

Distance Learning in Sub-Saharan Africa

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1.0 THE GOAL OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA


- ▶ The African Union (AU) in its Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006 – 2015) identifies the education sector as critical to the development human resources for achieving socio-economic development.
 - ▶ SADC also states the goals of education as “to increase the availability of educated personnel who will meaningfully contribute to scientific innovation and economic development.”
 - ▶ Thus, education, and higher education in particular, is key in the preparation of middle and high managerial cadres to feed the civil service, industry, commerce
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2.0 CHALLENGES FACING THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN AFRICA


However, the achievement of this goal is threatened with hurdles related to the following:

- ▶ Limited access to secondary, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education;
 - ▶ Limited provision of early childhood education;
 - ▶ Inequitable access;
 - ▶ Low quality of education;
 - ▶ High inefficiency of education systems;
 - ▶ Inadequately trained teachers;
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2.0 CHALLENGES FACING THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN AFRICA (CONT)

- ▶ Curricula inadequacies including mismatch;
 - ▶ The negative impact of HIV and AIDS;
 - ▶ Inadequate teaching resources; and
 - ▶ Lack of current and relevant data for planning, monitoring and evaluation
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2.1 Access

- ▶ Gross Enrolments Ratios (GERs) at different levels of education in Africa reveal under enrolment at tertiary education level
 - ▶ Definition of GERs: total enrolment within a country in a specific level of education, regardless of age, gender etc, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level education
 - ▶ One cause of this is overdependence on the traditional face to face mode of delivery
 - ▶ As a result, on average, only 5% of the population in African countries has access to tertiary education; against the global average of 27% (SADC, 2010)
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2.1.1 Example of Access in SADC Region

- ▶ For example, in the SADC region, GERs at different levels based on data available in the period 2004– 2009:

LEVEL	GERs & TRANSITION BETWEEN LEVELs
Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatively high because of policy of universal primary school education• However, 1 in every 5 primary school age is not in school
Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gross under provision of education
Tertiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At 6% against the global average of 27%

2.1.2 Example of Access in Malawi

► Gross Enrolment Ratios in Malawi

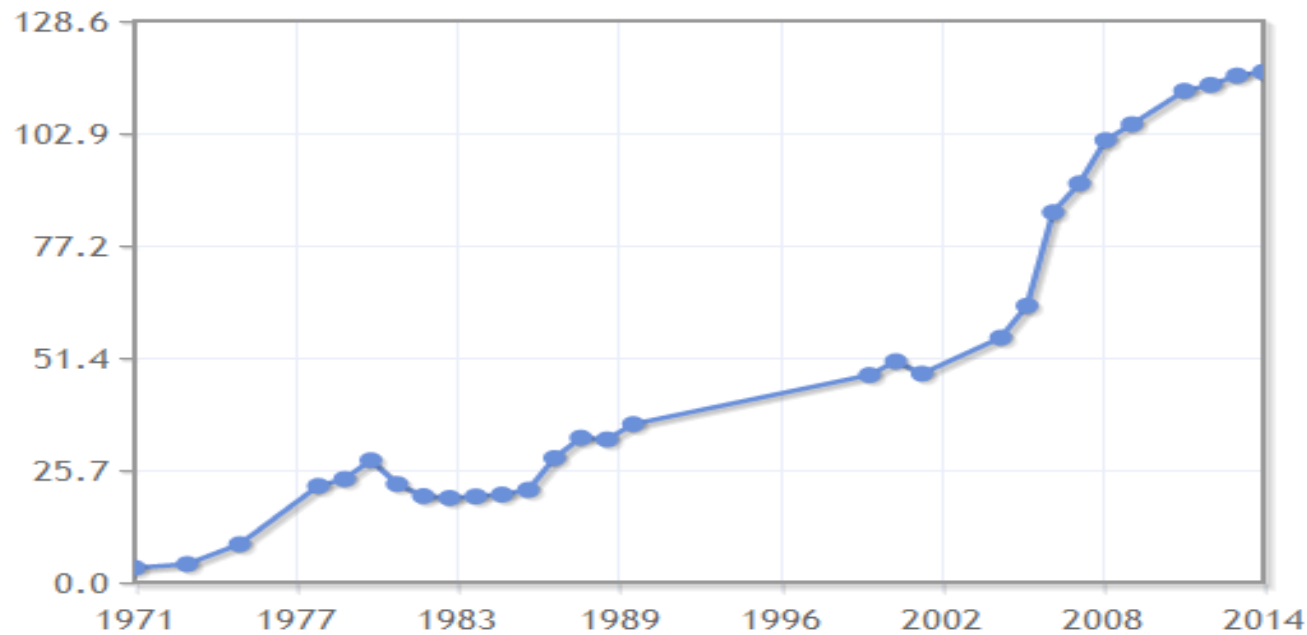
YEAR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TTC	VOC	UNIVERSITY
2010/2011	4,034,220	256,343	10, 993	6,105	12, 203
2011/2012	4,188,677	260,081	12, 839	8,356	*
2012/2013	4,497,541	307,216	*	*	*
2013/2014	4,670,279	346,604	13,865	*	*

* Data not available due to non response

Source: MOEST (2014)

2.1.2 Example of Access in Ghana

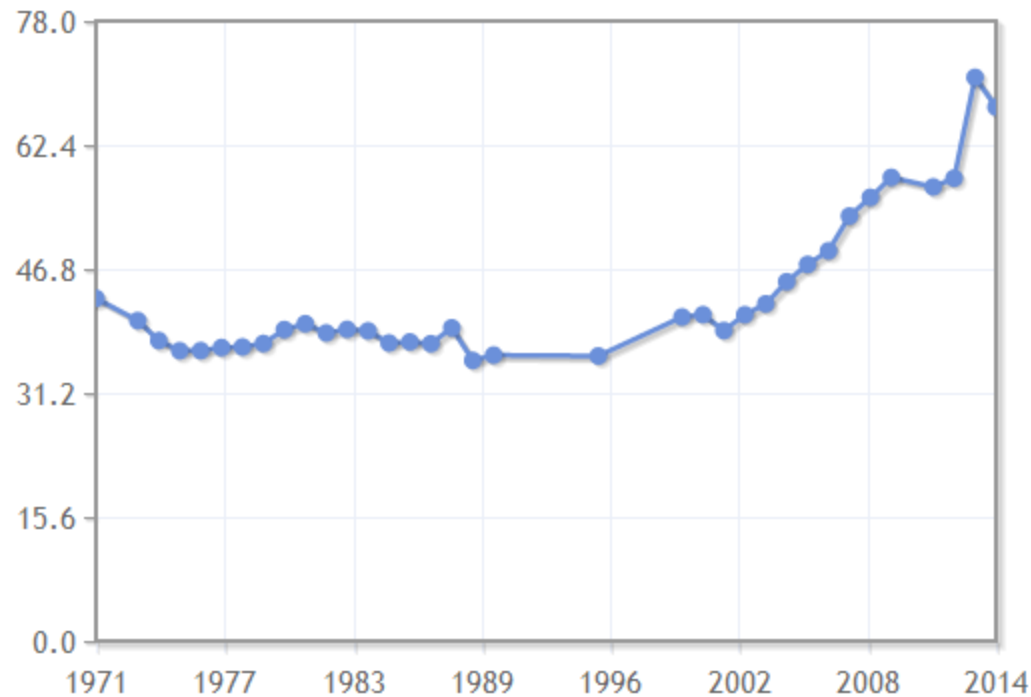
► Ghana GER Primary Level



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2014

2.1.2 Example of Access in Ghana (cont)

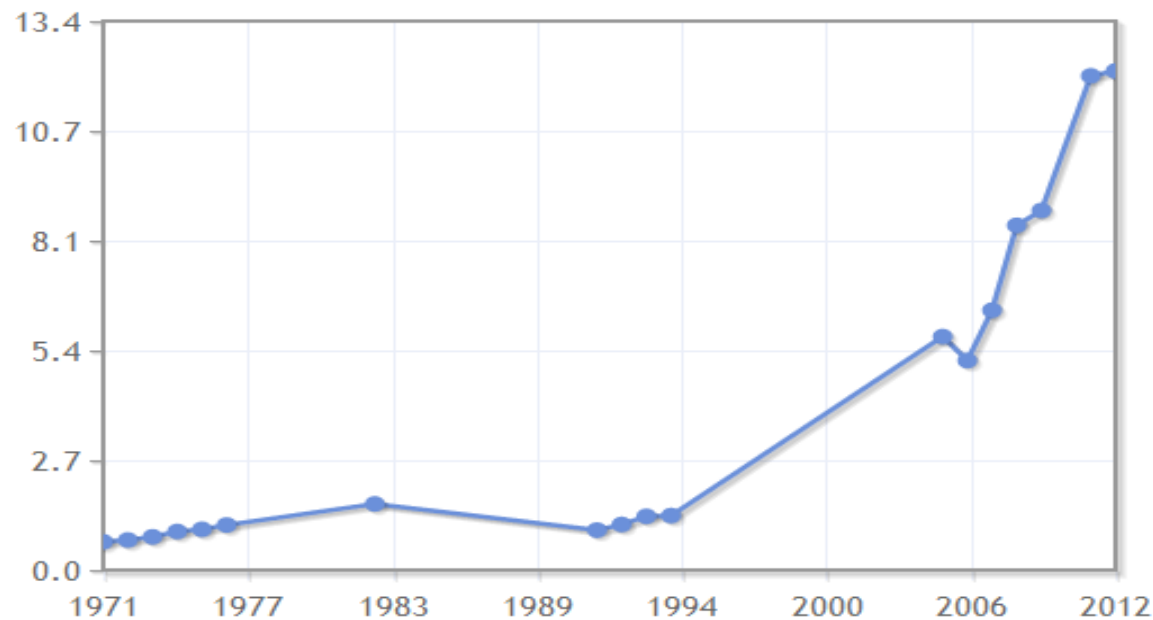
► Ghana GER Secondary Level



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2014

2.1.2 Example of Access in Ghana (cont)

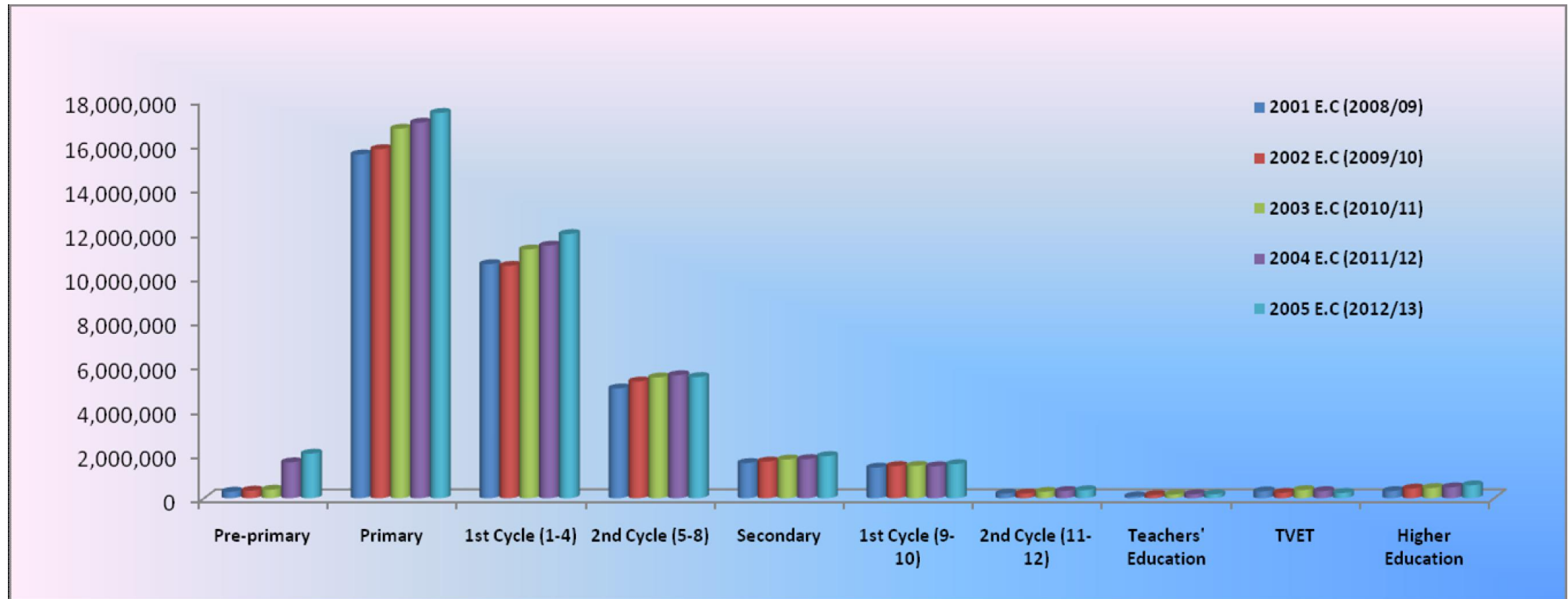
► Ghana GER Tertiary Level



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2014

2.1.3 Example of Access in Ethiopia

► GERs in Ethiopia



Source: Ethiopia Federal Ministry of Education (Nov 2012/2013)

2.1.4 Conclusions on Access


Conclusions based on the GERs:

- ▶ There is low transition rates from primary to secondary, and even lower rates from secondary to tertiary level (SADC, 2012)
- ▶ “The huge differences in GERs between the 3 levels of education is a reflection of **inefficiencies** and **wastage** of education systems” (SADC, 2012).
- ▶ Therefore, socio-economic development in Africa will be hard to achieve without innovative ways in the delivery modes to improve students’ participation in education.


2.2 Quality and Relevance

- ▶ Programmes in ODL delivery mode are of varying quality and relevance.
- ▶ Factors that affect quality and relevance of ODL programmes include lack of:
 - a. accreditation policies
 - b. national and regional qualification frameworks
 - c. quality assurance policies
 - d. national ODL policies
- ▶ This is, in part, the reason why there is, generally, negative perceptions about the quality of ODL graduates

3.0 RATIONALE FOR INVESTING IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

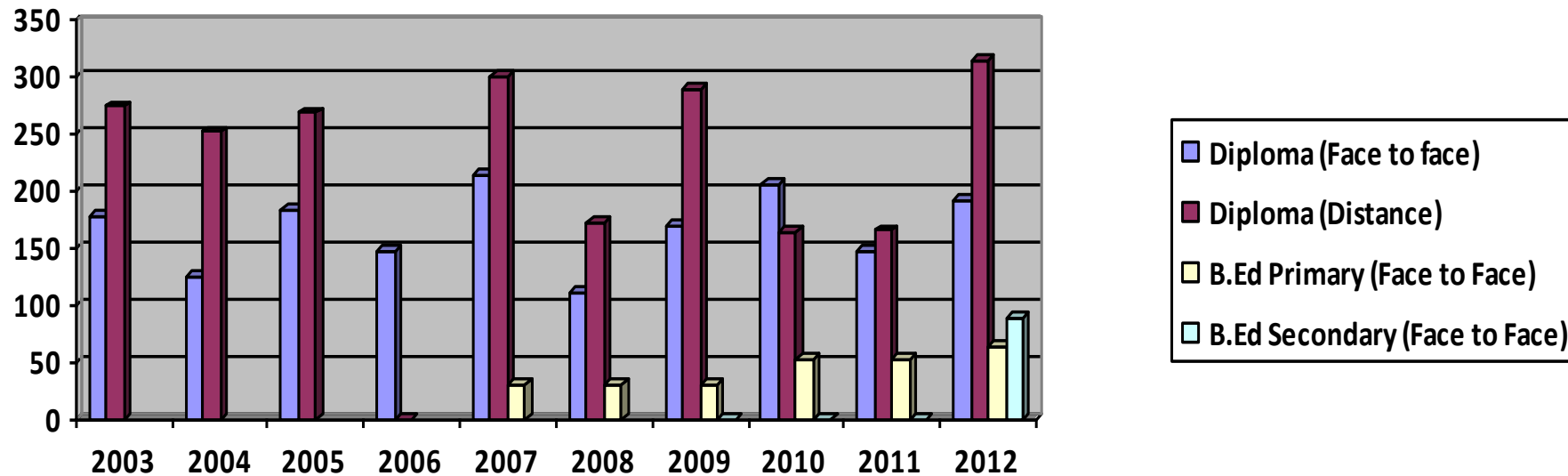
- ▶ The challenges, especially regarding access, relevance, quality, and equity can be improved with the use on innovative delivery modes like ODL
 - ▶ Current situation compels institutions of learning in Africa to use ODL than ever before because of the following:
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3.0 RATIONALE FOR INVESTING IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (Cont)


- i. Low students' participation rates makes ODL an ideal mode to increase enrolment because it does not depend on classroom space
 - ii. Very expensive tertiary education makes ODL delivery system ideal because it is cost-effective
 - iii. Recent advancement in ICT technology gives opportunities for well organized and efficient ODL system
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3.1: Example of Improved Access/Cost Effective ODL Delivery

- ▶ Domasi College of Education is a dual mode institution and the number of graduands per programme demonstrates improved access/cost effectiveness of ODL




3.0 STATUS OF ODL IN AFRICA


- ▶ Current trend is that many institutions of higher learning in Africa are becoming dual mode
 - ▶ For example, in the SADC region, enrolments in ODL has increased substantially in South Africa, Tanzania, Namibia, and Zimbabwe
 - ▶ By 2010, South Africa had 38.8% of enrolments at tertiary level through ODL, (SADC, 2010)
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4.0 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS IN ODL DELIVERY


In spite of the obvious advantages, ODL in Africa faces the following challenges:

- ▶ Weak support for ODL from political authorities
 - ▶ Lack of comprehensive policies on ODL
 - ▶ Underfunding
 - ▶ Limited use of ICTs
 - ▶ Inadequate supply of professionally trained ODL personnel
 - ▶ Inadequate Learner Support Services
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4.0 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS IN ODL DELIVERY (CONT)

- ▶ Lack of monitoring and evaluation systems
 - ▶ Lack of, or ineffective, quality assurance systems
 - ▶ Negative perceptions about ODL; degrading it to be of lower quality than the traditional face-to-face conventional mode
 - ▶ Absence of strategies for mainstreaming gender in ODL programmes
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5.0 THE SADC CAPACITY BUILDING IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) PROJECT


- ▶ The SADC Secretariat implemented a Capacity Building in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Project to address some of the challenges in the education sector
 - ▶ The main purpose of the project was to contribute to the development and deployment of effective, harmonized open and distance learning (ODL), to increase access to quality education and training and support regional integration across SADC.
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5.0 THE SADC CAPACITY BUILDING IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) PROJECT (CONT)

- ▶ The project had two components:
 - (i) policy development and
 - (ii) capacity building: with two centres of specialization i.e.
 - a. Open University of Tanzania: for teacher education
 - b. Malawi College of Distance Education: for secondary education

6.0 SHORT TERM CAPACITY BUILDING TRAININGS IN SADC CENTRES OF SPECIALIZATION

The SADC ODL Capacity Building Project identified 9 key skill areas for trainings as follows:

- ▶ ODL Curriculum Planning and Materials Development
 - ▶ Learner Support
 - ▶ Research Skills in ODL Application
 - ▶ E-learning
 - ▶ Quality Assurance in ODL
 - ▶ ODL Management, Administration and Marketing
 - ▶ ODL Financing, Budgeting and Costing
 - ▶ Strategic Planning and Management in ODL
 - ▶ Monitoring and Evaluation
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7.0 TRAINEES IN KEY SKILL AREAS

- ▶ The Projected trained a total of 345 trainees as follows:


Country	Female	Male
Angola	20	18
Democratic Republic of Congo	15	30
Lesotho	29	16
Malawi	16	29
Mozambique	16	28
Tanzania	14	29
Zambia	14	30
Zimbabwe	13	28
Subtotal	137	208
Grand Total	345	

8.0 ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN INTRODUCING ODL


When introducing ODL in our institutions, we should consider the following

- ▶ Need for strategic planning
 - ▶ Choice of ODL delivery tools
 - ▶ Models of delivery systems
 - ▶ Organization of Support systems
 - ▶ Need for inclusive education
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8.1 : Strategic Planning in ODL

- ▶ “Lack of strategic planning in education may lead to ineffective interventions or interventions that are not sustainable”
 - ▶ Issues to consider in strategic planning include: **Purpose; Vision; Mission; Formulation of goals, objectives; and Action Plans**
 - ▶ Use the SWOT Analysis for strategic planning
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8.2: ODL DELIVERY TOOLS

- ▶ There are two forms of ODL delivery:
 - a. Print materials
 - b. Electronic media
 - ▶ Choice of the tool to use will depend on:
 - a. nature of targeted students
 - b. staff capacity to use the form
 - c. availability of resources–e.g. internet infrastructure
 - d. benefits and limitations of each form
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8.3: Models of ODL Delivery System

- ▶ There are two ODL delivery systems as follows:
 - a. Pure distance study (i.e. no face to face sessions)
 - b. Blended model (residential sessions & distance study)
 - how long should the residential session(s) be?
 - how many residential sessions per academic year and why?


8.3: Support Systems

- ▶ Success in ODL delivery largely rests on the type of support services used
 - ▶ Supports systems can be grouped into two:
 - a. Students' support services (e.g. academic, administrative, counselling)
 - b. Support for ODL staff (e.g. career development in ODL; skills development in specific areas e.g. use of moodle platform)
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8.4: Inclusive Education

- ▶ There are inequities in the provision of education e.g.
 - a. gender inequities
 - b. rural–urban inequalities
 - c. poverty related inequities
 - d. inequities associated with disabilities
 - ▶ How should we organize ODL programmes to address such inequities?
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ACTIVITY FOR WORKING GROUPS

1. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF ODL IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN YOUR COUNTRY?
 2. WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOUR INSTITUTIONS FACE IN THE OFFERING/INTRODUCTION OF ODL?
 3. HOW CAN THESE CHALLENGES BE SOLVED?
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