



CAFOR
Coalition on Media
and Education for
Development Africa
Forum



CAFOR Project on the African Digital Library

CAFOR will work with other institutions and organizations at the global level to support ongoing activities in integrated online full e-textbooks. The idea would be to effectively promote digitized, full-text resources to learners in Africa via the Internet, thereby contributing to the revitalization of education and lifelong learning on the continent, the expansion of business, and poverty alleviation. This project will support e-book networking for schools and institutions of higher learning with knowledge exchange programs.

The African Digital Library (ADL) was opened on 1 November 1999 with nearly 3,000 e-books and has subsequently grown to about 10,000 e-books. The library is a project of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, Technikon SA, created in the African Renaissance spirit. Digital e-books can either be downloaded from the Internet using an offline reader or read directly on the Internet. The ADL represents a collection of books across the African continent and serves as a backup to all physical libraries. The African Digital Library provides a core collection of digitized, full-text e-books supporting lifelong learning in Africa. The collection covers 52 subject areas and is available in 54 countries of Africa. The ADL strives to provide its services to scholars and learners throughout the region via existing institutions and individuals. Access is free of charge, providing the user has access to the Internet.



CAFOR is replicating this project in the African continent's remotest areas and is seeking sponsorship and association-building with organizations already involved in this project. CAFOR will ensure that its members residing in countries in the five regions of Africa can take the task ahead in several steps in their respective countries.

CAFOR will seek additional grants that would enable it to popularize, collect and expand different e-books. CAFOR would also contribute to the payment of storage fees and programming to support ongoing activities on the continent. Although digital books are gaining popularity in Africa, they tend to remain in the market's early-adaptor section, and many people still prefer the printed equivalent. CAFOR will provide more access to books that users would not otherwise be able to access in local libraries. This project is most relevant for Africa, and CAFOR would take it to further steps as ADL is a developmental project aimed at assisting a less-developed region of the world, where direct access to books is comparatively limited in contrast to what one finds, for example, in North America and Europe.

CAFOR will, through its media components, popularize and encourage e-book networking among schools and institutions of higher learning with knowledge exchange programs. CAFOR is associated with the ADL to provide the fixed Internet Protocol (IP) address and would collaborate with ADL management to give further information and statistics on how CAFOR's users are using e-books, which would mainly constitute youths across the continent. CAFOR would want to build a private collection of books at its cost, which can be restricted for use by its members. CAFOR seeks sponsorship for e-Book collections most relevant to African youths across the continent. CAFOR will also work with ADL to negotiate with African publishers to digitize African origin works and make these available for sale via digital book vendors (e.g., Amazon.com). This initiative is expected to make African results more visible and available internationally and generate a revenue stream through royalties back to the continent. Intellectual property owners, the digital publisher, and the ADL will share the benefits.

CAFOR will also work with the ADL to build capacity in Africa by assisting institutions on the continent to convert the full text of theses, dissertations, and research papers into e-book format. These may become more visible to other researchers on the continent. Where thesis materials are available in e-book format, they are also available for sale to other libraries worldwide. This sale has two benefits: first, a revenue stream is created, and, secondly, African research papers, not otherwise readily available, become accessible to the rest of the world.

This exact mechanism might make additional study material available on a broader public basis. Such would include public domain material on agriculture, entrepreneurship, health, information technology, and food production.

The use of e-books is beginning to gain acceptance across the majority of countries in Africa. The ADL represents how e-books can support the development of hundreds of organizations and tens of thousands of lifelong learners in a continent with minimal resources. The future of projects

such as this depends on the availability of project funding by forward-thinking global organizations serious about developing the continent.



CAFOR will implement this project for four years at USD 3.9 million.

CAFOR is urging all its partners and stakeholders to ensure that governments and African institutions pay more attention to the digitization of quality education and invest more and better in education.

For more information, please click on:- <https://cafor.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2-Digital-Schools-Initiative-Project.pdf>