



MOOCs have the potential to widen access to higher education in Africa

Open and distance learning (ODL) institutions are expected and mandated to take the lead in widening access to quality higher education.

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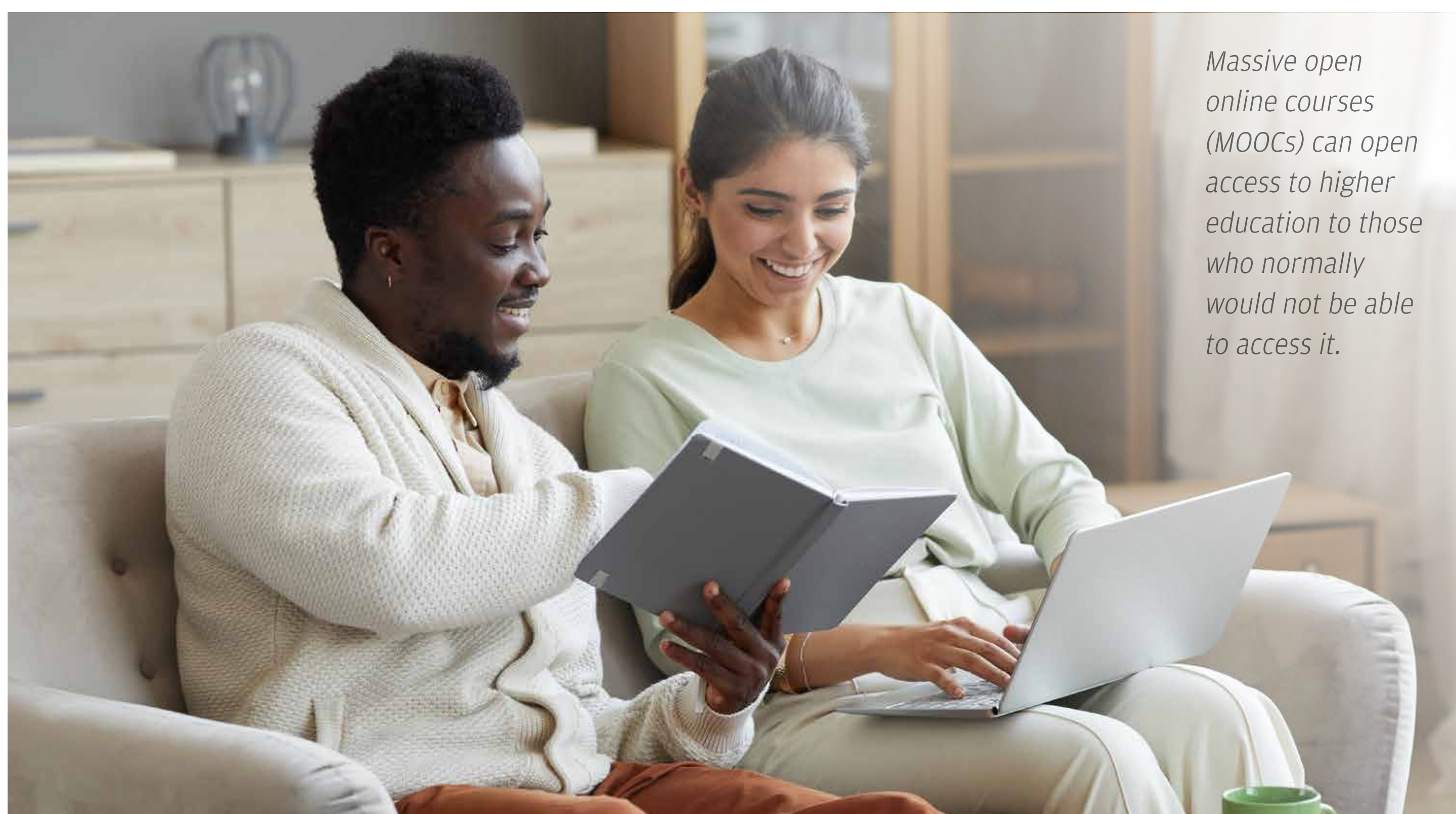
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Although the African student population is rapidly growing, sub-Saharan Africa is reported to have the lowest participation in higher education globally. Massive open online courses (MOOCs), like all emerging educational technologies and technological pedagogical innovations, have flooded Africa's higher education sector with many promises. MOOCs are free, easily accessible, completely online courses with no entry requirements. They have gained global interest. However, the collective effort to

adopt MOOCs on the continent remains slow. "Research shows that low-income and middle-income populations make up 80% of MOOC users and have the highest MOOC completion rates," says Mpho-Entle Modise. Although MOOCs are still emerging in Africa and in developing countries on other continents, they are recognised as a game-changer for conventional and ODL universities and continue to progress in the African higher education sectors. However, they are mostly used as a self-learning element

supporting formal qualifications within African universities. Governments that aspire to widen access to higher education through MOOCs need to raise the awareness of every stakeholder, including high school communities, HEI educationists, policy makers and government itself. African students need to be provided with quality and relevant education. Open and distance education could contribute enormously to the massification of education and widening access to many deserving learners.



Massive open online courses (MOOCs) can open access to higher education to those who normally would not be able to access it.