Open Access for Africa

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP IN QUAD APPROACH TO BPO

Eric M.K Osiakwan
Visiting Fellow and Scholar
Stanford University
Consultant
InfoDEV (www.infodev.org) @ WorldBank
Outline

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What is Open Access?

• “Open” has being a generic evolution for sometime now - Open Source, Open Architecture, Open Society, Open Access etc predicated on the need for “collaboration and involvement” rather than “competition and exclusion”

• In the US it stands on the issues of capacity unbundling by Regional Bell Operating Companies to competitors, particularly in terms of roll-out-to-the homes

• In Europe it has been used to address wider issues around access to the network and how the network might be financed and operated
  - Open Access in the context of Communication (Open Communication) means that anyone, on equal conditions with a transparent relation between cost and pricing, can get access to and share communication resources on one level to provide value added services on another level in a layered communication system architecture.
  - The concept of Open Access to Communication Resources is central in the ongoing transformation of the communication market from a "vertically integrated" market with a few operators owning and operating everything between the physical medium and the end-user, to an "open horizontal market" with an abundance of actors operating on different levels and providing value added services on top of eachother.
  - Open Access is also a broad approach to policy and regulatory issues that starts from the question: what do we want to bring about outside of purely industry sector concerns? It places an emphasis on: on empowering citizens; encouraging local innovation, economic growth and investment; and getting the best from public and private sector contributions. It is not simply about making micro-adjustments to the technical rules of the policy and regulatory framework but seeking to produce fundamental changes in the outcomes that can be delivered through it.
• The urgency, and the viability, of these new models are driven in part by the growing (and inevitable) move toward Internet Protocol (IP)-based communication networks. This in turn implies the move toward a “layered” model of these networks, where there is a logical distinction between:

• The **physical layer** (the actual physical infrastructure made up of electrical or mechanical interface);

• The **logical layer** (managing the connection between the physical infrastructure and higher layers - method for transferring data);

• The **applications layer** (which includes things such as the Web browser- the user's interface to the network), and

• The **content layer** (voice, data or images conveyed by the network - the voice, images and data that the network delivers)

NB: This fundamentally changes the communications system and market from the “vertical” to the “horizontal” paradigm
Open Access Principle

• The significance of IP networks and the core argument of Open Access is that they have provided the opportunity to change the structure paradigm. Instead of needing a small number of large organisations, it has been possible to create extremely diverse “ecosystems” with a mixture of small, medium and large organisations. Hence the following principles must be upheld in the “ecosystems”

1. Anyone can play
2. Technological neutrality
3. Fair and non-discriminatory competition at all layers
4. Transparency to ensure fair trading within and between layers
5. Everyone can connect to everyone else at the layer interface
6. Devolved rather than centralized solutions
Open Access, How and Why

The “rules of the game” have changed fundamentally in terms of the distribution channels of “INTEREST, POWER and MONEY”

• A democratising influence
• A driver of economic growth
• Best form of public and private corporation
• Bring down the cost of service for the bottom of the pyramid users
• Limits to infrastructure competition and the terms of access to it

NB: This is evident with growth in Europe and Asia where this has been experienced in various forms
Is a four sided social formation of constituency leaders to spur growth and innovation.

According to Prof. Ernest Wilson - Senior Research Scholar of University of Maryland “The Quad, whether in Beijing, Bangalore or Cambridge, is a network of sustained interactions among variously competing and cooperating elites. It is built on mutual self-interest and on trust, which are at the heart of the social architecture undergirding the technological architecture. These elites in government, private firms, non-governmental organizations and research bodies together form the core intellectual driving force and the principal political coalition for a distributed, transparent and non-hierarchical technological architecture of information and communications. In order to achieve a new technological architecture, information champions who constitute the Quad press for a new social architecture to launch and sustain it. Though operating within the confines of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, the Quad leaders often support broad institutional reform that can reduce monopoly, state controls, and hierarchy more broadly across society”.
Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)

BPO has been estimated at US$ 120-150 billion and its estimated to grow more than 10 times from its current size of approx. US$11.5 billion - *NASSCOM-McKinsey Report 2005*

BPOs come with Technology Parks as nurturing environments where the Tech Parks are “special enclaves” for aggregation of various ICT businesses which outsource and are outsourced. The interaction among these businesses in a common environment is an essential element for collaboration in innovation and business growth.

Asia’s leadership in BPO is much of same quality and quantity at low cost and this has helped their in role into the ICT arena. BPOs are entry elements into the information revolution which is the basis for the emerging knowledge economy. **MOVE FAST THE VALUE CHAIN**

African countries like Ghana, Senegal, Rwanda, Kenya, Botswana, South Africa etc are seeing the need to create the environment to be competitive in the BPO sector by ensuring a competitive workforce, innovative educational system, changing regulatory and public policy, easy business uptake, cheap real estate, bandwidth and infrastructure.
QUAD BPO IN THE UNIVERSITY

- The QUAD ECOSYSTEM requires all players to be active and up to their roles. The ROLES represent the RESPONSIBILITIES outlined below which generate the REWARDS in the next slide.
- UNIVERSITY provides LAND and legal framework for access to the elements necessary for REAL ESTATE uptake.
- UNIVERSITY also provides the HUMAN CAPITAL needed to stock the BPO boutique - ready to school and work students.
- BPO/TECH PARK Companies with or without their constituents bring the CAPITAL for development of the real estate.
- BPO/TECH PARKS Companies are also to bring the BPO JOBS on the low and high ends.
- GOVERNMENT creates an “INCENTIVE” based regulatory policy environment that ATTRACTS and CREATES the traction between the actors.
- GOVERNMENT also has the responsibility to MEDIATE in the process necessary for academia, research and industry to COLLABORATE.
- STUDENTS must see their participation as CHANGE AGENT not BENEFICARIES which means much of the success depends on them. Change of mind set to be “INDEPENDENT” @ the University.
WIN WIN SITUATION

- UNIVERSITIES get their available LAND used for BPO and TECHPARKS and in the long term they become lecture halls, lecture theatres, hostels etc.
- BPO/TECHPARKS need land and have budget for REAL ESTATE development for their outsourcing business.
- UNIVERSITIES have students they need to give practical knowledge and experience to make them ready for the knowledge economy and life.
- BPO/TECHPARKS need students as cheap but quality labor in large numbers to do their outsourcing jobs.
- UNIVERSITIES need practical and industrial knowledge in the classroom.
- BPO/TECHPARK company CEOs and Managers have practical knowledge they can deliver in the classroom to make the students ready for their firms.
- BPO/TECHPARK companies need R&D for their firms, the UNIVERSITIES provide that on a practical basis using their work and student pool.
- GOVERNMENT needs input from ACADEMIA, PRIVATE SECTOR and NGOs into Public Policy. That would be readily available due to the exiting INTERACTION so government policy is practical and upto date.
- NGO needs knowledge of the private practice and public policy to ensure grassroots engage, this is also available through the existing interaction.
WHO WOULD DO WHAT?

• UNIVERSITY TAKES LEADERSHIP TOGETHER WITH THE CONSISTUENT QUAD MEMBERS TO CREATE THE INTERACTION BETWEEN INDUSTRY, ACADEMIA, PUBLIC POLICY AND PRIVATE SECTOR - Core value for innovation and growth in the knowledge economy

• UNIVERSITY - gets real estate, utilize it’s land, produce carrier enabled and independent minded students, creates an ecological ecosystem on campus, brings private practice to the classroom,

• GOVERNMENT - gets the needed interaction with other constituents who make a major contribution to public policy and governance that is RESULT ORIENTED

• PRIVATE SECTOR get cheap, quality and quantity workforce for their non-core and core discipline of practice who graduate through the corporate value chain

• STUDENT gets work experience, computer literacy, money to support their education which means they would be less subsidized by the State, READY FOR THE JOB MARKET after school

• A BETTER CIVIL SOCIETY is CREATED - NGOs
References

- This presentation draws from the WorldBank InfoDev study on “Leveraging New Technologies and Open Access Models: Options for Improving Backbone Access in Developing Countries (with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa”), by a team consisting of Anders Comstedt, Russell Southwood and Eric Osiakwan, under the auspices of the consulting firm Spintrack.
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