Remote Learning for Sustainable Equity and Access in Higher Education: Sharing Some Experiences from Nigeria.

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February 2021

Nigeria University System at a Glance

73 years old and currently has 191 licensed Universities

➢92 Public : 99 Private

➢44 owned by Federal Government

➢48 Onwed by State Governments

➢16 of those owned by the Federal Government are specialized (Open University, Health, Agriculture, Technology, Maritime, Armed Forces etc).

➢13 of those owned by State Governments are also specialized.

➢12 public and private Universities are licensed to provide Distance Learning

➢We have one National Open University

Pre-Covid Teaching and Learning Situation

- Like in many parts of the world, Remote Learning was a niche activity in many Nigerian Universities pre-covid.

Covid and Post Covid Situation

The sudden shift from face-to-face to remote learning, forced by Covid, caught many Public Universities off guard.

- Poor levels of Remote Learning Infrastructure (hardware, software and communications)

- Poor quality of devices owned by students (lack of smart phones, tablets and laptops)

- Knowldege gap of Lecturers (beyound converting powerpoint lecture notes to various forms of online content formation and deployment)

Covid and Post Covid Situation

- Knowldege gap of Students (Navigating LMS, Online assessment).

- Cost and Quality of internet bandwidth for Universities, their staff and their students.

- Regulatory issues that mandates students to undergo a specific number of physical contact times with their teachers.

- Big issues relating to how to undertake laboratory and other practical and studio based assignments.

- Regulatory issues regarding online assessments.

Light on the Other side: Multi-level Interventions

Sn	Challenge	Interventions
1	Remote Learning Infrastrucutre	Increased used of locally developed LMS and Proctoring solutions based on Open Source frameworks)
2	Knowledge gap (Staff and Students)	Greater use of free online content to improve capacity and also increased funding for training.
3	Devices	Increased partnerships with private sector solution providers using "as-a-service models. (Device-as-a-Service; Infrastructrue-as-a-service etc)
4	Cost and Quality of internet Bandwidth	Greater conversations with Telco's to improve the quality of internet access and reduce the costs. Many Telcos are introducing special bouqets for University communnity. For example, the GLO-TIMs, Airtel double data bonus
5	Regulatory Issues	Greater conversation with the Regulatory Bodies to see how to best graft global best practice with local realities.
6	Content	Various Content aggregation projects are on-going. Tetfund is financing a Thesis and Dissetation Project aimed at digitizing all undergraduate and post graduate research outputs going back 60 years. The CVC is set to deploy EagleScan; a plagiarism detection software that searches against local and global databases. The project is being supported by Tetfund, JAMB and NUC

Eagle Scan Plagiarism Detection Software and Repository

A platform developed by the CVC in collaboration with ICT teams from public and private Universtiies in Nigeria.

❖ It is a homegrown solution that has been necessitated by the high cost of foreign anti-plagiarism software as well as the lack of reflectiveness of local Nigerian challenges in their content, indices and parameters of assessment.

❖ Its Features include
  - Plagiarism Checker; Peer Review
  - Local Repository; Global Repository
  - Document Comparison
  - Similarity Index
  - Grammar Checker
  - Originality Certficate
  - Support ticketing System

❖ EagleScan provides Nigerian Universities an affordable platform the helps improves originality and aggregates local content.

Global Repository

- 40,000+ Subscription journals
- 40,000+ Open Access journals
- 80,000,000+ Journal Articles
- 7,000,000+ Conference papers
- 300,000+ Dissertations
- 4,000+ Institutional repositories
- 12,000+ Publishers from around the world
- 70+ Billion web pages
- 170+ Million academic works

Local Repository

- Integration with Nigerian University's OER
- Direct submission to the EagleScan platform during similarity check
- Integration with third-party data providers
- Facilitate digitization of University's Documents

The "Elephant" in the Room

➢ How to produce various forms of local content (animations, interactive pages, video, audio) with the right quality and standard.

➢ Issues relating to how to undertake laboratory and other practical/studio based assignments.

➢ Very slow adoption of Virtual Laboratories, VR and AR Technologies; 3-D Laboratories are still rare.

➢ Issues regarding online assessments remains a concern for regulators.

   ➢ Can multiple choice question formats replace other forms of examinations?

   ➢ How do you ensure quality control and compliance?

   ➢ With very low levels of devices in the hands of students, how do you implement remote proctoring solutions?

Going Forward on a "forced agenda"

✓ Between Covid and a protracted Industrial dispute with Teaching and non-Teaching Unions, Nigerian Universities (especially the public ones) had it rough in 2020

✓ Extremly poor funding in the past has been excerebated by additional costs to navigate remote learning regimes.

✓ Curriculum and Minimum academic standards are lagging behind globallly recognized 21st century benchmarks

✓ Roboust collaboratory frameworks are emerging but are painfully slow.

✓ Remote Learning is helping Universities deal with over crowding in classrooms. Computer based testing is becoming standard for large classes.

✓ Virtual seminars and conferences are also increasing participation at international events that were seriously challenged in the past due to high travel and accomodation costs.

✓ Project based Learning is slowly gaining acceptance. Students now know that they have access to learning materials from all over the world

✓ Online based learning is gaining in acceptability across the Industry. The National Open University now has over 500,000 students.

Thank You for Listening