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DISTANCE EDUCATION FUNDING: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CENTRE FOR EXTERNAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN

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***Abstract.** This work evaluates the sources and uses of fund for and by the Centre for External Studies. It is discovered that the center though appears to be adequately funded but if all it needs to do, is done, the funding becomes inadequate. And it may become extinct if nothing is done to improve the revenue base of the centre. It thus suggested that the remuneration of the staff be improved while academic staff be recruited for improved services. It is equally suggested that investment of excess income be made, consultancy services be set up, and centre's programmes be expanded to involve those faculties and departments that are not yet taking part in its programme. Furthermore, intakes could be increased and fees be raised to meet the needs of the centre. The university should fully integrate the centre for greater productivity and sustainability of the programme.*

Introduction

In September 2001, there was an international workshop on Distance Learning mainly organized by the Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF and Commonwealth of Learning (COL) where a national policy on Distance Education and a ten-year programme were evolved (Ayorinde Dada (ed); 2001). This development has given greater impetus for the need to enlarge the scope of distance education in Nigeria if the teeming population requiring education at all levels are to have their aspirations met. It is noteworthy that that many are unable to enroll for formal education because of the degree of poverty prevalent in our society and because of the inability of Nigeria's tertiary institutions to meet the demand for admissions to their full-time programmes. Moreover, distance education presents the opportunity to some people to combine studying and gainful employment.

This investigation is informed by the need, at this point in time, to understand the financial implications of running a distance education programme as well as to the sustainability of the programme. It is by so doing that the programme will be properly run and administered to the mutual

benefits of both planners and implementers on the one hand and learners on the other to put their acts together for efficiency and effectiveness so that the desired impact is realised to the benefit of both parties. In fact, this point has been underscored by Dada (2001) when he states, "for distance education to cater for the needs of the generality of learners, the programme must be considerably expanded in content. But there are many constraints, especially finance, that militate against such expansion". To further strengthen the need for this study is the fact that the Federal Government intends to begin the implementation of Distance Learning by starting an Open school for the training of technicians and teachers in January 2002 (The Comet, August 2, 2001 p.25). The study may then provide a basis for budgeting for distance education outfits in the country.

Study Objectives

This study investigated:

- (i) The depth of the financial implications of running a distance education programme.
- (ii) Examine the sources of Centre for External Studies fund, the uses of Centre for External Studies fund;
- (iii) Investigate the adequacy or otherwise of funding the Centre; and
- (iv) Make suggestions for the sustainability of funding Distance Education Programme.

Research Questions

Thus the study will seek answer(s) to the following question(s):

- (i) What are/is the source(s) fund for running a distance education programme?
- (ii) What are the uses of fund in a distance education programme?
- (iii) How adequately is the funding of the Centre? If not, why? And what improvement can be made to make fund adequate?

Justification

Distance learning is very popular in Nigeria and has also attracted the interest and support of international organization like UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Commonwealth of Learning. The study is pertinent in that it is expected to provide information on how to improve and sustain distance learning at University of Ibadan. The University of Ibadan has one of the foremost

distance learning programmes in Africa and so needs to be encouraged, especially through research.

Distance education is taking a new dimension in the history of education in Nigeria. With the proposed cooperation of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), UNESCO and UNICEF on Distance Learning, it becomes imperative to examine funding of one of the existing distance learning programmes as a case study to unveil the levels of funding or financial implications of such a programme so as to avoid any haphazard implementation of the programme and ensure sustainability and continuity of this all important method of learning which can bring education to the door-step of many. This is especially necessary in view of the fact that the Government had appointed a Technical Director for the proposed Open/Distance Learning Varsity (The Punch, Aug 7, 2001 p.33).

Literature Review

According to Dada (2001) distance education is aimed at providing fresh opportunity for those who missed the opportunity of formal education at one level or the other; who would want to catch up with what was missed without having to go back to the conventional or formal school system. He thus defined distance education as:

Teaching and learning process where substantial proportion of the teaching is done by persons who are removed in space and / or time from the one who is being taught... there is physical separation of the teacher from the learner unlike in the conventional school system...

The emphasis here as Umoru-Onuka (2001) points out is that distance education is not limited by either time or space, as it covers a wider geographical area than formal education setting.

The trial edition of Guide to the Development of Materials for Distance Education produced by UNESCO/BREDA (2001) defines Distance Education and Open Learning as follows:

- Separation of teacher and learner in time or place or in both time and place
- Institutional Accreditation... Learning is accredited or certified by some institution or agency (not the same as learning through your own effort)

- Use of technical media including Print, Radio and TV broadcast, video and audiocassettes, computer- based learning and telecommunication.
- Provision of a two- way communication which allows learners and tutors to interact as distinguished from passive receipt of broadcast signals
- Possibility of face- to- face meetings for tutorials often referred to (learners in Ibadan) contact session
- Participation in the most industrialized form of education; i.e. large scale open and distance learning operations.

It also defines open learning as a situation whereby decisions are taken by learner himself/ herself about (i) whether or not to learn;(ii) what to learn (iii) how to learn (iv) when to learn (v) how to get learning (vi) what to do next. The term open access implies a level of formal entry requirements, prerequisites, credentials and entrance examination.

External Studies was regarded as a term that applies to instruction that takes place somewhere other than a central campus, such as classroom remote from campus, and includes variety delivery options. It stated that Centre for External studies at the University of Nairobi is responsible for both open and distance learning programmes. So open learning as defined by the South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE) states as follows:

Open learning is an approach, which combines the principles of learner centeredness, lifelong learning, flexibility of earning provision, the removal of barriers to access learning, the recognition for credit prior learning experience, the provision of learner support, the construction of learning programmes in the expectation that learners can succeed, and the maintenance of rigorous quality assurance over the design of learning materials and support systems... (UNICEF/ BREDA).

The characteristics contained in this definition may also to a very large extent hold true for distance learning. Defining Distance Education, UNESCO/ BREDA (2001) notes that it describes a “set teaching and learning strategies (or educational methods) that can be used to overcome spatial and temporal separation between educators and learners”. Farombi (2001) defines Distance Education as “a means an organized instruction is offered to the learner who is

often geographically separated from the teacher with the aim of changing the learners behaviors... such that feedback is facilitated through print, electronic device courier..."

Dada (2001) concludes, "Distance Education has come to stay as a means of making up for lost education opportunities around the world". According to Teboh (1996): distance education presents the various forms of study in which students are not in physical direct services of tutorial organizations. Instruction is through print, audio or electronic means or a combination of these. Distance Education is a means of providing alternative educational opportunities for those who lost such opportunities earlier and are now willing to take advantage of such alternative to ameliorate a lost opportunity or for those who could not afford education through its formal route because they want to study and at the same time keep their jobs.

The Importance of Distance Learning Include

- (1) It provides expanded opportunities through the expansion of the hitherto limited number of places that are available;
- (2) It reaches a wider audience than the formal educational setting;
- (3) It uses outside experts who could ordinarily otherwise unavailable;
- (4) It uses unconventional methods and means of imparting knowledge; and
- (5) It allows the educand to schedule learning performance.

It is also obvious that the funding of the education in Nigeria is primarily the responsibility of the Government hence Umoru-Onuka (1997) urges that all Stakeholders in education be involved in the financing of the sector. Mohammed Haruna, on p. 7 of the Comet of Wednesday, November 28, 2001, laments the underfunding of the education and agricultural sectors while commenting on the Presidential presentation of the 2002 Budget to the National Assembly. Engr. Abidoye Ayoola, Chairman Governing Council of the Polytechnic on Thursday, November 29, 2001 at p. 6 of the Nigerian Tribune, equally laments the underfunding of the institution. But Umoru-Onuka (1996), citing Peter Drucker (1962), states that education of the people is very important and is thus investment intensive meaning that it requires heavy funding. Durosaro (2000) implies that though enrolment in the Nigerian Universities, the funding and facility capacity does not appear to have increased in the same proportion; while Umobong (2000) found that the few available resources are not well managed by school managers and that the only way to ensure quality education is to adequately fund the sector. Therefore, it

becomes imperative that education generally and distance education in particular should be adequately if the National Educational objectives were to be realized as greater number of the populace without access to formal education could benefit from such a programme.

Centre for External Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

The idea of distance education at the University of Ibadan was the baby of the Department of Adult Education, which had thought of such a programme in the mid-sixties (Teboh, 1996). She also states that Dr. Ogunsanya, a former director of the Centre revealed that the external studies programme as it was then known was approved on February 26, 1987. It technically took off later that year after its November 23, 1987 inaugural meeting of the planning body. Adekambi (1992) reports that the history of distance learning dates back to 1887, the time when the University of London threw open its gates to Nigerian private candidates to write its examinations. According to Adekambi the programme of ESP, Ibadan, the Nigerian experiment in Ibadan apart from those of Lagos and Zaria took off with a total of 1122 pioneer students drawn from all parts of the country as follows:

<u>State</u>	<u>Number of students</u>
Abuja	2
Akwa Ibom	5
Anambra	5
Bendel	28
Kaduna	3
Kwara	4
Lagos	223
Imo	7
Ogun	117
Ondo	128
Oyo	598
Rivers	4
Sokoto	1
Total	1,122

Source: Teboh (1996) p. 44.

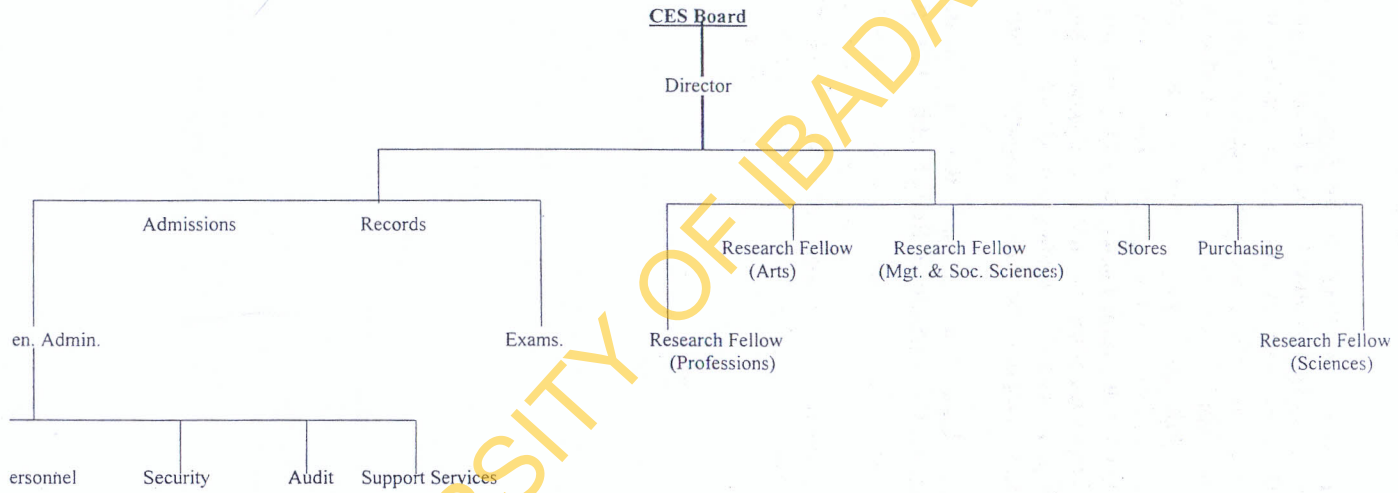
These students matriculated in 1988.

Teboh reports that at inception the programme had three units viz: Programme Planning and Development Unit, Editorial Unit and Administrative Unit. By 1996, there were seven units namely: Editorial Establishment and Records, Admissions and Study Centres, Teaching practice and Student's welfare, Stores and Supplies and Accounts Units and Examinations. Initially the H.O.D., Adult Education Department was also the Director of the Programme (Omolewa, 1995). However, by 1994 the directorship was severed from the HOD, Adult Education Department and the director was appointed from outside that Department for the first time (Ogunsanya, 1995)

By 1996 the center's organogram is made up of the Director, Director's Secretary, Deputy Registrar/Secretary, Editorial Unit, Teaching Practice and Students' Welfare, Establishments and Records, Admissions and Study Centres, Examinations Units (Adapted from Teobh, 1996, p.47).

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Umoru-Onuka (2001) suggests the following organogram as represented in the chart below:



The Directorate made up of Academic Staff (Research Fellows with background in major group of disciplines viz: the Sciences, Education, Management and Social Sciences, the Arts and the professionals to teach, research and coordinate the activities of the academics from the their respective faculties; Purchasing unit, Research & Marketing, Editorial and Stores Section. The Administrative Division with the following units; Examinations, Records, Admissions and General Administration with the following sub-sections: Audit, Personnel, Security and Support services.

Methodology

The approach to this study is ex post facto because what we are investigating had already taken place and does not lend itself to any other design-experimental or otherwise. Interview was carried out with those operating the programme to determine the adequacy or otherwise of funding. Data was collected from the Finance section with the permission of the Director. Admission records and financial records were examined in line with our research questions to determine the sources and uses of fund i.e. income and expenditure respectively. Percentage of each source of income (funding) was determined was done with that of expenditure head. The universe is the entire current population of the center, which also constitutes the sample for this study.

Limitation

Only a few years' records were readily available.

Findings

Discussion and Implications

Table 1. Enrolment per year/ session

Year/session	Enrolment (New students)
1997/98	279
1998/99	318
1999/2000	No Admission
2000/2001	314
Total	911

Source: Admission's Office of the Centre.

Table I shows the yearly enrolment at the center for three sessions consecutively. The figures did not show any tremendous increase in successive admission exercises (1997/98, 1998/99, 2000/2001).

The implications are that prospective students are not very responsive to the programme of the Centre because they are not aware of its existence or that direct solicitation for applications are highly restrictive to certain areas of the country so response to advertisements are poor or that stricter admission prerequisites than obtain elsewhere are required for admissions of candidates into the programmes and so they go elsewhere for their courses.

Table 2. Total Graduates per set

Set	No of students
1	1,013
2	576
3	978
4	599
5	135
6	232

Sources: Adapted from Admissions-Office of the Centre's admissions Records.

Table II shows the number of people who graduated per set. The first of 1,013 graduates of the center spread over three Departments of Adult Education (533), Guidance and Counseling (326) and Teacher Education (154) is the highest so far. The following set is made up of 516 graduates from the Departments of Adult Education (203), Guidance and Counseling (276), and Teacher Education (37). The third set consists of a total of 987 as follows: Department of Adult Education (307), Guidance and Counseling (403), Educational Management (138) Human Kinetics and Health Education (93), and Teacher Education (46) (five departments) The fourth set is composed of 599 graduates from Adult Education (113), G&C (385), Educational Management (64), Human Kinetics and Health Education (3) Teacher Education (33) and Special Education (14).

From the above analysis we found that enrollment did not increase successively. It was neither stable nor steadily increasing. However, if the centre, has many others of its kind, is self financing then efforts must be made to sustain increasing student's enrollment each succeeding year. The sixth set has a total of 232 students as follows: Adult Education (8), G&C (84), Educational Management (45), Human kinetics and Health Education (10), Teacher Education (25), Special Education (15) and Library, Archival and Information Studies (45).

Table 3. Sources of Funds (Revenue source)

Source/Session	<u>1996/97</u> <u>Amount</u>	<u>1997/98</u> <u>Amount</u>	<u>1998/99</u> <u>Amount</u>	<u>1999/2000</u> <u>Amount</u>
Tuition:	153,950	136,500	477,000	485,850
Sales of application:	1,681,350	1,642,600	2,349,100	2,521,100
Course Materials(Sales)	1,570,475	1,322,630	2,832,107	3,343,900
T/P& Misc.	343,400	697,965	493,400	1,002,310
Exam. Fees	740,405	338,575	299,400	472,900
Project Supervisor	36,217	31,753	48,164	67,879
Total	3,549,432.00	3,235,023.00	6,499,171.00	7,893,939.00

Source: Finance Record of the Centre for External Studies, University of Ibadan.

Table III depicts the sources of funds for the Center of External Studies, as follows:

- 1) sales of application forms
- 2) tuition
- 3) sales of course materials
- 4) examination fees
- 5) teaching practice/others and;
- 6) project supervision fees.

Tuition is the largest source of revenue for the center and this seems closely followed by sales of course materials if the sales turnover without cost of printing is taken cognizance of and this is the assumption here. However, if compared to the cost it no longer becomes the second largest source. Project supervision fees constitute the least means of fund.

Table 4. Uses of Fund (Expenditure Heads)

Item	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Printing of Course Materials	1,092,390	578,138	125,800	1,117,704
Staff enrolment;	1,107,462	1,011,472	2,033,142	1,942,096
Transport & Travels	70,227	56,465	177,149	53,065
Examinations	1,059,998	846,390	505,202	794,564
Office stationery	274,377	-	254,094	259,094
TP& Project	724,627	250,030	353,702	252,189
Maintenance of Office Equipment	36,960	13,085	33,430	43,900
Publications	495,769	22,552	-	70,000
Vehicle Running Expenditure	86,348	72,850	172,760	115,160
Maintenance of Study Centres	102,310	44,529	115,160	108,450
Matric. & Convocation	41,932	30,703	38,000	35,610
Advertisement	14,838	32,750	-	71,964
Office & General	-	28,850	35,270	144,487
Entertainment	-	-	15,049	23,065
Allocation to Depts.	336,170	-	-	504,220
Allocation to GES	8,404	31,400	-	12,602
Allocation to UI	33,617	-	-	50,422
Allocation to Faculties	42,021	-	-	63,027
Purchase of furniture	-	63,500	124,500	-
Purchase of vehicle	-	-	600,000	-
Purchase of office equipment	135,000	348,223	234,906	-
Total	4,838,858	3,404,906	5,381,717	4,977,584

Source: The Centre's Finance Records

In the Table 4 we see that staff salaries constitute the major source of expenditure while printing of course materials and examination alternatively constitute the second largest source of expenditure use of funds allocation to the GES is the last least means of expenditure. However, what is not clear from the table is whether the salaries include such expenditures as honoraria of

part-time lecturers, which one may conclude to be so since it was not shown under a separate heading. The amount of money expended on advertisement is small. This may have been responsible for low enrolment figures being recorded by the Centre. Maintenance of study centres was given very little allocation in the four sessions shown on Table IV. This is an indicator that not much goes on in the study centres or that there are very few of them. The total expenditure for the 1996/97 amounted to N5, 626,489 while the following year it was only N3, 404,906. In 1998/99 it was over N5, 381,707 and only N4, 977,584 in 1999/2000. The expenditure in 1996/97 exceeded income by N1, 100,663 (N5, 381,717-N4, 525,797) 1997/98 total expenditure amounted to N3, 404,906 while income stood at N4, 170,023 leaving excess income of N765117. In 1998/99 total income of N6, 499,171 was recorded while the total expenditure stood at N5, 381,717 allowing for N1, 117,454 profit and in 1999/2000 expenditure was N4, 977,584 while income stood at N7, 893,939 leaving N2, 916,356 in the coffers of the Centre.

Table IV shows that only infinitesimally small amount of money (less than 2% of total expenditure) is spent on adverts (N14,838, N32,750, and 71,964) for three sessions. Table IV shows that only infinitesimally small amount of money (less than 2% of total expenditure) is spent on advertisements (N14,838, N32,750, and 71,964) for three sessions.

Table 5: Percentage Income Per Source

Session	Sales of App	Tuition	Sales of c/m	Exam fees	T/P & others	Project supervisi on fee
1996/97	3.4%	37.15%	7.59%	34.7%	16.36 %	0.80%
1997/98	3.27%	39.39%	31.72%	16.74 %	8.12%	0.76%
1998/99	7.34%	36.14%	43.58%	7.59%	4.16%	0.74%
1999/2000	6.15%	31.94%	42.36%	12.7%	5.99%	0.86%

This Table above shows the percentage contribution of each item to the total income of the Centre as computed from Table 4 above.

Table6: Percentage of expenditure per source

Session	Salaries	Printing of c/m	Gen.&Misc. Exp.	Office stationery	Exam.	Tp & project
1996/97	19.03	19.42	1.2	4.8	10.04	12.00
1997/98	29.71	15.22	1.66	0.0	24.86	7.34
1998/99	42.5	2.63	3.7	5.31	10.56	7.39
1999/2000	34.32	19.75	0.44	4.49	14.04	4.51

Table 6 cont.

Session	Office equip.	Publi- Catio n	Vehicle Maint	Study Center	Matric& Convoc	Advert.	Office Allocation
1996/97	0.66	8.17	1.53	1.82	0.75	0.26	01.87
1997/98	0.38	0.66	2.14	1.31	0.9	0.96	14.06
1998/99	0.7	0.0	0.00	3.61	0.79	0.00	19.25
1999/2000	0.76	1.24	1.24	2.03	0.63	1.27	14.09

Table 6 shows the percentage of each expenditure item as computed from Table 4 above.

Salaries took 19.03%, 29.11%, 42.5% and 34.39% in the sessions covered by the study in chronological order while printing of course took 9.42%, 15.22%, 2.63% and 19.75%. In the same order, the other expenditure items shared the rest of the expenditure. Spending zero value on publications means that enlightenment is relegated to the background. There is no evidence that investment was undertaken from the profit made from the running of the Centre (this finding corroborates the assertion of Adejuwon (2001) during an interview that no investment had been made by the Centre. Adejuwon also opines that the revenue of the Centre seems adequate for now because it is undertaking all it needs to do and secondly because it is understaffed and the staff are underpaid. Staff responsibilities are not matched by qualifications and experiences; hence the performance or productivity cannot be maximized. Thus if the Centre pays its staff as it should and runs the Centre optimally, the present level of revenue and funding will definitely be inadequate. He said the sources of revenue included tuition fees, sales of course materials, examinations, teaching practice, projects supervision, application forms and miscellaneous sources. According to him, the sources of expenditure include printing of course materials, examinations conduct and supervision, printing of examination materials, allocations to Depts, faculties, GES, University, purchase and maintenance of office equipment, sales, honoraria, adverts among others.

On how the funding can be improved, he suggested external sourcing of funds, which he said, was an actual intention of the programme and that funds could also be sourced from companies, individuals, foundations, research and consultancy, expansion of the programme and from increased student enrolment. The expenditure pattern over the four years show that the staff members are probably underpaid or the right calibre of staff is not in place. And either of these two possibilities may not enhance productivity, which may in turn affect enrollment negatively.

Conclusion

The investigation reveals that the sources of funds are fewer than the uses of funds, though surpluses were consistently recorded in the four years (sessions) covered by this study. The sources of funds include: tuition fees, application form sales, project supervision fees, examinations fee, sales of course materials and teaching practice/ sundry materials. It appears for now that the sources of fund produce adequate fund for the running of the center, as there was no year under review when there was under funding in terms of shortfall in revenue when compared to the expenditure of each year. To that extent the fund is adequate: However, when reviewed against the background that the center is self-funding, it may become inadequate in terms of the long-term self-sustenance. Unless something is done to increase student intakes on a successive basis, since the entire fund comes from the students, shortfall in revenue compared with the expenditure may become the order of the day and that may lead to cessation of the programme. The uses of fund (expenditure) include: staff salaries (this did show whether it includes honoraria, but that can be easily inferred as there was no separate sub-head for it). The finding here is that the center is probably under-staffed because the salaries constituted less than 30% in 1996/97, about 32% in 1997/98, about 35% in 1998/99 and over 30% in 1999/2000 of total expenditure. Thus if the appropriate number of staff are employed the wage bill will go up and the center may run short of funds.

The number of courses being run is very few if compared to the courses offered in the University. In fact, running only educational courses and a few others outside of education makes it prone to extinction. The courses run cover only five Departments. These cannot sustain it at all for any good length of time; especially in the face of mushroom study centers of other universities springing up all over the place by the day and in view of the proposed Open/Distance Learning Programme of the Federal Government.

Other expenditure sub- head include: printing of course materials, which also consume as much salaries nearly every session, examination,

teaching practice supervision, project supervision, maintenance of office equipment, publications, maintenance of vehicles, travels, office and general, advertisement, maintenance of study centers, allocation to departments, GES, the university, faculties, purchase of furniture, purchase of vehicle etc.

To improve the revenue, the programme need be expanded, to cover courses from almost all the faculties, if not all. An academic should be employed for each group of discipline to research, possibly teach and liaise between the programme and faculties in which case he will interact with the academics as an academic himself to facilitate better productivity centre.

Like all other academic units/depts, it should have its own classroom away from other 'school' areas, so that its programme will not be disrupted by the disruption of regular academic calendar. This will encourage more people to embrace the programme of the centre. From this study we discovered that the Centre for External Studies is under funded because of the instability in its students enrollment and thus its revenue. It is thus suggested that its programme be reviewed to make it more attractive to a larger spectra of its clientele and it is also suggested that the center be integrated into the university to boost the morale of its staff. The fees and other charges should be raised to commensurate with what obtains in similar institutions, provided the service of the centre is equally improved. As a means to improving its services, it should recruit its liaison academic staff that will both teach, liaise with their academic counterparts in the faculties, and also engage in research and consultancy to raise fund for the centre.

Recommendations

In view of the system of funding the Centre summarized above, the following recommendations are made to keep/put the center on sound financial footing:

Reorganization/restructuring of the center to provide for more

Courses to be offered at the center, this step will equally expand the financial base of the center and thus its funding.

- Student population should be increased through increasing the annual intakes by involving departments that have not been participating in the center's programme. This step will in turn increase the center's revenue base, which comes mostly from tuition fees and sales of course materials as well as students' application forms' sales. This will also jack up the amount of revenue that will be realised from examination fees, another source of substantial fund for the center.

- The center should be allowed to source fund from international organizations, multinational companies, foundations, and philanthropic individuals. Individuals should also endow the center.
- The center should encourage the formation of Alumni Association of all its past students so that they could contribute their quota to the sustainability of the programme.
- Excess income should be ploughed into investments such as Treasury bills, an improved and expanded Business center to include photocopying and binding, publishing and possibly establishing its printing press.
- Academic staff that will be paid, as their counterparts should be recruited at least one each from disciplines from each of the faculties (participating faculties), so that they be engaged in research and consultancy to be established by the center. This will also help to boost the revenue base of the center. All the staff should be adequately remunerated.
- Marketing strategies should be evolved for the 'sales' of the programme to the public for better and improved patronage.
- The center should build its own classroom and use them for running professional programmes to be certified by professional bodies with whom it will collaborate, as well as professional diplomas and pre-degree diplomas to be certified by the university.
- It should be properly integrated into the university even though it should continue to be self-funding. This will give sense of belonging to its staff and thus increase their level of commitment and productivity.

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