The Futute Direction of Virtual Universities:

A Perspective from The African Virtual University

MIT Linc Conference
18th June 2013
Cambridge, MA

Bakary Diallo, PhD
Rector
African Virtual University
bdiallo@avu.org

AFRICAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE AFRICAINE
UNIVERSIDADE VIRTUAL AFRICANA

1 **Overview .** *Who we are ?*

2 **Our presence.** *Where we are?*

3 **Our Activities.** *What we do?*

4 **Future Direction for Virtual Universities**

AFRICAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE AFRICAINE
UNIVERSIDADE VIRTUAL AFRICANA

A Pan African Intergovernmental organization

1997   AVU was created.

2003   AVU adopted Open Distance and eLearing.

2007-9   AVU was reestructuraded redefining its focus through a Business Plan.

2010   AVU new Charter.

2012   AVU signed a MOU with African Union Commission

- **17 countries have signed AVU Charter**

- **Mandate-to increase access to quality higher education and training through use of ICTs**

- **Works Across Africa in English, French and Portuguese**

- **30 African Countries**

- **Has trained more than 43,000 students since inception**

- **More than 53 Partner Institutions**

Working Across Africa
Beyond Technological, Language and Cultural Barriers
Find more in www.avu.org

OUR PRESENCE IN AFRICA

❑ Organization profile. OFFICES – Africa

SENEGAL
Regional office in Dakar

Bureau Regional de l'Afriue de l'Ouest
Stcap Ltberte VI Extenston
Vtlla No 8 VON, B.P. 50609
Dakar Senegal
Tel. +221 33 867 0324
Fax +221 33 867 3554
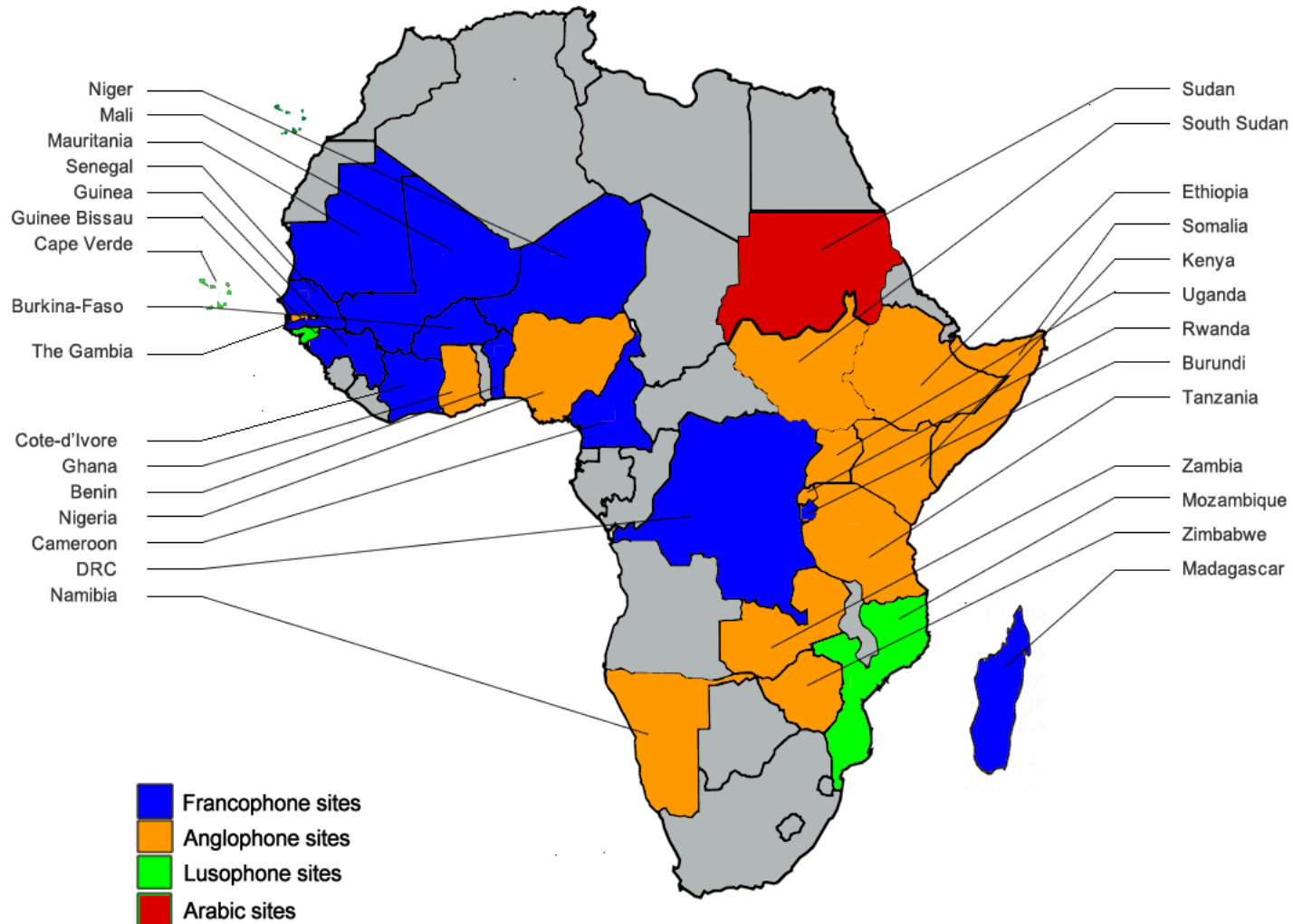e-mail: bureauregional@avu.org

NAIROBI
AVU Headquarters

The African Virtual University
Cape Off1ce Park (Opposite Yaya Center)
Rig Road, Kilimani
PO Box 25405 - 00603
Nairob, Kenya
Tel +254 20 252 8333
+254 20 3861458 / +254 20 386 1459
+254 722 205883 / +254 733 624A 12
Fax +254 20 3861460
Email: contact@avu.org

Profile Organization and References. | PAGE 6 |

The African Virtual University : Our Presence in Africa

- Niger
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Senegal
- Guinea
- Guinee Bissau
- Cape Verde
- Burkina-Faso
- The Gambia
- Cote-d'Ivore
- Ghana
- Benin
- Nigeria
- Cameroon
- DRC
- Namibia
- Sudan
- South Sudan
- Ethiopia
- Somalia
- Kenya
- Uganda
- Rwanda
- Burundi
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Mozambique
- Zimbabwe
- Madagascar

Francophone sites
Anglophone sites
Lusophone sites
Arabic sites

Context of Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Africa on a pedestal to become the next growth frontier

- However only 6% of school-leavers in Sub-Saharan Africa enter tertiary institutions.

- 12% to 15% workforce to attain tertiary education in order to sustain economic development

- Universities unable to increase physical infrastructure to meet the soaring demand.

- Current mode of delivery unable to meet either current or projected demand

- **Distance education could help meet demand**

- This requires appropriate policies and funding, meticulous planning and execution, innovation, quality control, research and development and a vast sensitization campaign.

Challenges for eLearning

- **Limited internet connectivity**

- **High cost of connectivity**

- **Intermittent power disruptions**

- **Access to computer and other devices**

- **Lack of national and institutional policies**

- **Scarce experienced human resources**

- **Perception that distance education may not offer the same quality as face-to-face education**

Opportunity for eLearning

- **Fiber optics penetration**

- **use alternative sources of power**

- **Emergence of mobile technology an asset**

- **A recent report by Ambient Insight, a US-based research firm, revealed that in 2011 eLearning revenues in Africa reached $250.9 million and they are projected to increase to $512.7 million by 2016.**

AFRICAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE AFRICAINE
UNIVERSIDADE VIRTUAL AFRICANA

- **AVU education & support services**

- **AVU eLearning model adapted to African context**

- **AVU eLearning Infrastructure adapted to low bandwidth**

Focus on Education and Support Services

- **Setup and upgrade a Learning / ODeL Centre**

- **Training of Trainers**

- **Updating and developing content**

- **Open Educational Resources (OER) Development**

- **Research & Development- Focus on educational technologies and mobile learning**

- **Developing Professional Networks (consortia, communities of practice**

- **Gender mainstreaming**

- **Quality Assurance, Evaluation & Benchmarking**

AFRICAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE AFRICAINE
UNIVERSIDADE VIRTUAL AFRICANA

Universidade Pedagogica, Mozambique - 2009

Consortium Program Model (CPM)

OER@AVU
http://oer.avu.org

Expand access beyond consortium

OERs

INSTITUTIONS Africa & Beyond

Individual Instructors

Self Learners

Formal Learning

>> VIRTUAL CONSORTIUM PROGRAM

- Policy & Curriculum Contextualization
- Capacity Enhancement
- Curriculum Design
- Content Development
- Content Production
- Content Review
- Quality Assurance
- Accreditation
- Program Delivery
- Research & Development
- Community of Practice

>> CONTENT PRODUCTION

> **Online Format**

> **DVDs**

> **Print**

- Online Delivery
- Face-to-Face
- Blended Mode

>> PROGRAM DELIVERY

- Consortium Members' Programs
- Joint Programs
- AVU Programs

> **Degrees**   > **Diploma**   > **Certificates**

>> SUPPORT TO DELIVERY

- e-learning Centers
- AVU Virtual Classroom
- Members' Classroom
- Members' Virtual Classroom

© African Virtual University **CONSORTIUM PROGRAM MODEL** presented by Bakary Diallo   **NOVEMBER 2011**

AVU Open Education Resources

- **Full instructional path for programs – not only courses or learning objects**
- **1.7 million users worldwide in 201 countries and territories**
- **Education-Portal.com People's Choice Awards – 2 Awards for "Best OCW Emerging Initiative" in 2011 and "Most Progressive" in 2012**
- **AVU Atomic Physics textbook won the OCW Consortium Text Course Award for Excellence 2013**
- **AVU is sustaining member of OCW Consortium**

AVU Open Education Resources

- **Developed in 2005 through a collaborative approach**

- **146 authors and peer reviewers from 12 Universities in 10 African Countries were involved**

- **OER@AVU portal: http://oer.avu.org/ and on Scribd: http://www.scribd.com/AfricanVirtualUni**

- **Available in English French and Portuguese**

- **219 text books in Mathematics, Sciences, Teacher Education Professional Courses, and ICT Education freely available in English, French, and Portuguese**

- **Produced in several file formats on CDs/DVDs and print**

AVU Multinational Project II (2012-2016)

- **US$ 21 Million: 15.6 funded by African Development Bank and $ 5.4 Million from AVU & partners institutions**

- **27 new or upgraded distance learning centers**

- **27 universities from 21 countries**

- **Review of AVU 219 OERs modules**

- **New consortium Bachelor of Applied Computer Science and release it as OERs- Community of practice to continuously update the program**

- **Peace & Conflict resolution program**

- **Gender mainstreaming**

- **Research & Development**

- **Technical Assistance f**

Innovation in Educational Technologies through R&D

- **Virtual Education Laboratory to be launch by end of 2013 or early 2014 in Nairobi Kenya**

    - **Mobile Learning Laboratory**
    - **Educational Technology and Learning Resources**
    - **Open Distance and eLearning Center**

- **Annual Conference**
    - **1st AVU International Conference November 20th - 22nd Nairobi Kenya http://www.avu.org/1st-international-conference-of-the-avu.html**

- **Online open journal to be launched in 2014**

AFRICAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE AFRICAINE
UNIVERSIDADE VIRTUAL AFRICANA

Full fledged University

- **AVU strong in development services**

- **But program and course offers under developed**

- **Full fledged University to support the commendable efforts of country members**

  - **Participate to increase human**

  - **Contribute to regional integration, cross-border education and accreditation, employability, mobility of trainers and trainees, and sharing of resources**

- **Feasibility study in August July 2013**

Massive Open Online Resources

- MOOC concept appealing and great potential

- Challenges: high bandwidth required for Hi definition videos;   focusing on courses, not programs ; completion rate < 10% ; no formal accreditation

- Massive accredited education required to provide human capital in order to sustain economic development in Africa

- Massive Open Online Programs (MOOPs), with low bandwidth platform, accreditation in all AVU countries members , high completion rate?

- AVU is conducting feasibility study

- Announcement on strategy soon

Consortium Program Model (CPM)

Open Educational Resources

Adapt AVU OER content to a web-based format, full instruction-path, with peer interactions

AFRICAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE AFRICAINE
UNIVERSIDADE VIRTUAL AFRICANA

Role Virtual University in Africa

- **Provide leadership in emerging technologies and innovative practices through Research & Development**

- **Provide massive, relevant and affordable accredited education, and non formal education**

- **Provide attractive and flexible services**

- **Capitalize on Collaboration & Internationalization**

AFRICAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITE VIRTUELLE AFRICAINE
UNIVERSIDADE VIRTUAL AFRICANA

World 2033

- **Bright future for virtual universities**

- **They will be able to provide services around the world**

- **They must be hubs for innovation in educational technologies**

- **They may be forced to adopt new models in order to face competition**

  - **sharing of resources (open resources)**

  - **Sharing infrastructure to operate beyond borders, cultures and languages**

- **They may be inspired by airline alliances like Sky Team and Star Alliance**

- **AVU Consortium Program Model may be a futuristic**

Thank You

www.avu.org
http://oer.avu.org

www.scribd.com/AfricanVirtualUni
@avu_org

facebook.com/AfricanVirtualUniversity

www.youtube.com/avuorg