

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An international workshop on Improving E-learning Policies and Programs was held on 9–13 August 2004 at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Manila. The workshop was organized for participating countries to share and review electronic learning (e-learning) policies and programs. Speakers and resource persons from various public and private organizations contributed their knowledge and skills for improving e-learning. At the end of the workshop, participating countries drafted action plans to initiate projects based on improving e-learning in their countries. The international workshop was conducted by ADB and the Asian Development Bank Institute together International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), Microsoft Corporation, and the governments of Australia and Republic of Korea.

There were 28 participants from 19 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, and Viet Nam. Participants were mostly decision makers in their respective fields of government.

Resource persons and speakers came from private organizations and institutions, such as IBM, Microsoft, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Other private organizations that attended were William Horton Consulting, Incorporated; Advance Learning Infrastructure Consortium; Paradise Patent Services, Incorporated; Janison Solution; Flexible Learning Access Services; and Computer Industry Trade Association. The governments of Australia; Republic of Korea; West Bengal, India; and Japan also shared their e-learning projects. A special forum was conducted as part of the workshop to discuss views of the private and public sectors.

The following are key messages from the workshop:

- E-learning is defined as the delivery of a learning, training or education program by electronic means. It covers a wide set of applications and processes, such as web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via Internet, intranet, audio and video tape satellite broadcast, mobile phone, interactive television, and compact disc-read only memory (CD-ROM).
- The function of e-learning is to empower educators and learners to express their ideas easily and naturally, interact with others, explore and discover the world, manage the process of learning, and assess its quality and quantity.
- Three elements are needed to complete the e-learning processes: producer, host, and learner; and three processes are required for e-learning implementation: create, offer, and access. Unless the three processes work, e-learning does not take place.
- In managing e-learning programs, one should target worthy goals and make general principles apply to each country, each culture, each organization, and each learner.
- Instructional systems design is concerned with understanding, improving, and applying methods of instruction. It is the theoretical backbone to understanding the psychology of learning and how to shape performance. The differences in value and results between designing for e-learning conversion and redesign are significant—both in terms of return on investment and learning empowerment.
- Intellectual property can be a valuable economic asset and a critical business tool to enhance competitiveness. Its creation is ultimately linked to the quality of innovation and creativity. Intellectual property rights (IPR) protection in a local economy is an important factor in the investment decision. Affordable access to IPR is a challenge for developing countries, but IPR can be used as a means of promoting technology access in the long run.
- E-learning technology has the potential to bring improved learning

opportunities to a larger audience than has previously been possible.

- Designing an e-learning project needs broad capabilities, which can help advance learning effectiveness and efficiency and produce real education training value.
- E-learning is helping to transform governments through workforce transformation, citizen education, and service optimization.
- Traditional approaches to learning are being replaced by a continuous approach aimed at driving performance.
- The vision of future e-learning is success through learning innovation. E-learning will change the way people acquire new skills and access knowledge by making learning pervasive. E-learning will eliminate barriers to accessing high-quality education by making learning continuous and relevant. E-learning will enable organizations to be more responsive to the changing environment by making learning collaborative.
- There are eight key issues in an action plan—access, equity, innovation, research, lifelong learning, government, systems integration, and emerging business models.
- Bear in mind the objectives when drafting an action plan. Always deal with it in a holistic fashion. Remember to keep it simple and manageable.