



*Griff Richards, PhD was one of the organizers and key speakers at the five-day AVU Crowne Plaza workshop.*

Between August 25 and 29, a sizable number of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and their Coordinators from 18 universities in Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone Africa were participating in the [African Virtual University](#)'s Applied Computer Science Program(ACSP) content authoring workshop at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nairobi.

Funded under the 'Multinational Support Project Phase II' by the African Development Bank(AfDB), the conference brought together academic experts in Computer Science from about 18 Partner Institutions (PIs), content development team coordinators, Computer Science international champions, industry stakeholders, gender mainstreaming consultants as well as the African Virtual University team of Educational Technology and Learning Resources.

Many such participating institutions in attendance were previously involved in formulating the African Virtual University's Computer Science programs financed under the 'Multinational Support Project Phase I', also by African Development Bank (AfDB), and the United Nations Development Programme (Somalia).

The institutions contributing towards the actualization of the Applied Computer Science Program(ACSP) at the African Virtual University(AVU) include Universite d'Abomey Calavi in Benin; Universite de Uogadougou in Burkina Faso; Universite Lumiere de Bujumbura in Burundi; Universite de Douala in Cameroon; Universite des Sciences, des Technologies et Medecine in Mauritania; Universite Gaston Berger in Senegal; Universite des Sciences, des Techniques et Technologies de Bamako in Mali; Gahana Institute of Management and Public Administration; Kwame Nkurumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana; Kenyatta University in Kenya; Egerton University in Kenya; Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia; University of Rwanda; University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania; Universite Abdou Moumouni de Niamey in Niger; Universite Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal; Universidade Pedagogica in Mozambique as well as the University of the Gambia in The Gambia. They are 18 institutions in total.



*Attentive AVU stakeholders at Crowne Plaza Hotel during the three-day content authoring workshop.*

The basic strides towards the AVU Applied Computer Science Program(ACSP) were made in a ‘Policy Harmonization and Curriculum Contextualization’ workshop in 2012. ‘Quality Assurance’(ongoing process), and ‘Curriculum Design’ began in May 2012 and ended in June 2014.

‘Content Development’, and ‘Program Delivery’ were marked by the just concluded ‘ Applied Computer Science(ACSP) Content Authoring Workshop’ in Nairobi as from August 25 to 29 of 2014, with the development of 54 multilingual Modules (between 2014 and 2015), ‘Uploading of Modules on LMS’ by 2015 , and ‘Program Delivery’ completing the process.

In general, the ACSP workshop participants, mostly Subject Matter Experts(SMEs) and Coordinators, underwent the AVU process for content development and related documents, useful training in the content authoring process, discussed and agreed on a comprehensive content authoring plan as well as the roles and responsibilities of their Coordinators. They were then to commence content writing for the first 75 Modules to be submitted to the respective country Coordinators by December.

Meanwhile, the Multinational Support Project is being implemented in 27 AVU partner institutions in the following 21 countries: nine Francophone African Countries- Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal; three Lusophone African Countries – Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, and Mozambique. Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, and Tanzania represent the Anglophone African Countries.

The second phase, intended to extend its benefits to more countries, builds on the first one with its overall objective being to “strengthen the capacity of AVU and a network of 27 institutions to deliver and manage quality ICT integrated education and training opportunities in 21 African countries.”



Key AVU conference

*facilitators responding to concerns from the audience.*

Moreover, the Phase II project encompasses the following key activities: establishment of new Open Distance and eLearning (ODEL) Centers and/or upgrading of existing AVU Learning Centers as well as Internet Connectivity provision at AVU Partner Institutions; development and/or improvement and delivery of four ICT integrated programs such as AVU Capacity Enhancement Program (ACEP); Teacher Education (TE), Computer Science (CS) and Peace and Conflict Resolution; Gender Mainstreaming; Research and Development; promotion and development of Open Education Resources (OERs) as well as enhancement of AVU capacity.

Aiming to “enhance capacity of the AVU’s Partner Institutions to develop ICT assisted education and training programs”, the ‘Multinational Support Project Phase I’ implemented between 2005 and 2011 is noted for the following achievements: establishment of 10 Open Distance eLearning (ODEL) Centers, 459 academics trained in AVU Capacity Enhancement Program (ACEP), re-writing courses for ODEL, Program Delivery and Management, and IT maintenance.

Also, given that a total of 86 Modules were developed in Portuguese, French and English, 219 others in the same languages developed for Open Education Resources (OER), 597 scholarships awarded, the enrollment of more than 4,000 students as well as achievement of essential cross-border collaborations

especially in the Teacher Education(TE) Virtual Consortium, it is reasonable to expect significant success from the AVU project Phase II.

The Applied Computer Science Program is a '2+2' plan, meaning the student can take two years for a Diploma program and/or two years for Degree. In the first year, the courses will revolve around General Education, Theory, Skills and summed with a Project. By the end of the four-year ACSP training, the student should have undergone two critical internships.