



Enhancing Quality Education through ICT

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Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have undergone a lot of transformation. The rapid change in technology coupled with the effects of globalization calls for an urgent need for nations lagging behind the change to close the gap.

Education in ICT will offer people the needed skills to contribute to their respective national economies. It is in the light of this that the Education Reforms 2007 of Ghana has stressed on the need for greater emphasis to be put on ICT and Science and Technology. This has led to the inclusion of ICT in the basic school curricula where the subject is now an examinable one.

During H.E. Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura's (immediate past Director-General of UNESCO) first visit to Ghana, ASPnet in Ghana requested for an ICT Centre to help demystify the computer to the Ghanaian school-child as well as train teachers to effectively use the computer. The UNESCO ASPnet ICT Centre in Accra has been of tremendous help to the Ghanaian child and their teachers as well. The Director-General responded positively by providing some computers for the centre. The UNESCO Information for All Program (IFAP) also contributed to the project by purchasing a server and hooking the centre on the worldwide web for one year. IFAP also purchased four computers

with accessories to beef up the stock of computers in the Centre.

The National Commission for UNESCO consulted the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and other stakeholders who provided and furnished a building to host the centre. A Management Committee has been set up headed by the District Directorate of Education and other stakeholders of Education in the sub-metropolitan area.

The establishment of the centre is serving the following objectives which aim at promoting quality education:



UNESCO
Associated
Schools

Founded in 1953, UNESCO's Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), commonly referred to as UNESCO Associated Schools, is a global network of some 8000 educational institutions in 177 countries (ranging from pre-schools and primary to secondary schools and teacher training institutions), who work in support of quality education in practice.

Ghana's ASPnet was established in 1958 and is an active member of the Global Associated School Project network. The activities of ASPnet revolve around four fundamental pillars, namely: peace building, human rights, intercultural dialogue and the environment. Currently, 130 primary and secondary schools in Ghana are involved in the ASPnet. Ghana's ASPnet has twinned with many schools abroad, including schools in: Denmark, Great Britain, Mexico and the USA. The network has facilitated exchanges among teachers and students.

- Demystifying the computer to school children in Ghana, especially those in the deprived regions;
- Training teachers who have no skill in ICT to enhance quality delivery;
- With the introduction of ICT as an examinable subject in the basic schools Curriculum in Ghana, the Teachers who were trained in the first centre are now ICT teachers in their schools.



- Serving as a centre where schools in the neighbouring communities can use the facility for computer studies;
- Serving as on-line registration Centre for schools whose candidates have to travel long distances to register on-line for their final examinations;
- Helping Ghana to achieve MDG 2; and
- Enhancing the visibility of UNESCO.
- The ICT Centre in Accra is now being used by 5 schools in the circuit in which the school hosting the centre is located. It is now being used to teach over 800 pupils.
- The Centre also serves teachers and members of the neighborhood who are not computer literate.
- It serves as an on-line registration centre where schools register their candidates for the Basic Education Certificate Examination run by the West African Examination Council.

Since the introduction of ICT in the new educational reforms basic school syllabus, pupils in public schools who form the majority find it difficult to assess the computer. Those in the remote areas have not got the opportunity to see and touch the computer. The benefits accrued since the establishment of the centre include the following:

- Over 300 basic school teachers have acquired training in computer skills and the use of computers to enhance delivery.
- Apart from ASPnet schools that use the centre, there are 7 other schools with no ICT facilities using the centre. In all over 850 pupils use the facilities in the centre for their lessons in ICT. The total number of lesson periods the centre gives to the schools is 46 per week, where each period is 40 minutes. About 70 teachers in the circuit also use the facility after school hours for research purposes to enhance their delivery. ■