

NJALA UNIVERSITY

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Network to Build Capacity for National Recovery

As Chief Academic and Administrative Officers of Njala University, I have reviewed the well-defined technology support systems and strategic partnerships for a Global University System (GUS) broadband network with Japan ODA donor structure and propose cooperation with the GOSL Ministry of Education with planning grants by UNAIDS (for infrastructure to advance education and health services) and Fast Track Poverty Reduction (for infrastructure which initially strengthens both fishing industry rehabilitation and rural women's farm cooperatives).

GUS for Sierra Leone has been adapted as complementary to the Mobile Assessment and Media Systems (MAMAS) outreach network for rural and refugee schools and learning centers to support acceleration of capacity-building across sectors.

In a larger context, we propose that this university-to-community educational network serve as a demonstration to help achieve MDG2015 targets, and as part of a Sierra Leone model for Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) http://www.adeanet.org/about/en_aboutADEA.html

Background

Linda Hawkin Israel (MAMAS) and Dr. Takeshi Utsumi (GUS) have presented us with an integrated and forward-leaning program outlining tools for implementation and coordination of all systems as they support basic education, participatory planning and tracking of public health and community medicine projects, with a structure under-girding education and management systems for economic development at varied levels of need. These systems can be anchored within the university networks in cooperation with international university and technology industry partners.

Over time, these capacities can increase income and security for universities, polytechs and even secondary schools as they “grow up” technical specialists and services to provide innovative community solutions.

Cross-Cutting focus:

As a cross-cutting educational program which uses these systems, MAMAS is proposing cooperation with the American Bar Association (ABA Africa Initiative), and Sierra Leone counterpart institutions and individuals, to include a track for strengthening legal infrastructure both at the university level and for legal literacy within civil society.

In cooperation with local stakeholders on development and distribution of content, this technology and peer-supportive infrastructure will expand potential for both education and dialogue with a strong focus on empowerment of women and on incorporation of lessons learned during Truth and Reconciliation hearings.

We understand that these linked models (MAMAS and GUS) represent several decades of research and international partnership-building and can be designed for ongoing reporting out, review, adaptation and eventual replication with consideration of population requirements and needs.

We also understand that Sierra Leone, its education and public health target goals, can provide the setting for a national “lab” to demonstrate a grid of technical solutions which are integrated into existing good programs and increase their potential for success both short and long term.

GUS and MAMAS: Current status

MAMAS, based at University of Washington, Seattle, and GUS, based in NYC and Tampere, Finland, represent mature programs with built-in peer support and donor strategy for a university-to-community education and telehealth network.

Both programs are ready for fast track implementation of a national “lab” demonstrating and reporting out advanced technologies as they are taught, maintained and used for sector-based needs. This process builds on nearly six years of pre-planning in Sierra Leone and will precede development of small pilots linking universities to community-based learning and health programs.

Next steps and requirements

Both MAMAS and GUS teams can be in Sierra Leone to begin this stakeholder planning process beginning June 1, 06. It is estimated that each program with its field and home support personnel will require about four months delivering the following:

1. demonstration workshops for sector applications
2. stakeholder planning for university-to-model community integrated infrastructure
3. agreements and structures for collaboration and accountability in place
4. coordinated proposals to donors for each track with pre-approved funding

University of Sierra Leone, Njala University, with Milton Margai College for Science and Technology, as lead for Polytechnic network systems, will cooperate with the Ministry of Education to anchor MAMAS and GUS infrastructure as is agreed upon during planning processes.

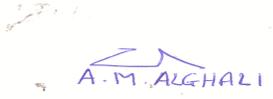
Funding

Budget for four month planning process as outlined above is 175K. This will cover costs of multi-sector initial analyses complete to finished proposals to donors. A planning budget is available for submission upon request.

We propose that funding for this next phase planning is provided and administered within UNDP and includes both *UNAIDS* and the *Fast Track Poverty Reduction* budgets as the implications are clear for this integrative approach to accelerate progress to meet targets for both programs.

We understand that the June 15 start date for a funded planning process represents a window which must be acknowledged for these programs to be available for our use.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A.M. ALGHALI". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink pen.

Prof. Aliyageen M Alghali
Vice-Chancellor and Principal
Njala University