2. Syllabus for Teacher Training on Integrating ICT into Teaching

UNESCO Teacher Training Syllabus
Quantum leap in teacher training on using ICTs in the classroom

UNESCO strongly believes that modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) can make a major contribution to the capacity-building of teachers. Of particular interest is the effective integration of technology in education while taking account of instructional design, pedagogy and many other critical components of effective teaching and learning.

2.1 Project Proposal

There are various providers of teacher training courses and certificates on the use of ICT for teachers and classrooms. UNESCO and Microsoft aspire for there to be a quantum leap in the quality of courses and in accelerating their uptake by educationalists and teacher training institutions through the availability of standards, guidelines or benchmarks on what ought to be provided by those who offer courses on ICT teacher training. Therefore, UNESCO with assistance from Microsoft is embarking on a multi-stakeholder initiative to develop a reference master curriculum ("Syllabus"), targeting those offering certificated courses on teacher training on the use of ICT.

More specifically, skills for teaching and managing through ICT (for example development of generic ICT skills, effective use of ICT in the classroom, effective assessment techniques, knowing how to decide when ICT can bring improvements in learning); open and distance education; courseware development tools; and instructional design.

It is not envisaged that UNESCO would offer worldwide training activities nor would it offer a UNESCO certification. UNESCO seeks to develop the Syllabus to illustrate the level of ICT knowledge and skills that an international expert group (including course providers) believes is desirable for teacher training course certification. The Syllabus could then form the basis for deriving training content to be delivered to teachers in a multitude of ways and by different providers.

As a second phase, UNESCO proposes the development of a transparent mechanism by which course providers, educational policy-makers and teachers can refer to the Syllabus as a benchmark and ascertain whether or not course content and training programmes meet the requisite standard.

2.2 Engagement with Microsoft

Microsoft will be one of the founding partners in this multi stakeholder initiative to improve the quality and availability of teacher training on using ICT. Microsoft will collaborate with UNESCO on the Syllabus by drawing on Microsoft's experience in designing ICT products and services for use by educationalists and contributing knowhow and technical expertise during the Syllabus concept and development phase. Microsoft will also contribute resources to illustrate and promote the concept of the Syllabus, commencing with a multi-media presentation of "lessons" that illustrate potential outputs from the Syllabus.

3. A Sub-regional Resource Centre to Support Youth Information and Learning Structures in the North African Arab States

Community Access and Development
Supporting youth technology and learning centres

Information and communication technology (ICT) represents an opportunity for Arab nations to accelerate their socio-economic development and provide a sustainable community of development solutions. In a region where 50% of the population are under the age of 20 and 65% are under the age of 35, an investment in youth capacity-building would assist in the building of knowledge societies. Knowledge is a foundation for development. Through knowledge, a new generation that is capable of facing global challenges will emerge. Thus, investing in youth is a key strategy for progress.

3.1 Project Proposal

There are numerous initiatives for introducing youth to ICT, including youth community centres, that have been established in some of the countries in the sub-region of the North African Arab States. This gives rise to several needs. First, there is a clear need to draw on the positive experiences and successful practices that have accumulated in order to catalyse the creation of new info-structures in response to growing needs for access to, and use of, information technology. Second, there is a need to reach a new level in capacity-building in the form of a resource facility that could support sub-regional initiatives such as promoting economies of scale and creating opportunities for collaboration on training and other services.

In terms of the users of the various youth centres in the sub-region, this collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experience could introduce a new dimension. It could contribute to the dialogue among youth where the cross-cultural exchanges, the sharing of knowledge and information and the active participation in the cyber world will become a reality for many young people.

The proposed initiative focuses on building the capacities for youth empowerment and gives a high priority to addressing the needs of the underserved and disadvantaged young people. The strategy would be to establish a sub-regional resource centre in order to provide opportunities and conditions for improved access to information and communication technology, ICT skills development programmes, participation in cyberspace and the sharing of information and experiences among youth, working across geographical boundaries.

UNESCO and Microsoft, in collaboration with existing information structures, networks and youth associations in the participating countries, and in close cooperation with the official bodies in charge of youth in Tunisia (or such other host country), would collaborate to establish a sub-regional information technology and learning centre that can become a resource facility.

This initiative has the following strategic objectives:

o   Develop ICT skills training schemes targeted at the needs of youth;

o Promote the efficient use of Information and communication technology resources in the sub-region through the pooling of know-how, identification of common resource needs and facilitation collective responses;

o Establish a centre of excellence and a shared resource for capacity-building for youth oriented information structures and networks;

o Create conditions for regional and inter-regional networking, including contribute to the creation of a regional network of information centres and build a knowledge community among youth;

o Facilitate local content production;

o Empower young people to realize their potential through improving their technical skills and helping integrate a new style of leaning and thus prepare them for the requirements of the labour market;

o Invest in the youth leaders and information workers through technical and managerial skills development;

o Engage youth to participate in the development of knowledge portal in different fields through collaborative learning programmes;

o Implement pilot community access based projects for youth; and

o Collection, dissemination, and share of best practices.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

It is anticipated that UNESCO would concentrate on:

o Leading negotiation with the host country national authorities on the conditions for the creation and hosting of the Centre;

o Providing information on tools and systems in use in other countries in relation to youth activities;

o Promoting the programme among national and regional partners;

o Sharing the learning and the experiences from other similar initiatives of the Infoyouth programme that includes already created info-centres;

o Financing some pilot activities of the centre related to Infoyouth (for instance, in the field of creation of micro-enterprises, HIV/AIDS prevention, youth community based voluntary programmes, youth mobility and exchanges); and

o Evaluating the impact of the project on the socio-economic development of the community and youth performance and their contributions to the knowledge society.

The Microsoft Unlimited Potential programme focuses mainly on narrowing the technology and skills gap to promote digital inclusion and a society that invests in life long learning. The programme also provides IT skills and access to community learning centres. Through this programme, Microsoft would contribute in the following ways:

o   Unlimited Potential Grants – seed money to support Train the Trainer & IT skills development for young people;

o   IT skill development curricula and certification;

o   Software donation and solutions;

o   Capacity-building through the support network;

o   Providing technical support and expertise in setting up the Centre;

o   Microsoft employee(s) involvement;

o   Leveraging the youth programmes that have been supported through Unlimited Potential; and

o   Assisting in mobilizing IT partners and other partners to maximise impact.

3.3 Contribution by Host Country

UNESCO will lead a negotiation with the national authorities of the host country to consider the conditions for the creation and hosting of the Centre, including:

o   The necessary infrastructure for the Centre (venue, installation etc.) and provide appropriate furniture;

o   The maintenance and security of the Centre;

o   Related operational costs (management, utilities, phone lines, supplies, etc.);

o   The costs for the coordinators responsible for the functioning of the Centre;

o   The effective management of the Centre and the promotion of the services and the activities at national and regional levels; and

o   Periodical reports on the project and the outcomes of the different activities.