

**LEADERSHIP VACUUM IN THE APPLICATION OF ICTs IN  
LIFELONG LEARNING IN AFRICA**

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# 1. Background to Leadership Vacuum

- ICTS available particularly in urban areas in form of the cell phone, internet cafes etc: rural areas under supplied
- **Barriers:** Access, availability and non affordability/costs of this technology as a learning tool in ODL
  - Lack of literacy skills particularly in the application of online learning and use of computers
  - Lack of skilled capacity to teach via ICTs
  - Lack of infrastructure in rural areas
  - Failure by govts to integrate ICTs in the economy at the micro level
  - These technologies out of reach for the majority who live in rural areas
  - Fear of the unknown among Faculty members due to job security
  - Technophobia hinders many adults from embracing ICTs
  - Lack of role models and career advice (particularly in the case of women to embrace ICTs)
  - Lack of peer support networks and networks requiring training in self-esteem)

## **1.1. Lifelong Education Challenges**

- Need for professional to re-skill themselves
- Access to new information eg in agricultural innovations
- Swift technological changes that require citizens to be prepared for the world of work in and out of school

## 2. Policy Guidelines and Lifelong Learning

- **Disconnect** between physical access to technology eg computers and on the ground connectivity resulting to too little use of ICTs in teaching and learning
- Use of ICTs in course administration in ODL limited. Institutions still bring students together for orientation, to course pre-requisites assessment, tips on how to study
- Lack of national Policies to inform e-commerce, e-education, e-administration leaving Africa as a consumer but not a partner in this multi-national ICT business
- Some governments addressing this issue:
  - The Botswana ICT Policy (Maitlamo of 2005) promises to provide all citizens with easy access to the internet for small business, health, education through local community centres for information by 2016

## Policy guidelines conti...

- School curriculum developers are being encouraged to incorporate ICTS in the school curriculum
- Education Centres used by both Primary and Secondary school teachers being resourced for use by teachers
- Computer labs in secondary available and in progress in primary schools
- Internet availability still a challenge
- But Shortage of internet facilities limit access to information
- Lack of access to internet limits distance learners (in-service teachers) access to open source materials, quick update to study materials and administration of assignments-making tracking of assignments easier than it is now
- Use of Fax machines on feasible due to telephone costs
- Curriculum workloads make use of ICTs as a teaching innovation difficult (Richardson 2009)
- Low confidence by users to use internet technology even in companies where available (Nleya, 2009) due to lack of competency in the workforce

# Policies...

## **Kenya government: Kenya National ICT Policy: to integrate ICTs in education**

- Reduce Digital divide between rural and urban areas and lack of skills among teachers (Gakuu, 2009)
- Increase access to equipment
- Develop policy that requires schools to integrate ICTs in the curriculum and subsequently in teaching and learning
- 2009 Kenya Communications Amendment Act was enacted to facilitate wide access to broadcasting, multimedia and telecommunications and strengthen the use of media to stimulate socio-economic development.

### 3.Role of ICTs and MDGs

- **To realise these goals by 2015 Commonwealth govts need to:**
  - Connect people to create their own capacities at the local level
  - Wide sharing of information (economic/agricultural) if we are to reduce extreme poverty and hunger to improve farming, production & storage (radio and cell phone technology are critical in this areas)
  - Train large numbers of teachers to promote universal primary education and reduce gender disparities- Correspondence education cannot do this job adequately. Use of ICTs is inevitable
  - Train health personnel and primary health care givers in order to reduce child mortality rates and women at childbirth
- **\*This is a lifelong learning agenda that requires governments intervention through ICTs**



## 4. Capacity Building

- To promote lifelong learning governments need to encourage public and private higher education institutions and civic leaders to facilitate participation in lifelong learning
- Public institutions such as University of Nairobi,(Kenya) Open University of Tanzania, (Tanzania) Zimbabwe Open University (Zimbabwe) have started various courses via ICTs at the Diploma and Masters levels using **audio/video technologies**.
- Some governments eg in Kenya has provided leadership in the use of the potential of technologies such as **the World Space Satellite Radio** to reach pupils and teachers in rural schools
- The **African Virtual University (AVU)** with sites all over Africa is another initiative in lifelong learning via ICTs. Working with partners institutions the AVU is participating in **human resource development** in areas such as business administration and other disciplines via ICTs.
- These initiatives requires liaison with telecommunications for the development of the required infrastructure in a cost shared environment.

## 5. Mobile Phone Technology

- (The most common technology to both urban and rural population
- However Gakuu et. al. (2009) reports that **only 21 million out of 816 million** in Africa have access to the mobile phone. Majority of the 21 million are based in North Africa or South Africa.
- Indira Gandhi (IGNOU) open University in India uses cell phones to support distance learners by connecting learners with their tutors and with each other and for timely feedback.
- Makerere University Uganda is using SMS to communicate with learners in cooperation with a local provider, as it is more regular than general correspondence
- In Botswana distance learners informally use cell phones to get in touch with their tutors
- In Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania there are reports of the use of the cell phone to run small businesses such as hair salons
- Kenyanjui (2004) advocates e-schooling by African governments through the PEPAD initiative to reach the out of school youth and young adults.

## 6. Target Groups

- Teacher training and teacher upgrading for universal primary education
- Out of school youth in developing countries
- The girl child from poor families who drops out of school to supplement house income as a child minder
- *Self -employed **Jua kali (hot sun)** artisans in e.g welding, car repair*
- *Small scale businesses. Not many of these people are trained about how to run these businesses*
- *E-health to provide health care, already reported to be in practice in Nigeria*
- *E.commerce (networking small scale business people)*
- *Agriculture: Exchange of information about seeds, farming techniques etc*

## 7. Conclusion

- Need for committed leadership at the national and international Level.
- Negotiate cheaper tariffs with ICT multinationals to make ICTs available to a larger population than is the case at the moment
- Create visible partnership between government and non-governmental organisations
- Set up and implement ICT use enabling policies across all sectors of development
- Conduct more research to establish how the use of ICTs can be facilitated and enhanced in the rural areas.