

14. Mohr J., Sengupta S., & Slater S. (2010). Marketing of high-technology products and innovations // Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

15. Muff K. (2012). Are business schools doing their job? // The Journal of Management Development, 31(7), 648–662.

16. Noorda S. (2011). Future business schools // The Journal of Management Development, 30(5), 519–525.

17. Pfeffer J., & Fong C.T. (2002). The end of business schools? Less success than meets the eye // Academy of Management Learning & Education, 1(1), 78–95.

18. Pop D. (2014). Online tool for soft skills evaluation and employee management // Journal of Information Systems & Operations Management, 1–10.

19. Rapert M., Smith S., Velliquette A., & Garretson J.A. (2004). The meaning of quality: Expectations of students in pursuit of an MBA // Journal of Education for Business, 80(1), 17–24.

20. Starkey K. & Tratsoo N. (2007). The business school and the bottom line // Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

21. Thomas H., & Cornuel E. (2012). Business schools in transition? Issues of impact, legitimacy, capabilities, and re-invention // The Journal of Management Development, 31(4), 329–225.

22. Wilson D.C., & Thomas H. (2012). The legitimacy of the business of business schools: What's the future? // The Journal of Management Development, 31(4), 368–376.

23. Global Management Education Graduate Survey [Electronic resource] // Global Management Education Graduate Survey Data Collection to Merge with Alumni Perspectives Survey. URL: <http://www.gmac.com/market-intelligence-and-research/gmac-surveys/global-graduate-management-education-survey.aspx> (accessed date: 03.06.2016).

24. Occupational Employment Statistics [Electronic resource] // Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2015. URL: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes111021.htm> (accessed date: 03.06.2016).

*урезанием финансирования бизнес-школы столкнулись с проблемой привлечения студентов так же, как и многие другие факультеты. Наряду с программой Магистр Бизнес Администрирования (МБА), которая остается популярной, возникла необходимость предложить специализированную магистерскую программу подготовки менеджеров и лидеров для сферы бизнеса. Данная программа предоставляет широкие возможности для трудоустройства и карьеры выпускников-магистрантов, потому что компетенции, знания и навыки, формируемые в рамках данной программы, несут в себе огромный потенциал для позитивных изменений в организациях и местном сообществе. Специализированная программа может изменить традиционный подход в подготовке специалистов в школах бизнеса.*

**Ключевые слова:** бизнес-школы, МБА, программы подготовки менеджеров, магистранты, карьера.

**FETWI ADGOY GILIA**  
(Volgograd)

### THE IMPORTANCE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN PROMOTING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN ERITREA\*

*The article shades light on the importance of distance education, as it is practiced both in the developing and developed countries all over the world. After independence, the Ministry of Education of the State Eritrea, faced with an acute shortage of teachers, both in terms of quality and quantity. And hence, Open Distance Learning Program (ODLP) was launched to upgrade the under-qualified elementary and middle school teachers.*

**Key words:** open distance learning, correspondence, Education, UNISA, University of Asmara.

#### 1. Review of literature.

According to the Encyclopedia of Education, the term distance education and/or correspondence education is defined as a "system in which universities, schools, educational agencies offer

\* Работа выполнена по итогам научной конференции (проект «Непрерывное образование учителя: теория и практика» № 16-06-14101), поддержанной РФФИ.

### **Специализированная магистерская программа подготовки менеджеров и лидеров для сферы бизнеса: преимущества для человека и организации**

*Исторически бизнес-школы в университетах США вносили очень важный вклад в развитие и финансовое благополучие своих университетов. Однако в последние годы в связи с усилением конкуренции на образовательном рынке и*

courses wholly or partly by mail. The Dictionary of Education also defines distance education and/or correspondence education in a more specific terms as a method of providing for the systematic exchange between students and instructors of materials sent by mail for the purpose of instruction in units of subject matter : a set of printed lessons or assignments based on textual materials and/or instructional media with directions for study, exercises, tests, etc. to be used as primary or supplementary aids to learning outside regular classroom environment [9].

The term “ distance education” covers the various forms of study at all lecture rooms on the same premises, but which nevertheless benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of tutorial organization [ 7, 10 ].

Distance teaching / education is a method of imparting knowledge, skills attitudes, which are put in practice by the application of division of labor and organizational principle as well as by the extensive use of technical media, especially for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching materials, which make it possible to instruct a numbers of students at the same time where ever they live [23, 10].

Distance education is a general word used across countries, and this distance mode of education is gaining a momentum, becoming more popular than the formal or conventional education. In many developed countries, learners prefer distance learning to formal/conventional education. It is assumed that distance education is an area which can make a great educational and structural changes in a short period of time as compared to the preceding schools of education [6 ].

Distance education has become an important issue in education as well as strategic planning for national, and international development; because distance education is cheaper than the higher education, a number of countries have developed policy frameworks for the enhancement of distance education at higher learning institutions since it promotes further education, enhances and updates knowledge, skills and attitude of learners [10].

In addition, distance education creates the possibility of increased access to university education at more cost effective ways [21, 19]. As a result of the modern technological advances, mass education can be facilitating today as the world is becoming much closer than before. Technical developments have greatly contributed for the development of distance education [23, 2].

Further, distance education is changing speedily enough as the process of education appears to change increasingly and become global-

ize in terms of physical reach and scope of courses and programs on offer; at the same time, different views on distance education are emerging, reflecting the fast evolving nature of distance education[ 9, 24 ].

It was during the 1960s and early 1970s, that writers such as Otto Peters Charles Wed Meyer, Borje Holmberg, John, and Michael Moore started publishing in the field of distance education. Although distance education is relatively a young field of study, a number of theoretical contributions have been made by various researchers and theorists [ 7 ].

These theoretical contributions in distance education serve only to introduce us some of the foundations of our thinking on distance education that we can get in the literature. A number of writers such as Rumble (1999), refer to distance education as an enlightening process in which a great amount of teaching is done by someone who is removed in space from the learner.

Distance education involves the use of a range of media such as print, electronic, written correspondence through assignments, audio and computer- based media. The modern electronic technology instructs successfully and delivers lessons without the teachers' direct presence [15; 6 ].

Distance education is a form of education characterized by physical separation from the teacher, an organized instructional program, technological media and two way communications [16].

Terry. E. and Juler (1991) argue that the ever developing world has hundreds of distance education teaching universities. According them, it is not a simple task to supply, sustain, improve, plan finance and manage universities with unique/different characteristics that they have. In one way or the other, the universities experience problems and barriers encountered by students; study limitations within and without the institutions; lack of feedback; lack of supports and services; problem of feeling alienation and isolation; problems with newer students; lack of organization- infrastructure, technology; lack of materials, competent computer workforce to support internet use etc.

Keast (1997), argues that if programs of distance education to become effective, institutions need to: “equip their target audiences with the required knowledge, skills, attitudes from the diverse courses that are supposed to take; empower women, in order that they can actively participate and contribute to social, economic and cultural development of the community and the nation; deploy resource for those ( for example ex-fighters, disable, women, adults), who are deprived from

the traditional campus-based school for one or the other reasons; provide for and upgrade teachers' professionalism and their career development at work; provide an innovative system of university education, which is both feasible and open in methods, pace of learning; play a role in appropriate implementation of government policy in education, to make it available to all qualified prospective students ;and deploy lifelong learning that is flexible ( while encouraging the students experience) and provide choice where, what, and how the student as well as the pace at which they learn”.

Than any other teaching approach and in a different way, distance education which exercises new mode of delivery, needs a collaborative effort between students and teachers (Ibid).

Distance education, as a provision can help learners to develop the acquisition of new knowledge and skills to lead a better life. Hence, joint work of both governments and private sectors is needed to lay a firm foundation to implement a doable distance education program [7].

## **2. Distance Education in Eritrea.**

The long war for independence (1961–1991) and the border conflict with Ethiopia after independence (1998-2000) have greatly affected the socio-economic advancement of the country. As time went however, the Eritrea is recovering from the ruins of war and it is on its way to nation building and reconstruction for a better future [13].

Eritrea has experienced different colonial types of educational systems: including the Italians, the British and the Ethiopians. The objectives of all colonial education systems including in Eritrea, were based on colonial requirements and a policies that placed emphasis on indoctrination and subordination [20].

Contrary to the above-mentioned colonial educational policies, the government of Eritrea believes that education is not only a fundamental human right, but also a vehicle for national development and poverty reduction initiatives [Ibid].

After independence in 1991, many problems appeared in the road of improving education in Eritrea: the participation rate of girls was very low at all levels of schools, most of the schools in the country work on double -shift system, because having one -shit system is difficult for Eritrea, as it requires an adequate number of school buildings. Many people who are living in both urban and rural areas of the country also need to learn and grow.

To provide educational opportunities to all and to make further education accessible to those who are interested in continuing their studies, to

extend learning beyond the regular system and to provide cost-effective education, the only alternative appeared to be distance education and /or learning.

Taking all these into considerations, the Ministry of Education and other institutions initiated distance education programs to alleviate the major concerns i.e. lack of highly skilled professionals and technical manpower in cooperation with various development partners.

At the same time, Ministries have been sending their staff members to both short- and long-term overseas training programs, in addition to what technical, vocational and managerial education was provided at home [15 ].

## **The Revolution School: the beginning of Distance Education.**

In 1976, the Revolution School (Zero) was established at the Eritrea's Popular Liberation Front's base (EPLF) in SAHEL: the ever-undefeated strong -hold area in the history of the Eritrean struggle for independence.

The Revolution School was serving for thousands of orphans, children of fighters, nomads and displaced highlanders and for Eritrean youth who had run away from areas occupied by the Ethiopians or the camps in the Sudan, where thousands of Eritreans were residing.

In the Revolution School, EPLF educator-fighters produced and tested a new 'national' curriculum and teaching materials, started to transliterate Eritrean oral languages, introduced mother tongue instruction, developed participatory teaching methods, which combine theory with practice. While Subject area Panels prepared instructional materials for formal schooling, the Adult Education Panel prepared materials to be used for distance education purposes [22 ].

In the meantime, the Revolution/ Zero/ School 'graduates' were trained as teachers and brought to liberated or semi-liberated areas. The task given to them was to organize cultural shows, adult literacy classes in schools for children. Basically, the purpose of the Awareness Campaign Strategy was to mobilize workers and the rural people; to make them aware of the goal and objectives of the war and their role in it; and to empower the population to develop their own resources and liberate their country in all aspects [7].

## **Distance Education for Disabled Fighters.**

The EPLF's disabled fighters, under the auspices of the EPLF, were residing in Port Sudan, in the Sudan. These disabled fighters were using the Eritrean Sudan-based Clinic for treatment, rehabilitation and some basic education programs. As there was a need to offer them with distance

education, a committee was set up to organize distance education program for these group of fighters.

The first task of the responsible committee to run distance education in Port Sudan and Suakin (Sudan) was to undertake a need -driven survey in order to figure out the educational levels or academic status of the disabled fighters.

The committee did its task ; accordingly, they were grouped into three categories as follows;

- Foundation course taker- groups grades--- 1–7/
- Refresher course taker- groups grades---- 8–9/
- 0 – level course taker- group grades---- 10–12.

According these groupings, distance education program was organized in two centers in the Sudan, namely one in Port Sudan and the other, in Suakin. The program went on for many years until the total liberation of Eritrea in 1991 [22].

#### **The Distance Education Program for Elementary Teachers (DPETE)**

This type of Distance Education Program was mainly targeted to elementary school teachers in the country. The program showed some positive signs in improving teachers' professionalism and was able to motivate teachers when it started. However, it became short- lived due to some reasons and discontinued before six years, mainly due to lack of expertise, experience, logistic problems, quality materials and student support services. The program was monitored by the Ministry of Education, the Italian government and UNESCO [16]

#### **The Open Distance Learning Program (ODLP)**

Prior to the Open Distance Learning program, Asmara University was given the responsibility 1991, to include distance education in its programs. Accordingly, linkages were made with South Africa ( UNISA) and UK to suit its needs. In the main, the role of Asmara University (UOA) in the establishment of distance education at tertiary level was to conduct a feasible study of this project; to secure the necessary budget for implementation and carefully implement the project.

The Open Distance Learning Program (ODLP) program was launched on 29 March 2006 at the Asmara University Main Building.

The program was a collaborative project between the Ministry of Education and the University of Asmara, with the aim to upgrade the capacity of middle school teachers throughout the six regions of the country. The then Minister

of Education, Ato Osman Saleh, presently the Minister of Foreign Affairs, make a remark during the opening ceremony, that the government of Eritrea realizes that education is the basis for economic growth, and the ministry has given priority to education and is actively working on it.

He added that the Ministry of Education has been working on capacity building by organizing distance learning and other forms of training [15]

The ODLP was successfully implemented in Eritrea. In its first Batch, about 590 junior school teachers were upgraded to a diploma level by way of ODLP. To successfully implement the program, faculty members from the University of Asmara and senior staff from the Ministry of Education took part in ODLP. Altogether, there were 26 information centers established around the country. The program was funded by the World Bank. In the Second Batch, of the ODLP intake, about 1400 certificate holder- teachers were upgrade to a diploma level. The Program was funded by the European Union [Ibid].

#### **The UNISA Supported Distance Education**

The University of South Africa (UNISA) experience of distance education program in Eritrea developed a policy framework for tertiary distance education which could possibly complement Eritrea's specific content- based on its national conditions. The main objective of the program was to improve the capacity of government institutions - i.e. to help them in resolving the major problems of acute shortage of skilled and professional manpower.

A total of 889 trainees from 34 public sector entities were originally enrolled in 44 areas of specification in the UNISA program. The attrition rate was quite high. While 213 (24%) failed, another 276 (31%) had to withdraw before completing their respective training modules. The main beneficiaries of the UNISA programs were the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Defense, which employ 53% of the participants, followed by the Ministry of Local Government [26].

According to the Consultancy, Training and Testing Center, University of Asmara-Records, 358 of the UNISA participants passed, 213 failed, 276 and other 42 withdrew.

The high attrition was due to the following reasons: students had difficulties in managing their study programs while coping with their work pressures, and were encountering logistics and transportation problems; some students lacked the courage to pursue their studies independently; there was also lack of computer skills and communication problems with instructors and

tutors; students considered that tutorials and support systems were inadequate ; delays in dispatching materials for exams, assignments (materials come, on average, in three weeks' time by courier – South Africa – via Kenya to Eritrea) ; students complained that there was less feedback given to them ; students were provided with material guides only – other books and references needed to be purchased and they faced several inconveniences [27].

#### **Eritrea-British Institute**

This organization was a new distance learning institute established in the private sector by an Eritrean and a UK institution, which was closely supervised by the Ministry of Education and the British Council Library in Asmara at that time. The institute provided various courses at undergraduate to postgraduate level. It had very cost-effective study fees compared with other overseas costs for the same programs [23].

#### **Eritrea Tutorial College**

This was a new distance education institution, emerged after independence. The School of Modern Consultancy Service launched the Eritrea-Tutorial College, aimed at providing educational opportunities. The Modern Consultancy Service was established as a local school of distance education in 2003 in order to assist those students/ individuals who, for one reason or the other, find it difficult to attend the normal College courses [Ibid].

#### **Conclusion**

Distance education initiative has played a positive role in providing education by providing access to teachers, urban community groups in rural and remote areas, including workers, fighters, women and other adults in Eritrea who want to upgrade their knowledge, skills in various fields.

Today, distance education through the internet and other modes has the capacity to play a positive role in enhancing knowledge, skills and attitudes; and has become a major issue in education and in strategic planning for regional and national development. It is a possible means for developing the human resources of small and young developing countries such as Eritrea.

Distance and/or correspondence learning have assisted in the development of education all over the world. In order to be effective, however, distance education requires enough logistics, quality materials, student support services and trained and committed manpower, among others.

#### **References**

1. Carrol D. (2004). Pedagogy and Assessment in the new curriculum, Ministry of Education, Asmara, Eritrea.
2. Daniel J. S. Mega (1996). Universities and knowledge media, Technology Strategies in Higher Education, London: Kagan Page.
3. Denzin N.K. & Lincoln Y.S. (1994) 'Strategies of Inquiry' in Denzin,N.K. & Lincoln (eds), Hanbok of Qualitative Research, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publishers, p. 199–208.
4. Evas T. & Juler P. (1991) . Research in distance education, London: Macmillan.
5. Harry K. (1992). 'Distance education today and tomorrow : a personal perspective ', Educational Media International, 29 ( 3), p. 189–192.
6. Holmberg B. (1995). The Evolution of the character and practice of distance education, Open Learning, 10( 2), p. 47–53.
7. Iyob R. (1997). The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, resistance, nationalism: 1941–1993. Cambridge University Press.
8. Keast D.A. (1997). Towards an effective model for implementing distance education programs, American Journal of Distance Education, 11(2), p. 39–55).
9. Keegan D. Foundation of distance education third edition. London: Routldg.
10. Khan J. (1993). Human resource development in the public sector management, 61 (1), p. 48–58.
11. Killion T.(1998) Historical Dictionary of Eritrea, Longman: Scarecrow Press.
12. Ministry of Education, UNESCO and the government of Italy (1996). Guidelines for a policy framework on distance education, Asmara, Eritrea (23 January).
13. Ministry of Education (1999). Our People are our Future : a framework for the development of human resources in the education sector, Asmara, Eritrea.
14. Ministry of Education (2003). Eritrea: Basic Educational statistic 2002–2003, p. 2–3.
15. Ministry of Education, (2006). 'Tertiary education in Eritrea , issues policies and challenges', Eritrean Profile,13 (56–57) (part I and II on 20 and 23 Sept, p. 2–3.
16. Ministry of Education (1996). Brief Description of DEPETE: Tasks and Achievements, Department of National Pedagogy. Ministry of Education, Asmara, Eritrea.
17. Moore M.G.( 1990). 'Recent contributions to the theory of distance education ', Open Learning, 5 (3), p. 10–15.
18. Moore M.G. & Kearsy G. (1996). Distance Education: a Systemic view Belmont, California: Wards Worth Publishing.
19. Rena R. (2004). Educational development in Eritrea, Eritrea profile, 11 (12), p. 6.
20. Rena R. (2005). Gender disparity in education, an educational perspective, Global Child Journal (USA), 2(1), p. 43–49.
21. Rena R.( 2005b). 'Financing of education in Eritrea, a case study in Zoba Maekel, the African Symposium (Albany, USA, 5(3), p. 113–128).

МЕТОДИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ОБЩЕГО  
И ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

22. Rena R. (2006b). Eritrean Education'-retrospective and prospective 'Eastern Africa Journal of humanities and Sciences (Nairobi, Kenya, 5(2), p. 1–12.

23. Rena R (2006). Educational and human resource development in post independent Eritrea-Analysis International Journal of Educational Development using information technology (IJEDICT), Barbados, West Indies.

24. Saint W. (1999). Tertiary distance education and Technology in Sub-Saharan Africa ,Washington, DC. The World Bank, ADEA working group on higher education.

25. Taye A. ( 1992). A historical review of the state of education in Eritrea, Asmara: Educational materials Publication and Distribution Division Agency (EMPDA).

26. Terry E.& Philip Juller (1991). Research in distance education ,London: Macmillan.

27. University of Asmara (2004). Records of the Consultancy and Testing Center,University of Asmara,Eritrea.

28. Visser J. (14 April 1994). Distance education for the nine high population countries, Paris: UNESCO Basic Education Division 14, april.

29. Wills B. (1998). Effective distance education planning: Lessons learned, Educational Technology, 38(1), p. 57–59.

*Важность дистанционного образования при формировании учительской профессиональной компетенции в Эритрее*

*Рассматривается важность дистанционного образования, которое практикуется во всех развитых странах мира. После получения независимости государства Министерство образования Эритреи столкнулось с недостатком учителей, как качественным, так и количественным. В этой связи была создана Открытая дистанционная образовательная программа (ОДОП), цель которой – повышение квалификации учителей начальной и средней школы.*

**Ключевые слова:** *открытое дистанционное обучение, заочное обучение.*

