
Building Capacity to Deliver Distance Education in Nigeria's Federal University System

REPORT PREPARED FOR THE WORLD BANK

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Acronyms Used

ABTU	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi
ABU	Ahmadu Bello University
CDLCE	Centre of Distance Learning and Continuing Education
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
DLI	Distance Learning Institute
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IP	Internet Protocol
NAERLS	National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services
NCE	National Council on Education
NCE	Nigeria Certificate in Education
NCNE	National Commission for Nomadic Education
NTCC	National Technical Consultative Committee
NTA	National Television Authority
NTI	National Teachers' Institute
NODEN	Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network
NUC	National Universities' Commission
NUSIP	Nigerian University System Innovation Project
TISEP	Teacher In-service Education Programme
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNILAG	University of Lagos
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WADEA	West African Distance Education Association

Executive Summary

Preamble

At the very beginning of the present Nigerian administration, the President announced that education would be the corner stone of his government. Following this declaration several workshops and seminars were organised in main areas of education. One such workshop was on distance education. The theme of the workshop was 'Towards Evolving a National Policy on Distance Education in Nigeria'. At the end of the workshop, a draft national policy was produced.

In line with the interest that the workshop generated, the World Bank sponsored Nigerian University System Innovation Project (NUSIP) included distance education as key component of the project. Subsequently, the World Bank – via COL International – appointed a South African consultant to produce a funding proposal for the distance education component of NUSIP. The National Universities' Commission (NUC) appointed a counterpart local consultant. The terms of reference and brief of the consultants cover mainly issues of both institutional and professional capacity development, including an analysis of quality tertiary level distance education expertise in Nigeria; assessment of institutional capacities for distance education; current levels of professional competence in distance education; identification of strategies for development distance education and recommendations for costs of, and cost-effectiveness in, developing and operating distance education at tertiary level in Nigeria. The time frame for the report was from early July to end of August

Initial Considerations and Activities

From the outset, we as the consultants felt that in order to meet the above terms of reference, we must:

- 1. Visit as many Nigerian Universities and institutions as possible. Since it is not feasible for us to visit all Nigerian Universities within the time given, we concluded the list and types of Universities to visit with NUSIP's Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the NUC. This list is shown as Annexure A*
- 2. Design a questionnaire that would elicit information from the Universities on availability and level of quality of staff, but which more importantly, would determine the level of interest in distance education within the Nigerian University system. We resorted to the use of the questionnaire because it would not be possible to identify and assess professional expertise within the time allowed. We designed the questionnaire, and made it available to the Project Implementation Unit. A copy of the Questionnaire is appended as Annexure B.*

Next we drew up framework and determined the modalities of our report. We agreed to produce joint report that would be drafted by the international consultant, with amendments and comments by the local consultant.

Current Distance Education Environment

We started our work at a time of great excitement and expectation about the potentials of distance education in Nigeria ensuing from the fallout of workshop mentioned earlier. The Federal Government has announced a firm intention to establish a dedicated Open University. Thus, it is not surprising that preliminary discussions with both the administrators at the Federal Ministry of Education and the NUC and with university academics revealed a strong – and growing – institutional commitment to distance education. Institutions have become aware of the potential for distance education. They appreciate that distance education would broaden their ability to make an educational impact and to expand the reach and scale of operations, with the possibilities of greater financial gains for their universities. However, in regards to government's objective to start an Open University, the perceptions and expectations about what could or should be done to vary from one institution and person to another.

Currently, the number of students that benefit from distance education is statistically very low as compared with those that attend conventional face-to-face university courses. Only two Universities (Abuja and Lagos) of the 30 federally owned Universities offer dedicated distance education courses at degree and sub-professional levels. Others like ABU and Ibadan provide extension and sub-professional courses in education, agriculture and health to meet local demands. ABU also makes extensive use of radio and television to reach farmers. All Universities provide in-service education in one form or the other. These are often described as distance education. Recently, many Universities operated "outreach centres" in many locations across the country, mainly for financial gains. These centres are not well coordinated and do not provide quality education. The Federal Government has moved in to limit their activities by laying stringent conditions on their operations.

Overview of Current Practices

There are currently three major kinds of institutional practice that are described as distance education in Nigeria. All but one exist in the federal university system:

1. 'Outreach' as Distance Education. A strong trend amongst universities has been to establish 'outreach' centres around the country, which have then generally been described as distance education centres. Such practices do not really fall within the broad ambit of distance education, as it is internationally understood. It is apparent that the quality of education offered through these centres is generally low and uncoordinated.
2. Dual-Mode Institutions. There are notable examples of distance education delivery forming part of a 'dual-mode' institution. Within this are varying degrees of formalization. For example, the Universities of Abuja and Lagos operate structured dual-mode distance education. In other examples – such as the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Ibadan – distance education practices are organized by a unit originally set up to provide education to working adults.

3. *Dedicated Distance Education Institution. The only current example of a dedicated distance education institution in Nigeria is the national Teachers' Institute (NTI), which falls outside of the University System. However, the establishment of an Open University is a key component of a renewed government commitment to developing distance education programmes at the tertiary level of education.*

Distance education has faced numerous challenges in implementation during its three-decade history. First, distance education provision constitutes a very small component of higher education provision within the Federal University System. Second, the two dual-mode institutions at Lagos and Abuja seem encumbered by existing university rules and traditions. Third, it appears that the main motivation for offering the variants of distance education described above is financial. Under such conditions, the quality and revaluation of distance education course materials and practices tend to stay static or decline over time.

Nevertheless, it is possible to extrapolate some general themes in assessing institutional capacity amongst current providers of distance education:

1. *A great benefit within the Nigerian Federal University System is the wealth of experience that has clearly built up amongst the primary providers of distance education programmes.*
2. *There is a strong tradition in Nigerian tertiary education of documenting theory and practice of distance education delivery.*
3. *In addition to strong central government commitment to distance education, there appears to be strong – and growing – institutional commitment to this mode of delivery. There are four, reasons for this:*
 - *Institutions see potential for it to expand their reach and scale of operations.*
 - *They regard distance education programmes as a strategy to absorb large numbers of students who cannot currently be placed in face-to-face programmes.*
 - *They see it as a means to provide education to working students.*
 - *They see it as an opportunity to generate income.*
4. *Distance educators readily identify problems in provision of telecommunications, electricity, and postal services as impediments to their work. Problems with delivery of national infrastructure continue to affect delivery of distance education, but this problem is not necessarily debilitating. Better coordination of institutional efforts to overcome these problems would be likely to lead to significant savings over time and ensure that distance education delivery was not unduly affected by national infrastructural limitations.*
5. *A key gap in distance education provision in Nigerian tertiary education is the application of traditional distance education economies, the economies of scale.*

In the main, distance education units are characterized by an over-abundance of course options and under-supply of students.

6. *Distance education delivery tends to be located within the systems and operations of predominantly face-to-face institutions. This has several implications:*
 - *Distance education tends to be regarded as a second-best option.*
 - *In the main, distance education programmes are required to generate their own income.*
 - *Finances tend to be managed by the central institutional administration, which effectively breaks the link between educational programmes' ability to generate income and their ability to invest in themselves or new distance education offerings.*
 - *Distance education units tend to rely heavily on writers who are already employed as full-time lecturers.*

Location of distance education facilities within the face-to-face tertiary institutions has relegated distance education to being regarded as what we might term the 'poor brother' of face-to-face education provision.

7. *There are problems regarding integration of new knowledge into academic courses and programmes. This challenge has two dimensions:*
 - *Disciplinary knowledge is often regarded as a static 'canon', thus not requiring ongoing adaptation and updating.*
 - *There is much evidence of outdated educational practices.*
8. *There has been an ongoing tradition of developing distance education materials at the tertiary level. Although much good work has been done, there is scope for substantial improvements in preparation of materials specifically for use in distance education programmes, for example through:*
 - *Integration of instructional design into the preparation of distance education course materials.*
 - *Use of computers to support development of materials.*
 - *Focus on layout of materials for distance education use.*
9. *There is general awareness of the need to decentralize learner support systems, but providers have typically set such networks up and then found them too expensive to maintain. In most cases, this network of centres has not been abandoned, but reduced in scale and scope to focus only on the logistical functions of student registration and distribution of course materials.*
10. *Administration of distance education programmes generally appeared to be functioning relatively efficiently. However, these systems have not yet been 'put through their paces', because most programmes have not yet gone to scale. This suggests that, if any significant expansion of distance education delivery is to be*

possible, investments in building robust administrative systems for distance education, and the skills to run these systems, will be a priority.

11. *Individual providers tend predominantly still to operate in isolation from one another.*

Challenges

The high hopes and enormous enthusiasm for distance education mentioned above are tempered by the realisation that Nigeria faces serious challenges if it is to fulfil the desire to establish an Open University. Almost everyone we met is concerned about the inadequacy (even outright absence) of essential services and infrastructure. Obviously, electricity, telecommunications and postal services must be developed to levels that could support the declared scale of the new Open University.

Possibly, the most serious challenge facing distance education at this level is the need for the integration of new knowledge into academic courses and programmes. This state of affairs grew mainly from the political isolation that Nigeria experienced during the military eras. Nigeria's professionals were not able to benefit from international assistance or from courses, conferences and seminars abroad. This denial of assistance and interaction has adverse consequences, both on the psyche of faculty and on the development of infrastructure necessary for professional development. In particular, we noted the following areas of concern that should be addressed urgently:

1. *The regard of knowledge as static 'canon': Many academics in Nigerian universities still use outmoded concepts and practices. Some reference materials used for course development often date back to before 1920.*
2. *Outdated educational practices: Our review of distance education texts of courses also reveals a common pedagogical attitude that knowledge comprises 'facts' that need to be communicated to and retained by students.*

These challenges must be faced and resolved if the plan to establish an Open University is to succeed.

Encouraging Aspects and Strengths

In spite of the many difficult challenges facing Nigeria's education system, we are very encouraged by some features and potentials of distance education techniques and practices. We observed for example that:

There is an ongoing tradition developing distance education materials at tertiary level, and we noted that academics in Nigeria are ready to make their work openly available, even to the scrutiny of their peers. Unlike their counterparts elsewhere, Nigeria's distance education authors do not insist on copyright for the materials and resources they have developed. Typically, course writers are commissioned and paid for their services, after which the institutions that hired them retain the copyright.

The expertise and interest in distance education administration, course writing and delivery systems offer great hopes for future development of distance education. Another positive feature is the know-how gained by providing distance education learner support to thousands of students. Although this aspect would need improvements, the level of Nigerian experience and competence is substantial and significant.

Strategies for Capacity Building

The visits and discussions we held with all stakeholders on this exercise has given us reasonable leads on some strategies that could be adopted. First and foremost is the need to sensitise administrators and decision-makers about current modes of distance education provision, about the need for planning and management - especially financial planning and management - and about the issues and dimensions for learner participation and support. At professional levels, existing interests and skills can form the basis for future development and growth.

We also believe that every effort should be made to expand and improve existing institutional framework; to encourage sharing and cooperation between them and to install and upgrade the of quality services and infrastructure. An obvious strategy is to apply information and communications technologies to support all aspects of any anticipated distance education initiative.

Proposed Projects

Based on the above analysis, we believe that the following project proposals constitute the most appropriate starting points for developing technical and professional capacity within the Federal University System to support implementation of distance education:

1. Strategies to raise awareness about distance education

These will comprise:

- Preparation and distribution of resource packs on the promise and challenges of distance education delivery.*
- Three workshops to raise awareness about the range of issues to consider in delivering distance education programmes. The first will allow Vice-Chancellors, senior Ministry officials, and senior management of NUC to share ideas with high-profile leaders of international distance education institutions. The second will be aimed at senior management within interested universities, while the third will be organized for university academics (with a particular focus on those faculties and schools most likely to participate in distance education provision).*

2. Delivery of intensive professional development courses for selected professionals

This project will involve implementation of three, tailor-made professional development courses for selected people from Federal Universities. These interventions will focus respectively on:

- *Management and financial planning of distance education programmes;*
- *Course materials design and development; and*
- *Supporting learners in distance education programmes.*

3. *Enrolments of selected academics in Distance Education Master's Degree programmes (offered at a distance)*

This project will lead to enrolment of at least 50 participants in international Master's Degree programmes, building on the courses provided in project two.

4. *Targeted support of new distance education programmes*

This project will lead to the creation of proposals for at least two new distance education programmes intended to model best distance education practice. From the perspective of this consultancy, each programme will be the subject of intensive capacity development support in order to create an 'incubation' system for development of necessary professional and technical capacity.

5. *Targeted investment in the development of administrative systems*

This project will see creation and installation of software to administer distance education programmes effectively, taking specific account of the need for administrative flexibility required by delivery of such programmes. The project will be run as an extension of project 4.

6. *Modelling of effective use of ICTs to support course materials design and development*

This project will see implementation of a comprehensive strategy to support distance education course materials design and development by using ICTs more effectively. The project will be run as an extension of project 4.

7. *Building the Capacity of the Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network*

This project will encourage the development of the Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network (NODEN) as a professional association of organizations and individuals involved in the delivery of distance education programmes. This will be integrated with the above projects – particularly projects one to three – using NODEN as a structure for bringing people together, but will also make small investments in NODEN's ability to function effectively as an Association.

Project Components

We subdivide and provide extensive details for each of the projects mentioned above, under the following headings:

- 1. Project Rationale*
- 2. Description of Project*
- 3. Implementation Plan*
- 4. Project Budgets*

Appreciation

We would like at this stage to express our appreciation to the World Bank and the NUC for trusting us with this very exciting, though rather tasking assignment. We particularly value the counsel of Mr. William Saint of the World Bank and Mr. Patrick Julien of COL International. Both current and outgoing Executive Secretaries of NUC have given us full support and cooperation, and their staff at NUC have been very helpful even though their organisation was undergoing a change in leadership. We also owe our thanks to the Vice Chancellors and their staff for readily agreeing to meet us even though the notices of our arrival were very short.

Neil Butcher & Hafiz S. Wali

31 August 2001.

Introduction

Government's intention to develop distance education in Nigeria led the Special Adviser on Education and the Federal Ministry of Education to organize a workshop on distance education at the ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja from 27th to 29th September 2000. The theme of the workshop was 'Towards Evolving a National Policy on Distance Education in Nigeria'. In line with the theme of the workshop, a draft national policy evolved at the end of the workshop.

Distance education, because of its rising importance in educational development, is one of the areas that will be covered by the World Bank sponsored Nigerian University System Innovation Project (NUSIP). In the light of this, a South African consultant was appointed – via COL International – by the World Bank to produce a funding proposal for the Distance Education Component of NUSIP. A counterpart local consultant was appointed by the National Universities' Commission (NUC). Together, the consultants were expected to produce a report that would fulfil the following terms of reference:

- a. Assess current levels of professional competence in distance education in Nigerian federal universities and identify existing concentrations of expertise.
- b. Outline various options by which the federal universities system could develop the technical and professional capacities that it will need in order to design, launch and manage tertiary distance education programmes.
- c. Recommend the most cost-effective approach to creating national capacities for tertiary distance education in Nigeria.

This report presents the findings of the consultants.

CONSULTANCY APPROACH

The local and international consultants were each supplied identical terms of reference, and thus agreed to submit a consolidated report containing the results of our work.

The consultancy began with identification of appropriate institutions to visit. Given that the consultancy was limited to three working weeks in Nigeria, it was not possible to visit all institutions. Thus, we made a preliminary selection based on the local consultant's knowledge of the sector and particularly of current distance education practices. The local consultant discussed the list of selected institutions with the National Universities Commission (NUC), and we made modifications based on their input.

Next, we prepared a questionnaire designed to elicit the views of all institutions on various aspects of capacity building for distance education. We requested NUC to send the questionnaire (attached as Annexure B) to Universities, and NUC undertook responsibility for circulating it and receiving returned copies. We delivered the questionnaire to the NUC by the beginning of July. However, no responses had been returned by the time we began report-writing in early

August. We remain convinced, though, that the questions contained in that instrument are important, and that there is still value in collating responses to it.

We started meetings with institutions between the 6th and 15th July, the dates of the international consultant's first trip to Nigeria. Reports of these meetings are contained in Annexure A. In addition to visiting institutions and other national structures, we had opportunities to meet key players in the national Planning Committee on Distance Education and Open Learning (including its head, Prof. Olugbemire Jegede, who currently heads the Centre for Research in Adult and Distance Learning at the Open University of Hong Kong, but happened to be in Nigeria at the time). We also spent some time with a delegation of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), which was on a mission to Nigeria to support developments in distance education initiatives.

Before completing the first cycle of meetings, we drew up a schedule for a second series of visits, which commenced when the international consultant returned to Nigeria between 30th July and 12th August. Our schedule was submitted to and approved by the NUC. The second trip was a continuation of the first series of visits to tertiary institutions.

As we were about to embark on the second phase of our work, a change of leadership of the NUC was announced, and a new NUC Executive Secretary was appointed. This development raised concerns about the future or nature of the consultancy. However, the local consultant obtained NUC's assurances that no changes were envisaged.

We were able to arrange meetings with the NUC senior staff members charged with responsibility of monitoring the NUSIP distance education project. We also met the local representative of the Planning Committee on Distance Education and Open Learning, Prof. Aminu Dorayi. Finally, we had opportunities to share and shape ideas with the World Bank NUSIP project delegation, which was in Nigeria at this time.

THE CURRENT POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The policy environment within which distance education operates in Nigeria is currently in a state of flux. When the concept for this consultancy project was established, distance education was a relatively low policy priority in Nigeria. However, this changed after a national workshop on distance education was held in September 2000 at the ECOWAS Secretariat. This workshop saw the development of a plan for a decade of distance education, with the following objectives:

1. Enactment of a National Policy on Distance Education (as a component of the National Policy on Education) to provide the policy framework for the operation of the distance education delivery system in Nigeria.
2. Establishment of a solid institutional framework for distance education in Nigeria following carefully conducted needs-assessment studies.
3. Establishment of distance education as a core component of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme to jump-start the UBE delivery process
4. Support of UBE (including the non-formal and nomadic education components) to achieve (a) 100% primary and junior secondary Net Enrolment Ratio; and (b) 100% adult literacy rate.

5. Reopening of the National Open University to address access and equity issues in higher education.
6. Provision of higher education to a minimum of one million qualified candidates through the distance and open learning modes involving public and private sector participation, in areas of high manpower needs.
7. Establishment of a National Open School (secondary) to address access and equity issues in secondary education.
8. Provision of secondary education to five million out-of-school youth and adults through the National Open School.
9. Capacity building (training) of 20, 000 distance education operators including course writers, support service providers, producers, managers, broadcasters, instructional designers and technicians.
10. Establishment of a virile ICT-driven distance education delivery system.¹

The full plan developed is attached as Annexure C.

After the September 2000 workshop, a technical committee on distance education was set up under Prof. Jegede, of which Prof. Dorayi is the local convener until Prof. Jegede's assumption of duty. The NUC and university community, though also very keen on distance education, seem to have different perceptions about the directions the course any such programme would pursue. While we do not assume particular insights into any challenges that Nigeria faces in this respect, we hope that our report will add to the process of shaping meaningful policy directions for distance education in Nigeria.

The approach that we felt would be most helpful was to develop proposals that will remain valid regardless of ultimate policy directions and projects that the Federal Government of Nigeria adopts. The emphasis in our terms of reference on capacity building will, we hope, add value to the Nigerian Federal University System whichever route Nigeria finally decides is most relevant for distance education in the country.

¹ Federal Ministry of Education. [2000] *Education Today: Quarterly Journal of the Federal Ministry of Education*. Vol. 8, No. 3. p. 59.

Chapter One: Distance Education in Nigeria

BRIEF HISTORY OF TERTIARY DISTANCE EDUCATION

As a review of their aims and objectives illustrates, all first generation universities in Nigeria (University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University [ABU], University of Nigeria Nsukka, and the University of Lagos [UNILAG]) were required to attend to the tertiary education needs of the population, especially within their respective 'catchment' areas. Since the Nigerian population was, and still is, mainly rural and agricultural, extension courses were to provide farmers new skills to introduce them new methods. ABU and the University of Ibadan were early providers of such extension services (early to mid 1960s). However, the clientele of the University of Lagos was urban, and extension courses there were geared towards the attainment of university and professional courses. That University's Distance Learning Institute (described in Annexure A) is an outgrowth of earlier programmes supported variously and at different time by the International Extension College in London, the Ford Foundation, UNESCO, and other donors. Currently and as a part the University's entrepreneurial thrust, distance education courses contribute significantly to UNILAG's resources.

At ABU, the need to upgrade teachers' qualifications and skills became a prime objective since, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was obvious that the northern part of Nigeria was lagging far behind the rest of Nigeria in this area. Thus, ABU's Institute of Education introduced the Teacher In-service Education Programme (TISEP) to raise the quantity and quality of teachers in Northern Nigeria. At the end of TISEP studies, candidates sat for Grade III or Grade II Teachers Certificate. Later, when the National Council of Education ruled the National Certificate of Education (NCE) to be the minimum qualification for teaching at primary level, the Institute started the NCE by correspondence programme.

When in 1974, the then Head of State (Yakubu Gowon) announced Government's intention to introduce Universal Primary Education by 1976, it was clear that there was insufficient time to produce the estimated number of teachers to cope with demands of the programme. Distance education was considered the best means of supplying the required number of teachers. Simultaneously, in the early 1970s to mid 1980s, distance education was gaining currency internationally as a viable strategy for delivering large-scale educational opportunity. In many countries, especially developing ones, it was seen as a panacea to the challenge of providing education at affordable costs. In Nigeria, this led to the establishment of the National Teachers Institute (NTI).

The NTI was the first institution specifically established by Federal Government to provide distance education courses designed to upgrade under-qualified and unqualified teachers. In line with the minimum qualification directive mentioned above, NTI also introduced the NCE by distance learning in 1990. A more detailed report on NTI is provided in Annexure A.

Another historical step in Nigerian distance education was the initiative of the civilian government of Shehu Shagari to establish an Open University, which was to be based in Abuja. However, for various reasons and considerations, the scheme was scrapped by the following military regime, headed by General Buhari. His Government favoured a dual-mode set-up at the University of Abuja. The Centre for Distance Learning and Continuing Education (CDLCE) was mandated to provide a distance education component for every course that the University of Abuja would provide. However, it was not possible to meet this mandate.

It is pertinent to state here that, despite enthusiasm for distance education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, some uncertainties remain about the type, scope, and nature of distance education provision in Nigeria. The respective roles of Government, the NUC, and of individual universities remain unresolved. We feel that the success of any programme will, to a large extent, depend on how the various experiences of institutions are shared, modified, and integrated. Thus, we turn our attention briefly to what our research has revealed in these regards.

CURRENT DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVISION

INSTITUTIONAL MODELS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION DELIVERY

There are currently three major kinds of institutional practice that are described as distance education in Nigeria. All but one exist in the Nigerian university system.

'Outreach' as Distance Education

A strong trend amongst universities has been to establish 'outreach' centres around the country, which have then generally been described as distance education centres. These centres have often been established in towns that are far away from central campuses. The predominant practice is to sub-contract local tutors on local versions of university programmes. The tutors arrange face-to-face lectures, and provide for assessment of learners. Successful students are then awarded university qualifications. The main motivation behind establishing such centres appears to have been to generate income for the university.

Such practices do not really fall within the broad ambit of distance education, as it is internationally understood. It is apparent that the quality of education offered through these centres is generally low and uncoordinated, and therefore a serious concern. As a consequence, the Federal Government has moved to limit the activities of outreach centres by restricting any centres to within 200 kilometres from a central campus. Nigerian universities are also prohibited from setting up outreach centres in a town or city where another federal or state university operates.

Dual-Mode Institutions

There are notable examples of distance education delivery forming part of a 'dual-mode' institution. Within this are varying degrees of formalization. For example, the Universities of Abuja and Lagos operate structured dual-mode distance education. At Abuja, the Centre for Distance Learning and Adult Education is situated in the middle of the city in a rather cramped

facility that is over 60 kilometres from the main campus at Gwagwalada. Despite this separation from the University, the administration of the centre is closely tied to the office of the Vice-Chancellor. The Lagos Distance Learning Institute is more fortunate in that it operates within the main campus of the University. Both Universities have a centre for distance education that is an integrated part of the administrative structure of their respective Universities. The two operate, however, with a reasonable degree of autonomy.

As dual-mode establishments, both face the standard operational challenges of any distance education enterprise operating within a conventional face-to-face university environment. In other examples – such as the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Ibadan – distance education practices are organized by a unit originally set up to provide education to working adults. In this instance, the primary driving logic behind the Centre was to extend educational opportunities to this group rather than specifically to create and operate distance education programmes. Use of distance education has developed from this imperative.

Dedicated Distance Education Institution

The only current example of a dedicated distance education institution in Nigeria is the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), which falls outside of the University System. Its entire institutional goals and infrastructure has been built up expressly to support delivery of distance education programmes to improve and upgrade the quality of the nation's teaching force. More information about the NTI is provided in Annexure A.

The civilian government of Shehu Shagari passed a bill to establish a national, dedicated distance education University at Abuja, but this initiative was halted when government support for the initiative was withdrawn during the Buhari government. However, as time went by, it became increasingly obvious that the country lacks the human, infrastructural, and financial capacities to cope with demands for higher education created by Universal Primary Education. Currently, according to the Minister of Education, over 700,000 candidates qualified for University entrance in 1999, but only 80,000 ultimately gained admission². The establishment of an Open University is a key component of a renewed government commitment to developing distance education programmes at the tertiary level of education. There are similar proposals to establish an Open School and an Open Polytechnic at lower educational levels.

FEATURES OF CURRENT DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVISION

Distance education has faced numerous challenges in implementation during its three-decade history. First, although time constraints and lack of ready statistics have prevented us from providing detailed quantitative analysis of the system, it is obvious that distance education provision constitutes a very small component of higher education provision within the Nigerian University System. Second, the two dual-mode institutions at Lagos and Abuja seem encumbered by existing university rules and traditions. Third, it appears that the main motivation for offering the variants of distance education described above is financial. Under such conditions, the quality and revaluation of distance education course materials and practices tend to stay static or decline over time.

² Address to Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Education Tax Fund (ETF) on the 9th August 2001

It is possible to extrapolate some general themes in assessing institutional capacity amongst current providers of distance education. Embedded in these characteristics are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Rather than seeking to categorize these simplistically, we have chosen to present a single, integrated analysis of current distance education provision.

The Strength of Experience

A great benefit within the Nigerian University System is the wealth of experience that has clearly built up amongst the primary providers of distance education programmes. This wealth of experience provides an excellent platform for development and delivery of new programmes because the lessons learned can assist in determining what paths are suitable and what pitfalls should be avoided. Some of these lessons are articulated in this section of the report.

We stress that these lessons should serve as starting points for future delivery of distance education, rather than simply being regarded as problems of the system. Past mistakes often provide the best mechanisms for avoiding future ones. The depth of experience, as well as the difficulties and mistakes already well understood by current providers of distance education programmes in Nigeria, should be taken into account when the country reassesses its future in distance education.

Documentation of Theory and Practice

Linked to the above point is a strong tradition in Nigerian tertiary education of documenting theory and practice of distance education delivery. In all instances where we visited institutions, documentation about programmes and institutions was readily available, and this tended to progress beyond simple description of practice into some analysis of problems encountered and, in several instances, into plans for future developments. Similarly, we were provided copies of different collections of distance education readings, often with unique Nigerian focuses (such as a collection of articles on distance education and nomadic education). This tradition stands distance education in good stead. The key challenges here will be to ensure that such documentation and literature is infused with new ideas (see section on ‘Integration of New Knowledge’ below) and that circulation of such resources is broadened.

Commitment to Distance Education

In addition to strong central government commitment to distance education (discussed in our earlier analysis of the policy environment), there appears to be strong – and growing – institutional commitment to distance education, whether or not these institutions have a history of distance education delivery. Institutional representatives articulated four, linked reasons for this:

1. Institutions see potential for distance education to extend their ability to make an educational impact on their communities by expanding their reach and scale of operations.
2. They also regard distance education programmes as strategies to absorb the large numbers of students who cannot currently be placed in face-to-face programmes, as well as some of those currently using facilities on central campuses (because of high levels of demand, universities in Nigeria are all typically enrolling more students than their physical facilities and human resources can handle).

3. They see distance education as a means to provide education to working students, who would not be able to attend full-time, face-to-face education.
4. Finally, they see this as an opportunity to generate much-needed income for institutions. This imperative has grown in importance since it became necessary for federal universities to generate 10% of their income themselves.

All institutions we visited noted their strong interest in distance education, invoking one or more of the above reasons as motivation for their interest.

National Infrastructure

Limitations of national infrastructure are well known in Nigeria, with distance educators readily identifying problems in provision of telecommunications, electricity, and postal services as impediments to their work. The latter is probably the most directly relevant to distance education in the country, as all providers we interviewed have had to set up their own materials distribution systems independent of the national postal service (although there are some recent reports of improvements in this service). Fortunately, Nigeria boasts a significantly better road system than most other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the benefits of cheap oil, thus making it easier for institutions to maintain such systems. However, in a country the size of Nigeria, maintaining a dedicated 'postal service' as part of a distance education provider is a significant additional expense, and one that all providers are currently maintaining independent of other providers.

Despite national infrastructure problems mentioned by most providers, it is probably worth noting that Nigeria's national infrastructure is reasonably robust relative to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa and has great potential for further development. This potential does at least provide a basic platform for running distance education programmes. If better coordination of distribution of materials could be achieved, even problems in postal services would not be a major drain on resources. Importantly, many institutions (the computer centre at the University of Jos is a good example) have developed innovative strategies to reduce dependence on national telecommunications and electrification provision for their mission-critical operations.

In summary, problems with delivery of national infrastructure continue to affect delivery of distance education, but this problem is not necessarily debilitating. Better coordination of institutional efforts to overcome these problems would be likely to lead to significant savings over time and ensure that distance education delivery was not unduly affected by national infrastructural limitations.

Limited Application of the Economics of Distance Education

A key gap in distance education provision in Nigerian tertiary education is the application of traditional distance education economies, the economies of scale. The only distance education programmes with a history of large-scale enrolment is the NTI, which currently falls outside of the University System. Although there are exceptions, in the main, distance education units are characterized by an over-abundance of course options and under-supply of students. In some instances, this extends to the range of programmes on offer, but in most it is limited to the range of course options offered within programmes. Thus, even where programme enrolments extend beyond 1,000 students, these cohorts still tend to be split across too many individual courses to achieve even modest economies of scale. The result is that many courses have very low student

enrolments, which prevents effective ongoing investment in course design and development, learner support and development of administrative systems. Under these circumstances, there is little evidence internationally that distance education becomes more cost-effective than face-to-face education. There is also evidence that many courses currently being offered via distance education are not actually enrolling any students, adding to wastage within the system.

Another lesson emerging from international experience of distance education delivery is that distance education institutions *can* be more cost-effective³ than conventional institutions when they offer high quality learning materials and tutorial support for students, thereby securing satisfactory retention and graduation rates. Conversely, if they do not achieve satisfactory retention and graduation rates they may well be much more expensive. Distance education provision in Nigeria faces serious challenges in both of these areas of investment, which are explored in more detail below. Here, though, it is worth noting that there appears to be little in-house auditing of the profitability or financial sustainability of individual courses and programmes. Such auditing might contribute significantly to improving the quality of distance education by helping to identify and reduce areas of inefficiency.

Location of Distance Education within Dual-Mode Institutions

A key characteristic of delivery of distance education within the University System is the location of such delivery within the systems and operations of predominantly face-to-face institutions of higher education. This has several implications:

1. *Distance education tends to be regarded as a second-best option*, open to those who, for whatever reasons, cannot enrol in face-to-face tuition. This feeling of inadequacy surfaced regularly during interviews. One of the key reasons cited for interest in distance education was to absorb those students who could not be accommodated in the face-to-face system (in other words, those who did not make the cut). It was also clear that a key rationale for distance education was to raise money for the University – moneys that are not always re-channelled to support distance education. This has implications for management of finances, which we describe in more detail in point two below.
2. *A need to generate income*. Another outcome of the location of distance education within predominantly face-to-face institutions has been a requirement, in the main, that distance education programmes generate their own income. This has meant that, from the perspective of learners, such provision carries a relatively high price tag (although often still lower than contact education). This does, though, introduce the advantage that the Nigerian education market is by now educated in its understanding of the need to pay for distance education. With better coordination of distance education provision and application of some of the lessons of good education practice internationally, this stands distance education in good stead to become sustainable in the long-term. However, if it becomes the predominant logic behind distance education programmes, this could potentially be at the expense of quality.

³ Cost-effectiveness is used here as a term distinct from cost-efficiency. As used here, the latter is about 'cheapness' of educational provision – usually expressed in terms of per-student costs – while the former represents striking the optimal balance between cost, student numbers, and educational quality, a balance which will be entirely different for different educational contexts. There is no magical formula that leads to cost-effective education; rather, cost-effectiveness needs to be measured on an ongoing basis in relation to changing contextual requirements.

3. *Finances tend to be managed by the central institutional administration.* This poses a serious problem, as it effectively breaks the link between educational programmes' ability to generate income and their ability to invest in themselves or new distance education interventions. In instances where we discussed finances with directors of distance education units, there seemed to be no correlation between the income generated by distance education programmes and the income they received from university finance departments. This severely limits the quality and growth potential of distance education provision. It also emerged as a theme that several institutions not currently providing distance education programmes are interested – at least in part – in such provision because of its potential to generate income. Of course, there is no problem with this *per se*, but it does become a problem when this income is used to subsidize other perhaps unsustainable elements of an institution. This can undermine the quality and sustainability of the distance education programmes themselves.
4. *Distance education units tend to rely heavily on writers who are already employed as full-time lecturers.* As individual institutional reports illustrate, development of materials for distance education provision relies predominantly on course writers who are already employed on a full-time basis as academic staff in face-to-face institutional settings. This does have advantages, most obviously in that it allows distance education programmes to work directly with content experts. Such experts cannot therefore reject the course as being below standard. It also means that the university would not pay heavily for the services of external course writers. However, it does mean that writing of distance education materials competes with several other priorities in the lives of academics, and undermines the ability of these academics to meet deadlines. This then translates into inability of distance education providers to enforce deadlines in delivery of materials. Moreover, using in-house academics means that distance education providers are forced to rely heavily on materials writers who have not been comprehensively trained in development of distance education course materials.

Predominantly, then, location of distance education facilities within the face-to-face tertiary institutions has relegated distance education to being regarded as what we might term the 'poor brother' of face-to-face education provision. Future capacity-building strategies will need to tackle this challenge head on.

Integration of New Knowledge

Possibly the most serious challenge facing distance education provision in Nigeria is not unique to distance education. This pertains to the integration of new knowledge into academic courses and programmes. A direct effect of Nigeria's political isolation during military regimes was that Nigeria's professionals were not able to benefit from international assistance or from courses, conferences and seminars that were organized to enhance competence and imbibe new pedagogic cultures. This challenge has two dimensions:

1. *Disciplinary knowledge as a static 'canon'.* This problem permeates most of the distance education course materials we were provided by universities we visited. It is apparent that content often tended not to reflect engagement with current theories, concepts, and practices.

As a simple example, a third-year level course book on *Modern Principles and Techniques of Management* first published in 2000 contained 58 academic references. Of these, only two references were to texts later than 1990 (1990 and 1991 respectively). Of the rest, nine were references to texts published before 1920. No doubt Nigeria's international isolation during its years of military leadership has contributed to this problem (in similar ways possibly to the academic boycott of South Africa during apartheid), as have more recent limitations in library facilities and Internet access. However, historical lack of political commitment to education, coupled with economic mismanagement, has also apparently been important in creating this problem. Regardless, the problem appears to have permeated institutional culture to a degree, being reflected in a tendency to regard knowledge as static and thus not requiring ongoing adaptation and updating. This requires urgent attention, both in terms of knowledge about distance education methodologies and in the content that permeates many distance education course materials.

2. *Outdated educational practices.* Even brief review of the texts of distance education courses reveals an urgent need to expose some academics within the Nigerian University System to a wider range of educational principles and practices. This is linked to the above problems, as most materials we were provided reflected a pedagogical belief that knowledge is comprised predominantly of a series of 'facts' that need to be communicated to and retained by students, mostly in preparation for examinations in which these 'facts' are re-presented back to lecturers by students. This pedagogical approach was reflected in presentation of argument and opinion as 'fact' and in the predominance of self-assessment activities that required nothing more from students – even at third- and fourth-year levels – than to summarize sections of text to test their comprehension. There is a strong tendency to regard students as passive recipients of information rather than as active participants in an educational process. Again, this problem needs to be engaged as part of any meaningful capacity-building exercises.

The Tradition and Challenges of Materials Development

There has been an ongoing tradition of developing distance education materials at the tertiary level, as our visits to dual-mode institutions confirmed. Although there have been problems associated with this (discussed further below), it does hold two particular benefits. First, in many academic systems, the process of committing academic offerings (particularly lecture notes) to paper is seldom done, as it opens this work to easy scrutiny by peers. Second, many academics around the world, where they do develop resources to support course delivery, are very reluctant to cede the copyright to this to a central publishing entity within the university. Fortunately, this tradition of developing distance education materials in some Nigerian universities has served to overcome these two problems.

Distance education materials development tends to follow a similar process from institution to institution:

- A course writer, a content expert in the subject for which materials are being written, develops materials (each course is usually broken down into modules or units). In many instances, the preferred strategy for such work is to bring several writers together for 'writing workshops', at which they are provided some basic training and then provided

accommodation to complete as much writing of a module as they can within these timeframes (typically one or two weeks).

- Another content expert – usually a senior academic in the same department as the author – then reviews these materials, following which revisions to the original are made. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure the quality and standard of materials.
- Once the text is finalized, it is sent to a copy editor for editing (although, in some cases, some copy editing is undertaken during the review process). Where necessary, a language editor also reviews the materials.
- At this point, the distance education unit will take over the manuscript, in order to apply common styles and layout templates to the materials and add any graphics required.
- When this is complete, the materials are prepared for publication.

In the majority of cases, use of computers is limited to typing support by the distance education unit itself. This means that periods of authoring and review are often done by hand, adding substantially to the cost and duration of the process.

Materials development for distance education programmes in Nigeria is hampered by the problems we outlined under ‘Integration of New Knowledge’ above. These problems are raised because we feel that strategies to improve the quality of distance education materials need to be aware of and tackle these more general educational problems, rather than simply training people in techniques of writing distance education materials. We also feel that tackling the issues we raised will help materials developers to widen their skills, integrate new knowledge into their presentation of courses, and grapple with challenges posed by ongoing developments in educational principles and practices internationally.

In addition to the above, there is scope for substantial improvement in preparation of materials specifically for use in distance education programmes. Areas in which potential for enhancement was most notable are:

1. Integration of instructional design into the preparation of distance education course materials. None of the materials development processes we documented made any specific reference to the need for instructional design to be integrated into design of distance education course materials. The assumption seemed to be that course writers would provide these skills, even though for many this is clearly not an area of expertise (nor should it be). Most distance education course materials development processes internationally now prefer to split these functions, in order to allow the content expert to focus specifically on his or her role in generating quality content.
2. Use of computers to support development of materials. A key challenge facing materials developers is that materials still rely heavily on handwriting of materials and capture of materials into digital format by specialist typists. Obviously, improvements in computer infrastructure within federal universities fall outside of the brief of distance education capacity-building per se, but it is worth noting that such investments carry strong financial logic, as current materials development strategies significantly increase the time on task for all involved.
3. Focus on layout of materials for distance education use. There was very little evidence in most examples of materials we were supplied of layout paying particular attention to the

requirements of studying at a distance. This might range from simple techniques such as allowing space in layout for students to write in course guides through to more complex layout considerations such as the relationship in design terms between activities and the rest of the text. There was also little use of referencing techniques such as icons, in-text learner support, and introductory overviews of how best to approach studying independently.

Learner Support Systems

Most distance education providers in Nigeria have appreciated the importance of supplementing course materials with face-to-face educational support. There is also general awareness of the need to de-centralize such support systems, taking this level of support to learners rather than expecting them to come to a central campus. Unfortunately, though, NTI is the only institution that has been able to maintain a network of local tutorial support centres. Other providers have typically set such networks up, but then found them too expensive to maintain. In most cases, this network of centres has not been abandoned, but reduced in scale and scope to focus only on the logistical functions of student registration and distribution of course materials.

Some providers reported that this face-to-face contact has not always worked as intended, tending to be used to deliver lectures supplementing the materials rather than being used for meaningful student-educator interaction. This is often because students request such an approach, but is also because university lecturers who are only comfortable with this mode of face-to-face contact sometimes run such sessions. In many programmes, a significant capacity gap is the skill to run tutorial sessions focused on the specific requirements of students learning at a distance. Because many programmes are required to provide face-to-face support from a central campus, there are also problems for many learners in attending tutorial sessions, as travel is often time-consuming and expensive.

Another common feature in some distance education programmes is the inclusion of a lengthy 'residential' session (typically at least six weeks), which effectively serves as preparation for examinations, and is also used to administer examinations. In some cases, it appeared that this session had specifically been introduced to overcome weaknesses in course materials (or even the absence of course materials). The inclusion of such a session no doubt makes participation by working students more difficult, and also raises concerns about the underlying pedagogical design of programmes. For example, in instances where a long period in residence is necessary, typically all assessment takes place during that period, thus significantly reducing opportunities for providing learners formative feedback on assessment (very few programmes provided structured opportunities for supporting learners in this way). The need to introduce such a support strategy also clearly raises the importance of building capacity to design more comprehensive course materials packages that reduce institutional dependence on long residential sessions for educational delivery.

Administration of Distance Education

Administration of distance education programmes generally appeared to be functioning relatively efficiently. Every institution we visited demonstrated evidence of having developed systems to administer students on distance education programmes, usually independently of mainstream student record-keeping systems. In all cases, these systems had been developed into some form of electronic database. There was also much evidence of systems to allow students to register

locally for programmes, even where they are required to visit a central campus to receive face-to-face support. Further, some distance education providers have come up with innovative strategies for overcoming weaknesses in the national postal service, creating their own networks of materials distribution to get course materials to learners.

All providers did, however, express concern that their student record-keeping systems were predominantly reliant on databases developed by people no longer at the institution and that expertise to adapt and further develop these systems did not exist on campus. Importantly, these systems have, more often than not, not yet been ‘put through their paces’, so to speak. This is because most programmes have not yet gone to scale, thus not requiring the systems to deal with large volumes of students enrolling on programmes nationally. As all assessment is usually managed through face-to-face contact, there has also not been any requirement to track the progress of student assignments centrally on any significant scale. Likewise, because in most instances programmes tend to run tutorial sessions from a single, central campus, these administrative systems have not yet had to cope with the complexity of managing a decentralized tutorial support network. The only systems that have had to deal with these kinds of complexities are those of NTI. All of these points suggest that, if significant expansion of distance education delivery is to be possible within the Nigerian University System, investments in building robust administrative systems for distance education, and the skills to run these systems, will be a priority. Fortunately, the administrative base that does exist provides a platform off which to build such capacity.

An Absence of Coordination

A notable feature of distance education provision in the University System is that individual providers tend predominantly still to operate in isolation from one another. In some respects, this is not surprising. After all, they are competitors. However, there are some areas where – individually – providers are clearly struggling to establish effective distance education delivery infrastructure, most notably in the areas of materials production, distribution of resources, and establishment and maintenance of decentralized tutorial networks. We believe distance education would benefit from greater coordination and sharing of resources amongst providers, and that this could be managed in such a way as not to remove competition where it makes sense. It was pleasing to note, for example, that discussions about such cooperation have already begun between the University of Abuja and NTI.

LINKED AREAS OF INNOVATION

In addition to prevailing distance education practices, we encountered some structures that provided an excellent platform for innovation in distance education within the University System. The purpose of providing only a few examples is not to judge whether or not these practices are currently innovative, nor is it to accord them preferential status. These are only indicative of opportunities for innovation, as there are undoubtedly substantially more such initiatives that we were not able to visit within the time of this consultancy.

1. *The Centre for Nomadic Education at the University of Port Harcourt*

In 1999, the University signed a memorandum with the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) to establish the fourth Nomadic Education Centre in the country (the

others are at the Universities of Jos, Maiduguri, and Sukoto). This centre has been allocated responsibility for migrant fishing community education in Nigeria, a logical choice given its location in the country's riverine coastal areas. Currently, the Centre is:

- Providing face-to-face training in different states for teachers of nomadic children (typically three-day training courses for practicing teachers);
- Engaged in materials production for nomadic children, specifically in adaptation of the national syllabus to the needs of nomadic fishing communities;
- Undertaking research on migrant fishing communities.

The Centre has expressed interest in expanding its operations to include distance education programmes, particularly to take account of the living patterns of participating learners.

2. *National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) at Ahmadu Bello University*

NAERLS is one of the Research Institutes under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Rural Development, charged with the primary responsibility of collating, processing and disseminating research results to rural farm families and other interested end-users...the NAERLS/ABU has the following general functions:

- Conduct research in the area Extension including adoption process [sic];
- Coordinate the overall planning and development of extension liaison services throughout the country;
- Coordinate and understand the production of extension packages in the form of training, publications, radio and television packages;
- Coordinate national training, conferences and workshops;
- Publish the National Agricultural Journal of Extension and other books or technical bulletins which cover subject matter in more depth.⁴

3. *Computer Centre at University of Jos*

The introduction of computer networks at the University of Jos is changing the culture of teaching and learning at the institution, driven by a core of committed and professional computer staff. The purpose of these networks has been to augment teaching and research. All major buildings are connected via fibre-optic cables. All faculties have computer laboratories, accessible to staff and students alike, of between five and fifteen computers. These are used for teaching, e-mail, Internet access, typing, and other related computer functions. There is also a Computer Centre, which houses over 50 computers, for use by members of the University community. These facilities are very heavily used, with students able to book a computer for shifts of an hour at a time. Internet access at the University is provided via a VSAT dish. This offers a 256k down path, and a 64k return path, providing unusually quick Internet access by Nigerian standards.

These are cited as just a few examples of innovation that we discovered. We believe that innovations like this provide a major additional resource for distance education in the university system. Of course, there are no doubt others. For example, we are aware that the centre for Sahel Studies (University of Maiduguri) is another possible candidate for development of distance education courses. Similarly, the solar energy programme of Usman Danfodio University, which currently supplies power to a nearby village, could be developed to extend technological support

⁴ NAERLS. [no publication date]. *The NAERLS*. Zaria. NAERLS/ABU. pp. 2-5.

to rural areas. Initiatives such as these are important resources for effective development of tertiary distance education in Nigeria.

Chapter Two: Strategies for Building Capacity to Deliver Distance Education

INTRODUCTION

In considering strategies to build capacity to deliver distance education in Nigeria's higher education system, it is necessary to consider four primary types of capacity:

- Capacity within the policy environment
- National infrastructure
- Institutional capacity
- Individual capacity

We will review each of these areas in turn, analysing current capacity in each area and providing an assessment of key issues we believe justify consideration.

CAPACITY WITHIN THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Capacity within the policy environment covers two broad areas, namely national and institutional policy. In our discussions with key players at national level and some of those at institutional level, it is apparent that there are people who understand the imperatives and requirements of distance education, with respect to developing appropriate policies. It is also notable that, as distance education has grown in stature within national policy debates, there is a growing number of policy-makers taking an interest in distance education and building a greater capacity to develop and implement effective supporting policies. However, it is also clear that the current base of such people is quite thin, and that there are many more people for whom distance education is still a somewhat alien concept and whose approach to policy-making is mediated by a very limited understanding of its implications for education systems and structures. This problem is most apparent at the institutional level, where many institutional policies simply still do not take account of the implications for distance education practices, even at institutions where distance education is currently being delivered. Thus, we believe that there is merit in broadening and deepening awareness about distance education, its possibilities, and the challenges of implementation amongst a much broader group of decision-makers responsible for policy development.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In the previous section, we have noted problems with existing national infrastructure. It is important to stress that, in developing proposals for building capacity, we have purposely avoided specific references to the need to build national infrastructure, as we felt that this extended beyond our brief. However, it is important to note that ongoing national efforts to improve the quality of national infrastructure – particularly electrification, telecommunications, roads, and postal services – will be critical to the success of distance education in the university sector. Thus, we believe distance education protagonists should seek to play an active role in lobbying national efforts to improve national infrastructure, with a view to ensuring that, amongst other roles, it serves the needs of the higher education system.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

As we have noted in our report, universities involved in delivery of distance education still run relatively small distance education operations and have hence not developed many of the systems and structures needed to expand this delivery significantly. We have also described some of the institutional problems faced by distance education programmes in the Nigerian University System, particularly those pertaining to their location within systems and structures designed predominantly for full-time, face-to-face education. Thus, if distance education is to grow significantly in scale and stature and if Universities are to play a meaningful role in this, extensive work is going to need to go into building institutional capacity. Much of this involves developing the capacity of the employees of those institutions, which is picked up below in the section of ‘individual capacity’. This requirement constitutes the primary focus of our capacity-building proposals. However, there is also a need to start modelling the systemic requirements for large-scale distance education delivery and developing the capacity of tertiary education systems to be able to meet these requirements. Below, therefore, we have included some initial ideas on how this can be carried forward.

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY

As we have noted above, many Nigerians possess expertise in aspects of distance education, including content determination, course writing, and editing and evaluating the quality of distance education materials. Perhaps, at an individual level, expertise in course design represents the weakest area. We are also concerned about general levels of knowledge of Nigeria’s decision-makers and University administrators. It is however, very encouraging that, at least at a theoretical level, there is considerable appreciation of and enthusiasm about the elements that make up distance education delivery.

However, it is also clear that projects to build professional and technical capacity in distance education will work off a thin base of capacity. Thus, any such projects need to provide a thorough introduction to the challenges of providing distance education to many more people within the tertiary education sector. If there is an intention to scale up distance education delivery significantly, the following capacity building interventions are required:

- Sensitization of decision-makers to the practical challenges faced in delivering distance education and to the financial logic of effective distance education delivery.
- Improving planning and management of distance education interventions (with particular focus on financial planning and management).
- Building skills in managing and implementing course materials design and development processes.
- Developing understanding of the various dimensions of learner support (with a particular focus on managing de-centralized tutorial support systems).

These interventions will need to focus on building real capacity to implement distance education, rather than helping participants to understand just the ‘theory’ of distance education delivery. Thus, to the greatest extent possible, the interventions will need to support people ‘on the job’, particularly supporting those who seek to implement distance education programmes.

PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS

In compiling proposals to build professional and technical capacity to design, launch, and manage tertiary distance education programmes, we have worked on the following assumptions:

- *One-off, professional development workshops are of little educational value.* Many interventions seeking to build distance education capacity in the developing world seem to assume that ‘hard’ skills can be taught by bringing together employees from many organizations to workshops of between three to five days. Our view is that such interventions have little educational merit, as they are simply too brief and too divorced from the day-to-day realities of work to develop any skills. This does not mean that such interventions have no value, but we believe that this value lies almost exclusively in their ability to raise awareness about key issues and to showcase distance education practices. If such face-to-face interventions are to hold value as educational interventions, we believe that this needs to be as part of a much longer, more sustained intervention of support for distance educators.
- *Project integration is critical to the success of the interventions.* The proposals presented below have been developed as independent components, which can be implemented separately. However, we have developed these proposals with a chronology in mind, and hoping that each will constitute a step in an integrated process. This is particularly important to take into account given the first assumption we have articulated above.
- *Our proposals should not be tied to any specific policy directions regarding a Nigerian Open University.* This consultancy has been made more complicated – and interesting – by renewed government commitment to establishing an Open University. At this stage, it is unclear how this process will unfold, how such an institution will secure capacity (by building it internally or by creating networks), and what its relationship to the Federal University System will be. Although we have formulated some provisional opinions on this (some expressed throughout this report), we have sought to develop proposals that will remain useful regardless of how these questions are finally answered. We hope that the proposals below could, sometimes with some minor modifications, support a range of scenarios for developing distance education at the tertiary level in Nigeria.
- *There will be local managerial capacity in place to coordinate these projects.* The plans compiled below assume the need for local project management with primary accountability to the NUSIP Project for project implementation and expenditure. This job function will be critical to the success of the project, and will demand the skills of someone with knowledge of distance education, but also of the politics of the Nigerian higher education system. We have included this job function as a line item in our budgets, as it seemed presumptuous to assume that existing organizations would be able to provide a person dedicated to project implementation.

PROJECT PROPOSALS

Based on the above analysis, we believe that the following project proposals constitute the most appropriate starting points for developing technical and professional capacity within the Federal University System to support implementation of distance education. These interventions are summarized below, and then described and justified in detail.

8. *Strategies to raise awareness about distance education*

These will comprise:

- Preparation and distribution of resource packs on the promise and challenges of distance education delivery.

- Three workshops to raise awareness about the range of issues to consider in delivering distance education programmes. The first will allow Vice-Chancellors, senior Ministry officials, and senior management of NUC to share ideas with high-profile leaders of international distance education institutions. The second will be aimed at senior management within interested universities, while the third will be organized for university academics (with a particular focus on those faculties and schools most likely to participate in distance education provision).
9. *Delivery of intensive professional development courses for selected professionals*

This project will involve implementation of three, tailor-made professional development courses for selected people from Federal Universities. These interventions will focus respectively on:

 - Management and financial planning of distance education programmes;
 - Course materials design and development; and
 - Supporting learners in distance education programmes.
 10. *Enrolments of selected academics in Distance Education Master's Degree programmes (offered at a distance)*

This project will lead to enrolment of at least 50 participants in international Master's Degree programmes, building on the courses provided in project two.
 11. *Targeted support of new distance education programmes*

This project will lead to the creation of proposals for at least two new distance education programmes intended to model best distance education practice. From the perspective of this consultancy, each programme will be the subject of intensive capacity development support in order to create an 'incubation' system for development of necessary professional and technical capacity.
 12. *Targeted investment in the development of administrative systems*

This project will see creation and installation of software to administer distance education programmes effectively, taking specific account of the need for administrative flexibility required by delivery of such programmes. The project will be run as an extension of project 4.
 13. *Modelling of effective use of ICTs to support course materials design and development*

This project will see implementation of a comprehensive strategy to support distance education course materials design and development by using ICTs more effectively. The project will be run as an extension of project 4.
 14. *Building the Capacity of the Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network*

This project will encourage the development of the Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network (NODEN) as a professional association of organizations and individuals involved in the delivery of distance education programmes. This will be integrated with the above projects – particularly projects one to three – using NODEN as a structure for bringing people together, but will also make small investments in NODEN's ability to function effectively as an Association.

A NOTE ON BUDGETS

We prepared some notional budgets for each project, where possible. However, we should stress that these simply provide a projection of likely costs. As a first phase of project implementation, more

detailed financial preparation will no doubt be necessary. Detailed budgeting spreadsheets for each project have been supplied separately.

In preparing some notional budgets for the projects below, we used the following funding norms:

Currency Exchange Rates			
Naira – Dollar		N 134.00	

	Unit Type	N Cost per Unit	\$ Cost per Unit
Personnel			
Local Project Leader	days	N 35,000.00	\$ 261.19
Local Project Manager	days	N 20,000.00	\$ 149.25
Local Consultant	days	N 35,000.00	\$ 261.19
Local Administrator	days	N 10,000.00	\$ 74.63
International Consultant (High)	days		\$ 1,000.00
International Consultant (Medium)	days		\$ 550.00
Materials Developer/Editor	days		\$ 400.00
Web Developer	days		\$ 300.00
IT Specialist	days		\$ 800.00
Researcher	days	N 20,000.00	\$ 149.25
Travel			
International Air Travel	average trips		\$ 1,500.00
Accommodation nights & subsistence	Daily cost		\$ 200.00
Local Air Travel	Daily cost	N 7,000.00	\$ 52.24
Local Car Travel	Daily rate	N 18,000.00	\$ 134.33
Subsistence	Daily cost	N 5,000.00	\$ 37.31
Workshops			
Participant attendance	workshop day	N 10,000.00	\$ 74.63
Workshop venue hire	workshop day	N 75,000.00	\$ 559.70
Extraordinary Items			
Resource Pack	single unit	N 4,000.00	\$ 29.85
Distribution of Resource Pack	single unit	N 2,000.00	\$ 14.93
Web/mail hosting	monthly cost	N 15,000.00	\$ 111.94
Master's degree enrolment	student enrolment		\$ 20,000.00
Computer & software	single unit	N 175,000.00	\$ 1,305.97
Newsletter & distribution	1000 units	N 200,000.00	\$ 1,492.54

PROJECT ONE: RAISING AWARENESS

Project Rationale

As we have noted above, at universities we visited there is great interest in and commitment to distance education. This interest amongst decision makers is critical to the success of any initiative that will lead to sustained growth of distance education at the tertiary level. We believe, though, that it is now critical to involve administrators and professionals at the highest level to develop greater appreciation of the potential and challenges of distance education.

In addition, it is becoming increasingly important to raise awareness in much more structured ways amongst a broader base of personnel within university structures. It is often at the level of implementation that awareness about the specificities of distance education delivery has appeared to be weakest, for example amongst some course writers and course tutors. There appears to be little structured dialogue at a middle management level between various players either already involved in or interested in offering distance education programmes.

Finally, a key weakness throughout the University System is access to new ideas about distance education. Academic texts on distance education reflect a predominance of sources from the 1970s and earlier. Although there has been extensive writing on distance education in Nigeria over the past five or six years and much of this contains important documentation of the challenges of distance education delivery in the country, it is constrained by lack of access to international debates about distance education and its changing nature and role.

Given the above problems, we believe it is important to implement a suite of related interventions focused on raising awareness about and the public profile of distance education.

Description of Project

This project will have two primary components, namely preparation and distribution of information packs on the promise and challenges of distance education delivery and organization of three high-profile national workshops on distance education.

The purpose behind preparing an information pack on the promise and challenges of distance education delivery is to inject education debates in Nigeria with fresh ideas about distance education and its implementation. We believe that this contribution is critical to the successful growth and development of distance education practices, provided appropriate channels for distribution can be found for such a resource pack. We anticipate that the resource pack would source distance education material it could use free of charge, relying on agencies such as the Commonwealth of Learning and projects such as the World Bank's Global Distance Education Network to acquire appropriate material. We anticipate that the resource pack will comprise:

- Concise pamphlets on distance education, one each on:
 - The concept of distance education;
 - The economics of distance education;
 - Designing and developing distance education courses;
 - Supporting distance education learners; and
 - Administration of distance education.
- A collection of appropriate readings on distance education.
- A comprehensive CD-ROM of free distance education resources sourced internationally, but with a particular focus on developing country practices.

We propose that the series of workshops be run in conjunction with the Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network (NODEN), with a view to providing that association a mechanism to galvanize its operations in support of national distance education developments. The series of workshops will work as follows:

1. One high-level, two-day workshop of Vice-Chancellors, senior Ministry officials, and senior management of NUC to share ideas with high-profile leaders of international distance education institutions. The purpose of this exercise will be to engage senior decision-makers in the complexities of delivering large-scale distance education programmes. Through the inputs of

respected (current or recent) leaders of international distance education institutions, the intention will be to provide a comprehensive overview of distance education provision. This will be, in many ways, a political exercise intended to:

- Raise awareness about the potential of distance education through a high-profile gathering of key decision-makers.
- Provide comprehensive case studies to decision-makers of the operations of large distance education programmes and institutions, thus building knowledge at senior management levels in Nigerian tertiary education about the challenges of making distance education work successfully.
- Erode myths about the ‘cheapness’ of distance education.
- Generate high-level excitement about the potential of using distance education to tackle large-scale educational problems.
- Provide a national forum for discussing challenges in implementing tertiary distance education in Nigeria.
- Provide informal opportunities for senior managers within the Federal University System to share ideas and explore opportunities for cooperation.

The workshop will bring together all Vice-Chancellors in the Federal University System, as well as key decision-makers from the Federal Ministry of Education, national Planning Committee on Distance Education and Open Learning, and the NUC. This will probably comprise a total of 50 participants. It will have an international facilitator, to ensure that the workshop is seen to transcend any politics within the Nigerian tertiary system and is thus not ‘owned’ by any specific player.

2. One workshop targeting senior and middle management within interested universities. Its goals will be similar to those of the workshop for decision-makers, but will delve into more detail of the operations of distance education programmes and institutions. Again, the purpose of this exercise will be to showcase international best practice. In this workshop, we anticipate that two distance education providers from Nigeria will have opportunities to present overviews of their operations, thus allowing for some benchmarking of local practices against international best practice and also ensuring development of a local culture of cooperation and sharing of experience. The goals of this workshop will be to:

- Provide senior and middle managers within the Nigerian Federal University System a comprehensive overview of the operations of international and local distance education programmes, with a particular focus on managerial, financial, and logistical challenges faced in implementing large-scale programmes.
- Erode myths about the ‘cheapness’ of distance education.
- Allow for showcasing of best international practice in distance education, alongside the best of current Nigerian implementation.
- Offer opportunities for middle managers to raise and discuss institutional challenges to effective delivery of distance education in the Federal University System.
- Establish a forum to begin identifying new opportunities for delivering distance education programmes.
- Provide informal opportunities for middle managers within the Federal University System to share ideas and explore opportunities for cooperation.

The workshop will aim to bring together at least two senior or middle managers from each institution, preferably focusing on the level of deputy vice-chancellors, registrars, and financial directors.

3. One workshop aimed at university academics (with a particular focus on those faculties and schools most likely to participate in large-scale distance education provision). Again, the goals of this workshop will be similar to those above, but approaching distance education more explicitly from the angle of pedagogical approaches to distance education. Thus, the intention will be to provide interested academics from Federal Universities insight into best international and local practices in the pedagogy of distance education. The aim of this workshop will be to:
- Showcase best practice, with a view to eroding myths of distance education as a ‘second best’ educational option.
 - Stimulate academic imagination about how to use distance education methods to improve the quality and reach of tertiary education in Nigeria.
 - Offer opportunities for academics to raise and discuss educational challenges to effective delivery of distance education in the Federal University System.
 - Establish a forum to begin identifying new opportunities for delivering distance education programmes.
 - Provide informal opportunities for academics within the Federal University System to share ideas and explore opportunities for cooperation.
- This workshop will target academics from faculties and schools where the potential for significantly increasing the scale of programmes is greatest.

Implementation Plan

Implementation of the above will require the following broad steps:

1 *Preparation of Resource Pack*

- 1.1 Source appropriate readings and material for pamphlets.
- 1.2 Compile book of readings.
- 1.3 Develop and lay out printed pamphlets.
- 1.4 Compile CD-ROM Resource, using combination of HTML and PDF resources.
- 1.5 Prepare packaging.
- 1.6 Produce 500 copies of pack for distribution via NODEN.

2 *Decision-Makers’ Workshop*

- 2.1 Secure services of international facilitator.
- 2.2 Prepare agenda for a two-day workshop.
- 2.3 Secure participation of two international institutional heads.
- 2.4 Finalize invitations and date of workshop.
- 2.5 Organize travel and accommodation for all participants.
- 2.6 Run workshop.

3 *Managers’ Workshop*

- 3.1 Secure services of local facilitator.
- 3.2 Prepare agenda for a three-day workshop.
- 3.3 Secure participation of two international and two local institutional presenters.
- 3.4 Finalize invitations and date of workshop.
- 3.5 Organize travel and accommodation for all participants.
- 3.6 Run workshop.

4 *Academics’ Workshop*

- 4.1 Secure services of local facilitator.

- 4.2 Prepare agenda for a three-day workshop.
- 4.3 Secure participation of two international and two local institutional presenters.
- 4.4 Finalize invitations and date of workshop.
- 4.5 Organize travel and accommodation for all participants.
- 4.6 Run workshop.

Project One Budget

	Unit Type	Cost per Unit	Number of Units	Cost	TOTAL
Personnel					\$ 56,483.58
Local Project Leader	days	\$ 261.19	16	\$ 4,179.10	
Local Project Manager	days	\$ 149.25	50	\$ 7,462.69	
Local Consultant	days	\$ 261.19	18	\$ 4,701.49	
Local Administrator	days	\$ 74.63	26	\$ 1,940.30	
International Consultant (High)	days	\$ 1,000.00	25	\$ 25,000.00	
International Consultant (Medium)	days	\$ 550.00	N/A	N/A	
Materials Developer/Editor	days	\$ 400.00	18	\$ 7,200.00	
Web Developer	days	\$ 300.00	20	\$ 6,000.00	
IT Specialist	days	\$ 800.00	N/A	N/A	
Researcher	days	\$ 149.25	N/A	N/A	
Travel					\$ 17,500.00
International Air Travel	average trips	\$ 1,500.00	7	\$ 10,500.00	
Accommodation nights & subsistence	daily cost	\$ 200.00	35	\$ 7,000.00	
Local Air Travel	daily cost	\$ 52.24	N/A	N/A	
Local Car Travel	daily rate	\$ 134.33	N/A	N/A	
Subsistence	daily cost	\$ 37.31	N/A	N/A	
Workshops					\$ 18,656.72
Participant attendance	workshop day	\$ 74.63	190	\$ 14,179.10	
Workshop venue hire	workshop day	\$ 559.70	8	\$ 4,477.61	
Extraordinary Items					\$ 154,925.37
Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 29.85	5,190	\$ 154,925.37	
Distribution of Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 14.93	N/A	N/A	
Web/mail hosting	monthly cost student	\$ 111.94	N/A	N/A	
Master's degree enrolment	enrolment	\$ 20,000.00	N/A	N/A	
Computer & software	single unit	\$ 1,305.97	N/A	N/A	
Newsletter & distribution	1000 units	\$ 1,492.54	N/A	N/A	
Sub-Total					\$ 247,565.67
Add Overheads @	20%				\$ 49,513.13
New sub-total					\$ 297,078.81
VAT @	0%				N/A
TOTAL					\$ 297,078.81

PROJECT TWO: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

Project Rationale

In many ways, the key priority in building technical and professional capacity for distance education is to begin by focusing on developing skills in areas of greatest need. As we have noted above, this capacity is limited across the board in Nigeria and thus requires to be built up systematically. However, one-off sessions such as the workshops described above need to be followed up immediately with more detailed, thorough professional development interventions to build hard skills.

Description of Project

This project will involve implementation of three, tailor-made professional development courses for selected professionals from the University System. The intervention will target professionals within Federal Universities, from academic departments and administrative units within those institutions (see detailed descriptions below for further information on target learners). To build successfully on these awareness-raising exercises, it will be critical to provide training courses of substantial duration. We propose professional development interventions lasting a minimum of 120 notional hours of learning, but suggest that this be spread over time to ensure that learning activities can be integrated with people's day-to-day work.

Selection criteria will need to be established for participation, but might include the following:

- Enrolment should draw learners from as many institutions as possible, including those currently providing distance education programmes and those not.
- Institutions nominating people to enrol should be required to demonstrate some indication of how these learners will be provided opportunities to deploy their skills in the workplace.

These courses will follow on from the awareness-raising exercises described in project one, preferably establishing continuity of participation of individuals.

These interventions will focus respectively on:

1. *Management and financial planning of distance education programmes*

This course will be aimed at current and potential managers of distance education programmes. It could cover the following topics, amongst others:

- The policy environment.
- Structures for distance education provision (including differences between single-mode, dual-mode, and mixed-mode institutions).
- Establishing credibility of distance education.
- Managing distance education systems and programmes.
- Understanding institutional requirements for effective learner support.
- The economics of distance education.
- Costing distance education programmes and courses.
- Staffing and finances.
- Professional development of staff.
- Setting and maintaining standards and professional ethics.
- Issues of copyright.
- Research and evaluation.
- The concept of quality assurance.
- Constructing and maintaining quality assurance policies and processes.
- Collaboration and partnerships.

2. *Course materials design and development*

This course will be aimed at current and potential coordinators of course design and development for distance education and at materials writers themselves. It could cover the following topics, amongst others:

- Needs assessment
- Curriculum development processes.
- Target audience.
- Learning outcomes.
- Content areas.
- Teaching and learning strategies.
- Learner support in materials.
- Financial planning.
- Interactive materials.
- Assessment and feedback.
- Differentiating between media and technologies.
- Educational characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of different media and technologies.
- Factors influencing choices of media and technologies (including national infrastructure policies).
- Applying the most appropriate media and technologies to support learning outcomes.
- Using media and technologies to support educational delivery, interaction, and learner support.

3. *Supporting learners in distance education programmes*

This course will be aimed at a range of people involving in designing and implementing distance education courses, including course coordinators, academic staff involved in delivering programmes, and tutors (all current and potential). It could cover the following topics, amongst others:

- Special needs of distance learners.
- Strategies for supporting learners.
- Roles of support services at key times in the learning cycle.
- Learner support and administration.
- Counselling.
- Functions for face-to-face contact in a distance education system.
- Setting up and managing de-centralized tutorial support systems.
- The role of tutors.
- Drawing on existing resources to support learners.
- Use of media and technologies in supporting learners.
- Learner support and national coordination.

It is conceivable that these three courses might be combined to lead to an accredited certificate or diploma programme, should this be necessary.

Organizational Strategies

Although there are many individuals in Nigeria who have capacity to train others in distance education approaches and methods, our view is that this does not currently translate into any sustainable institutional base for delivering programmes such as those outlined above. Given this, we believe it is critical to use this intervention as an opportunity to build such local capacity. Hence, we propose that this project should see establishment of a partnership between a local education provider (preferably

with ability to deliver accredited education programmes) and an international agency. We would expect that the international agency would be responsible for building the capacity of the local provider to be able to continue delivering these courses after their first enrolment. This requirement should form part of the contractual obligation of an international organization successfully bidding for the contract to deliver these courses.

Further, as the ideas below illustrate, we see the possibility of using e-mail as a mechanism for providing ongoing support to learners. We imagine that – should this be deemed a sensible strategy – capacity to deliver this type of professional development should be developed hand in hand with the Nigerian Universities Network (see report in Annexure A).

Finally, delivery of courses such as these provides an ideal opportunity for developing national networks of distance education professionals, as does project one. Thus, we propose that delivery of these courses be implemented in partnership with NODEN, as part of helping it to establish itself as such an association.

The Course Environment

Although work will obviously need to be done on developing appropriate curriculum delivery models, we believe that efforts by COL to deliver training using computers and e-mail justify serious consideration for these interventions. Thus, we have included a modified description of these models of implementation for consideration by whichever organization is contracted to develop the courses. This broad model has been used as the basis of our costing models for this intervention. Regardless of models finally chosen, though, it is critical to stress that the success of these courses will depend largely on the quality of activities designed by the course developers.

The model we propose involved a combination of CD-ROM, e-mail, and face-to-face contact. It could comprise the following steps:

1. Learners gather for a short two-to-three day workshop. At this session, the purpose of the course is defined in detail, sessions are run to ensure that learners start from a common platform, and learners are provided all resources they require to participate successfully in the course.
2. Learners enrol in an online 'course', which runs part-time for two months. An electronic course environment will constitute the core resource of the course. It will provide learners a CD-ROM with all of the information and content that they require to complete a course successfully. It will also provide full details on the range of learning pathways that learners can construct for themselves as they navigate their way through the resource. Where appropriate, though, resources will be delivered in PDF format to allow learners to work with print where print is the most sensible medium to be used.
3. On starting the course, learners will join a community of learning, which will require that they participate in online discussion and progress through an individual course within certain time frames. Learners will have online tutors for each module, who will support them through their work, as well as facilitating online discussion between a small community of learners (say, 10 learners). All of this communication will take place via e-mail, using a mail server set up to route mail to the appropriate location and ensure that computer viruses are not circulated through the system. Continual feedback will be provided via e-mail, while the course environment will be designed in such a way that it is possible to monitor the progress of participants in the run up to a second, five-day face-to-face workshop. This will also comprise ongoing telephonic interaction and support with learners.

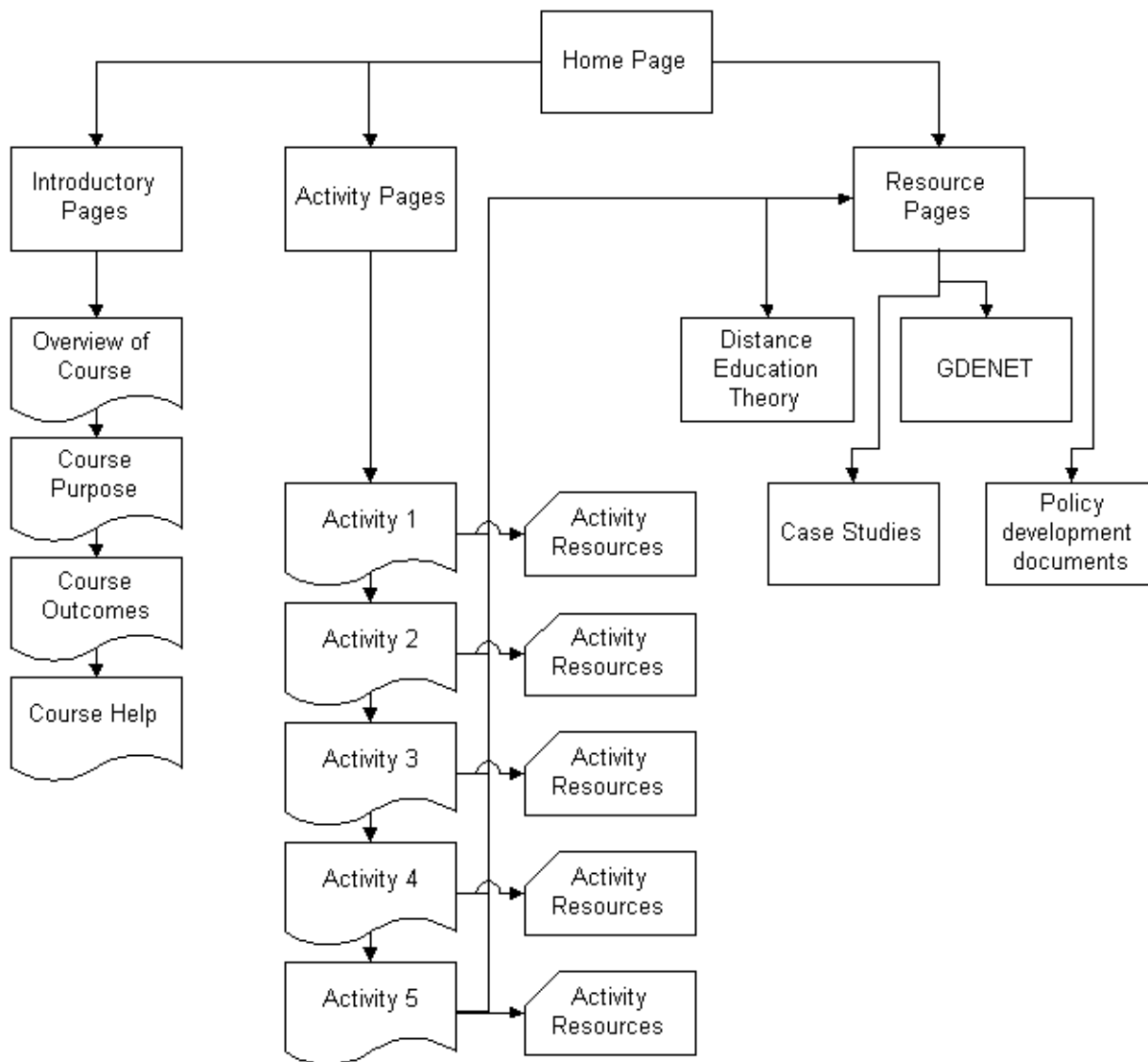
4. After one month, participants gather to participate in a five-day training session. Given the online preparation, the second, face-to-face session will focus squarely on intensive interaction between participants and facilitators, providing participants unique opportunities to work through practical activities, share experiences and problems with their peers, and shape the learning environment so that it meets their specific requirements.
5. Following the face-to-face session, online interaction will be continued for at least a further month. At this point, the formal structure of the online environment will be loosened somewhat to allow more dynamic engagement amongst peers, but will comprise some designed activities to ensure ongoing participation.

In the materials, the assumption will not be that the content will teach. The role of the materials is to structure activities that are opportunities for

- Reflection;
- Experiences;
- Generation and sharing of ideas;
- Sharing of problems and their possible solutions; and
- Sharing of resources.

These activities will be supported by content where necessary. The role of content is to fuel the learning process by providing the necessary skills, process, or information base that will make learning possible and more meaningful. The real learning itself will take place within the activity, and will be supported and enhanced by a variety of possible interactions that stem from that initial activity.

Although it will no doubt be necessary to modify and adapt this structure as development of the resource materials proceeds, we propose the following broad structure for online course materials. Given the nature of online interaction, it will be important to ensure that learners follow a reasonably standard pathway, although they will obviously be free to decide their own navigation pathway through content. The activities will be structured, though, in such a way that less and more advanced learners can follow different pathways, but still contribute equally to the online community of learning.



Implementation Plan

Implementation of the above will require the following broad steps:

1 Establish Course Delivery Structures

- 1.1 Issue international tender for development of courses (note that all activities after this point are assumed to be the responsibility of the successful agency, working in partnership with the NUC).
- 1.2 Select appropriate long-term institutional location for delivery of distance education capacity-building courses.
- 1.3 Identify list of potential contributors (Nigerian and international) to design and delivery of course.
- 1.4 Collect CVs of potential contributors.
- 1.5 Finalize choice of contributors.
- 1.6 Establish local reference group for course development process.
- 1.7 Finalize contracts.

2 *Finalize enrolments in courses*

- 2.1 Issue invitation to institutions and individuals.
- 2.2 Follow up invitations with targeted requests to key units/departments within universities (identified through this consultancy and through awareness-raising exercises).
- 2.3 Finalize enrolments.
- 2.4 Establish first contact with course participants.
- 2.5 Finalize numbers and names of participants.

3 *Design of course curriculum*

- 3.1 Develop preliminary curriculum framework. This will include:
 - 3.1.1 A detailed statement of proposed learning outcomes;
 - 3.1.2 Detailed categorized lists of relevant content areas linked to the course outcomes, together with identification of specific links between outcomes and subject areas;
 - 3.1.3 A brief description of the level of learning at which the course is pitched;
 - 3.1.4 Assessment criteria for each learning outcome, to provide participants guidelines for measuring their progress within the course;
 - 3.1.5 A detailed outline of the combinations of teaching and learning strategies (combining independent study, contact, and assessment) that will enable learners to achieved the stated outcomes of the course.
- 3.2 Incorporate feedback from participants/reference group into curriculum framework.
- 3.3 Finalize curriculum framework.

4 *Design and development of course materials*

- 4.1 Gather all appropriate source materials for possible use within course.
- 4.2 Use available materials to inform design of curriculum framework (particularly proposed teaching and learning activities).
- 4.3 Finalize materials structure and flow of learning activities, based on curriculum framework.
- 4.4 Develop draft learning materials, drawing on existing resources.
- 4.5 Develop outlines of contact sessions with learners.
- 4.6 Construct formative assessment tasks for learners.
- 4.7 Circulate materials, contact session outlines, and assessment tasks for final comment/input from reference group.
- 4.8 Finalize materials for use by learners

5 *Implementation of course*

- 5.1 Run three courses involving 100 participants each (note that costing of this exercise is based on the course delivery assumptions outlined in the previous section).

6 *Evaluation of online course*

- 6.1 Appoint external evaluator.
- 6.2 Track all management processes leading to development of course materials.
- 6.3 Review final course materials and write report.
- 6.4 Monitor learner/educator discussions to assess value and write report.
- 6.5 Run interviews of key participants (students and course developers).
- 6.6 Assess user-friendliness of administrative systems, and write report.
- 6.7 Finalize report.
- 6.8 Assess quality of contact session structures, materials, logistics, integration with rest of process.
- 6.9 Attend contact sessions, and assess value (including interviews with key participants).
- 6.10 Finalize report

Project Two Budget

	Unit Type	Cost per Unit	Number of Units	Cost	TOTAL
Personnel					\$ 474,261.19
Local Project Leader	days	\$ 261.19	49	\$ 12,798.51	
Local Project Manager	days	\$ 149.25	142	\$ 21,194.03	
Local Consultant	days	\$ 261.19	420	\$ 109,701.49	
Local Administrator	days	\$ 74.63	88	\$ 6,567.16	
International Consultant (High)	days	\$ 1,000.00	N/A	N/A	
International Consultant (Medium)	days	\$ 550.00	318	\$ 174,900.00	
Materials Developer/Editor	days	\$ 400.00	189	\$ 75,600.00	
Web Developer	days	\$ 300.00	165	\$ 49,500.00	
IT Specialist	days	\$ 800.00	30	\$ 24,000.00	
Researcher	days	\$ 149.25	N/A	N/A	
Travel					\$ 43,585.07
International Air Travel	average trips	\$ 1,500.00	13	\$ 19,500.00	
Accommodation nights & subsistence	daily cost	\$ 200.00	113	\$ 22,600.00	
Local Air Travel	daily cost	\$ 52.24	13	\$ 679.10	
Local Car Travel	daily rate	\$ 134.33	6	\$ 805.97	
Subsistence	daily cost	\$ 37.31	N/A	N/A	
Workshops					\$ 120,335.82
Participant attendance	workshop day	\$ 74.63	1,500	\$ 111,940.30	
Workshop venue hire	workshop day	\$ 559.70	15	\$ 8,395.52	
Extraordinary Items					\$ 14,776.12
Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 29.85	300	\$ 8,955.22	
Distribution of Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 14.93	300	\$ 4,477.61	
Web/mail hosting	monthly cost student	\$ 111.94	12	\$ 1,343.28	
Master's degree enrolment	enrolment	\$ 20,000.00	N/A	N/A	
Computer & software	single unit	\$ 1,305.97	N/A	N/A	
Newsletter & distribution	1000 units	\$ 1,492.54	N/A	N/A	
Sub-Total					\$ 652,958.21
Add Overheads @	20%				\$ 130,591.64
New sub-total					\$ 783,549.85
VAT @	0%				N/A
TOTAL					\$ 783,549.85

PROJECT THREE: INTERNATIONAL DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Project Rationale

The interventions described in project two provide thorough opportunities for building skills in three key areas of distance education delivery. We believe it is important, though, to provide further opportunities for extending this platform for those learners who exhibit the most interest and/or potential to apply such skills effectively.

Target Audience

Project three will target the same groups of professionals as project two, but will narrow and deepen its impact by selecting from an original 300 learners only those 50 who show the greatest promise of succeeding in longer distance education studies.

Description of Project

This project will enrol at least 50 participants in international Master's Degree programmes. In considering appropriate enrolments, the following are examples of such programmes on offer around the world:

INSTITUTION	PROGRAMME	REQUIREMENTS	DURATION	COST
University of South Africa	Post-Graduate Diploma in Distance Education	Bachelor of Arts	1 Year minimum	R920 per course – 6 courses. Price escalation for 2002 approx 10%
Indira Gandhi University	Masters Degree in Distance Education	Diploma in Distance Education (DDE) or Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education (PGDDE) from IGNOU	1 year	
Open University (UK)	Masters Degree in Distance Education	Recognized UK degree or candidates must apply for credit transfers. As it is an online taught course candidates are required to have access to a computer with CD-Rom drive and www access. Not available to candidates in Africa.	Not specified	£5,384 for MA (6 credits) - plus the registration fee £884
IEC/University of London	Post-graduate Diploma and Masters	Criteria vary	600-800 hrs for PGD Masters Degree requires a further 600-800 hrs 1-5 yrs for PGD 2-4 yrs for MA	
Athabasca University	Masters in Distance Education	Bachelor's Degree (Recognized). Computer which complies with university's hardware and software requirements	Not specified	Thesis route requires 9 credits at CAD1,050 per 3 credit course.

INSTITUTION	PROGRAMME	REQUIREMENTS	DURATION	COST
University of Southern Queensland	Masters of Open and Distance Learning (online)	4 year Bachelor's Degree and working in the field	Not specified	AUD850 per credit point (there are 8 and 12 credit masters degrees)
Royal Roads University ⁵	MA in Distributed Learning	Two courses (three weeks) on campus, eight via distance learning. Students must have access to Web.	Two years	C\$16,000 over two years, plus materials.

In providing the above information, we are not, however, proposing that learners be provided a menu of options. Rather, it would be best to identify a preferred provider first, by putting the project out to tender amongst providers such as those listed above. This might be done in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning, which has already established good working relationships with many of the above organizations in delivery of such Master's programmes internationally. Tenders provided will, of course, need to demonstrate the provider's ability to maintain an ongoing relationship of support to learners throughout the programme, particularly given the realities of Nigeria's national infrastructure.

Implementation Plan

Implementation of the above will require the following broad steps:

1 *Select appropriate programme(s)*

- 1.1 Establish working relationship with COL in programme enrolments.
- 1.2 Submit tender for enrolment of participants to appropriate providers.
- 1.3 Finalize selection of provider(s) and programme(s).

2 *Select participants*

- 2.1 Obtain feedback from implementers of project 2 on potential applicants for bursaries.
- 2.2 Finalize selection criteria for participants.
- 2.3 Invite applications from interested parties.
- 2.4 Choose final recipients of bursaries.

3 *Finalize enrolments*

- 3.1 Undertake all necessary logistical arrangements to process enrolments of selected participants.
- 3.2 Receive regular quarterly reports from participants and provider on progress of participants through programme, to ensure successful use of resources. These will include brief evaluation of programme(s) by participants.

⁵ Added by editor, COL International, as this programme has gained high international recognition.

Project Three Budget

The budget presented below is not based on finally accurate costs of enrolling students, as this will depend on which programme is finally chosen. Notional figures for a range of such programmes have been extrapolated from the above table.

	Unit Type	Cost per Unit	Number of Units	Cost	TOTAL
Personnel					\$ 18,867.91
Local Project Leader	days	\$ 261.19	7	\$ 1,828.36	
Local Project Manager	days	\$ 149.25	47	\$ 7,014.93	
Local Consultant	days	\$ 261.19	N/A	N/A	
Local Administrator	days	\$ 74.63	68	\$ 5,074.63	
International Consultant (High)	days	\$ 1,000.00	N/A	N/A	
International Consultant (Medium)	days	\$ 550.00	9	\$ 4,950.00	
Materials Developer/Editor	days	\$ 400.00	N/A	N/A	
Web Developer	days	\$ 300.00	N/A	N/A	
IT Specialist	days	\$ 800.00	N/A	N/A	
Researcher	days	\$ 149.25	N/A	N/A	
Travel					\$ 2,500.00
International Air Travel	average trips	\$ 1,500.00	1	\$ 1,500.00	
Accommodation nights & subsistence	daily cost	\$ 200.00	5	\$ 1,000.00	
Local Air Travel	daily cost	\$ 52.24	N/A	N/A	
Local Car Travel	daily rate	\$ 134.33	N/A	N/A	
Subsistence	daily cost	\$ 37.31	N/A	N/A	
Workshops					N/A
Participant attendance	workshop day	\$ 74.63	N/A	N/A	
Workshop venue hire	workshop day	\$ 559.70	N/A	N/A	
Extraordinary Items					\$ 1,000,000.00
Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 29.85	N/A	N/A	
Distribution of Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 14.93	N/A	N/A	
Web/mail hosting	monthly cost	\$ 111.94	N/A	N/A	
Master's degree enrolment	enrolment student	\$ 20,000.00	50	\$ 1,000,000.00	
Computer & software	single unit	\$ 1,305.97	N/A	N/A	
Newsletter & distribution	1000 units	\$ 1,492.54	N/A	N/A	
Sub-Total					\$ 1,021,367.91
Add Overheads @	20%				\$ 204,273.58
New sub-total					\$ 1,225,641.49
VAT @	0%				N/A
TOTAL					\$ 1,225,641.49

PROJECT FOUR: SUPPORTING NEW PROGRAMMES

Project Rationale

Projects one to three provide a platform for developing awareness about distance education and its implementation, as well as beginning to build the capacity required to develop and implement distance education programmes. This work is not, however, a goal in its own right. Rather, in our opinion, it is an important step towards a bigger goal, namely the development and implementation of large-scale distance education programmes designed to accommodate the need for greater access to quality higher education in Nigeria. As our analysis of the policy environment has illustrated, some steps have been taken towards creating a policy environment conducive to developing such programmes. However, we think there is merit in contributing further to this process by beginning to conceptualize new distance education programmes and the institutional arrangements to deliver such programmes.

Description of Project

This project will lead to the creation of proposals for at least two new distance education programmes intended to model best distance education practice. From the perspective of this consultancy, each programme will be the subject of intensive capacity development support in order to create an 'incubation' system for development of necessary professional and technical capacity. As importantly, these two programmes will become models for best distance education practice, providing capacity-building opportunities by demonstrating the best of distance education practice.

As the few examples of innovation provided in chapter one illustrate, Nigeria has a wealth of educational interventions which have as their key aim the development needs of the country. These interventions tend, however, to be localized and small scale. The purpose of this project is to attempt to identify among this rich diversity courses which are successful in their development aims and which have the possibility of being offered on a large scale, using distance education methods (including effective use of ICTs).

The fulfilment of this project will require a range of activities. In consultation with the relevant players in the field, it will be necessary to identify learning opportunities that are of greatest priority for Nigeria. Using this as a basis, it will then be necessary to conduct an assessment of capacity to identify who has developed expertise which can be effectively harnessed to create new and relevant distance education programmes that exploit these opportunities. This work will enable the project to identify appropriate partners who have the potential to participate in the development of courses for each programme. In this way, it will be possible to conceptualize and develop large-scale educational interventions that build on successful work that has been undertaken in Nigerian tertiary education.

The principle of partnership is very important if high quality, large-scale educational opportunities are to be developed. However, the potential of partnerships has not yet been realized in Nigerian distance education. Thus, the process of brokering effective partnerships that harness the strengths of pockets of good practice is essential to the successful achievement of this project. However, institutional structures for delivering such programmes will need to be agreed, taking into account developments around the establishment of the proposed Open University.

The work described above will lead to proposals for two new distance education programmes that can be offered by universities or via partnerships between education providers to large numbers of learners annually. Once focuses for the programmes have been identified, it will be critical to provide support to

the development of detailed proposals This will include services in the areas of financial planning, technology choice, and overall course design.

This project should be read in conjunction with projects five and six, which we believe will contribute further to development of the necessary institutional infrastructure for delivering distance education programmes (regardless of what institution or consortium of institutions is responsible for implementing such projects). We imagine that project proposals for projects five and six would be developed as part of the process outlined under 'Implementation Plan'.

Implementation Plan

This work will need to be contracted to an appropriate local research agency. Implementation of the above will require the following broad steps:

1 Development of project proposals

- 1.1 Identify – in consultation with all relevant players – at least five possible areas for development of large-scale distance education programmes, together with sources of expertise to be tapped in each area.
- 1.2 Begin negotiations with all potential partners in developing programmes to assess feasibility of developing programmes in each area.
- 1.3 Run marketing surveys to assess potential national demand for programmes in each area.
- 1.4 Finalize choice of two programmes based on results of feasibility studies and marketing surveys.
- 1.5 Develop detailed proposals for implementation of new distance education programmes, covering:
 - 1.5.1 Detailed curriculum descriptions;
 - 1.5.2 Outline of learner support strategies;
 - 1.5.3 Descriptions of institutional arrangement for delivery of programmes (taking into account lessons outlined in chapter one of this report);
 - 1.5.4 Descriptions of programmatic administrative systems;
 - 1.5.5 Details of course design and development strategies (including identified personnel);
 - 1.5.6 Timeframes for implementation;
 - 1.5.7 Budgets.

Project Four Budget

The budget below covers only the generation of project plans. We imagine that it might be possible to submit completed proposals to the World Bank-NUSIP Innovation Fund for consideration once they are completed.

	Unit Type	Cost per Unit	Number of Units	Cost	TOTAL
Personnel					\$ 49,589.55
Local Project Leader	days	\$ 261.19	28	\$ 7,313.43	
Local Project Manager	days	\$ 149.25	27	\$ 4,029.85	
Local Consultant	days	\$ 261.19	75	\$ 19,589.55	
Local Administrator	days	\$ 74.63	10	\$ 746.27	
International Consultant (High)	days	\$ 1,000.00	N/A	N/A	
International Consultant (Medium)	days	\$ 550.00	N/A	N/A	
Materials Developer/Editor	days	\$ 400.00	N/A	N/A	
Web Developer	days	\$ 300.00	N/A	N/A	
IT Specialist	days	\$ 800.00	N/A	N/A	
Researcher	days	\$ 149.25	120	\$ 17,910.45	
Travel					\$ 14,417.91
International Air Travel	average trips	\$ 1,500.00	N/A	N/A	
Accommodation nights & subsistence	daily cost	\$ 200.00	40	\$ 8,000.00	
Local Air Travel	daily cost	\$ 52.24	20	\$ 1,044.78	
Local Car Travel	daily rate	\$ 134.33	40	\$ 5,373.13	
Subsistence	daily cost	\$ 37.31	N/A	N/A	
Workshops					N/A
Participant attendance	workshop day	\$ 74.63	N/A	N/A	
Workshop venue hire	workshop day	\$ 559.70	N/A	N/A	
Extraordinary Items					N/A
Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 29.85	N/A	N/A	
Distribution of Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 14.93	N/A	N/A	
Web/mail hosting	monthly cost student	\$ 111.94	N/A	N/A	
Master's degree enrolment	enrolment	\$ 20,000.00	N/A	N/A	
Computer & software	single unit	\$ 1,305.97	N/A	N/A	
Newsletter & distribution	1000 units	\$ 1,492.54	N/A	N/A	
Sub-Total					\$ 64,007.46
Add Overheads @	20%				\$ 12,801.49
New sub-total					\$ 76,808.96
VAT @	0%				N/A
TOTAL					\$ 76,808.96

PROJECT FIVE: TARGETED INVESTMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

Project Rationale

We noted in chapter one a concern that administrative systems for distance education in Nigeria have not yet had to cope with some of the key challenges such systems typically face, particularly in terms of dealing with large student numbers, central tracking of student assignments, and managing a decentralized tutorial support network. Further, we noted that all providers were concerned that their student record-keeping systems were predominantly reliant on databases developed by people no longer at the institution and that expertise to adapt and further develop these systems did not exist on campus. For these reasons, we believe there is merit in considering targeted investment in the development of administrative systems that might be made available to distance education providers in Nigeria (and potentially beyond). We would imagine such investments, in the first instance, being deployed to support the new programmes emerging from project 4. Thus, rather than providing a detailed project description – which would need to be developed as part of the proposal for project 4 – below we present some further ideas that might justify consideration in preparing such proposals.

Description of Project

This project will see creation and installation of software to administer distance education programmes effectively, taking specific account of the need for administrative flexibility required by delivery of such programmes. Several key operational approaches are important to the success of such a project. These are described below.

1. *Stripping Down Data Complexity*

A common problem afflicting several Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) nationally and internationally is the tendency to build unnecessarily complicated data management models and systems. This has two consequences. First, it undermines the possibility of ensuring project sustainability, as it drives up the cost of maintaining such systems. Second, it introduces gravitation towards centralized management of data, as it is easier to cluster high-level technical skills in a single location. Both of these problems are antithetical to the broad objectives of this project. Thus, initial specification development process should focus squarely on ensuring that data models are kept as simple as possible, constructing functionality around a stripped down, minimal core of data sets. Building on this, the project should pay particular attention to the design of user-friendly paper-based tools and computerized interfaces, which take into account the likely skills levels of users. These will need to be thoroughly tested with potential users during the first year of implementation, with the results of this testing feeding back into the re-design of all aspects of the system.

2. *A Technologically Flexible Model*

A critical principle on which to operate is that of technological flexibility, as this is the only approach that takes sufficient account of the operational realities of the schools with which we intend to work. Thus, design of administrative systems should, wherever possible, be de-linked from specific technological platforms. This project will design systems that can be used effectively as both paper-based and computerized systems. As an extension of this, the project will also seek to develop and deploy computerized systems that built on Internet technology to minimize dependence on specific technological platforms. In this way, it is possible to ensure that the systems deployed are as compatible with as many technological platforms as possible.

3. *The Importance of Data Warehousing*

To ensure that the system designed is as robust as possible, it will be important to focus strongly on designing efficient data warehousing structures, which seek to achieve an optimum balance between normalized data structures and efficient data management at institutional and national levels. This is important because analysis of data requirements of, for example, the NUC, demonstrates clearly that some aggregation of data up these various levels will be necessary. Well-designed data warehousing structures will also ensure that historical snapshots of important statistics over time are stored for ongoing comparison of data and extrapolation of key trends. Linked to this, the project will need to ensure that systems are compatible with legacy systems in operation within national structures in Nigeria. The project should seek to harness the power of networked computing to facilitate easy, automated transfer of data wherever possible. This can be achieved by building and/or acquiring systems developed using Internet Protocols.

4. *An Open Source System: Ensuring Sustainability*

Sustainability of systems is critical to the success of this project. This is why all systems developed should, in the first instance be designed as manual systems, which do not require sophisticated computer equipment to work effectively. Further, though, it is useful, wherever possible, to build systems on open source code. By designing systems as open source systems, it is possible to ensure that a wide range of organizations and individuals is empowered to update and improve the platforms created. This will also ensure that all systems developed become public property, and that individual institutions are easily placed to further adapt and improve the base platforms provided.

5. *Breaking the Task Down*

In approaching the design of EMIS systems, it is important to begin by breaking data requirements down into various key themes:

- Learner profile;
- Personnel;
- Curriculum;
- Student results/assessment;
- Institutional governance;
- Finances;
- Physical resources.

The project will examine each of these data themes in terms of a hierarchy of data collection and flow. Then it should develop a detailed statement of data requirements at institutional and national level within each theme listed above. This statement will include:

- A list of information requirements for that theme at that level, sorted into an order of priority.
- Table structures for the data model, listing data fields, a description of the field, the data type for each field, whether or not the field is required, and links between the field and other fields.
- A data flow diagram for each level, illustrating the movement of data from one level to the next.
- A statement of procedures for gathering data, which will include generic statements of responsibility for data gathering.
- A description of existing systems in terms of their applicability to the above descriptions.

PROJECT SIX: MODELLING OF EFFECTIVE USE OF ICTS TO SUPPORT COURSE MATERIALS DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Project Rationale

As we have noted in chapter one, a key challenge facing materials developers is that materials still rely heavily on handwriting of materials and capture of materials into digital format by specialist typists. Although improvements in computer infrastructure within federal universities fall outside of the brief of distance education capacity-building, such investments carry strong financial logic to them, as existing materials development strategies significantly increase the time on task for all involved. Therefore, we believe that there is merit in considering using the implementation of new distance education programmes – as proposed in project 4 – to model effective use of ICTs to support course materials design and development. Again, rather than providing a detailed project description – which would need to be developed as part of the proposal for project 4 – below we present some further ideas that might justify consideration in preparing such proposals.

Ideas for a Project Modelling Effective Use of ICTs to Support Course Design and Development

Curriculum design and development is – in many ways – the most important investment in the quality of educational programmes, as it provides the basis for everything that takes place in a teaching and learning environment. Unfortunately, though, most curriculum design and development tends to be undertaken in an *ad hoc* and often individualistic way. Thus, it is plagued by three problems. First, lack of systematic investments in curriculum design and development leads to wasteful duplication and fragmentation of efforts. Second, because curriculum design and development is not approached systematically, work done becomes harder to understand because it often does not form part of a larger whole. Thus, it is often implemented very inefficiently. Third, because the process resides predominantly with individuals, large investments are often quickly lost when an individual leaves an institution or become the ‘empire’ of that individual, creating significant potential management problems.

These problems can be partially resolved by creating systems to manage design and development of curriculum frameworks and resources. However, to systematize the design of curriculum resources - and the repositories that store these resources - we need to understand the core information that can be used to describe curriculum resources.

In order to be able to store any curriculum resource accurately and in a way that will make it easy to retrieve for future use, it is necessary to know how it fits into the curriculum. Before this can be done effectively, though, it is necessary to have defined the curriculum framework itself accurately. There are four types of information (or data sets) that people usually generate when developing a curriculum framework. These are:

- Learning outcomes (what will learners be able to do when they have worked through the curriculum?);
- Levels of learning (for example, undergraduate, postgraduate, or diploma);
- Content or subject or disciplinary areas (what content will courses use to help learners be able to achieve these outcomes?);
- Teaching and learning pathways (what activities will need to learners complete in order to be able to achieve learning outcomes?).

The above list does not represent a chronology of development. Rather, development of curriculum frameworks is an iterative process. We generate learning outcomes, but may then modify these based on the content we have available. Similarly, we may discover that we have missed out certain content areas when we design learning activities. Relational databases can play a critical role in helping to manage the relationships between all of this information.

In addition, rapid digitization of information and consequent ease of its dissemination is creating an important shift in emphasis regarding its value. Historically, information has been regarded as a product, which people were happy to purchase, to the financial benefit of those social structures that controlled and profited from its production and dissemination. While certain types of information will continue to retain value in this traditional way, the vast bulk of information, once it has been developed or collated, now rapidly loses value. Printed catalogues of information become redundant almost as soon as they are printed because this information changes so quickly. Cheaper and easier reproduction and communication of information very quickly erode the strategic and economic advantages emanating from having produced that information. Access to multiple sources of information via the Internet is making it harder to identify the source of new ideas, while the rapidity with which new information can be circulated reduces the time for which it can be regarded as 'new'.

These changes make it essential to find ways to use information quickly in as many different ways as possible before it loses its value. These need to focus on re-using information in different ways without generating significant additional cost. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to establish effective information systems, which can allow for quick and easy sharing and manipulation of information once it has been developed or gathered. It is also advisable from this perspective to invest slightly more energy in gathering and compiling information (which would focus on making it as generically applicable as possible), with a view to increasing its versatility and the strategies that can be used to disseminate it. Although this creates some additional costs initially, these can easily be amortized across the range of options that then become possible for communicating this information or using it to support a diverse range of educational opportunities. In this way, the resources used to generate information can be used much more effectively.

Possibly most importantly, it becomes essential to develop effective strategies for storing information in ways that allow it to be very easily manipulated for future purposes. If information about educational curriculum, resources, courses, and programmes is stored effectively, it then becomes easily available for future applications. In this way, research can build on growing knowledge bases, rather than repeating basic work already conducted. This can maximize the value of money spent on course design and development or educational research. It can then also – where appropriate – be easily made available via the Worldwide Web for access by all people involved in a given education programme, thus contributing usefully to developing an effective educational resource and research base online. Of course, in instances where security of information is important, it is easily possible to restrict access to it by adding a range of security strategies.

Another point emerging from the above discussions is that increasingly value lies not in possessing information, but rather in developing the skills and capacity to manipulate it effectively for new applications, which will be critical function to the ongoing sustainability of education. There is added benefit to creating electronic interfaces that enable users to engage with certain types of information themselves with little or no intervention by other people. For example, if web interfaces are added to such data warehousing systems, it becomes possible for educators and learners to select their own search criteria and extract relevant information very quickly and at no additional cost. This simple

search level adds tremendous strength to the information storage systems, and is very cost-effective, because changes made to databases can be reflected automatically via a web interface.

For all the above to work effectively, though, it becomes necessary to invest financial and human resources in:

- Establishing the types and combinations of information needed to support teaching and learning environments, target learners, and strategies for making this information accessible to all learners;
- Developing appropriate conceptual frameworks for new computer-based information systems; and
- Designing electronic database architectures that can be used to organize, store, and allow for multiple uses of curriculum-related information.

Description of Project

This project will see implementation of a comprehensive strategy to support distance education course materials design and development by using ICTs more effectively, possibly building on ideas such as those presented above. The project will be run as an extension of project 4, and thus detailed implementation proposals will be put together as part of that project.

PROJECT SEVEN: BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE NIGERIAN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION NETWORK (NODEN)

Project Rationale

The above projects – and particularly projects one to three – will contribute to the development of corps of distance education professionals, people able to contribute to the design and implementation of high quality distance education interventions. Although we have tried to ensure that the three capacity-building projects we have proposed comprise an integrated, ongoing professional development experience for participants, it is important not to see these as once-off interventions, but rather as a process of building a network, which continually shares ideas and continues to learn from the best in international distance education practices.

Currently, NODEN is a small association of organizations, by its own admission not functioning as effectively as it could. Nevertheless, it represents the only forum that brings together distance educators in any type of formal network, and we believe its goals are such that it justifies support and strengthening.

Description of Project

This project will encourage the development of the Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network (NODEN) as a professional association of organizations and individuals involved in the delivery of distance education programmes. This will be integrated with the above projects – particularly projects one to three – using NODEN as a structure for bringing people together, but will also make small investments in NODEN's ability to function effectively as an association. NODEN is not currently an organization with any official status, but it is the only organizational structure in Nigeria that provides an inter-institutional representation of the interests of distance education.

Currently, NODEN's membership comprises only organizations and its office bearers all have other full-time commitments, but we have been informed that the Network is intending to review membership types, with a view to introducing different types of membership. This introduces the possibility, amongst others, of building NODEN as a network of distance education professionals

(without losing its focus on institutional membership). We think there is great merit in building such a network, as it has the potential to:

- Coordinate ongoing training for distance educators in the country (workshops, conferences, short courses, and so on);
- Circulate new ideas and information amongst members, through a communication mechanism such as a newsletter;
- Provide people involved in delivery of distance education programmes a sense of common identity and purpose that extends beyond the individual programmes on which they may be working;
- Bring distance education providers and professionals together to speak with a common voice on policy and related issues relevant to distance education.

In this project, we propose that some type of structured linkage be established with NODEN to support implementation of projects one to three, and that a mechanism be found to provide a year's membership to the association to all participants in these projects. Further, we propose that funding be granted to NODEN to produce and circulate a bi-annual newsletter for distribution to, and possibly beyond, its membership. Finally, we propose that a small grant be made to NODEN to enable it to establish a basic administrative infrastructure, housed in an appropriate organization that can function as its secretariat. Here, we suggest that the decision to house NODEN's secretariat (an administrative function) be a long-term one. Many associations of this kind fail because they attempt to revolve these administrative functions from organization to organization (in the interests of democratic fairness), but this inevitably prevents establishment of the kinds of administrative infrastructure necessary to run such an association effectively.

Implementation Plan

Implementation of the above will require the following broad steps:

1 Secure NODEN commitment to project

- 1.1 Hold meeting with current NODEN members to present proposal, secure commitment, and finalize new types of membership required to make project work successfully.
- 1.2 Develop proposed administrative structures for NODEN.
- 1.3 Agree location for NODEN secretariat.

2 Build NODEN administrative structures

- 2.1 Purchase computer for NODEN secretariat.
- 2.2 Arrange (possibly through NUNet) e-mail facilities for NODEN secretariat.
- 2.3 Finalize fee structures for members and mechanisms for gathering funds (including opening NODEN bank account).
- 2.4 Develop simple database for tracking membership of NODEN, contact details, and newsletter subscription lists.
- 2.5 Establish mechanisms to ensure accountability of secretariat, including financial auditing procedures.
- 2.6 Enrol workshop/course participants as NODEN members.

3 Produce newsletters

- 3.1 Define procedure for producing bi-annual NODEN newsletter.
- 3.2 Produce four issues of newsletter, at 1000 copies each.

Project Budgets

	Unit Type	Cost per Unit	Number of Units	Cost	TOTAL
Personnel					\$ 28,380.60
Local Project Leader	days	\$ 261.19	5	\$ 1,305.97	
Local Project Manager	days	\$ 149.25	22	\$ 3,283.58	
Local Consultant	days	\$ 261.19	34	\$ 8,880.60	
Local Administrator	days	\$ 74.63	39	\$ 2,910.45	
International Consultant (High)	days	\$ 1,000.00	N/A	N/A	
International Consultant (Medium)	days	\$ 550.00	N/A	N/A	
Materials Developer/Editor	days	\$ 400.00	20	\$ 8,000.00	
Web Developer	days	\$ 300.00	N/A	N/A	
IT Specialist	days	\$ 800.00	5	\$ 4,000.00	
Researcher	days	\$ 149.25	N/A	N/A	
Travel					N/A
International Air Travel	average trips	\$ 1,500.00	N/A	N/A	
Accommodation nights & subsistence	daily cost	\$ 200.00	N/A	N/A	
Local Air Travel	daily cost	\$ 52.24	N/A	N/A	
Local Car Travel	daily rate	\$ 134.33	N/A	N/A	
Subsistence	daily cost	\$ 37.31	N/A	N/A	
Workshops					N/A
Participant attendance	workshop day	\$ 74.63	N/A	N/A	
Workshop venue hire	workshop day	\$ 559.70	N/A	N/A	
Extraordinary Items					\$ 8,619.40
Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 29.85	N/A	N/A	
Distribution of Resource Pack	single unit	\$ 14.93	N/A	N/A	
Web/mail hosting	monthly cost	\$ 111.94	12	\$ 1,343.28	
Master's degree enrolment	enrolment student	\$ 20,000.00	N/A	N/A	
Computer & software	single unit	\$ 1,305.97	1	\$ 1,305.97	
Newsletter & distribution	1000 units	\$ 1,492.54	4	\$ 5,970.15	
Sub-Total					\$ 37,000.00
Add Overheads @	20%				\$ 7,400.00
New sub-total					\$ 44,400.00
VAT @	0%				N/A
TOTAL					\$ 44,400.00

SUMMARY OF PROJECT BUDGETS

A summary of the projected costs provided for each project is supplied below.

PROJECT SUMMARY BUDGET

	TOTAL
Personnel	\$ 627,582.84
Travel	\$ 78,002.99
Workshops	\$ 138,992.54
Extraordinary Items	\$ 1,178,320.90
Sub-Total	\$ 2,022,899.25
Add Overheads	\$ 404,579.85
New sub-total	\$ 2,427,479.10
VAT @ 0%	N/A
TOTAL	\$ 2,427,479.10

Note: Overheads have been calculated as 20% of costs. These overhead calculations are designed to cover the costs of project administration, office administration, reception facilities, office space and infrastructure, computer infrastructure, rates and electricity, telephone, fax, and e-mail costs, maintenance and upgrading of equipment, and other related overhead costs.

Annexure A: Organizational Reports

SCHEDULE OF INSTITUTIONAL VISITS

INSTITUTION	LOCATION	ACTION
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University	Bauchi	Visit
Ahmadu Bello University	Zaria	Visit
Bayero University	Kano	Questionnaire
Federal University of Technology	Owerri	Questionnaire
Federal University of Technology	Akure	Questionnaire
Federal University of Technology	Minna	Questionnaire
Federal University of Technology	Yola	Questionnaire
National Teacher's Institute	Kaduna	Visit
Nnamdi Azikiwe University	Awka	Questionnaire
Obafemi Awolowo University	Ile-Ife	Questionnaire
University of Abuja	Abuja	Visit
University of Agriculture	Makurdi	Questionnaire
University of Agriculture	Abeokuta	Questionnaire
University of Agriculture	Umudike	Questionnaire
University of Benin	Benin City	Questionnaire
University of Calabar	Calabar	Questionnaire
University of Ibadan	Ibadan	Visit
University of Ilorin	Ilorin	Questionnaire
University of Jos	Jos	Visit
University of Lagos	Lagos	Visit
University of Maiduguri	Maiduguri	Questionnaire
University of Nigeria	Nsukka	Visit
University of Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt	Visit
University of Uyo	Uyo	Questionnaire
Usmanu Danfodiyo University	Sokoto	Questionnaire

ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI

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INTRODUCTION

The Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ABTU) in Bauchi was established in 1980 as the Federal University of Technology, Bauchi, and is one of four technology universities in Nigeria. Its name changed in 1988, in honour of the first Prime Minister in Nigeria (who was from Bauchi State). It began as an independent institution, was later merged with Ahemdu Bello University in Zaria, and is now independent again. Its goals and objectives are:

- (1) To develop and offer academic and professional programmes leading to the award of diploma, first degrees and post-graduate degrees, which emphasize skills, planning, adaptive research, development and maintenance in Engineering as well as in the Scientific, Agricultural and allied professional disciplines with the aims of producing socially matured men and women with capability not only to understand, use and adapt existing technology but also improve on them and develop new ones.
- (2) To act as agents and catalysts, through post-graduate training, research and innovation for the effective and economic utilization, exploration and conservation of the country's economic and human resources.
- (3) To offer to the general population, as a form of public service, the result of training and research and to foster the practical applications of these results.
- (4) To establish appropriate relationships with institutions involved in training, research and development technologies.
- (5) To identify technological problems and needs of the society and to find solutions to them within the concept of overall national development.
- (6) To induce in our students a sense of curiosity as well as an enquiring mind in order to encourage and develop in them creative thinking and research.
- (7) To generate in our students an awareness of the resources in their environment so as to enhance solutions to the challenges of our time for a match towards technological development and nation building.
- (8) To prepare the students for professional participation in related disciplines. It is intended therefore that graduates of the University will be able to adapt themselves to jobs which are problem/result oriented in a variety of areas. Graduates of the University are encouraged to seek to employ rather than being employed.
- (9) To seek to promote among our staff and students a sound academic and peaceful atmosphere for the proper conduct of effective teaching and research.
- (10) To undertake any other activities appropriate for a technologically based institution which are quite distinct from those of traditional Universities and Colleges.⁶

The University has five schools, a School of Engineering and Engineering Technology (engineering is the main strength of the University), a School of Agriculture and Agriculture Technology, a School of Environmental Technology, a School of Science and Science Education, and a recently started School of Management Technology. The University focuses on producing graduates who are entrepreneurs. There are approximately 7,000 students enrolled on the central campus, as well as another 20 – 30,000 enrolled in its outreach centres (see section on Centre for Distance Learning below). It also houses a Zero Emissions Centre, a research centre

⁶ A.S. Sambo. [2001]. *Academic Brief of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi*. Unpublished document from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. pp. 4-5.

affiliated with the United Nations University in Tokyo. The University now has approximately 300 academic staff.

The University has established an up-to-date computer centre, which houses around 50 computers, as well as computer facilities in various faculties and departments (including the administrative block and library). Many of the University's computers are networked internally via fibre-optic cable, and the University hopes to install a VSAT dish soon so it can provide Internet access and set up an Internet café. All students are required to take some form of computer course as part of their studies, and are also able to use computer facilities to type assignments, send e-mail, or perform other computer-related tasks.

ABTU also has its own press, a facility which – in addition to meeting the printing needs of the University – generates commercial income.

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

As part of its work, the University started setting up outreach centres around Nigeria in 1990. Over time, it has established 15 such centres (usually through sponsorship from state governments requiring development of specific skills), which have generated good income for the University. With the Federal Ministry of Education recently having placed restrictions on such activities, these are being reduced to the five centres within a 200-kilometre radius of Bauchi. The University became concerned about the quality of educational delivery at these centres, and thus established a Centre for Distance Learning to monitor the work of the centres.

The University provides outreach centres the syllabus for university programmes, and the centres are then responsible for designing and implementing the programmes. Monitoring by the Centre for Distance Learning focuses on the quality of teaching and takes various forms:

- There are ongoing visits to each outreach centre to review weekend teaching practices (usually around six visits per year). During these visits, the Centre also ensures that there are sufficient facilities to run any practical courses.
- The University checks examinations offered by the outreach centres. Examinations prepared by centres are sent to the University, where they are moderated (using external examiners appointed by Senate), printed in Bauchi, sealed, and then taken by an examiner to the outreach centre. Marking of examinations is also moderated by the external examiner.
- The Centre participates in interviewing of staff of the outreach centres

INTEREST IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

The University notes that the work of the Centre for Distance Learning does not really constitute distance education as it is commonly understood. Nevertheless, it sees clear roles for distance education in future. Current facilities on campus limit the institution's opportunities for growth, and ABTU feels that, using distance education methods, it could reach several more students.

With the recent closure of outreach centres, the University sees no option but to participate in national strategies to provide distance education programmes at higher education level.

However, it is concerned about centralized control of distance education practices, indicating a preference to see universities taking their own responsibility for managing inter-institutional collaboration, with common sets of minimum guidelines provided by a central agency such as the NUC.

To be able to participate in delivery of distance education programmes, the University would require:

- Support in packaging its curriculum for new modes of delivery. This would include developing capacity to develop distance education materials.
- Improved library facilities to support distance education delivery. This would include acquisition of digital educational resource and better Internet access (both to support development of course materials).

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INTRODUCTION

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) was established and began teaching in 1962. In terms of its University Law, the objects of the University are:

- (a) To provide regular and liberal courses of instruction in the humanities, the sciences and other spheres of learning of a standard required and expected of a University of the highest standing;
- (b) To promote research and the advancement of science and learning;
- (c) To secure the diffusion of knowledge throughout Northern Nigeria;
- (d) To acquire and take over the property, rights, trusts and liabilities of the Provisional Council established by the University of Northern Nigeria.⁷

⁷ Ahmadu Bello University [1975]. *Calendar 1975 – 1977*. Zaria. Ahmadu Bello University Press. p. 38.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AND RESEARCH LIAISON SERVICES (NAERLS)

Introduction

The National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) was started as a research unit in the Ministry of Agriculture (Northern Nigeria), but was attached to the ABU when the university was started in 1962. Its mandate was extended from the states on Northern Nigeria to the whole country in 1987. NAERLS is, therefore, now:

One of the Research Institutes under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Rural Development, charged with the primary responsibility of collating, processing and disseminating research results to rural farm families and other interested end-users...the NAERLS/ABU has the following general functions:

- a) Conduct research in the area Extension including adoption process;
- b) Coordinate the overall planning and development of extension liaison services throughout the country;
- c) Coordinate and understand the production of extension packages in the form of training, publications, radio and television packages;
- d) Coordinate national training, conferences and workshops;
- e) Publish the National Agricultural Journal of Extension and other books or technical bulletins which cover subject matter in more depth;
- f) Act as external review of the activities of Research Institute based AERLS form time to time in order to enhance their performance.⁸

NAERLS, which has a total of around 370 staff, has five general offices located around the country, each of which is responsible for operations in specific geographical zones of Nigeria. Its dissemination activities include providing in-service training for extension field staff, conducting policy maker workshops, packaging information in news bulletins and leaflets (of which there are over 100 titles), and producing radio and television programmes. The organization is also involved in ongoing research into agricultural extension, with a particular focus on researching new models of extension. It is currently working on testing new models of community-based participatory approaches to extension, which are aimed at empowering local communities and farmers.

Broadcasting and Print

NAERLS has been actively involved in producing radio and television programmes on agricultural extension. Over the years, it has produced several programmes on crops, livestock, poultries, fisheries, and home economics. On the television side, there used to be regular broadcasting until broadcasting was commercialized. At this point, television coverage was significantly reduced, and broadcasting of programmes is at the discretion of individual channels. Some television channels do continue to broadcasting approximately 30 minutes of NAERLS programming weekly. Unfortunately, there is growing obsolescence of NAERLS's television production facilities, which now require extensive additional capital investment if the service of television production is to be continued.

In terms of radio,

⁸ NAERLS. [no publication date]. *The NAERLS*. Zaria. NAERLS/ABU. pp. 2-5.

The NAERLS Radio Programmes have been used effectively over the years to reach farmers in nearly all parts of this country and the West African Sub-region. The Farm Radio Programmes of this Institute started in 1969...Since then, farmers' questions are answered in radio and timely advice on every aspect of agricultural production are given in simple language over the radio.⁹

These services appear to be widespread and very popular in Nigeria. Again, however, commercialization of broadcasting has taken its toll, leading to the unusual situation that – although NAERLS covers all costs of production and receives no return on advertising– it is currently required to purchase broadcasting airtime on the radio station that broadcast its programmes.

As has been mentioned above, NAERLS has over 100 titles in its range of educational leaflets. These are short pamphlets, produced in a range of languages, that provide information a range of agricultural topics. Batches of leaflets are currently produced on order by state and federal government departments, and constitute a substantial education resource (which appears not to be being used to its full potential). Interestingly, although the leaflets are produced on computer, graphics are added manually immediately before printing, as there is currently insufficient hard drive space to store all of the graphics of the leaflets digitally.

⁹ *ibid.* p. 20.

NATIONAL TEACHERS' INSTITUTE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Teacher education in Nigeria does not constitute part of the federal university system. Nevertheless, it seemed appropriate to include a report on the National Teachers Institute (NTI), because it has run larger-scale distance education programmes during its history than any other institution in Nigeria. This experience provides a possible platform for developing capacity to deliver distance education programmes at other institutions.

INTRODUCTION

According to its 2001-2005 strategic plan,

The National Teachers Institute was established by Decree No. 7 of 10th April 1978, to upgrade the quality of teachers in the nation's educational sector, and to contribute in various ways to the general educational development of the country. The institute has its headquarters in Kaduna and operates through a network of 37 coordinating offices and 800 study centres across the country...Accomplishments of the institute include the training of 1.5 million candidates in the Teachers Grade Two Certificate Program by distance learning and the graduation of fifty thousand teachers in the Nigerian Certificate in Education Program by distance learning. Recently the institute's mandate was enlarged to include the

design, development and running of a special training program for the production of teachers for the implementation of the universal basic education (UBE) project.¹⁰

NTI identifies its functions as being to:

- Upgrade under-qualified and untrained teachers.
- Provide refresher and other upgrading courses for teachers.
- Organize workshops, seminars and conferences, which would assist in the improvement of teachers.
- Conduct examinations.
- Carry out research in conjunction with other bodies on any matter relevant to education development in the country.
- Formulate policies and initiate programmes at all levels of education designed to improve by way of research the quality and content of education in Nigeria.
- Assess from time to time the training programmes offered by institutions controlled by or associated with the Institute with a view to ascertaining the professional competence of those institutions.
- Offer such assistance, either alone or in cooperation with educational bodies as may required by the institutions controlled by or associated with the Institute.
- Foster and enhance international cooperation in the education of teachers.

NTI offers three programmes in total, all offered via distance education:

- The Teacher's Grade Two Certificate. The purpose of this programme – introduced in 1984 – is to upgrade teachers whose deficiencies in one or more subjects has denied them award of the Teacher's Grade Two Certificate (about 21% of the 400,000 teachers in Nigeria's primary school system).
- The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). This programme was introduced in 1990 to upgrade qualified Grade Two teachers to NCE level. This level will eventually become the minimum teaching qualification in the country's education system.
- The Pivotal Teacher Training Programme. This programme was launched in August 2000, to cater for expected demand of the recently introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. This programme is likely to see enrolment of an additional 1.12 million students in the primary school system, and lead to demand for an additional 30,000 teachers annually until 2006. On its launch, the programme enrolled 20,176 students.¹¹

The Institute also plans to start offering degree programmes in partnership with the University of Abuja in the near future.

NTI is organized into six departments to carry out its functions: The Directorate, Administration and Personnel Department, Professional and Field Operations Department, Examinations Department, Planning, Research and Statistics Department, and the Finance and Supplies Department. As of November 2000, there were 809 staff, comprising 483 senior and 326 junior staff. However, the NTI recognized that it is impossible to put all staff required for its operations into one institution, and hence has set up working relationships with other institutions and developed a list of resource persons to complement its full-time staff contingent. Despite this,

¹⁰ NTI. [2001]. *The Strategic Plan of the National Teachers Institute 2001-2005: Re-engineering the NTI for First Class Service to the Nigerian Education System in the Twenty First Century*, unpublished report. p. 4.

¹¹ Information taken from: NTI. [2000]. *Report on National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna*. Unpublished report. p. 3.

NTI aims to become self-sufficient in all aspects of distance education delivery (particularly in areas such as printing and production of materials) to avoid reliance on sub-contractors who cannot deliver efficiently and on time.

DELIVERING PROGRAMMES

Delivery of programmes relies predominantly on printed materials, with the emphasis being on creating simple, readable materials, laid out attractively for learners. A course book will cost, on average, N400 per copy to produce. Interestingly, it appears that several institutions (including universities) use NTI materials in their programmes.

The Institute does have a desire to use audio, video, and computer-based materials, but this has currently not extended beyond some minor experimentation with audio and video. Regretfully, the costs of introducing new media are prohibitive, particularly since the commercialization of broadcasting in the country.

To support learners, NTI has established 37 state offices around Nigeria (including at least one office in every state). The Institute has also established a much larger network of study centres, mostly using school facilities nearby the NTI offices. Typically schools are paid a token fee of N5000 per annum for use of these facilities. Registration of students takes place at the NTI field centres. There is an annual registration, as well as three term re-registrations. The latter are undertaken to assess dropouts from the system.

Course tutors are recruited for each centre, and they provide learners approximately 80 hours of face-to-face tuition per session (a session lasts 12 months). Most of this is provided during school holidays, but there is also ongoing contact during school time (usually on weekends). The exact schedules for face-to-face tuition are negotiated between students and tutors. The ration of students to tutors is variable across centres, but NTI aims for a 30:1 ratio.

Provision is made within this system for delivery of practical sessions in subjects such as English, Science, and the Arts. Certain centres within the NTI network have been targeted for this purpose, and students are required to travel to these specially equipped centres for practical work.

There are two basic forms of assessment in NTI programmes, continuous assessment and examinations. Continuous assessment comprises 40% of a student's final mark, and is made up of tasks such as assignments, tests, and practicals. These assessment tasks are marked by local tutors, and usually have a turnaround time of one to two weeks. Examinations comprise the other 60% of the final mark. NTI operates its own examining board for administering these examinations.

It is worth noting that, throughout the above, NTI places no reliance on the Nigerian postal system, choosing rather to work through its own network of centres and delivery vehicles to deliver materials to and maintain communication with students.

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

The teacher education curriculum is designed by the National Educator Research and Development Council in Abuja. NTI then adapts this national curriculum to its needs and the needs of its clientele in constructing its programmes. NTI will usually prepare a programme overview and sequencing, before approaching university staff from different institutions to develop materials (for which they are paid a once-off fee). NTI provides these writers a format for materials development for distance education, as well as a guide to writing distance education materials.

Most materials have been generated using ‘conference writing’, a process which involves bringing together subject specialists, content editors, and language editors to kickstart the development of materials and combine this process with professional development for the team.

Materials are usually handwritten in the first drafting phases. After editing, they are sent to the computer centre for typing, and any further changes are made by subject specialists on campus.

Materials revision usually takes place every four to six years, and generally follows a similar process to materials development.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality assurance framework at NTI starts at study centres. These centres are expected to set up inspectorate networks within their state, involving key state bodies, which then become responsible for assuring quality of the NTI system. In addition, though, NTI runs its own quality assurance processes. This includes such activities as:

- Feedback from students via questionnaire on the quality of materials;
- Visits by NTI central office to its centres three times annually, during which routine monitoring and checking of records takes place;
- Programme monitoring by bodies such as universities and national agencies; and
- Accreditation of courses by the National Commission for Colleges of Education.

A full quality assurance plan is documented for the Pivotal Teacher Training Programme in a publication entitled *Quality Assurance in the Pivotal Teacher Training Programme: Monitoring and Evaluation guide*. This guide contains detailed descriptions of roles for various people in quality assurance, as well as tools (mostly questionnaires) to support implementation of the quality assurance strategy.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The following extract from the NTI 2001-2005 strategic plan highlights problems and prospects from an institutional perspective:

Although the Institute has recorded significant progress in some of its activities, its operations have over the years become bedeviled by problems and its capacity for meeting

its mandates has become very seriously threatened. Perhaps, as a result of circumstance the Institute since inception has focused on rather limited aspects of its mandate. In the meantime Government has established other Institutions to carry out functions earlier envisaged for the Institute e.g. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and Teachers' Registration Council (TRC). Inadequate funding, poor quality staffing, ineffective Governing Council over a long period, poor management, all of these have been cited as reasons for the loss of focus and the increasing inability of the Institute to effectively retain and accomplish its mandate. The overall effects of this is now manifest in the Institute's dilapidated facilities and obsolete equipment, its inability to produce required course materials even where students have paid for them, thus grossly undermining the Distance Learning nature of the Institute's programmes and the ineffective control over state offices and study centres.

In spite of these problems however the continuing relevance of the mandates for which the Institute was originally established is not in doubt. Similarly the establishment of other Institutions has not obviated the need for the services, which the Institute, properly reengineered and managed, can most effectively offer. The reality of the Nigerian educational scene today is that of massive short falls in the supply of teachers particularly at the primary school level. It is also acknowledged that a very significant percentage of teachers in employment are untrained, under-qualified and professionally unqualified. There is no reason to think that this situation would change in the short or medium term without forceful and effective intervention. Hence with the commitment of the present government to education in general and to the UBE programme in particular, the production of large numbers of qualified teachers and the retraining of the large numbers of unqualified teachers already in the system have become urgent and imperative. That this imperative cannot be met through the regular school system is obvious hence the need for the application of the Distance Learning System for which the Institute is already well known.¹²

¹² NTI. [2001]. *The Strategic Plan of the National Teachers Institute 2001-2005: Re-engineering the NTI for First Class Service to the Nigerian Education System in the Twenty First Century*. pp. 5-6.

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INTRODUCTION

The National Universities Commission (NUC) was set up in 1962. It emerged as an administrative department in the Cabinet Office with first Commission comprising twelve non-academic members. In 1974, the Commission was re-constituted as a statutory body in order to give it the proper legal instrument to perform its functions. The primary objectives of the NUC are 'to ensure the orderly development of University Education in Nigeria, to maintain its high standard, and to ensure its adequate funding'.¹³ Its specific functions are:

- (a) To advise the Head of the Federal Government, through the Minister on the creation of new Universities and other degree granting institutions in Nigeria;
- (b) To prepare after consultation with all the State Governments, the National Man-power Board and such other Bodies as it considers appropriate, periodic master-plans for the balanced and coordinated development of the universities in Nigeria and such plans shall include:
 - (i) The general programmes to be pursued by the Universities in order to ensure that they are fully adequate to National needs and objectives;
 - (ii) Recommendations for the establishment and location of new Universities as and when considered necessary; and

¹³ NUC. [2000]. *Annual Report 1999*. Abuja. National Universities Commission. p. iv.

- (iii) Recommendations for the establishment or disapproval of new faculties or postgraduate institutions in existing Universities or the approval to establish such faculties or institutions.
- (c) To make such other investigations relating to higher education that the Commission may consider necessary in the National interest;
- (d) To make such recommendations to the Federal Government on the financial needs, both recurrent and capital of University education in Nigeria; and study the financial needs of the University's research and to ensure that adequate provision is made for this in the Universities;
- (e) To receive block grants from the Federal Government and to allocate them to Universities in accordance with such formulae as may be laid down by the Federal Executive Council;
- (f) To take into account, in advising the Federal Government on University finances such grants as may be made to the Universities by State Governments and by persons and institutions in and outside Nigeria;
- (g) To undertake periodic reviews of the terms and conditions of service of personnel engaged in the Universities and to make recommendations thereon to the Federal Government where appropriate;
- (h) To recommend to the Visitor of a University that a visitation be made to such University as and when it considers it necessary;
- (i) To act as the agency for channeling all external aid to the universities in Nigeria; and
- (j) To carry out such other activities as are conducive to the discharge of its function under [its] Act.¹⁴

¹⁴ *ibid.* p. iv-v.

NIGERIAN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION NETWORK

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INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Open and Distance Education Network (NODEN) was established in 1992. It currently comprises 12 institutional members nationally. Its aims and objectives are:

- a) To further the growth of Open and Distance Education;
- b) To disseminate information about Distance Education;
- c) To promote networking and sharing of information and materials on Open and Distance Education;
- d) To promote research, evaluation and publication in Open and Distance Education;
- e) To establish contact and cooperation with all Distance and Open Education institutions/organizations in Nigeria and at the regional and international levels;
- f) To engage in Open and Distance Education activities through workshops, seminars and conferences at national, regional international levels; and
- g) To promote all other such activities that can advance the cause of Open and Distance Education in Nigeria.¹⁵

¹⁵ NODEN. [2001]. *NODEN: Nigerian Open & Distance Education Network*. Unpublished Information Document. p. 1.

Membership of NODEN is currently N65,000 per institution, as well as an additional US\$15 for membership of the West African Distance Education Association (WADEA). The Network meets quarterly, as well as running professional development workshops for members.

NODEN itself notes that, despite several years of existence, it has suffered a 'stunted growth'.¹⁶ However, it has recently attempted to reinvigorate itself in the wake of the September 2000 National Workshop on Distance Education, noting that:

Finally Nigeria has woken up from her slumber and is ready to join the rest of the world in the quest for a global reform in education and its delivery. NODEN must be part of this global movement.¹⁷

To this end, NODEN has established various goals for 2001. In brief, these are to:

- Properly define distance education and – through this – to set out clearly criteria for membership of NODEN;
- Engage in an aggressive membership drive and to seek to make current members more committed and active;
- To establish a newsletter for NODEN;
- Strive to position itself as the 'spokes body' for Open and Distance Education in Nigeria by strengthening its relationship with key national structures.

¹⁶ *ibid.* p. 1.

¹⁷ *ibid.* p. 1.

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INTRODUCTION

The NUC established an e-mail committee in 1994 to study the feasibility of introducing e-mail to Nigerian universities. Its objectives are:

- To end the isolation of Nigerian academic staff and students from each other and from the global academic community;
- To encourage the sharing of resources, foster academic and research collaborations among Nigerian universities, and with their counterparts around the world;
- To provide universities with access to electronic data-bases, journals and books, many of which are increasingly available only in digital formats;
- To serve as a vehicle to expand access to education at minimal cost of capital building expenditure; and
- To place Nigerian universities at the forefront of the information revolution in Nigeria, that they might serve their proper roles as foci for National development.¹⁸

Following a preliminary workshop on electronic networking of Nigerian universities (which was organized to discuss the feasibility report prepared by the Committee), it was decided that the Nigerian Universities Network (NUNet) should be formed. Eventually, the NUNet National Technical Consultative Committee (NTCC) was established in 1997 to advise of such issues as network topology and technology options. Simultaneously, the NUC prioritized investments in ICT by granting blanket approval for universities to spend 20% of their teaching and research equipment grants on 'NUNetworking'. During 2000, a World Bank feasibility study endorsed NUNet, and provided further recommendations on topology.

Currently, 25 higher education institutions have been provided dial-up e-mail through the NUNet project, although the project is reportedly

Hampered by unstable power, unreliable and high cost of telephone, lack of campus LANs and WANs to distribute service, and lack of skilled staff to maintain [the service].¹⁹

The NUC has deployed a test VSAT earth station during 2000 to overcome some of these problems, and explore the possibility of providing two-way data transmission services via satellite. However, this will not really be feasible until universities have their own networks and are using the service sufficiently to justify investments. Additional plans in place include:

¹⁸ NUNet. [2001]. The Nigerian Universities Network (NUNet) in Brief. Unpublished paper. p. 1.

¹⁹ *ibid.* p. 1.

- The World Bank has approved a Project Preparation Facility to fine-tune NUNet plans for the backbone and institutional LANs.
- MacArthur Foundation has made grants to the universities at Kano, Zaria, Port Harcourt and Ibadan to produce network strategic plans.
- US Department of State and USAID have respectively approved linkages with the University of Iowa to coach university decision-makers and technical staff on ICT over the next 2 years.²⁰

Capacity-building is a key priority. Reportedly, for example, all 47 Nigerian universities have fewer trained ICT staff than the University of Iowa.²¹

An interesting problem outlined by NUNet is that there is currently no agency responsible for allocating top-level domain names in Nigeria, which has made it impossible for NUNet to upgrade its mail server (as it unable to have its IP Addresses changed). The process has been impeded by Nigerian agencies seeking to take short-term profits out of this function (an organization which had offered to do this worked proposed to charge between N50,000 and 70,000 for the service).

²⁰ *ibid.* pp. 1-2.

²¹ *ibid.* p. 2.

UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA CENTRE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

According to a document on the history of the University of Abuja, The Centre for Distance Learning & Continuing Education, being an integral part of the University of Abuja, owed its emergence directly to the establishment of the latter as a conventional university by the Babangida administration in 1988, four years after the Open University was scrapped....Basically the aims of the Centre as a 'distance education' provider was to increase access to knowledge to a large number of citizens interested in furthering their education...Unlike the conventional methods, distance education is designed to democratise and liberalise education so as to facilitate the pursuit of knowledge without sacrificing one's career.²²

The Centre offers programmes that are obtainable within the university under the conventional system (although with some modifications in terms of lengths of duration to accommodate practicalities of learning by distance education). As of the end of June, 2001, there were 5,156 students enrolled in distance education programmes. An analysis of course registrations on 195 courses reveals the following percentages of enrolment figures:

Fewer than 10	29%
10 – 100	31%
100 – 500	35%
500 – 1000	3%
More than 1000	2%

²² Abubakar, S. et al. [2001]. 'Distance Learning & Continuing Education' in *The Foundation & Growth of the University of Abuja* (S. Abubakar [Ed.]), Abuja. University of Abuja Press. p. 80.

Although the Centre is empowered to offer programmes in all disciplines, there are one or two exceptions to this (forced by external circumstances). Most notable is that the Council for Legal Education, a national structure not linked to the university, does not recognize any legal graduates who have studied via distance education as lawyers. When the Centre established its legal programme, it was very popular, but had to be discontinued because of the Council's position.

In a more recent development, the Centre has developed proposals with the National Teachers' Institute (see separate report) on joint training of in-service teachers for a Bachelor's Degree of Education. This proposal has been submitted to the Federal Minister of Education for his consideration.

DEVELOPING MATERIALS

Materials are developed by academics of the main university, with support from expert staff from the Centre. The Centre is currently developing strategies to be able to sub-contract non-university staff to develop materials, and has already been able to bring a few external experts in to support materials development. Although there is some use of audio cassettes (for English and Communication Skills courses), print is the dominant medium.

The process of materials development begins with subject specialists, who are located within mainstream university departments. These specialists are paid by the Centre for their work. Payment is around N3,000 for up to eight lectures – which make up a unit. Payment for speedy delivery of the course is doubled. Materials are also submitted to another content specialist for content editing. If major modifications are required, there is a process of dialogue between the content editor (who is usually a senior academic in the same department) and the course writer. In some instances, the Centre has run residential workshops to speed up the writing process. In such workshop, several writers are brought together for a combination of intensive training and materials development.

Once this is complete, if necessary, the materials are passed on to a language editor for final editing, before they are passed on to the Centre to be put into the layout and format required by the Centre (where common headings, fonts, footers, and so on are applied to the materials). There is one graphic artist appointed at the Centre, who takes care of any graphical requirements within the materials. Final printing is sub-contracted to commercial printers, and one copy of a study guide for one unit usually costs around N300 to print.

Given technological realities, most of this materials development and editing process takes place manually on hand-written or typed materials. Where materials have been typed, this is typically done by secretarial support rather than by materials developers themselves, and corrections are also incorporated by this secretarial support. Capturing materials on computer is done at the main University's computer centre, at a price of approximately N20 per page.

On completion, copyright of materials resides with the university. Students studying full-time via contact education on the main University campus are able to access materials in the University library.

There is little ongoing review of materials once they have been developed.

DELIVERING PROGRAMMES

Students depend primarily on course materials when working through the course, but there are also contact sessions. When the Centre was established, there were 11 contact centres located around the country, intended to provide face-to-face support to learners, but these were closed in 1994. Currently, the Centre has been using schools in Abuja to provide lectures and tutorials to learners. It pays a nominal rental fee for use of these facilities. Plans have been established to re-open some of these centres:

The new arrangement is to re-open, on staggered basis, a centre in each of the six geo-political zones of the country, as from 2001/2 academic session. In addition to Abuja, the proposed new zonal centres will be at Enugu, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Jos, Maiduguri and Zaria. The first three centres to take off in October 2001 are Enugu, Lagos and Zaria. It is hoped that courses to be offered in zones, apart from Abuja, shall be on a cost effective basis. This means that only programs that would attract candidates for a standard class would be floated in the study Centres outside Abuja. Certainly, courses where only a handful of students are likely to register would be jettisoned.²³

The Centre has also started building its own classroom facilities in Abuja.

Contact sessions are run once a month on Fridays and Saturdays. There are approximately 12 hours of contact per session (sessions are annual) per course. These are intended as tutorial centres, but usually comprise traditional lecturing by academic staff. Travel and accommodation are the responsibility of students.

During contact sessions, lecturers also often sell handouts to learners (at anything up to around N300 per handout). This practice is not sanctioned by the Centre, as lecturers – who also mark assignments and examinations – indicate to students that such handouts are critical to successful completion of the course and proceeds from such sales are pocketed by the lecturers. This exploitation of students by individual lecturers was euphemistically described as the ‘Nigerian factor’.

There is continuous assessment, usually in the form of tests and take-home assignments, as well as a final examination. Assignments are usually delivered and returned at face-to-face sessions, which means turnaround time for assignments is generally at least a month. Very little feedback is provided on assessment. Moderation of examination does takes place, using external moderators from other universities within Nigeria.

²³ *ibid.* p. 89.

ADMINISTRATION

The Management Board of the Centre is presently the highest administrative organ of the Centre on matters of policy. It is chaired by the University Vice-Chancellor, and comprises the principal officers of the University, Director of the Centre, Deans of Colleges, the Directors of Academic Planning and Computer Centre, and representative of senior staff of the Centre. It is answerable to the University Council. In addition, there is an Academic Board, dealing with all academic matters of the Centre, as well as a Management Committee and an Admission Committee for the Centre.

Registration and admission of all students is conducted at the Centre (although this will be extended to other contact centres as and when these are re-opened). The Centre insists that students be at least 22 years of age to register, in order to maintain focus on mature working adults. Students receive course materials on registration. All student records are kept at the Centre. They are captured on a DOS-based administration system (currently being upgraded to a Windows-based system), as are all student results.

Funding for the Centre comes directly from the National Universities Commission, but is paid into the main bank account of the University. Likewise, student fees are administered by the central finance department of the University. Money is then made available to the Centre as determined by the central finance department. This has created ongoing problems, with the Centre being regarded in some senses as the poor relative of the University.

OTHER FACILITIES

There is no library at the Centre, but the British Council does bring books from its facilities weekly. Similarly, there is no Internet access at the Centre, with Centre staff having to visit the main University campus to gain such access. There is a small, shared computer centre on campus, which houses nine computers. These computers are used for student record-keeping and to support development of course materials. These facilities serve 57 staff at the Centre, of whom approximately 15 are academic staff, programme officers, and senior management.

Audio production facilities were donated to the Centre by COL in 1995 (although no training was provided). These are currently used very little, their main use being to duplicate cassettes for the English and Communication Skills courses. Despite this lack of use, the facilities occupy the best space – air-conditioned and secure – on campus. Interestingly, this space is significantly more spacious than that provided for the computer centre. There are plans to produce videos of lectures, but the Centre requires more equipment in order to do this.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

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INTRODUCTION

The University College, Ibadan, was established in 1948, and was characterized in its inception by a special working relationship with London University. In terms of this relationship, the institution was affiliated to London University, and bound by its quality standards, qualification-awarding mechanisms, and institutional structures. However, in terms of new laws passed in 1954, the University College established its own Senate and a reorganized council. It then achieved full academic independence in 1962 through a new Act. According to its Constitution,

It shall be the general function of the University to encourage the advancement of learning throughout Nigeria and to hold out to all persons, without distinction of race, creed or sex, the opportunity of acquiring a liberal education; and for the purpose of carrying out that function it shall be the duty of the university, so far as its resources permit:

- (a) To provide such facilities for the pursuit of learning and the acquisition of a liberal education as are appropriate for a university of the highest standing; and
- (b) To make those facilities available on proper terms to such persons as are equipped to benefit from the use of the facilities.²⁴

Between 1948 and 1997, the University has produced 52,312 first degree graduates. From 1968 to 1997, it has produced 17,748 Master's Degree and 2,327 Doctorates. This has meant that Ibadan has played a major role in producing senior academic staff for other universities, a role formally acknowledged by the NUC in its acceptance of proposals by the University to focus increasingly on postgraduate studies in its development. However, 'financial constraints have...prevented the kind of increase in postgraduate intake that was anticipated'.²⁵

The University of Ibadan currently enrolls over 20,000 students across a range of faculties and Colleges, including Medicine, Science, the Arts, Law, and Education.

CENTRE FOR EXTERNAL STUDIES

The Centre for External Studies was started in 1988, through the Department of Adult Education. Its focus was initially on training teachers, particularly practicing teachers who needed to upgrade qualifications, as well as guidance/counseling training and development of adult

²⁴ University of Ibadan. [1998]. *University of Ibadan 1996-1998 Calendar*. Ibadan. University of Ibadan Printery. pp. 31-32.

²⁵ *ibid.* p. 23.

educators. This focus has, however, recently been expanded to include two Arts Degrees (one in theatre and one in French), as well as an agricultural programme. There are approximately 1,500 students currently enrolled in programmes of the Centre.

The main thrust of delivery in the Centre's programmes is through printed materials, developed by university lecturers. There is also a regular student newsletter. After registration, students take materials home to study, and then return to the University for a six-week residential session. At this session, they also write a final examination (which currently constitutes the only formal assessment within programmes). The Centre established six study centres to support students (where they are able to register, collect materials, and organize teacher practicals), but three of these centres have now been closed.

The Centre also used to run tutorials, but has had to discontinue these because of administrative problems (particularly due to lack of financing). It is expected to be financially self-sufficient, which means that – on most cases – the cost to students of studying in this way is the same as face-to-face education.

Writing of course materials is done by university lecturers. It is generally initiated through writing workshops, at which training is provided and lecturers are accommodated in hotels for an intensive writing period during which they complete as much of their writing as possible. Lecturers are paid for this work, as well as for time they spend running face-to-face sessions. They also receive royalties on sale of materials (although copyright resides with the Centre). Editing of materials is undertaken by Centre staff (who have been sent on courses in the United States of America).

Each guide consists of around 15 lectures, meaning that there are approximately six guides for each full-year course. Guides cost about N100 to produce, and are sold to students for between N150-200. Materials are made available to all students on campus at the University Bookshop. The Centre is interested in exploring use of multimedia resources – particularly audio cassettes – but finances currently make this impossible.

The University administration has recently become more interested in the work of the Centre, since it has demonstrated its ability to maintain educational standards and success rates of the face-to-face programmes. The University is particularly interested in the Centre's ability to generate income, to provide education to working people, and to absorb students who cannot currently be accommodated in face-to-face programmes. A Committee has been established to review the structures and operations of the Centre, with a view to expanding its operations (for example, in areas such Accounting and Business Administration).

UNIVERSITY OF JOS

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Jos first came into existence as a satellite campus of the University of Ibadan in 1971. It was granted full autonomy in 1975, and has subsequently established eight faculties, namely Arts, Education, Environmental Sciences, Law, Medical Sciences, Natural Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Social Sciences. There are currently approximately 12,000 students at the University, a figure which overstretches the existing facilities of the institution.

According to its prospectus,

Based on our motto which is “DISCIPLINE AND EDUCATION”, the university’s philosophy can...be said to be “Innovative and Practical Education for Humble Service to Humanity”...The main objectives of the University are, therefore, as follows:

- a) To produce men and women in different fields of endeavour who are imaginative, practical, creative, humble and dedicated to the service of humanity.
- b) To contribute through researches and practical professional practices towards solving various scientific, technological, environmental, socio-cultural, economic and other problems of Nigeria and humanity at large.
- c) To make substantial, high-quality contribution to academics and knowledge through research, publications and other forms of dissemination of knowledge.
- d) To attain and maintain the highest possible standards in the quality of our teaching, research outputs and services.
- e) To inculcate the spirit of the University’s motto in the staff, students and general University community.²⁶

The University of Jos has expressed an interest in distance education, particularly with a view to generating income for the institution. This has become particularly important since a requirement introduced that universities generate 30% of income themselves. At present, however, the

²⁶ University of Jos. 2000. *University of Jos Prospectus 2000-2002*. University of Jos Press. Jos. pp. xi-xii.

University is waiting to see how the Federal Ministry of Education and NUC will proceed with distance education, and will then work out its proposals as to how to integrate itself with these national strategies.

COMPUTER FACILITIES

The introduction of computer networks at the University of Jos is changing the culture of teaching and learning at the institution, driven by a core of committed and professional computer staff. The purpose of these networks has been to augment teaching and research. All major buildings are connected via fibre-optic cables. All faculties have computer laboratories, accessible to staff and students alike, of between five and fifteen computers. These are used for teaching, e-mail, Internet access, typing, and other related computer functions. There is also a Computer Centre, which houses over 50 computers. These facilities are very heavily used, with students able to book a computer for shifts of an hour at a time.

The University is now responsible for producing very computer-literate students. The Centre runs Diploma and Certificate programmes, as well as specialized training periodically for staff from other universities. It also runs eight-week courses for the general public, enrolling 60 students at a time. Materials for these courses are placed on the University's servers, so that students can also access materials after lectures are completed. In the long term, the University's aim is to digitize learning materials for all courses across campus.

The Computer centre houses five servers for the University LAN, each of which has been built at the University. These servers run a combination of NT and Linux operating systems, but the long-term plan is to migrate all systems across to Linux. There are approximately 200 computers connected to these servers. Thus, to ensure continuity of operations, the computer centre is connected to NEPA, to the University's main generator, and its own dedicated generator. There are also solar panels connected to the servers.

Internet access at the University is provided via a VSAT dish. This offers a 256k down path, and a 64k return path, providing unusually quick Internet access. These facilities costs US\$4000 a month to rent.

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS DISTANCE LEARNING INSTITUTE

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Lagos was established by an Act of Federal Parliament in 1962, and currently has approximately 30,000 students. According to the prospectus for the Distance Learning Institute at that institution,

Because of its unique and cosmopolitan environment, the University was...required to provide facilities for part-time studies in such fields as Business Studies, Accounting, Law and Education through Correspondence and Distance Learning techniques.²⁷

The Distance Learning Institute was originally established as the Correspondence and Open Studies Unit in 1973. It changed name to the Correspondence and Open Studies Institute in 1983, as a reflection of a growing degree of autonomy within the university. In 1997, its finally changed, to become the Distance Learning Institute (DLI). This change,

While re-affirming the enhanced autonomous status of COSIT, effected some re-structuring and streamlining in the modus operandi of the Institute. The restructuring was, among others, to ensure that the frequency of study-centre meetings are reduced to the barest minimum, leaving only meetings for tutorial, informal group studies, etc., while the Institute provides the support learning materials, such as Course Texts, Audio and Video Cassettes, etc.²⁸

As an Institute, DLI has its own Academic and Management Boards, and is empowered to formulate policies, employ staff, and be responsible for academic programmes, examinations, and supervision of its day-to-day affairs.

The Mission of the Institute is:

To provide a special non-conventional mode of education which would:

- Fill a gap in the opportunities for higher education for gainfully employed persons in the business/commercial capital of the nation.
- Widen access to and promote an innovative, flexible and cost-effective system of education to an increasing proportion of mature persons within and outside the country.²⁹

It seeks to achieve this mission through:

- Expanding higher education facilities and widening access to them by some carefully fashioned means;
- Providing demand/need-based programmes;
- Reaching out to large numbers of people, especially those disadvantaged in utilizing the conventional full-time educational mode;
- Establishing and operationalising a major open university network employing mainly distance learning mode;
- Establishing and developing educational resource bases;
- Assuring the quality of programmes and services offered.

The three primary programmes of the DLI are:

- Degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, and Science (with options to specialize in Biology, Mathematics, Physics, or Chemistry). The Accounting and Business

²⁷ DLI. [2001]. *Distance Learning Institute 1991-2001 Prospectus*. Lagos. Unilag Press. p. 1.

²⁸ *ibid.* p. 3.

²⁹ *ibid.* p. 4.

Administration degrees have approximately 4000 students enrolled, and the Science degrees approximately 300.

- Diplomas in Mass Communication and Library Science. These programmes are just starting.

DELIVERING PROGRAMMES

Since its inception, the DLI has been subject to certain infrastructural limitations. It began by using television broadcasting to deliver lectures, but this could not be sustained, as government support for this was withdrawn (this coincided with the time at which the government of the day disbanded the first fledgling open university). This removal of government support meant that the DLI was required to begin charging its students fees to participate in studies, which obviously placed limits on who was able to enrol. It also negatively affected the DLI's ability to invest in technologies to support programme delivery, such as audio-visual and computer facilities.

As a consequence of these kinds of problems, the DLI has had to revert to a quite substantial reliance on face-to-face lectures in delivery of its programmes. These are augmented by course materials, written by university lecturers. Face-to-face sessions take place at the university of campus in Lagos. There are DLI centres – in Benin City, Enugu, Ile-Ife, Owerri, Ilorin, Kaduna, Akure, Kano, and Abuja – which used to be lecture centres, but these are now used only for administrative functions (particularly registration and delivery of course materials). Approximately 30% of students come from outside Lagos State.

There are 15 lecture sessions per year per course (these take place on Fridays and Saturdays), as well as residential sessions of between four to six weeks. During the long residential sessions, there are opportunities for tutorials and revision, and the session culminates in writing of a final examination. There is also continuous assessment through the residential session, which accounts for 20% of the final mark.

The DLI used to use radio broadcasts as part of its delivery strategy, but was forced to discontinue this. It has, however, started to produce audio cassettes for the Library Science Diploma, and is hoping to have these produced before the end of 2001. The cassettes will contain audio recordings of the course materials.

DEVELOPING MATERIALS

When new courses are identified, the DLI looks for appropriate professionals within university departments. Only if there is no-one internally available does it proceed with employing external course writers. Because course materials are predominantly written by university lecturers, there have been some problems in their production. This is because these lecturers are engaged on a full-time basis in the operations of the mainstream university programmes.

Typically, materials development follows the following process. An individual course writer develops materials, working from a brief guide supplied by DLI. S/he then passes these on to DLI, which undertakes a brief quality assessment. Following this, the materials are given to a

moderator, who assesses the quality of the content (this is usually a more senior academic within the same department). The moderator then completes a form commenting on the material, either accepting it, proposing modifications, or rejecting it. If proposed modifications are major, the revised work may be returned to the moderator for re-assessment. Once this process is complete, the materials are handed to DLI for layout and printing. Although the DLI now insists on receiving materials on diskette, major capacity problems at the university's computer centre mean that materials are sometimes still received in handwritten form.

The DLI has experienced major problems in production of materials, because of bottlenecks with the University of Lagos Press. As a university institute, the DLI is required to use this facility rather than sub-contracting materials production to the private sector. This examples typifies the kind of problem DLI faces as a distance education unit within a dual mode university.

The DLI aims to review its courses approximately every five years

LINK TO OPEN UNIVERSITY

Many of the problems that the DLI has experienced in delivering its programmes led it to make a submission on distance education to the Federal Minister of Education. In combination with other factors, this prompted the Ministry to run a national planning workshop on distance education in 2000, which saw many universities being forced to shut down their satellite campuses, which were erroneously being described as 'distance learning centres'. This workshop also lead to proposals to re-establish the Open University.

The DLI sees the Open University as a joint facility, providing shared resources, operational guidelines, and coordination to the delivery of distance education throughout the university system. The director of the DLI is part of the planning committee on distance education, which will be responsible for planning the Open University.

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

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INTRODUCTION

A law to establish a University in Eastern Nigeria was passed in 1955, the date which marks the formal beginning of the University of Nigeria. The University of was formally opened in 1960. The University has two campuses, one at Nsukka and one at Enugu. A third campus in Calabar became a fully-fledged university in 1977.

The objectives of the University are:

- (a) To encourage the advancement of learning and to hold out to all persons without distinction of race, creed, sex or political conviction the opportunity of acquiring a higher and liberal education;
- (b) To provide courses of instruction and other facilities for the pursuit of learning in all its branches, and to make those facilities available on proper terms to such persons as are equipped to benefit from them;
- (c) To encourage and promote scholarship and conduct research in all fields of learning and human endeavour;
- (d) To relate its activities to the social and economic needs of the people of Nigeria; and
- (e) To undertake any other activities appropriate for a university of the highest standard.³⁰

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Nigeria is a relative latecomer to distance education. It started its exploration of distance education approaches by providing 'sandwich' courses for teachers (these are residential courses offered to teachers during school vacations). It then further extended these operations by setting up outreach programmes, as an extension of its philosophy of bringing education to the doorstep of the Nigerian people.

The University's involvement in outreach programmes is fewer than two years. It has decide not to rush into these operations, in order to ensure implementation is done properly. The University currently has eight outreach centres around the country, seven of which are accepting students on programmes. The University's intention is to consolidate existing centres before proceeding with any further expansion.

³⁰ University of Nigeria. [1991]. *University of Nigeria 1991-1993 Calendar*. pp. 6-7.

All programmes offered through outreach centres have to be approved by the University Senate. Lecturers at centres are drawn from both within and outside the university, but must have the same qualifications as lecturers on the University's normal programmes. The current focus is on certificate and postgraduate programmes, in areas such as computer science, public administration, management sciences, mass communication, accountancy, marketing, environmental education, and engineering (amongst others).

On average, there are about 200-300 students being enrolled per centre (compared with enrolments of approximately 25,000 on the central campuses of the University). Numbers are being limited because of limitations in facilities. However, the demand for enrolment is much higher than these figures suggest.

The main mode of delivery at outreach centres is the lecture. Some use is made of materials, but this is limited because of abuses by lecturers in selling lecture notes to students at very expensive rates. There are plans to introduce some centralized production of materials, but it is difficult to get cooperation from lecturers, who often want substitute compensation for this work, as it will remove their existing sources of income through private materials sales. However, the University's Outreach Implementation Committee is considering strategies to produce standardized materials.

The Internet revolution is also affecting education, and the University of Nigeria has begun exploring how to use the Internet and how to build virtual education. Nothing has started yet, as the computer culture is still in its embryonic stages at the University. There are still no computer networks on campus, and facilities such as the library have some distance to go towards computerization. Nevertheless, the University is keen to be part of computerization processes, and is also keen to provide students at outreach centres access to resources via the Internet.

The Government's position on outreach centres has complicated delivery of distance education. The University feels that there outreach does have a place in higher education, and that Government's role does not quite understand possible roles for outreach. However, the university sees this is an ongoing dialogue, and looks forward to putting its views forward as the process unfolds.

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

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INTRODUCTION

According to its history,

On 27 April, 1975, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria decreed the establishment of four universities...and three University Colleges...In the case of the University College, Port Harcourt, affiliated to Lagos, nothing at all happened in 1975 beyond the appointment of Professor Donald E.U. Ekong as first Principal in September...1976 was the year in which the first appointments were made, junior academics were recruited for training, meetings with local communities held, classes held to prepare local candidates for admission, and policies formulated...On the 1st October, 1977, the institution...was granted full university status and autonomy.³¹

The University has a number of broad disciplinary focuses, fairly typical for a higher education institution: humanities, biological sciences, chemical sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and health sciences, educational studies.

The University history notes that 'one of the earliest problems experienced by the university authorities was location of the university at Choba which is several kilometers from Port Harcourt'.³² This does indeed pose a serious challenge to the institution, as was, for example, seen in the time it took this researcher (over an hour) to get to the institution from central Port Harcourt. This problem of time was exacerbated by poor roads and traffic congestion, and raises issues of how distance education students might, for example, travel reasonably regularly to campus to participate in tutorial sessions. However, to counter this problem, the University has set up a satellite campus, responsible for providing part-time courses, in the city itself.

³¹ Alagoa, E.J. [Ed], [1999] *A History of the University of Port Harcourt 1977-1998*. Port Harcourt. University of Port Harcourt Press Limited. p. 7.

³² *ibid.* p. 48.

The University has, as one would expect, a colourful history marked throughout by a series of challenges that have impeded its work. Notable amongst these challenges have been ongoing difficulties in maintaining and securing facilities and infrastructure and labour relations difficulties (the most recent academic strike at the institution was still underway during my visit, although it appeared that it would be over in that week). As one would expect under such circumstances reference is made regularly to insufficiency of national budget allocations to education. One academic indicated to me that a major reason for the current strike was an attempt to force government to increase its expenditure on higher education as a percentage of GDP, which he indicated – and other reports corroborate – is well below international norms (he suggested that the strike had successfully achieved this goal).

Problems with infrastructure and facilities are most obvious, and also strongly stated in the institution's historical archive:

- It is becoming difficult for the Works and Services Department to cope with the enormous task of maintaining facilities.³³
- The problem of infrastructural development is still prevalent, for instance, the supply of light is still unsteady; the generators are virtually dead due to old age; but peace is gradually coming to campus...As said earlier, funds for university have not been coming in the quantity needed and all universities are crying out for it.³⁴
- Library facilities are still not what they should be in a university. Available space is inadequate, air-conditioners have given up, the furniture is in a state of disrepair and a lot of academic materials are archaic.³⁵

This is no doubt going to be an ongoing theme throughout the entire federal higher education system, and poses particular challenges when considering strategies to build capacity to deliver distance education programmes.

SOME OPPORTUNITIES

Although there are no current distance education programmes at the University of Port Harcourt, two specific opportunities were brought to my attention that seem to justify further consideration in building distance education capacity in Nigeria:

1. Via its Adult Education Centre, the University has expressed great interest in delivering distance education programmes. The University regards distance education as a viable way to reach more people and to extend the reach of the institution beyond its current geographical limits. Current thinking is to transform the Adult Education Centre into a university-wide centre for delivering distance education. A representative of that centre indicated that the institution already has resources that can contribute to creation of distance education, most notably the human resources of the university. In particular, there is a Department of Curriculum and Educational Technology, which has built up some relevant expertise in this regard. In addition, there is existing space and building infrastructure on campus that could be used in delivering distance education programmes. Some of these

³³ *ibid.* p. 45.

³⁴ *ibid.* p. 49.

³⁵ *ibid.* p. 83.

would, however, require refurbishment. An example of such a building was shown to me, and I was given a very informal estimate that this building would cost between N1 to 1.5 million to refurbish. However, the Centre also listed briefly some of its needs to be able to contribute effectively to distance education delivery. This included:

- Equipment;
- Research facilities;
- Radio production and transmission facilities;
- Facilities for developing printed materials (development of printed materials currently relies heavily on photocopying);
- Attendance at distance education conferences (particularly those where developing countries share ideas and experience).

2. In 1999, the University signed a memorandum with the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) to establish the fourth Nomadic Education Centre in the country (the others are at the Universities of Jos, Maiduguri, and Sukoto). This centre has been allocated responsibility for migrant fishing community education in Nigeria, a logical choice given its location in the country's riverine coastal areas. Currently, the Centre is:

- Providing face-to-face training in different states for teachers of nomadic children (typically three-day training courses for practicing teachers);
- Engaged in materials production for nomadic children, specifically in adaptation of the national syllabus to the needs of nomadic fishing communities;
- Undertaking research on migrant fishing communities.

The Centre has expressed interest in expanding its operations to include distance education programmes, particularly to take account of the living patterns of participating learners. The Centre is currently developing proposals to use radio programmes to provide education to migrant fishing communities, as an expansion of a similar pilot proposal developed by the National Universities Commission. Radio is regarded as particularly appealing given the lifestyles of people in migrant fishing communities and the fact that most such communities rely heavily on radio for access to information.

Annexure B: Preliminary Institutional Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

“Distance education methods, when applied to tertiary level instruction, possess the potential to generate numerous benefits. If properly staffed and implemented, distance education can (1) increase enrolments at less marginal cost than by expanding residential campuses; (2) expand access to under-served populations; (3) lay the foundation for a culture of life-long learning; and (4) improve the structure and pedagogy of university curricula. For this reason, tertiary distance education has become an area of very rapid growth in the world today.

Government’s inclination towards developing distance education in Nigeria led to the organization of a workshop on distance education put together by the office of the Special Adviser on Education and the Federal Ministry of Education at the ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja from 27th to 29th September 2000. The theme of the workshop was ‘Towards Evolving a National Policy on Distance Education in Nigeria.’ In line with the theme of the workshop, a draft national policy evolved at the end of the workshop.

Distance education, because of its rising importance in educational development, is one of the areas that will be covered by the World Bank sponsored Nigerian University System Innovation Project (NUSIP). In the light of this, one local and one international consultant have been appointed by the World Bank to produce a funding proposal for the Distance Education Component of NUSIP.”³⁶

We would like to invite your participation in this important process by asking you to complete the attached questionnaire.

Neil Butcher
SAIDE, South Africa
International Consultant

Hafiz S. Wali
Kaduna
Local Consultant

³⁶ Introduction to NUC/NUSIP/World Bank’s ‘Nigeria Tertiary Distance Education Capacity Building’ - Consultants’ TOR.

INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTACT DETAILS

Institution: _____

Contact Person: _____

Position of Contact Person: _____

Telephones (1) _____ (2) _____

E-mail: _____

Fax: _____

Postal Address: _____

Date founded: _____

If there are people you would want to serve as contacts, please supply similar information about them at the back of this sheet.

OVERALL INSTITUTIONAL DESCRIPTION

1. How would you describe your institution? (In answering this question, please consider your mission statement, goals, types of qualification offered, target groups of learners, and other relevant information)

CURRENT PROVISION OF EDUCATION

In seeking to contribute to building the capacity of Nigeria's tertiary education system, we are keen to understand better how the system is serving current demands. The following questions focus on establishing this understanding:

2. How many students applied for admission to your institution in:

	applied	registered	enrolled
2001			
2000			
1999			
1998			
1997			

3. Please list the three most important reasons that prevented you from enrolling more students.

#1

#2

#3

INTEREST IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

4. Would your institution be interested **in running distance education programmes**? If so, please explain briefly why.

5. If the answer to question 4 was yes, in which three curriculum areas would you be most interested in offering distance education programmes?

6. If the answer to question 4 was yes, would you like to offer your own distance education programmes or would you prefer to work in partnership with other organizations?

If you were to work in partnership with other organizations, which of the following roles do you think your institution would be best equipped to perform? Please explain briefly underneath each positive response what specific capacity you believe you have that you could contribute to establishment of distance education programmes.

7. We could play a role in **planning of distance education**: YES NO

Specific Area of Interest	YES	NO
Determining the type of DE Institution to be established	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation of DE policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational plans and strategies for DE at tertiary level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identification of challenges and constraints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain briefly what specific capacity you believe you already have in any of the above areas.

FACILITIES

9. Do you have a resource centre of library on campus? If so, how many books does it stock? Is it accessible to students? Is it accessible to the community around your institution?

10. Are your teaching facilities ever used by other organizations to provide education? If yes, please describe briefly what facilities are used for these purposes and how.

11. How many functioning computers are there on campus? How many of these are for student use?

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED (IF AVAILABLE)

- ✓ Publicity information
- ✓ Mission statement
- ✓ Prospectus
- ✓ Calendars
- ✓ Information guide for learners
- ✓ Evaluation reports
- ✓ Institutional policy documents

Annexure C: Plan of Action for a Decade of Distance Education in Nigeria (2001 – 2010)³⁷

INTRODUCTION

Following extensive deliberation at the National Workshop on the theme “Towards a National Policy on Distance Education in Nigeria” held in Abuja, between the 26th and the 29th of September, 2000, participants affirmed that distance education delivery system is critical to educational development in Nigeria. Note was made of the early start in distance education in the 1950s and the relapse from the 60s to date. This slackening of thrust has resulted in the tardiness of Nigeria to take full advantage of the immense opportunities provided by distance education in enhancing access and ensuring equity in the delivery of quality education to the citizenry.

Participants further noted that it has become auspicious for the distance education delivery process to take centre stage especially with the present Government commitment to revamping education. Consequently, a 10-year Plan for rejuvenating distance education was endorsed to serve as catalyst for rapid turn-around of education in Nigeria.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

WHAT IT IS

The term “distance education” refers to various methods by which a variety of media and technologies are used to provide and/or improve access to good quality education to large numbers of people either because they missed the opportunity earlier in life or because their present socio-economic and family circumstances would not permit them to acquire education through the formal school system.

Variouly known as ‘correspondence study’, ‘home study’, ‘off-camps study’, ‘distance study’, ‘telematic teaching’, ‘extra-mural study system’, distance education is the provision of education by a mode other than the conventional face-to-face method but whose goals are similar to, and just as noble and practical as those of on-campus full-time, face-to-face education. Distance education is a cost-effective system of instruction independent of time, location, pace and space and can be used for a variety of learning situations such as full-time, part time, graduate and undergraduate, certifications and continuing education.

³⁷ This annexure is taken, in its entirety, from: Federal Ministry of Education. [2000] *Education Today: Quarterly Journal of the Federal Ministry of Education*. Vol. 8, No. 3. pp. 59-64.

It accommodates diverse learning styles, provides access to remote and normally inaccessible underrepresented groups such as women, as well as persons in rural and remote locations.

In other words, distance education is a system of teaching and learning which adapts and adopts various instructional media and capable of providing access and qualitative education for diverse learners in a cost-effective and efficient manner such that learners will develop their full potentials for life-long and life wide learning.

In the classical definition of distance education, the system is characterised by the quasi-separation of teacher and learner, the use of media, the provision of two-way communication for purposes of inter-activity, and the quasi-permanent absence of the learning group.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of distance education in Nigeria are to:

- Provide access to educational opportunities in a cost effective manner for those who otherwise would have been denied access;
- Provide a second chance for those who left school for one reason or the other, but who having matured further would want to make a re-entry into the knowledge arena;
- Provide a chance for those who did not avail themselves the opportunities to go to school but who are still whiting the age range for UBE, to make up for their short comings or to become literate and get on with life;
- Enrich the knowledge base of students in regular school programmes as well as others who cannot afford to attend full-time schooling; and
- Deliver educational services in a manner that would be more learner friendly and would motivate learners to realise that learning is a life-long affair.

Distance education is characterised by the learner taking greater control over what to learn and when to learn it. Even though teachers are responsible for packaging and facilitating students' learning, teacher-student face-to-face contact constitutes a minor part of the learning process. The multi-mode approach, using several media for facilitating teaching and learning is a trademark of effective distance education/open learning. Distance education recognises change as a constant, and flexibility as a trademark.

ROLE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN NATION BUILDING

Distance education should meet the needs of all Nigerians and should adequately and appropriately address, amongst others, the following issues:

- Access and equity;
- Alleviation of capacity constraints;
- Provision life-long and life-wide education;
- Development of social (civic) literacy;
- Education of the citizenry to remove illiteracy and poverty; and

- Development of culturally and socially tolerant people who exercise ethical and moral considerations in national and local affairs, with a community spirit.

Distance education should, amongst others, cater for:

- All levels of education – primary, secondary and tertiary;
- Formal and non-formal sectors including workplace training; and
- Continuous professional development of teachers.

STATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Over the years, the provision of education facilities has been grossly inadequate, largely because of funding inadequacy. Thus, there has been a growing unmet demand for suitable places in our educational institutions, especially at the tertiary level. In view of this high unmet demand, a number of institutions have resorted to establishing satellite campuses in cities where there are many candidates eager to obtain higher qualifications. Most of these institutions, especially those that have established outreach study centres elsewhere, erroneously called Distance Learning Centres, in the past ten years have embarked on this mainly for money-making purposes. In many cases, the overtures to establish the satellite campuses or facilities, recruit local lecturers and are involved in the local management and operation of the Outreach Programme. These individuals or firms see the operation as a form of business venture from which to make money to be shared in agreed formulas with the collaborating tertiary institutions.

In effect, the mushrooming satellite campuses are characterised by poor training facilities and the exploitation of unsuspecting candidates eager to acquire higher degrees. Since their establishment is largely motivated to generate revenue, with very little interest and concern to provide qualitative education, the local facilitators recruit, both qualified and unqualified persons as lecturers; examinations are characterised by large scale examination malpractices and unsupervised works, with the result that the so called graduates are half-baked in terms of imparted knowledge.

A few institutions such as the National Teachers Institute (NTI), Kaduna, are making notable efforts at distance education delivery. In recognition of NTI's capability to utilise distance learning methodologies, the Federal Government has given it some responsibility for teacher education on a massive scale for the UBE programme.

It is by addressing the undesirable situation in the distance terrain in Nigeria that we can begin to make the much needed effort to tackle the problem of access and to offer educational opportunities to candidates in a better streamlined and sanitised form to ensure qualitative education.

DECADE GOALS

It is envisaged that by 2010, the following would have been achieved:

1. Enactment of a National Policy on Distance Education (as a component of the National Policy on Education) to provide the policy framework for the operation of the distance education delivery system in Nigeria.
2. Establishment of a solid institutional framework for distance education in Nigeria following carefully conducted needs-assessment studies.
3. Establishment of distance education as a core component of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme to jump-start the UBE delivery process
4. Support of UBE (including the non-formal and nomadic education components) to achieve (a) 100% primary and junior secondary Net Enrolment Ratio; and (b) 100% adult literacy rate.
5. Reopening of the National Open University to address access and equity issues in higher education.
6. Provision of higher education to a minimum of one million qualified candidates through the distance and open learning modes involving public and private sector participation, in areas of high manpower needs.
7. Establishment of a National Open School (secondary) to address access and equity issues in secondary education.
8. Provision of secondary education to five million out-of-school youth and adults through the National Open School.
9. Capacity building (training) of 20, 000 distance education operators including course writers, support service providers, producers, managers, broadcasters, instructional designers and technicians.
10. Establishment of a virile ICT-driven distance education delivery system.

MID-DECADE GOALS

In order to keep the decade goals in perspective, the following mid-decade goals are set, to be evaluated in 2005.

1. National Policy on Distance Education (as a component of the National Policy on Education) approved by National Council on Education.
2. Needs-assessment studies on distance education conducted, leading to the establishment of institutional frameworks and the strengthening of existing structures such as the National Teachers Institute (NTI).
3. Distance education established as a core component of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) delivery process.
4. Support UBE (including the non-formal and nomadic education components) to achieve (a) 85% primary and junior secondary Net Enrolment Ratio; and (b) 70% adult literacy rate.
5. Re-opening of the National Open University.
6. Establishment of at least one private sector initiative (institution) at the tertiary level in distance education.
7. Provision of higher education to a minimum of 200,000 qualified candidates in areas of high needs.
8. Establishment of a National Open School (secondary).
9. Provision of secondary education to one million out-of-school youth and adults thorough the National Open School

ACTIVITY	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Distance education established as a core component of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme to jump-start the UBE delivery process.	■									
Support UBE (including the non-formal and nomadic education components) to achieve (a) 100% adult literacy rate.	■									
Re-opening of the National Open University to address access and equity issues in higher education.	■									
Provision of higher education to a minimum of one million qualified candidates through the distance and open learning modes involving public and private sector participation, in areas of high manpower needs.		■								
Establishment of a National Open School (secondary) to address access and equity issues in secondary education			■							
Provision of secondary education to five million out-of-school youth (and adults) through the National Open School				■						
Capacity building (training) of 20,000 distance education operators including course writers, support service providers, producers, managers, broadcasters, instructional designers and technicians.	■									

ACTIVITY	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Establishment of a virile ICT-driven distance education delivery system.										

SAMPLE OUTLINE PLAN OF ACTION

YEAR	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
2001	Enactment of a National Policy on Distance Education (as a component of the National Policy on Education).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To provide the framework for the distance education delivery system in Nigeria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Draft Policy prepared at the September 2000 National Workshop ◆ Draft Policy circulated widely for comments ◆ Draft Policy revised in line with suggestions for improvement ◆ Draft Policy forwarded to NCE through JCCE for approval. <p>Distance Education Coordination Unit in BACAA Branch of ESS Department of the FME to coordinate implementation.</p>	Federal Ministry of Education
2001	Reactivation of the Nigerian Network for Distance Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To re-activate the Nigerian Network for Distance Education to enable it play active role in the implementation of the National Policy on Distance Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Allocation of seed grant to the Network to organise a “resuscitation meeting and an annual grant thereafter to sustain its activities. ◆ Network to hold an early meeting (October/November 2000) for discussing draft National Policy on Distance Education and to finalise Action Plan. ◆ Establishment of linkage of the Nigerian Network to other networks on distance education in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ FME ◆ Donor Agencies
2001	Conduct of a Distance Education National Needs Assessment Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To deepen understanding of, and provide empirical data on (a) the clientele for distance education in Nigeria at the primary, secondary and higher education levels; (b) human and material resources required for successful implementation ; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Commissioning of the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) Secretariat of the Federal Ministry of Education to implement the needs assessment studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ FME ◆ Donor Agencies

YEAR	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
		© capacity building needs; and (d) sources for funding distance education in Nigeria		
2001	Distance education established as a core component of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme to jump-start the UBE delivery process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To jump-start the UBE process and strengthen its implementation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Continuous social mobilisation; (b) Reaching the unreached (expanding coverage); (c) Delivery of high quality teaching and learning; and (d) Improved management 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ FME ◆ Donor Agencies
2001	Capacity Building for Distance Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To train different categories of personnel who are/will be involved in the DE delivery system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Conduct of study tours to centres of excellence in DE e.g. India and South Africa ◆ National, Zonal and State-level training of personnel who are/ will be involved in DE. ◆ Sponsorship to IGNOU, PGDEE and MADE courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ FME ◆ Donor Agencies
2001	Re-open the National Open University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To re-open the National Open University as a Centre of Excellence in Distance Education in Nigeria. ◆ To provide an avenue for enhancing access to and promoting equity in higher education in Nigeria. ◆ Boost high-level manpower in Nigeria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Set-up National Open University Reactivation Committee. ◆ Implement recommendations of the Committee in phases beginning with location, installation of take-off infrastructure, appointment of core staff including Principal Officers. 	FGN, Technical Assistance from Commonwealth of Learning, Donor Agencies
2001	Strengthen existing DE institutions in the areas of human resources and infrastructure.	<p>To empower existing DE institutions to achieve greater efficiency</p> <p>To enhance the programme through enhancement of human and material resources.</p>	Determine through assessment	