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Director’s Message

Using **ICT** to Achieve Education For All Goals and Reduce the Digital Divide in the Asia-Pacific Region

Our world is changing rapidly. Developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) and the emergence of knowledge societies are changing the ways we live, work and interact. Our educational systems must respond accordingly, not only in providing learners with ICT skills, but in harnessing the potential advantages ICT offers in improving teaching and learning.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) implements programmes in the fields of Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information. Within the Education field, UNESCO’s main focus is access to education for all, and the quality of education. In pursuit of these objectives, UNESCO seeks to improve both the methodology and content of teaching and learning, as well as to promote policy dialogue, innovation and knowledge-sharing.

UNESCO has already made a significant impact in terms of widening access to education but after 15 years of working towards Education for All (EFA) goals, it has become clear that simply extending conventional education systems and methods is not always successful in reaching excluded groups and in retaining learners. At the same time, it has become plain that with the many changes that are occurring, including rapid globalization and the advent of knowledge societies, education systems need to be reexamined for their local relevance, and need to be adapted so as to ensure that all learners have the key competencies required for forming peaceful and prosperous societies.

UNESCO recognizes the potential of ICT to assist in achieving EFA goals, in particular the potential of ICT to:

- Enable the inclusion of groups which have so far not had access to education,
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning,
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness in planning and administration in education ministries, schools, classrooms and community learning centres.

At the same time, UNESCO acknowledges that it is vital for policymakers, educators and managers to be aware and informed of the conditions in which ICT can be successfully used. There are numerous cases which demonstrate that unless implemented judiciously, investing in ICT can be a waste of scarce resources. In addition, experience has shown that without integrated policy development, sustainable professional development, curriculum integration and close monitoring and evaluation, ICT in Education initiatives invariably fail.

Careful and judicious decision-making is particularly important given the rapidity of ICT developments in recent years. Such changes have led to a digital revolution, a phenomenon which has transformed the world. For those with access to these technologies, such developments have enabled marked improvements in their quality of life and livelihoods. However, the vast majority of people in the world remain disconnected from this phenomenon and have yet to benefit from it. In the interests of global equity and of furthering UNESCO’s mandate to uphold freedom of expression and
universal access to information and knowledge, there is a clear need to ensure that this digital divide is bridged.

We are therefore faced with a dual challenge: to utilize appropriate technologies to meet EFA targets, and to translate the potential benefits that ICT offers into a reality for all, especially for the most disadvantaged groups.

In 2002, in response to these challenges, and with the intention of exploring how best to harness the potential of ICT, UNESCO launched the Asia-Pacific "ICT in Education" Programme.

The aim of the ICT in Education programme is to empower learners, teachers, educators, managers and leaders to use ICT judiciously and effectively for expanding learning opportunities and ensuring educational quality and relevance. In addition, the programme aims to facilitate wider access to locally-relevant forms of ICT. In these ways, the programme aims to contribute both to achieving EFA goals and to reducing the digital divide.

The ICT in Education programme is now moving into its fourth year and has established a strong foundation for achieving its objectives. Its success so far forms the basis for the UNESCO Asia-Pacific ICT in Education Vision 2008, which states that by 2008 all the Member States in the Asia-Pacific region will have:

- A national ICT in education policy.
- ICT as a component of pre-service teacher training.
- The beginnings of a process of developing relevant, multilingual and appropriate educational content, especially for disadvantaged groups.
- Networks for sharing of knowledge and experiences.
- Key indicators developed and used to monitor development and to form strategies.

In the following pages we will share with you the key achievements so far of the ICT in Education programme, and will present the future initiatives we intend to implement in the next few years. We also describe our current partnerships, as well as how interested groups and organizations can become involved and share in this programme’s activities and achievements.

Sheldon Shaeffer
Director, UNESCO Bangkok
Introduction:
The UNESCO Asia-Pacific ICT in Education Programme

Goals

The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into education systems offers the potential to increase the quality of education and the effectiveness and efficiency of education delivery, as well as the potential to facilitate greater access to information and services by marginalized groups and communities. Harnessing of this potential is seen by UNESCO as a means of contributing to the achievement of UNESCO’s Education for All (EFA) goals and to the reduction of the Digital Divide.

With these considerations in mind, the UNESCO Bangkok office established the ICT in Education programme, which has as its main goal: to contribute to enhancing the reach and quality of teaching and learning through ICT.

Definition

The term, information and communication technologies (ICT), refers to forms of technology that are used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. This broad definition of ICT includes such technologies as: radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed line and mobile phones), satellite systems, computer and network hardware and software; as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as videoconferencing and electronic mail.

Education for All (EFA) Goals:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS):


The UNESCO Bangkok ICT in Education Programme activities are compatible with the WSIS Action Plan’s main action lines, which can be summarized as follows:

- Encouraging the effective participation of governments and all stakeholders.
- Facilitating universal access to information and knowledge.
- Developing infrastructure and facilitating the provision of connectivity and access to remote and marginalized areas at national and regional levels.
- Building capacity and literacy.
- Safeguarding and supporting cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content.
- Strengthening international and regional cooperation.
- Fostering confidence and security in the use of ICT.
The ICT in Education programme, funded mainly by Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT), focuses on six key, interrelated areas:

- **Education policy**: building national capacities to develop appropriate policies and plans for the integration of ICT into education.
- **Training of Teachers**: building the ICT-capacity of those at the heart of education.
- **Teaching and learning**: developing and delivering content using ICT.
- **Non-formal education**: using ICT to bring education to out-of-school youth and adults.
- **Monitoring and measuring change**: monitoring and measuring the impact of ICT in education using performance indicators.
- **Research and knowledge-sharing**: collecting, creating and disseminating information and knowledge about ICT in education.
# Projects

With the six focus areas in mind, the ICT in Education programme has designed and is implementing a number of specific projects. These projects are listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus area</th>
<th>Ongoing and New Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Policy</td>
<td>• ICT in Education Policy Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Training of Teachers            | • Training and Professional Development of Teachers and Other Facilitators for Effective Use of ICT in Improving Teaching and Learning  
• Establishing the Effective Use of ICT in Education for All in Cambodia  
• Training of Teachers in Information Technology to Meet the Emerging Needs of the New Learning Environment in Sri Lanka  
• Next Generation of Teachers (NET) Project |
| Teaching and Learning           | • ASEAN SchoolNet: Strengthening ICT Use in Schools and SchoolNet in ASEAN Setting       
• Improving Management and Delivery of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) through the Application of Information and Communication Technologies |
| Non-Formal Education (NFE)      | • ICT for Community Empowerment through NFE  
• Tajikistan-Uzbekistan: Silk Road Radio Project |
| Monitoring and Measuring Change | • Performance Indicators on ICT Use in Education                                         |
| Research and Knowledge-Sharing | • Regional Clearinghouse in Support of the ICT in Education Programme                   
• Meta-survey on the Effective Use of ICT in Education |
These projects are being implemented across the Asia-Pacific region. The map of the region, above, indicates the countries that have participated so far.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour Code</th>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Countries Involved in the Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Training of Teachers</td>
<td>China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Viet Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Non-Formal Education</td>
<td>China, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Monitoring and Measuring Change</td>
<td>India, Philippines, Thailand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guide to this publication
Part I
The first section of this publication describes the achievements of the ICT in Education programme so far, providing information about the activities undertaken and the key outputs and results.

Part II
The second section shows where the programme is heading over the next few years, providing details of upcoming activities and events and the materials and publications that will be produced.

Part III
The final section of this publication introduces the key partners in our various projects and invites the collaboration of new partners with matching goals, to share in achieving the programme's objectives.