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Inside

From the Director's Desk

In previous issues when I wrote in my column about development especially in the context of disasters, I am guilty of having addressed the theme from the 'social distance' of a development communicator.

There are lessons to be learned from the recent disasters at Mumbai and New Orleans. The most important lesson is that disasters are great levelers and no matter at what levels of development and wealth a nation is; it is down to the basics of human tragedy. A second important lesson is that we cannot really understand the key issues, until we have first hand experience.

The recent flooding of CEMCA's offices caused by incessant and heavy rains in Delhi taught us a lot. We learned at first hand the sense of helplessness and frustration while we struggled to save and protect property from further destruction. We empathise those who have to reconstruct and get on with their lives. And we know that it was knowledge, powered by education, that has helped us deal with the crisis.

My purpose in drawing your attention to this experience is to reiterate that commitment to education is as important as translating that commitment to action—because education comes when information is converted to knowledge and subsequently to wisdom. And in 2005, the year in which the global community should have achieved gender parity in education, we are still not within sight of achieving this goal.

In our Guest Column, Prof. Dhanarajan, an eminent educationist and former President and CEO of COL, reflects on the task ahead and the role that open and distance learning can play in achieving the Millennium Goals and targets. As if echoing his thoughts, our Spotlight focuses on Vidya Prathisthan Institute for Information and Technology (VIIT), an institution that has taken its social mandate seriously and brought computer learning to the doorstep of the learner. Our Case Study of Seelampur features an award winning experiment where educational opportunities have empowered women in an urban slum.

In Country Focus, we describe two unique efforts—one in Bangladesh where traditional boats and river networks are used to deliver access to information technology and the other a nationwide initiative to provide IT education in Sri Lankan schools. In our Resource Reviews, we look at two important documents.

Other features are also there in this issue. Smart Tips looks at mobile technologies and we also show you how we have analyzed our own website as part of an action research process. Our section on "Worth While Webs' backs up our research by drawing your attention to websites that will help you to do your own analysis.

We regret that this issue comes to you a little late. As professionals, we know this is unacceptable but is due to unavoidable circumstances. Our apologies for the delay and we hope you understand.

Dr. Usha Vyasulu Reddi
Director

Guest Column...

Distance Education and the Millennium Development Goals

Professor Dhanarajan is currently with the Wawasan Education Foundation, Penang, Malaysia and can be reached at gdhan@streamyx.com

Gajaraj Dhanarajan

The Asian Round Table on Open and Distance Education for Attainment of Millennium Development Goals was supported by Commonwealth of Learning and hosted by the Open University of Sri Lanka at Colombo, Sri Lanka from May 20-22, 2005. Dato' Professor Emeritus Gajaraj Dhanarajan, who has devoted more than a quarter of a century to promoting quality distance and open learning , delivered the keynote address excerpted here.

We have less than ten years to ensure that we accomplish the millennium development goals (MDG) and make 'poverty history'. South Asia is no different from any other part of the developing world where the aspirations of leaders and their citizens are to be equal and contributing partners to global development through meeting all of the targets set in the MDGs. In one way or another many of these targets are heavily reliant on well-functioning educational systems. The gaps between the need and the supply of education, both formal and non-formal, which cuts across all sectors from primary through secondary, matriculation, tertiary and continuing, could be a contributing factor.

In the remaining ten years the global community is expected to achieve Universal Primary Education, reduce levels of illiteracy significantly, ensure gender equality in primary and secondary enrolments, reduce and even eliminate maternal mortality; reduce child mortality rates by at least two thirds of their 1990 level and increase basic income of workers from US$ 1 a day to at least US$ 2. While there has been progress in many cases to a significant degree, there is also certain pessimism about accomplishing all that we set out to do in 2000, especially here in South Asia.

Out of the eight goals and 18 targets (see box) agreed to by the global community, seven goals and nine targets will, by definition, require an intervention by the educational community whether formal or non-formal. The axiom that education is the fundamental key to social development and by extension of that, the elimination of many forms deprivation, is truer today than it was in earlier times. Ahmad Badawi the Malaysian Prime Minister was recently quoted as saying " ...THE RECENTLY ESPOUSED 'CAPABILITY VIEW OF POVERTY' REGARDS POVERTY AS A SHORTFALL IN HUMAN CAPABILITY– ENCOMPASSING THE LACK OF ABILITY TO LIVE A LONG LIFE, TO ENJOY GOOD HEALTH OR TO HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE....GOVERNMENTS SHOULD FOCUS ON BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH SUPERIOR EDUCATION AND RELEVANT SKILLS TRAINING [*if they wish to reduce deprivation among their citizens*] I MUST STRESS [he said] THAT OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING MUST BE QUALITY OPPORTUNITIES, RATHER THAN RUN-OF-THE-MILL OPPORTUNITIES.[1]

Similarly, not too long ago, Juan Somavia, the Director General of the International Labour Organisation, observed that the "*the principal route out of poverty is work...*"[2] and many others before and after him have also consistently argued that the *principal route to* work *is education not just once but throughout a person's life, which enables citizens to continuously add value to a person's labour*. But education is much more than just utilitarian in its purpose. It is also about dignity, self esteem, empowerment, respect, freedom and a most valuable insurance in maintaining safe environments, personal freedoms, better health, and well-being. These were perhaps the reasons why the Delor's Commission went on to define a central role for education in development by stating that it "*must be a part of a new approach to problems in which it is not simply one of many means towards development, but [it is] one of its constituent elements and ... essential goals.*"[3]

In discussing the issue of health and well being of mothers, children, food and water safety and the performance of nations in meeting MDG targets, an ODI briefing paper[4] was clear that "Public expenditure has been less important than income, *education* and conditions of life and work." In commenting on gender parity and empowerment of women, the role of education as a cornerstone for progress was eloquently described by Venkatasubramaniam a member of the Indian Planning Commission "*Educated women have fewer, healthier children, greater opportunities for employment, help reduce infant mortality significantly and significantly reduce endemic poverty*"[5]

It is these underlying expectations of education that present challenges: to

Millennium Development Goals and Targets

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Target 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of peoplewho suffer from hunger

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

Target 3. Ensure that, by 2015,children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

Target 5. Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

Target 6. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7. Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 8. Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 9. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Target 10. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

Target 11. By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at east 100 million slum dwellers

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

Target 12. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally)

Target 13. Address the Special Needs of the Least DevelopedCountries Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC andcancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

Target 14. Address the Special Needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states

Target 15. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Target 16. In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

Target 17. In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries

Target 18. In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

ensure that this region realises its vast potential and goes beyond the development targets through the provision of educational services economically and efficiently. Those services need to not only reach all children already in primary schools but also improve completion rates which are currently either poor or appalling as well as bring in the additional 115 million who are currently not participating in schooling; increase significantly the participation rates in post primary schooling, provide preparatory training or in-service training to at least half the 59 million teachers globally, raise levels of participation in tertiary education from present levels of around 89 million globally to twice that number mostly from South Asia and find the means and methods to refresh a workforce of some two billion individuals continuously and offer literacy and numeracy experience to 850 million adults . That most of these adults are found in our region and are females, especially in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh makes the task even more critical.

Meanwhile, how has South Asia fared in these efforts? Reports are mixed; Gross

Enrolment Rates of children in primary schools have increased, but as pointed out by a recent UNICEF report[6], South Asia still accounts for more than a third of the world's 115 million children still out of school; with India accounting for about 27 million, Pakistan 8 and Bangladesh 4. Both Sri Lanka and Maldives [at least before the Tsunami] had achieved UPE some time ago. The gender gap still persists certainly in India, Pakistan and to a lesser extent in Bangladesh. In terms of adult illiteracy the situation has not changed significantly since the Dakar conference. Of the 850 million or so adult illiterates the subcontinent accounts for about 185 million[7]. The numbers may be much higher if we include "functional literacy" as part of the consideration.

By and large these figures need to be treated with some caution. Gross enrolment figures are often inflated by the presence of many over-aged children in schools; while many children attend the first year of school the attrition rates beyond that also contribute to the appalling statistic. The figures also do not reflect the quality of the learning environment which range from poor physical infrastructures, un- or under-qualified teachers to lack of women teachers and consequently unfriendly environments for girls as well as reasonable teacher-pupil ratios.

Therefore the need for public education systems, either formal, government or non, across the region to assist in increasing human capital through the use of innovative delivery mechanisms, continue to be enormous. It will not be too damning a criticism to state that these systems by and large have not responded to these pressures in any meaningful way by expanding, restructuring, reforming and applying policy tools required of them. On the other hand, international developments in education as well as the debates surrounding them have been extensive. These debates have focussed on:

- Expanding the education catchments
- Ending the education queue
- Bringing the chronically poor especially the girls and women into education
- Investing more in girls
- Retaining children longer in schools
- Improving the quality of teaching
- Making available a second chance
- Making non-formal learning relevant to livelihood
- Using the newer technologies to improve the quality of teaching and learning

We are therefore going through a time of greater expectations from all those vested with the responsibility of providing education. Ministries of Education and their Departments, schools, colleges and universities must respond to the differing expectations of a more challenging global environment, especially in primary education. From doing business as usual we need to draw new maps for learning to support our developmental goals. These maps of learning must include provisions, besides addressing the demand from the young, for bringing in *a diversity of participants into learning [out of school youth, women, the marginalized, people self-employed and in paid employment etc.];* a *diversity in the learning context* [part time, flexible arrangements, home-based learning, off-campus] and a *diversity of learning goals* [learning for livelihood, learning skills, learning for enrichment, refreshing knowledge]. Such maps require a new infrastructure[8] of learning, such as:

- *An Infrastructure for Open Learning* which will remove as many of the restrictions to access that exist in the form of current structures such as selection criteria and rigid timetabling as a means of assuring quality. A more inclusive policy of participation does not have to compromise on academic standards. An open learning infrastructure should ideally allow students to fashion their learning more flexibly not just over a day, week and year, but also over a life-cycle. Where institutions are open to all and allow time to be structured at the convenience of the student, it becomes easier for citizens to envisage regular returns to learning throughout their lives.
- *An Infrastructure for Effective Learning*: With changing technical infra-structure as well as a greater demand from learners that what they learn is relevant to their lives and needs, the teaching and learning strategies will require change. Clearly, in an environment enriched by the new technologies, the role of the teacher changes from one who is the "master" in the class to one who is a facilitator of learning. Teachers do not automatically change because there are computers in the classrooms. They need to be retrained to adapt to a new role and the institutions they work in must change as well. We know from current evidence that traditional institutions that have embarked on distance or technology-assisted learning have not undergone the transformation required to guarantee the quality of their service is as good off-campus as it is on-campus.
- *An Infrastructure for Learning from Anywhere*: Distance teaching makes it possible for students to be based at home, the work place or any other location of choice to the learner. This choice is becoming even more diverse with the availability of wireless access to databases via the

web or the net. We therefore have the opportunity of integrating learning in different settings, allowing elements of study and exchange among the learning community to take place in colleges, workplaces, community centers, homes according to their appropriateness. This new infrastructure for learning will be open, permit interactive dialogue and will be unconstrained by place and time. But technology alone will not produce the results. The behaviour of people and the framework of funding and regulation in which learning is set, will determine the use of the new infrastructure.

Taken together, these shifts in the way educational services are delivered, raise fundamental questions for all institutions engaged in teaching and learning. Within education systems, there is a growing recognition that teaching and learning are not synonymous. A strong view, gradually gaining acceptance, is that the principal objective of education is to enable students to take charge of their own learning. Students should be empowered and enabled "to learn to learn," as forcefully expressed in the Delors Commission Report to UNESCO.[9]

Post-secondary education, in particular, is under enormous pressure to meet the new situation where there is a diversity of learners, their learning context and needs. This sector of education is no longer the preserve of the 18 to 25 age group or of students solely engaged in full-time study. An increasing number of students are over the age of 25, many of whom are making a late entry into higher education and are, therefore, more likely to be studying part-time. For them courses have to be organised so that they can study off-campus and many may indeed be enrolled in distance education programmes. The flexible nature of distance learning is what makes it possible for so many. Advances in communications technologies over the last decade and those expected to emerge over the next will further strengthen the call for institutions to increase access beyond present levels.

During the last ten years, these issues have been the focus of much academic debate and public discussion. They still continue to be. The arguments centre on how far our institutions, especially the post-secondary ones, should preserve their traditions of teaching and how far they should acknowledge the changing nature of the world, including the character of learners and adapting to new circumstances. This is one reason why distance education approaches must be given serious consideration as policy options in all South Asian countries in the context of addressing the MDGs.

Twenty years ago, the distinction between distance and face-to-face teaching was sharper than it is now. Under typical arrangements, distance teachers and their students were separated in time and space. They kept in touch with each other through printed study guides and correspondence tuition. Self-instructional lessons were an important part of the environment and for some students, their only interaction with the teachers was through the materials. Today, distance students no longer need to be isolated. Students signing up for a course can expect to have their study materials supplemented in numerous ways. They may include local tutoring, workshops, on-campus study, Web and Internet-based relationships with the institution, telephone tutoring, video-conferencing seminars, etc. Good practice and information and communication technologies (ICTs) have changed the way distance education is practiced today. More importantly, good pedagogical skills originally developed to meet the needs of the isolated student, as well as the instruments of the technological revolution, are becoming assets for use on-campus.

Those of us who championed the cause of open and distance education around the mid-sixties would cite many good reasons for its inclusion in national educational provisions. Foremost among these was the political desire to increase provision for learning, the economic desire to cut the cost of education while increasing participation levels, the social desire towards egalitarianism to ensure equity and equality of opportunity and at least in some locations, an educational desire to improve the relevance and quality of the curriculum. There were also those who wanted to reach the isolated, marginalised, challenged and minority groups – for the very reasons the MDGs were created.

The case presented by developing country enthusiasts was especially strong and as the evidence of the 30 years shows, convincing as well. There are now, more distance education facilities in the developing parts of the world than the developed ones. The Open Universities of Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as the emergence of the Open Schools in these countries all have the potential to reach millions of individuals simultaneously. Apart from these dedicated systems, there are the external studies and off-campus departments of dual mode universities that also use distance education to reach out to new clients.

Collectively, these institutions have indeed increased access to learning. They also seem to have brought down costs and unintentionally may have additionally taken the first steps in placing the learner at the centre of the educational transaction. Some of them

have used broadcast technologies as the main drivers of educational distribution, and others have developed capacities to enrich the curriculum by the application of multi-media. The exploration of technologies by distance educators has also had a positive impact on improving teaching in non-distance education institutions. Above all, distance education ventures seem to have proved that many individuals in our societies, regardless of the extent of prior learning, are perfectly capable of self-directed learning, if only instruction is designed sensitively and sensibly, respecting the learner and supporting him or her in the learning.

Despite these successes, the levels of disappointments have been high as well. These disappointments range from a failure by many institutions on the one hand to penetrate large parts of those communities that have traditionally been marginalised by the higher education sector and, on the other, a reluctance to apply rigorous quality control. In 1992, UNESCO (Suk-Ying Wong *et al*) published a report on *A Survey of Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific* (National Institute of Multimedia Education, 1992). Reading through the report, one quickly discovers that by and large, the open universities of the developing countries of Asia serve more or less the same sector of the population that their metropolitan campus-based counterparts have been serving. Students are mostly urban, male, middle class, have substantial prior learning, and are white collar workers. Provisions for and ease of access to those who do not fall within this newly privileged group are minimal, and where they exist, support for learning to them is almost none. Gandhe (1999) went as far as to say that in India, none have made any significant impact among the rural poor, marginalised communities and women, despite some 50 or 60 providers of open and distance learning. Most of them had basically become sub-servers to conventional providers, due in part to a mindset that considers higher education a part of urban culture or, worst still, as a cash cow to buttress cash strapped universities, affordable only by those living in cities.

While open learning and distance education should not and cannot be seen as a panacea to solve all of the educational deprivations of our nations, it would seem injudicious not to include it as an important part of a solution to bridge the gap between the demand for, and supply of, education. But for distance education to be of meaningful service towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, we need to put in more efforts, resources and energy. It is important to remember the pedigree of most distance education enterprises. The common aim over the years has been to spread enlightenment, knowledge and instruction to men and women who because of personal circumstances, poverty, isolation, distance and a lack of prior learning were prevented from studying for one purpose or another. Most initiatives in distance education during the last 30 years have sought to increase opportunities for such marginalized individuals in our communities but in a limited and constrained way. More needs to be done, for there are millions of individuals in our countries marking time as illiterates of one kind or another and at the same time almost the same number of adults who could possibly face marginalisation from economic production because of knowledge obsolescence. All of these people could not be abandoned to stigma and disadvantage and worse still, likely pass these to their children. These individuals have a right to a second chance to learning. Very few educational provisions offered either by the state or private providers offer that second chance to the same extent that open and distance learning does. 'Affordable', 'flexible', 'learner-centred', 'relevant' are terms that come to my mind as I reflect on the use of distance education to give humanity that second chance. For this region, it is hard to see how it could respond to the demands for more education other than to build on the experience of distance education gained over the last three or four decades here and all over the world in order to support the targets set in the MDGs. ECA

[1] Ahmad Badawi [2004] *Opening speech at the OIC meeting*

[2] ILO [2003] Press release *Working Out of Poverty. Rome.*

[3] UNESCO [1996]: *Learning: The Treasure Within. The International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century. Paris*

[4] *ODI Briefing paper; April 2003*

[5] K. Venkatasubramaniam[2001]*: Education and Poverty in THE HINDU [04/12/2001]*

[6] *UNCEF April 2005*

[7] Sheldon Shaffer *in VISION QUEST* a publication of UNESCO's Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau of Education, 2003

[8] OECD Report [CERI/CD [95]6: *Learning Beyond Schooling – New Forms of Supply and Demand.*

CEMCA Offers Travel Subsidies – Application Date Extended to October 31,2005

In keeping with its mission of fostering greater exchange of scholarship within the region, CEMCA is pleased to announce a limited number of travel only subsidies for participation in the forthcoming International Conference on Open and Distance Education (ICDE) to be held in November in New Delhi, India *(see Forthcoming Events)*. The subsidy will be awarded to participants from Commonwealth Asia, (including one from India), whose abstract/paper has been accepted at the conference. The last date for receipt of requests is October 31, 2005. For more details, email Director, CEMCA at cemca@nda.vsnl.net.in or ureddi@col.org

Spotlight On...

For thousands of school children tucked away in 50 odd villages of Baramati in rural India, "mobile computing" takes on a new meaning when every week a bus comes to their school bringing excitement and education, as they joyously welcome their favourite school period: 'Hasat Khelat Sanganak' meaning 'play and laughter with computers'. We bring you glimpses of this school computer project.

A Schoolbus with a Difference

Amol Goje

Called the 'Baramati Initiative', it was conceived by Vidya Prathisthan's Institute for Information and Technology (VIIT) (http://www.viitindia.org/) established in February 2000 at Baramati with an aim to provide quality education in the field of Information Technology and Computer Science. Baramati is

located in western India, in the State of Maharashtra, around 200 km. from the capital city Mumbai, and a 100 km. from the state's industrial and educational hub, Pune. The initiative began with its opening conference in 2001 and over five years it has established itself as a networking platform for people, institutions and organizations across the world to showcase and share knowledge in the field of ICT for development, redefining information technology access and applications in rural sector.

The Mission: Information Technology in Rural India

The mission of VIIT is to introduce the use of Information Technology (IT) enabled affordable services in the day-to-day life of rural communities, reducing the digital divide. Redefining information technology access and applications in rural India, a range of IT projects are being implemented successfully at Baramati like the farmers' market information service called *"Bazar Bhav"* based on Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Tele-banking, Wireless in Local Loop(WLL) for Wireless Internet, Smart Card application for milk co-operatives, and SETU (meaning a bridge), the Integrated Citizen Facilitation Centres mooted by the government of Maharashtra. One such initiative, aimed at bringing computer education to school children, is the School Project.

Computer on Wheels

The School Project, initiated in June 2004 has been providing basic computer skills to the primary school students. With support from the World Bank, VIIT runs the mobile education programme through buses fully equipped with computer labs. Each bus has 18 computers installed and goes once a week to each of the 53 schools, in 40 villages chosen for the project, covering over 6300 students. Each bus has four teachers, trained by VIIT. Depending on the total number of students in a school, two groups, with a maximum of 36 students each, are formed. Each group takes its theory and practical classes one after another. Each computer is shared by two students. Currently, five such buses are funded by the World Bank.

Overcoming the Challenges

When it comes to introducing IT initiatives in rural areas, typically, the problems encountered include the non-availability of hardware, maintenance of hardware, either a lack of or inconsistent power supply and finally, lack of skilled teachers. The concept of running labs in the buses helps address these problems all at once as they

- maximise the utilization of hardware, as each bus is used to cover 2-3 schools daily
- use the scare resources of teachers to deliver content, as only 3-4 teachers per bus are required
- reduce downtime on the buses, as they return to base every evening for any required maintenance
- offer uninterrupted delivery by fitting generators on the buses and ensure that the entire lab works on a 12V Battery

Implementation Partners: IL&FS Education and Technology Services Limited (IETS).

IETS, one of India's corporations committed to developing projects in the social infrastructure sector, specially in the areas of health and education, like the Schoolnet initiative, provided expertise throughout the design and development of education programmes. Various aspects like defining the syllabus, student activity like workbooks, teacher training, creating teaching/learning resources, monitoring and assessment tools, the recruitment and training of teachers, implementation and monitoring of programme, assessment of students and teachers, programme impact analysis, programme modifications and adaptations were worked out in consultation with IETS, thus leaving no aspect to chance.

Teacher Training

A crucial aspect of programme success, the training objectives were well defined and judging by the teachers' response, (see box) well achieved.

Training Objectives:

- Creating awareness of computers as a window to knowledge
- Enhancing interest-levels in learning
- Recognizing the importance of information
- Introducing the multi-disciplinary approach to education
- Using computers as a tool for daily tasks
- Encouraging collaborative learning
- Developing interpersonal skills
- Creating technology awareness amongst rural community
- Providing equal opportunities for rural youth

Teachers' Responses to Training

"We have been teachers for a number of years & have attended many workshops/seminars/trainings, but this 5-day Orientation Course was an eye-opener to the many new aspects of teaching, which we were not aware of earlier… Teacher as a Counselor, Multidisciplinary Teaching, Computer Teacher vs Computer Instructor…This project, which was just a job when we joined has now become OUR PROJECT after understanding the implementation details & its probable impact on the rural society."

Purushottam Mahamuni, Main Teacher

"…Thank you so much for making me a part of this wonderful project. It gives me THE opportunity to give back to society….I feel so proud being a part of the team. The job has taken a social dimension…"

Rohini Shinde, Assistant Teacher

Students:

"The Computer Bus comes to our school every Wednesday. We like to play various educational games on the computer every Wednesday. Earlier we used to see computer at some places only and used to think that learning computers is a very difficult thing. But after the Computer bus started visiting our school we have realised that learning computers is not that difficult as we used to think. We were very happy when we started using the computer and we have also got the computer book that I read daily. The teachers on the bus are also very good, kind hearted and loving. *I request that let the Computer Bus come to our school every Wednesday and let Wednesday come everyday."*

Monali Narayan Pathare
7th Standard, Z.P.Primary School, Sangavi

Teachers:

- Student interest in academics & school activities has increased after introduction of the Programme…"
- "…Marked increase in confidence-levels of students"
- "We would like to learn computers as well!"
- "Parent-interaction has been positive…"

Parents:

"Children share their enthusiasm & learning of computers at home…"

"My Daughter speaks a lot about Computers, when she comes home. She likes this subject a lot. I work as a labourer and we have a hand to mouth situation at home. …….This Computer subject is very good and it will benefit my daughter a lot in future. My daughter reads the book provided by you everyday and also solves the questions regularly. Guests who come to our house are surprised when we tell them that the computer bus comes to our village ……"

Mrs. Suvarna Paudkule, M/o Madhavi Paudkule
Class 5, Z.P.School, Shiravali, Baramati

Attention to Detail

Rooted in ground realities of education in rural India , where most schools deliver instruction in the local language, (in this case Marathi), special care was taken to make the instruction and explanations easy to understand for the non-English speaking students, at the same time giving them adequate and requisite exposure to the English terms and computer jargon. Similarly, care was also taken while designing activities for the Programme with respect to the resources available

Programme Objectives

The programme envisages that students would be able to :

- use the information, communication and self-learning facilities available over the Internet to enhance their skills
- use MS Excel and other MS Office applications effectively to achieve results
- create simple web pages using MS FrontPage
- understand computer programming logic and create simple small programmes in QBASIC
- identify and trouble-shoot simple hardware-problems

A Sustainable, Economically Feasible Model

VIIT considers the model sustainable, profitable and effective for delivering computer education to rural school children. The programme levies a small user fee and according to the programme managers has built in financial sustainability. The estimates of income and expenditure that make the model economically feasible are given below:

Fees charged per student per month	:	US$ 0.50
Total Number of Students	:	1,000
Total fees collected (1,000 x 0.5 x 12)	:	US$ 6,000

Estimated Expenditure (US$)

Salary	Diesel	Maintenance	Course	Total
3,000	1,000	250	750	5,000

Programme Impact

The programme meets with all round enthusiasm from teachers, students, parents and school principals alike. Currently the ratio of girls to boys covered in the project is 4:6 ECA

Dr.Amol Goje is Director of VIIT and can be reached at director@viitindia.org

Case Study...

In a crowded down-market locality in Delhi, India, in the backroom of a 'Madarsa' , a different kind of learning is being imparted. A young girl, a school drop-out sits at a desktop, editing photographs. Another is going over the final copy of a community newspaper for which she doubles up as a reporter and editor. Yet others are editing sound files, working on Excel files, many hitherto without access to either education or computers. Across the corridor, in other rooms, older women, many of them in purdah, are taking a class in garment design and embroidery. The place is abuzz with activity and creative talent. And making it happen is Datamation Foundation, a Delhi based, non-profit Charitable Trust.

Economic Empowerment of the Marginalized : Application of ICTs for Income and Vocational Skills Enhancement, ICT Center- Seelampur

Chetan Sharma

The Project

Datamation Foundation as part of UNSECO's Major Cross Cutting Theme Programme on Eradication of Poverty entitled "Empowering the Underprivileged through the use of ICTs" set up a Community Multi-Media Centre (CMC) in Babul-ulm-Madarsa located in extremely impoverished and backward Seelampur-Zaffrabad, a predominantly Muslim neighborhood on the fringes of North-East Delhi in March 2003. The average family size in the area is 8 to 10 and monthly family incomes range from Rs.4,000-5,000. Most people are engaged in the informal sector and small businesses. The school drop-out rate amongst the girls is over 60%. Women get married early and are not permitted to step out of their homes unaccompanied.

The objectives of establishing CMC in Seelampur were to test the hypothesis that after attaining a level of empowerment language or education are not barriers for the Muslim women to access ICTs for unleashing their 'latent' communication need, apart from a need to 'creatively' express themselves. The Project wanted to further ensure that by a systematic delivery of mentoring, counseling and training materials in the local languages, it is possible the semi-literate and neo-literate, marginalized Muslim women from the ghettos to earn sustainable livelihoods enabled by ICTs.

Objectives

The Datamation Foundation and UNESCO wanted to provide appropriate ICT enabled support mechanism viz. capacity-building, marketing and financial linkage for the women engaged in informal sector of the economy encompassing small and petty businesses. Moreover ICTs could help overcome Muslim women's perpetual cycle of poverty, social exclusion and low bargaining power by building their capacities and vocational skills.

The project also wanted to test if ICTs could play an enabling role in empowering the Muslim women to deal with age-old social problems such as the denial of equal status in the society, dependence on the family for all decisions including various personal decisions viz. reproductive rights, career and vocational options. Towards this end effective multi-media training, learning and counseling materials in empowerment; basic literacy and vocational skills enhancement were proposed to be deployed.

The Datamation Foundation set up a Community ICT Training-cum-counseling center in the Babul-ulm-Madarsa with UNESCO's support. The Centre, located in the Seelampur-Zaffrabad ghetto, was opened for community use in March 2003. Till date, the project has reached out to more than 2000 women from the Seelampur community.

Scope

Due to traditional linkage between the learning-teaching process and the enabling role of ICT on the same, apart from the crucial role of Islamic clergy; it was decided to locate the CMC within the premises of Madarsa instead of a public place. The women were provided separate entry to the institution. Extensive community mobilization was done with the help of a Mentor Mother who reached out to the community for enrollment of the women in the ICT Center. Thus a community mobilization drive commenced, ensuring enlistment of the women as "canvassers" and "community mobilizers"

Integrated with the technical aspect of the project is the ongoing ethnographic action research process facilitated by the London School of Economics and the Queensland University, Australia. We also provided weekly updates based on 'immersion' and 'community animator' concept for understanding in-depth impact of ICTs on the women and their families. The updates, as well as field notes, were posted on the ICTPR website.

The Foundation developed over 654 self-paced, interactive multi-media empowerment and skills development CDs. In-built evaluation procedures were integrated in the CDs. The CDs ranged from health, nutrition to life-skill topics;

empowerment, rights, duties and responsibilities of the women; adolescence, confidence-building and personality development. Consolidating on the 'innate' design, arts, crafts and workmanship most people including those of Seelampur possess; the project deployed over 40 different skills and vocational modules ranging from tailoring, embroider, candle making, liquid soap, management of courier and tiffin centres, stationary items, paper bags etc. The Foundation enabled formation of the Self-Help Groups after the women had completed the learning on the modules. Multi-stakeholder workshops were conducted for exploring mutual synergies and linkages.

The Foundation also started the process of identifying commercial opportunities for the beneficiaries of the project. Participation in various exhibitions, events apart from direct marketing of the arts and crafts produced by Seelampur women was organized. A portal www.seelampurmart.org has been set up for the marketing of Seelampur arts, crafts and services. Payment gateway, fulfillment, order servicing have been activated.

Apart from multi-media CDs; UNESCO and NIC local community browser ENRICH (http://enrich.nic.in) a generic, customizable, web-based solution designed to facilitate Seelampur women's knowledge and communication requirements on their own, without requiring any special technical skills. Seelampur women were able to quickly build their own gateway website, enriched with their own local content.

Demonstration

The Seelampur CMC has successfully demonstrated forging of a diverse, multi-sectoral, multi-specialty

Multi-stakeholder Platform (MSP) for public good. Despite the heterogeneous nature of partners; keen desire

to deploy and implement successful ICT4 Development models in public interest has enabled below partners, apart from the Datamation Foundation and the Babool-ulm-Madadrsa to work together on the project:

- Microsoft: Microsoft has tested Hindi operating system amongst the Seelampur community and used test results for their product development.
- CISCO: CISCO is in the process of commencing their basic networking and advanced hardware maintenance program for the Seelampur Community.
- One World South Asia (OWSA): The Seelampur Site is OWSA Open Knowledge Network (OKN) Partner. As OKN hub, the Datamation Foundation in partnership with the local communities has been producing and disseminating vibrant, innovative local knowledge pieces via printed newsletters, web-sites, cinema slides, radio jingles and short films.
- Govt. of India and the Govt. of Delhi: The Govt. of India's Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's PNDT Cell's initiative on controlling sex selection abortions and campaign against female foeticide is being implemented from the Seelampur CMC. The Govt. of Delhi is also a very important stakeholder in this process.

Information on various welfare schemes of the Govt. of Delhi and Govt. of India such as registration of the Life & birth, Property Taxes, Admissions for the distance learning education programs conducted by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Gets accessed and processed at Seelampur CMC.

- National Informatics Centre(NIC): The local community browser Enrich developed by the NIC has been successfully deployed at Seelampur. The Enrich serves the local information needs effectively apart from providing localized inter-community and intra-community information networking opportunities.
- Networking opportunity for the local Artisan Groups and individual Artisans has been rendered from the Seelampur Mart (www.seelampurmart.org)

After successful operation of one year; the CMC is now being run as a commercial Tele-Centre for rendering commercial services viz. typing, DTP, printing, binding, internet surfing and email.

- **Primary sector of ICT4D Project :** Women's Empowerment.
- **Secondary sector of ICT4D Project :** Livelihoods.
- **Project Coverage Area :** Seelampur-Zaffrabad is spread over 20 kms. and has a population of over 6.8 lacs.
- **Services contemplated:** Empowerment, vocational and skills development with the help of ICTs; practical demonstrations, consultations for improving product design; marketing services for the women with the help of

SHG formation. E-Commerce has been facilitated via www.seelampurmart.org

- **Target Group :** Minority Muslim women.
- **Project start date :** March 2003.
- **Number of years Project has been running :** Over two and a half years.

Project Implementation

- **Services actually provided :** Educational and skills development training; vocational skills enhancement and basic literacy. Marketing linkage services have been rendered by organizing exhibitions and events apart from facilitating E-Commerce via www.seelampurmart.org
- **Category of basic Computing implemented in the Project:** Client Server architecture, hand held computers, scanners, printers. Significantly Plotter for facilitating CAD to enable sharpened project designs is contemplated. Design tablets have been provided as well.
- **Category of basic Data Communication implemented in the Project :** Cable internet access.
- **Type of software tools utilized :** Local community browser Enrich, skills development multi - media CDs, Design tools.
- **Innovation if any deployed in the Project :** First ever organized attempt for ICT diffusion in the area reaching out to the Minority community; apart from formation of the women's SHG and linking them to markets are some innovations apart from extensive use of local content development for skills development.
- **Technology Model :** CAD and local community browser driven; Clients and Hand held computers.
- **Business Model :** Initial resources have been committed by UNESCO and Datamation; however the project leverages on the skills, competence of the local women by channelizing these into income generation opportunities.

Metrics and Impact

Several universities have carried out Impact assessment studies including One World South Asia, Development Gateway, (www. developmentgateway.org) the Euro-India Development Cooperation Forum (http://server.metaware.it/EuroIndia2004/) and national media like Outlook (Magazine) and Indian Express (Newspaper)**. The Findings of the evaluation and impact assessment studies report that** ICTs have had a cascading effect on the lives of the women of Seelampur apart from their families in not only empowering them and building their self-esteem, confidence but also in enabling to enjoy better quality of life.

Conclusion and Lessons learnt

The issues of sustainability and replicablity have also been addressed by the project. With the help of Tele-Centre income, sales proceeds of the SHGs selling their arts and crafts apart from the fee paid by the women; the project is sustainable. The project is being replicated in few other parts of the country as well as abroad with the help of participating Islamic Learning Institutions. Project documentation is available at www. datamationfoundation.org / www.unesco.org

The Seelampur project is a step forward in a globalized world for the women from a poor community trying to find their rightful place. Deploying a multi-pronged ICT enabled empowerment and skills enhancement strategy; the project has provided an opportunity for the women to interact with the external world and come in direct contact with the ultimate buyers of their products. ECA

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Datamation Foundation bags Gender & ICT Award 2005

Datamation Foundation will receive a cash prize of USD3,000 in the Gender and ICT Awards ceremony and Knowledge-sharing Session. to be held during the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) Forum on 27-30 October 2005 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Regional News...

E-Learning Studio for Underprivileged Youth

The Learning Studio - a studio to create e-learning modules for underprivileged youth - was inaugurated recently in Hyderabad, in the state of Andhra Pradesh India, by Dr Reddy's Foundation. This is part of project "Disha", a social initiative of Dr.Reddy's Laboratory, a Hyderabad based pharmaceutical major with a presence in over 100 countries worldwide.

The studio is set to create modules for youth in the age group of 13 and 25 years for learning academic and vocational skills at their own pace through onsite and offsite facilitation, making 'Any Time Learning' a reality.

The studio employs advanced technology using VSAT connectivity and internet technology that enables interactive One Way Video and Two Way Audio Collaborative Tools and Learning Management System.

Employer-recognized competency/skill-based certificates will also be provided to the learners through this medium to increase employability in the new economy.

The Learning Studio will be piloted in Andhra Pradesh with already existing government partnerships like UPADHI LABS of AP Urban Services for the Poor (APUSP), MAARPU LABS of the department of youth services and VELUGU LABS of the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP).

At a later stage, it is poised to spread across the country both in rural and urban India.

WOU Opens Doors in September Next Year

The Wawasan Open University (WOU), offering degrees for working adults, will start operating in September next year. Approval for the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia-sponsored (PGRM) university was given by the Higher Education Ministry on July 15.

Funded by philanthropists and corporate bodies, the WOU will offer distance- learning degree courses for about RM17,000. This will give the country's five million working adults with SPM qualifications the chance to further their studies.

At a Press conference in Cheras, WOU interim council chairman Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said no time limit had been set for the students to complete their courses.

Dr Lim, who is also Gerakan president and Energy, Water and Communications Minister, said they were waiting for the courses to be approved by Malaysia's National Accreditation Council.

He said the university would have study centres in Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Johor Baru and Ipoh, with the headquarters in George Town. Professor Emeritus G. Dhanarajan, an international expert in open learning and distance learning, has been appointed chief executive officer of WOU. He is now the director of the Wawasan Open University College. Once the university is running, Dhanarajan will be its vice-chancellor.

WOU will commence operations with three faculties: the School of Business and Administration, School of Science and Technology and School of Foundation Studies. Dr Lim said the university was recruiting staff and expected students to pay RM300 a month for courses.

Students will get their notes as printed material, CD-ROM and via the Internet.

http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Sunday/National/20050807073742/Article/pp_index_html

US and India Universities Collaborate on Engineering E-learning Programme

The University of California (UC) and four other U.S. universities will join with Indian institutions to enhance material engineering science and nanotechnology education in India, over a new satellite e-learning network.

Funding for U.S. participation in the program will come from QUALCOMM Inc., Microsoft Corporation and Cadence Design Systems, Inc.

Although representatives could not confirm precise details of the program, they did state that the focus will initially be on engineering and computer science, but courses will also include materials science and nanotechnology.

Under the agreement, UC Berkeley and UC San Diego, as well as Carnegie Mellon University, Cornell University, the State University of New York at Buffalo, and Case Western Reserve University will encourage engineering faculty to spend a quarter or semester of their sabbatical at **Amrita** University in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. **Amrita** will extend use of its e-learning centre, making it possible to be beamed over Edusat, a satellite launched by the Indian Space Research Organization to transmit educational programming to multiple educational institutions throughout India.

Composed of four relatively new campuses, **Amrita** is established by a humanitarian organization, Mata Amritanandamayi Math, which is also developing undergraduate and graduate engineering courses to be delivered over Edusat, a satellite launched by the Indian Space Research Organization to transmit educational programming. Other Indian partners in the project include the Government of India, and the country's Department of Science and Technology.

Changing Roles of Media and Society in Asia

More than 400 participants from all parts of Asia, including academics, media industry professionals, government media agencies, policymakers, regulators, UN agencies, donors, research groups, civil society organisations, independent consultants and students engaged in a four day debate on

various dimensions of the role of media in the transformation of society in Asia, at Beijing, from July 18-22,2005.

The focus was on the impact of the media on society across Asia, and how media organisations are changing in response to changes in the global political, economic and technological landscape. Over four days, a wide variety of topics were discussed in plenary and parallel sessions through both theoretical papers and case studies.

A plenary and a parallel session were devoted to the theme of Media and Education. The sessions explored, through case studies, the implementation issues and the training needs for effective use of media in education and development in Asia.

Promoting Girls' Education in South Asia—UNGEI

With the purpose of building a network of like-minded agencies working for the Millennium Development Goals and for furthering girls' education as part of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) brought together a group of multilateral agencies and several NGOs to discuss a framework and Plan of Action for joint initiatives on September 13th at New Delhi.

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Its goal is to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and to ensure that by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to all levels of education.

UNGEI, the EFA flagship for girls' education, is a partnership that embraces the United Nations system, governments, donor countries, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, and communities and families. UNGEI provides stakeholders with a platform for action and galvanizes their efforts to get girls into school.

Global Mega Universities Network Meets in Delhi

India's Indira Gandhi National Open University hosted the international summit of the Global Mega Universities Network in Delhi from September 23 to 25, 2005. Participation of more than 50 elite institutions and educational leaders enriched this meet which was inaugurated by Dr. Arjun Singh, India's Minister for Human Resource Development. The theme of the summit was ***Cross Border Delivery: Experiences Of Mega Universities.***

The Global Mega Universities Network (GMUNET) to promote mutual understanding and academic solidarity was set up at the 2003 Summit in Shanghai, China in response to UNESCO's call for international cooperation in distance and open learning to achieve the goal of 'Education for All'. The priority areas for cooperation include need assessment, curriculum design and development with particular emphasis on Information and Communication Technologies and strategies for their use. Other areas are joint programmes at certificate and degree levels and exchange of courseware.

Presidents, Rectors and Vice-Chancellors of Mega Universities of the world met to discuss opportunities, challenges faced by distance and open learning systems and to consider concrete proposals for cooperation between their universities. ECA

Worth While Web...

On Web Analysis Software

http://www.statcounter.com/: A free yet reliable invisible web tracker, highly configurable hit counter and real-time detailed web stats.

http://www.metasun.com/: Serving up the same old end-of-the-month stats is stale and outdated. MetaTraffic, a popular web analytics tool, provides live traffic statistics answering your questions quickly such as what ad campaigns are being converted into buyers at your web site.

http://www.onestat.com/: Advanced and powerful web analytics to track in-depth visitor behavior, commerce, leads and conversions.

http://www.analog.cx/: Analog shows you the usage patterns on your web server. It's ultra-fast, scalable, highly configurable, reports in 32 languages, works on any operating system and free.

http://www.shinystat.com/: Helps to efficiently allocate resources for effective site promotion.

http://www.urchin.com/: Urchin Web Analytics shows you how people found your site, how they explored it, and how you can enhance the visitor experience.

http://www.clicktracks.com/: A web analytics program that uses a radically different architecture, making it easy for marketers to perform desktop data mining activities that are difficult or impossible to implement using traditional web analysis methods.

http://www.webtrends.com/: Accelerate your web ROI with the industry standard in web analytics. ECA

Country Focus...

Sri Lanka

Special ICT Learning Packages for Schools: Accelerated Programme for ICT Development

The Sri Lankan Education Ministry has launched an ICT programme for both senior and junior school students and is developing an extensive plan for IT development in the school system, to be implemented from 2005 to 2010. As part of the ICT programme, teaching of General Information Technology in the advanced level classes will be strengthened, with a new national examination for Grade 12 students.

Teaching General Information Technology in the Advanced Level classes will be strengthened and accelerated with a new national examination scheduled for August this year for Grade 12 students. Similarly, a new subject at the Ordinary Level will be introduced from January 2006 with IT as an option, a release by the Ministry of Education said.

With the new curriculum revision, Computer Science and IT subjects will be introduced from Grade 1 onwards. In Grade 6 to 9 activity rooms and science rooms will be introduced in all Navodya and National schools from 2006 with computers and CD packs. Similarly, primary classrooms in these schools will have "Science/Maths Corners" where ICT concepts will be introduced through special learning packages.

The Ministry of Education has invited content providers from the non-government and corporate sectors to contribute towards its efforts in the preparation of teaching-learning materials in all subjects in the primary and secondary school system, using IT as a learning tool the message said.

http://www.dailynews.lk/2005/06/16/news33.htm

Bangladesh

Using Traditional Boats and River Networks to Deliver Access to Information Technology: Bangladeshi Organization Receives Award of US $1 million

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation presented its 2005 Access to Learning Award of US $1 million to Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha, a non-governmental organization in Bangladesh, for its pioneering approach to bridging the digital divide and its commitment to providing free public access to computers and the Internet. Through the use of indigenous boats converted into mobile libraries, schools, and the Mobile Internet Educational Units on Boats program, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha provides educational services, access to technology, and computer training to poor communities in a Northern Bangladesh watershed. The boats, which anchor at remote villages, rely on generators or solar energy and mobile phones for Internet access.

"All our program activities are concentrated in and around the rivers using a familiar vehicle for people to approach technology. Our boat libraries are crucial to the progress of the villages along the river basins," says Abul Hasanat Mohammed Rezwan, executive director of Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha and founder of the boat project.

Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha is dedicated to alleviating poverty among the poorest people in the Nandakuja-Atrai-Boral Watershed, serving 86,500 families and an area covering over 240 kilometers crossed by thousands of rivers, tributaries and streams. The Access to Learning Award will enable the organization to sustain its services and expand programs to meet an increasing demand.

"Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha is bringing technology to people most in need," said Martha Choe, director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries Program. "This organization's perseverance and ingenuity is a testament to the value of, and demand for, public access computing throughout the world. Its efforts will have long-lasting impact for generations to come."

Relying on skilled volunteers, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha educates men, women and children on issues ranging from agricultural practices and to micro enterprise and literacy. Farmers learn about strategies for productive and sustainable farming and the ecological hazards of pesticides. Throughout the year, they are able to connect with educators via onboard e-mail and check current farm prices online to remain competitive in the local market. "Seeing a computer, let alone touching it, was beyond our wildest imagination," said Abdul Azad, a farmer who travels an hour to the docked boat library from the remote village of Kalinagar.

Students who would otherwise be unable to attend school during the monsoon season continue their education through the year using the libraries' onboard field staff. With literacy rates in Bangladesh at only 42 percent, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha is making a significant impact on educating young people, especially girls. In fact, over 70 percent of the program's beneficiaries are women. In a highly competitive job market coupled with pervasive poverty, student participants are eager to learn technological skills they hope will translate into a career later on. ECA

Sourced from http://intranet.col.org/

CLIR Press Release (http://www.clir.org/news/pressrelease/05gates_pr.html)

CEMCA Bulletin Board...

Moving On...

Mr. Dalip Kumar Tetri, Head (Finance and Administration) at CEMCA has returned to Indira Gandhi National Open University, his parent organization from September 1, 2005 as Registrar. We wish him well on his well deserved promotion. CEMCA looks forward to working with him, in his new position.

Dr. Pankaj Khare, Programme Officer, CEMCA has also returned to his parent organization Indira Gandhi National Open University from September 1, 2005 to his erstwhile position as Deputy Director. He is now with the International Division; where we wish him well and look forward to taking the rich relationship between CEMCA and IGNOU forward.

CEMCA welcomes Mr. Nanda Kumar. He joins CEMCA as its Head (Finance and Administration) from October 1, 2005. A chartered accountant by profession, Mr. Kumar brings with him over twenty years of experience both in private and public sectors. He takes over from Mr. Dalip Kumar Tetri, who returned to IGNOU as its new Registrar.

COL Institute on Open Schooling at NIOS

Five countries were represented through their participants at the ten day COL Institute for Officers of Open Learning of five Commonwealth countries at India's National Institute of Open Schooling from September 11th to 22nd, 2005. Participants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ghana. and Sri Lanka interacted with the various officers and divisions of the NIOS, visited regional and study centres in Rajasthan and several other open learning institutions of India, including IGNOU.

Participants were highly appreciative of the exposure to the experience of NIOS and noted specially the quality assurance procedures in curriculum development and the pioneering on demand examination system developed by NIOS.

CEMCA Attachments at the TOPNZ, New Zealand

In a unique inter-regional cooperation and collaboration, CEMCA supported the attachment of two academics from the NIOS for a two week attachment to study and observe the technical and vocational courses of The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand in July 2005. Drs. Mamta Srivastava and Rana Sanjap Pratap Singh have returned to their parent organization with new ideas on expanding the reach of technical and vocational offerings of the NIOS in India.

COL Workshop on Research Methodology in Distance Education

COL conducted a workshop on research in distance education, jointly with Open University of Malaysia (OUM). The workshop conducted from September 19-24,2005, on Research Methodology in Distance Education was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor and the Additional Director General, Ministry of Higher Education. There were 38 participants from 12 Malaysian institutions and of these 16 were women. The workshop used the PREST (Practitioners Researchers Evaluation and Skills Training) materials as a useful background resource and consisted of presentations and technical sessions followed by group work. The objectives of the workshop were for participants to:

- Identify suitable research problems/areas
- Undertake research reviews in the area of interest
- Design suitable instruments for DE research
- Prepare effective research/ project proposals
- Prepare successful research / project reports

This workshop was the fourth in the series of similar events organised in the region, namely, for India at BRAOU, Hyderabad; for Sri Lankan academics at the OUSL and for West Africans at RETRIDOL, Nigeria.

The expected outcomes of the workshop are for OUM to:

- Carry out similar training independently
- Publish the research reports
- Enhance the quality of individual/institutional research.

PAN COMMONWEALTH FORUM-4

Smart Tips...

The cell phone can be a great convenience, keeping us in touch with colleagues and loved ones wherever and whenever we please. But more often than not, this dream of state of wireless bliss can turn into a nightmare, with poor reception and huge phone bills. Smart Tips looks at some emerging cellular technologies and smart ways of choosing one that works for you.

Choosing the Right Cellular Technology

Using your mobile (cell phone) while travelling can be expensive. Long distance charges and roaming fees for accessing another phone company's system can make your cell phone bill skyrocket.

There are a number of ways to minimise these expenses:

❖ **Switch to SMS:** International roaming is very affordable if you stick to SMS (text messaging). On departure, just forward all calls to voicemail and leave a message that you will only receive text messages while traveling. You will pay about 15 cents (US) per message on the Vodafone network in over 160 countries (you would need to check which of your local service providers links to this network).

❖ **E-mail efficiently:** E-mail on cell phones and similar instruments such as PDAs/Blackberries is a budget killer at about US$40 per megabyte on international roaming. Avoid it if you want to save money, unless you are using 3G technology (see "The emergence of 3G" on this page).

❖ **Make sure you have the right phone:** Check with your cell phone provider to make sure your phone will work where you're going. While GSM/GPRS networks are used most widely around the world, CDMA networks will work only in specific geographic locations. Go to your service provider's web site and research this in advance.

❖ **Purchase a calling card**: Calling cards offer low per-minute rates. It is less expensive to access voicemail messages by using your calling card at a public payphone or other land-line. You can purchase in-country calling cards, or use ones issued by your home telephone company.

❖ **Get a second phone**: Some frequent travelers buy or hire a phone that will work at their destination. Look for a GSM tri-band or quad-band phone that is "unlocked" or "un-coded", so you can insert a prepaid local SIM card that provides a certain amount of air time and long distance charges. You can buy the cards at a newsstand or local shop when you arrive at your destination.

❖ **Leave your phone at home:** The surest way to save money on cell phone charges when you're traveling is to not even have your cell phone with you – then you won't be tempted to turn it on or answer a call.

The Emergence of 3G

An emerging technology that bears watching is called "3G" – third-generation mobile phone technologies. 3G technologies can transmit high-speed data through cell phones, PDAs or other mobile devices, thereby reducing air-time charges. It is already being introduced in some countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. 3G promises to reduce the cost of e-mails and data sent over cellular networks from around US$8 per megabite to about 10 cents per megabite.

Your choice of which cellular technology to buy will depend largely on where you live and where you travel. The more countries you visit and expect to contact, the more basic you need to keep your technology. Some communication systems use GPRS cellular networks, which are likely to cost you $1 to $3 per message coming in or going out, depending on length, and are limited to just over 60 countries world-wide. The short messaging system that has been in use since just after the release of GSM phones ("1G") still only costs a few cents per message and moves freely between over 160 countries. Sometimes older technology just makes sense.

If you are planning to move around a small piece of the world where 3G has been implemented, this is probably the way to go – provided your correspondents all use cell phones or e-mail. It is possible to use a PC card in your notebook/laptop to connect to the Internet via cellular networks. If you are planning to purchase one of these in your country, check very carefully on the prices you will be paying to access networks, especially on international roaming. If the service defaults to GPRS when traveling internationally, you may be paying as much as $40 per megabyte.

Cell Phone Radiation Levels: What it All Means

According to the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA), SAR or *specific absorption rate* is "a way of measuring the quantity of radiofrequency (RF) energy that is absorbed by the body." For a phone to pass FCC certification, that phone's maximum SAR level must be *less than* 1.6W/kg (watts per kilogram). In Europe, the level is capped at 2W/kg.

While research abounds on the harmful effects of cell phone radiation, and some tests have shown that cell phone radiofrequency (RF) could accelerate cancer in laboratory animals and that they can affect internal pacemakers, there is no conclusive or demonstrated evidence that they cause adverse health effects in humans. Interested readers can check out this site for more information http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-6602_7-5020355-1.html ECA

Sourced from Edtech News, Connections, News from Commonwealth of Learning June 2005 Vol 10. No.2 and Internet based sources

Research Shows...

With Internet speed and bandwidth increasing every day, more institutions are using websites as their way of promoting an institutional image and of reaching out to and networking with wider audiences. Web analysis techniques help an organization assess the effectiveness of this outreach mechanism. Using data from CEMCA website, Research Shows focuses on what web analysis, as a research tool, can reveal about usage patterns.

Pankaj Khare

Web Analysis: Application and Implications

With the advent of internet and its rapid growth, institutions and businesses have come to rely on it as an easy, fast and cost-effective way of sharing information about themselves to widespread audiences. Today efficient Internet tools make the task of creating and hosting web-pages easier than ever before. On-line instant updating of information has also become simpler. Thus Internet presence has become a must for almost everyone with a product, service or an idea. However, once an institution creates and hosts their web-site, it hopes that the intended people are coming to the site and finding the kind of information they seek. The way a website is linked to searches, so as to direct information seekers to the desired information is an important aspect of web hosting.

Searching for relevant information in the shortest possible time with accuracy is an art in itself. What search engine is used, what search strings (or key words) are given to locate the site and later, how information is collected or browsed i.e.how one wanders around other links are person-centric. A single search task often can be divided into two parts: first, one looks for an adequate starting page, second, the final page is found by using means that the starting page offers (Smith et al., 1997). Roughly one fifth of the users always choose the means they suppose to be most adequate in the respective situation without a certain preference (Nielsen 2000). As of date, there are a limited number of knowledge finders who follow a given link to obtain guided information.

In order to make web searches effective, it is important for knowledge providers to understand their users, their preferences, the strengths and weaknesses of the web-site, the usefulness of the knowledge being hosted and its updating schedule. The obvious starting point is the objective of hosting a site, the mission and then mandate of the institution. A set of questions that need answers might be:

- How many people are visiting the website?
- Where do the visitors come from?
- Which pages do they look at most?
- What type of information are they interested in?
- During what hours, days, weeks, months, quarters and years are they particularly active?
- What kind of technology and tools do they use to view the website?

Answers to these provide the institution with an opportunity to predict on-line user behaviour and to cater to their needs more efficiently. Making the task possible are a host of Web Analysing tools available today. Table 1 provides a brief list of tools based on open source software (http://www.jalizer.com/webanalyzer.php).

Data Mining the Website

After putting a web analyzer in place, extracting from the huge pool of information, getting insights into on-line behaviour and applying the knowledge to optimise effectiveness are the next set of important tasks to be performed.

Some of the questions raised earlier are answered here, taking the example of user data from the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre's website, www.cemca.org.

The very first question that a knowledge provider is curious about is the rate of browsing. This can be obtained as day, week or month-wise hits, number of files browsed and pages actually seen. Table 2 is a compilation of averages on these, taken for a one year period.

For the year under consideration, average daily hits are 1,309, the monthly average is 37,852. In a day, end users were exploring 964 files (28,041 files per month) and browsing 243 pages (6,915 per month).

While this information gives a general overall picture, it does not provide specific information about the usage pattern. For example, it does not indicate who the users are and what they are seeking. The tools of web analysis do provide micro-level knowledge that is illustrated here using the user data for the month of July 2005 as an example.

In the month of July 2005, the site received 33,978 hits with an average of 45 hits per hour (maximum 248 hits) or 1,100 hits per day. The analysis reveals that maximum hits are made during 6 to 9 am, Indian Standard Time or around 6 to 9 pm USA time. During this period, an average of approximately 42,267 KBytes/day were downloaded.

A closer look at the top 30 pages gave an indication of what the visitors to the site actually took from the site. Forty percent of the hits were for the quarterly Educomm Asia, including both past and current issues. Other publications of CEMCA got

Table 1 : **Popular Web Analysis Software Currently in Use**

Software	Homepage hosted by	Type	Operating System
Analog	University of Cambridge Statistical Laboratory	free, Open Source	C/C++ Sources, Unix, Linux, Windows, OS/2, etc.
Report Magic for Analog	Wadsack-Allen	Add-On for Analog	Add-On
Funnel Web Analyzer	Quest Software Inc.	Trial-Version	Windows, Mac, Linux, FreeBSD, Solaris
Ixsite Web Analyzer	Ixacta, Inc		Windows
Web Analyzer	InContext Systems	Trial-Version	Windows
The Webalizer	Webalizer	free	C/C++ Sources, Windows, Linux, Mac, OS/2, Unix, etc.
AWstats	OpenSource Project	free (GPL), Open Source	Perl, CGI
BBStats	CAPSI		PHP
HTTP-analyze		free, Open Source	Unix, Windows
NetChart		free, Open Source	Windows
OpenWebScope			Windows
Relax (Referrer Analysis)	ktmatu	free (GPL)	Perl
Surfstats Log Analyzer	SurfStats	Trial-Version	Windows
Webtrax	Tom Van Vleck	free	Perl
wwwstat	Roy FieldingDepartment of Information and Computer Science, University of California, Irvine	free	Perl
gwstat		Add-On	Perl
WebTrends	NetIQ	Trial-Version	Windows
Wusage	Boutell.com Inc.	Trial-Version	Unix, Linux, Windows
WebSuxess [de, en]	exody	Trial-Version	Windows
LogFile Analyse	Jan Winkler	free	Windows

about the same number of hits at 38 per cent. Among the publications, the most popular were the Teleconference Manual (15 per cent), followed by Multimedia for Teacher Developers (12 per cent) and E-Learning (11 per cent). About 19 percent of the hits were to the CEMCA Home Page only.

The entry pattern of the users in the Website shows that more than 50 per cent users enter through various pages of the Newsletter rather than hitting the home page directly. They also exit the same way rather than visiting the home page. This provides an important insight into on-line user behaviour–which is, that they use search engines to locate the information of specific interest to them and limit themselves to that knowledge rather than browse an entire site. This highlights the importance of linking CEMCA to various global search engines, thus enabling wider access.

Analysis of location of the users over a period of six months, namely February to July 2005, indicate that nearly half the time (49 percent) the location is unknown or unresolved. Of the remainder, the largest group was from USA (21 percent) followed by South Asia (12 percent), a region that CEMCA is mandated to cover. Other parts of the world from where the CEMCA site was visited were the United Kingdom (4 percent), Canada (3 percent) and Australia (2 percent). There were about six percent of the hits from its host country, India. Among the users were non-profit organisations, institutions, and individuals. This data indicates that while CEMCA is mandated to work in Commonwealth Asia region, its knowledge resources are used by people all over the world. Thus micro analysis provides insights into user data that can help refine or shape new policy initiatives.

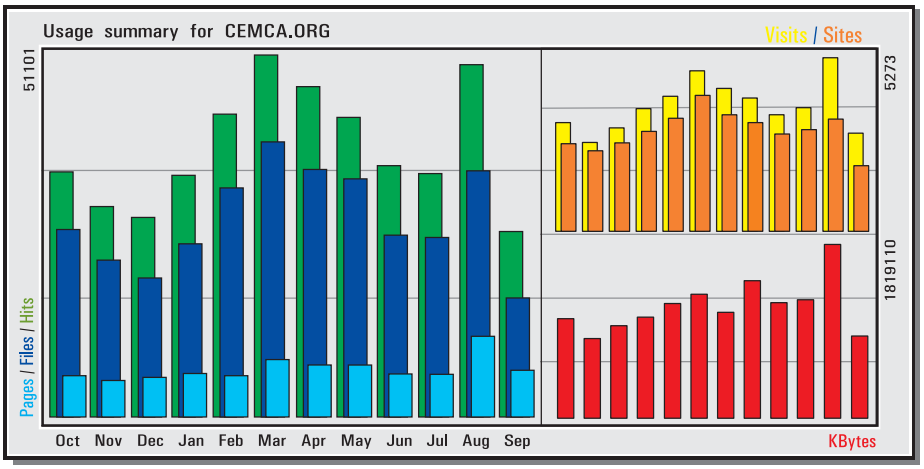
Conclusion

The purpose of maintaining a website is to increase outreach, develop an institutional image and to network widely in the most resource-efficient manner. Often institutions maintain

Table 2 : **CEMCA Hits Over a Period of One Year**

Summary by Month										
Month	**Daily Average**						**Monthly Totals**			
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	**KBytes**	Visits	Pages	Files	**Hits**
Sep 2005	1628	1067	410	179	1906	821824	2878	6569	17075	26055
Aug 2005	1598	1102	366	170	3275	1819110	5273	11360	34167	49560
Jul 2005	1096	825	202	115	3004	1239985	3578	6266	25585	33978
Jun 2005	1163	863	202	110	2812	1185111	3302	6076	25911	34905
May 2005	1368	1065	235	127	3197	1392920	3955	7305	33040	42421
Apr 2005	1547	1172	248	138	3337	1076493	4164	7451	35166	46424
Mar 2005	1648	1281	262	150	3873	1298643	4680	8133	39730	51101
Feb 2005	1528	1164	241	140	3301	1160757	3933	6764	32597	42810
Jan 2005	1090	792	197	115	2896	1048854	3590	6125	24569	33804
Dec 2004	916	638	183	100	2598	960218	3113	5686	19802	28420
Nov 2004	995	741	175	88	2402	833462	2661	5278	22254	29872
Oct 2004	1125	858	192	103	2670	1039173	3193	5971	26603	34879
Totals						**13876550**	**44320**	**82984**	**336499**	**454229**

Graphical Presentation of Usage Pattern



websites, but rarely undertake analyses of the site to mine important information. While the purpose of using existing tools is to provide valuable information for decision making, it can also help identify faults and weaknesses in the site, and to analyze the organization's work more closely.

In the case of CEMCA, the process of using existing web tools has helped understand the audiences better and to cater to their general and specific needs more efficiently with very little additional human or financial resources. For instance, the user- statistics suggest that CEMCA should continue with its development and publication of its knowledge resources, as users seem to find these to be of value. If one compares the cost of a web analysis to the cost of the field based survey one can immediately see the effectiveness of web analysis.

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Corrigendum

In our last issue of Educomm Asia, (Vol.10 No. 4, June 2005), **Research Shows** "Effectiveness of Developed e-Content Portal in Terms of Achievement and Reaction of Electronic Media Students, the last of the Major Findings should read ***"Gender produced no significant effect on achievement of students i.e. there was no significant difference between male and female students in terms of achievement***, instead of "Gender produced no significant effect on achievement of students i.e. there was significant difference between male and female students in terms of achievement." We regret the error.

Web Resource

European Federation for Information Technologies in Agriculture, Food and the Environment (EFITA) ICT in Agriculture: Perspectives of Technological Innovation E. Gelb, A. Offer

K. Balasubramanian

ICT in Agriculture: Perspectives of Technological Innovations is a collection of interesting articles edited by E.Gelb and A.Offer. This work is a joint effort of European Federation of IT in Agriculture (EFITA) and the Centre for Agricultural Economic Research, Rehovot, Israel and hence the perspectives are more oriented towards developed countries of Europe, USA and Israel. For a reader from a developing country, this book does not offer the vocabularies familiar in ICT4D literature. Nonetheless, conclusions of many articles in the book are relevant for developing countries.

The work has made an attempt to develop a holistic picture of ICT in agriculture. Farm level production, decision-making and networking have received substantial attention and they have been elaborated on with historical perspectives. Some of the articles are heavily infused with modeling which is commonly seen in the literature of agricultural economics. But these articles make limited efforts to link ICT with modeling and decision-making process.

In his introductory chapter, Andy Offer describes the evolution of ICT in agriculture, which is similar to what ZEDDCOMM (2004) portrayed about the progress of e-learning in North America.

The introductory chapter argues that e-trading which began with fanfare and hopes busted out with dot.coms and now it is resurfacing with "small is beautiful" theme. Offer argues, "*My perception is that there is still a fundamental issue with ICT adoption in agriculture – and it applies in most other industries as well – and this is the lack of perceived benefit to the user. I have described the 'Benefit vs. Effort' rule on many occasions but as promoters and suppliers of this technology, we still tend to ignore this simple truism*" and this truism has lot of validity for ICT4D in developing countries.

Friedrich Kuhlmann emphasizes on the need for developing ICT based decision-supporting system in agriculture and looks forward to the support of governmental agencies and research foundations. The use of telematics in French agriculture has been well described by Mick Harkin, who argues *that the most critical task facing service providers is determining real user needs. Ideally, there should be demonstrable benefits to the farmer in cost, time and effort over the current way of doing things or in undertaking new activities*. The articles on use of ICT in precision agriculture, water management and dairy farming describe the need for understanding the demonstrable benefits for the user community. Some of these articles argue that the potentials of ICT is well realized among large farmers and large dairy groups whereas the cost-benefit relationship is yet to be established among small farmers. A farmer claims, *I've learned more about growing cotton from my computer than my classroom teacher or my extension advisor taught me*" after using the ICT based decision-support system called GOSSYM-COMAX for cotton farmers. But, as Jeremy Lambert argues, such efforts require public funding since these efforts may be economically viable for farmers but not financially feasible for developers. The personal memoir of Abraham I Lobowitz illustrates the "social construction" of AGRIS (The International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology) and the problems of identifying and understanding the user community for AGRIS.

Developing countries have received attention in one chapter, which argues that ICT should focus on livelihood issues and it can play a major role in facilitating extension activities. Other articles focus on response of the farmers' community towards ICT and these articles emphasize the need for identifying user needs, capacity building, and simpler software packages for promoting ICT in agriculture.

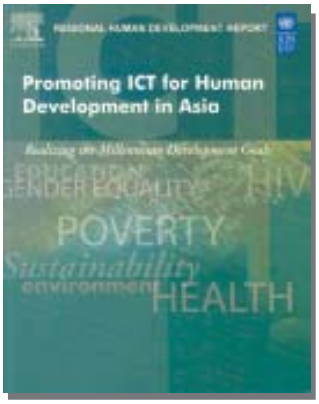
Phase	Period	Characteristic	Dominant Theme
I	Late 80s and early 90s	Discovery	ICT in agriculture is a panacea
II	Late 90s	Confusion	How do we relate it to agriculture?
III	2000	Rejection	ICT in agriculture does not work
IV	2004-2005	Renewal	Use it strategically and appropriately

Based on ZEDDCOMM (2004)

Thus, identifying the user community, understanding its needs, analyzing the cost-demonstrable benefit relations and capacity building are some of the general themes, which are emanating from these articles. Even though most of the articles

Contd. on p. 22

Book



Regional Human Development Report Promoting ICT for Human Development in Asia: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals

Published for United Nations Development Programme (2005) New Delhi: Reed Elsevier India Private Limited.

Binod C. Agrawal

This is an excellent publication containing country-wise studies of China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Each case study was prepared under a lead researcher of that country and under the research coordination of Indrajit Banerjee of AMIC, Singapore. C.P. Chandrasekhar acted as Principal Consultant of the study.

In the preface of the report, Arthur C. Clarke discusses what is expected from ICT for promoting human development and asserts, "one big challenge, therefore, is to get ICT to solve real life problems without creating any new ones. In the early part of the last century, Mahatma Gandhi proposed a simple test for the effectiveness of any development activity: find out how the last man would be affected by it. We should adapt this as a test for ICT in development: how will the last man, woman and child be reached, touched and transformed by these marvellous communication tools?" (Page vi). The attempt of each lead researcher has been to capture the spirit of Clarke's sentiments in the development process.

This report brings out a systematic assessment of the role and impact of ICT on human development in selected countries of Asia, especially two of the world's most populated and rapidly developing countries – China and India. ICT has been conceived as a tool to fight poverty; though at the moment it is not evenly distributed in the Asian countries barely touching many. The real effort is to bridge the digital divide urgently.

The report has touched all the eight Millennium Development Goals and has attempted to assess the role that ICT can play in the human development of Asia in a holistic manner. The authors believe "that holistic human development is, in the final analysis, a prerequisite for sustainable growth"(Page 3). Broadly, the report is divided into 13 chapters. It starts out by mapping the human development performance in Asia (Chapter 1). Chapter 2 details and assesses the major goals and targets set out in the Millennium Declaration and the progress made in the Asia Pacific region. Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the ways in which ICT can be utilised to facilitate human development. Country-specific surveys have indicated uneven ICT penetration, which was considered far from satisfactory (Chapter 4).

The most significant outcome of the Report relates to the preparation of a composite development index on the use of ICT on which nine countries were ranked in terms of development for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (Chapter 5). The Report suggests that the national ICT policies of the selected countries have been sensitive to human development, which are reflected in their regulatory framework. It must be pointed out that Appendix III, where data for the construction of indices pertaining to ICT were provided, should be treated with care, since comparable data from each country are not available. The remaining chapters (7 to 12) provide discussion and analysis of each of the Millennium Development Goals.

It has been argued that ICT can directly contribute to poverty reduction either through employment generation effects of its diffusion or through its effect on enhancing returns from economic activities. Illustrations of ICT applications from agriculture, employment, credit, government services, to mention a few have been discussed and it is recommended that local languages and, to the extent possible, visually oriented voice interfaces must be used to help the poor to use ICT effectively.

The potential benefits of ICT in education are manifold; it allows interaction without temporal and special constraints to both teachers and learners. Successful use of ICT for education requires clearly outlined long- and short-term objectives for development of ICT. Several Asian governments have initiated ICT programmes to exploit benefits. Country-specific studies have provided a number of projects in the Asian countries where ICT is being used for the promotion of education without breaking cultural traditions, especially among women.

ICT's role in halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and to facilitate a two-way information exchange in healthcare has been documented in the Report along with its importance in remote consultation, diagnosis and treatment. At the same time, the limitations and constraints of human and institutional capacities have been discussed for the potential use of ICT in healthcare, especially in the poor countries. The major future issue related to development is environmental sustainability, especially in Asia, in which there is still a measure of ambiguity in the use of ICT on the environment. The authors believe that ICT applications in environment create opposition for government to ensure public access to environmental information and broaden public participation in decision-making. A number of applications of GIS and satellite remote sensing have been discussed from country-specific reports.

Another significant discussion centres on substantial gender disparities in the course of economic development the world over, in which Asia is no exception. It recommends mainstreaming the gender problem in development and has examined how ICT can and should be used to bring about gender equality or empowerment in Asia. At the moment, there is a gender divide that has been affecting the status of women throughout Asia. It has also contributed to the digital divide. Therefore, women's access and capacity to use the benefits of ICT are constrained and restricted by cultural and social norms. ICT use for women would help provide insights into women's issues and create awareness among women regarding their rights and choices.

It is for the first time that such a comparable analysis has been presented together to give a comparative perspective of the use of ICT in human development. The technical content, the painstaking efforts in collecting data and the editing of the Report are praiseworthy. Wider circulation of the Report will help a large number of Asian countries to learn and replicate appropriate models of ICT for development in their respective countries. Since ICT applications in development is very recent in origin; authors have not based their recommendations on any evaluation. Hence, it remains a recommendation whose real utility will only be known in the years to come. ECA

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Contd. from p.20

talked about the cost-benefit relationship, none of the articles made an effort to describe the perspectives in this regard. In particular, the role of ICT in reducing social and economic transaction costs in agriculture has not been adequately dealt with. The role of ICT in agricultural education and learning, particularly concepts like e-learning, could have received more focus. Issues such as digital divide (which are still relevant to developing countries) have not received attention.

In spite of some of these shortfalls, the book still offers interesting perspectives on ICT in agriculture and it will be a worthwhile collection for development workers all over the world since most of the conclusions are relevant to the developing world. ECA

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ZEDDCOMM 2003: An Overview of e-learning in Canadian Agriculture and Agri-business. Agriculture and Agrifood, Canada

E. Gelb, A. Offer 2004: *ICT in Agriculture: Perspectives of Technological Innovation.*
http://topics.developmentgateway.org/ elearning/rc/ItemDetail.do~1039686?intcmp=7

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Report

Thwarted Innovation : What Happened to e-learning and Why

Robert Zemsky and William F. Massy Zemsky, R.; Massy, W.F. / Learning Alliance for Higher Education, USA , 2004

Why did the USA's Boom in E-learning Go Bust?

This report examines the debate over the success or failure of e-learning in the USA. It tracked the changing attitudes about, and perceptions of e-learning by faculty and technical staff over 18 months across a wide sample of US colleges and universities each with substantial investments in e-learning. It also mapped the changing supply of e-learning providers and products. The study debunks three failed assumptions:

- ***If we build it they will come:*** Not so; despite massive investments in both hardware and software, there has yet to emerge a viable market for e-learning products. Only course management systems (principally BlackBoard and WebCT)—and PowerPoint lectures (the electronic equivalent of clip-art) have been widely employed. At the institutions participating in the study, more than 80 percent of their enrollments in "online" courses came from students already on their campuses.
- ***The kids will take to e-learning like ducks to water***: Not quite; students do want to be connected, but principally to one another; they want to be entertained, principally by games, music, and movies; and they want to present themselves and their work. E-learning at its best is seen as a convenience and at its worst as a distraction—what one student called "The fairy tale of e-learning."
- ***E-learning will force a change in the way we teach:*** Not by a long shot; only higher education's bureaucratic processes have only proved more immutable to fundamental change. Even when they use e-learning products and devices, most

faculty still teach as they were taught—that is, they stand in the front of a class giving lectures intended to provide the basic knowledge the students need. Hence, we see the success of course management systems and Power Point — software packages that focus on the distribution of materials rather than on teaching itself.

The report concludes that the rush to e-learning produced more capacity than any rational analysis would have said was needed. In a fundamental way, the boom-bust cycle in e-learning stemmed from an attempt to compress the process of innovation itself. The entrepreneurs' enthusiasm produced too many new ventures pushing too many untested products: products that, in their initial form, turned out not to deliver as much value as promised. E-learning took off before people really knew how to use it: e-learning will become pervasive only when faculty change how they teach, not before. ECA

Sourced from: Information Resource Centre, Commonwealth of Learning, email: irc@col.org

Rescheduled

Regional Workshop on Demystifying E-Learning

Due to unavoidable circumstances the two regional workshops that CEMCA was to conduct have been rescheduled.

Original Dates	Rescheduled Dates	Last dates for registration
In collaboration with National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), New Delhi November 25-29, 2005	January 30-February 3, 2006 at Delhi	December 31, 2005
In collaboration with Osmania University, Hyderabad December 1-5, 2005	February 06-10, 2006 at Hyderabad	January 15, 2006

We regret any inconvenience caused due to the postponements.

Readers Write...

Thank you for sending me the Quarterly Journal Educomm Asia-I find it enjoyable to read and the information helps in keeping up to date with the region's activities. I do appreciate the journal-as a consultant instructional designer in my own business, I look forward to future associations.

There is an error in the mailing lable which probably results in it taking longer to reach me.

Regards,

Kathy Cavanagh

2/9 Warigal Street, Bribie Island Qld, Australia

Thank you Kathy. We have corrected the address in our records - Editors

Dear Professor Usha Vyasulu Reddi,

Wish to inform you that I have been a regular reader of Educomm Asia Quarterly of CEMCA. I could not track some issues as I was away in the USA for a year and have returned to Hyderabad recently. I request you kindly continue sending me the quarterly, which benefits me a lot. If possible kindly send me the back issues from September 2003.

Kind regards,

Dr. P. Satyanarayana

Former Regional Director (IGNOU)

We will try to locate and send you the back issues but would like to inform you that all the issues on our website www.cemca.org - Editors

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CEMCA, a centre of **Commonwealth *of* Learning** (COL) Vancouver, Canada, is an international agency.

CEMCA's mission is to promote the application of media and technology in education in Asian Commonwealth countries. *For more information,*

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Forthcoming Events...

International Conference on Open and Distance Education: Open and Distance Education in Global Environment: Opportunities for Collaboration, 19-23 November, New Delhi, India.

Theme: Open and Distance Education in Global Environment

Emphasis: Through a series of Core and extension events and pre-conference workshops, the delegates will debate, deliberate, discus and collate issues, challenges and concerns relating to internationalization and networking, technology enabled education, quality and accreditation, and distance education and development at all levels of education and training.

Dates: November 19-23,2005

Venue: New Delhi, India

Organiser: International Council for Open and Distance Learning (ICDE)

Host: IGNOU

Conference website: http://www.ignou.ac.in/ICDE2005

E-mail: ICDE2005@ingou.ac.in

13th International Conference on Computers in Education (ICCE 005), 28th November to 2nd December, Singapore.

Theme **:** Towards sustainable and scalable educational innovations informed by the learning sciences"- Sharing research results and exemplary innovations

Emphasis : Learning sciences; Socially informed design; Collaborative and group learning; Learning systems platforms and architectures; Modeling and representation; Intelligent tutoring and scaffolding; Interaction design and novel interfaces; e-Learning and Knowledge Management and Leadership in e-Education.

Organiser : Asia-Pacific Society for Computers in Education (APSCE), National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, National University of Singapore and Institute of Infocomm Research.

Host : National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

Web address : http://www.icce2005.servy.net/icce2005.htm

4th International Conference on Informationa Technology in Asia 2005, CITA'05, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, 12 - 15 December 2005

Theme: Pervasive and Ubiquitous Computing: Computing Anytime, Anywhere for Everyone**.** conference will provide a platform to bring together researchers and practitioners from different research fields of industry, to contribute to a pool of knowledge and experience as well as to collaborate in addressing the issues of applying, integrating and monitoring ubiquitous computing systems

Organisers: Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) in collaboration with: Information and Communication Technology Unit, Chief Minister's Department of Sarawak Global Information & Telecommunication Institute

Dates: 12-15 December,2005

Venue: Kuching City

Web address: http://www.cita05.org/callparticipate.html

The 3rd International Workshop on Frontiers of Information Technology, "Leveraging IT for Progress", December 28-29, 2005 ,Islamabad ,Pakistan

Theme: The annual conference provides a platform for presentations and discussions of recent developments and future trends in Information Technology. The workshop generally consists of technical presentations, panel discussions, posters, exhibitions and demos. Communication and Networking ,IT Security, Educational Technology ,IT Applications ,ICT in the Developing Countries, Distributed and Collaborative Computing, IT based Applications including digital government, e-commerce, e-learning and bioinformatics.

Dates: 28 - 29 December 2005

Venue: Marriott Hotel ,Islamabad , Pakistan, on

For further information contact: fit@lums.edu.pk

International Conference on Distance, Collaborative and E-Learning (DCEL), 4-5 January 2006, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Theme **:** Providing learning opportunities in the new millennium via innovative approaches.

Sub-themes : Distance Education, Collaborative Learning, E-Learning, Lifelong learning, Human Resource Development, Open Learning, Adult Education, Extension Education, Continuing Professional Education, Training Management.

Dates: 4-5 January,2006

Venue : Berjaya Times Square, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Organiser : The Institute of Education Development (InED), Universiti Teknologi MARA.& UNESCO Bangkok

Web address : http://www.ined.uitm.edu.my/dcel2006.htm

Or email: Prof. Dr. Hadariah Baharom

ICT R&D Grants Programme: Next Round of Competition in October 2005

Url:http://www.apdip.net/news/ictrndoct2005

The ICT R&D Grants Programme for Asia-Pacific is pleased to announce the October 2005 Competition Round. The Information Communication Technology Research and Development (ICT R&D) Grants are for projects that find innovative ways to use ICT applications for sustainable development in Asia-Pacific countries or at the regional level. Practical and replicable solutions are emphasized.