

Increasing Access to Post Schooling: Can Open and Distance Learning Contribute?

7 November 2011

Background

- Reports indicate that there are some three million youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who are not in education, training and employment in South Africa.
- Half a million young people only have a primary education.
- Another half a million have less than grade 10 and almost a million dropped out between grades 10 and 12.
- Additionally half a million who completed grade 12 had no matric exemption (Stats SA)

Our Problem

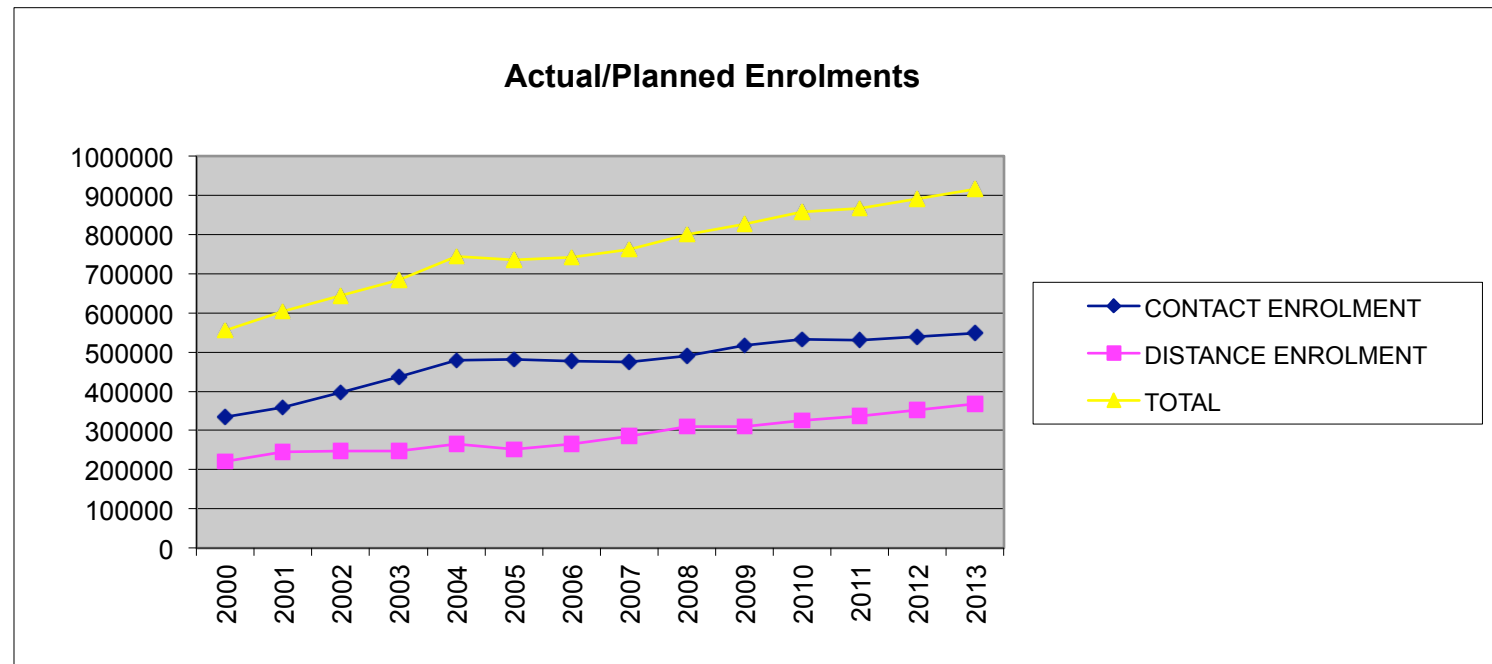
1. Millions of young people who have left, or been pushed out of, schooling without
 - Any qualificationand more importantly
 - Any basic skills, knowledge and learning habits
2. Millions of adults burdened with the legacy of Apartheid who were systematically denied access to post-primary education and especially Maths and Science

Our Response - 2009

- 420 K enrolments in 49 FET Colleges (about half of HE) – how many FTEs?
- 298K in 2395 PALCs
- SETAs
- Private FET

By contrast: Distance Higher Education has nearly 400 000 enrolments

Comprises on average 40% of higher education
enrolments over the last 10 years



Can Open and Distance Learning Contribute?

1. Defining ODL
2. Examples of practice from across the world
3. Some possibilities for our context

Target Group Needs

- Meaningful post schooling learning pathways for students who exit the formal schooling system at different levels
 - Learners exiting schooling before completing grade 12
 - Learners exiting schooling after grade 12 but without an exemption and the ability to access tertiary education
 - Adults who need a matric equivalent certificate
 - Adults and younger people without matric needing skills programmes

What is Distance Learning/Education?

- Describes a collection of methods for the provision of structured learning which together avoid the need for learners to discover the curriculum by attending classes frequently at a central venue for long periods.
- It uses an appropriate combination of different learning resources as well as tutorial support (online or face-to-face), peer group discussion (online or face-to-face), and practical sessions.

And What is 'Open'?

Highly contested. Usually includes

- Access more open than usual – sometimes no requirements
- *Flexible as to time and space* – sometimes anytime/anywhere
- *Flexible registration and examination dates* – sometimes enrol when you wish and write when you wish

More Encompassing Approaches to Open Education

- Our White Paper 1 and Saide identifies *open learning principles*
- Unesco is developing a concept of *open education practices*

Open Learning Principles

- Lifelong learning
- Building on the experience of the learner
- Encouraging critical and independent thinking
- Flexible arrangements for learners
- Recognition of prior learning/Credit accumulation
- Fair chance of success

Unesco Open Educational Practices – levels of openness

- “Low” : objectives /methods of t&l are “closed” & one way, transmissive and reproductive. Teachers know what learners have to learn and mainly focus on knowledge-transfer.
- “Medium”: objectives are still pre-determined, but methods of t&l encourage dialogue oriented forms of learning or problem based learning (PBL) focusing on dealing with developing “Know how”.
- “High”: objectives, learning pathways and methods are determined by learners. Teachers facilitate through methods which accommodate different learning pathways, either through scaffolding and tutorial inter-actions

Open Education

*An approach to all education that strives to ensure that as many people as possible are able to take advantage of **and succeed** in meaningful learning opportunities throughout their lives*

Examples of Practice from Across the World

- Kha Ri Gude
- NAMCOL
- BOCODOL
- TAFE
- Indira Gandhi
- US Community Colleges
- Ontario Online

Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign

- Highly structured learning resources filled with learner activities
- Corps of distributed and trained tutors
- Efficient distribution and tracking system
- Classes held in communities, at times which are convenient to the learners, and take place in homes, churches, community centres, *prisons*, etc.

BOCODOL (Botswana)

- Public institution providing post schooling education through ODL in Botswana
- Enrolment includes those who never studied in the conventional schools and those seeking a 2nd chance
- Delivery is through independent learning guides, tutors and 5 strategically placed regional centres with a network of 92 learning centres across the country

NAMCOL - Namibia

- Largest learning institution in Namibia
- Established to provide secondary education for those who cannot or wish not to attend conventional schools
- Includes vocational and professional programmes
- Four regional structures and 100 tutorial centres across the country

Lessons from BOCODOL/NAMCOL

- Open schooling model
- Centrally developed and directed curriculum
- Decentralised regional centres for delivery including tutorial sessions
- Flexible delivery and self paced study

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Australia

- Delivery through State and Territory Colleges - each with a number of institutes and each institute also having several campuses offering delivery on site, online, by distance learning as well as blend of these
- Providing predominantly vocational tertiary education courses
 - Advanced diplomas
 - Bachelor degrees and post graduate diplomas
 - Partial credits towards Bachelor level degree programmes at universities

TAFE

- For vocational programmes and professional diploma and certificate courses, face-to-face training at the workplace and online training in theory
- For other courses, full online provision
- Practical component significant – requires closeness to site of delivery

National Institute of Open Schooling

- Streams
 - Schooling
 - Vocational
 - Academic
- Centres across the country
- Common curricula centrally set as well as exams
- Common supported self study learning materials

IGNOU

- The University develops its academic programmes through 21 Schools of Study.
- A dedicated faculty, trained in distance education methodology, is responsible for planning, designing, developing and delivering academic programmes.
- Delivery methods include teleconferencing, radio counselling, telecasting through certain channels of audio and video programmes

Indira Ghandi National Open University (IGNOU) India

- Branches in about 35 countries, 11 schools of study, 58 regional centres, 7 sub regional centres, 1400 study centres and 41 overseas centres.
- Distance learning for short skills courses, professional programmes, diplomas, degrees up to doctoral programmes
- Distance/Contact sessions mix for professional, diploma, degree to doctoral programmes

US Community Colleges

- Each state has its own college system and each college has a number of campuses and learning centres
- Bridging courses from high school to college
- Non-credit bearing personal-enrichment classes including basic computer skills, fitness and health, finance.
- Courses for transfer toward a bachelor's degree
- Entry-level career training courses to prepare students for the job market.

US Community Colleges

- Job re-entry or career-advancement courses for adult students wanting to upgrade their skills.
- Under-graduate and graduate programmes
- Mode
 - Face to face on campus
 - Distance
 - E-Learning
 - On-line provision on or off campus

Proposed Ontario Online (Canada)

- Central body to facilitate the development and enhancement of a network of providers
- In process of construction

Proposed Ontario Online (Canada)

- Functions :
 - Facilitates the provision of information to prospective students concerning available online courses/programmes.
 - Conducts market research and provides market information to support institutions' decisions about course/programme dev't
 - Supports students' access to online courses and programs.
 - Facilitates collaboration among participating institutions to catalyze and enable joint development of courses/programmes
 - Identifies student support services for online learners that could be efficiently and effectively shared across institutions supports collaborative delivery of these

Ontario Online (Canada)

- Promote and share best practices for the integration of mobile devices and digital media.
- Create ongoing opportunities for institutions to share effective practices regarding development of online courses and programs, online pedagogy, and the utilization of technological innovations.
- Collect and disseminate recommendations for best practices for innovative online pedagogy and delivery mechanisms.
- Facilitate development of agreements among institutions for sharing of course content

-

Three Possibilities for our Context

- One or more small 'ODL' institutions, using PALC's as their network
- A curriculum and materials development institute for AET as a
 - creator, collator and disseminator for AET
- A loosely coordinated and supported network of online providers

But first – “Connectivity”

- Availability of bandwidth has increased dramatically over the last 18 months
- Cost has come down
- Smart phone penetration has increased markedly
- Unisa believes that it will soon be able to have every student connected

AET ODL Institution or Institutions

- Develop curricula and ensure accreditation
- Develop associated learning resources – for independent study and group sessions
- Devise and provide the assessment strategy
- Conceptualise a tutoring model
- Collaborate with PALC to appoint and train tutors/facilitators
- Liaise with PALC's to recruit and administratively support students – use Kha Ri Gude's Admin systems

AET ODL Institution or Institutions

Model suitable for

- Post grade 9 Foundational Programme
- SC
- SC Upgrading Courses – better symbols or additional subjects (e.g. Maths)
- Adult SC
- Some programmes with more of a skills focus – see Namcol

A Curriculum and Materials Development Institute for AET

- Development and /or collation of more skills oriented/ vocational programmes
- Registration of the associated qualification
- Development of and/or collation of learning materials – largely for independent learning
- Dissemination of these materials as open educational resources (OER) – freely available on the web to copy with attribution and, in most cases, modify and re-release with attribution
- (Appropriate QC to accredit providers)

Aside

- US Labor Dept has announced \$ 500 million in grants to Community Colleges to develop new courses and related materials
- Publishers are trying to limit the space

A Network of Online Providers

A bit down the line, but we should start to plan!

- PALCs, in association with schools and community centres, will need access to connected computers
- The Network would be facilitated by a small centre whose job it would be to
 - Identify online providers
 - Collect appropriate student information from them
 - Aggregate it onto a easily searchable database
 - Collect and disseminate information on appropriate bursaries

A Network of Online Providers

- PALCs, and associated centers, would act as a place where students could access the information, with the necessary support, and provide a place where registered student could participate online in their chosen course

Discussion

- Are there other possibilities stimulated from the examples given?
- Are any of the possibilities worth elaborating?