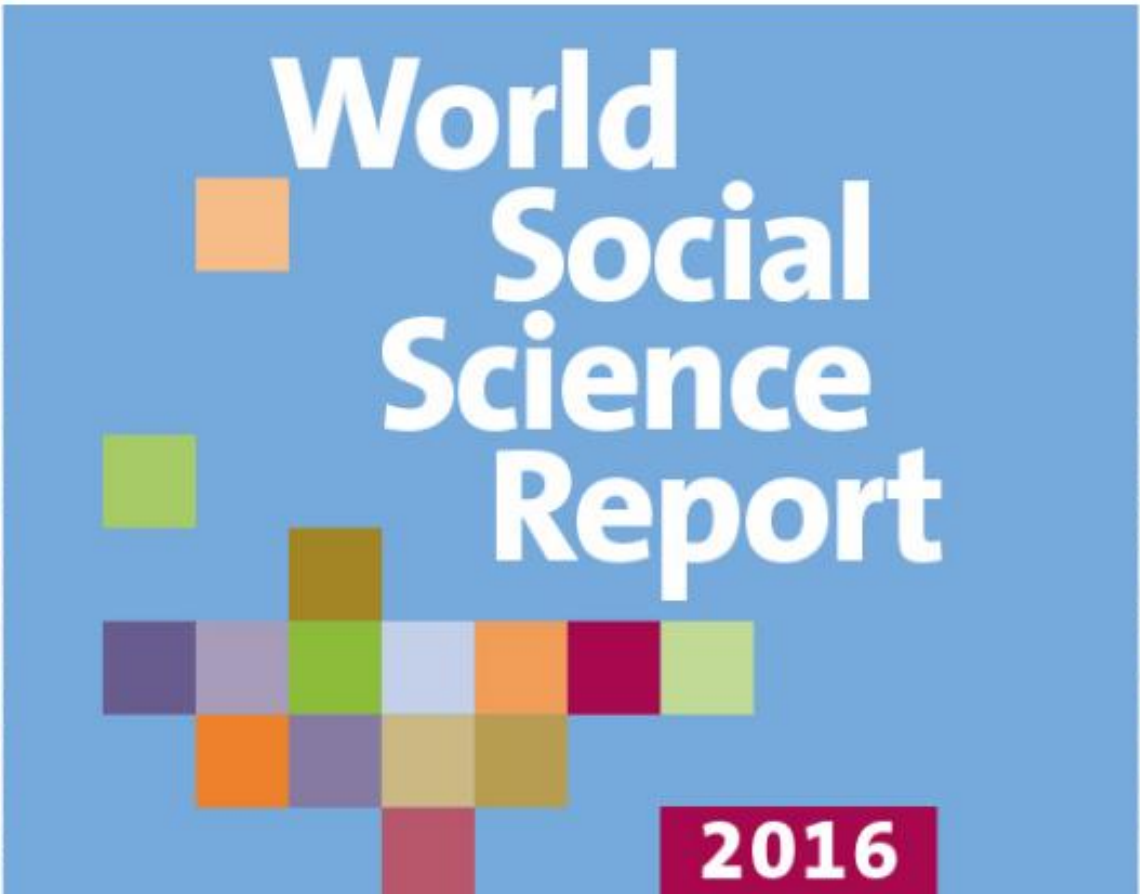


SKILLS MISMATCH



As HE providers, we must pause to ask....

- **Are learners fit for purpose?**
- *“Companies are constantly rethinking what they do and how they work, that’s why they need employees who can flex, stretch and evolve to meet the challenges we can’t yet imagine” (Agbu, 2022). [Connecting quality assurance and employability for a future-ready workforce - Commonwealth of Learning \(col.org\)](#)*



Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World

Never before has inequality been so high on the agenda of policy-makers worldwide, or such a hot topic for social science research. More journal articles are being published on the topic of inequality and social justice today than ever before.

This is the Summary of the 2016 World Social Science Report. It draws on the insights of over 100 social scientists and other thought leaders from all over the world, across various disciplines, to emphasize transformative responses to inequality at all levels, from the grass-roots to global governance.

Summary
Full Report
Contents
Key messages



The Future of Jobs Report 2020

OCTOBER 2020

The Future of Job

- Forum's [Future of Job's report](#) suggests that employees in almost every part of the world will need to **upgrade their skills and capabilities by 2025**



A Policy Paper

Bridging the Employability Skills Gap in Higher Education



The problem

- Lack of coordination among key stakeholders
- Misconceptions and lack of knowledge about labour market needs
- Curriculum mismatch with labour market needs
- Outdated teaching methods and lack of practical training
- Lack of digital skills

[wcms_857260.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)



Considering employability allows universities to:



Strategically articulate the skills and experiences developed as a result of a higher education



Devise ways to integrate useful and transferable skills and attributes throughout the students' educational pathway



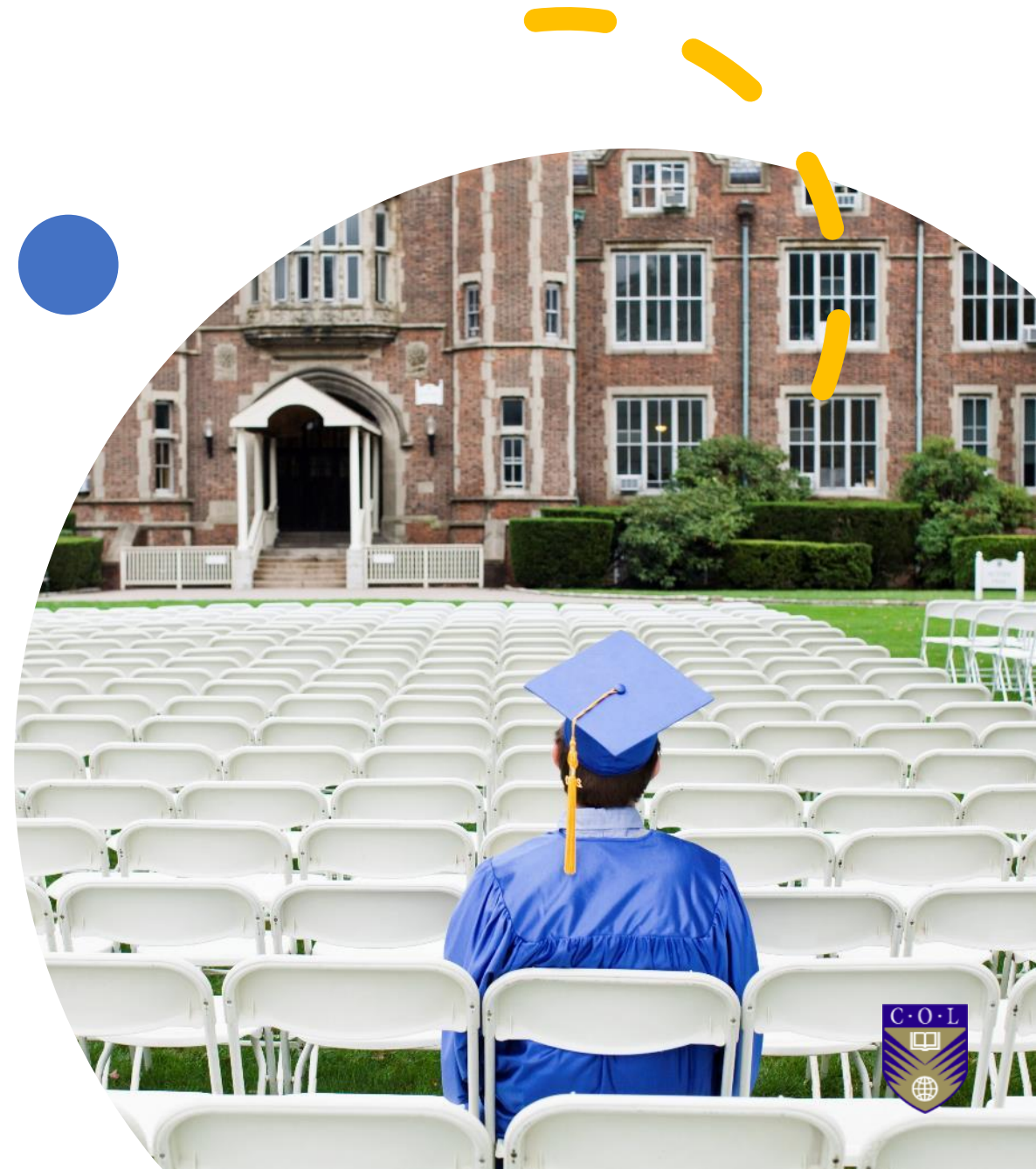
Work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to better understand the needs of the workforce, economy and community



Demonstrate interest in their students' long-term personal, professional and financial success



Better understand how students' coursework and experiences transfer into the workforce



Considering employability allows students to:

- Think about how their education can contribute to long-term success
- Acknowledge the importance of employability
- Engage in dynamic learning opportunities
- Acquire useful skills, competencies and attributes that are transferable and valued in the long term
- Visualise how their education may pay off





Considering employability allows Communities and Government Consider Employability to..



Anticipate potential skills imbalance



Engage with workforce that can adjust to dynamic changes

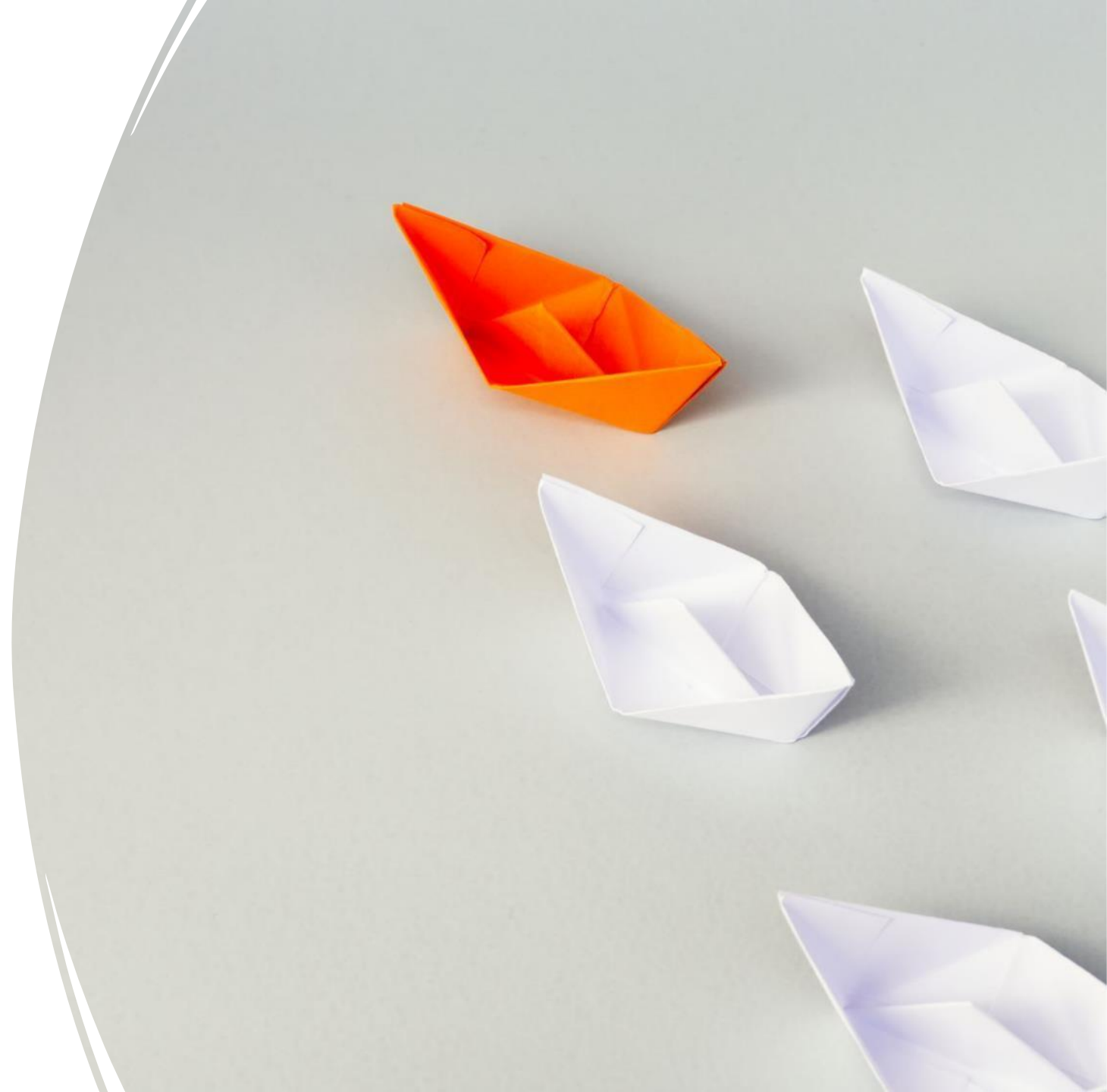


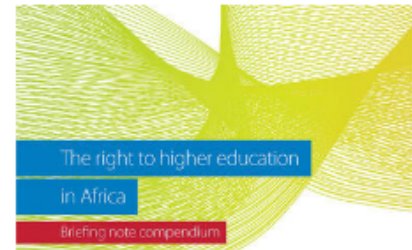
Improve local development, economy and community engagement

Employability Skills

Communication Skills	Self-Motivation	Numeracy	Ability to work under pressure	Adaptability	Ability to articulate knowledge and skills
Ability to learn	Resilience and Growth mindset	Transferable skills	Willingness to try new things	Interpersonal Skills	Systems thinking
Specialised or Discipline Specific knowledge	Diverse experiences	Interdisciplinary thinking	Technical skills	Ability to value diversity and differences	Teamwork

Employability, Higher Education and Role of ODL





AFRICA

The right to HE is not yet a reality in Africa – Report

Wachira Kigotho 23 November 2023

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The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has urged African countries to make the right to higher education a reality on the continent by reducing the cost of studying, expanding access, providing quality education and erasing gender inequalities.

In a **report**, *The Right to Higher Education in Africa: Briefing note compendium*, issued recently, UNESCO noted that although the enrolment rate in higher education has more than doubled in the past two decades, Africa as a region has the lowest university enrolment rates in the world.

According to Dr Dimitri Sanga, the director of UNESCO's regional office based in Dakar, Senegal, to make progress, African countries would have to face those challenges head on. "They must integrate inclusion, gender and equity to ensure that no one is left behind," said Sanga.

Sanga noted that African countries should try to internationalise the universities, encourage inter-regional mobility of students and researchers, as well as create virtual universities by enhancing penetration of the internet and digital education.

Taking into account that talent is equally distributed across the population, in all groups, regardless of their different characteristics, UNESCO stressed that it is possible to find students with the potential

Right to Higher Education

- Africa has the lowest University enrolment rate, globally
- Global Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): **19% in 2000 and 40% in 2020**
- Ratio remain under **20% in Africa**
- and **9.4% in Sub-Saharan Africa**
- *“Most people in Africa do not even know if they have the right to higher education, as rights and access to higher education are determined by many hard conditions,”*
Professor Olusola Oyewole, the secretary-general of the Association of African Universities
- **Issues**
 - Expanding access
 - Inclusion
 - Cost
 - Providing quality

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Related Links

GLOBAL

Right to HE does not exist in a vacuum, say young people

GLOBAL

Global ‘Roadmap to 2030’ for higher education announced

GLOBAL

Universities as lifelong learning institutions – Some way to go

GLOBAL

UNESCO reaffirms higher education as a right and a public good

ODL and Graduate Employability: **The bigger Picture**

Benefits of ODL

- Increasing access
- Supporting inclusion
- Enhancing Flexible learning opportunities
- Provides Life-long learning opportunities
- Reducing cost





Still on the bigger Picture

Low Carbon Footprint



Requirements for success in ODL



Some level of digital skills



Intrinsic motivation



Self-directed learning skills



Time-management strategy



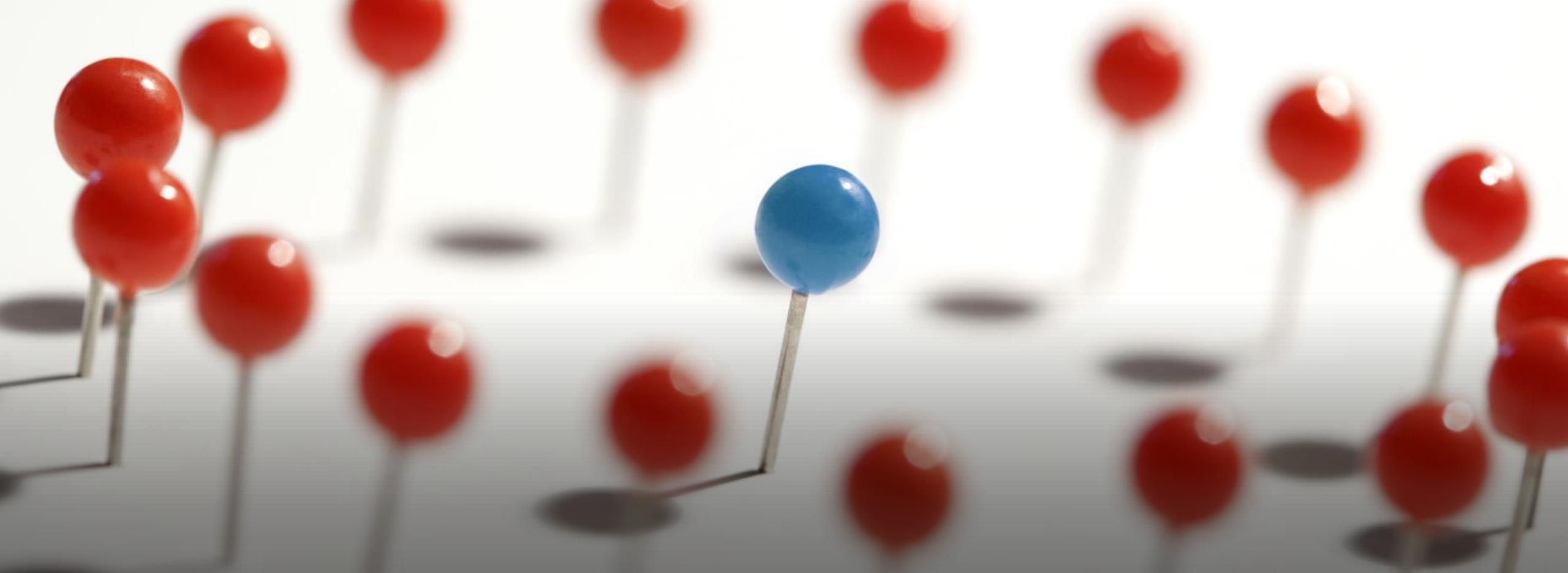
Ability to set goals for learning



Collaboration



Teamwork



The Specifics



Essential Life Skills (ELS) MOOC

Resources for Online Learning - 3rd Offering

Course Description

This MOOC examines the topic of climate change through the lens of small island developing states (SIDS). SIDS are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change despite being responsible for less than one percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This MOOC will introduce learners to key concepts, methodologies and approaches to enhance knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of sustainable environmental practices and promote climate action. The course will draw on a variety of

Self-directed learning for higher education



MOOCs

- Reskilling and Upskilling
- Networking and collaboration
- Professional development

ent

nt for Online Learning - 2nd Offering



Authentic Assessment for
Online Learning: Course
Material (col.org)

ODL
promotes
Self-Directed
Learning



Policy-makers and social partners agree: the future lies in **lifelong learning**. Yet, the challenge is how to make this a reality and ensure that institutions, resources, motivation and time are available to enable people to acquire the right skills at the **right time?**

World Employment Confederation

[Skills - World Employment Confederation \(wecglobal.org\)](https://wecglobal.org)



TOPICS

Skills

Technology is changing the way we work, including the skills that workers need to succeed. Moreover, the skills and competences workers need will change over the course of their working lives. This begs the question as to whether existing workforces and skilling institutions are fit-for-purpose and will be able to deliver on these changing skills needs.

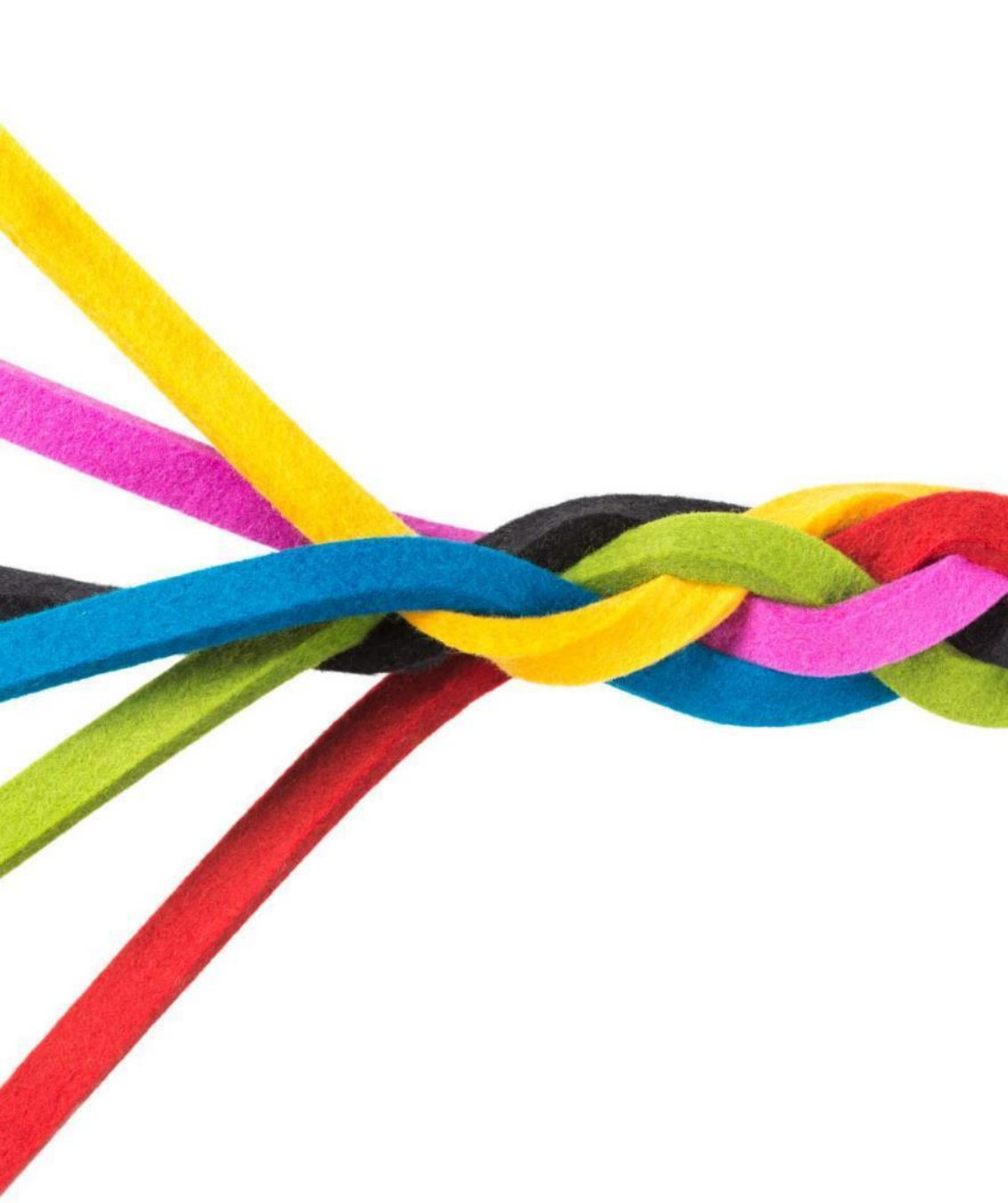
Policy-makers and social partners agree: the future lies in lifelong learning. Yet, the challenge is how to make this a reality

GO TO WEC EUROPE >



Increased focus is placed on the combination of working and learning, especially for young workers entering the labour market for the first time.

Another key element is to better identify the types of skills that people should anticipate learning. Policy initiatives are focusing on better connecting business to educators, promoting the development of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) skills, and enhancing 'soft skills' which encompass human interaction capabilities and the ability to learn.



ODL by its beauty and design supports GE

- **Access**
- **Inclusivity**
- **Flexibility**
- **Life-long learning opportunities**
- **Cost effectiveness**
- **Healthy environment**
- **Quality courses**
- **Collaboration**
- **Internationalisation**

learning for sustainable development

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2027

Mainstreaming GE in HE: COL's Model

Higher Education



Commonwealth countries are seeking new ways to improve access to quality higher education for all. The key challenges in this context include growing demand for higher education, limited resources and relevance to contemporary needs. Open universities, online and blended approaches are viable options for increasing access and equity, improving quality and cutting education costs. Governments and institutions need support to develop policies and strategies to transform the higher education sector and adopt open and distance learning (ODL), including online and dual-mode opportunities. Plus, educators need focused capacity building in ICT integration and the adoption of new pedagogies and authentic assessment. Furthermore, learners need a curriculum that prepares them for employment, entrepreneurship and sustainable jobs for the future.

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is working with policymakers and higher education institutions to enhance quality education opportunities in the Commonwealth with a focus on Africa.

finance systems

Spotlight



COL announces second offering of Authentic Assessment for Online Learning MOOC

[Read Full Story >](#)



Appointment of new COL Chairs announced

[Read Full Story >](#)



Self-directed learning for higher education MOOC opens for registration

[Read Full Story >](#)

The Countries

Cameroon

Eswatini

Kenya

Nigeria

Sierra Leone

Malawi

Namibia

Lesotho

Tanzania

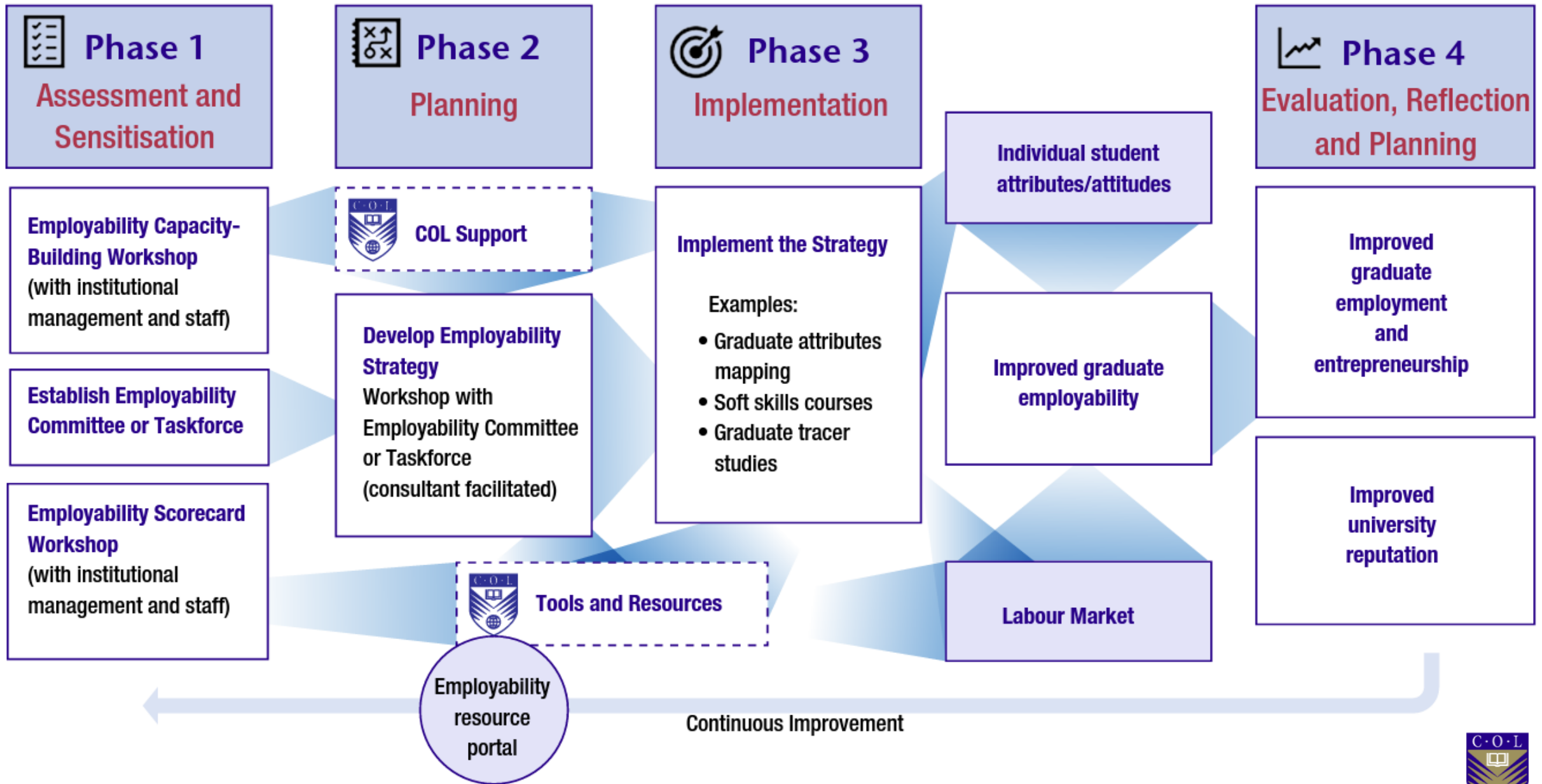
Zambia

Botswana



COL's Employability Model: Integrating employability in Higher Education Institutions

[A Guide to Integrating Employability in Higher Education Institutions: The Commonwealth of Learning's Employability Model \(col.org\)](https://col.org)



COL'S Employability Model for higher education institutions



1 STAGE 1 YEAR 1

Sensitisation and
Career Awareness

- How is the institution helping students explore careers and career options?

Criterion: 4
Total Possible Score: 12

2 STAGE 2 YEAR 2

Career Counselling,
Intensified Career
Awareness & Career
Fostering

- How is the institution connecting students with employers, speakers and skill development opportunities?

Criterion: 8
Total Possible Score: 24

3 STAGE 3 YEAR 3

Evaluation Drills

- How is the institution enabling students to gain hands-on, real-life career experience?

Criterion: 6
Total Possible Score: 22

4 STAGE 4 YEAR 4

Career Support Pre
& Post Graduation

- How is the institution helping students transition from school to employment?

Criterion: 7
Total Possible Score: 21

Total Cumulative Score Possible: 79

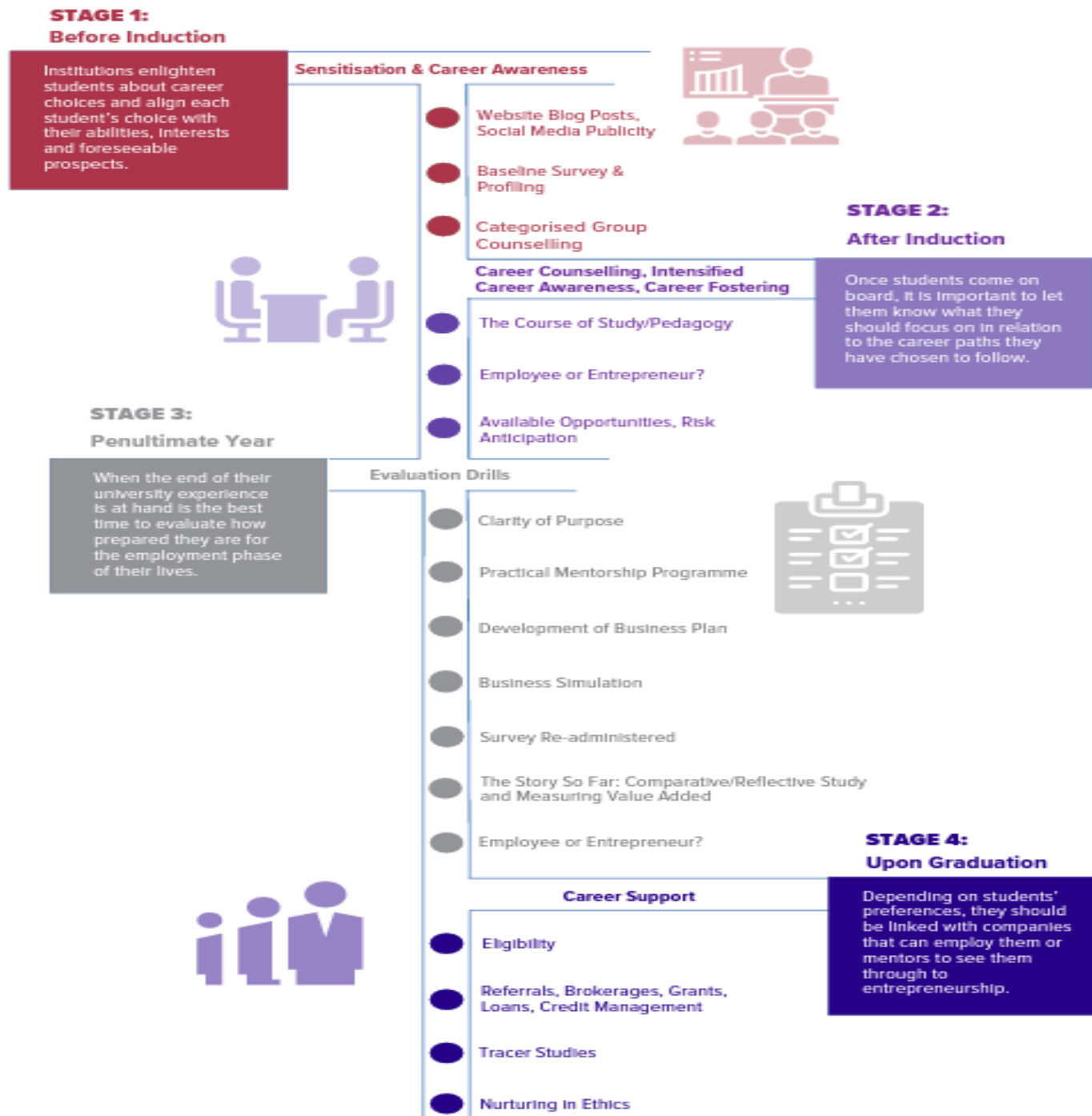
Institutional Employability Scoring

0–49%, 0–38
points =
Not Met/Poor

50–69%, 39–54
points =
Partially
Met/Average to
Good

70–100%, 55–
79 points =
Fully Met/ Very
Good to
Excellent

Employability Journey Mapping Model





Getting Started: Pre-planning meeting

Generating employability and institutional review questions and expected outcomes



Phase 2: Developing Strategy

- Step 1:** Alignment to the university's mission
- Step 2:** Alignment to the university's values
- Step 3:** Alignment to the university's vision statement



Phase 4. Executing Your Strategy and Managing Performance

- Step 1:** Establish implementation schedule
- Step 2:** Train your team to manage their part of the plan
- Step 3:** Review progress quarterly

Phase 1: Determining Your Strategic Position

- Step 1:** Identify your employability strategic issues
- Step 2:** Conduct an environmental scan
- Step 3:** Identify institutional opportunities and threats



Phase 3: Developing Your Strategic Plan

- Step 1:** Set priorities
- Step 2:** Define long-term strategic objectives
- Step 3:** Set university-wide employability goals and measures
- Step 4:** Select key performance indicators
- Step 5:** Cascade your strategies to operations



Strategic Objectives: An Example



Embed employability in all degree courses in styles most relevant to each discipline



Establish placement offices to facilitate students' work experiences



Link students to workplace as part of their training



Forge strong collaborative linkages with industry and professional bodies and involve them in curriculum design



Align employability framework with other relevant university policies



Opportunities for developing employability skills in university

CURRICULUM & DESIGN

Employability attributes, skills and opportunities can be built into courses

- Project-based
- Collaborative
- Opportunities for failure
- Critical self-reflection
- Multimodal
- Interactive
- Intergenerational learning

EXTRA- & CO-CURRICULAR

Campuses can organise conferences, competitions and experiences that enhance employability

- Case competitions
- Conferences
- Speaker workshops
- Study abroad
- Service & volunteering
- Student clubs
- Special training

CAREER PREP & SUPPORT

Universities can help students understand what is needed to succeed in their chosen career

- Personalised career counselling
- Career awareness
- Help with resumes, interviews and cover letters
- Employment fairs
- Mentorship
- Internships

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Students can be provided opportunities to try out skills in the real world, alongside members of the community who serve as co-educators

- Project-based partnerships with local businesses, non-profits or communities
- Course-based experiential learning co-led by community partners
- Co-op or work–learn opportunities

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students can be given opportunities to develop key personal attributes and skills such as resilience, confidence, flexibility, innovation, networking and public speaking.

- Resources for counselling and personal development
- Opportunities for self-reflection
- Opportunities to learn from failure






[Toolkit for Key Employability Indicators for National Qualification Agencies \(col.org\)](https://col.org)

Key employability standards for QA

- Institutional strategy
- Admission
- Programme design
- Teaching and Learning
- Student engagement
- Digital learning environment
- Assessment
- Student support
- Work integrated Learning
- Internationalization
- Research

TOOLKIT FOR KEY EMPLOYABILITY INDICATORS FOR NATIONAL QUALIFICATION AGENCIES

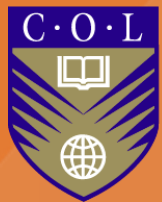
March 2020



Concluding thoughts....

- Many jobs are disappearing just as new ones are created.
- HEIs must be ready to address the skills and capabilities gaps, as well as help graduates meet the new requirements of a future-ready workforce.
- Innovative and strategic use of ODL enhances the mainstreaming of Graduate Employability in Higher Education

Thank you



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