



# Institute of Distance Education

Issue 6 – May, 2012

Institute of Distance Education

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE  
EDUCATION IS PUBLISHED  
TWICE A YEAR.

## IDE Taking University and Professional Programmes to the People

Read more inside... ..

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### Foreword - The IDE Director

It gives me great pleasure to write this foreword to this second edition of the IDE Newsletter for the Academic Year 2011/2012.

The Institute continues to pursue its vision of being an International Centre of Excellence in distance education access, delivery, practice, research and life-long learning. However, this academic year, due to certain external factors, part of the mission of IDE – that of increasing access to tertiary education – could not be achieved. This was because prospective students could not secure the required funding for their studies and as a result they could not register.

Nonetheless, the Institute continues to expand and develop, and in this regard I am pleased that this coming August, 2012 students in the Commerce programme will be enrolling directly into the new and strengthened Bachelor of Commerce Degree, as the Diploma in Commerce has been phased out. This shall allow Commerce students to do a Commerce Programme that is relevant to the needs of the industry and one that will take them six (6)



Professor CWS Sukati

years rather than the current seven (7) years. I have no doubt that this will benefit the IDE students.

This newsletter contains several articles that demonstrate IDE at work, in terms of the several activities that were accomplished by the staff members in the Institute. Significant is that a number of these activities would not have taken place if it was not for the support of our various partners, most notably the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the SADC Centre for Distance Education, UNESCO, the Government of

Singapore, and the gracious donations received from SGL and Woodmasters for the IDE Computer Laboratory. We are grateful to all our partners and donors for supporting our Institute because this has enabled us to achieve our objectives.

Enjoy reading our newsletter and if you have any questions, comments, criticisms and suggestions about this newsletter or on any of our IDE activities and services, please feel free to communicate this directly to me or to any of my team members in IDE.

Professor CWS Sukati

### STUDENTS RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE FINAL YEAR OF STUDY

We wish to remind our stakeholders (students and staff) of Academic General Regulation 040.64 (a), which reads: "All students shall be required to register for a project in one of the subject majors. However, students in the Faculty of Education must take a project in Education."

Previously, due to several reasons, in particular the fact that IDE students did not take a research course in their third year, Senate waived this regulation for them. Now that this waiver has lapsed, all final year

students in the degree programmes in IDE will be expected to do a research project.

This means that these students will have to register for a project in one of their major subjects as from August 2012. Students in the B.Ed. programmes will, in accordance with the academic general regulation, be expected to do a project in Education.

**Prof. CWS Sukati**

## Extension Education through Distance Mode for Rural Development in Swaziland

*Prof. Satish Rastogi, Coordinator Research & Evaluation, IDE, UNISWA [srastogi@uniswa.sz](mailto:srastogi@uniswa.sz)*

Swaziland is a small and peaceful country which has a population of 1,100,000 only. Most of the population live in rural areas where a black fertile soil and enough water is available for producing agricultural products.

Still, in spite of this natural situation, the country imports much of its fruits and vegetables from neighbouring countries in order to sell in Swaziland. Ideally, every country should import only products, which it cannot produce. Swaziland can earn a huge amount of foreign currency through producing and exporting various agricultural products to Gulf countries. This can be achieved by the people residing in the rural areas receiving Extension Education (EE) to boost agricultural production.

The Distance Mode of Education may be the best possible method for raising awareness of this agrarian revolution among the rural people of the Kingdom. Noteworthy, is that Extension Education has three main elements which include:

- (i) Farmers, rural people or clients;
- (ii) Innovations, discoveries or Inventions; and
- (iii) Extension workers or educators or specialists in extension services trained to use the distance mode of education for farmers or rural people.

Also, worth highlighting is that extension education may lead to positive behavioural changes among the people residing in the rural areas by informing and motivating them to adopt newer suggested agricultural innovations. This entails active participation by the people so that their decision making skills results in a permanent improvement in their living conditions.

What's more, they can develop their own programme and learning habits as well as build their confidence through action and conviction. Innovations may be put into practice through field trials, and evaluations, by Extension educators using the Distance mode of Education and Training. They can develop print material in Self Instructional Material (SIM) format in order to develop their client's (farmers and rural people) knowledge about various crops and activities within a crop growing process. In addition, they can develop Audio CDs as well as Video CDs for Skills development and organise interactive discussions through television or radio 'call in' programmes. These programmes can be supported by target groups who can be available for 'on the spot'

*"Most of the population is living in rural areas where black fertile soil and enough water is available for producing agricultural products."*

*Prof. Satish Rastogi*



interaction with farmers and experts who can be accessed via Video or Audio Conferencing. This would help the rural people change their attitude about themselves and their capabilities insofar as their agriculture skills are concerned. On the other hand, the extension workers may then recognise that using the distance mode is an economical and viable option.

Major areas covered through this suggested programme may be Agricultural Extension and Home Science Extension. Here, the Extension workers would follow a two way process which involves the villagers and College of Agricultural Sciences for Agricultural Development. In addition, they will work as agents for 'change' amongst the rural people and the College of Health Sciences which is attached to the University of Swaziland (UNISWA). The role of the Home Science Extension in rural development may entail:

- a) Food and Water shortage;
- b) Poor health and Nutrition;
- c) Over population;
- d) Environmental Pollution
- e) Poverty; and,
- f) Low efficiency in house hold work etc.

This programme may develop, strengthen and motivate the groups,

objectives of growth and production in order to experience a better life.

Equally, these villagers may become leaders in their local professions and possibly provide sufficient data for developing plans to coordinate relevant activities. This is advantageous in that through using the distance mode for training and guidance, the scientific and other factual information relayed may become available for the targeted farming community and this would solve the problems in agriculture. These problem areas include; Animal Husbandry, Gardening, and Agricultural Engineering etc. The implementation of the Extension Education may bring rapid increase of food and agricultural production, improvement in health, promotion of competencies covering knowledge, skills and attitudes. Also, it may raise the rural community to a higher level of economic status and arouse enthusiasm for new knowledge and improved ways of living. Moreover, it will help in addressing hunger, related diseases, and prevent ignorance about farming innovations among the rural people of Swaziland.

The Distance Education mode may play a vital role in imparting extension education to villagers in Swaziland especially since the country has a rich network of radio, television and internet too. Also, the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) has the potential of developing Audio/Video CDs and can collaborate with the College of Agricultural Sciences and Health Sciences to manage a staff development programme which trains the rural area workers in the field of Agriculture and Health. Likewise, these workers may be further oriented about Distance Education methodologies by the Institute of Distance Education (IDE) in order to meet various needs of rural people.

Subsequently, this upgraded input may manage a quality process which results in valuable output becoming the end product too. This end product will be in the form of a group of competent rural people who may create for themselves the desired change in their lives as well as improve the country's economy too.



# Congratulations

**IDE Coordinator, Linguistics & Modern Languages is now Dr Karen Ferreira - Meyers**

**I**DE takes this opportunity to congratulate colleague Karen Ferreira – Meyers on her achievement and newly acquired title of Dr. In April 2012, she obtained her **PhD degree** from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Her research focused on a comparative analysis of Francophone African and European 'autofictional' works written by female authors born after 1960 (Amélie Nothomb, Calixthe Beyala and Nina Bouraoui).

We at IDE we are extremely proud of her and wish her only the best in all her future endeavors.



Sourced: Internet



Pic: Dr. Karen Ferreira Meyers (middle) is pictured at her graduation with her supervisor (on her (left) Prof. B. De Meyer and Prof. J. Alant. (on her right)

**D**r. Ferreira- Meyers has recently published the following papers, alone or in collaboration with colleagues:

**2012** - CHAKANYUKA, S., VILAKATI, N. & FERREIRA-MEYERS, K., « A Case Study of Regional Strategic Alliances toward offering a Professional Psychosocial Support Programme », <http://w.nadeosa.org.za/>, 10 pages.

**2012** - 5 March, IDE ICT Laboratory, Uniswa, Kwaluseni, paper presented at International Open Educational Resources Week: (with Nokuthula Vilakati) "Is there a compelling case for Open Educational Resources (OER) in Higher Education?".

**2012** - 7-12 March 2012, International conference *L'Illisible*, Tunis (Tunisia), paper presented: "L'illisible de l'imaginaire autofictionnel" (8 March) + paper presented: "Evaluations on Moodle" (12 March)

**2012** - 14 March 2012, International conference *Evil/Le Mal*, Doha (Qatar), paper presented: *Et si le mal venait de nous? Ou comment raconter le mal individuel à travers le genre autofictionnel?*

## Professional Development



Pic: IDE Copy Editor, GN Nsibandé is pictured here with Prof. S. Modesto of BOCODOL after receiving an award of excellence for obtaining a distinction in the PREST course.

### My Experience with the PREST Course

**D**espite the sleepless nights I endured whilst pursuing my studies in this course, I learnt priceless knowledge about pertinent critical Open Distance Education (ODL) issues and concurrently developed my research and evaluation skills in the ODL area as well. Obtaining this Post Graduate Certificate in Practitioner Research & Evaluation Skills Training (PREST) is a source of pride for me because it illustrates that the Institute of Distance Education (IDE) is moulding active ODL practitioners who can contribute towards enabling more Swazis access to quality education. Armed with this newly acquired knowledge I am now capable of clearly differentiating between distance education and conventional education and I will strive to link ODL practices to matters or sectors in the Kingdom which will benefit from distance learning.

I value my learning experience and intend to continue practicing what I learnt because I believe that distance learning is the vehicle towards ensuring that more Swazis become educated for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

I wish to thank UNISWA and BOCODOL for providing this opportunity to pursue this wonderful course.

*GN Nsibandé*

## UNISWA Staff Upskilling in Readiness for Online Learning Facilitation *NT Vilakati*

**K**waluseri – Some UNISWA staff members completed a training course on managing and facilitating online learning. The course was presented face-to-face on the university campus from 28 to 29 November 2011 (2 days). The same course was thereafter continued online from 30 November to 2 December 2011 (3 days). Course co-facilitators were Greig Krull and two guest facilitators from SAIDE; Brenda Mallinson and Sheila Drew.

Participants cited the following as beneficial:

- Learning how to use Moodle and exposure to the tools (blogs, messages etc).
- Strategies to help students own their knowledge generation
- Embedding practical activity through discussion forums, chats and reflective blogs. Asynchronous and synchronous learning was particularly enlightening.



*Pic: Pictured above are some participants from various faculties and units within UNISWA concentrating on their online tasks.*



*Pic: Success – Some of the participants pictured holding their certificates of achievement.*

- Continuous course availability online and further sessions which may be facilitated in-house through IDE and ADC support. This course is available as an Open Educational Resource (OER).

### Certificate Award Ceremony

Participants then attended an award ceremony, to celebrate their success. A high level UNISWA delegation honoured the ceremony by their presence and they motivated awardees to apply their expertise as they offer courses. These delegates were the UNISWA PVC, Professor VSB Mtetwa, IDE Director, Professor CWS Sukati and ADC Director, Dr T Mkatshwa. Course participants included representatives from all UNISWA faculties that offer distance learning programmes.

## SGL & Woodmasters Sponsor the IDE Computer Laboratory

*GN Nsibande*



*Pic: Pictured above (on the left hand side) are UNISWA top executive VC Prof C Magagula, Prof VSB Mtetwa who are next to SGL' George Hemwood whose shaking hands with Woodmaster's Vick Erwing. On the right handside are the main sponsors pictured with board members of the UNISWA Foundation.*

## THANK YOU

**I**n our last edition of the IDE Newsletter we promised to reveal the key donors who made generous contributions to ensure that the newly established IDE Computer Laboratory becomes a reality. Today, its with great pleasure that we inform you that through IDE's fundraising drive as well as that of the UNISWA Foundation, SGL donated equipment worth E550,000.00 which comprises of 40 brand new desktop computers and an overhead digital projector. In addition, Woodmasters then donated quality furniture worth E150,000.00.

This initiative is most welcome because technology is undoubtedly the cutting edge in the 21st century we live in. UNISWA as an academic institution will use the facility for staff and students to conduct research as well as a teaching and learning tool.

Now that the laboratory is officially opened, staff and students will be given further information on how this new IDE facility will be utilised as soon as IDE and the ICT Centre has finalised the guidelines for its use.



## VUSSC BOOTCAMP

**T**he Director of IDE and the Dean of the Faculty of Education participated in the 10<sup>th</sup>. Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) International Training and Materials Development Workshop. This workshop was held in Singapore from November 17<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together a team of subject matter experts from the small countries of the Commonwealth to develop content for a Master's Degree Level programme in Educational Leadership. This development is still progressing online, and once it is completed, this programme will be one of the VUSSC resources that countries can utilise.



*Pic: The Director of IDE receiving his certificate from a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official at the end of the Bootcamp in Singapore*



*Pic: The Director of IDE with other participants from other countries that attended the VUSSC Bootcamp*

## Open Educational Resources at the University of Swaziland

*Dr K Ferreira Meyers*

**K**waluseni – On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2012, the Institute of Distance Education marked the beginning of the Open Educational Resources International Week by hosting a seminar. At that seminar, various members of the University and wider Swazi community made presentations (Mrs. S. Dlamini, Mr. J. Anbu, Ms. N. Vilakati and Dr. K. Ferreira-Meyers) and participated in lively debates. In view of underlining the importance of Open Educational Resources (OER) to the workings of IDE, UNISWA and the whole educational sector in Swaziland, I would like to supplement those discussions with some information.

What does OER mean?

According to OER Africa, *in its simplest form, the concept of Open Educational Resources (OER) describes any educational resources (including curriculum maps, course materials, textbooks, streaming videos, multimedia applications,*

*and any other materials that have been designed for use in teaching and learning) that are openly available for use by educators and students, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees* (<http://www.oerafrica.org/understandingoer/UnderstandingOER/tabid/56/Default.aspx>).

According to the Commonwealth of Learning, OER can encourage the development and sharing of knowledge, resources and technologies, and help developing nations improve access to quality education and training. In the spirit of open learning, which we foster at IDE and which can be seen as *an educational philosophy of widening learner choices in things like when and where to study, preferences for media used in delivery, widening entry and exit points if study, etc.,* it is important to be able to identify and use OER because these allow us, as

instructors and learners alike, to improve our personal knowledge systems.

There are many benefits to OER and I would like to cite some of these advantages: OER increases the availability of high quality, relevant learning materials through peer reviews, they allow for contextualized, localized and

personalized adaptations of materials by educators and students alike, they can build capacity for creation and use of OER as part of professional development for academic staff, OER eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort by building on what already exists, they remove costs of copyright negotiation and clearance and they can engage open communities of practice in ongoing quality improvement and assurance.

We need to be reminded that sharing knowledge is and has always been done on a daily basis, whether in the form of parents advising their children, teachers teaching in the classroom or researchers

consulting with their peers. Likewise, it is good to remember that sharing knowledge doesn't mean you lose that information or those skills, you keep what you know and are able to do, allow others to benefit from that knowledge and those competences, and, more often than not, learn from the ones with whom you are collaborating.

OER Africa (<http://www.oerafrica.org>) is an innovative initiative established by the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) to play a leading role in driving the development and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) across all education sectors on the African continent. The website also offers a space where African educators and learners and other users can find OER on the Internet. Its focus



*Pic: Participants in the IDE seminar which marked the start of the OER International week.*

*Continued on page 8*

## IDE INTRODUCES A NEW COMMERCE PROGRAMME

**I**n accordance with its Strategic Plan, and following consultations with its stakeholders, including students and inputs from a Visiting Professor, the Faculty of Commerce revised its Diploma – Degree programmes in Commerce. During the review, it was noted (among others) that: (i) there were a number of unnecessary overlaps in the commerce courses, (ii) the five year diploma – degree programme was costly and did not conform to what other universities were doing in the region; and (iii) the field of commerce has advanced with the times, particularly with the new ICT's, and that as a result the Faculty programmes needed to advance as well to capture the advances so that they still continue to produce appropriately qualified human resources for the diverse human resource needs for the private and public sectors.

Following the Faculty of Commerce's revision of its programmes, the IDE had to follow suit and revise its commerce programmes. As a result of this revision, the IDE came up with a new and strengthened B. Com. Degree. This new degree will be offered in IDE as from August 2012. The Diploma in Commerce will however no longer be offered by the Institute.

## REGIONAL POLICY FORUM FOR AFRICA ON OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

**T**he Director of IDE (Prof. Sukati) and the Coordinator (Materials Design and Development) (Ms. Vilakati) attended a COL-UNESCO Regional Policy Forum for Africa on Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally. This policy forum was held in Pretoria, South Africa on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2012. The objectives of the regional policy forum for Africa were to reach a worldwide audience of ODL practitioners and government policy-makers in order to:

- Engage and intensify dialogue with Member States on the OER project;
- Raise awareness about the transformative potential of OER for education and showcase local OER policies, experts and initiatives;
- Enrich the information that Member States provided in response to the COL/UNESCO questionnaire survey on OER policy, and
- Provide input to the Draft Declaration that will be submitted to the UNESCO World OER Congress in June 2012.

The Forum came out with a number of recommendations which constituted Africa's specific input to the Paris Declaration to be adopted in June 2012.

## Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

**M**atsapha – 'There's always a solution for every problem, hence the importance of conducting research' said Minister for Finance during the OSSREA Swaziland Special Issue Journal Launch. The Swaziland Chapter, OSSREA hosted an official launch ceremony for its 2011 Special Issue journal publication. The journal was published in December, 2011 and the launch ceremony, was held at Esibayeni Lodge, Matsapha, Swaziland on the 27th April 2012. It was attended by a high profile delegation including the Honourable Minister for Finance, Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Swaziland, Prof. VSB Mtetwa, Director for UNISWA Research Centre (URC), Prof. M. Dlamini, some of the UNISWA Faculty Deans and Directors, research partners and OSSREA local chapter representatives.

The Minister for Finance was honoured during the ceremony and was labelled Champion for the Swaziland Chapter of OSSREA. This follows encouragement by OSSREA headquarters for national chapters to identify and establish working relations with high profile people in their countries who demonstrate the goodwill and are in a position to support the local work of OSSREA.



*Pic: The Hon. Minister for Finance Majosi Sithole seated with Ms TF Khumalo and Dr AM Zamberia*

The Swaziland Chapter wrote and submitted a proposal in April, 2010 which was accepted and approved. Then in collaboration with UNISWA, the Chapter published a special volume of the UNISWA Research Journal, volume 26.

In this journal publication there are 10 articles focusing on various unemployment issues of Swaziland, including rural and urban youth unemployment, formal education and employment, graduate unemployment, and migration and development. A read through the articles provides insightful analysis of unemployment issues in Swaziland that can serve as policy input as well as teaching and reference materials in sub-Saharan Africa.

The launch of the Special Issue is, therefore, not just an event to launch the volume, but also an important occasion to acknowledge the invaluable association between OSSREA, UNISWA, and social science researchers in Swaziland.



## The Government's Role in Developing the Swaziland Book Development Sector

**G**lobalization, over the last decade has placed into sharp focus the acute need of information, thus creating a demand for high levels of literacy and the need for skills (Stiglitz, 2000: 97). Globally, the emphasis is now on a knowledge based economy and 'books' are the necessary ingredient to ensure that this occurs. The availability of books in a country ensures that the country's population is literate and the literacy levels in the country are sustained and further developed. Publishing has a highly important function in any society because it fosters the national development of a country through the knowledge disseminated (Altbach and Rathgeber, 1980:55). Noteworthy, is that in order to see the local publishing industry thrive, government cannot be disregarded because she is key in terms of policy development, creation of a conducive policy environment, politics and allocation of resources.

### Role of Government

The United Nations Declaration of 1946 on education is further emphasised by the adoption of the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) by the United Nations in 2000, declaring that 'illiteracy should be eradicated by 2014'. Therefore, the Government has a critical role to play in creating a balance in the book industry by creating a national book policy framework which would act as the glue or central coordinator which ensures that synergy between publishing activities exists. Creating a national book policy could be one strategy aimed at achieving this synergy between stakeholders in the publishing industry because it would act as the link between various book industry sectors (Wafawarowa, 2006). The lack of a national book policy framework in Swaziland means that key stakeholders such as printers, booksellers and authors have no policy guidelines within which to work and find themselves competing against each other instead of working as a unit in the development of the book industry.

Moreover, a study revealed that a book policy is necessary to coordinate or link the various book sectors that should work as a unit and not be antagonistic towards each other if progress is to be witnessed in the book industry (Nyariki and Makotsi, 1994).

### A National Book Policy Framework

Even though government is recommended as the significant player in the book development sector of the kingdom, a sustainable

*'Globally, the emphasis is on a knowledge based economy and 'books' are the necessary ingredient to ensure that this occurs.'*

**WRITES  
GN Nsibande**



book sector is built and achieved through a joint effort at national level. Having said that, the task of developing a national book policy framework involves coordinating behavior and attitude change as well as cultivating interest in books by encompassing the leadership in government, such as ministers and other high ranking officials, parliamentarians as well as the people involved in the book industry like the publishers, booksellers, librarians, printers, readers and the nation at large.

Immergut (1992) argues that institutions do not allow one to predict outcomes, but by establishing the rules of the game, they enable one to predict the ways in which policy conflicts will be played out. Also, let us be reminded that the institutional theory that supports government action to bring about policy guidelines, is particularly important in as far as certain aspects of government structure and procedural rules is concerned, which can empower a particular course of action (Kraft and Furlong, 2004: 75). Certainly, the existence of a book policy, with clear guidelines, procedures and rules will immensely benefit the country and ensure the sustenance of knowledge economy.

### Neutral

A trend noted in the African publishing sector is that the focus tends to predominantly support textbook publishing, yet if government remained neutral and supported the whole publishing industry without bias non-textbook publishing would also thrive. Government's neutral stance would mean that different publishers would be allowed the opportunity

to submit different types of books or genres instead of having to adhere to governments specific requirements. Consequently, a variety of books would be produced and hopefully this would translate in the readership increasing, thus the local publishing industry witnessing and experiencing growth.

Nonetheless, since our reality is such that educational publishing is dominant, our starting point towards building a relationship between the two key stakeholders (government and publishers) should be that publishers know the syllabus and be part of its development so they can produce relevant, creative and competitive books ahead of time (Bodunde, 1994:7).

In conclusion, I am of the view that government should initially place the book policy under the Ministry of Education & Training (MOET) who have experienced the textbook publishing. She should regard publishers as partners in both general publishing plus the education process and be open and transparent with regard to the syllabus used so as to enable the stakeholders to produce diverse reading materials for consideration. Government should not control but facilitate and enable by ensuring that the country gets good returns on book development (Wafawarowa, 2006).

## SEMESTERISATION

### PHASE II

**F**ollowing lengthy consultations with its stakeholders, the University has, come up with a blueprint for Phase II of Semesterisation. The document spells out, in detail, this phase of semesterisation and is available in the IDE Print Shop for staff and students to familiarise themselves with this subject. If anyone of our stakeholders has a question and/ or comment on this document, please feel free to contact any of our staff members in IDE.

## The Psychosocial Certificate Triumph

GN Nsibande



Pic: The Mentors from the 4 regions of Swaziland are pictured with the Deputy Vice Chancellor of UKZN (3rd from the right), Prof. Zulu, guest speaker the Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency Themba Masuku, UNISWA Vice Chancellor, Prof. C. Magagula and REPSSI Representative Mr Wylis (far left).

**K**waluseni—The graduation ceremony for the Psychosocial Certificate Programme was held on the 27th April, 2012 in the brand new UNISWA 'Licabo LeMaswati' sports emporium.

The 119 graduates which comprised of 74% females and 26% males achieved an impressive 92% pass rate and deserve to be congratulated for doing so well in their studies.

Since the launch of this programme in 2009, it is now being localised and as of this year (2012), IDE will house it. 'It is through the strong partnership that the programme is a success and we should collectively ensure that it remains accessible to the traditionally marginalised' said UNICEF's Ms. M. Mufico.

She committed UNICEF to persist advocating for funding to be invested into this programme in order for it to continue.

The Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency Themba Masuku reminded the graduates that 'your success means someone around you sacrificed their time with you in order for you to dedicate yourself to your studies. Today, despite family commitments or other challenges such as disability you now know for a fact that you can make a difference in your community. I note with delight that neither challenges nor disabilities have prevented you from making a difference to people's lives in your communities because today you are graduating. Congratulations to you all' he said.

## Exams Are Here



*Since this Newsletter is coming out towards the beginning of our end-of-year examinations, I wish to advise our students in IDE to take their work seriously and prepare well for their examinations - and I wish them the best of luck. To those who are completing their programmes, I wish to let them know that education does not end with the qualification from IDE, they should utilize the many available opportunities to further their studies. On our part, we wish them all the best in their future endeavours and we request them to become good ambassadors of Distance Learning in general, and the Institute of Distance Education in particular.*

**Prof. CWS Sukati—IDE Director**

*Continued from page 5* is threefold; provide a home for African OER that is not being hosted anywhere else online, maintain a detailed catalogue of all online OER provided by Africans to showcase African OER and present an online 'map' for African educators to help them locate the best sources of OER online from around the world. There is a search facility to search the database or you can also select any of the links to find resources by theme. One of the fascinating OER you can find there is an online, downloadable, free textbook on Communication Skills. Surely, this has to be something you should look into. Enjoy!



**Institute of Distance Education**

*Taking University Education and professional programmes to the people rather than the people coming to the University.*

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### Time to Reflect

'Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.'

W.B. Yeats