



**AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR
DISTANCE EDUCATION
STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 - 2025**

DECEMBER 2021

AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (ACDE)

Kenyatta University, Main Campus Thika Road

Kenyatta University Conference Centre

P.O. Box 8023-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.

Tel.: +254 (0) 20 8704117/18/19.

E-Mail: exccdirector@acde-afri.org

PREFACE

On behalf of the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), I wish to take this opportunity to introduce you to the ACDE Strategic Plan (SP) for 2021-2025 which aims to facilitate the mission of *“promoting collaboration amongst actors in ODeL, advocate for policy, research and quality assurance in open and distance learning with the aim of increasing access to inclusive equitable quality education and training in Africa.”* Operationalization of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan will be through implementation of earmarked strategic projects/programmes.

The SP builds on and consolidates the achievements made by the Council over the last five-years 2016-2020. It is designed to transform the Council *“To be a major player in the promotion of and advocacy for Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) in Africa.”*

The Council will continue working closely with its various stakeholders existing and potential member institutions, African governments, regional institutions, development partners, the private sector and the general public.

I wish to express gratitude to the ACDE member institutions and individuals, African governments, regional institutions, development partners, the private sector and all friends and well-wishers of the Council for the past and current support. It is my sincere hope that this support will continue in order to make remarkable impact through implementation of the SP.



Prof. Goski Alabi
President, ACDE Executive Board
September 2021

ABBREVIATIONS

ACDE	African Council for Distance
AfDB	African Development Bank
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOUN	National Open University of Nigeria
ODeL	Open, Distance and e-Learning
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OER	Open Educational Resources
OU UK	Open University of United Kingdom
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAA	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SP	Strategic Plan
TESSA	Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) is a continental educational network comprising African universities and other higher institutions of learning, which are committed to expanding access to quality education and training through Open and Distance Learning (ODL), including e-learning. It is registered under the laws of Kenya as an international educational non-profit making organization, and has its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

The idea of the ACDE establishment was motivated by the desire of African Vice Chancellors to establish a unifying body that would facilitate and promote the pooling of resources, the shaping and influencing of continental policies on distance education, and collectively sourcing for and tapping into resources available from the national, regional and the international communities for the advancement of education and training through ODL.

This Strategic Plan (SP) for the period 2021 – 2025 has developed a clear statement of the Council's vision and mission, specified set of strategic objectives and formulated key strategies and projects that address those factors that are essential to the organisation's success.

The plan succeeds the strategic plan for 2016-2020 and has been prepared through an in-depth consultative process, designed to align the Council's activities with the aspirations of key stakeholders in the African Region.

2. ACDE Vision, Mission and Core Functions

The ACDE's strategic future direction is encapsulated in its statements of vision, mission, core functions and core values:

Vision

To be a major player in the promotion of and advocacy for Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) in Africa.

Mission

To promote collaboration amongst actors in ODeL, advocate for policy, research and quality assurance in open and distance e-learning with the aim of increasing access to inclusive equitable quality education and training in Africa

Core Values

The ACDE is guided by the following core values: Transparency; Accountability; Integrity/Ethics; Collaboration; Equity; Responsiveness; Innovativeness; Results-oriented; Sustainability; Reliability; and Efficiency.

Core Functions

- a) To promote quality in open and distance learning including e-Learning, flexible and lifelong learning in Africa.
- b) To promote research and training in open and distance e-learning in Africa.

- c) To contribute to the development of policies essential to the advancement of open and distance e-learning.
- d) To foster continental and global collaboration in open and distance e-learning.
- e) To provide a forum where individuals, organizations and governments can interact, deliberate on policy matters, share and disseminate ideas on and innovations in open and distance e-learning.
- f) To promote the development of appropriate methods, human capacities and technologies in education and training relevant to open and distance e-learning.

3. Strategic Plan Development Process

To develop this strategic plan, a situation analysis of ACDE was undertaken by a committee that was constituted by the ACDE Executive Board in November 2020 with representation from ten ACDE Member Institutions. The committee participated in the review of the 2016-2020 SP and development of the 2021-2025 SP.

Through the situation analysis of ACDE programmes and activities, the committee came up with a score card of achievements based on four thematic areas namely: Our people (learning and growth); Clients/stakeholders/services/brand; internal systems and processes and financial sustainability as indicated in table 1. The committee further identified challenges that were experienced in implementing the ACDE 2016-2020 strategic plan. In addition, the committee identified opportunities that can be utilized in the 2021-2025 ACDE strategic plan.

Table 1: 2016-2020 Achievements score card

<p>1. Our People: Growth and Development In the last strategic period ACDE had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 programme directors in 4 member universities (a] Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency, hosted by National Open University of Nigeria, b] Collaboration and Partnership, hosted by Open University of Tanzania, c] Database, hosted by University of South Africa and d] Information and Communication Technology, hosted by Open University of Sudan) • The Secretariat comprising of seconded staff by NOUN & Egerton Universities including; Executive Director, Administrative Finance Officer, and Administrative Secretary • 29 active ACDE Member Institutions 	<p>2. Our stakeholders: Promotions and advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations in teacher educator capacity building (TESSA, OU UK) • Collaboration with COL on capacity development • ICDE, CoL, UNESCO, AfDB, Master Card Foundation, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and EAC. A link was established with regional and national ODeL Associations
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<p>3. Internal systems and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held 5th ACDE Conference and General Assembly successfully • Developed a functional website hosted by ACDE Secretariat • Signed collaborative MOUs with various partners • Developed QA Tool kit • Trained 141 QA officers from 11 ACDE Members institutions • Made various presentations on the QA in international and regional conferences 	<p>4. Financial sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generated USD 292360 from membership subscription • Received contributions from 29 ACDE members • ACDE activities funded by some Member institutions both in kind and financially • Utilized seconded members of staff paid by seconding member institutions
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4. Challenges Experienced in Implementing the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan

The following challenges were identified as a hindrance in implementing the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan:

- a. Lack of consistent subscription from ACDE members. While 58 member institutions were registered with ACDE, only 29 were active. However, the financial sustainability of the council was carried by only 15 member institutions who were subscribing consistently.
- b. Most institutions were not reached for training in the use of the ACDE-QA tool kit due to lack of funding.
- c. Lack of information on on-going ODL projects on the African continent that result in wasteful duplication
- d. Unavailability of and limited access to reliable, transparent and up-to-date information and data on ODL in Africa.
- e. Lack of research activities.
- f. ICT matters were not adequately covered under key results areas and strategic issues in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. Different universities have different ICT platforms, so creating one for all universities to use was not possible.

5. Opportunities

The opportunities identified include:

- a) Conduct surveys to:
 - Assess the impact of the QA tool kit in institutions that have adopted the use of the ACDE-QA toolkit. Collaborate with National QA Agencies to incorporate ACDE-QA toolkit in their evaluation instruments.
 - Review of the ACDE-QA tool kit to accommodate e-Learning.
 - Determine levels of collaboration among partner institutions.
 - Activate dormant partnerships through consultative meetings.

- b) Encourage ACDE member institutions to forge more collaborations and partnerships in areas of ICT, training, research, OER and MOOCs.
- c) Encourage Regional Representatives to recruit new members and report progress on the link created between ACDE and their regions.
- d) Design and develop open and online capacity development programmes
- e) Engage in continental higher education policy issues in ODeL
- f) Publish conference proceedings Develop collaborative activities with regional ODeL bodies.
- g) Encourage member institutions to report status of implementing ODeL programmes.
- h) Development of a framework for collaboration and partnership between and among the ACDE network of institutions and partners.
- i) Development and maintenance of a functional, interactive and dynamic continental ODeL Database. Explore the possibility of using social media to enhance visibility of ACDE to facilitate information sharing amongst stakeholders.
- j) Resuscitate the ACDE ODL research agenda, encourage member institutions to make voluntary contributions, Source funding from donors, create partnerships with publishing houses.

6. The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan

Table 2 presents the 2021-2025 balanced score card, showing what ACDE seeks to achieve in the next five years.

Table 2: 2021-2025 Balance Score Card

<p>1. Our People: Growth and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of active ACDE members subscribing regularly from 15 to 30 • Have a functional secretariat with seconded members of staff from ACDE Member institutions including (Executive Director, Finance Officer, Administrative Officer, Senior Administrative Officer • Have student interns to support ACDE secretariat • Have research fellows to support ACDE Secretariat 	<p>2. Our stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of collaborations that are active to 15 • Undertake 10 capacity building workshops for ACDE members, targeting 2 workshops per year focusing on open, Distance and e-learning • Have functional collaboration with 20 stakeholders in ODeL • Develop a newsletter biannually updating ACDE members on the ACDE activities • File annual returns to the Kenya Revenue Authority and the NGO's Coordination board on a timely manner • Having a functional website hosted by ACDE Secretariat • Develop one policy brief per year informed by evidence
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3. Internal systems and processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the 6th and 7th ACDE General conference • Audit the ACDE accounts and processes annually and publish the reports on our website • Sign collaborative MOUs with partners • Train 200 QA officers from 30 ACDE Member institutions • Accredite 30 ACDE Member institutions that use and comply to the ACDE QA standards • Publish ACDE reports annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4. Financial sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase membership subscription to USD 500000 in the current strategic period by 2025 • Develop at least 3 funding research proposals per year with a target of winning one. • Encourage and increase the number of ACDE member institutions supporting ACDE activities from 4 to 15
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7. Operational Action Plan

7.1 Our People: Growth and Development

Goal: To enhance ACDE institutional Capacity									
Objective	Indicator	Activities	Responsible	Budget	Time frame				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
To double the number of active ACDE members	Register of ACDE Members	Develop, a recruitment framework Upscale the recruitment of members	ACDE secretariat						
		Undertake <i>strategic recruitment</i> to fill staffing gaps at ACDE Secretariat preferably by way of	ACDE Board						

Hold the 7 th ACDE Conference 2023	Conference reports Conference reports	Set up conference planning committee by the end of 2021.	Secretariat to initiate; planning committee to execute							
Hold ACDE virtual Conferences after every two years	Conference report	Planning for the conference								
Hold ACDE Annual Webinar/workshop annually	Webinar report									
Audit the ACDE accounts and processes annually and make reports available for stakeholders	Audit report	Publish audit report	ACDE Secretariat ACDE Board							
Enhance collaboration with stakeholders in ODeL	Signed collaborative MOUs with partners									
Train QA officers in ACDE member institutions	List 200 QA officers from 20 ACDE Member institutions trained List of certified trained QA officers	Reviewing QA tool kit Training QA Officers	ACDE QAAA							

Accredit 20 ACDE Member institutions that use and comply to the ACDE quality standards	List of certified and accredited ACDE Institutions	Develop manual for accreditation Develop accreditation tool. Appoint Accreditation panels. Setting up of Committee to develop policy brief	ACDE Executive Board. ACDE QAAA ACDE Secretariat						
Total Cost				480800					

7.4 Financial sustainability

Goal: Enhance our financial standing by 50% in the next five years									
Objective	Indicators	Activities	Responsibility	Budget	Time frame				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
To increase revenue by doubling the number of active members	List of paid up members	Invoice members on time, and following up non-payment	Secretariat						
Increase membership subscription	Records of annual subscription	Recruiting new members	Secretariat						

n to USD 500000 in the current strategic period by 2025									
Developing at least 3 funding research proposals per year with a target of winning one.	List of funding proposals developed	Proposal writing	Research committee Secretariat						
Increase the number of ACDE member institutions supporting ACDE activities from 4 to 15	Advocacy strategy in place	Develop advocacy strategy Writing to potential member institutions to support ACDE activities	ACDE Secretariat						
Total Cost				15000					

8. Sources of Funding for implementing the strategic plan

The funding of the ACDE 2021-2025 will be obtained from the following sources as indicated:

- i. Membership annual subscriptions to raise USD 350000
- ii. Members in-kind donations and financing ACDE activities to raise USD 150000
- iii. Conference subscription fee USD 120000
- iv. Research funding proposal writing USD 3000

DECLARATION:

This ACDE Strategic Plan 2021-2025 has been approved for implementation with effect from 1st December 2021.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Goski Alabi', written in a cursive style.

Signed: _____ Date 30th November 2021

Prof. Goski Alabi
President, ACDE, and
Consulting President, Laweh Open University Ghana