

International Conference

16–18 October 2007 • Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines

Benjamin Vergel de Dios
Project Officer
ICT in Education Unit
UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau, Bangkok

ICT in Education Planning Toolkit

Policymakers in developing countries encounter more obstacles than their counterparts in developed economies. These obstacles are both basic, such as lack of awareness and policy capacity, as well as systemic, such as lack of political will and ineffective coordination between departments with ICT responsibilities.

There is no simple solution to these obstacles. However, there is an ICT in Education Toolkit for Policymakers, Planners and Practitioners developed by UNESCO Bangkok and its partners to help countries systematically plan the integration of ICT in education. Because UNESCO Bangkok is convinced that the education sector can benefit from ICT in many ways. The most common benefit that people immediately think of is in the area of teaching and learning. In fact, there are more. It is, therefore, up to us educators and policymakers to find out and take advantage of these benefits ICT can bring to education.

Still, many policymakers are not sure whether to introduce ICT or not in their countries because of the high cost and implementation risk associated with it. But how come Singapore, Japan, South Korea and Malaysia are investing a lot in integrating ICT in schools and throughout the education system? Because these countries have long recognized the potentials of ICT in education.

What should policymakers from developing countries do? UNESCO Bangkok recommends that an ICT country plan, program or project should aim to i) expand access to education; and ii) reduce the burden of teachers; and iii) it should be affordable; and iv) the technology to be used is widely available. There is no short-cut to success in ICT in education. Every country needs to grow and learn from their experience. The best time to begin is now and using the ICT in Education Planning Toolkit should be a good start.

To obtain access to the toolkit, send an e-mail to: Mr. Benjamin Vergel de Dios
b.vergeldedios@unescoibkk.org.



International Conference

16–18 October 2007 • Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines

ICT Unit at UNESCO, Bangkok, Regional Bureau

Two of UNESCO's key areas of interest are Education for All (EFA) and the need for higher quality education. UNESCO is therefore pursuing various programmes which aim to improve the reach and quality of education.

Another area of concern for UNESCO is the growing digital divide" between those who have access to modern forms of information and communication technologies (ICT) and those who do not. The concern is that unless the divide is bridged, the lack of access to ICT will have adverse implications in terms of access to information and participation in socio-economic life, particularly in the emerging knowledge societies.

It has been demonstrated that integrating ICT into education systems can increase the quality of education and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education delivery. Use of ICT in formal and nonformal education also offers the potential to facilitate greater access to information and services by marginalized groups and communities. With these considerations in mind, the U'ESCO Bangkok office established the ICT in Education" programme which has as its main goal: to assist in harnessing the potential of ICT towards achieving quality education for all in the Asia-Pacific region.

To achieve this goal, the programme has four objectives:

- i. To identify and promote ways in which ICT can enhance the reach and quality of education in the Asia-Pacific context.
- ii. To draw attention to the possible pitfalls involved in acquiring and utilizing ICT and to the pre-conditions for their successful use.
- iii. To empower teachers, educators, principals, administrators and policy makers to make informed, judicious choices regarding the use of ICT in education.
- iv. To promote greater access to ICT tools by educators and learners.

What is ICT?

The term information and communication technologies" (ICT) refers to forms of technology that are used to transmit, process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means. This broad definition of ICT includes such technologies as radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed line and mobile phones), satellite systems, and computer and network hardware and software, as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as videoconferencing, e-mail and blogs.

