

Status of ICT in the Education Sector.

There are different initiatives of ICT in the education sector, which are operating at different levels of the education system in Uganda. There is urgent need to harmonise all these initiatives so that we know for certain what each initiative is up to, so that we avoid duplication of efforts and maximize the synergies of working in unison.

a) Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Education Management Information System is a component of ICT in the Ministry of Education and Sports, it provides quality education statistics in a timely, cost-effective and sustainable manner. EMIS provides the education statistics and pupil details among others. After the procurement of computers, printers and accessories each district has hardware and software installed and is to carry out data gathering from schools for processing through ED*Assist application Software which is used in EMIS. District officials have already benefited from computer training in the use of EMIS. Computers were procured and distributed to all districts and municipalities. At the Ministry not all the offices are connected on the network and are able to use the internet and e-mail services as well as to access resources on the network.

The Ministry suspended plans to network all districts and the centre to enable information flow from districts to the centre (Ministry of Education and Sports) and vice versa, at the same time. This would have enabled districts to make comparative analysis amongst themselves.

b) School net Uganda

SchoolNet is a national network of professional educators and schools whose vision is to transform the Uganda educational system from an Industrial model (learning by assimilation) to a knowledge-based model to prepare the youth of Uganda to effectively enter a Global Economy based on Knowledge, Information and Technology)

c) Connect-ED (Connectivity for Educator Development)

In 1993, Uganda undertook a comprehensive reform of its primary education system. The reform redirected the function of primary teachers colleges focusing mainly on improving the quality and equity of primary education in Uganda. This requires the colleges to provide continuous professional development to teachers through refresher courses, helping teachers improve their effectiveness as well as make and use instructional aids among other things. All these functions need adequate support ranging from effective training to consistent access to updated information, knowledge and resources.

With the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE), greater demand on teachers and the quality of primary education has increased. In order to address the need for quality primary education and the provision of additional resources for Ugandan primary teachers, the Connectivity for Educator Development (Connect-ED) project was initiated in May 2000.

The Connect-ED project is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in close cooperation with Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports and within the framework of the U.S. Education for Development and Democracy Initiative (EDDI). Connect-ED is using technology to enable and enhance learning and teaching for primary educators through the creation of multifaceted approaches to integrating media and computers in the Primary Teacher Colleges (PTC) classrooms. Connect-ED accomplished this by setting up Education Technology Centres thereby increasing access, availability, and provision of relevant and quality learning materials and support for teacher professional development.

Connect-Ed is a non-governmental organisation that is providing connectivity to 8 core PTCs namely: -

1. Shimoni PTC
2. Mukuju PTC
3. Gulu PTC
4. Bushenyi PTC
5. Ndegeya PTC
6. Kibuli PTC
7. Soroti PTC
8. Boroboro PTC

e)IICD-Ministry of Education and Sports

There are four projects going on between the Institute for Information and Communication Development (IICD) in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Sports. These projects are namely:

- a) ICT Based Educational Content.
- b) ICT Training.
- c) ICT Workflow Management and Financial Information.
- d) ICT Maintenance Capacity.

f)British Council

British Council has a program in some Private Secondary Schools. This initiative aims at introducing ICT to be used in teaching and learning.

g)Global Teenager Program

Global teenager program is aimed at assisting Students to learn and use ICT in Secondary Schools.

h)Curriculum Net

National Curriculum Development Centre worked with International Development Research Centre to come up with the CurriculumNet project to develop, test and implement a mechanism for curriculum integration and delivery for primary and secondary schools in Uganda via Communication networks using computer related

tools. In relation to the mandate of NCDC and its functions, the CurriculumNet Project was conceived to influence both the practice and policy of Education.

Notable to mention is that whereas these initiatives had made tremendous strides in school connectivity, teacher training and promotion of global learning, none had ever attempted content development-online format, to supplement the current campus learning system of the curricula of Uganda.

This necessitated development of local content that is relevant to the learner and the Ugandan approved National Curriculum hence creating an added value.

Thus the difference with Curriculum Net was it intended to enable students, educators and educational administrators to develop appropriate competencies to effectively use ICTs in the teaching and learning process. The ultimate goal of this project is to accelerate the participation of schools, teachers and learners in the use of ICT in teaching and learning process. The project supports all educators, and students who foster the use of ICT in teaching and learning process.

As an action research activity, it was intended to test the technical and operational feasibility, and economic viability of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the education delivery process. It is also expected to examine the value added by ICTs in core subject areas of the educational system in Uganda and the extent to which teaching and learning is enhanced.

i)UNESCO

Creating learning networks for Africa is meant to assist teachers in secondary schools to appreciate ICT in their works and is supported by UNESCO.

j)U-Connect

The goal of the Project is to introduce more widespread use of ICTs in Uganda primary and secondary schools, especially in rural towns.

It raises awareness of the benefits of ICT-enhanced primary and secondary school education, especially the ability to dramatically amplify the limited educational resources in rural towns, and demonstrate best practices in the economical provision of school computer labs and affordable high bandwidth connection to the Internet in a developing country.

k)New Partnership for Africa in Development

Youth form the majority of Africa's population and are most likely to be affected by the digital and knowledge divide. They also form the basis upon which our future economic activity will be built. The e-Schools Initiative will, therefore, ensure that the majority of the people on the continent will have the skills required to function in the Information Society and knowledge-based economy.

The objectives are:

- To provide ICT skills and knowledge to primary and secondary school students that will enable them to function in the emerging Information Society and Knowledge Economy.
- To make every learner health literate.
- To provide teachers with ICT skills to enable them to use ICT as tools to enhance the teaching and learning.
- To provide school managers with ICT skills so as to facilitate the efficient management and administration in the schools.