

International Conference

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

Julian Watson

Team Leader/Policy and Planning Expert

RETA 6278: Innovative ICT for Education and Its Potential for Reducing Poverty in the Asia and Pacific Region

Conditions Controlled by Government That Have a Positive Effect on Nurturing Innovative ICT in Education

This presentation focuses on the enabling factors a government can provide to deliver effective ICT in education. It is concerned with governmental responsibility, policy and strategy. and deals with broad issues such as the existing misconceptions of ICT, the reality of the demand, and, most importantly the conditions controlled by government that nurture innovative ICT. The presentation looks at how willing governments are not only to create ICT policy but to actually implement it in a regulated environment that is encouraged as much by ownership as control.

Questions of copyright and taxation law are raised and their merits discussed –questions as to how to maximize human resources and as to whether special ICT development funds drive the effective use of ICT, or are they merely back door taxation?

Out of the research has come a clear message: the necessity of planning at every level –from policy to pupil. The interdependence of every link in the planning chain means that one weak link jeopardizes the whole and the ICT educational plan is too fragile to endure. The presentation shows the pitfalls of disconnected planning and how macro and micro decisions are inextricably interdependent. A small budgetary oversight can result in greatly increased total cost of a long-term ICT policy. Only governments can provide the framework for this type of planning.

There are clearly major infrastructure issues in many of the DMCs and human resources need to be developed but to plan for these in isolation will lead to complications for implementation. The integration of all levels of planning within a regulated structure that allows private/public initiatives and human resources to be used to their best advantage will only happen when each issue is considered within a concept of total planning.

The presentation asks what regulation and enforceable legal structures are required, and at what level, but concludes that without government resolve, driving an inclusive planning process demand for ICT in education will never be met.



International Conference

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

Julian Watson is Team Leader for ADB's regional study on innovative ICT in education, STEP-AP. Mr. Watson came to ICT in education from a background in book publishing. In the 1970s when the written word was virtually the sole source of information printing and reprographics were areas in which computerized technology had already begun to have a major transforming impact. This combination of information and technology led ultimately to his involvement with ICT in education. Apprenticed in a London publishing house, in 1986 Julian was given his first opportunity of working in a developing country by Tony Read when he visited Ghana to assess book distribution systems. Since then he has worked in 19 countries in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East mainly for donor agencies taking a particular interest in the use of ICT in post conflict zones. In West Bank/Gaza Julian worked for an education and health rehabilitation project, as the learning materials expert charged with investigating the use of multi-media approaches - including telemedicine. In West Africa he was the regional educational adviser for the International Rescue Committee at the end of the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia and negotiated policy between host governments and the refugees' home countries to ensure mutually recognized certification and acceptability during repatriation. ICT materials were developed within the West African Examination Board to allow international recognition of qualifications attained by both pupils and teachers. The opportunities provided by ICT to enhance education are nowhere more

