

AFFORD / FAHAMU

**Independent Evaluation of the Course:
Fundraising and Resource Mobilisation**

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Participants in the final workshop left the following positive messages

- **About their own personal growth**
- **Of the development of their logical thinking skills**
- **Concerning the improvement of their communication skills**
- **Regarding improved discipline with respect to work deadlines**
- **Of gains in time management**
- **Relating to increased confidence, both generally and in respect of fundraising**

And

- **About networking**

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1. Executive Summary

Rather than providing a conventional summary of the contents of the full report, this section essays a response to the four main objectives posed for the evaluation.

1.1 Assessment of the relevance of the distance learning materials to the course participants

* No single course member has had other than real praise for the content and style of the distance learning materials with which they have been working. There has been equal praise for the levels of tutorial support provided by the two course tutors, and for the administrative support provided by Fahamu.

* Learning through distance mode has exerted unfamiliar pressures on a majority of the students. A significant number found they could not maintain the commitment against competing pressures, mostly from their full-time work commitments, but in some cases from unpredictable personal or family events. In future courses, a stronger element of pre-course counselling would likely be beneficial.

* The Fahamu materials are meant to relate very directly to the context of the individual learners. This is a justifiable claim, supported by the responses of the course members.

* The undertaking of a significant though small-scale project provided the opportunity for course members to (i) show what they had gained from the distance learning materials, and (ii) to set that learning in the context of their own organisation and their day-to-day work.

1.2 Assessment of the extent of skill enhancement of the participants

* The headline outcome is the very considerable growth of both skill and confidence of the twelve participants who successfully completed all elements of the course. They have articulated that themselves, and their tutors have reinforced that view. Their enhanced professional competence in both institutional and public fundraising is already being carried through into their existing or embryonic organisations

* To date, the most concrete example of their skill enhancement is contained in the generally very successful project assignments, which report on work undertaken which has direct relevance to their work situations

* It is much harder to assess the skill growth of those who failed to complete the course. Several report their use of the distance learning materials, but none record systematic use in their workplace.

1.3 Assessment of the value for money provided by the course in relation to other courses and methods

* The only similar distance learning programme with which the evaluator is familiar is that offered by the UK Open University, titled ‘Winning resources and support’, B624, which is a Level 3 course of six month’s duration. There is an expectation in joining the OU course that the student will already have a significant fundraising role within an organisation. Further details of the OU course are given at Annex 4. The course fee is currently £875. Your evaluator is not familiar with any equivalent face-to-face courses, although they may well exist within the NGO/charity world.

* That all course members made a personal fee contribution of £100 is important.

* The quality of the Fahamu materials is excellent. They are well tried and tested in a variety of relevant settings. They are perceived as accessible, interesting and challenging by the participants.

* At its best, the quality and intensity of tutorial support for this course was excellent. There was some variability in the tutorial experience of some students. Student – tutor interaction, now often called mentoring, is seen as a central part of distance learning of this kind. It is, of course, labour intensive, and therefore intrinsically expensive.

* Both workshops – introductory and final – were of very high quality, well appreciated by all participants, and a key part of the programme, as they provided concentrated face-to-face experience.

* The fee cost to the course completers seems extremely reasonable. Assessment of the value for money of the programme as a whole is made more complex if the cost per completer takes account of the two-thirds of the course entrants who failed to complete. There is only limited evidence of skill gains from those who failed to complete the full programme.

1.4 Judgements regarding the contribution of the course to AFFORD’s wider capacity-building agenda among the diaspora

* This was very much a pilot course so we must be careful not to extrapolate too far from it. Pilot courses are often deemed successful, at least in part because the level of commitment of all parties is greater than in perhaps the sixth or seventh cycle of the course! What is clear, however, is strong levels of learning among the surviving group of students, and also for Fahamu and AFFORD in relation to the conduct of any future courses.

* At the very least, AFFORD now has a trained and highly motivated group of graduates from the programme, with an articulated commitment to the organisation, who should provide an important resource for the organisation as it carries forward its mandate.

* Now that this first course is complete, and now that we have some evidence regarding its effectiveness, perhaps the next logical stage for AFFORD would be to look more broadly and strategically at its capacity-building needs, in the context of which a coherent training plan could be developed.

2. Methodology

The evaluator accumulated evidence from the following sources:

- Early discussions with Firoze Manji (FM: Fahamu) and Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie (Chux: AFFORD)
- Participation in Introductory Workshop (28 February 2004)
- Pre-Course Questionnaire completed at the Introductory Workshop
- Monitoring of E-mail exchanges between tutors (FM and Abudulai Sulemana [AS]) and participants
- Participation in Final Workshop (11 – 13 June)

The approach to data analysis used will be described at the appropriate point of the report.

3. Course Process

3.1 Selection

- Thirty-six participants were identified and signed up for the course. One dropped out on the Monday following the introductory workshop, so the effective course membership was 35.
- Scrutiny of the CV's of those accepted on the course suggested capability to undertake the course, and a rich resource of experience and skills.
- The text advertising the programme included the following statement:

“This course is for those who work in organisations that don't have professional fundraisers on their staff. It is for people who want to learn the basic skills of fundraising. It is for people who want to develop fundraising skills to increase their attraction to larger organisations. You don't need to be a specialist fundraiser to use these techniques; you are more likely to be someone who has to shoulder the responsibility for raising the funds while doing many other things. **Individuals not currently linked with an organisation** and those parts of organisations are welcome to participate.” [My emphases]

AFFORD's Director, himself a course member, emphasises that, with their constituency, it would simply be unacceptable to exclude enthusiastic candidates who are not yet hooked-up to a thriving NGO or other organisation.

Following that rubric, a significant number of those accepted were not, at that time, working in posts that would allow them to relate the course materials directly or even indirectly to their daily paid employment. We will return to this issue.

3.2 Expectations

Two probes were undertaken at the very beginning of the course:

- During the introductory workshop, each participant was asked to list their expectations for the course. These were shared with other course members. The evaluator simplified and grouped the responses as follows.

Analysis of Expectations of Course Members from Saturday 29th February

| Expectation | No. of Mentions |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Gain more awareness and understanding of fundraising | 11 |
| 2. Well equipped to help my NGO raise funds for projects | 6 |
| 3. Networking | 5 |
| 4. Knowledge and skills to develop an Africa-oriented NGO | 2 |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 5. Writing project proposals | 2 |
| 6. Setting a fundraising strategy | 1 |
| 7. How to establish a good relationship with donors | 1 |
| 8. How to manage funds in a proper way | 1 |
| 9. Learning to reach people before reaching their wallets | 1 |
| 10. Gain knowledge of research-based projects | 1 |
| 11. To meet diaspora needs | 1 |
| 12. A cluster of different responses, including: 'Fun', 'Confidence', 'Enlightenment', 'Awareness', 'Support' | Several mentions |
| 13. "To gain confidence, knowledge and supporting generating resources for my project." | 1 |
| 14. "To gain tools to start my journey to contributing to making Africa attain its rightful position on the global stage." | 1 |

- Also at the introductory workshop, each participant was asked to complete a short confidential questionnaire (See Annex 2). The evaluator analysed the completed responses from 28 participants. The technique used was to progressively focus the qualitative statements made in the responses, in order to produce the shortest possible digest of major opinions and issues. The results are given below.

Pre-course Questionnaire

*** Question 1: Have you ever studied by open/distance learning before?**

N = 28; Yes = 6; No = 22

Commentary: For a large majority of the group, this was to be their first experience of distance learning. We might anticipate that some would have difficulty with the learning style required.

*** Question 2: If you answered 'yes', please indicate the nature and length of your course(s) below:**

Commentary: Courses taken ranged from one-year undergraduate courses in the social sciences with the Open University, to shorter technical courses in accounting and financial services of up to two months duration.

*** Question 3: Please use up to three words or phrases to describe your feelings about working with IT [i.e. computers, CD-OM, e-mail] during this course**

Commentary: The overwhelming response was of a positive attitude to working with IT. **Confidence** with IT, which allows **flexible working**, a **willingness to learn**, even

enjoyment, user-friendly, and the expectation that they will **enhance their own IT skills**.

A very small minority were clearly **apprehensive** about a new mode of learning, and others expressed anxieties about possible **unreliable technology**.

“It sounds like an adventure I might enjoy.”

*** Question 4: Please list not more than three personal aims you have for participating in this course**

Commentary: One respondent aptly summed up all the comments in three words: **share – learn – implement**. A very clear picture of priorities emerged, thus

- Increase knowledge of fundraising and learn effective techniques of fundraising [24 responses]
- Networking, or giving / sharing ideas for fundraising [15 responses]

Given the later emphasis in the course on developing project proposals, it is worth noting that only one mention was made of writing effective proposals. Only one participant mentioned the gaining of a certificate from Oxford University as an aim.

Several [at least 6] expressed a more idealistic view of their role in relation to the development of Africa and its people, and the role of the diaspora.

Question 5: Please list below not more than three aims you have for participating in this course which relate to the AFFORD-related organisation you work for:

Commentary: This question was hard for some participants to answer, as they were not working for an NGO with links to AFFORD at the time they joined the course. This recruitment-related issue is addressed elsewhere in the report. The key organisational aims mentioned were:

- The course should create opportunities to network with other African organisations and gain from the synergy created;
- Raise the knowledge base of their organisation in relation to achieving sustainable funding, particularly raising awareness of the range of potential funders;
- Use knowledge gained on the course for training purposes within the organisation;
- Raise understandings of development issues, principally as they relate to Africa.

“Work towards developing a constituency of young African people interested in Africa’s development.”

Question 6: Please note below any anxieties you have at the start of this course:

Commentary: Most of the anxieties expressed relate in some way to the particular dimensions of learning through distance mode. Issues of time management predominated (at least 14 mentions), followed by uncertainty about the quality of teaching through an unknown medium [“Can a distance learning course really serve to achieve the objectives set out?”], personal anxieties about being able to cope with the intellectual demands of the course and related fear of failure, and just being able to maintain motivation [“I am normally too tired in the evenings (the only time I am free/have time) to do anything productive.”].

However, even with a question which invited negative perspectives, one respondent was able to write:

“No anxieties – looking forward to the joy of this ride – it will be illuminating new territories and scenarios that I thought were beyond my boundaries.”

3.3 Introductory Workshop

- This was a well-organised day, well appreciated by the course members, with an appropriate range of inputs addressing course objectives, content and mechanisms for communication between participants and tutors. It included an early introduction to the project which would be carried out in the latter part of the course. There may have been some information overload, as one participant said informally over lunch “...using big words – trying to put me off”.
- Documentation for the workshop, including course objectives, learning outcomes and course structure was clearly presented in appropriate detail
- There was some discussion about how the e-mail discussion might work, with suggestions for a pre-arranged time for interchange of messages. There was also suggestion that real-time discussion could be used by those with internet access. The latter was not activated.
- There was one query about the negative aspects of continual use of the computer screen when learning.
- The award for the successful of a certificate of the University of Oxford was introduced early. That it would be presented at AFFORD’s AD3 on 3rd July set up a hostage to fortune, as it was already known that the project phase of the course would not be complete by that date. Given the high profile given to the project phase, this left an awkward disjunction, even though it was made clear that the project assessment would be made on the plan for it rather than the implementation.

- Course tutors talked about **time management** as a key dimension of distance learning courses, and helpful suggestions were made. Nevertheless, lunch-time conversations, and later the responses to the pre-course questionnaire, made it clear that there were already anxieties about coping, which never receded thereafter. We will return to this theme.
- FM was perhaps a little early into publicising other FAHAMU courses at this time.

3.4 E-mail exchanges

- The evaluator studied a sub-set of the total e-mail exchanges during the course. He accessed:
 - All exchanges for List A group (member - member + member - tutor) from 1.3.04 to 19.4.04
 - Similar exchanges after amalgamation of the two lists from 23.4.04

He did not access exchanges between tutors and course members relating to either assignments or projects, except in a very small number of cases when both parties agreed to make the exchange 'public', or where someone pressed the wrong computer key!

- The table presented below shows the frequency of e-mail exchanges monitored, by week, up to 27.7.04.

| Week | Numbers | Week | Numbers |
|--------------------|---------|------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 81 | 12 | 22 |
| 2 | 32 | 13 | 9 |
| 3 | 10 | 14 | 30 [Run-up to workshop] |
| 4 | 9 | 15 | 29 |
| 5 | 3 | 16 | 12 |
| 6 | 4 | 17 | 11 |
| 7 | 2 | 18 | 5 |
| 8 [Lists combined] | 2 | 19 | 2 |
| 9 | 15 | 20 | 2 |
| 10 | 6 | 21 | 7 |
| 11 | 2 | | |

- Observations:
 - There was a high level of initial enthusiasm for e-mail participation, which lasted rather less than two weeks, probably as assignment tasks kicked in.
 - A large percentage of the exchanges, probably around 50%, could be defined as **administrative** or **procedural**.

- A further 30% were **encouraging** or **congratulatory** in style.
- In the e-mail exchanges the evaluator digested, there was very little serious discussion of **content** or **issues** arising from the materials. The tutors assure me that their exchanges on a one-to-one basis with participants were very different in nature.
- Only about one-third of the course members became fairly regular contributors to List exchanges. Except in the pre-workshop discussions about who should or should not be allowed to participate, this same group came through as the survivors. Several course members never contributed to the list.
- As early as Week 2, the e-mail messages from FM were emphasising assignment deadlines, so that assessment pressures were already being felt at this early stage.
- Throughout, FM tried to find a balance between pushing people to meet assignment deadlines, and, on the other hand, assuring them that this was not a course led by the requirements of assessment and certification. This will be discussed in more detail later in this report, but suffice to say that a satisfactory resolution was never really achieved, resulting in some sharp but well-mannered exchanges.
- The successful submission of assignments became a defining issue for many course members when it became clear that it was linked to participation in the major workshop in June, hence the flurry of exchanges in the run-up to the workshop.
- More generally, we should note that up to three-quarters of the participants were using IT facilities in internet cafes, in itself restricting both financially and in aspects of time/access.
- The intention expressed at the introductory workshop, that all participants would be put into five or six e-mail discussion groups was never made operational. Given that other pressures soon built up, this may have been a blessing in disguise. On the other hand, the potential of that size of group for mutual support and stimulus remains untested in this programme.

3.5 Course Content and Learning Mode

- There is no dissenting voice from the proposition that “The course materials are of high quality and relevance”. In this edition, the Fundraising and Resource Mobilisation materials generated by Fahamu and field-tested in various environments were clearly well matched to the needs of this learning group.
- The packaging of the course as CD-ROM and e-mail interaction was well accepted. There was only limited evidence of demand for greater access to a print version of the materials, though some did point out that if they did not have access to institutional printing capacity, any printing costs entailed were high.
- There are questions about the timing/rhythm of this course, particularly in relation to the assignment loading; these will be picked up later.

- A significant section of the materials is devoted to the rather arcane skill of developing so-called logical frameworks, otherwise called logical framework analysis (LFA). The cognitive demands of LFA are quite high and it is the experience of many trainers that LFA should not initially be a solitary activity. It occupied a large part of the June workshop and it was clear that the activities used there were necessary to cement participants' understanding of LFA. Skill in LFA is a valuable asset for all workers engaged in development programmes, even if it is not a specific requirement of a particular funder.

3.6 Final Workshop

- Well before the dates of the workshop, FM tried to elicit ideas for content. There was very little response, probably because people were immersed in assignment preparation.
- This three-day event was wholly successful. It brought together those course participants who had completed a clear majority of the assignments successfully - about one-third of the total enrolment. An obvious result was the very high level of engagement and camaraderie among the participants. On the Sunday, a small number of others joined, providing very useful feedback for the organisers and evaluator as to their reasons for failing to complete the taught part of the course.
- The work of the first two days was properly dominated by exercises designed to support participants in their understanding of LFA, an objective which was achieved, with huge gains in competency.
- The contribution of Michael Norton was hugely appreciated.
- The other prime focus was on preparation for the upcoming project. There was a general feeling that more one-to-one time with a tutor would have been useful, but a recognition that this would have been difficult to manage in the context of a workshop with only two tutors.
- There was a period of very thoughtful feedback and evaluation, many of the elements of which have been built into this report.

3.7 The Project

- The evaluator did not directly monitor the development of the projects between the end of the final workshop and submission. He did see and read ten of the submitted projects and the grades and commentary of the tutor (FM). FM indicates that there was a high level of tutor-student interaction at the early stage of the development of the project proposal, but very little afterwards.
- Grades given were: A – 4, B – 1, C – 5. All of these could be properly justified. The best projects were of very high quality indeed, all were acceptable. There was

evidence of good planning, based on skills learned directly during the course. Perhaps most important, the projects generally related precisely to the priorities of the organisations for whom the writers are working, showing the beginnings of a wider impact of the course.

- There was clear evidence that logical framework analysis remains a challenge for several of the participants, despite the attention given to it throughout the course and the workshop.
- Feedback provided by FM on the final versions was appropriate.
- I conclude that the timing and duration of the project was correct, following as it did on the final workshop. It is a great pity that a larger proportion of those who started the course did not survive long enough to benefit from this challenging and exciting part of the programme.

4. Issues and Recommendations

The key issue to be addressed is the poor completion rate of the course, with only ten certificates being awarded from a starting population of thirty-six students [28%]. A number of relevant issues will be addressed in the following sections, before we undertake a detailed analysis of the reasons given by students for dropping out.

4.1 Course selection

- We have already introduced (3.1) the issue of students' participation or non-participation in relevant organisations as an important issue. This caused a variety of problems, including
 - Their ability or otherwise to relate the course materials to their daily tasks;
 - The economy of effort achieved when your study field relates closely to your normal workplace activities;
 - The difficulty of identifying case study material for responses to assignments if you were not attached to an appropriate environment.

Recommendations from 4.1

- If it is acknowledged that there are two distinct populations to be served, it feels that the most appropriate response would be for the two groups – the 'start-up' group and the 'already engaged' group - to be kept separate, at least for the distance education part of the course, and to have different versions of the course. The present version does present significant difficulties for the 'start-up' group. It might be possible to run a version for the 'start-up' group which could be seen as a precursor of the full course, and even a prerequisite.

- A slightly different scenario would see the course divided into two self-standing parts embracing **Institutional Fundraising** and **Public Fundraising**. These could be run separately, perhaps with one somewhat shorter project per course, with a gap in between to gather breath, and with more careful matching of the entry experience and future needs of each of the students to the content of the courses. There would be no expectation that all students would wish to take the second programme.
- These two versions are not mutually exclusive. It may be that the Institutional Fundraising course should be seen as the core, to be attempted by students from a wide range of backgrounds, while the Public Fundraising course is recognised as more of a special interest.
- Absolutely key, though, is the case for a careful needs analysis to be undertaken by AFFORD, probably across quite a wide skills spectrum, ahead of any further ventures of this kind. Matching of student needs and aspirations to course content is always important, but it is crucial in the case of distance learning courses such as this one.

4.2 Pace of the course

- There is a strongly expressed view, even among course completers, that the combination of content and assignments, as presented in the present programme, is very demanding. No one really believes that full coverage can be completed utilising only one hour of study per day (7 hours per week). Several respondents estimated that they needed at least twice that time.
- This perspective should also be related to the relative unfamiliarity of the participants with working in distance learning mode, and the likely ‘gearing up’ time. They are generally not people who have been studying for four years with the Open University, for whom distance learning study has become a way of life.
- One thoughtful course member noted that they wanted space to be able to ‘think outside the box’ without getting rapped over the knuckles for being behind with assignments.
- FM acknowledged, in the final workshop, that he felt the course had tried to take in too much material, as it combined both institutional and public fundraising. I have made suggestions above, based on discussions with FM, regarding the possible separation of the two elements.

Recommendations for 4.2

- Revisit the estimate of study time, taking into account the newness for many participants of working through distance mode;
- Revisit the rhythm and demands of assignments;

- Consider provision of a short ‘introductory or preparatory module’ addressing at least (a) strategies for efficient working within a distance learning programme, and (b) guidance and practice for those students who feel they do not have current skills in responding to assignment tasks. The Fahamu course, JustWrite, could be used for (b), but takes a fairly intensive three-week commitment.

4.3 Administrative support

- The support of Fahamu staff was exemplary throughout the course, often going well beyond what might reasonably have been expected. Issues relating to the IT elements of access and delivery were quickly sorted out; issues relating to the difficulties of individuals in relation to a number of aspects of their participation (sickness, job changes, IT access, etc) were promptly addressed.
- IT access was much easier for those who were working in established NGO’s.

4.4 Tutorial support

- Those students who worked with FM have consistently praised the level of support he provided, both pastorally and in dealing with their assignments. The evaluator has not had access to these interchanges and resulting documentation, other than assignment grades.
- At the final workshop, those present were entirely relaxed and positive about having all assignments put on the e-mail List. Perhaps this is not surprising, as they represented the successful elements of the group. It is a desirable aim. There was some discussion of group assignments, with no clear consensus emerging for or against.
- The evidence of support from SA is not so strong. At least voices were not clearly raised in acclamation. His general e-mail interactions were normally extremely concise, and limited to words of encouragement and congratulation. I have no example of an extended e-mail message containing significant content or comment.
- I have some anxiety about the differential outputs between the two tutorial groups. In Group A (FM), 74 assignments were received and graded, in Group B (SA), the comparable number was 36. Seven Group A students received certificates, three from Group B. I understand that FM has taken on the supervision of all the project work, following an e-mail from SA. I have no further evidence to offer, but would stress the centrality of tutorial support to success in this kind of programme.

Recommendations for 4.4

- My view would be that a student: tutor ratio of 17:1 or 18:1 is perfectly reasonable in an established programme like that run by the Open University or many professional bodies. It transpired that this programme required a considerable input of counselling-type support, and pretty constant encouragement to participants to stay on track when the assignment load became overwhelming. This put a great deal of pressure on the 'lead' tutor, FM, who occasionally misjudged the appropriate tone needed to support the group. With hindsight, it would probably have been more appropriate to have three course tutors engaged with the group.
- Communication through e-mail exchanges is clearly at the heart of student – tutor interactions in a programme of this kind. The overall programme generated a massive 1,959 e-mail messages, a large majority of which were between student and tutor. FM's group are wholly positive about the one-to-one mentoring style which is generated through multiple e-mail exchanges.
- What has not flourished through e-mail exchange is an extended discussion mode across the wider population in the lists. FM and I are of the view that we should no longer press for this, as the aggregated learning from this and other Adilisha courses is that such communications have rarely (if at all) flourished. We recommend that maximum effort be put into e-mail support of the individual student.

4.5 Workshop/distance learning balance

- There is always a trade-off, in distance learning programmes, between the distance learning and face-to-face elements. When learners are very familiar with learning at a distance, their demand for face-to-face tuition often diminishes; while learners are new or relatively new to the medium, they generally and understandably seek the reassurance of familiar face-to-face learning. Face-to-face tuition is, of course, expensive.
- In this programme, I judge that the balance was about right between the different elements. The one-day introductory workshop probably covered all that was necessary and appropriate prior to the start of the course, unless an additional induction phase were added to cater for those with no distance learning experience. Even then, that would most likely be achieved in distance mode. The timing and substance of the main workshop was excellent, but we must note that two-thirds of the course members did not achieve attendance.

4.6 Certification

- The potential of achieving a certificate of the venerable University of Oxford was clearly welcomed by the course participants. The extent to which it acted as

extrinsic motivation for completing the full assignment load is less clear. As we shall see in the next section, it appears that most drop-out was related to external factors rather than to the nature of the course structure and content – in fact all of the drop-out. This may suggest that the certificate as incentive did not play a major part.

- What is clear is that the decision that certificates should be presented at the AD3 event on 3rd July caused an awkward discontinuity in the programme, as projects were not due to be submitted until three weeks later. The compromise that was reached was not entirely satisfactory, and made up well after the start of the course. All of this relates to the wider issue of the rhythm and duration of the course, to which we shall return.

4.7 Non-completion: a detailed analysis

- Non-completion is a crucial issue and has been followed through in some detail. The evaluator has undertaken the following data collection exercises:
 - Discussion at the final workshop with two groups of students who had not completed the necessary assignment tariff to gain entry to the full workshop, and, hence, the certificate;
 - Monitoring of e-mail discussions regarding course completion issues;
 - Follow-up questionnaire by e-mail to all of those who did not complete the programme;
 - Telephone discussions with several of the respondents to the above e-mail request;
 - Discussion with FM as to Fahamu administrative interactions with drop-outs.
- The table that follows summarises the reasons given for non-completion.

| Student | Overload with other study commitments | Overload with 'normal' work commitments | Illness, family crises | Lack of suitable work environment | Poor support from work line managers | Other |
|----------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| A | | | | | | * (personal reasons) |
| B | | | * New baby! | | | |
| C | | * | | | | |
| D | | * | | * (initially) | | |
| E | | * (Darfur emergency) | | | | |
| F | | | * Illness | | | |
| G | | * | | | | * |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | | (personal situation) |
| H | | * | | | | |
| I | | | | * | | |
| J | * | | | | | |
| K | | * | | | * | |
| L | | * | | | | |
| M | | * (Assignments complete but doesn't need certification) | | | | |
| N | | | | * | | |
| O | | * | | | | |
| P | | | * | | * | |
| Q | | | | * | | * |

There appear to be three major reasons for non-completion: **professional overload, inappropriate work environment and personal overload**. These can, in turn, be broken down into **predictable** and **non-predictable**, the former being of most concern here.

Telephone discussion with a very small sample of non-completers, on the single issue of whether or not the materials were still of use to them, proves rather inconclusive. Several indicated that they had used the materials for their own development even though they had not submitted assignments, etc, but none convincingly showed that they were using their learning on a day-to-day basis in their organisations.

A number of propositions may now be made regarding the potential for developing the course for future populations:

1. Those applicants with little or no experience of distance learning should be offered/given an introductory module to help them to feel the nature and extent of commitment needed in order to succeed. Over half of the non-completers identified 'normal' work pressure as the major reason for not completing the course. That figure is not uncommon in distance learning programmes, but action as described above can reduce significantly the element of shock in distance learning.
2. For those not already involved in fundraising for an NGO or like-minded organisation, special provision almost certainly needs to be made. Those who tried to link with existing NGO's were not noticeably successful. It is beyond the evaluator's knowledge base to assess how much effort would be required to ensure that each course participant has an organic relationship with an appropriate NGO which could provide an element of mentoring support. At best, such an investment could work well for all parties. Given AFFORD's mission, it is important to cater for this group.

3. Adjust the extreme assignment pressure experienced by a majority of course members. AFFORD's Director has wondered whether, for those not directly working in organisations during their course experience, it would be possible to create a **simulated environment**, with matching assignments, etc. This is entirely possible, but would require a good deal of additional creative work to generate what would be a course based largely on a case-study. This might be an interesting challenge to which Fahamu might wish to respond.

4. Provide more intensive tutorial support.

5. De-link the undertaking of the course from the Oxford University certification, making it clear from the outset that grown-ups should jump through hoops they have designed, rather than those created for them. For those who need/want the certification, that's fine, but for those who don't, that's of equivalent worth.

.....

Annex 1

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

The main objectives of the evaluation will include:

- Assessment of the relevance of the distance learning materials to the course participants
- Assessment of the extent of skill enhancement of the participants
- Assessment of the value for money provided by the course in relation to other courses and methods
- Judgements regarding the contribution of the course to AFFORD's wider capacity-building agenda among the diaspora.

IRFOL agrees to:

- monitor introductory workshop (28 February) – to assess the starting points of the participants and to find out what they have as expectations from the course;
- monitor on-line interactions between tutor-student and student-student throughout the first part of the course;
- participate in the three-day workshop (11 – 13 June) at the end of the taught part of the course, focussing particularly on achievements, on the perceptions of participants, and the preparation for the project phase which follows and produce a short, preliminary report thereafter;
- monitor progress and achievements with project activity;
- provide a considered opinion as to the quality and value-for-money provided by the course;
- present findings at AD3 (3 July);
- write and submit a full report by 31 July 2004.

Annex 2

AFFORD – Adilisha – Fundraising Course

Pre-course Questionnaire

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Terry Allsop and I am the Director of a small NGO that exists to carry out research on open and distance learning [ODL] – the International Research Foundation for Open Learning. I have worked in education in sub-Saharan Africa for many years. I shall be trying to report on the effectiveness of various aspects of this course, so your views as the learners are central to my interests.

For now, I would be grateful if you could find **not more than 15 minutes** before the end of the day to complete this short questionnaire. I do not need your name, anonymity is guaranteed.

I hope you enjoy the course!

.....

1. Have you ever studied by open/distance learning before?

Please circle either Yes or No

2. If you answered ‘Yes’, please indicate the nature and length of the course(s) below:

3. Please use up to three words or phrases to describe your feelings about working with IT [i.e. computers, CD-ROM, e-mail] during this course:

*

*

*

4. Please list below not more than three personal aims you have for participating in this course:

*

*

*

5. Please list below not more than three aims you have for participating in this course which relate to the AFFORD- related organisation you work for:

*

*

*

6. Please note below any anxieties you have at the start of this course:

*

*

*

Thank you for spending time on this response.

Terry

Annex 3

Statements made and issues raised at the final workshop

- **Positive messages:**
 - Course materials of high quality and relevance
 - Tutorial and administrative support excellent
 - Interaction with group members hugely beneficial, particularly during the final workshop
 - “I have learned valuable new skills which will help me be more effective in ...”

- **Things which have made me feel anxious/insecure:**
 - The difficulty of understanding the particular demands of logical frameworks
 - Time pressure, manifested by
 - @ Feeling rushed with ‘covering the material’
 - @ Assignment deadlines to be met
 - @ No space to communicate to e-mail discussions with colleagues
 - My insecurity with IT
 - My limited access to IT




- **Elements which might contribute to an even better course:**
 - A ‘foundation’ course on learning at a distance
 - A basic/advanced split in the course structure
 - Stretching the whole course [Cost & time implications]
 - Raise level of participant - participant interaction by (i) pre-planned e-mail discussions, and (ii) group assignments
 - Timing of the three-day face-to-face workshop [? Mid-course]
 - Reflection on the style/intensity of assignments
 - Is certification an important issue?

Annex 4

Rubric for Open University Course 'Winning resources and support'

Winning Resources and Support

Points: 15  Code: B624 Level: 3 

| Start  | End  | UK fee * | |
|---|---|-------------------|--|
| Nov 2004 | Apr 2005 | £875 |  |
| Nov 2005 | Apr 2006 | Not yet available | registration not yet available  |

*Fee in other areas : residents of [Republic of Ireland](#) [European study areas](#)

Summary

- **Facts**
- [Computer and Internet access required](#)
- No residential school
- [Studying outside the UK](#)
- **Assessment**
- 3 Tutor-marked assignments (TMAs)
- Examination
- [More assessment details](#)

Focusing on the skills and knowledge necessary for successful fundraising, this six-month course leads to the Institute of Fundraising's Certificate in Fundraising Management (CiFM), subject to membership conditions. With a strong emphasis on ethical issues, you will learn how to identify and communicate a compelling fundraising case and how to plan and implement a fundraising strategy. You will look at evaluation, problem-solving and working with others, in particular, how to develop productive relationships with individuals and organisations. You will also explore a more long-term strategic view of organisational survival and growth. Primarily aimed at fundraisers, the course offers valuable professional development to anyone working in public relations or campaigning in the public and non-profit sector with some involvement in winning resources and support.