

Seminar at Norad on ICT in education, Friday 9 May 2014

Info Centre 6th floor, Norad, Ruselekkveien 26, Oslo



How may ICT in basic education help reach global development goals?

Programme

- 14:00 – 14.10 Welcome by **Vigdis Aaslund Cristofoli** (moderator) Head a-i. of the Education Section, Department of Global Health, Education and Research, Norad
- 14.10 – 14.20 “Testing the ‘digital classroom’ in Uganda, China and Gaza/West Bank” **Helge Høivik**, Professor at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences
- 14:20 – 14:30 “Online learning from a Chinese perspective” **Songuan Hou**, Assistant Professor, Open University of China (via Skype)
- 14:30 – 14:40 “ICT in two teachers’ colleges in Croatia” **Marijana Kelentric**, Advisor at the Norwegian Centre for ICT in Education, Oslo
- 14:40 – 14:50 “The impact of technology on teacher effectiveness and learning achievement” **Rosalind Gater**, Advisor, Education Policy Team, the UK Department for International Development (DFID)
- 14:50 – 15:00 “Promoting assistive technologies for people with disabilities” **Ancil Torres**, Head of the Torres Foundation for the Blind, Trinidad & Tobago and Washington, D.C., USA (via Skype)
- 15:00 – 16:00 Q & A, coffee & cake/fruit
- Twitter hashtags: #edtech #IKTutdanning #R4DNor #bistand #EFA #education4all #GAW2014 #edchat

[List](#) of Twitter hashtags for education

Presenters



Helge Høivik is Professor in e-learning and digital documentalism at the [Learning Centre](#) of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, where he heads the Research & Development Unit LATINA/Lab. He holds a bachelor's degree in social sciences and a master's degree in library science. In 1992-93 he was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the School of Education, Penn State University. Since 2010 he is Professor II at the Department of Educational Technology, Capital Normal University in Beijing, China. From 2013 he is member of a committee for digital learning under China's Ministry of Education, and Professor II at the Open University of China. Helge has held digitally oriented courses in the U.S., East Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.



Songuan Hou is Assistant Professor at [Open University of China](#) where she coordinates the development of online mini courses. She holds a Master of Education from the University of Manchester, UK and worked as Program Officer in the International Department of China's ministry of Education from 2001-04. Following this, she worked in Beijing for the Open University in the UK with the task of expanding networks toward Chinese institutions. The Open University of China started as China Central Radio and TV University in 1979. Today it has 2.7 million students and operates directly on the web and via 44 open province universities, 279 prefecture schools and 625 centres at municipal and county level.

Via Skype from China



Marijana Kelentric is Advisor at the [Norwegian Centre for ICT in Education](#) in Oslo. She has her education in ICT and as an English teacher from Croatia. Before moving to Norway she worked at Croatia's Ministry for Family, Veterans and Solidarity between Generations. At the University of Oslo she studied comparative and international education science. Her master's [thesis](#) is about the use of ICT in basic education teacher training. The study applied pedagogical theory of change. Marijana is currently working on digital competency testing for pupils and teacher students in Norway.



Rosalind Gater joined the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in 2013 as Advisor in the Education Policy Team. She has compiled an evidence paper that explores the impact of technology on teacher effectiveness and learning achievement. The paper synthesizes findings from over 80 studies from sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and South America. Rosalind will present this paper at e-learning Africa in May and in London in June. She [blogs](#) about the topic. In August 2014, she will move to Abuja, Nigeria to join the education team there. Rosalind is a graduate of the University of Cambridge, where she studied English, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education where she studied International Education



Ancil Torres from Trinidad and Tobago is President of the [W.R. Torres Foundation for the Blind](#), which has offices in Washington, D.C., Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica. The Foundation specializes in distribution and training in the use of assistive technology for people who are blind or visually impaired. The first conference in the Caribbean and Latin America about assistive technology was held by the Foundation in 2005. Ancil has been blind since birth. His wife Sonia Aslam from Pakistan is also blind, and teaches assistive technology at the Foundation. Via their international network Ancil and Sonia advocate for better access and accommodation for blind people in schools, universities, libraries and work places.

Via Skype from USA

Background

Until now, authorities have increased school enrolment mainly by expanding services to reach many, but not all. In addition, many children receive education of poor quality. Globally 250 million children can neither read nor write when they start fourth grade. This may be partially explained by the large increase in children starting school not being matched by raised number of teachers, classrooms and educational material. There is a major shortage of teachers, and especially of qualified ones. The meeting addresses ICT in teacher education and how technology may boost learning.

Services must expand and adapt to those who are the hardest to reach. Ten percent of the world's children lack schooling. About half of these children live in countries in conflict. A [tweet](#) on 8 May 2014 by @ks7s Kriti Sharma of Human Rights Watch quoted Hans Brattskar, State Secretary at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Of the 56 million children out of primary school worldwide, one third are children with disabilities. In Nepal, 85 percent of children outside school have a disability, according to the Global Campaign for Education's [website](#). Internally in countries, exclusion from education affects most those who are poor, part of a minority or who live in remote areas. UNICEF has documented that it is by including the most vulnerable and marginalized children one can increase the progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. Targeted and adapted use of ICT in education can help to include more.

What are ICTs?

According to UNICEF's [website](#) about communication for development, Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can include the whole range of technologies used for communication. They include the Internet, the PC and the mobile phone which enable applications like the World Wide Web, email, blogs, electronic archives, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Orkut and other social networking websites where multi-media content can be accessed and shared.

Some definitions of ICT include 'old' or 'traditional' electronic media, such as radio and television, because digitization provides opportunities for various media to work together as a suite of media channels to achieve a particular information and communication objective. Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and digital Geographical Information Systems (GIS), or digital mapping can be included in the list of ICT tools as well.

Along with this great potential comes barriers that can prevent the most marginalized groups from accessing ICTs, including age, gender, disability, literacy, capacity, cost and connectivity.

«As a little boy in Trinidad I was told at the library that they only had printed books. The contrast is big to the range of assistive technology children with disabilities may use at school and in libraries today.»
Ancil Torres, President of the W.R. Torres Foundation for the Blind

ICT in education

In November 2013 UNESCO and partners held a [conference](#) in Shenzhen, China about ICT in education. This Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE) had the theme "Fostering Favorable Policy Environments for Mainstreaming Sustainable Innovations". The [concept note](#) points to major challenges:

Despite the varied approaches to integrating ICT into education, most educational innovations still seem fragmented –appearing either disconnected from the greater realities of the classroom, isolated from national educational visions and goals or bearing limited features to be mainstreamed to open up new progression paths. On the one hand, a number of pocket innovations at the field level are confined to a limited scale despite their potential to be scaled up, often due to lack of favorable policy environment and support. On the other hand, many political initiatives are prematurely scaled up, rushing into a scale or even into the roll-out stage without deliberating essentially interconnected factors at the implementation level, e.g. teachers, curriculum, leadership, technical support, and so on. More often than not, these fragmented innovations end up having a short life span for not being able to reach a wider scale of audience or are hard to sustain with no follow-through from the top. In view of this, important questions need to be addressed: How can policies help sustain educational innovation? How can innovative practices inform the education policies? What optimum level of balance is required from the top (policy) and from the bottom (practice)?

UNESCO's Institute for Information Technologies in Education ([IITE](#)) advises educational authorities locally and internationally. IITE carries out studies and writes concept notes about ICT in education. The Institute supports UNESCO by bridging the digital divide in education, building inclusive knowledge societies, facilitating policy dialogue, and initiating development of national strategies. IITE's conferences stimulate open debate about best practices, strategies and methods for using ITC in education. Education authorities and experts may discuss how ICT affects education, learning and the professional development of teachers. Events review global trends in open learning, distance education and studies via the web. IITE addresses ITC's potential for making education more inclusive and achieving equity between the sexes.

Dendev Bardach of IITE was among the presenters at the [AMFIE](#) conference in Shenzhen in November 2013. He posed several questions in his PowerPoint [presentation](#) "Trends in ICT in Education Policy: Regional Prospects"

Why introduce ICT?

- ✓ Is ICT meant to improve learning outcomes?
- ✓ Is ICT intended to improve cost-effectiveness?
- ✓ Is ICT expected to expand access to education?
- ✓ Into what system is ICT being introduced?
- ✓ Will ICT be used to carry the existing curriculum or will its introduction be accompanied by curriculum reform that takes advantage of the benefits of ICT?
- ✓ How might wider use of new technologies impact pedagogical approaches?
- ✓ Does teacher professional training ensure ICT skills adequate to the new requirements imposed by the use of ICT?

Mr. Bardach outlined these topics for early childhood and primary education, vocational education, inclusive education and the professional development of teachers. For instance, regarding early childhood and primary education he highlighted the need for a clear vision and policy statement, instruments to initiate and support integration of ICT: ICT standards for teachers, curricular supplements, assessment framework, learning resources, collections of good practices and other supportive frameworks.

He said the professional development of teachers must focus on (a) developing ICT literacy of educators, and (b) building new pedagogies of ICT in favour of children's learning and development. Safety and gender issues should be addressed when designing and implementing an ICT strategy for early childhood and primary education.

In technical and vocational education and training it is key that the promotion of the use of ICTs in vocational education fully corresponds to the national priorities for modernization of the educational systems, Mr. Bardach said.

In February 2014 the Swiss Embassy in China [mapped](#) Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) in China.

Education policies

A UNESCO-conference in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2012 with the theme "The Power of ICT in Education Policies: Implications for Educational Practices" gave these [recommendations](#) (page 5):

Recommendations were drawn on three key areas including Policies, Practice and Knowledge sharing.

- For policy, recommendations were made on engaging in holistic, multi-sector and multi-year planning, enhancing public-private partnerships for strategic policy implementation, adopting competency frameworks and prioritization of data collection and consideration of societal costs of the long term use of technology
- To facilitate interventions in practice, it was emphasized that ICT can be a lever to achieve quality education for all. There is a need to build skills within the teaching body as a route towards achieving shared vision. Utilization of demonstration schools can provide means for testing and spreading innovations.
- Using pilots and evaluations, sharing of data, policies and programs and thinking beyond borders were suggested to advance knowledge sharing.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Anita Yang, an independent consultant from London, UK, writes on UNESCO Bangkok's [website](#):

A prolonged economic recession, limited resources and a shift in how companies are approaching Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is reshaping the dynamics of traditional Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Companies today are no longer simply interested in signing a cheque. Instead, they seek non-profit partners that can create win-win programmes which deliver value for both society and the company's bottom line. In 2009, the [LBG Research Institute](#) published a report and survey to identify top issues facing corporate givers and foundations in the US, particularly as a result of the financial crisis. The survey findings indicated that organizations were attempting to better align activities with their strategic goals by re-assessing their grant-making criteria, by emphasizing partnerships with non-profits over cash donations, by seeking new partners who better matched their needs and by placing more emphasis on measurability and accountability of partners. (...) Yet very few development organizations engaged in PPPs have successfully embraced this transition or have understood the ramifications on partnership activities. (...)

Development organizations have tended to view the private sector as distant and passive donors. However, companies are increasingly seeking a more active role and deeper engagement in their community activities. More companies are joining the examples of Microsoft, Cisco and Intel in personally designing and delivering larger education initiatives which have more defined activities that are often aligned to the strategic goals of the company. This shift will require development organizations to better understand the needs of the private sector and how to work effectively with them in delivering activities. Secondly, development organizations will need to think more innovatively about how they can create impactful partnerships with the private sector. Aside from financial support, the other immense assets of the private sector such as its global presence, networks, brand influence, online presence, in-house expertise as well as resources (e.g. products, office space, etc.) are often overlooked, writes Ms. Yang.

At the same time, it is important for a government agency such as Norad and partners to address ethical dilemmas that may occur if the private sector's profit motive conflicts with the public sector's responsibility to offer services based on need and fair distribution.

G.T. Tinde Norad

5 May 2014