

International Conference

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

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Technology as a Catalyst to Improve Access to and Quality of In-Service Teacher Trainings in Rural Settings. Results from ADB's Regional Study on Innovative ICT for Education – Nepal and Bangladesh

Nepal

Although VHS video has been around for many years, and has been common in teacher training in some countries since the 1970's, the advent of digital recording offers many new possibilities for using video in the classroom, and in developing-country contexts, because of the compact and easily distributed nature of this technology. Therefore, it makes it a particularly suitable tool for remote areas with poor communications infrastructure, such as the mountainous regions of Nepal.

In the context of a regional technical assistance project financed by the ADB, RTI International introduced digital video recorders to remote, mobile teacher training teams who deliver teaching qualification programs to serving, but untrained teachers. This document is one product of that research, which showed that the use of video for self assessment of teaching practice can add significant value to in-service or pre-service training programs. It also creates a bridge for communicating training processes and outputs from remote regions to central education planners and decision-makers who can use that information to improve training curricula and human resources, as necessary. This presentation will give an overview of the process and outcomes of this experience, and the implications for using digital video recording as a support for training teachers.

Bangladesh

'Mobile learning' is a term used to describe learning through portable, handheld, electronic devices, generally with wireless communications capabilities. It is not limited to mobile phones, since it can also refer to the use of personal digital assistants, handheld computers, or mobile gaming devices. It implies learning while 'on the move'—outside of the classroom and outside



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of the home. Mobile learning means you can be learning while in your car, or riding the subway, or walking. Understanding how mobile devices can be used to support learning is important to educators because of the increasing pervasiveness of these tools in society, and also because of their ability to create situated learning environments, and facilitate communication and collaborative learning.

Under a technical assistance project financed by the ADB, RTI International carried out a study in Bangladesh to determine whether or not mobile phones could be an appropriate and effective method for supporting school-based in-service teacher training. RTI provided mobile phones with advanced multimedia and communications features to 10 schools. A standard 2-week face-to-face training was converted to 6-weeks distance mode, and a pair of teachers from each school completed the course using print materials, practical school-level exercises, and frequent communication with trainers and teacher trainees in other schools using the mobile phones. The results show that the distance mode can be as effective as face-to-face training, and it is the strongly preferred mode by training participants. This presentation will give an overview of the process and outcomes of this experience, and the implications for using mobile phones as a support for teaching and learning at a distance.

Sarah Lucas Pouzevara is a consultant in international education and development with experience with the United Nations, multilateral and bilateral donors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, and foundations in the role of program evaluator, program manager, instructional designer, trainer, and technical writer. Ms. Lucas has worked on other projects involving large-scale teacher training improvement in Mongolia and Indonesia, and has extensive experience with the use of ICTs in education, including distance learning, mobile learning, and creating online communities of practice. She is a 2001 graduate of the Columbia University Teachers College (New York, USA) Department of International and Transcultural Studies.

In her childhood in Nepal, **Binita Parajuli** remembers that investing for girls' education in a family was not common, but she was fortunate to that her parents enabled her to complete not only basic education, but also her Master's degree in statistics and post-graduate diploma in Women and Development Studies in 1998. These qualifications have been translated into practical experiences in her current role as fundraiser and coordinator of iEARN, where she is focusing on promoting ICT in education and using new technologies in teaching and learning. She will be pursuing further studies (PhD) in education and uses of new methods and technology in education in USA in 2008.

Rubina Khan is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, University of Dhaka. She has an MA in TESOL from the University of Northern Iowa and a PhD in ELT from the University of Warwick, UK. Dr. Khan has published in journals and has presented at national and international conferences. Her areas of interest are testing, evaluation and teacher education. She is the General Secretary of the Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA).

