

# Draft WGIG Issue Paper on Education and Human Capacity Building

This paper is a 'draft working paper' reflecting the preliminary findings of the drafting team. It has been subject to review by all WGIG members, but it does not necessarily present a consensus position nor does it contain agreed language accepted by every member. The purpose of this draft is to provide a basis for the ongoing work of the group. It is therefore not to be seen as a chapter of the final WGIG report, but rather as raw material that will be used when drafting the report. This draft working paper has been published on the WGIG website for public comment, so it will evolve, taking into account input from governments and stakeholders.

## 1. Issue (what?)

Please identify an issue listed on the table “Inventory of Public Policy Issues” and describe this issue.

### Education, Human Capacity Building

Education and learning are pre-requisites to using the Internet, but the Internet can also be used as a tool to facilitate better, more efficient and affordable education and training.

Education, training and human capacity building form an integral part of the transition to the networked knowledge economy. Low literacy rates will limit peoples' ability to connect to and use the Internet, thereby reducing their opportunities, access to affordable communications, knowledge and the ability to make informed choices.

Membership to the networked economy requires augmentation of basic literacy with ICT skills and awareness. This brings with it the threat of a widening gap between developed and developing countries – with disparities in access to knowledge and information, reinforcing existing differences in capital and resources.

In addition to literacy, a country's capacity to take advantage of the knowledge economy depends on how quickly it can become a “learning economy”. Learning means not only using new technologies to access global knowledge, but also using them to communicate with other people about innovation.

Lifelong learning is also required to foster the virtuous circle of discovery, dissemination, and emergence of shared understanding.

As a learning tool, the Internet has the potential to improve the quality and efficiency of teaching and learning at a reasonable and sustainable cost. In particular the Internet facilitates distance education and the provision of learning content.

## 2. Attribution to category / ies

Please attribute the issue to one or more of the five categories on the table “Inventory of Public Policy Issues and Priorities”.

Access for All

### **3. SWOT Analysis**

Please assess the strengths and weaknesses of the present system (internal factors). What are its opportunities and threats (external factors)?

Strength: Actors firmly committed.

Weakness: Present system not well coordinated; no formal linkages amongst disparate actors.

Threat: Low use of languages and cultural representation of marginalized peoples likely to perpetuate and even enhance the digital divide.

Opportunity: Growth of multi-cultural content and international consensus on the importance of preserving cultural identities

### **4. Actors (who, with whom?)**

Please identify the main actor (government, private sector, civil society or international organization) dealing with this issue and who else among the relevant stakeholders is involved.

Main actors are Governments, International Agencies (e.g. World Bank, UNESCO), Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g. International Education and Resource Network – iEARN), Universities and Other learning Institutions (E.g. MIT’s African Internet Technology Initiative) Professional Associations and Development Partners.

### **5. Forums (where?)**

#### **(a) who participates**

#### **(b) nature of forum**

Please describe where this issue is being discussed or dealt with and at what intervals? Do these meetings make decisions? What is the nature of possible decisions? Who participates in discussions and decision-making processes? What are the decision-making procedures?

- a) Numerous forums are held around the world each year by organizations such as the World bank and UNESCO. These meetings make decisions for the respective actors, usually on improving the provision of ICT education and using the Internet as a learning and resource tool.
- b) Many forums are educational, such as the upcoming “Technology, Colleges and Community - Worldwide Online Conference”. Others are professional, held by respected professional bodies( upcoming “The 5th IEEE International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies). Apart from the educational and professional forums, the others are usually closed to members or representatives of the actors.

### **6. Governance mechanisms (how?)**

#### **(a) objectives of the rules system**

Governance mechanisms with regard to Education, training and Capacity building are dissipated amongst the actors, and can be generalized as having the general objectives of improving literacy and awareness for users and policy makers, as well as ensuring that the Internet fulfils its potential as a teaching and learning tool. All this to ultimately reduce the digital divide and attain the Millennium Development Goals.

## **(b) content of principles, norms and rules**

Please describe the overarching objectives of the rules system or norms in question. What is the actual content of the principles, norms and rules designed to achieve these objectives?

There is no overall rules system or systematic system of norms.

## **7. Adequacy measured against criteria / benchmarks set out in Declaration of Principles:**

### **(a) multilateral**

Multilateral when carried out under UN agencies such as UNESCO.

### **(b) transparent**

The meetings are usually not “open” but can be classified as transparent in the case of most international organizations, NGOs and development partners.

### **(c) democratic**

Only in the case of UN Agencies

### **(d) capacity to address Internet governance in a coordinated manner**

Only in the case of UN Agencies

### **(e) multi-stakeholder approach**

Most of the mechanisms are not multi-stakeholder.

### **(f) other**

Please assess whether the mechanisms described above are adequate when measured against the criteria or benchmarks set out in the Declaration of Principles. Are they multilateral, transparent and democratic? Are they addressed in a coordinated manner? Are they based on a multi-stakeholder approach? Are there other principles they respect or should respect?

## **8. Additional comments**

Please make any additional comments you may wish to make with regard to this issue.