Editorial: Using ICT for rural development

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Welcome to Volume 3 Issue 2 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) for rural empowerment. It brings articles from and/or about Pakistan, India, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia.

In the article "Study of diffusion and adoption of Male Annihilation Technique", Zaheeruddin Mirani describes the "Male Annihilation Technique" (MAT) - an economical, non-polluting, non-hazardous, environment friendly, less laborious technology to control the fruit fly. Despite all these advantages offered by MAT, it has failed to reach the maximum level of adoption among the growers of Pakistan particularly of Sindh province. The article describes research that identified barriers in the rate of adoption of MAT and also identified the information sources that have created trust among farmers resulting in the dissemination of MAT on a larger scale.

In the same country, the article by Kashif Sattar - "A sustainable model for use of ICTs in rural Pakistan" - proposes an ICT-Training Centre consisting of a network of Rural Kiosk Machines placed at every village, updated by the ICT-Rural Development Department. The author contends that by using this model, a major proportion of the population can play an important role in the development of this country.

Mrinalini Shah discusses the position of India in the e-governance environment and issues and challenges ahead. In the article "E-Governance in India: Dream or reality?" the author describes how e-governance can be attained in four steps: Information or Cataloguing, Transaction, Vertical Integration & horizontal integration. The author outlines various barriers, including geographical, social, and economical disparities, which are the biggest barriers for full-fledged e-governance.

Olivia Kwapong discusses the logic of designing a disaggregated ICT policy in her article "Problems of policy formulation and implementation: The case of ICT use in rural women's empowerment in Ghana". The basic hypothesis in the study was that the wide differences in the socio-economic status of rural women households' influences their choice of information delivery technology and also their willingness to pay for a selected technology. The results point to a merit in allocating considerable authority to regional and local authorities in setting priorities and approaches to empowering rural women through the use of ICT.

In their article, Adesope, Asiabaka and Agumagu examine the "Effect of personal characteristics of extension managers and supervisors on information technology needs in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria". Their findings revealed that number of associations belonged to, educational qualification, training, category of organization were the personal characteristics that significantly influenced information technologies needed by extension managers and supervisors. On the basis of their findings, the authors make various recommendations regarding the training of extension managers and supervisors.

Using examples from Tanzania, Sife, Lwoga and Sanga discuss "New technologies for teaching and learning: Challenges for higher learning institutions in developing countries". The article discusses new learning and training technologies, considering their pedagogical, cost and technical implications. It also discusses challenges for integrating these technologies in higher learning institutions, and giving best practice approaches for addressing each of the challenges.

In "Challenges and opportunities in ICT educational development: A Ugandan case study", Ryan Wells and Susan Wells examine an organization which is partnering to provide ICT solutions for secondary schools in Uganda. Based on interviews and observation, they identify nine key transitions in this organization's development. This study intends to contribute to the dialogue concerning ICT, education, and development and aims to expose some ways to build bridges across the digital divide.

In "Academic computing at Malaysian colleges", Mokhtar, Alias and Rahman address three research questions: What are the indicators for assessing academic computing? What are the general characteristics of academic computing at different levels of performance? What is the general performance of academic computing at colleges in Malaysia? The authors conducted an academic computing survey involving 62 public and private colleges in Malaysia. The findings of this study showed that performances varied between areas and between colleges in Malaysia.

Mary Allan, in her article "Millennial teachers: Student teachers as users of Information and Communication - A New Zealand case study" argues that personal usage of ICT within student teachers own learning will form their models of teaching practices. This paper draws on a survey conducted in 2005 at a teachers' education college in New Zealand. The findings provide a snapshot into the current situation of teachers' education in relation to the use of Internet technology and online learning systems and have implication for teachers' education in the new millennium.

In "Engagement Theory, WebCT, and academic writing in Australia", Simone Marshall describes a case study in which a popular learning management system, WebCT, is used in an academic writing course at the University of Sydney, Australia. The study highlights both the benefits and difficulties of using technology when teaching academic writing and shows how effective Engagement Theory has been in the design, implementation, and outcomes of the website associated with the course.

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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