

Chapter 6

Profiling Collaborating Partners in E-Learning in Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

When Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are rapidly revolutionizing, online learning is undergoing dramatic change as powerful new content types, technologies, and services are being adopted for education and training. Traditional learning needs to be supplemented by virtual learning to meet the rapid population growth and counter the lack of traditional higher education institutions. This is particularly true in least developed countries faces critical challenges to meet the new demands in higher education with its ever increasing population, remote and scattered areas, non-availability of resources (including infrastructure, few institutions, few experts or teachers, etc.), and limited funding. While it has been known that developed country are enjoying technology dance for so long time, least developing countries are either not or just joining the dance especially in e-learning. In other hand, there are enough literatures on the e-learning strategic alliances or collaborations/partnerships in developed countries for the purpose of dominating in Education delivery worldwide, and there is no or little literature about existence or non-existence of strategic alliances or collaboration on the e-learning development in the least developed countries. This is why this paper brought forward, enlightening the non-existence or existence of e-learning development strategic alliances, which has been sought to solve dual problem, scarcity of resources and increase the certification and recognition of online degrees in developed countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Least Developed Countries (LDCs or 4th World) represent the poorest and weakest segment of the international community characterized by extreme poverty or low income, the structural weaknesses of their economies and the lack of capacities or human resources related to growth (UN-OHRLLS, 2009; Wikipedia, 2009;). A country may 'graduate' if it passes these criteria. It has been known that LDCs are acute susceptibility to external economic shocks, natural and man-made disasters and communicable diseases. According to UN-OHRLLS (2009), Thirty three countries in Africa are the least developing countries including Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The least developed countries are concentrated with high population, lacking physical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals roads, etc which point out that there is necessary for something to be done or try technology as a tool for development. The introduction of e-learning may be of the utmost importance (Juhary, 2005) since least developed countries' population is too high and pressured by education for all by 2015, especially for ages 17-24 attending the higher education. Equipping these youths with the right skills will help to make their countries 'graduate' and not become 'least developed countries'. E-learning is flexible, making our young people study as well as be working (Juhary 2005). Generally E-learning is noted as a tool to cater for the higher population with few physical building for education. While e-learning is so important(Juhary, 2005), yet there are so many challenges(Ricketts & Gunga, 2007; Ndume et al, 2008; Juhary, 2005; Puteh, 2008;) in its development in least developed countries including people's perception and acceptance, Quality and certification of e-learning, intellectual investment, management support, Technology infrastructure, lack of experts and much more are the three pillars of the ICT revolution that is connectivity, capacity and content, are yet to be realized in least developed countries (Ricketts & Gunga, 2007). Partnerships bring together innovative minds and solve such kind of problems (Ricketts & Gunga, 2007) and avoid dual problem solving within the same country. While by partnership other refers to Public-private partnership other refers to Strategic alliance and many more. This paper looks to find out the exactly term been used to refer collaboration within e-learning development, as well as to see the existence and non-existence of these terms in least developed countries.

The next section will reveal the literature review, followed by methodology, discussion and finally conclusion which will suggest further research area to be considered for researchers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

E-Learning, Africa, and LDCs

In contrast to traditional modes of education delivery, e-learning carried three important principles: Scalability, access, and timeliness which makes e-learning to be very important for the 21st century. E-learning can be scaled almost infinitely at little additional cost, making it available for access anywhere there is internet connection and continually updated with new information and knowledge relatively cost effectively (Clarke & Herbmens, 2001)

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