Welcome to our last e-newsletter issue of the year!

With this special holiday edition, we wish to thank all of our readers for your cooperation, commitment and input. We especially want to thank our donors and partners, Korean Funds-in-Trust, Japanese Funds-in-Trust, Intel, Chung Dahm Learning Inc., Blackboard, and Korea Education and Research Innovation Service (KERIS), whose generous support and cooperation have been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals.

With this special edition, we wish to share our busy, productive and successful year aimed at integrating ICT in Education in a holistic and effective manner.

We hope you enjoy reading through our progress this year!

Happy winter holidays to you all!

2014 Achievements:

Policy

Earlier this year, UNESCO held the Experts’ Meeting for “Fostering Digital Citizenship Through Safe and Responsible Use of ICT” at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. In line with one of the UNESCO’s priority areas, this project aims to encourage policy dialogue on the importance of responsible and safe use of ICTs. Through this meeting, the UNESCO Bangkok Project Team had collected cases and materials as well as policy recommendations for the member states. Additionally, this helped develop a framework for the teacher training materials. Following up on recommendations from the meeting, UNESCO Bangkok, with support from Intel, is currently undertaking a review of national policies and initiatives in Asia and the Pacific, expected to be completed by July 2015. For further information, please click here.

Realizing the unique context and educational challenges that the region of Central Asia faces, UNESCO Bangkok has started to organize the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education since 2011, providing a sub-regional platform
to discuss and focus on policy options amongst regional policy and decision makers in a collective and collaborative manner. The 3rd annual Symposium was held in May 2014 in Tashkent, the Republic of Uzbekistan on a theme of “Embracing Technologies, Empowering Teachers.” This theme and event aimed at focusing on teacher empowerment in terms of effective teacher development programmes, technologies for teacher support and time management, as well as systematic monitoring and evaluation of regional ICT-related projects. More broadly, the Symposium serves as a platform for Central Asian countries to cooperate and share their successes and challenges, as well as experiences in building national capacity in the use of ICT in Education at all levels. The outcome document of the 2014 Symposium provides an overview of the Central Asian countries, their current issues and challenges in terms of ICT in Education integration, promising initiatives, ideas for collaboration, and an overall evaluation as well as conclusions from the Symposium.

Teacher training for effective ICT-pedagogy integration has always been a core priority of UNESCO Bangkok’s ICT in Education Programme. Thanks to the generous and continuous support from Korea Funds-in-Trust for the ICT in Education programme, UNESCO Bangkok launched a project in September 2013, entitled “Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration Project.” The project aims to provide policy advice to the Member States in integrating ICT in education in order to encourage and support innovative pedagogy. In August of 2014, UNESCO Bangkok held a regional meeting to share the first outputs of the project and evaluate the project’s progress (For more info, please click here). During the meeting, the promising case studies from five countries (Australia, People’s Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Tanzania and Kenya) were shared. The draft of the Regional Guidebook was presented in order to provide step-by-step guidance, different tools and resources drawn from the exemplary country cases, targeting Member States who wish to develop national competency standards for teachers. This also provided an opportunity to collect feedback and suggestions on improving the Guidebook. The case study will be published in the first half of 2015, while the Guidebook will be piloted in 2015 in three pilot countries, namely, Nepal, the Philippines, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The final draft of the Guidebook is planned to be published in 2016.

Practice

In the fall of 2014, UNESCO-APEID 17th International Conference took place in Bangkok, Thailand on the theme of “The Powerhouses of Education: Teachers for the Future We Want.” The objectives of the conference were to understand and learn more about the teaching profession, present innovative approaches and projects, promote collaboration, and facilitate the sharing of experiences among the participants. For more information and resources related to the conference, please visit the conference page.
The highlight of our work with teachers and teacher trainers is the UNESCO Resource Distribution and Training Centres (RDTC) Regional Seminar, held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in November. This year’s event focused on "Promoting Reflective Practices in ICT-Pedagogy Integration." The Seminar aims to strengthen RDTC capacity in promoting a culture of reflection among teachers, promote teachers’ lifelong professional learning, and serve as a frontier in advocating the reflective teaching practices for the effective ICT-pedagogy integration in the region. Congratulations to our outstanding RDTC members who successfully organized National Conferences for teachers in their respective countries: the ICT Conference on Creativity and Innovation in Philippine Education; Facilitating ICT-Pedagogy Integration Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms in Tablet-based Learning in Thailand, and Using ICT to Enhance Teachers’ Pedagogical Skills in Pakistan.

Knowledge Sharing, Research and Development

One of the important missions that the UNESCO Bangkok ICT in Education programme focuses on and leads is building a knowledge base through research and practice in order to provide its partners and Member States with resources and support for ICT in education policy elaboration, as well as strategy and activity development. Our monthly e-newsletter, revamped in October 2014, also provides a comprehensive synthesis of emerging learning technologies in the world, (e.g. MOOCs issue in September and Assistive Technology issue in November) and their potential in addressing pertinent issues in the education systems of the region.

As a continuing effort to strengthen teachers’ professional development in the area of innovative and effective ICT-Pedagogy integration, UNESCO Bangkok has partnered with Chungdahm Learning Inc. to update its collection of free digital resources for teaching and learning based on core curriculum standards across the Asia-Pacific region. This publication, a collection of productivity tools for teachers as well as a collection of free educational resources for science and mathematics, are developed to provide teachers with ready access to quality educational tools that were screened, curated and categorized by pedagogical experts. The new collection will be available in the first half of 2015.

Through K-science Project, UNESCO Bangkok and YTN Science continues to build on the progress it has made in making science education content widely accessible and available, as new project participants came on board the K-science project this year, with the entry of Fiji TV and Vietnam TV. Fiji TV is broadcasting K-science programs through its Sky Pacific TV channel, which can be viewed in Fiji and in several Pacific countries. Vietnam TV on the other hand has translated the K-science TV programs to Vietnamese (audio dubbing). K-science has also added to the content that is being made available free of charge to project participants. Three new science education TV programs were made available: Exploring Korean History (scientific examination of Korean historical artifacts and cultural heritage), The Taste of Korea (Korean cuisine and the science behind each dish) and Documentary (recent discoveries and developments in science and technology and its impact on
everyday living and way of life). TV channels participating in K-science have lined up the said TV programs for broadcasting in their respective countries.

Looking ahead to 2015:

The year of 2015 holds a special role for UNESCO and other development stakeholders as the culminating year of the EFA movement that was launched in 1990 by UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank. With our mission of promoting education as a fundamental human right, improving the quality of education and facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building, each of the EFA goals has been focused on in a comprehensive manner and provided the world with a foundation system, or a benchmark of where we want to be. Throughout the 15-year pursuit of the EFA goals, and with the continuing challenges throughout the education systems as well as regional contexts, the role of ICT in Education has become even more critical for achieving education for the future we want.

With these goals and perspectives in mind, in 2015, we plan to:

1. Continue our support and focus on policy development and elaboration: we wish to facilitate policy level dialogue on the roles of ICT in education in achieving lifelong learning for all in line with the post-2015 EFA goals through the World Education Forum (WEF), the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE), Asia-Pacific Conference on Education and Training (ACET), and the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE).

   • In May, one of the most important upcoming milestones in global education and development, the World Education Forum, will take place in the Republic of Korea marking the target date of the Dakar EFA goals with the aim of developing one single global education agenda for 2015-2030.
   
   • In June, in light of much needed transformation of TVET and improvement of our capability to address the skills needed for the future jobs, UNESCO with the support of the Malaysian Government and other partners, is organizing the Asia-Pacific Conference on Education and Training (ACET) entitled ‘Making Skills Development Work for the Future’ in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with the aim of promoting policy debate and dialogue as well as strengthening the links between TVET and the labour market.
   
   • In September, UNESCO Bangkok will be holding the biannual Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education in Bangkok, Thailand. This grand meeting provides a platform for exchange and sharing of ICT in Education policies and practices as well as regional and country-level direction and support toward smart policy-making for ICT.
2. Continue to conduct research and sharing findings on benefits and risks of new learning technologies (big data for learning analytics, ICT-enhanced innovative pedagogy for TVET, ICT for the marginalized, gender inequality, and much more).

3. Help build teachers’ capacity in effectively integrating ICT to enhance pedagogy for 21st skills development.

- In November, UNESCO Bangkok will be holding another RDTC Regional Seminar in order to continue our efforts in supporting our teacher and teacher training centres in the region.

Once again, UNESCO Bangkok would like to take this opportunity to thank you all of your support, participation and inspiration. We wish you a happy and healthy new year ahead!