Creating digital content in African universities

Stories of innovation from Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria

Our project is investigating the ways in which university academics and educators in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria are innovating to create their own digital content, to support student learning. It is being undertake as part of the Digital University in Africa programme, funded by the British Council. It runs from February until May 2021.

We have six objectives

1. **Identify and document less visible practices** in the creation and use of digital learning content: what content is being created? For what purpose? By whom and for whom? Through what methods?
2. **Understand the opportunities and challenges encountered by these creators**: what individual, institutional, and wider system-level factors enable academics to create and use digital learning content?
3. **Understand the extent to which this content is formally incorporated into institutional learning collections**, through review, quality assurance and accreditation, publication and hosting.
4. **Identify promising practices** that have wider value for academics and universities in each country, as well as value to university educators and leaders across the continent, and for the global HE community
5. **Identify policies and processes which can enhance or hinder** the development of digital learning content and recommendations for action which could facilitate wider replication.
6. **Demonstrate these innovations in practice to African HE policy makers and leaders**, and to HE policy makers and leaders from beyond Africa

Research team

The project is led by INASP, UK, with independent researchers leading the work in each country.

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- Dr Augustine Mwangi (University of Nairobi, Kenya)
- Oluchi Okere (Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria)
- Richard Lamptey (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, Ghana)

Our starting points

While much is written about the potential and impact of ICTs on teaching and learning in African higher education, much less is known about how African academics are creating and developing their own learning content. The prevailing narrative suggests that African academics are largely consumers of digital learning content and tools produced by others, rather than being producers of their own.

We believe that there is a different story – or stories – that show how African academics and university educators are innovating, to produce content to support student learning, and that much is happening "below the radar", invisible to the wider higher education community.

We aim to get beyond the "flagship universities" by deliberately seeking insights from a range of institutions.

Defining our terms

Innovation is contextually dependent. We take it refer to any practices which are unusual or creative within their own national and institutional contexts. By **digital learning content** we mean content that is:

- Designed for use on computers, tablets or mobile phones; is shared and accessed via websites, online learning platforms and repositories, smartphone apps, or is shared through other social media channels and groups such as WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram etc.
- Digital content could include material in audio or visual form – a digital document of any type, a video, an audio recording, an application (app).

Our approach

- Rapid review of the existing (published) and grey literature
- Call for "stories of innovation" - to identify interesting, innovative, useful digital content being created "under the radar"
- "Stories" shortlisted and most interesting developed further through interviews (conducted online & recorded)
- Stories published online for wider viewing, comments
- Two-stage workshop to synthesise results, reflect on emerging findings, identify enablers and obstacles, co-produce recommendations
- Final report and briefings