

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: A Case Study of National Open University of Nigeria's Environmental Science And Resource Management Programme

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ABSTRACT

This study revealed how environmental education was communicated to a variety of people through Open and Distance Learning (ODL through the programme environmental science and resource management offered at the degree level at the School of Science and Technology of the National Open University of Nigeria. This opportunity provided learners with the ability to continue their education build capacity and brought about social justice, with the aim of contributing to social awareness and create opportunities in social life. Questionnaires were administered on 150 learners who registered with the university across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

The aim of the study was to determine the accessibility and relevance of the programme to registered learners from various six geo-political locations using also their demographic characteristics. The results of the study indicated various benefits, including: the positive perceptions of open and distance learning by the respondents which resulted from their improved access to education; the availability of course materials, the open system of admission where students can register at any time of the year; at their convenience; the flexibility of study, the ability to develop skills and capacity and the potential of open learning to provide new employment opportunities, enhance career prospects and work place promotion were some of the benefits indicated by the respondents in their questionnaires. Through open learning, environmental awareness and accessibility to homes and communities is increased.

This would consequently encourage the management of natural resources for the future by the promotion of technological advancement in environmental management, sound data collection and analysis.

Thus, communication of environmental data would further improve the chances of mitigating future environmental challenges and encourage exchange of solutions between nations.

Keywords: Open and Distance Learning, environmental education, environmental application.