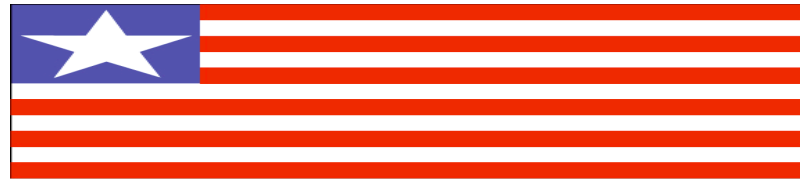# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ONLINE LEARNING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON LIBERIA

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How did online learning originate in Africa?

- It was originated1976 in South-Saharan Africa by the National Teachers Institute, Kadauna in Nigeria.
- The intention was to remove barriers and constraints that may prevent learners from accessing and succeeding in quality, lifelong education.
- It courses were predominantly through the print media.
- It helps encourage studies at home and help combat educational problems in the Nation.
- It geared towards educating growth competitiveness and reaching social and economic impact.

The advantages of online learning in developing countries?

- Developing nations will respond to increase demands of students.
- It reduces costs of education and increases participation of many students regardless of their locations.
- It provides students the opportunity to learn at their own pace.
- It creates an environment for students to collaborate on an assigned project without being at one locations.

The disadvantages of online learning in developing countries?

- Majority of the students attend public or government schools due to high tuition fees.
- Students and instructors will need to take fundamental computer courses.
- Institutions lack relevant infrastructures.
- The country lacks of high bandwidth connections.

Partial view of class room in Liberia.

The challenges of online learning in developing countries?

- Learning can be difficult for students who are not familiar with the technology involved.
- Students do not have direct interaction with instructors and classmates.
- It can be difficult for students who are undisciplined or unmotivated.
- It involves spending on training of staffs and new technologies.

Staff being trained in the lab.

INGOs making efforts to administer online learning in developing countries.

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1945-Present
    - Is working to improve the development of African countries educational sectors.
    - It has been encouraging African governments and development partners to maintain education as one of its priorities.
- African Virtual University (AVU) 2003-Present
    - Makes efforts to increase access to quality higher education and training through information communication technologies ICT.
    - To build sustain and enhance the capacity of African tertiary educational institutions.
    - To implement research and evaluation activities on the African Continent.

Physical and Geography History of Liberia

- Liberia was founded July 26, 1847 by free African slaves from the United States.
- It's a country in West Africa bordered by Sierra Leone to its West, Guinea to its North and Ivory Coast to its east.
- Monrovia, is Liberia capital city
- Tropical, humid and raining season is the climate in Liberia.
- St John river, St Paul river are the largest river in Liberia
- Nimba Mountain is Liberia biggest mountain.
- Iron ore, Timber, Diamonds, Rubber, are Liberia natural resources.

Political History of Liberia

- Americo-Liberian rule (1847-1980)
- The Country covers an area of 43,000 square miles.
- Suffered 14 years of civil crisis from 1989-2003
- President is the head of state.
- Ellen Johnson Sirleaf a Harvard-educated banker and administrator is the current and 24th president of Liberia. 2006-Present.

Her Excellency, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Statistics relevant to Online learning

- Poverty Rate: 80%
- Unemployment rate: 85% and 201st compared to rest of the world.
- GDP: 8.3% and 11th compared to rest of the world.
- Communication: Telephone: 2.394 million (2012) 138th compared to rest of the world.
- Electricity: 335 million kWh (2010 est.) 168th compared to rest of the world.

Workers at a Construction site.

Conclusion Slide

- Potential is huge for Liberia educational system for online learning and technologies in the emerging years.
- Challenges: Are also huge and more so in Liberia due to destroyed infrastructure, including the educational sector, which was badly affected due to fourteen years of civil war.
  - Questions?

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