

Editorial: Using ICT to empower marginalised groups

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Welcome to Volume 2, Issue 3 of the *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*. This issue contains articles concerned with using information and communication technologies (ICT) to empower marginalised groups (e.g., the poor, women, youth, rural communities) and also articles on the use of ICT in educational institutions. It brings articles from and/or about Bangladesh, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Latin America, Nigeria and The Philippines.

In each issue of *IJEDICT*, in addition to including articles bringing knowledge and experience from different countries, we try to include at least one article that develops a theoretical position, or speaks to new research methodology, or in some other way develops a global perspective. The article "Beyond access to ICTs: Measuring capabilities in the information society" by Erwin Alampay discusses some development paradigms linked to the idea of an information society and explains how ICTs are seen as a means to development. The article also looks at the concept of a 'digital divide' and the universal access to ICT policies that are meant to address the problem. Finally, the article proposes a model for applying Sen's capability approach to analyze access to ICTs impact on development.

Studies have revealed that youth participation in education and skills training in many developing countries is inadequate. In their article "Reducing the vulnerability of the youth in terms of employment in Ghana through the ICT sector", Imoro Braimah and Rudith King point out that the ICT sector has the potential to generate job opportunities for the youth. But for this to happen, the regulatory body in the sector has to be strengthened and given the necessary independence to provide an enabling environment for private sector participation for the sector to develop and create the much needed jobs for the youth. In their article "Value-proposition of e-governance services: Bridging rural-urban digital divide in developing countries", Gyanendra Narayan and Amrutaunshu Nerurkar provide a roadmap to bridge the rural-urban digital divide based on an analysis of successful e-governance projects in India. The article seeks to formulate a framework for delivering value-proposition to rural populace and equipping them for the better use of e-governance. The model proposed improves upon the "time-to-public" and "time-in-public" of e-governance services.

"Analysis of the uses of information and communication technology for gender empowerment and sustainable poverty alleviation in Nigeria" by Obayelu Elijah and I. Ogunlade, is a descriptive analysis of the use of ICT for gender empowerment and sustainable poverty alleviation in Nigeria. It describes the roles that ICTs have played in the lives of the poor and the ones yet untapped in Nigeria, and how ICTs can assist women in addressing the chronic issues of widespread poverty. Using ICTs to support poverty reduction is found to be possible, practical and affordable if Nigerian government acknowledges its role as a major employer and user of ICT beginning with a development commitment that targets poverty alleviation. The article "Appraising the relationship between ICT usage and integration and the standard of teacher education programs in a developing economy" by Nwachukwu Prince Ololube also relates to Nigeria. In this study, the author presents a relatively detailed analysis of a research survey conducted on the impact and

uses of ICT and the issues that underlie the integration of ICTs in teacher education programs in Nigeria. The results suggested that the respondents were disgruntled with the sluggish use and integration of ICT in both the state and federal government institutions of higher education in general and into teacher education programs in particular.

The last three articles also deal with ICT in educational institutions. The article "A survey of Internet access in a large public university in Bangladesh" by M. Roknuzzaman, describes the current state of Internet access and its usage in Rajshahi University, the second largest public university in Bangladesh. The study used a questionnaire-based survey method to investigate the infrastructural facilities for Internet access and to know the patterns of Internet use in the university. It revealed that nearly half of the responsible authorities of the various sectors are not satisfied with the existing facilities owing to several constraints. The article "Technology leveraging change in Hong Kong schools" by R.M.K. Fox reviews Hong Kong school practices and government policies and strategies and proposes that technology can act more as a lever than a catalyst for change if supported by broader changes in the education system. The article concludes that certain factors can facilitate this change. "The sustainability of institutional capacity in information and communication technology (ICT) at the State University of Medan" by Syawal Gultom describes an Indonesian Government project called "Institutional Capacity Development in Information and Communication Technology (ICD-ICT)". One unique aspect of this project, is that the Government has devolved the responsibility to every state university in Indonesia for maintaining the project sustainability. The author discusses in detail the how this has been achieved at UNIMED.

Often, learning institutions in developing countries struggle to maintain libraries and resources in agriculture and natural resources management. As major developers of research and training, the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centres are collaborating to centralize learning resources in support of open access and knowledge sharing to strengthen the teaching and communication capacities of these learning institutions. In the Project Sheet "Making Agricultural Training and Education Resources Accessible", Courtney Paisley describes a World Bank project "*Online Learning Resources*" that seeks to extend the dissemination of CGIAR agricultural and natural resource management resources to a global community.

In his review of the book *Private Education and Public Policy in Latin America* edited by Laurence Wolff, Juan Carlos Navarro and Pablo González, Ed Brandon points out that most of its content is devoted to case studies of six Latin American countries (Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Guatemala, Peru, and Venezuela). The focus of the case studies and of the whole book is on the ways the private sector, or perhaps better the non-governmental sector, can be used to enhance educational opportunity, especially at the primary and secondary levels.

The emphasis in IJEDICT is on providing a space for researchers, practitioners and theoreticians to jointly explore ideas using an eclectic mix of research methods and disciplines, and we welcome feedback and suggestions as to how the journal can better serve this community.

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