Fostering Universal Access to Education

ICT Pitso 2015
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Preamble

The brief I received from the Ministry was to present on the topic “Fostering Universal Access to Education.”

The objective is to use cases studies to highlight how the world is leveraging ICTs to

- foster improved access to education; facilitate in service training of professionals; and commercialize the Education sector beyond their jurisdiction.

In the presentation there should be a highlight of level of utilization of available educational facilities.

The presentation should highlight how the country can leverage ICTs to package educational content and increase access beyond the traditional mortar and brick classroom setting.
Preamble

The presentation should highlight niche areas that Botswana can effectively harness immediately to market its educational sector in the region and beyond.

It should also highlight the required reforms technical, social and legal that needs to be undertaken to facilitate leveraging digital platforms for teaching and learning purposes.
Topics of Interest

- Global eLearning Trends
- African eLearning Trends
- State of eLearning in Botswana
- Botswana eLearning Initiatives
- eLearning Case Study – South Africa and Jordan
The Perils of Gradual Change

There is supposedly a cartoon which ridicules the traditional political positions of liberals everywhere, showing a group of serious demonstrators chanting

“What do we want?”
“Gradual change” comes the reply
“When do we want it?”
“In due course!”

Gradual change is not good in an era where technological change is moving at alarming speeds. Including in the eLearning space which is driven by technological change.

If education is the key to Africa’s future, then technology has to be at the heart of it. With a growing population and a higher percentage of young people than anywhere else on the planet

“what is necessary in order to meet the need for skills and employment on the continent is radical, not gradual, change.”
Global eLearning Growth

▲ The eLearning industry has grown in leaps and bounds and eLearning culture is becoming very much part and parcel of education throughout the world.

▲ The global eLearning market will most likely reach $107 billion by 2015, compared to $56.2 billion in 2014. Others have predicted that by 2018 the global market will be valued at $169 billion.

▲ According to recent regional studies (by IDC), the highest growth rate is in Asia at 17.3%, followed by Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America at 16.9%, 15.2%, and 14.6%, respectively.

▲ Amongst the industry’s sub-sectors, the mobile market is of particular interest to Africa given the significance of mobile as a more affordable form of technology for millions of Africans.

▲ The mobile market was valued at $5.3 billion in 2012 and is estimated to reach $8.7 billion in 2015, and $12.2 billion by 2018.
State of eLearning Readiness in Africa

▲ Whilst eLearning services and products are freely on offer in Africa, with many interesting initiatives and projects in place, the real question is whether the continent is ready fully to benefit from this revolution.

▲ Most countries (Botswana included) were aided in developing ICT policies some time ago but the central question is…….

▲ Beyond those national policies, what kind of strategies have countries put in place specifically for eLearning and what initiatives do we see on the ground driving those strategies?
Policy to Practice

▲ eLearning initiatives are certainly underway in many African countries, particularly in higher education institutions.

▲ In Kenya, Kenyatta University provides a wide-range of eLearning and online materials, while the United States International University is building a system that provides online access to all its courses.

▲ In Rwanda, the NEPAD e-Schools programme and the KIST Academic exchanges of students with German Universities, were launched. Furthermore, the One Laptop per Child programme led to the distribution of 100,000 computers across various primary schools, and eLearning and distance learning were introduced in secondary schools.

▲ In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry has connected 1.4 million students across 27 federal universities to the internet, as a result of the Connect Nigeria Initiative. This includes equipping 1,552 secondary schools with access to the internet.
Policy to Practice

△ eLearning initiatives in Africa………

△ In Ghana, all the country’s major universities have their own separate ICT policy, which includes an ICT levy for students. This enables students to have access to 24-hour computer laboratories with broadband internet connection.

△ In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education has developed an Education based web-portal for the South African Community with a simple interface and functionality for Learners, Teachers, Parents and School Administrators.
Welcome to the DBE Cloud

An Education based web-portal for the South African Community

Learners
Teachers
Parents
School Administrators
Setting a Good Example – South Korea

South Korea, the top performing non-Western country in the Web Index, overcame poverty and achieved rapid economic growth through a twin track strategy of investment in education and investment in ICTs.

Not only did the government build the most advanced IT infrastructure in the world, it also offered internet and computer literacy programmes to marginalised groups, including women, reaching 21% of the population, set up free internet access points across the country and connected all schools for free or at discounted rates.
Setting a Good Example – South Korea

▲ The push to introduce ICTs into schools created not only a huge demand and market for the ICT industry, helping to make it the single most important engine of growth for Korea’s economy, it also helped to create the vital human infrastructure to make economic growth equitable and sustainable.

▲ Currently Botswana appears to be actively exploring this successful case and possibly using it as a guide in terms of our eLearning agenda.
Policy to Practice

These examples notwithstanding, the key question is whether governments are providing a centrally coordinated eLearning implementation programme that aligns national goals to educational reform and the use of effective technology.

Without such an intervention, ICT in education initiatives will continue to be scattered and disparate. Therefore, an eLearning strategy should be a subset of an ICT in Education policy.
Teaching Teacher Trainers to Teach Online

▲ Before you bring in the technology, you first need to build teachers’ capacities

▲ This is one of the most important lessons for anyone who wants to introduce ICT into education in Africa.

▲ To improve the quality of education in teachers’ colleges and schools, and to equip educators with the skills they need to use ICTs in their teaching, digital literacy has become a priority

▲ According to the eLearning Africa Report survey, 74% of teachers say there is not enough support in their country or region for teachers to increase their digital literacy.
State of eLearning in Botswana – Structural Challenges

▲ Policy Framework
  ▲ eEducation is one of the pillars of our National ICT Policy (Maitlamo)
  ▲ National eLearning policy not developed

▲ eLearning Strategy…..?????
  ▲ Tender was floated and eventually cancelled

▲ eLearning Council……..????
  ▲ Started with some steam by appears to be dormant

▲ Result: a number of fragmented e-learning initiatives driven by Government, Parastatals and the Private Sector (banks, insurance companies, etc) including the following:
  ▲ BOCODOL
  ▲ Sesigo
  ▲ Online Training Database for DIT
e-Learning Initiatives: Botswana

▲ Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL)

▲ BOCODOL was created by an Act of Parliament in December 1998. Its creation marked a milestone in the development of Education for Botswana and a significant step towards realising Botswana’s Vision 2016, which emphasises the elimination of poverty through the provision of knowledge and skills.

▲ BOCODOL was formed to improve access to learning opportunities on a nationwide scale for the out of school young adults. Learning is through specially designed study materials, which use a combination of different types of media, methods and communication technologies (using the Open and Distance Learning Methodology), rather than through direct face-to-face mode of instruction as in conventional schools.

▲ With an annual enrolment of over 6000 learners, the College offers programmes which comprise; Junior Certificate (JC) and the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) to the vocational, management and professional programmes at certificate diploma, degrees and post graduate levels. The College ventured into post graduate programmes through collaborating and partnering with other local, regional and international universities.
e-Learning Initiatives: Botswana

▲ The Sesigo Project (Implemented by Learning and Growth Consultants)

▲ A countrywide initiative that installed computers and Internet for free use by the public in libraries and village reading rooms in order to improve the quality of life for users and ensure their social and economic inclusion.

▲ The Sesigo Project was a collaboration among the Government of Botswana through the Ministry of Youth Sport and Culture (MYSC), ACHAP and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

▲ The training targeted all staff members some of which were Standard 7 school leavers. Staff included the Librarian, Library assistant, library clerks, library attendants, gatekeeper, security guards, messenger, cleaner, driver, and the Department of out of school Education and Training facilitators – Thuto ga e golelwe.

▲ Taking into consideration the project’s vision of success which is to see Botswana transformed into an information society Learning & Growth Consultants implemented an eLearning Project offering the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) as the main course. This covered Basic Computer Literacy and Microsoft Office.
e-Learning Initiatives: Botswana

▲ Online Training Database for DIT
  ▲ Through Implementation of an Online Training Database/eLearning, IT Managers and Officers were given the opportunity to acquire IT specific skills at their own convenience.
  ▲ Travel away from work was avoidable hence there was no negative impact on productivity since work was not interrupted by officers being away.
  ▲ Knowledge and subsequent skills acquired from the training database aimed at ensuring that officers are equipped with the most relevant and current skills for them to be more effective and innovative as they deliver service to the citizens and residents of Botswana.

▲ Project aimed to address the following challenges:
  ▲ Large staff establishment of 800 across the country
  ▲ Insufficient training budget
  ▲ Rapid advances in technology, requiring constant knowledge acquisition
  ▲ Staff turnover and need to train new employees
e-Learning in Botswana – Are We on Course…?
THANK YOU!