Policies and Initiatives to Promote Children’s Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT: Asia Pacific Regional Consultation
9-11 September 2015; Bangkok, Thailand

Co-organized by
UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific

Background

The proliferation and emergence of ICT has fundamentally changed the way in which society operates. The increasingly ubiquitous nature of ICT has also inevitably caused it to become indispensable as part of daily life and a basic building block of modern society. When used effectively and appropriately, the benefits of ICT are boundless, enabling inclusive and sustainable human development by providing people not only with access to information and services but also expanding opportunities to participate in and contribute to the knowledge economy.

Despite the affordances of ICT, the widespread use of ICT at present has brought about a range of social and ethical issues from online safety and security, misuse of information, and to health and mental hazard. Therefore, more so than ever, there is an urgent need to address and mitigate the risks associated with ICT use while simultaneously exploiting the opportunities afforded by these technologies. In view of the present situation, it is of paramount importance that young digital citizens equip themselves with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitude to leverage and enjoy the potential benefits of ICTs while being resilient to the risks. Furthermore, schools, teachers, parents/guardians, policy makers, industry players, and other key stakeholders are encouraged to adopt a proactive approach towards fostering a favourable environment to encourage responsible and safe use of ICT among children.

In this regard, UNESCO Bangkok has been undertaking the “Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT” Project. It aims to promote policy dialogue on the issues of the ethical, safe, and responsible use of ICT and in building the education sector’s capacity in fostering digital citizenship among children, by:

- providing member states with a sound evidence base to guide policy and practice
- raising the level of consciousness among member states on digital citizenship through education sector policy guidelines (Phase 1), advocacy campaigns, and educational resources (Phases 2 and 3)

To this end, UNESCO Bangkok and UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) will be holding the “Policies and Initiatives to Promote Children’s Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT: Asia Pacific Regional Consultation” on 9-11 September 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand.
The Regional Consultation aims to:

- Share and verify the initial findings from the policy review
- Refine and revise the draft education sector policy recommendations and develop a framework for the 20-page annotated policy guidelines
- Formulate an Action Plan for the proposed regional consortium

The Consultation will take stock of current states on policy responses and national initiatives in the education sector that promote digital citizenship, with special attention to fostering safe, effective, and responsible use of ICT among children. The stocktaking will be built upon findings from a UNESCO policy review study¹, which gathers and synthesizes various legal framework and policies, national curriculum, and other educational programmes of selected Member States in the Asia Pacific region. The Consultation aims to validate the research findings towards informing and refining the draft policy recommendations that were formulated during the first Expert Meeting last March 2014. The resulting guidelines, expected to be available for distribution in early 2016, seek to address the gaps, in both policy and practices, in promoting children’s safe, effective, and responsible use of ICT in the region, particularly in the education sector. To facilitate this process, nominated country experts from the ten selected countries will be tapped to form the National Experts Advisory Committee (NEAC). Please refer to the Annex for details on the NEAC.

In addition, the Consultation will engage gathered key stakeholders in forming a regional consortium to a) set a regional direction while considering the region’s immense diversity and b) synergize efforts within identified core areas of intervention, including policy, research, education, and advocacy, among others.

**Participants**

The organizers plan to invite the following:

- international experts from the research team
- nominated country experts from the target countries (NEAC)
- experts/resource persons from diverse fields
- representatives from key regional organizations that have programmes related to the theme, namely:
  - International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
  - UN Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UN-APCICT/ESCAP)
  - SEAMEO INNOTECH
  - Intel
  - Google
  - Microsoft
  - Facebook
  - Safer Internet Day-AP (if any)
- Other relevant stakeholders (research network-AP, teacher, parent, child/youth)

¹ The findings from the study, “Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe and Responsible Use of ICT: A Review of National Policies and Initiatives in Asia Pacific”, are expected to be available in November 2015.

A recent publication “Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe and Responsible Use of ICT: A review of current status in Asia and the Pacific” provides a synthesis of information on various policy responses, programmes, and initiatives implemented by governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector, gathered from a desk review and the Expert Meeting held in March 2014. It also outlines possible action points, for the proposed regional consortium among various stakeholders, covering four pillars of Policy, Research, Education, and Advocacy. A copy is available on this link: [http://bit.ly/sru14](http://bit.ly/sru14)
Dates and Venue

The meeting will be organized in Bangkok, Thailand on 9-11 September 2015.

Contact Information

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ANNEX
NATIONAL EXPERTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NEAC)

The NEAC will be composed of at least 10 country experts, one from each country studied: (to follow; note that each of the five (5) sub-regions will be represented).

The members of the NEAC will be invited by UNESCO Bangkok office in his/her individual capacity. Being a NEAC member does not imply any affiliation with a member’s employer or institution or employment or contract with UNESCO.

The expected roles of a NEAC member are:

- to review critically and constructively the content of the publication, in terms of accuracy, timeliness, and completeness;
- to review if the examples (if any) cited in the publication are appropriate/ relevant;
- to provide additional inputs and materials/references that can be used to improve the publication;
- to verify if the language used is easy to understand within the region; and
- to review and provide comments/inputs on draft Policy Guidelines.

In addition to general comments, it is desirable that the NEAC member send specific comments by using the track change function in the draft publication text. The committee can also propose a printing style or layout of the publication. UNESCO Bangkok will finalize the publication upon receiving the comments and suggestions from the members.

Acknowledgements

Please note that UNESCO Bangkok duly acknowledges the contribution received from the NEAC members by putting their names in the acknowledgement section of the publication. E-copies of the printed publications will be shared with member states. Printed copies could also be shared upon request. Please note that a NEAC member is an honorary assignment for which UNESCO Bangkok does not pay any remuneration. A NEAC member may withdraw his/her name from membership at any point of time by sending an email to: ict.bgk@unesco.org