



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Capacity Building
in Africa



Republic of Kenya



University of Nairobi

ICT and distance learning in tertiary education institutions during COVID-19 induced school closure

Webinar on 29 April 2020

Sharing of information and experiences – Kenya

Robert Oboko, PhD
University of Nairobi

Agenda

- Background
- Status of Distance Learning Before COVID-19
- University Response
- Capacity Building for Educators during this period
- Government support
- Challenges and Opportunities

Background

- Kenya has a longstanding tradition of distance learning – paper based classes e.g. University of Nairobi, Strathmore and Mount Kenya
- Since the last decade successful efforts in ICT-enabled distance learning- Most universities have ODEL units – University of Nairobi, Maseno, Moi, Jomo Kenyatta, Daystar, USIU
- In a survey by KENET on mode of preference for learning among learners in 44 universities in Kenya in 2019, 57% preferred blended learning while 3.3% preferred pure online learning
- Orientation towards learning with ICT was there
- Paper-based and ICT enabled distance learning during school term for module 4 learners and face to face holiday learning also popular in Kenya tertiary institutions

Status of Distance Learning Before COVID-19

- Majority of the universities in Kenya have an ODEL unit
- They have courses and programs available but mostly for on campus students
- Some success stories in use of distance learning beyond Kenyan boundaries are in University of Nairobi, Maseno University and the AMREF university
- Some already examine students by e-means such as University of Nairobi and Maseno
- Policy for bring your own device (BYOD) (laptop) and a laptop as a requirement in many universities in Kenya
- Use: Blended on campus and holiday programs (Mod 4)
- **Availability of blended learning environments / courses** : *Although the students preferred blended learning, the e-readiness survey results (KENET, 2019) show that blended courses were not widely available. 38% had not taken a blended course and 40% a few (78%)*
- 36% of students had taken a pure online course – university of other courses from MOOCS – Potential for such learning

University Response

- Universities were suddenly ordered by the government to close
- Training of all faculty members on online teaching tools
- Took up offers for free training tools: Webex, MIT courseware, ...
- Created institutional emails for learners to facilitate enlistment for the courses
- Developed guidelines for virtual examination of projects
- Provided staff and learners with internet bundles – safaricom or TelkomKenya
- Mostly synchronous training as there was no time for instructional design and course conversion for electronic learning
- Decision to complete academic year that was a few weeks to the end by online teaching

Government Support

- Kenya has signed an agreement with Google Loon
- To provide internet access to Kenyans as they work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Targets rural areas with 4G connection
- Through Telkom Kenya
- CUE required that new programs or revised programs in universities incorporate the use of Blended Learning as a means for delivery

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Large classes not so manageable with the available technologies
- Learners in rural areas not well catered for – no electricity in some areas, poor network connections and the cost of bundles
- Most lecturers are using synchronous sessions as they had not prepared interactive materials for asynchronous learning
- Learners with disabilities (hearing, seeing) not well catered for
- Learner resistance partly due to the psycho-social climate –uncertainty
- How to administer examinations

Opportunities

- Many members of faculty now believe they can integrate technologies into teaching and learning
- Students accept this as an alternative way of learning- from the lowest levels to university
- If used in blended version, it might increase availability of lecturers to students, especially those who travel a lot on research engagements

END

- **THANK YOU**
- **Asante Sana**