The improved student-centred E-learning Approach: the experience of ISDL

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1. Introduction

❏ A controversial debate surrounds the question of whether introducing ITC into education and promoting E-learning has instigated positive change across Africa

❏ In the early days, E-learning received a bad press (bringing computers into the classroom would remove that human element that some learners need)

❏ E-learning can be one of the big drivers behind the change in Africa.

❏ There are still many aspects of E-learning which need to be examined and defined.

2. Review of the Experience

❑ "E-learning is the use of internet technology for the creation and management of educational content"

❑ ISDL is a private institution created in 2005 in Dakar (Senegal)

❑ The Institute is one of the pioneers in local development engineering in Francophone Africa

❑ The paper is informed by the author's over 7 years' experience implementing E-learning, documentary research, and shared experience of ISDL's stakeholders

2.Review of the Experience

ISDL offers Bachelor and Master degrees in various areas:

- ✓ Project Management
- ✓ Community Development
- ✓ Environmental Management
- ✓ Community Health
- ✓ Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH)
- ✓ Management of Local Authorities
- ✓ Communication for Development

2.Review of the Experience

❑ In 2009, ISDL initiated an innovative E-learning programme centred on students (use of Moodle)

❑ A student centred approach as the student plays a pivotal role in the learning process, the teacher is a facilitator and not an "expert", both teacher and student work together to build the capacity of the student.

2.Review of the Experience

❑ Main players of the e-learning program: learners, course designers, course facilitators and administrators.

❑ E-learning process based on a new pedagogical model including both distance learning and face to face training

❑ About 800 students trained since inception of the new programme in 2009

2.Review of the Experience

❑ **Good practice 1**: learners from different areas and social backgrounds have the opportunity to engage in learning activities independently and in lifelong learning.

❑ **Good practice 2**: there is a shift from a teacher centred approach to a more learner centred approach

❑ **Good practice 3**: adult learners have a unique opportunity to develop a collaborative learning community.

3. Strengths and Challenges

Strengths:

- ❑ The program can be accessed from anywhere
- ❑ Flexibility of the Approach
- ❑ The Program is cost effective and saves time
- ❑ The program contributes to bridge the digital divide between generations and areas
- ❑ The Program is a blending of traditional classroom approaches with those that use technology.

3. Strengths and Challenges

Challenges:

❑ Filling the digital divide between urban and rural areas

❑ Not all teachers and students are prepared to take part to E-learning programs

❑ Pushing some teachers and learners to change their practice of teaching and learning

❑ Research documenting the impact of E-learning in developing countries (newness of programs).

❑ Educational technologies are developing rapidly

4. Conclusion

❑ The success of ISDL's program is mainly based on its blended mixture of traditional methods and new technology

❑ E-Learning technologies could potentially play an important role in reducing the gap in access to education

❑ Potential exists for an increase in learning through ICT, building a human capital to address development challenges.

Thank you very much