Highlight: ICT for Special Needs Education

UNESCO global report: opening new avenues for empowerment: ICTs to access information and knowledge for persons with disabilities

Building on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this Global Report addresses strong recommendations to all stakeholders – from decision-makers to educators, civil society and industry – on how concretely to advance the rights of people living with disabilities.

Digital talking books: An alternative way of educating children with disabilities of their rights

The Autism Society Philippines (ASP) implemented a project entitled “Educating Children with Disabilities of their Rights Using the Digital Talking Books”. This initiative, funded by the Australian Aid (AusAID), educated more than 600 children with disabilities of their human rights using digital talking books as well as their parents and siblings.

News & Events

IITE and UNESCO Bangkok strengthen collaboration on ICT in education policy and practice

The whole is different from or greater than the sum of its parts. In keeping with this age-old philosophy, UNESCO Bangkok and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) continue to explore synergy in the area of ICT in education, both policy and practice.

ICT in schools survey – many children not getting what they need; teachers need more training and support

Students and teachers in Europe are keen to "go digital", computer numbers have doubled since 2006 and most schools are now "connected", but use of ICTs and digital skill levels are very uneven. These skills and support for teachers to deliver them need a strong boost, according to a survey on the use of digital technologies in schools in Europe published by the European Commission.

ITU celebrates global ‘Girls in ICT Day’

Every year on the fourth Thursday in April, ITU and the global technology community celebrate ‘Girls in ICT Day’, an awareness-raising initiative designed to pay tribute to women’s contribution to the technology industry and promote tech careers to a new generation of girls with an interest in science and maths.

Programmes & Projects

ICT for Inclusion project

The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education ICT for Inclusion project activities will run during 2012 and 2013. The aim is to collect information on the use of ICT for Inclusion – that is using ICT to support the learning of learners with disabilities and special educational needs in inclusive settings within compulsory education.
Resources

New publication: Open Educational Resources - Innovation, Research and Practice
This book, initiated by the UNESCO/COL Chair in OER, is one in a series of publications by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) examining OER. It describes the movement in detail, providing readers with insight into OER’s significant benefits, its theory and practice, and its achievements and challenges.

Preparing special education frontline professionals for a new teaching experience
This paper reports the findings of a survey conducted among teachers attending a Master’s Degree on Special Education in which they were asked to analyse the acquisition of general ICT skills and specially oriented ICT solutions for students with learning disabilities. The collection, compilation and processing of the survey’s data describes and explains the actual perceptions, skills and training needs of this professional group.

Toolkit of Best Practices and Policy Advice: Module 4 Using ICTs to promote education and job training for persons with disabilities
This toolkit module is one of several modules developed by ITU under the “Connect A School Connect A Community”-initiative which aims to promote broadband Internet connectivity for schools in developing countries around the world.

ICT in Education: A critical literature review and its implications
This review summarizes the relevant research on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education. Specifically, it reviews studies that have touched upon the merits of ICT integration in schools, barriers or challenges encountered in the use of ICT, factors influencing successful ICT integration, in-service and pre-service teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and confidence in using ICT as well as the importance of school culture in the use of ICT.

Highlight: ICT for Special Needs Education
UNESCO global report: opening new avenues for empowerment: ICTs to access information and knowledge for persons with disabilities

Building on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this Global Report addresses strong recommendations to all stakeholders – from decision-makers to educators, civil society and industry – on how concretely to advance the rights of people living with disabilities. These recommendations draw on extensive research and consultations. Studies
launched in five regions have allowed UNESCO to understand more clearly the conditions and challenges faced by persons with disabilities around the world.

To empower persons with disabilities is to empower societies as a whole – but this calls for the right policies and legislation to make information and knowledge more accessible through information and communication technologies. It calls also for applying accessibility standards to the development of content, product and services. The successful application of such technologies can make classrooms more inclusive, physical environments more accessible, teaching and learning content and techniques more in tune with learners’ needs.

This UNESCO publication not only makes a major contribution to the understanding of disability, but also highlights technological advancement and shares good practices that have already changed the lives of people with disabilities. It also makes concrete recommendations for action at the local, national and international levels, targeting policy and decision makers, educators, IT&T industry, civil society and certainly persons with disabilities.

**Read the publication:**

- [UNESCO global report: opening new avenues for empowerment: ICTs to access information and knowledge for persons with disabilities](#)

**Related links:**

- [UNESCO launches a meeting report on accessible ICTs for students with disabilities](#)
- [R-learning = improved learning results?](#)
- [Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities](#)
- [UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities](#)
- [Improving child literacy in Africa: Experiments with an automated reading tutor](#)
- [UNESCO and G3ict sign a partnership on ICT for persons with disabilities](#)
- [ILO launches community portal to collaboratively address the challenges of skills development and employability](#)
- [The liberation of textbooks](#)
- [e-Accessibility Policy Toolkit for persons with disabilities](#)
- [ICT and disabilities in China: Seeing in the cyberworld](#)
Digital talking books: An alternative way of educating children with disabilities of their rights

By Ranil Sorongon. Executive Director of Autism Society Philippines

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) recognize the inherent rights of children with disabilities (CWDs) and their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom on an equal basis with other children. Accordingly, CWDs need to be educated of their rights in a way that recognizes their capacities and limitations.

Believing in the potential of DAISY digital talking books1 in supporting CWDs’ learning process in this area, the Autism Society Philippines (ASP) submitted an entry to the “Search for Innovative Philippine Human Rights Initiative” in 2011 conducted by the Ateneo Human Rights Center, Ateneo School of Government, and the Caucus of Development NGOs. The proposal entitled “Educating Children with Disabilities of Their Rights Using the Digital Books” emerged as one of the winners among the more than 200 entries. Australian Aid (AusAID) provided the funding support for the one-year project implementation that started in May 2012.

It was a daunting task for the project team, the partner schools, and therapy centers as well as the teachers of the learning sessions to implement such a novel project but the enthusiasm and commitment of the implementers fueled the group to successfully finish the project. After a year of implementation, 626 children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, AD/HD, Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, deafness, and other disabilities acquired knowledge of their rights specifically the right to a good education, the right to play and rest, and the right to

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1 digital talking books are included in the range of technologies advocated by the International Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) Consortium – more information on http://www.daisy.org/multimedia, accessed May 2013
be protected against verbal and physical abuse. The total number went beyond the project’s target of 500 recipients. Aside from this, the project team oriented 1,004 parents, siblings, teachers, and service providers on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a means of assisting the CWDs in continuously understanding and internalizing their rights. Twenty-seven (27) special schools and therapy centers around the country agreed to become ASP’s partners, committing to have their respective teachers conduct the learning sessions.

The project partners and teachers unanimously agreed that one of the major impacts of the learning sessions was the immediate and sustained attention from the CWDs with the use of the digital talking books (DTBs). As a result, it was a breeze for the teachers to motivate the CWDs in actively participating during the discussions and evaluations. In addition, the DTBs provided the CWDs with opportunities to share personal experiences in relation to the rights presented, learn responsibilities attached to their rights, and seek solutions or alternatives if and when their rights get violated. It also paved the way for the CWDs to assert their rights in specific situations, much to the surprise of their parents and teachers. Even if the project has avenues for further improvement, the digital talking books have definitely brought so much hope to the children with disabilities as a medium for educating them towards their empowerment.

To sustain the efforts, ASP gave all its project partners a DVD package that contained the following: AMIS (an open source program used for playing the DTBs), the Implementation Manual, and the three (3) learning stories /DTBs both in English and Filipino versions.

ASP is looking forward to present the results of this project in local and international conferences on human rights; disability; and information, communication and technology as a means to share the technology and to promote the rights of children with disabilities.

The Autism Society Philippines (ASP) is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to the well-being of persons with autism spectrum disorder. The ASP has been in the forefront of providing services and training to families living with autism.

Further information:

- [Autism Society Philippines (ASP)]

Related links:

- [UNESCO launches a meeting report on accessible ICTs for students with disabilities]
- [R-learning = improved learning results?]
• Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities
• UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities
• Improving child literacy in Africa: Experiments with an automated reading tutor
• UNESCO and G3ict sign a partnership on ICT for persons with disabilities
• ILO launches community portal to collaboratively address the challenges of skills development and employability
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News & Events

IITE and UNESCO Bangkok strengthen collaboration on ICT in education policy and practice

The whole is different from or greater than the sum of its parts. In keeping with this age-old philosophy, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) continue to explore synergy in the area of ICT in education, both policy and practice.

UNESCO takes a holistic approach to promoting ICT in education, whereby addressing the interlinked issues of access, quality and inclusion in the education system. This huge task is shared amongst three sectors within UNESCO, namely Education, Communication and Information and the Sciences. In the Asia-Pacific region, the Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) of UNESCO Bangkok takes the lead in this
regard, in collaboration with other units, including the Education Policy and Reform Unit (EPR).

UNESCO Bangkok has a proven record of initiating and implementing various programmes and projects to support policy dialogue, teacher capacity building and knowledge sharing on ICT in education. Among them are the ICT in Education Policy Project funded by the Japanese Funds in Trust (JFIT) from 2003 to 2011; Strengthening ICT in Schools and SchoolNet Project in ASEAN Setting funded by JFIT and the ASEAN Foundation from 2003 to 2006; Next Generation of Teachers Project co-funded by JFIT, Microsoft, CISCO and Smart Technologies from 2006 to 2011; and the most recent Facilitating Effective ICT-Pedagogy Integration Project funded by the Republic of Korea from 2010 to 2012 (UNESCO, 2013). Annually, UNESCO Bangkok organizes high-level ministerial forum to facilitate dialogue and share policy, experiences, good practices and lessons learnt in ICT in Education.

As part of the Central Asia initiative funded by JFIT, the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE) in January 2013 provided Central Asian countries the regional platform to cross-share policies, promising practices and lessons learnt in integrating ICT into the education systems. It focused on the use of ICT for policy formulation and ICT-supported open and distance learning towards enabling lifelong learning (UNESCO CASIE 2013);

As a Category 1 Institute based in Moscow, Russia, UNESCO IITE supports bridging the digital divide in education and building inclusive knowledge societies (IITE, 2012). It has initiated development of many research-based publications (i.e., policy briefs, analytical surveys, best practices of ICT use) to support national strategy on ICT in Education. IITE conducted teacher professional development programmes; organized policy level meetings, extended technical assistance and expert support to Member States. It has also contributed to the promotion of the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT) by facilitating localization, adaptation and translation of the framework (IITE Annual Report 2011). In support of governments’ efforts to achieve the EFA goals, in particular goal 2 “Ensuring that by 2015 all children, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality”, the “ICTs in Primary Education” project was launched in 2011 to facilitate the policy dialogue and build foundation for effective primary education using ICTs. A massive open online course (MOOC) on ICT Primary with the University of London is an exciting development to look forward towards the third quarter of 2013.

Tracing these common goals, UNESCO Bangkok and IITE are steered to cooperate more closely, facilitate dialogue, collaboration and model synergy between regional bureaus and specialized institutes.
The ball gets rolling to this direction as UNESCO Bangkok, on invitation of the Director, Mr. Gwang-Jo Kim, welcomed IITE Acting Director and Director of UNESCO Moscow Office Mr. Badarch Dendev on 22-23 April 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. The two-day meeting explored collaboration as “One UNESCO” particularly in the areas of ICT application in education policy and practice and opportunities for staff exchange.

In translating policies into practice, the rich resources of analytical studies and policy researches conducted by IITE in areas of ICT in Education would serve as useful bases for designing joint activities for the Asia-Pacific region, especially in Central Asian countries. Their dissemination to a wider network would increase knowledge sharing and awareness in the member states.

Moreover, utilizing the experiences gained by UNESCO Bangkok’s ICT in Education Team on student-based learning using ICTs, IITE and UNESCO Bangkok will develop a joint programme on teacher development to harness a new pedagogical approach using ICTs.

Through the meeting, it was also affirmed that IITE and UNESCO Moscow, concurrently headed by Mr. Badarch as Director, will support facilitating involvement of the Central Asia sub-region, the Russian Federation and other cluster countries in the newly established regional Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP) through membership, collaborative research, information sharing, translation and joint support to countries. Strengthening collaboration in other areas of education policy and management, education quality, TVET and education research and foresight will be further explored.

Further information:

- [UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education](#)

Related links:

- [Publications by UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education](#)
- [How can we use ICT to promote Lifelong Learning?: Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education](#)
- [How technology can change assessment](#)

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- [UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter](#)
ICT in schools survey – many children not getting what they need; teachers need more training and support.

Students and teachers in Europe are keen to "go digital", computer numbers have doubled since 2006 and most schools are now "connected", but use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) and digital skill levels are very uneven. These skills and support for teachers to deliver them need a strong boost, according to a survey on the use of digital technologies in schools in Europe published by the Commission

The study was undertaken by European Schoolnet and the University of Liège. This is the third European survey of ICT in schools, and the first to survey students directly. The previous study (eEurope 2005) focused mainly on infrastructure provision; this study has broadened into how ICTs are used and perceived and competences in using ICT. The survey was carried out between January 2011 and November 2012 Findings are based on over 190,000 responses from students, teachers and head teachers of 27 countries.

Key findings of the study:

- Only one in four 9 year olds studies at a 'highly digitally-equipped school' – with recent equipment, fast broadband (10mbps plus) and high 'connectivity' (website, email for students and teachers, local area network, virtual learning environment).
- Only half of 16 year olds are in such 'highly digitally-equipped schools'.
- 20% of secondary students have never or almost never used a computer in their school lessons.
- Students’ frequency of ICT-based learning activities in the classroom increases when schools have specific formal policies to use ICTs.
- There are marked country differences. Scandinavian and Nordic countries have the best equipment (Sweden, Finland, Denmark); while students in Poland, Romania, Italy, Greece, Hungary and Slovakia are most likely to lack the right equipment.
- Laptops, tablets and netbooks are replacing desktop computers in many schools.
- Lack of equipment does not mean lack of interest: some countries with the highest use of computer equipment are the ones with the lowest scores on equipment provisions (e.g. Bulgaria, Slovakia, Cyprus and Hungary).
- It is essential for students to have access to ICTs at both home and school.
- Most teachers believe there is need for radical policy change.
• Teachers are generally confident and positive about the use of ICTs for learning. This confidence is key: skilled and confident teachers are more important than the latest equipment to delivering digital skills and knowledge.
• However, teacher training in ICTs is rarely compulsory and therefore most teachers devote spare time to private study of these skills.
• Teachers use computers to prepare lessons more often than they use them in lessons.

Recommendations of the study:
• An integrated approach to ICT teaching in schools is needed, meaning not only investment in infrastructure but also greater investment in teachers’ training, rewards for teachers using ICT in the classroom, and the creation of ICT coordinator posts.
• At EU level, the Commission is recommended to work to reduce divergence in ICT teaching between countries, support projects on new approaches to teaching through digital technologies, support high quality digital learning resources for teachers and regularly monitor progress in the use of digital technologies and digital competence.

Neelie Kroes, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda, said: "ICT skills and training must be available to all students and teachers, not just a lucky few. We want our young people exposed to ICTs in school from the very beginning, and we want teachers who are confident to share their knowledge".

Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, said: "We need to invest more in the development and use of ICTs in schools. Europe will only resume sustained growth by producing highly skilled ICT graduates and workers who can contribute to innovation and entrepreneurship".

Marc Durando, European Schoolnet’s Executive Director, said: “Policy makers and school heads should focus on concrete measures at school level to support the use and integration of ICTs in the classroom and invest in capacity building through new training models (online communities, blended learning, etc.)”.

Next steps
These findings and recommendations will feed into the Digital Agenda’s effort to enhance every European's digital skills, so that they can all participate fully in society. They will assist the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs – see IP/13/182 (which plans, for example, to promote Massive Open Online Courses –MOOCs- for teachers, and spread the use of incentives and coordination in teacher ICT training), and other Commission initiatives for example the Rethinking Education Strategy and the forthcoming Opening Up Education proposal. These initiatives will work to ensure new generations know how to operate in a networked society where companies, the network and people are all interlinked - supporting the innovation, entrepreneurship and ICT skills that boost participation and creativity in society.
Further information:

- ICT in schools survey – many children not getting what they need; teachers need more training and support

Related links:

- Survey of Schools: ICT in Education
- European Schoolnet on the survey, Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, Digital Agenda
- Neelie Kroes, Follow Neelie on Twitter
- New, open source database helps track country progress in education
- A monitoring and evaluation scheme for an ICT-supported education programme in schools
- Outcome Document: Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE) 2012
- Education system profiles unveiled
- First large-scale survey of ICT in Europe’s schools under way
- Measuring ICT application in education: feedback and lessons from the SABER East Asia pilot

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?

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ITU celebrates global ‘Girls in ICT Day’

Every year on the fourth Thursday in April, ITU and the global technology community celebrate ‘Girls in ICT Day’, an awareness-raising initiative designed to pay tribute to women’s contribution to the technology industry and promote tech careers to a new generation of girls with an interest in science and maths.
Since its inception in 2010, the day has been gaining huge momentum around the world, with over 1,300 events organized in 90 countries in 2012, and even more activities set to take place in 100+ countries spanning 21 time zones during the course of the day today.

This year, ITU is celebrating the event both at home and abroad, with events organized at its Geneva headquarters as well as in Brussels, in partnership with the European Commission’s DG Connect, and with the personal support of EC Vice-President Neelie Kroes.

ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun Touré started the day in Brussels at a tech breakfast focused on promoting opportunities for girls in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), organized by the Women2020 organization. The event featured a high-level panel debate, followed by the launch of the new Digital Girl of the Year and Digital Woman of the Year awards.

Dr Touré then joined EC Vice President Kroes, Belgium’s Minister for Scientific Research Céline Frémault, and a group of local high school students for a series of hands-on ICT workshops exploring visions of tomorrow’s Digital Future and the technology behind Digital Music Production and Performance, including a ‘digital DJ’ component hosted by DigitalMuse.

During a networking lunch at the European Parliament, Dr Touré accompanied ITU partners Cisco, Intel and WITIN (Women in Technology in Nigeria) in awarding Tech Needs Girls prizes to five talented young individuals, and a group of young Nigerian girls, for innovative technology-based projects. The WITIN ‘Princeton’ group comprised Adeola Augustina Fasan, Abisola Chinonye Jegede, Chiemerie Mary Okoro, Joy Ayomide Olufemi, and Chikodili Grace Ozoagu. Cisco winners were Florence Boden, Thea Bradley and Caitlin Wilson, while Intel awarded its prizes to Meiri Anto and Naomi Shah. Cisco is also organizing 80 of its own Girls in ICT Day events in 60 countries around the world.

Dr Touré rounded off the day’s activities with an address to the European Parliament in which he highlighted the urgent need to redress the growing gender imbalance in the technology sector.

“Despite some progress, only 21 of the Fortune 500 companies are run by women. There are only 16 women ICT Ministers out of ITU’s 193 Member State governments, and only 10 of the world’s 160 independent ICT regulatory authorities are headed by a woman. In a world where over 95% of all jobs now have a digital component, and where there is a large and growing skills shortage in the ICT sector, we need to get more girls involved in science, technology, engineering and maths, and we need to get more girls taking an interest in ICT careers,” he told MEPs.

Dr Touré said Girls in ICT Day has an important role to play in raising the issue at a global level, and thanked the European Commission for its vision and commitment in creating an exceptional awareness-raising event.
“I am convinced that events such as this – and the many hundreds of other ICT & Girls events taking place today around the world – will make a real difference, and that we will see a dramatic change in the coming decades, as more and more girls study tech subjects, gain tech degrees and pursue tech careers,” he said.

Meanwhile, back at ITU headquarters in Geneva, a compelling programme was held around the theme ‘Discover, Learn and Share’. Co-organized by ITU and the US Mission in Geneva, the event welcomed over 70 schoolgirls aged 14-17 from local Swiss and French schools, and kicked off with a tour of ITU’s interactive tech learning facility, ICT Discovery, followed by workshops around four topics: satellites, coding, mobile app creation, and digital videography.

It concluded with a lunch with female professionals from ITU, the US Mission and the Swiss Engineering Network. “I am delighted that ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), which plays a key role in coordinating Girls in ICT Day events globally each year, is now organizing its own event to empower girls and young women,” said BDT Director Brahima Sanou. “We are very privileged to have the support of high-level guests, including US Ambassador Betty King, who addressed the participating girls and young women we hosted today.”

For her part, Ambassador King emphasized the wealth of opportunity available to young women considering a career in the booming tech sector. “In our modern, connected world, ICT has become increasingly the means with which people learn, become informed about the world around them, connect with friends and opportunities, and give themselves a voice. The more pervasive they become, the more opportunities there will be for those who are up to the challenge,” she said.

The event also featured a special video message from Geena Davis, ITU’s Special Envoy for Women and Girls. “Events like Girls in ICT Day are important in engaging and inspiring girls to explore careers in technology,” said the Academy Award winning actor and advocate. “Studies by the Geena Davis Institute confirm that negative gender stereotypes in media influences the way girls see their future and possibilities. We want to empower them to be whoever they want to be, and reach their full potential.”

Activities concluded with a convivial lunch with students and female professionals from both ITU and the US Mission.

An annual event on the UN calendar, Girls in ICT Day' is celebrated every year on the fourth Thursday in April. It was established through a formal Resolution at ITU’s Plenipotentiary Conference in 2010.

View Girls in ICT Day video messages from ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun Touré and Director of ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau at www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5rXOSDmDJU.

Video from the Brussels event will be available for download (broadcast quality) at: www.itu.int/en/newsroom/Pages/videos.aspx and for viewing on ITU’s YouTube Channel at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5rXOSDmDJU.

Photos from both the Brussels and Geneva events will be available for download from ITU’s Flickr site at: http://www.flickr.com/photos/itupictures/collections/72157629541186854/

Information, pictures and videos from all national and local Girls in ICT Day events are available on the ITU Girls in ICT Portal.


Further information:

- ITU celebrates global ‘Girls in ICT Day’

Related links:

- Korea promotes e-learning system for women’s career development
- UN debate stresses need to break down barriers for girls in technology-related careers
- PISA: Are boys and girls ready for the digital age?
- Help my hand write my future: Literacy project launched in Senegal in collaboration with UNESCO and Procter & Gamble
- ITU launches Girls in ICT web portal
- Crescent Girls’ School – A FutureSchool@Singapore
- ICT education breaks through gender barriers in India
- iSchools Project helps a young girl’s dream

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- UNESCO ”ICT in Education” Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?
Programmes & Projects

ICT for Inclusion project
The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education ICT for Inclusion project activities will run during 2012 and 2013. The aim is to collect information on the use of ICT for Inclusion – that is using ICT to support the learning of learners with disabilities and special educational needs in inclusive settings within compulsory education.

This information will:

- provide an update to the Information Communication Technology in Special Needs Education project that ran from 1999 – 2001 and involved 17 Agency member countries and
- build upon work conducted as part of the practice review on the use of ICTs in Education for People with Disabilities conducted in 2010/2011 jointly with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE).

In recognition of the potential impact of ICT to education, but also social inclusion opportunities, the broader role of ICT in supporting learners with different needs in their wider societal inclusion will be considered within project activities.

The project will involve the following Agency member countries:

Austria, Belgium (covering both the Flemish and French speaking communities), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK (England), UK (Northern Ireland), UK (Scotland) and UK (Wales).

Project Framework

As a framework the project, the focus will be upon five key propositions that can be identified within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) in relation to the use of ICTs in education. These propositions are:

1. ICT should be considered as a key tool for promoting equity in educational opportunities;
2. Access to appropriate ICTs should be considered an entitlement;
3. Training of educational staff in the use of general and specialist ICT must be considered a priority area;
4. The promotion of ICT research and development requires a multi stakeholder approach;
5. Data collection and monitoring in the use of ICT in inclusion should be considered an area requiring attention at all levels of educational provision.

These five propositions will be used as the main inter-connected themes for the overall project information collection and analysis.

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Further information:

- European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Related links:

- UNESCO launches a meeting report on accessible ICTs for students with disabilities
- R-learning = improved learning results?
- Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities
- UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities
- Improving child literacy in Africa: Experiments with an automated reading tutor
- UNESCO and G3ict sign a partnership on ICT for persons with disabilities
- ILO launches community portal to collaboratively address the challenges of skills development and employability
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Resources
New publication: Open Educational Resources - Innovation, Research and Practice

Open Educational Resources (OER) – that is, teaching, learning and research materials that their owners make free to others to use, revise and share – offer a powerful means of expanding the reach and effectiveness of worldwide education. Those resources can be full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, software, and other materials and techniques used to promote and support universal access to knowledge.

The new publication, “Open Educational Resources: Innovation, Research and Practice”, was initiated by the UNESCO/COL Chair in OER. This book is one in a series of publications by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) examining OER. It describes the movement in detail, providing readers with insight into OER’s significant benefits, its theory and practice, and its achievements and challenges. The 16 chapters, written by some of the leading international experts on the subject, are organised into four parts by theme:

1. OER in Academia – describes how OER are widening the international community of scholars, following MIT’s lead in sharing its resources and looking to the model set by the OpenCourseWare Consortium
2. OER in Practice – presents case studies and descriptions of OER initiatives underway on three continents
3. Diffusion of OER – discusses various approaches to releasing and “opening” content, from building communities of users that support lifelong learning to harnessing new mobile technologies that enhance OER access on the Internet
4. Producing, Sharing and Using OER – examines the pedagogical, organisational, personal and technical issues that producing organisations and institutions need to address in designing, sharing and using OER

Instructional designers, curriculum developers, educational technologists, teachers, researchers, students, others involved in creating, studying or using OER: all will find this timely resource informative and inspiring.

Read the publication:

- Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning: Open Educational Resources: Innovation, Research and Practice

Related links:

- Implementing the Paris OER Declaration: Launch of Project
- Making sense of MOOCs
- A world map of Open Educational Resources initiatives: Can the global OER community design and build it together?
Preparing special education frontline professionals for a new teaching experience

A large number of special education professionals agree on the fact that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are an important tool for teachers and students to overcome barriers and promote the acquisition of skills. ICT can promote school and social inclusion by diminishing the obstacles for students with Special Education Needs (SEN).

A correct educational implementation of ICT depends strongly on the teachers’ awareness of their possibilities in the classroom, their training and their capacity to adapt to the differentiated learning styles of SEN students. However, the lack of training on ICT is one of the most
frequently pointed reasons for not using or misusing them as pedagogical tools or individual Assistive Technologies among pupils with SEN.

This paper reports the findings of a survey conducted among teachers attending a Master’s Degree on Special Education in which they were asked to analyse the acquisition of general ICT skills and specially oriented ICT solutions for students with learning disabilities. The collection, compilation and processing of the survey’s data describes and explains the actual perceptions, skills and training needs of this professional group.

The results confirm that special education teachers support the use of ICT as a useful tool in the education of students with learning disabilities. However, the conclusions show that prior to a specific ICT for SEN training, teachers must acquire a set of basic ICT skills. The educational support provided by trained and specialized professionals assisted by ICT means and techniques constitutes an extraordinary aid for those disadvantaged students.

Read the full paper:

- [Preparing special education frontline professionals for a new teaching experience](#)

Related links:

- [UNESCO launches a meeting report on accessible ICTs for students with disabilities](#)
- [R-learning = improved learning results?](#)
- [Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities](#)
- [UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities](#)
- [Improving child literacy in Africa: Experiments with an automated reading tutor](#)
- [UNESCO and G3ict sign a partnership on ICT for persons with disabilities](#)
- [ILO launches community portal to collaboratively address the challenges of skills development and employability](#)
- [The liberation of textbooks](#)
- [e-Accessibility Policy Toolkit for persons with disabilities](#)
- [ICT and disabilities in China: Seeing in the cyberworld](#)

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Toolkit of Best Practices and Policy Advice: Module 4 Using ICTs to promote education and job training for persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities in developing countries face particular difficulties in accessing the most basic forms of education. They face the lowest levels of educational access of any cohort of students.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs), and in particular assistive technologies (ATs), can provide persons with disabilities access to traditionally inaccessible educational content through electronic and online learning channels. Connected schools, with the right mix of ATs, can provide children and other persons with disabilities unprecedented access to education.

Connected, accessible schools can also be leveraged to create accessible community ICT centres, facilitating job-skills training and even providing employment opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities in the wider community.


This toolkit module is one of several modules developed by ITU under the “Connect a School Connect a Community”-initiative which aims to promote understanding and awareness among government decision makers, donors and partners on the need for coordinated policies, regulations and practices that promote school connectivity and community benefits.

Access the toolkit:

- Module 4 Using ICTs to promote education and job training for persons with disabilities
Related links:

- Broadband “the missing link” in global access to education
- Expanding internet access in developing countries can help achieve sustainable economies – UN official
- UNESCO launches a meeting report on accessible ICTs for students with disabilities
- R-learning = improved learning results?
- Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities
- UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities
- Improving child literacy in Africa: Experiments with an automated reading tutor
- UNESCO and G3ict sign a partnership on ICT for persons with disabilities
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ICT in Education: A Critical Literature Review and Its Implications

This review prepared by Jo Shan Fu, National Institute of Education, Singapore, summarizes the relevant research on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education.

Specifically, it reviews studies that have touched upon the merits of ICT integration in schools, barriers or challenges encountered in the use of ICT, factors influencing successful ICT
integration, in-service and pre-service teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and confidence in using ICT as well as the importance of school culture in the use of ICT.

This review discusses gaps in the literature and the directions that future studies may take to address these gaps.

Read the review:

- [ICT in Education: A Critical Literature Review and Its Implications](#)

Related links:

- [International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology](#)
- [ICT in Education Programme (UNESCO Bangkok)](#)
- [ICT in Education Programme (UNESCO HQ)](#)

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