Dear readers,

February 15, 2015 was the fourth annual World Radio Day. This long-lasting (or old) and lower-end technology still serves in many parts of the world as a means of social inclusion, education, and culture. In line with the World Radio Day, which celebrates this timeless tool for social inclusion, this edition focuses on open and distance education, with special attention given to the marginalized communities. This issue will also feature other “old” or the “lower-end” technologies to reach the unreached, such as radio, TV, and simple mobile phones, due to these devices’ unique and central relevance in many communities around the world.

We hope that you enjoy reading this edition!
Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions.

Highlights:

Open and Distance Education for the Marginalized (ICT in Education, UNESCO Bangkok)
This article provides the basic information on the marginalized groups around the world, and what UNESCO as well as other organizations have done and continue to achieve to improve these groups’ access to quality education through open and distance educational opportunities.

To various degrees, marginalization and vulnerability exist almost everywhere in the world. In some contexts these groups are in smaller numbers, while in others, the concept of being “marginalized” becomes more controversial, as they may constitute most of the population, depending on the context. The consequent question arises as to who and where these marginalized groups are, why they are marginalized, and how their challenges can be addressed in an inclusive and efficient way. Evaluating some of the national policies and data available on the vulnerable and marginalized, five categories of marginalization emerge:

- gender-related (girls)
- culture-related (castes, tribes, religious groups)
- location-related (refugees, conflict-affected areas, child soldiers, nomads)
- poverty-related (working children, single mothers), as well as
Starting with the Jomtien Declaration in 1990, UNESCO had committed to serving the underprivileged groups, including “the poor; street and working children; rural and remote populations; nomads and migrant workers; indigenous peoples; ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities; refugees; those displaced by war; and people under occupation.” Ten years later, in line with this pledge, the Dakar Framework for Action committed to serving the “children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities.” Most recently, through the promise of the Education for All Movement as well as the Millennium Development Goals, the governments together with the UN and other international organizations have been planning and implementing concrete policies and programmes to improve access to and quality of education, ensure girls’ inclusion in schools, and reaching the marginalized. Today, we can say through evidence that gender parity in primary and secondary education has drastically improved (UNESCO, 2014). However, as we come closer to the deadline date for these goals, we can see that the most marginalized communities are still denied the opportunities for education (UNESCO, 2014).

With the endless array of educational opportunities available and the advent of educational technologies, these groups could or should be put at an even higher priority, receiving timely, relevant and quality education. In response to different needs, technologies can serve various types of learners, cutting the physical and mental distance between the learner and knowledge acquirement. Open and distance education (ODE) is one of the educational delivery modes that has been increasingly explored for the marginalized. This new approach to education frees learners from the constraints of time and space with a more flexible approach to learning (Okebukola, 2013). Students engaging in ODL can simultaneously work or carry out their daily responsibilities. The three main characteristics of open education are: “flexibility, technology-mediation and learner control”, making this approach free and with an array of choices of what, where and how to learn (Okebukola, 2013). It does not only broaden access, but can also improve the quality of education, collaboration, and autonomy of the students. With technology-enabled ODL, the change from the traditional classroom to a virtual one can become almost unnoticeable.

However, some of the challenges remain in providing open and distance education to the marginalized. When the marginalized groups rarely have access to education, it’s not surprising that they have no access to the latest educational technology. The second wave of digital gap, or knowledge gap caused by unequal access to digital resources, becomes a bigger challenge. Despite this hindrance and lack of inclusion of the marginalized groups in advanced technologies as well as education, many innovative projects around the world have utilized the available technology in smart and efficient ways, with a focus on the lower-end devices, such as radio, mobile phones, or television.

The more useful and successful technologies for the marginalized could instead utilize the “lower-end” gadgets, reaching those who do not have access to tablets, smart phones, or laptops. For example, radio is still utilized as the main source of information, reaching the many rural or hard-to-reach areas. The UNESCO World Radio Day (13 February) celebrates this timeless technological tool, highlighting its unique power to connect people and information throughout every corner of the globe. Radio can allow our listeners to not only learn information, but also develop and share it.

As for the mobile phones and their unique as well as effective utilization in some parts of the world, a programme in Pakistan that uses basic cell phones, the Bunyad Mobile-Based Post-Literacy Programme, focused on supporting young rural women through materials sent to their cell phones. Moreover, additional messages on social issues, value of education, and then environment are also provided. Similarly, the project in Afghanistan, Using Mobile Phones to Accelerate Literacy Education and
Empower Afghan Women, provided literacy lessons through the use of mobile phones, as well as information on human rights, health, nutrition, banking, and more. It also aimed to inspire motivation among marginalized girls and women. The Ustad Mobile programme in Afghanistan, addresses the issue of the access to education for women in challenging settings. It provides literacy lessons for simple phones, with audio and video learning tools through an open source application, which contains local content, and can be easily maintained by the users.

In reference to the usage of TVs for education, such projects as the Development of Community Television in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil provides educational and cultural programmes for the low-income and disadvantaged communities, shares community news and events, allows for local debates, notifies the community of important services, such as vaccination opportunities, and more. Since the content of this channel is the most important aspect of the project, non-governmental organisations, communication students from the city’s universities, and local residents who show interest in the local media are involved in its development. Additionally, training for youth and adults is provided.

As the abovementioned programmes have tried to reach the vulnerable and marginalized populations, and although open and distance education can help communities learn independently, the human aspect of these initiatives is crucial. Frequently, learners need reminders, motivation and adequate time management skills in order to continuously learn and utilize the online platforms. Many of the distance education programmes, thus, include actual teachers, or facilitators that can respond to and remind their students to partake in a discussion, provide feedback, or answer questions. Some projects also utilize community centers or libraries for community needs and educational provision or support. IREX’s Beyond Access programme, Libraries for Development in Peru, focus on libraries as knowledge, culture, and information centers for the communities. It aims at decreasing the digital and information gaps in the country. While located in remote areas, these libraries can help address the educational and technological needs of their communities, becoming centers for technological innovation as well as learning. Another Beyond Access project, Powering Economic Opportunity in Davao City in the Philippines, also utilizes libraries as places for information as well as digital literacy and skills training. Additionally, this project aims to support the Philippines E-Government Plan and the Philippine Digital Strategy, which focus on providing access to ICTs, especially for the marginalized.

In addition to the learner side of online and distance education, a recent UNESCO project in partnership with Chung-Dahm Learning Inc., “Updating UNESCO Collection of Digital Resources for Teaching and Learning: Supporting the Effective ICT-pedagogy Integration for Teachers and Teacher Educators Programme”, aims to provide teachers and teacher educators with a new collection of open and free digital contents that are developed in line with the core curriculum standards for secondary education in Mathematics and Science in the Asia Pacific region. These can be accessed both online (downloadable from the web), as well as offline (CD ROM or portable drive), depending on the ICT infrastructure in the least developed countries, which are the focus of this project. This is an effort to strengthen teachers’ professional development in the area of innovative and effective ICT-Pedagogy integration, as well as make this digital content widely available to countries that face infrastructure limitations. The package will be available for use soon.

With the evidence of radio, mobile phone and TV effectiveness as educational resources in many rural, disadvantaged and remote contexts, the opportunities for innovative, relevant and effective programmes can be endless. Once the cloak of the latest gadget is taken off, one can see that it is not the technology in the end that changes the learning outcomes, or provides a boost in motivation. It is the competent teachers, technical support, strong leadership, and the adequate identification of the
most usable technology that has contextualized, appropriate and useful content for its end users. As the 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report on Reaching the Marginalized points out, there is still a long road ahead of us to reach the marginalized. “Unless special efforts are urgently taken to extend educational opportunities to the marginalized, the poorest countries may take several generations to achieve universal completion of primary and lower secondary education as well as universal youth literacy…” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 41).

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Open and Distance Learning for the Marginalized: Potential, Realities, and Recommendations

Written by the Director of International Development and Teacher Education as well as Professor of Distance Education and Development at the Open University, UK, Alan Tait, this article introduces the rapid advent of ICT and its influence on all sectors of society, including education. It further identifies the marginalized groups, shares the work the International Development and Teacher Education group at the Open University UK have accomplished, and provides observations as well as recommendations in reference to Open and Distance Learning for the marginalized as well as learners at large.

The digital revolution has been radically changing organisational cultures and practices for the last 20 years in all sectors. The first to change were amongst others, personal communication through mobile telephones, email and other messaging systems; retail, with shops on the street losing their business to online shopping; the financial sector where money can be moved around the world in fractions of a second and financial analysis managed equally fast to allow new approaches to market and risk; the music industry where the business model has changed completely; and the travel industry where direct customer purchase through the web has substantially removed a tier of intermediates in the travel agency sector. Not all of this has been well done: for example the combination of ICT with the finance sector and bad regulation in particular has caused havoc in many countries. But we have now passed the tipping point in poorer as well as richer parts of the world for all educational institutions as to whether they should engage with changes in the organisation of learning and teaching with ICT.

While for many of the last 20 years innovation in this field has been inhibited by concerns about access - who would be excluded by the adoption of ICT in education? - the last 5 years have made the holders of the view that we should not adopt ICT seem conservative not progressive. It is not that the issues of digital exclusion have disappeared. Research in all parts of the world shows that those excluded by the digital revolution from educational opportunity and indeed from many other opportunities and services
are distributed primarily along three axes: the poor; the rural; and the elderly. Gender usually reinforces the barriers in all groups, to the disbenefit of women and girls. These cohorts are evidently not mutually exclusive, i.e. you can belong to more than one of them, or indeed to all. While the next 20 years will continue to diminish those exclusions: the cost of technology will continue to fall; ICT infrastructure will continue to penetrate further into the countryside; and the digitally competent 40 and 50 years olds will become the new elderly, that does not help us now and exclusion will continue to exist even if to a lesser extent.

However, it is not a serious proposition in all but the most deprived settings not to make some attempt to

- use the resources of the web so that learners can enrich their learning resources over and above what is available locally
- embed the development of digital skills so that learners are equipped both personally and from the perspective of livelihood for the future
- develop teachers so that they can and want to engage and succeed with ICT
- develop strategies for learning, teaching and professional development that achieve these objectives.

The contribution that education systems might make to development is thus intimately connected today with the extent to which they can succeed with this difficult and challenging agenda in schools, colleges and universities.

In this context I am pleased to be given the opportunity to share here some of the work of the teams in the International Development and Teacher Education group at the Open University UK, to which I belong. We have been working for more than 10 years to support the development of teachers in school in order to improve the quality of the learning experience for children. The work as a whole is based on a number of key assumptions:

- outcomes from the schooling experience for children are based very substantially on the quality of what is experienced in the classroom
- programmes to improve the learning experience for children cannot wait for newly trained teachers, but have to focus at least as much on those who are already in practice
- core to the improvement of the learning experience is the development of active and child-centred learning and teaching practice, not the use of more familiar didactic teacher-centred practice
- teacher development is thus needed at enormous scale to engage with the millions of serving teachers
- ICT provides tools that allow us to move from small scale to large scale teacher development programmes, and to develop attractive active and child-centred strategies for learning

The IDTE team have pioneered large scale teacher development programmes in Bangladesh and 7 poorer states in India using a range of innovative approaches, including the use of video on mobile
phones to show active learning processes in action, and the development of open educational resources (OER’s) with partner organisations that can be adapted and translated for the most effective local use (see www.eiabd.com/eia/ and www.tess-india.edu.in). The concepts in both programmes embody very considerable scale, reaching many hundreds of thousands of teachers, and are only possible with the use of ICT’s and new approaches to content development and sharing that OER’s represent. We have clear evidence in Bangladesh that children’s language learning has improved as an outcome of changes in teacher behaviour. It is certainly true that the use of ICT is challenging in developing country contexts. But it is no longer true that it is less than centrally important to the development process.

I would like to reflect in on the wider role that open and distance learning (ODL) has in reaching the more marginalised communities. In many well-known ways ODL is designed to reach the marginalised: its flexible patterns of study allow those working or/and with family responsibilities to study from home at times they want; ODL reaches into the countryside as well as the cities; and the costs to the learner are often less than those of campus-based institutions. ODL permits women to study at home in societies where their movement is restricted. ODL institutions can deliver educational programmes at significant scale, to meet the very significant demand in many countries that cannot be met by building campuses. As secondary schooling increases in scale of provision, following the very widespread engagement with the Millennium Development Goals for primary education, the follow through to post-secondary education is transparently necessary. On the supply rather than the demand side, the need for a more highly skilled and educated population for the purposes of economic and social development are widely understood by governments. But while ODL programmes have many advantages as set out above, it is also the case that student success is often poor: the number of drop-outs means that the proportion of students finishing qualifications successfully is low. A number of conclusions should be drawn from this, including

- ODL institutions need to hold and manage data about student success. Too often ODL programmes make public their recruitment data, but do not know or do not choose to act on completion data;
- ODL institutions should be transparent but should not be defensive about student completion. Where ODL institutions are seeking to recruit non-traditional students, that is to say those who come from outside the élites and who have not had the benefits of the best schools, and who study full-time before family and livelihood responsibilities, then ODL institutions are taking an important and valuable risk in widening access to new cohorts of adult learners. The same ratios of student success for part-time adult students are never going to occur as compared with full time young people on campus.
- ODL institutions must however study the needs of their students and provide well-resourced learner support tailored to their needs. There is a significant literature on learner support for ODL, and readers may find the paper listed at the end helpful.

In conclusion, ICT is changing cultures and practices of learning and teaching through ODL, OER’s and MOOCs in ways that are exciting and valuable, and that are compelling and engaging for learners. We are still only at the early stages of innovation and this is an exciting field for practitioners who can innovate in ways that are truly pioneering. However, in all the excitement of ICT my proposition insists on the centrality of the learner, and on the support of his or her learning and development. New technologies cannot in and of themselves change that, therefore underlining the crucial role of innovative pedagogy and the human aspect of teaching and learning.

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For a recent publication see:


Note: The opinions expressed in the articles included in this newsletter are those of the authors and editors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNESCO, nor of any particular Division or Office.

Open Access Journals: ICT Mediates to Minimize Inequality in Access to Knowledge

Written by Miron Kumar Bhowmik, a Programme Officer at UNESCO Bangkok, this article shares his personal experience and struggle in completing graduate studies in a developing context, with little to no access to scholarly journals due to high fees.

Having my first and second university degrees from a developing country in early 2000’s provided me no opportunity to access into the world of latest knowledge due to expensive subscription fee to scholarly journals. Like many other universities in the developing world my university could hardly afford to buy the latest books let alone the high subscription fees for top journals. The result was obvious for me to end up with two degrees without knowing much of the latest state of world’s knowledge in my studied discipline.

I did not realize how the publication business is perpetuating inequality in accessing knowledge around the world until I had an opportunity to pursue a Doctoral study in one of the developed countries in Asia. While this university provided me access to some 190 electronic databases and some 49216 electronic journals (“Library statistics”, 2014) I could not think of any single access to an electronic journal when I had studied in the university in the developing country. This portrays enough the large access gap to knowledge between universities in developed and developing countries. The important questions remain: should knowledge be limited to those who can afford it or should it be accessible to everyone regardless of affordability? While I found most of the academics, albeit anecdotal, have a clear stand against the current practices of subscribing journals, they are helpless to powerful publication industry. Then I came across the idea of ‘open access journals’, a great initiative to minimize the inequality in access to knowledge.

Open access journals are characterized by a noble idea of providing access to scholarly knowledge without any subscription fee on the part of readers. Suber (2013), the most noted proponent of open access movement, puts it: “Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions”. The financial part of producing open access journals is mainly supported by academic institutions, learned societies, governments, and authors themselves in some cases. Generally those open access journals are considered to be reputable which are listed in the directory of open access journals (DOAJ) (“Evaluating open access journals”, 2015).

The rapid growth of the uses of ICT in many developing countries is providing ample opportunities for university students, teachers and researchers to access these journals. Thus ICT is playing a key role in mediating people’s greater access to knowledge. The world of knowledge is coming close to them which was never before. Consequently this will reduce the gap between people in developing and developed countries in accessing the world of knowledge.
The journey of open access journal was not too smooth. We often see the politics of ‘knowledge imperialism’ and the vested interest of publication business by questioning the quality of some of these journals. While compromising with the quality should never be acceptable, we should also be thoughtful about the politicization of this issue. Nevertheless, it is my hope that the good soul will win this war which aims to reduce such inequalities for the people in developing countries.

Many open access journals and databases are available now. Here are some useful links:

- Directory of open access journals doaj.org
- Useful information about open access journals and databases from the University of California Santa Barbara Library website www.library.ucsb.edu/node/2446
- UNESCO Open Educational Resource Platform www.oerplatform.org/oer-products1

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Sub-Regional Corner: Pacific

A Review of Education and ICT indicators in Pacific (by UNESCO Bangkok)

This article provides an overview of Pacific demographics, education challenges and improvements, as well as key ICT indicators.

The Pacific is a diverse region that is home to several countries and territories – Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – with varying populations, natural resources, economies and cultures. Among the countries, Australia and New Zealand act as major external influences on educational development, assuming the role of the dominant shapers of education in the region. Some of the region’s small island developing states (SIDS) – Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – are among the poorest in the international community, currently classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs)[1]. The SIDS depend largely on aid from and partnerships with larger
economies with regards to economic growth and sustenance of livelihood (i.e. meeting education and basic needs). Therefore, having an active and functional interregional system and strong relationships with bilateral and multilateral donors are essential in promoting and ensuring progress towards sustainable development. The increasing number of international development actors, such as European Union, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and various UN agencies, contributes significant financial support to education as well as assistance in education development in the region. Still, Australia and New Zealand continue to assume their historically established role as major bilateral donors to education in the region (Coxon & Cassity, 2011; UNESCAP, 2010).

Much progress has been made in the Pacific with regards to education. Literacy rates are among the highest in developing countries with most Pacific Island Countries (PICs) attaining above 90% literacy rate due to the provision and enforcement of free and compulsory primary education by the government – for example in Tonga and Palau the youth literacy rates are 99.44% and 99.81% respectively, and the adult literacy rates, 99.39% and 99.52% respectively. In addition, both Tonga (0.99) and Palau (0.97) have also reached a gender parity index (GPI) of close to 1.00, which is above the global level of 0.90. Over the last decade, most PICs (with the exception of Nauru and Papua New Guinea) have also progressed towards achieving universal primary education with the region reporting an adjusted net enrolment rate (ANER) of 83.26% in 2003 to 93.90% in 2012. (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2013; UNDP, 2013).

The geographical vastness of each PIC, however, presents the challenge of spatial poverty traps – i.e. geographically remote areas that are far and isolated from economic and political centres are poorly linked in terms of markets and communication and often have low levels of public and private investment. Schools in these areas tend to have fewer teachers and inadequate access to resources to support educational infrastructure (especially for early childhood or special needs education). The lack of resources for professional development and training programmes for teachers and consequently the quality of education in this region is thus a major concern. Despite the region’s high pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 92.81%, the GERs of several countries such as Solomon Islands (43.49%), Marshall Islands (47.73%) and Tonga (70.60%) are relatively low, reflecting the need for more attention to early childhood care and education services (Cassity, 2015; UNDP, 2013).

Despite the progress towards achieving gender parity, women’s economic and political empowerment still remains a major challenge. For example, unemployment rate among women are typically higher in rural and remote areas, gender discrimination in terms of wage and work conditions is still prevalent in the region and the average percentage of seats held by women in Parliament is only 4.7% (excluding Australia and New Zealand) which is the lowest among the other regions in Asia-Pacific (UNDP, 2013).

Australia and New Zealand are the main leaders in education in the Pacific region with 5.12% and 7.38% of their GDP respectively accounting for government expenditure on education. Both countries cooperate closely on providing aid and developmental support to improve education across the Pacific. However, while the achievement levels of these rich countries are generally higher, they are still faced with the challenge of effectively reaching the poor and disadvantaged. In New Zealand, only two-thirds of poor students achieved the minimum standards, compared with 97% of the rich students. One common challenge in both Australia and New Zealand is the persistent gap in learning outcomes between indigenous children and the rest of the population. For example, in Australia, around two-thirds of indigenous students achieved the minimum benchmark in grade 8 between 1994 and 2011 compared with almost 90% of their non-indigenous peers. The gap is thus clearly evident in student assessments, but has not received sufficient policy attention leading to its persistence (UNESCO, 2014).
The Pacific Education Indicators

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<td>Pre-primary, Total</td>
<td>70.03</td>
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<td>75.49</td>
<td>75.75</td>
<td>76.98</td>
<td>78.53</td>
<td>78.77</td>
<td>78.23</td>
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<td>Primary, Total</td>
<td>90.50</td>
<td>90.39</td>
<td>90.52</td>
<td>89.99</td>
<td>91.09</td>
<td>91.71</td>
<td>95.82</td>
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<td>Secondary, Total</td>
<td>111.60</td>
<td>108.41</td>
<td>108.37</td>
<td>97.42</td>
<td>96.94</td>
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<td>99.34</td>
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<td>51.39</td>
<td>51.52</td>
<td>51.06</td>
<td>51.89</td>
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In terms of ICT development, there is great disparity within the Pacific, with richer economies such as Australia and New Zealand at the top of the ranks. On the one hand, Australia (8.18) and New Zealand (7.82) are ranked in the top 20 on the global IDI[2] with IDI values that all exceed the developed-country average of 7.20 but on the other hand, Solomon Islands has a global ranking of 136 with an IDI value of 2.29. With regards to ICT indicators, it is worth noting that limited data is available in the Pacific region as many LDCs lack the resources to collect data through conducting of ICT surveys and therefore still lack national baseline data (ITU, 2014; UNSD, 2012).

In general, it is crucial for the Pacific SIDS to receive continuous support in addressing education development. Steady progress has been made since the development of the Pacific Education Development Framework which focused on two areas – education for all and training for employment to better assist economic growth. However, more has to be done with regards to quality of education. Increasing the number of teachers is important but providing them with adequate training is also key to universal access to and participation in quality education. This would require significant resources which
further emphasizes the importance of ongoing efforts and support from international development actors (UNESCAP, 2010).

**ICT Development Index (IDI), 2012 and 2013**

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**ICT Access Indicators**

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<th>Mobile-cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants</th>
<th>Percentage of households with computer</th>
<th>Percentage of households with Internet access</th>
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<td>Percentage of households with Internet access</td>
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Contact info: Jollyn Peiling Cheong, jp.cheong@unesco.org

References:


Countries are classified as LDCs based on a set of criteria laid out by the UN that includes Gross National Income (GNI) per capita and indicators of sustainable development such as level of human development measured by the Human Asset Index (HAI) and structural vulnerability to shocks proxied by the Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI).

The measurement used here is the ICT Development Index (IDI), a composite index combining 11 indicators – categorised into ICT access, ICT use and ICT skills – into one benchmark measure, and used as a tool to monitor and compare developments in ICT across countries. Theoretically, IDI values range from 0 to 10 and the greater the value, the higher the level of ICT development – globally, the average IDI value is 4.77 with the lowest IDI value of 0.96 in the Central African Republic and highest of 8.86 in Denmark. Further details on the methodology used to compute IDI values can be found in: www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2014/MIS2014_without_Annex_4.pdf

Programmes and Projects

The 5e’s Project: eDUCATE, eENABLE, eNERGIZE, eMPLOY the Out-of-School Youth through eLearning

This Philippines based project addresses the critical issue of out-of-school children by providing technical training for this youth through public-private partnerships and real opportunities for employment.

The out-of-school youth (OSY) situation

The 2010 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey of the National Statistics Office shows that 16% of the estimated 6-24 years old that make up part of the 92.34M population are out of school. That is 1 of every 8 Filipinos. Also, studies indicate an alarming decline in functional literacy that underscore the utter lack of competencies necessary for gainful employment.

A niche to be filled

The 5e’S Project was purposely established to help ease the social burden of the out-of-school youth (OSY) problem. The project offers holistic, values-enriched and information technology-based technical training for the OSYs. As such it addresses the needs of the OSY through:

- High quality technical training
- Computer-based e-learning that conforms with IT and industry standards
- Non-technical interventions as values formation and psychosocial skills
- On-the-job training and apprenticeship

Public-Private Partnership

In 2003, the e-Skills Network partnered with Chevron Geothermal Philippines, Consuelo Foundation to undertake the 5e’S Project for the communities hosting Chevron’s operations in the provinces of Albay, Batangas and Laguna.
The program was later adopted by the Local Government of Sto. Tomas in 2010. This is in recognition of the strategic benefits the program offers in terms of human resource development. It eventually established the “Sentrong Sanayang Teknikal ng Kabataan” (Skills Training Center for the Youth) to position the center as a showcase for ICT based technical/vocational education and training and a more strategic presence in the Calabarzon region.

From its humble inception, the SSTK using ICT in the modality of training has since attracted a significant number of industrial cooperators notably Honda Philippines, CNRGI Philippines, Koyo Manufacturing, Hoya Philippines, Komyo Manufacturing, Masuda, Yutaka Corporation, MOATECH, Mariwasa Siam, Samsung, Epson Philippines, UPI, Honda Cars, Brother and Canon.

Building a track record

The SSTK with the 5e’S Project opened its doors to the Sto. Tomas community in 2010. After four years, ten batches, 727 trainees and three training courses, it has established a track record that has earned the confidence of the local government, project partners and industry cooperators considering that it has a drop-rate of 18% and with an average employment rate of 82% (national average according to TESDA is 62%) of all its graduates.

The SSTK has done its part to contribute to the socio-economic development of its host community. It has since been replicated in Calauan, Laguna where a resettlement community of 5,000 families has been put up in the aftermath of super Typhoon Ketsana. SSTK partnered with the Salesian Order in 2013 to start up the technical/vocational training in the area.

Over a 4-year period, the SSTK has positioned itself as a credible and viable organization that is able to provide quality technical training using ICT intervention, on-the-job training and apprenticeship and generate opportunities for employment for its marginalized beneficiaries.

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Open and Distance Education Projects for the Marginalized

For more projects, UNESCO Bangkok has compiled a list of various other initiatives that use both high and low end technologies to support the marginalized communities.

- **ICT for Seniors’ and Intergenerational Learning**
  With the aging population of Europe, and the increasing gap between younger and older generations, the Lifelong Learning Programme provides learning opportunities at any stage of life, equipping seniors with the necessary digital skills. This report shares examples of projects funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme (and EU) that support lifelong learning and development of digital competencies.

- **MobiStation – an Innovation Supporting Education In and Out of Schools in Uganda**
  Developed by UNICEF Uganda, this “classroom in a suitcase” provides educational opportunities for in and out of school children, and acts as a useful resource to teachers. This solar-powered suitcase includes a laptop, projector and audio system. For more information on MobiStation, click here.
• **Interactive Education Using Technology in Amazonas, Brazil: Expanding Coverage of High Quality Education to Remote Areas**
  In order to address the urgent need for educating children living in remote areas, the Inter-American Development Bank builds on the *State On-site Technology-Mediated Instruction System (SEEPMT)* to improve the quality of education in remote areas through the *Program to Accelerate Educational Progress in the state of Amazonas (PADEAM)*.

• **PISCES Project**
  The Pacific Islands Schools, Connectivity, Education, and Solar Project focuses on developing local skills, including technology training, to the Federal States of Micronesia and Guam. They hope to connect underprivileged schools to Internet and solar-powered technology, especially due to remoteness of these islands. The three pillars of the project are training, skill development and partnerships.

• **We Are An Invincible Youth**
  This project in Panama trains youth in high-risk communities about basic techniques for radio production as well as other skills necessary for media, involving them in the production of programmes about positive change in their communities, aired on two national radio stations.

• **Communication: Key Element for Personal and Social Development in Indigenous Communities**
  Focusing on the human rights of indigenous peoples in Panama, this project provides alternative methods of communication and professional development in order to address the issues of access to information, choices of media, capacity development, and gender equality in journalism in rural communities.

• **Strengthening Innovative and Gender Inclusive Use of Community Media Practices in the Pacific Region for Peace and Security**
  Utilizing the power of radio and its continuous central role in many parts of the world, especially in the Pacific region, this project focuses on the implementation of a regional digital strategy for improving ICT and diminishing the gap between urban and rural/remote areas in the Pacific Islands region.

• **Supporting Marginalised Girls in Sierra Leone to Complete Basic Education with Improved Learning Outcomes**
  This project aims at improving primary and secondary educational opportunities for girls in Sierra Leone. It addresses the main factors that inhibit girls’ participation in education, such as lack of resources and teachers, gender-based violence, early marriage, and domestic obligations. Thus, this project takes a three-teared approach: it addresses the high dropout rate through funding textbooks, uniforms, and more for 12,000 girls, while also training teachers; it allows 550 young women to enroll in distance education at Open University in order to become private school teachers; and it provides training for teachers on pedagogy, inclusive education, and conduct. This project also focuses on disabled children and can fund small grants for materials or training for a more inclusive school environment.
News and Events:

- **Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT Integration into Pedagogy in Uzbekistan (21-23 January, 2015. Bostanliq, Uzbekistan)**
  Supported by the Korea-Funds-in-Trust (KFIT), UNESCO Tashkent Office, with facilitation by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (Bangkok), organized the first national workshop (one of the series) aimed at assisting officials from the ministries of education in capacity development for teacher training reforms. This two and a half day workshop in Uzbekistan invited 25 officials from the Ministry of Public Education as well as the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education to review the current readiness of teachers in the country against the national education goals, explore different approaches to developing competency standards for teachers, and develop an initial set of ICT competency standards as well as corresponding indicators for Uzbekistan’s teachers.

- **The 26th ICDE World Conference: Growing Capacities for Sustainable Distance e-Learning Provision (14-16 October, 2015. Sun City, South Africa)**
  The biennial ICDE World Conference, widely regarded as the leading world event in open and distance education provides a platform for the presentation of cutting edge developments, network building, and professional development. This conference will explore such themes as potential as well as challenges of open education, access to knowledge for a sustainable future, capacity development, and more.

- **ICDE-UNESCO Policy Forum on open, online and flexible learning calls for actions by governments, higher education institutions and faculty**
  The importance of access to open, online and flexible learning as a solution to pressing development challenges and needs of 21st century societies is emphasised in the ICDE-UNESCO Policy Forum. Key stakeholders from a variety of higher education institutions – campus-based universities, bi-modal universities, distance teaching universities, online and smart universities – urged ICDE and UNESCO to continue their efforts in supporting and encouraging governments to ensure progress in effectively providing access to open, online and flexible learning through the following ways: 1) creating favourable frameworks for opening up education; 2) stimulating the use of Open Educational Resources (OER); 3) enabling learner mobility; 4) encouraging the adoption of quality standards, guidelines and benchmarks; 5) fostering innovation; and 6) investing in research.

Resources:

- **Linking Generations Through Radio: Toolkit for Radio With Youth**
  This UNESCO radio toolkit is an open access resource, a 62-page document that provides examples to foster free exchange of ideas between youth in order to increase awareness of radio producers. It can be used as a training tool, a resource for young people, and a way to inform sound policy development.

- **The Pacific Women for ICT and the ICT4W Digital Alliance**
  This platform provides women and girls in ICT with an online venue to discuss, share information, and further develop and improve their respective contexts. This alliance also facilitates mentoring for students and professionals.
Promising Uses of Technology in Education in Poor, Rural and Isolated Communities Around the World

This World Bank EduTech blog written by Michael Trucano provides an overview of lessons learned, both good and bad, in terms of technologies for the marginalized. It provides some factors to consider when introducing ICTs in hard-to-reach or poor areas, and shares some noteworthy initiatives.

Directory of Open Access Journals

This is a directory that provides access to free quality journals.

Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU)

This non-profit organisation of higher learning institutions that focuses on open and distance education aims to improve access to quality knowledge and learning to all people in Asia.

Useful applications

- **iStudiezPro**
  A useful time management app that sends reminders of appointments and more to keep students on track with their studies.
- **Harvest**
  This app allows to track time spent on assignments in order to balance school work and personal activities.
- **GoodReader**
  This e-reading app supports PDF and TXT files, while also featuring annotating tools for reading and preparing papers or presentations with sticky notes to highlighting capabilities.
- **Dropbox**
  For collaborative work, this useful file-sharing tool is essential when working with others.
- **inClass**
  To take studying and learning to another level, this app allows for note taking, lecture recording, file sharing, and even alarms. It can be used to record video presentations, participate in discussions, share files and notes, and keep track with appointments.

New Publications:

- **EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010: Reaching the Marginalized**
  This UNESCO report identifies the marginalized communities, explores the reasons of why they continue to be left behind, and looks for concrete solutions to fostering inclusive education systems for all children.

- **A Complex Formula: Girls and Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in Asia**
  This new UNESCO Bangkok publication focuses on women’s participation in the STEM fields, and tries to address the approaches of what can be done to involve and encourage more women and girls in these professions. Seven countries from the region provide the findings as well as reflections and conclusions for further steps and policies in Asia.

- **The Investment Case for Education and Equity**
  Addressing the out-of-school children as well as children in schools who are not attaining quality education, in combination with a decline in funding for education, this UNICEF publication explores the global crisis and proposes solutions.
Next issue: The March issue will focus on the theme of Mobile Learning for Women. If our readers are interested in contributing to this edition, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Contact/Feedback: ict.bgk@unesco.org
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View previous newsletters: http://www.unescobkk.org/education/ict/enewsletter