



An International Perspective on ICT in Education

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global e-schools and communities initiative
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Background

Established in 2004 by the United Nations ICT Task Force, GeSCI is a global non-profit, non-commercial organisation with a mandate to provide assistance to governments in the strategic implementation of ICTs in Education.

Mission

Adopting a demand-driven, collaborative and comprehensive approach, GeSCI works in partnership with those countries pioneering the use of interactive technologies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and thereby transforming education and empowering communities.

Approach

GeSCI's services and activities were defined in direct response to the needs of several countries:

- Designing and implementing policies and plans
- Building capacities within Ministries of Education;
- Utilizing ICTs cost-effectively to achieve educational objectives.

The Cart Before the Horse

ICTs – The Silver Bullet?

Unfounded claims about ICTs and their potential, result in the deployment of technology without capacity.

➔ One Size Fits All!

We assume that what works for one country works for another.

➔ Business for Education

Technology harnessed for business does not always meet the needs of Education.

Technology without capacity is futile!

- ➔ *Connectivity without computers*
- ➔ *Computers without connectivity*
- ➔ *Untrained teachers with computers*
- ➔ *Trained teachers without computers*
- ➔ *Technology without future planning*
- ➔ *Maintenance providers responding to all of the above issues*

Lessons Learned

IRELAND – Lack of long term Strategic Implementation and Planning

A booming economy with a highly skilled ICT literate workforce

YET – ICT4E has been left in a policy vacuum since IT2000 initiative ended.

Policy without sustainability:

- Initial funding provided hardware and software but no long-term funding.
- Schools struggle to maintain ICTs while govt invests millions in broadband.
- Schools can't plan for ICTs in advance due to lack of guaranteed funding.

Poor integration of ICTS in Teaching and Learning

- Teacher training does not adequately incorporate ICTs in teaching & learning.
- Lack of indigenous interactive software – culture specific for national curricula.

Lesson

The continuing absence of a defined ICT4E policy with a sustainability strategy could impede Ireland's socio-economic advancement as a new generation of school-leavers are left without the skills necessary to contribute to Ireland's growing economy.

ICT integration must correlate with wider educational aims. – affirm professional skills of teachers and personal growth of students. At a local level, ICTs must work in tandem with the implementation of school development plans.

Lessons Learned

LATIN AMERICA – Lack of Infrastructure & Connectivity

A region of the world where most countries are within a stone's throw of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal completion of primary education

YET – levels of access to ICTs remain well below that of other countries with the gap in terms of pc ownership and internet users continuing to widen.

Absence of an Enabling Environment

- Limited telecommunications infrastructure
- Relatively high cost of access for most people
- Technology without connectivity
- Growing digital divide among countries in region and within countries due to concentration of access and infrastructure in specific geographic areas such as urban centres.

Lesson

The low penetration of fixed telephony suggests that deployment of broadband access will continue to be slow in the region, given the magnitude of investment required for wireless or wirelined broadband technologies.

Higher levels of investment in telecommunications infrastructure and deregulation of the telecommunications sector are needed to extend Internet broadband to a wide spectrum of the population – schools and communities.

India

Developing Guiding Principles for “ICT in Education Policy

Enabling Environment

- Growing level of interest and activity in use of ICTs in education system.
- Has necessary intellectual and human capacity to meet demands of effective ICT integration.
- Ripe for multi-stakeholder process – civil society, private sector and 32 states.

Why integrate ICTs into Education?

- New competencies are required to respond to a changing world:
 - Higher order thinking and problem solving skills
 - ICT literacy and life skills
- It raises the education level to promote economic growth.

Leading by Example

- India has a leading IT economy – developing guidelines for ICT4E policy in Indian context will provide strategic direction for other countries.

Good Practice

1. Policy – doesn't exist or piecemeal

FROM THE TOP - DOWN

ICTs must be integrated into national policy. Piecemeal ICT integration is unsustainable.

2. Strategic Implementation & Planning – lack of resources

FORESIGHT IS FOREKNOWLEDGE

Every stage of the process must be anticipated for integration to succeed

3. Teaching & Learning – no training or content

TEACHERS ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE

Children require new competencies to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world

4. Infrastructure & Connectivity – inadequate & expensive

ACCESS, CAPACITY, AVAILABILITY

Without adequate infrastructure, technology deployment is a waste of resources.

5. Monitoring & Evaluation – no feedback mechanism

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the process of ICT integration.

Without it the entire initiative is flawed, as continuous learning cannot be realised.

India

Critical Elements in the development of an “ICT in Education Policy

What are the expectations of a National ICT in Education Policy?

- What are all the components of the Policy?**
- How to define priority areas?**
- How to align with other Govt. Departments and policies?**
- Others?**

What are the types of mechanisms for implementing the policy?

- Guidelines**
- Tools**
- Knowledge Sharing**
- Others?**