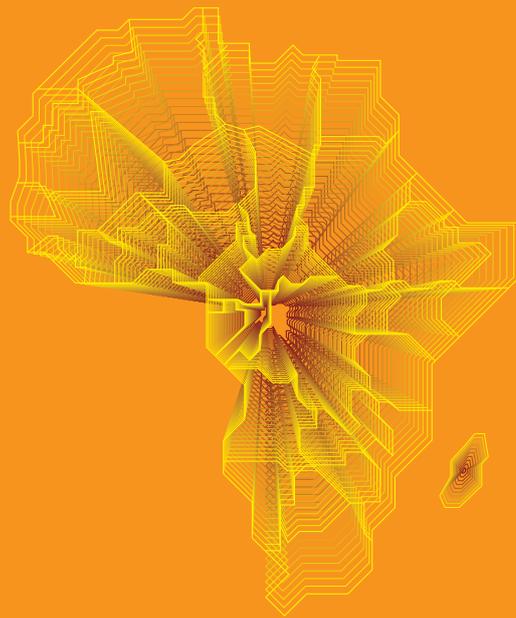




5th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training

Pan-African Conference on Technology-Enhanced
Education, Training and Development



The Third African Ministerial Round Table on ICT for Education, Training and Development

*Leadership for Creating Inclusive Education
Systems: The Role of ICT*

Hotel InterContinental
Lusaka, Zambia, May 26, 2010

The Lusaka Communiqué

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Background

If current trends continue, 56 million children in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) will still be outside the school system in 2015, despite significant increases in school-enrollments in SSA in the last five years. This was one of the conclusions reached in [UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report in 2010](#). Many children are prevented from attending primary school because of inequality linked to poverty, gender, ethnicity and language. UNESCO is therefore advocating a renewed focus on inclusive education systems as a way to combat inequality. Visionary and effective leadership at every level will play a crucial role in this process and determine how successful SSA countries will be in creating **inclusive education systems** that tackle these deep-set inequities.

This process must be steered and nurtured by the top educational decision-makers in Africa. Therefore, on the occasion of the [5th eLearning Africa Conference](#) in Lusaka, Zambia, ministers, diplomats and government officials from Angola, Finland, Kenya, Liberia, the Netherlands, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, gathered for a Ministerial Round Table discussion to explore key issues related to the following theme:

***Leadership for Creating Inclusive Education Systems for
Inclusive Knowledge Societies: The Role of ICT.***

To enrich the discussion, leading figures from the private sector (Microsoft, NComputing) and the international development community (UNESCO, UNECA, USAID, SPIDER, GeSCI, IICD and VVOB) took part. The Ambassadors of the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Finnish Embassy also gave presentations and actively engaged in the debate. They were joined by representatives from the embassies of Zimbabwe and the Republic of Angola.¹

¹ [List of MRT Workshop Attendees](#)

This one-day pre-conference event took place at the Hotel InterContinental in Lusaka, Zambia on May 26th, 2010.² It was sponsored by Microsoft and co-hosted by the [Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative \(GeSCI\)](#), [ICWE GmbH](#) and the [International Institute for Communication and Development \(IICD\)](#).

The debate was informed by the findings of recent global reports such as the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2010 referred to above, the [World Bank Horizon Report 2010](#) and research reports such as the [GeSCI Meta-Review Report of ICT in Education 2009](#) and [ICTs for Education: Impact and Lessons Learned from IICD-supported Activities \(2008\)](#). References to these reports were made in the workshop presentations which can be found in Annex 1.

The issues considered included the need to:

- Establish more dynamic institutional structures to respond to changing demands
- Develop effective leadership strategies and capacity-building programmes
- Improve coordination and planning among national institutions for national ICTE interventions
- Find solutions for the effective allocation of resources among competing priorities
- Explore potential tensions between central policy-making and local implementation
- Reduce the time lag between Information and Communication Technology for Education (ICTE) policy formulation and implementation.

During the Ministerial Round Table Conference, ministers and distinguished guests assembled to discuss the benefits and challenges of using ICT to drive development forward in their respective countries. In addition to identifying ways in which ICT could be used to accelerate development and bring about change, the delegates also outlined areas in which they required support and further guidance. These are summarised below.

² [Programme for Ministerial Round Table](#)

Leadership

It was acknowledged that the creation of an enabling environment based on a clear vision, well-formulated policies and leadership was required to create the Knowledge Society and that education underpins the Knowledge Society. However, leadership should not be confined to the higher echelons of government but should be cultivated throughout the education system. Those holding leadership positions should be alert to the power and potential of ICT as well as the new patterns of education required to leverage the power of ICT. Role models, innovative practices and new investments are required, as well as placing a premium on Research and Development (R&D). A culture of collecting and using data to inform policy formulation needs to be developed as well as the necessary capacity for the implementation of policies. The role of Higher Education Institutions in this respect was highlighted.

Use ICT to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be used to accelerate the development process, especially with regard to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It has the potential to radically change the face of education in the 21st century by:

- Providing new learning methods and enhancing existing pedagogical practices
- Improving the skills and competences of teachers
- Strengthening youth employability and
- Boosting the efficiency of management and administration in the education sector.



Provide ministries with hard evidence about the impact of ICT

It is not enough to extol the virtues of ICT; objective, analytical studies are required to outline the benefits and expose the caveats. Hard evidence already exists to support the long-term advantages that ICT can bring to the education sector: a recent [international survey by IICD](#) of 10,000 children who used ICT over a 3-year period found that the children who lagged behind improved their learning performance by 10% after using ICT, while those who were on track improved their overall score by 7%. Ministers were therefore urged to avail themselves of existing and emerging evidence of the benefits of ICT. For their part, civil society organisations were urged by the ministers to make their activities and findings more visible and readily available to government, to help inform them during the decision-making process.

Share eLearning research findings

Senegal has carried out extensive research into eLearning and has offered to provide the delegates with access to its research findings. The findings show, among other things, that despite elearning's largely positive impacts, there remains some resistance to its adoption due to the increased transparency it brings with it.

Evaluate and fine-tune the ICTE strategy on a regular basis

Delegates advocated setting up a continuous monitoring and evaluation system to establish how well ICTE strategy implementation is working and whether the planned outcomes and impact are being achieved, so that the ICTE strategy can be fine-tuned at different intervals. This can be done by each ministry.



Share best eLearning practices

"Our vision is translated into policies but development cannot be widespread until Africa unites."

Professor Mamadou Gaye,
Ministry of Education, Senegal

In terms of policy, it was acknowledged that approximately 17 African countries already have an ICT policy for education. However, only 10 African countries have developed an implementation plan and have actually started implementation. The ministers therefore agreed that it is vital to highlight the experiences of those countries that have already developed policy implementation plans and started implementation so that these can be used to help other governments that are still at the preliminary stage. Best practice examples can be found in Rwanda, Ghana and Nigeria, Swaziland, Gambia and Namibia. In Namibia's case, its ICT policy and strategic plan received international recognition for being locally relevant, yet globally aware. Other countries can learn from this.

Cooperate together in a trusted relationship

"We do not make concerted efforts to create enabling environments to allow our best academics apply their knowledge. In fact we don't even engage them until they migrate elsewhere. Then we sit back and think 'ah, we should have recognised their expertise'."

The Honourable Stanley M. Simataa
Deputy Minister ICT, MP,
Namibia

Ministries face many challenges during the implementation phase of their ICT policy strategy. Delegates stated that it is vital for ministries and non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and private sector partners to work closely together in a trusted relationship. Organisations such as IICD and GeSCI can assist the ministries in their efforts to formulate and develop an ICT in education policy and implementation strategy. Zambia provides a good example whereby the ministry requested IICD to facilitate a participatory policy formulation process with all ministerial departments, which resulted in an ICT policy, strategy and implementation plan for the education sector. A broader, more collaborative approach between civil society and private sector partners is needed when supporting the government with their ICT initiatives. These partners should align themselves with the strategies of the Ministry, providing services and advice in areas already defined in ministerial policies and strategies. This will prevent isolated projects which do not contribute to the implementation of planned activities from being launched.

Some of the main challenges listed by the delegates included:

- The poor infrastructure in many African countries
- Resistance to change by teachers

- A lack of local content in African languages
- A lack of coordination in and between the ministries
- The absence of a culture of collecting and using data in many African countries
- The fact that ICT is not set as a priority, therefore there is no proper budget allocation

The focus on acquiring expensive computers at the expense of developing the capacity of the teachers was also cited as a major challenge. It was suggested that it would be much better to mix this with low-cost ICT alternatives such as radio, mobile telephony, etc.

Make capacity development a priority

"I am convinced that ICT is the single instrument that should be used to revolutionise our education system. Let us all use it to make the next decennium the one in which we finally realise the universal goal of 'Education for All.'"

His Excellency, Harry Molenaar
Ambassador of the Royal
Netherlands

Capacity building is one of the most important components of the ICT process. Yet delegates learned that in most ICT policy plans only 10% of the budget is allocated to Capacity Development, while 90% is still given to hardware. It was suggested that if the appropriate capacity and skills were in place, expensive hardware would not be needed. This situation is further compounded by the brain drain from Africa and brain circulation within the country, whereby people who are trained to work in one sector switch to another unrelated sector, taking their skills with them. Africa needs to recognise its own talent and retain its skilled professionals. Therefore, in future, it was recommended that capacity building should take priority.

In order to get schools on board, the school principals must be convinced of the potential of ICT and its value to their schools. Teachers' resistance to ICT was hailed by the delegates as a major challenge. Awareness-raising among teachers and school principals is therefore key. During the 5th eLearning Africa Conference, a Teachers Forum organised by ICWE, IICD and the eBrain Forum of Zambia attracted 110 Zambian teachers who wished to expand their knowledge of ICT. International and national ICT awareness-raising events such as this are the way forward.

Encourage distributed and inclusive leadership

"If we empower people we will see innovation. It's not about high tech – it's about doing things differently to improve your system."

**Aida Opoku-Mensah, UNECA
Ethiopia**

The need for distributed and inclusive leadership at every level was emphasized: from high-level decision-makers to school management. This will speed up the decision-making process and make it more effective. Given that education is the hub of all other sectors, this will also ensure that ICT permeates all sectors of development for maximum impact. Leaders must also be prepared to embrace disruption due to the introduction of ICT in education because change is not possible without some degree of disruption. Moreover, the delegates universally acknowledged that it is vital to listen to the voice of youth because they will hold leadership accountable.

Define the resources needed to achieve policy goals beforehand

Coordinating funds is another challenge. This could be alleviated if ministries begin by defining the resources (human, financial, institutional) that they will need to realise their policy goals beforehand. An in-built monitoring framework to determine how far an ICTE policy is delivering on its objectives would help with this. It is also important to measure the capacity that is needed to implement an ICTE policy during the formulation phase as strategies can sometimes exceed the capacity of the national institutions and organisations that are required to implement them.

Develop local content that has cultural relevance

Developing local content that has cultural relevance was considered to be of paramount importance. Delegates agreed that there is a need to reflect upon, internalise and articulate the need for knowledge sharing from an African perspective: local content for Africans by Africans and in local African languages are also key to creating knowledge societies in Africa.

However, one of the major challenges with this is that most African schools have a fixed curriculum. This means that if the locally developed content does not match the fixed curriculum, there is a problem. In addition, teachers have a very tight schedule in which

they have to meet the curricular needs. Therefore, there is seldom time to introduce content that falls outside the curriculum. At the same time, contextualised education materials are seen as an important way to empower and motivate teachers to integrate ICT in their teaching programmes. Meanwhile, this can be combined with external materials that are already available, facilitating a faster introduction of digital education materials in the different curricular areas.

Educational reforms

Education reform in Africa has mostly come from outside. This is the underlying reason for the challenges within Africa's education sector today. New pedagogical approaches and practices are required to harness the potential of ICT and to provide the skills required for the 21st century. The question is where does Africa wish to go in the realm of knowledge sharing. Africa has produced top-class people yet there is still no solid foundation for knowledge sharing either in or between African countries. The education system has to address this, especially as education cuts across all sectors; it is the centre of public policy. Therefore, the way in which ICT impacts the education sector will have a direct effect on all sectors of society.



Five steps towards creating inclusive education in Africa

It was agreed that the creation of an enabling structure and environment to develop a knowledge society in Africa that will serve as the cornerstone of an inclusive education system depends upon the vision, drive and commitment of policy-makers. The first steps towards achieving inclusive education in Africa are as follows:

1. Cultivate closer collaboration between ministries, international development organisations, and private sector IT companies, particularly in the area of Information and Communication Technology for Education (ICTE) policy formulation and implementation.
2. Cultivate closer collaboration between African countries at the ministerial level whereby African countries that are more advanced with formulating and implementing their ICT for education policy can share their findings and best practices with African countries that are about to embark on this path.
3. Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation system in each country to ascertain how well ICTE strategy implementation is working and whether planned outcomes and impact is achieved, so that the ICTE strategy can be fine-tuned at different intervals.
4. Invest in more Research and Development (R&D) in each African country and throughout Africa as a whole to breed innovation throughout the continent.
5. Help to spearhead a full-fledged 'ICT movement' in all African countries, lead by key decision-makers at the ministries.



Recommendations

During the Ministerial Round Table discussion it was stated that there is an urgent and immediate need for countries to:

1. Take stock of their existing education system and revise it to suit Africa's needs.
2. Take time to reflect on, internalise and articulate the need for Knowledge Sharing from an African perspective by Africans: no more borrowed and hackneyed concepts from others.
3. Substantially Increase investment in Research and Development (R&D) in Africa to harness innovation in African societies and economies.
4. Ensure that there is distributed leadership throughout the system – i.e. inclusive leadership.
5. Recognise and acknowledge Africa's own home-grown talent and combine this with a concerted effort to stop the brain drain out of Africa or 'national brain migration to different sectors'.
6. Create a dynamic system that involves all stakeholders in the policy development process right from the start – particularly those national institutions and organisations that will be required to implement the ICTE policy on the ground – so that they are empowered to understand it and to better implement it.
7. Embrace disruption because without some degree of disruption change is not possible.
8. Be aware that many people working within 'the system' are actively resisting information and communication technology (ICT) because of the transparency that this technology brings.
9. Listen to the voice of youth because ultimately they will hold leaders accountable.
10. Make these issues top priority at the regional level as well as the national level.

The way forward

The ministries expressed a wish for assistance from support partners to create a successful 'ICT movement' in Africa. Some ministries indicated that they would like support in the preparation of ICT implementation plans for the education sector to secure the actual implementation of their ICT policies and strategies.

A second key area for consideration consists of providing support for content development and partnering with the Ministry of Education or the national Curriculum Development Centre to develop content that meets the needs of the population. This is linked to support with the certification of ICT training. In the particular case of Mali, this poses a considerable challenge.

ICWE, GeSCI and IICD indicated their availability to follow up with the countries present to enable them to act on the recommendations made during the 3rd Ministerial Round Table before the next eLearning Africa Conference. This will bring the assembled group of delegates and the groups that they work with to the next level to ensure that, as leaders, they can remain alert and aware of the emerging issues relating to technology development while at the same time harnessing ICT to accelerate development in the education sector.

Above all, there is a need to make all these issues a top priority at the regional as well as national level.



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The 2011 eLearning Africa 4th Ministerial Round Table in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

At the close of the discussion, it was agreed that between now and the next eLearning Conference in 2011, the ministers and participants will work closely together to realise the recommendations emanating from the Ministerial Round Table and take the first steps towards achieving inclusive education. Progress will be discussed at the 4th Ministerial Round Table Conference which will reconvene in Dar es Salaam on May 25th, 2011, the first day of the 6th eLearning Africa Conference.



For more photos, please visit www.elearning-africa.com/mrt/gallery_2010.php

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Annex 1

Speeches

[Welcome by the Zambian Minister of Education, Hon. Dora Siliya](#)

[Guest Speaker Address – Aida Opoku-Mensah, UNECA, Ethiopia](#)

[Remarks – H. E. Harry Molenaar, Ambassador of the Royal Netherlands](#)

Workshop Presentations

[Towards Inclusive Education Systems for Inclusive Knowledge Societies: The Role of ICTs](#)

[Leadership for Creating Inclusive Education Systems: The Role of ICTs](#)

[Challenges and success factors in ICT policies and implementation](#)

Resources

[UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report 2010](#)

[World Bank Horizon Report 2010](#)

[GeSCI Meta-Review Report of ICT in Education 2009](#)

[ICTs for Education: Impact and Lessons Learned from IICD-supported Activities \(2008\)](#)

[ICT in Education Policy \(Namibia\)](#)

[Strategic Implementation Plan \(Namibia\).](#)

[International Survey by IICD](#)

Further Documents and Links

[Ministerial Round Table 2010 Brochure](#)

[List of delegates 2010](#)