Open Education Resources and the Covid 19 Lockdown in Uganda

Context

Since the closure of schools and learning institutions in Uganda in March 2020, there has been concern about the availability of learning opportunities whilst keeping students at home as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this brochure Creative Commons Uganda Chapter is enlisting some of the CC Uganda Open Educational Resources (OER) which are readily available over the internet and in the Public domain free of any cost.

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are any type of educational materials that are in the public domain. They are published under open licenses (i.e Creative Commons) that specify how materials can be used, reused, adapted, shared and modified according to specific needs. They can include textbooks, lecture notes, syllabi, assignments and tests (RMIT University, 2020).

Online learning presents an opportunity to innovatively present learning opportunities while observing the health guidelines of social-distancing and Ministry of Education and Sports guidelines of inclusivity.

Alternatives presented to traditional learning

- Study materials have been availed in Newspapers
- TV classes are being broadcast to learners across the country
- Classes on some Radio stations
- Zoom classes by several private schools

The case for open education resources

The best OER is made with tools designed with OER in mind

Types of learning opportunities available to Ugandan Students in the Lockdown

Face-to-face learning is an instructional method where course content and learning material are delivered in person to a group of students. It is the most traditional type of learning instruction.

This during lock down has been hard to achieve in school premises. However, parents and teachers have created opportunities where classes take place in homes.

E-learning is formalised teaching with the help of electronic resources and platforms. It comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching. E-learning can be conducted in a face to face session where one uses simple projecting technology. However, it can be more complex to involve online resources.

Content is delivered via the Internet, intranet/extranet, animation, audio visual material (videos), satellite TV and radio. This may also include live streaming of content or stored content uploaded for future reference. As such, online learning can be self-paced or facilitator-led and mobile gadgets in which participants can be spread across geographic zones.

Education materials though newspapers: The Ministry of education of Uganda partnered to deliver reading materials in the pages of some of the national daily newspapers. The success of this has not been measured by any study to-date. However, doubts can be cast on the efficacy of this method owing to the cost and the low circulation numbers of newspapers in Uganda.

Advantages of electronic learning: To the Learners

Improved access to education

- Better opportunities to acquire skills at one's own pace, with a degree of privacy that may be missing when using shared computer facilities or relying on equipment belonging to somebody else. This is particularly important for women and girls.
- Good support for preferred modes of interaction, e.g. accessing audio content or participating in social networks on the move?
- Use of relatively inexpensive everyday technologies

Relevance to authentic learning needs

- Catering for interests beyond what is provided in class, through access to additional content such as podcasts or free learning materials
- Handheld devices are often an everyday part of business, so learning can contribute directly to enhancing employability, life skills and work practices

Benefits for educational systems at a national level

- May promote a more equitable access to education, for those suffering exclusion for social or economic reasons.
- Encourages a culture of lifelong learning; learners taking part in organised education but also habitually using personal technologies to support inquiry and knowledge building whenever the need arises
- Encourages a culture of life-wide learning, whereby individuals recognise the value of learning in unconventional or everyday contexts.
- A stronger global, inter-cultural perspective, which thrives on unconstrained access to learning resources and flexible study.
- Promotes enhanced virtual communication and collaboration.

Some useful open educational resources available to Ugandan students

Walktrack Edu Platform - http://edu.walktrackuganda.com/

Provides free & open educational resources for both teachers & students across Uganda.

Hire the youth – https://www.hiretheyouth.org/ugandan-e-learning-platforms/

List of eLearning platforms for Ugandan Students

Uganda Networks -

https://www.ugandanetworks.org/Articles/458169/FutureLearn.aspx

Provides access to relevant resources and services, and a place to advertise and share opportunities.

Zero-rated educational websites

These are only open to students registered to the respective Universities by MTN Uganda Limited

- Makerere University: https://muele.mak.ac.ug
- Uganda Christian University: https://moodle.ucu.ac.ug/
- Uganda Martyrs University: https://elearning.umu.ac.ug/
- International University of East Africa: https://elearning.iuea.ac.ug/
- Gulu University: https://elearning.gu.ac.ug/
- Mbarara university: https://smartlearning.must.edu.eg/
- Kyambogo university: https://kelms.kyu.ac.ug/

Selected international links to open education resources

COURSE ERA: www.coursera.org

ED X: www.edx.org

OPEN CREATE -

https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/local/ocwfreecourses/freecourse.php

Research Data Management Librarian Academy:

https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2719

Open data for research

Registry of Open Data on AWS: https://registry.opendata.aws/

Harvard University Data Verse: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/

World Bank Open Data: https://data.worldbank.org/

World Health Organisation (WHO) Open Data repository: https://www.who.int/gho/database/en/

Google Public Data Explorer: https://www.google.com/publicdata/directory

Open Data Kit: https://opendatakit.org/

Open Data Impact Map: https://opendataimpactmap.org/