



Distance Education Association of Tanzania

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COUNTRY REPORT – TANZANIA

DEATA AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS:

1. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology;
2. The Open University of Tanzania (OUT)
3. University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM);
4. Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA);
5. Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS);
6. Institute of Adult Education (IAE);
7. Moshi Cooperatives University (MoCU), and
8. International Training & Education Centre for Health (I – TECH).

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Introduction

Established in August 1993, the Distance Education Association of Tanzania (DEATA) is a National Association with a goal to promote networking and collaboration among distance education institutions and professionals in Tanzania, East Africa, SADC regions, and the world. The Distance Education Association of Tanzania (DEATA) is striving to become the clearing *house for issues related to open and distance education* in the country, region and global.

Through its linkages (both professional and informal) with ODL researchers, practitioners and institutions, DEATA is led by its constitution to provide a forum for discussing issues affecting and/or related to the field of distance education; encourage inter- institutional consultancies among member institutions as efficiently and widely as possible; promote co-operation and exchange of information and materials among its members and institutions and with associations concerned with open/distance education outside Tanzania; initiate and widen educational activities and access through distance education especially among disadvantaged groups; top up and support research and assist individual institutions and members in such areas as:-

- (i) Feasibility surveys
- (ii) Objective evaluation studies on specific distance education programmes.
- (iii) Adaptability of OERs to local conditions.

The association also liaises with the central and local government and International Agencies in advancing distance education; represents and advocates for the interest of distance education to government funding and policy formulation; support the training of full-time and part-time staff on distance education in Tanzania; hold conferences and seminars/workshops in Tanzania among others.

DEATA founding institutional members are: the Ministry of Education and Culture; the Open University of Tanzania (OUT); the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM); the

Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA); the Muhimbili University College for Health Sciences (MUCHS); the Institute of Adult Education (IAE); and the Cooperative College Moshi.

The current members of DEATA executive committee are:

- Patron: Prof Elifas Bisanda, Vice Chancellor, Open University of Tanzania.
- Chair: Prof Deus Ngaruko, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics, Open University of Tanzania.
- Secretary General: Prof. Elinami Swai, Coordinator, SADC Centre of Specialisation in ODL (Teacher Education).
- Editor: Dr. Cosmas Mnyanyi – Head, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education, Open University of Tanzania.
- Accountant: Dr Fauzia Mohammed Head, Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The Open University of Tanzania.

DEATA Key Performance Areas

Since its inauguration in 1993, the organization has been involved in a range of research, professional development and policy advocacy activities. DEATA has represented the Tanzania at regional and international distance education gatherings and participated in a National Fora on Distance Education. The association has also provided scholarships to individual members to undertake professional training in distance education and to organized professional development workshops and conferences in relevant areas. After supporting the formation of sister National Associations in Uganda and Kenya, in 2001, DEATA hosted a Regional Meeting in Dar es Salaam, which resulted in the formation of the Open Learning and Distance Education Association of Eastern Africa (OLDEA). Besides Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, other co-opted members are Malawi and Seychelles.

Research Activities

The Distance Education Association of Tanzania encourages institutions and individuals to engage in research in a coordinated way through conferences organized annually as well as workshops. To date, six conferences have been held within Tanzania. The 1st DEATA conference was held at Naura Springs Hotel, Arusha, TANZANIA, with a theme: *"The Role of ODL in National Development and Poverty Alleviation"*. This was followed by the 2nd DEATA conference that was held in Dar es salaam at MWINYI HALL, Open University of Tanzania on 23-24 August 2012. The theme of the 2nd DEATA conference was: *"Reaching All through Open and Distance Learning (ODL)"*. In the following year, in 2003, the 3rd conference was held at the Moshi University College of Cooperative and Business Studies (MUCCOBS) on 22-23 rd August with a theme: *"Blended Learning: Convergences Of Distance Learning And Conventional Learning"*. The 4th conference was held in Dar es salaam at the Open University of Tanzania on 22nd and 23rd October 2014 with the theme: *"Academic Integrity in Higher Education: Combating cheating, plagiarism, and Favoritism"*. This was followed by the 5th, which was also held in Dar es salaam at the ODL Tower, Open University of Tanzania, Kinondoni, Dar-es-Salaam on the 5-6th November, 2015. The theme of the 5th DEATA conference was: *"Openness In Learning and the Convergence of ODL and Conventional Face to Face Learning"*. This was followed by the 6th conference that was held at the University of Dodoma on the 8-10th March, 2017. This had a theme: *"Role of Distance Education in Socio-economic Development"*. All the conferences have been hosting over 100 participants from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Capacity Building

The goal of DEATA conferences is to encourage researchers, practitioners and graduate students to showcase and engage with innovative research projects in distance education and to promote networking and collaboration. In the conferences, researchers exchange knowledge and in each conference there is a slot for graduate students to present their researches and get feedback from the panel. Likewise, the

capacity of young scholars is built through the feedback of their research in the conference and networking. Through DEATA conferences, there is a long list of researchers that serves as a data base for mentorship and capacity building in different areas.

Partnership and Collaboration

DEATA, through representation of the country conferences has enhanced collaboration within the country, in Africa, South-South and North-South and participants have benefitted from best practices from one another.

Policy Development and Facilitation

DEATA members are aware that with the new training demands and new competitive challenges, more and more traditional universities are rapidly transforming from single mode to dual mode in the provision of education. Being a distance education association, in all its undertaking, DEATA is dedicated to researching on policy innovations in governance, openness in admissions, curricula, enrolment, classrooms, relevance and responsiveness to current realities in African and the globalized world.

Quality Promotion

As an educational association, DEATA members are aware that scientific research has become much more complex and institutions and individuals demand convincing evidence from research. In all the research activities, each paper is subjected to rigorous peer review before it gets published or disseminated.

New Innovations

In the recognition of the demand for innovative methodologies and programmes in the ODL system, DEATA has devised a way to encourage innovations in distance education. A decision has been made to institute an award for the best paper on innovation in Distance Education, as from 2018 annual Conference. Papers and show cases will be

reviewed and short listed through a committee, among which the best paper or show case will be awarded a certificate.

Challenges

As a non-profit making association with a mandate to raise funds, the current funding strategies are mainly institutional and individual membership subscriptions. The money generated through the membership contributions is inadequate to cover the expenses of conferences, to support the members to represent the association or to provide scholarships to the needy staff or students. Committee members work voluntarily, and use their own funds to represent the association. This situation compromises the effective quality assurance of DEATA activities; as well as outputs such as papers and policy briefs, which are time consuming and costly. The Open University of Tanzania has generously been in support of the association and often times, has used its funds to support staff and students to attend to the conferences.

Conclusion

DEATA has set itself ambitious but reachable goals to attain despite facing financial challenges. Key to successful of the association will be the ability to generate funds to finance its activities and to work together and provide mentorship to young scholars within and outside the country. Then certainly DEATA is set to become the powerhouse in ODL in Tanzania and East African region.