

COUNTRY REPORT – ZAMBIA

11/6/2017

Open and Distance Learning
Association of Zambia (ODLAZ)



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INTRODUCTION

The Government of Zambia has recognised the important role that Open and Distance education (ODL) is playing in human development, especially as regards the universal access to education and enhancement of instruction affordably, anywhere, anytime. As Zambia embarks on attaining vision 2030 which spells that Zambia must reach a middle income status by the year 2030, highly skilled human capital to transform the social, economic landscape necessary for poverty alleviation and enhancement of prosperity will be necessary. In the wake of the so many competing demands for the inadequate resource envelop for all sectors of national needs in Zambia, the Government is aiming at entrenching distance education as a medium of availing education and training to a greater number of the Zambian populace, especially those out of School. The Government has therefore included ODL in the development Plans and the education policies.

There is strong evidence that ODL is fast developing globally. Even industrialized countries and regions such as North America (USA and Canada) and Europe with well-developed educational infrastructure and services have invested heavily in ODL because of its significance in its contribution to meet educational demands.

For Zambia to fully tap the benefits of ODL, the country with the support of the Ministry of General Education established the **Open and Distance Learning Association of Zambia (ODLAZ)** about three years ago. This was done in order that we take a holistic approach in form of a national campaign that will enhance collaboration among all ODL players and stakeholders.

COMPELLING NEEDS AND BENEFITS

There are a number of compelling needs and benefits why Zambia needs to embrace and implement ODL without delay.

These include:

- Need to raise literacy levels;
- Address the inadequate physical learning infrastructure;
- Address the inadequate numbers of teaching and learning materials;
- Address the issue of outdated reference materials for teachers / learners;
- Maintain teacher availability in schools;
- Avail equal learning opportunities;
- Enhance effectiveness of outreach programmes;
- Promote staff retention in rural areas;
- Narrow the digital divide between the "have" and "have nots";

- Create a platform for promotion of Zambia's social / cultural interests,
- Promote collaborative R & D across sectors and institutions;
- Minimize the cost of education and training;
- and improve productivity and reduce of poverty.

After consideration of the global, regional and national state of affairs, and taking into account Zambia's aspirations promulgated in various documents such as Vision 2030. And in order for us to guide the development of ODL it was necessary to put in place an ODL policy and guidelines. In 2016 the stakeholders' meetings were called to develop the ODL guidelines that will be used to address the regulation and quality challenges in the provision of ODL.

DISTANCE LEARNING IN ZAMBIA (PHILOSOPHY)

Zambia utilizes ethical procedures in decision-making and provides a friendly, humanistic environment for the education system in the country. Traditional Face-to-Face and ODL modes will co-exist and support each other. The ODL system meets the needs of all learners regardless of challenges. The ODL in Zambia values and respects all players in the country; Access for all is a priority; Quality learner support service is a priority. The ODL strives to respond to the learning needs of industry and the community.

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA (ODLAZ)

Against the above overview the Directorate of Open and Distance Education in partnership with stakeholders and pursuant to its mandate established the Open and Distance Association of Zambia (ODLAZ) in August 2014.

Since 2014 the Association has continued to receive government support leading to its growth, drawing membership from Public and Private colleges and universities.

ODLAZ Founding Institutions

- Directorate of Open and Distance Education (DODE) under the Ministry of General Education
- The University of Zambia
- Zambian Open University
- Mulungushi University
- Chreso University
- Cavendish University
- Colleges of Education (Mufulira College of Education took a leading role)

Objectives

The objectives of the Association are:-

- (a) To promote professional and ethical standards in the provision of Open and Distance Learning;
- (b) To promote awareness of the importance of Open and Distance Learning in the nation and to convince the government and other interested parties to fund distance education programmes adequately;
- (c) To promote provision of quality Open and Distance Learning, its potentialities and achievements using various technologies and methodologies;
- (d) To promote and coordinate research and publications in methods of Open and Distance Learning (ODL);
- (e) To promote networking and partnerships among members, business houses and government in sharing ideas concerning the promotion of Open and Distance Learning.

The current members of ODLAZ executive committee are:

Position	Name & Institution
Patron	
President	Dr. Lawrence Mwelwa, Vice Chancellor Chreso University
Vice President	Prof. Sikwibele, Mulungushi University
Secretary	Mr. Kumwenda, Mufulira College of Education
Vice secretary	
Treasurer	
Committee Members	

COLLABORATIVE R & D ACROSS SECTORS AND INSTITUTIONS

The Association now offers the opportunity to both individuals and institutions to easily interact at local and international levels in areas of mutual interest and reduce the costly dangers of re-inventing the wheels of development in the area of Open and Distance Education.

The Association has been organizing National and as well as regional meetings, creating a platform for ODL players to collaborate and present research papers and findings.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

As ODLAZ positions itself to provide adequate ODL services to the public in the medium term, it must also look to the future and ensure that it is capable of providing the service in future years on sustainable basis. ODLAZ should be responsible for securing the future of ODL programmes initiated.

As reflected in various constraints in the document, public funding is critical to ODLAZ's ability to meet the current and future demands for ODL services. This will also contribute to ODLAZ's stated need to meet financial viability.