

World Educational Portals (WEPS) Partners with EducationUSA to Launch the WEPS Mathematics Academy with Online Courses to Zimbabwe High School Students preparing for College Studies

The World Education Portals (WEPS) has partnered with EducationUSA in Zimbabwe to launch the WEPS Mathematics Academy aimed at providing online Mathematics courses to high school students who are preparing to enroll at international and local universities. EducationUSA will open the courses for all qualified A level Zimbabwean high school graduates, including students in their United States Student Achievers Program (USAP).

USAP began in Zimbabwe in 1999 with the aim of providing access to higher education for determined, bright, low-income youth, thus producing highly-skilled and liberally-educated leaders for tomorrow's Zimbabwe. Thirteen years later, more than 250 Zimbabwean USAP students have excelled as students at America's top colleges and universities, and many are continuing graduate studies or are working all over the globe. WEPS Academy offers free open courses in Calculus I and Calculus II. These courses correspond to standard US Calculus I and Calculus II courses. Successful students of Calculus II earn University of Helsinki credits assuming that they enroll to take these courses for credit.

The proliferation of MOOCS has opened learning opportunities in places where students might have had limited access to well developed courses from world-renowned faculty. MOOCS have made it possible for students worldwide to benchmark their standards globally. Although MOOCS are a recent phenomenon to a lot of people, WEPS, based at Florida State University has been in existence for over a decade. The US President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) has identified promising new high-tech educational tools as a way to improve access and opportunities to low cost but high quality higher education. Access to higher education is a prerequisite for success in the knowledge-based economies of the 21st century. The international collaboration involving teams at Florida State University, Harare, Zimbabwe and Helsinki, Finland will bring tangible benefits of MOOCS to low resourced students by providing opportunities to earn college credits from the online courses. The collaboration involves a number of experts in learning, mathematics education, and data analysis who will provide the necessary support structure for success. Members of the team include:

Florida State University, USA. – Mika Seppala and Claudius Mundoma

Harare, Zimbabwe (USAP) – Rebecca Zeigler Mano and Itai Muzhinji

Helsinki, Finland - Matti Pauna, Olga Caprotti, Anna Kairema, Yong Tao Chen

Useful Websites

<https://myweps.com/moodle/>

<http://www.usapglobal.org/>

www.educationusa.state.gov

<http://myweps.co/weps/PEOPLE.html>

About EducationUSA and USAP EducationUSA is a program of the U.S. Department of State that operates over 450 educational advising centers in over 150 countries around the globe. EducationUSA's mission is to provide the only source of comprehensive, current and accurate information about study opportunities in the United States. In Zimbabwe, EducationUSA operates four comprehensive advising centers in the main cities of Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru and Mutare. As part of EducationUSA, in 1999, Rebecca Z. Mano founded a small, ambitious but highly organized program called the United States Student Achievers' Program (USAP) in Zimbabwe. Since then, the organization has grown remarkably, spreading to 13 countries on 4 continents and counting. The program's primary goal is to encourage and assist highly talented but economically disadvantaged high school graduates access scholarships and full-funding at top US colleges and universities. USAP has since grown into an international program including cohorts in a wide range of countries including Brazil, Ecuador, Mongolia, Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia and Mozambique. Rebecca's vision of educating the underprivileged has broken borders and through a dedicated network of EducationUSA Advisors in various countries, USAP has significantly impacted the lives of the recipient youths. There are currently over 250 USAP students in the United States bringing about change both on their campuses and in their communities back home.

About WEPS WEPS courses are based on materials developed at participating universities. WEPS online courses yield very good learning outcomes. WEPS offers outsourcing of instruction, based on proven educational models, to educational institutes worldwide. The WEPS Team carries out research on education in particular on the use of "Big Data" to improve student success. This work has been supported by the European Union and is currently a central theme in the Science Across Virtual Institutes collaboration between the US National Science Foundation, Academy of Finland, and TEKES, a Finnish funding agency.

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