

**E-BRAIN Monthly Meeting - October
Copperbelt Chapter**

Date: 1st November 2007

Venue: Hotel Edinburgh
Glasgow Conference Room

**Time
Start:** 17:48hrs

Finish: 19:30hrs

Presenter: Lee Muzala
Chairman – e-BRAIN Forum of Zambia

Topic: *How we can apply Information and
Communication Technology (ICTs) in Distance
Education*

Moderator: Emmanuel Chunda

Rapporteur: Chibwe Chibwe

Attendance: 49 on the register

1.0 Welcome remarks

Mr. Emmanuel Chunda welcomed all to the e-BRAIN monthly meeting. He introduced the presenter, Mr. Lee Muzala the Chairman of e-BRAIN Forum, from Lusaka and the topic – How we can apply ICTs in Distance Education.

He then called upon the chairman of e-BRAIN Copperbelt Chapter, Mr. Mwala Sheba, to give the opening remarks.

2.0 Opening Remarks

Mr. Sheba apologised for having had come late for the meeting because he was in Lusaka for some other business. He thanked all for the good attendance and expressed that the topic was a challenge for our time.

He also apologised that this was the first of the e-BRAIN monthly meetings this year mainly due to administrative problems. He said that earlier, the e-BRAIN Copperbelt Chapter sponsored a radio programme and referred to a number of other community projects done by the Chapter.

He thanked all the Copperbelt Chapter members for their contribution to the running of the Chapter. He reported that the last meeting hosted by the Chapter was a support for e-Health by CHAZ and e-BRAIN. A number of medical institutions attended.

He said that Distance Learning (DL) was now changing from a traditional classroom to virtual lessons. The meeting was going to concentrate on the challenges DL and how it would benefit us.

He then introduced the Chairman of e-BRAIN Forum Mr. Lee Muzala and the Office Manager Ms Yvette Mpakateni from Lusaka. He said both were well versed with this topic. He then asked Mr. Muzala to say a few words before making his presentation.

3.0 Introductory remarks

Mr. Muzala thanked all present for attending the meeting. He said that e-BRAIN was a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) that tackled issues of looking at ICTs for national development. He reported that e-BRAIN recently made an input to the Ministry of Transport and Communications on the national ICT policy. He expressed the need to have national legislation back ICT resulted into the formulation the national ICT policy.

He said e-BRAIN also does research work in ICTs for national development in Education, Agriculture, Health and other thematic areas like small scale business to enable them utilise ICTs.

4.0. Presentation

The moderator then called Mr. Muzala to make his presentation.

Topic: How we can apply ICTs in Distance Education.

Mr. Muzala started by quoting from the World Development Report by the World Bank that “Knowledge is like light. Weightless and tangible, it can easily travel the world, enlightening the lives of people everywhere.” He emphasised the need for people to acquire knowledge without necessarily sitting in a conventional classroom.

He then asked for four volunteers from the participants. He asked two volunteers from the back of the room to write down on a piece of paper any one problem being faced by the world today. The two volunteers in the front seats were asked to write down any solution to the problems being faced by the world today.

Problems written down

- Developing an aid to free digital access
- Poor national budgeting

Solutions

- Computers must be adopted to enhance learning
- Need for people to learn so that development can be seen.

Mr. Muzala explained that in both cases the participants expressed the need to broaden access to ICTs and learning of the solutions. The solutions were also tailored along the use of ICTs or the teaching of ICTs.

History

He started by giving history of Distance Education in Zambia. He stated that some time back we had Correspondence Colleges in Zambia that offered Distance Education. Registration was through mail and all the lessons and correspondence was via mail. All the support materials were also sent through mail.

Some of the examples of Correspondence Colleges that existed in Zambia were:

- Rapid Results College
- Central African Correspondence College

There were also other Matchbook courses

Delivery methods

The main methods through which courses were delivered were:

- Correspondence through mail
- Internet Courses .i.e. Webcasting both synchronous and asynchronous.
- Telecourse/Broadcast via TV or radio. He gave examples such as Taonga market presented by the Ministry of Education in Zambia for the Zambian population.
- Computer Based Training (CBTs). He said this was mainly delivered through the use of CD-ROMs and were largely home based.
- Pocket PC/Mobile Learning – this is a project by the American Government that works on putting course materials on an I-pod for service personnel and other people.

Myths

Mr. Muzala said myths were particularly prevalent in societies that were not well developed. These have got to do with the use of the Internet and computers.

Some of the myths that were identified were:

- Distance Education is not as good as learning on campus.
- Regulation is benign. The way it runs is very compassionate.
- Internet is about teenagers and as such the elderly have Internet phobia.
- Need to be literate for any person to use a computer.

Realities

- The world is full of scattered rural populations and need to learn. The only logical and reliable way they can access knowledge efficiently is through the use in ICTs in Distance Education.
- People are constantly on the move and as such there is need for them to continue with Education from wherever they are through ICTs.
- Very interesting people, environmental laboratories, cultures and customs of people.
- Much knowledge resides in global and local communities of interest.
- Distance Education is as good as or better than campus based.
- Distance Education can be adjusted to fit the delivery modes .i.e. continuous access is more important than speed.
- Integration and interoperability.

What is distance learning about?

Mr. Muzala posed this question to the participants and he gave some of the following points to explain what distance learning is all about.

- It is about teaching and learning than about technology. Some people have used CBTs even if they were not computer literate justifying the fact that it is about teaching and learning.
- It is about access and equality for learners. Everyone needs access to education anywhere and anytime.

What is driving Distance Learning?

Mr. Muzala explained that Distance Learning is mainly driven by demand but there were a number of catalysts that precipitated this demand. He presented these in a tabular form.

Demand	The catalysts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid changes in technology • Need for just-in-time delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet access at home and at work • Advances in computer technology support multimedia rich content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for cost effective ways to train a globally distributed workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing bandwidth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for flexible access to lifelong learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing list of quality e-learning products • Emerging technologies

Mr. Muzala then gave a contrast of the new and old media used in delivering distance learning.

Old media

- Radio
- Television
- AudioTape
- Videotape
- Books
- Slides

Problems

- Short – lived in nature for radio and TV
- Reuse is difficult
- Most useful for mass delivery
- Difficult to manipulate and do corrections

New media

- Computer
- Multimedia CBT
- Internet

Advantages

- Digital learning resources
- Reusable with little difficulty
- Personalised instruction

- E-mail
- CD/DVD
- Cost intensive, though it is decreasing
- Easy to manipulate, duplicate and Transport.

He gave an example of Zambia Air Services Training Institute (ZASTI) where they use a flight simulator to train their pilots. This machine simulates all the features of an airport and a cockpit. Since computers were multi-sensory, it made full interactive learning a reality.

Barriers to use of ICTs in Zambia

Mr. Muzala highlighted some of the barriers to the use of ICTs in Zambia and as such impediment to Distance Learning.

These barriers were:

- Lack of access to technology
- General literacy and language skills
- Cost of hardware and relevant content
- Lack of technical training in the use of technology
- Institutional and infrastructure barriers.

He also highlighted the need to make it mandatory for people to do an IT course before being enrolled in colleges.

ICT and capacity building

- ICT improves educational quality
- ICT increases access to basic learning for everyone.
- Leads to improved educational management
- Enables lifelong learning opportunities
- Capacity to reach disadvantaged people

Benefits of Distance Education

He categorised the benefits of Distance Education into two categories. These two are Students and Professors.

Student

The benefits to the students are:

- Flexible as student can rewind and walkthrough and through.
- Supportive by on-line support available
- Interactive and as such captivating for the student
- Responsive
- Technological as a certain level of IT literacy is required

Challenges to the student

- Resistance to change
- Technological challenges
- Self-discipline
- Feeling of remoteness/resentment.

Professor

The benefits to the professors were listed as:

- A new way of looking at his/her course material
- A new challenge

Challenges to professor

- Flexibility
- Organisational problems
- All preparation work is “up front”
- Feelings of outside interference

5.0 Conclusion

He concluded by requesting the participants to brain storm the question – Where to next?

6.0 Questions

The Moderator thanked the Chairman for the presentation. He said that Mr. Muzala gave an overview of what Distance Education is through the use of ICTs and challenges for Learners and Professors.

He finished by opening the floor for questions.

6.1 Mr. Mutuzana Misheck from Education – School net Mufulira branch.

Mr. Mutuzana highlighted a number of problems. He complained that despite donors donating PCs the number of hours they spent at work could not make them effective ICTs users. Lack of PCs at home meant that they spent money at cafes to do research work whose benefactors are the pupils.

He also complained of the lack of hardware knowledge on the part of the teachers and as such they fail to resolve the simplest of problems in the classrooms.

He also lamented on the negative attitude exhibited by the Headmasters on the procurement of PCs.

His question was how we could our country in this area.

Mr. Muzala said that for one to do a Distance Education course they needed to evaluate themselves. Internet cafes are expensive but there were some Distance Education institutions that offer a laptop as part of the package.

6.2 Mr. Emmanuel Mumba – CBU 3rd Year student of Computer Science

Mr. Mumba wanted to know the basic requirements for a person to enroll for Distance Education.

Mr. Muzala said it depended on the interests of the applicant and the course being applied for. He gave an example of UNISA where one needed to do an International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) course before their applications can be accepted. ICDL is offered in Lusaka. He said it was very comparative to conventional education but was a bit more expensive.

Mr. Chunda added that public institutions did not charge economic fees because Universities were fully subsidised by the Government. Distance Education was cheaper than conventional schools because they charge economic fees. However, they normally insist that a student buys a laptop.

6.3 Mr. Augustine Mwashu – CBU 4th Year student of Computer Science

Mr. Mwashu had two questions.

- 1). How has e-BRAIN gone to negotiate with Government to look at the challenges of highlighted?
- 2). Any Government policy concerning ICTs in colleges?

Mr. Muzala said that e-BRAIN contributed to the national ICT policy and fully brainstormed it for two months. He said that ICT education is needed for every teacher to be computer literate so that pupils are literate by Grade 7.

He said that two weeks ago e-BRAIN submitted a document on the ICT policy to Government. A Malaysian consultant engaged by Government to look at the implementation of the policy.

Mr. Sheba came in and said a pilot project on the teaching of Mathematics using computers was in progress. The Zambia Research Institute is in the process of finalising a project to connect all institutions of high learning in Zambia. The process was however slow. He also thanked CopperNet Solutions for offering a website where the ICT policy was hosted for comments.

6.4 Mr. Mulenga Salati – CBU IT student

Mr. Salati wanted to know how far e-BRAIN has gone on cooperation with Government on how the rural areas are benefiting from Distance Learning using ICT. He gave an example of India where many youths (20s to 30s) were using ICTs.

Mr. Muzala gave a three-point answer.

- 1). Cooperation with Government is there. E-BRAIN sits on the national working group of ICT policy.
- 2). e-BRAIN has representation in the Ministry of Education looking at ICT in Education.
- 3). e-BRAIN in discussion with Communication Authority on how to access funds they have for rural ICT.

6.5 Mr. Mando Tembo – Zamtel College

He wanted to know what e-BRAIN was doing to enable lecturers produce lecture notes on CDs.

Mr. Muzala said there was need to start from somewhere to enforce this. e-BRAIN will work with its partners to enable teachers. One World Africa was working on a project to digitise notes the experienced teachers have been using over the years. A pilot project is already there but needs Government and Private Sector support.

Mr. Chunda said the School of Business at the CBU has an arrangement with Wisconsin University of America where on-line lectures have been held.

6.6 Mr. Mondoka Chadli – Beautiful Gate

Mr. Chadli complained about the myths and said that when he sits on a PC for a long time, he tends to be affected in a way i.e. eye problems and nose problems as a result of using computers. He wanted to know how safe computer use was and how to prevent such effects to human beings.

Mr. Muzala said the PCs were as safe as vehicles.

Mr. P. Lunda from CopperNet said the CRT monitors were being phased out and were bad to the eyes due to their high radiation emission. The TFT screens were better because they did not have this problem.

Mr. Muzala further said that ergonomic issues in the design of keyboards, screen, seats etc needed to be considered by computer users. He said the angle of the monitor, lighting in the room where the monitor is and the adjustment of the screen and sitting position of the user needed to be taken into consideration to avoid these effects. He asked Mr. Chadli to use anti-glare screen filters and to take frequent breaks when using his office PCs.

6.7 Mr. Musukwa – Mukuba Secondary School, Kitwe.

Mr. Musukwa wanted to know whether e-BRAIN deals in all spheres of life and whether there was any relationship with the Citizenship Empowerment (CE).

Mr. Muzala said that e-BRAIN had been looking at ways of looking at collaborative activities and issues that e-BRAIN can go into.

Mr. Sheba said that there is a young engineers fund is available where enterprising people can access for people with projects. He also said that Schoolnet Africa and Schoolnet Zambia can be accessed by schools for their activities.

Mr. Chunda asked Mr. Lunda whether it was possible to connect all schools and colleges.

Mr. Lunda said it was very possible. Many colleges have received donor funding and connected for on-line Distance Education. If colleges wrote to Government, donors can assist them. Most colleges rely on libraries. He suggested that they put PCs in the library so that students can find resources from the Internet.

He said that teachers can learn through ICTs and Distance Learning if the Schools and colleges take up this initiative.

He suggested that the Government puts up a deliberate policy where if any person did not have any IT qualifications or certificate then they can not enter College. This way schools will be compelled to buy computers.

Mr. Muzala said he manages a project for schools where Global Teenager Project connects pupils to other schools all over the world. Two or three themes selected on MDGs, health and they put on a learning cycle and they do their research.

6.8 Mr. Mulenga Salati

Is Government monitoring colleges where lectures are not qualified but they are lecturing?

Mr. Muzala said he was not from Government and as such he could not answer this question.

Mr. Chunda said qualifications are done at the point entrance.

6.9 Mr. Mutunase

What was e-BRAIN planning so that software in Zambia can be offered in Local Languages just like it is done in Swahili?

Mr. Chunda challenged the CBU students.

Mr. Mufungulwa said projects have been undertaken by 3rd and 4th students regarding Local Languages. If felt necessary and e-BRAIN gives CBU a go ahead, this can be done for as long as the results are not shelved in one of the offices.

Mr. Muzala said that it all starts at the level of production of local content .i.e. Do a research on the 73 tribes on Zambia. There was no site in Zambia about the tribes in Zambia and yet this information is available on the FBI site.

Mr. Sheba said e-BRAIN did a research some time back and sponsored a former CBU IT club chairman to Ghana. It also sponsored ten radio Programmes that were run by the students themselves.

6.10 Ms Chansa

How is the membership for e-BRAIN?

Mr. Chunda said that Ms Yvette Mpakatani was going to distribute membership forms for all those interested to join e-BRAIN.

Ms Yvette Mpakatani said subscription fees were structured as:

- K20, 000.00 - for students annually
- K50, 000.00 - for working individuals
- K200, 000.00 - for clubs, societies etc

K500,000.00 - for institutions

She said e-BRAIN was an ICT information sharing Platform and does researches through thematic groups and members are included in some of the Researches.

Membership forms were handed out to prospective members and evaluation Forms were also handed out

7.0 Closing of the meeting

The moderator thanked the chairman for the presentation and closed the meeting.