



August 13, 2015

Dr. Srikant Mohapatra
OSD
Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur, Odisha
(Recently established)
Mobile no. 91-8802714059
E-mail: srikant_mohapatra@rediffmail.com

Dear Dr. Srikant Mohapatra,

Re: Collaboration to improve access to higher education using Open and Distance Learning

I hope this mail finds you in good health. It's my pleasure to write to you about our possible collaboration in working towards improving access to higher education using open and distance learning and technology enhanced education.

The Higher Education initiative at COL has now commenced undertaking activities for the new six-year strategic plan 2015 – 2021, and I am very pleased to indicate that we would like to work with you and all other partners in Cameroon's Higher Education sector so that we take issues related to open and distance learning in Cameroon to another level to facilitate more access to quality higher education for all including those in marginalised communities. I am sure you are aware that many developing countries seek to increase participation in higher education and find it possible once they have policy frameworks and systems in place that enable the mainstreaming and deployment of sound open and distance learning within their broader national education framework. For instance, the average participation rate around 2012 was under 10% in sub-Saharan Africa, under 15% in South Asia and about 25% in the Caribbean¹ (OECD, 2012).

Open, distance and technology-enhanced learning can provide cost-effective means of increasing access to quality higher education.

COL's Higher Education initiative has been working with Commonwealth governments and institutions to develop national and institutional ODL policies in order to improve the quality of systems and enhance staff capacity to develop and deliver quality programmes. COL's Higher Education initiative will continue to promote good practices and support member states as they seek to strengthen the credibility of ODL as a viable means of developing human resources for their economic and social development.

As technologies continue to grow and new delivery modes emerge such as MOOCs, there is a global trend towards the internationalisation of higher education, the need to address the demands of the labour market and the expectation that higher education will lead to employment and entrepreneurship. COL's Higher Education initiative will provide technical advice to stakeholders as they prepare to respond to these changes by reforming the curriculum, diversifying provision and enlarging their networks.

¹ OECD (2012), Education at a Glance 2012: Highlights, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2012-en


In the light of the above, COL's Higher Education initiative would be delighted to support the Open and Dual Mode Higher/Tertiary Education Institutions in India develop and implement the following:

- **Institutional Dual Mode/ODL policies** – to enhance the domestication of the national ODL Policy framework and ODL M&E to ensure increased ODL quality and credibility;
- **Institutional ODL M&E frameworks** – to enhance the domestication of the national ODL Policy framework and to ensure increased ODL quality and credibility;
- **Institutional quality assurance policies** – to enhance the domestication of the national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks by promoting a culture of quality assurance and self-assessment and inter-institutional quality audits across Higher Education Institutions;
- Facilitate inter-institutional networking and collaboration in the development, adoption and use of **ODL and technology-based models such as MOOCs and OER**;
- **National and Institutional OER policy framework** – to guide the adoption, adaptation, creation of OER, reuse and cut the cost of education provision and increase access to more learning opportunities for learners; and
- Support the professional development of Institutional ODL policy makers, academics and practitioners.

In the light of the above, it will be a pleasure for us to start working together on your immediate priority areas in ODL for quality Higher Education.

I thank you and look forward to our fruitful engagement soon.

Yours sincerely,



Godson Gatsha, PhD
Education Specialist, Higher Education