



Project Number:

Project Title: Connecting Schools in Underserved Areas of Countries of the Americas
Region: Connecting the Unconnected Communities

Estimated Start Date: July 2012

Estimated End Date: June 2015

Regional Cooperation Agencies: ASETA, CITEL, COMTELCA, Inter-American Development Bank, REGULATEL, World Bank

Implementing Agency: International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Beneficiary Countries: Latin American countries of the Americas Region

ITU Project Manager: Regional Office for the Americas, Brazil

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

A) Project Budget

Description	USD
Personnel Costs	
SSA Consulting	400,000
Missions (SSA and ITU)	211,000
Training	100,000
Equipment	360,000
Miscellaneous and Other Costs	119,025
Total:	1,190,025

B) From Partners:

In-cash: USD 1,190,025

C) From Beneficiary Countries:

In-kind: all those specified in this PRODOC, and mainly connectivity for model-connected schools

In-cash: to ensure the acquisition of necessary equipment in case no funding partners are identified

Brief Description:

The Project aims to assist at least ten (10) Latin American countries. First step is to assist beneficiary countries in the preparation of a National School Connectivity Plan, for those that haven't yet prepared one, promoting the understanding and awareness among policy makers and regulators on the need to have coordinated policies, regulations and practices in this field. It will also develop in each country at least three model connected schools in underserved areas that can also serve as community ICT centers, equipped with personal computers, printers, scanners, facsimile machines, assistive technologies, local area networks and, eventually, low-cost laptops for the students of selected schools in each country and ICT training materials (targeting users and training for trainers). An important aspect to highlight is that training will be provided for teachers and trainers who will train community members.

For the	Signature	Date	Name/Title
ITU:	_____	__/__/____	
Partner(s):	_____	__/__/____	
	_____	__/__/____	

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) enlarge the scope of learning, overcoming the traditional space and time limits as well as the boundaries of the existing education systems. Whenever considering in implementing regional actions or initiatives one has to take into account the special characteristics of the existing cultures present in the countries of the Americas region, as well as the existence of human marginalized groups due to their social conditions, ethnicity, language, and persons with disabilities, among others.

The great progress of ICTs has emphasized the strategic character of education in human capacity building, which facilitates the social and economic development of a country. The advent of the new Information and Knowledge Society brings opportunities that should be put to good use by regions, countries, organizations and individuals. These opportunities, converted into real implementation, allow all stakeholders to overcome inequalities in the quality and access to education and knowledge.

Successful experiences of implemented and ongoing activities in the Americas Region clearly show that ICTs are important in promoting social and economic development and have proven to be a powerful driver of innovation, growth and productivity not only in the Americas but globally.

While Latin American government authorities increasingly recognize the important role of ensuring broadband access to citizens to improve governance, health care, education, etc., few government programs have officially incorporated this issue. To contribute to speed this process and increase awareness among telecom authorities in beneficiary countries is one of the main goals this Project intends to achieve.

Most countries are still betting on the creation of community telecentres. Despite the difficulties several of them are facing due to continuous technological changes they can still provide access to ICTs in rural regions with underdeveloped and remote infrastructure and be helpful in integrating relatively isolated communities into national information networks. They can also improve the degree of local employment by offering teleworking opportunities and support the training of local people by using eLearning techniques, not to mention that they also open new channels for sharing of global knowledge resources and the free flow of ideas and opinions.

Taking advantage of ITU's Initiative "Connect a School, Connect a Community" and the development of a related on-line toolkit (www.connectaschool.org) to promote broadband school connectivity to ensure that youth and children have access to and use ICTs, the ITU Americas Regional Office presents this Project Document in order to assist Latin American countries in activities that will include the identification of best practices in school connectivity initiatives related to policies, regulation, applications, services and practical experiences in the development of National School Connectivity Plans, as well as with the connection of public schools, using low cost computing devices, to serve as community ICT centers.

The ITU Connect a School, Connect a Community initiative promotes the twin goals of connecting schools to broadband Internet services and using schools as ICT community centres through two main activities: 1) identification of policies, legislation and regulations that ITU Member States can implement to connect their schools; and 2) implementation of projects to connect schools to serve not only school children but also members of the local community including: youth, women, indigenous people and persons with disabilities.

Schools can be open during off hours to provide community citizens career training and education. Schools in indigenous areas can foster access for indigenous persons and can provide job training and promote cultural issues. Schools can be equipped for persons with disabilities and can also provide access to people living in underserved areas, whether rural or urban.

Smart Policies promoting community access targeting marginalized groups are required and critical issues must be addressed in a holistic manner. These include understanding and implementing: policy and regulation; cost analysis; technologies for broadband network access, installation of network equipment; access to end-user devices such as laptops; teacher training and basic ICT training and ICT-enabled career training for members of the local community; providing a safe online and physical environment for

children, youth and women; providing assistive technologies and an accessible environment for persons with disabilities; developing and accessing content for education; understanding resources such as digital libraries, among others.

It is of utmost importance to attract the necessary financial resources to ensure the implementation of this Project, which will represent a major step to assist countries of the Americas Region in achieving the UN Millennium Development goals and of the World Summit on the Information Society which call for connecting all schools by 2015.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project aims to assist beneficiary countries in the preparation of a National School Connectivity Plan, for those that haven't yet prepared one, promoting the understanding and awareness among policy makers and regulators on the need for coordinated policies, regulations and practices in this field. It will also develop in each country at least three model connected schools in underserved areas that can also serve as community ICT centers, equipped with ICT equipment such as personal computers, printers, scanners, assistive technologies, local area networks, low-cost laptops for the students of selected schools in each country or other ICTs such as tablets and e-readers, ICT training materials, periodic training to ensure optimal use - training will also be provided for teachers and trainers who will train community members.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This project's main objective is to promote the use of ICT applications and services by children and youth, women, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Its other main objective is to demonstrate to Policy Makers and Government decision makers the value of connecting schools and developing connected schools as community ICT centres to include children and youth who lack access and know-how in the use of ICTs and who risk becoming further marginalized.

The Project will assist those countries that have not yet developed their National School Connectivity Plans and will develop school-based community broadband ICT centres.

The Project will also strengthen the existing relationship among regional and sub-regional organizations, and between those and ITU, due to the need of coordinated actions to harmonize the implementation of project activities among the groups of beneficiary countries.

4. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The following outputs are envisaged:

- National School Connectivity Plans for each beneficiary country to promote the understanding and awareness among policy makers and regulators of the need for coordinated policies, regulations and practices in this field in order to achieve the WSIS targets of connecting schools to ICT while considering the specificities of each country and corresponding advancements.
- Model-connected schools equipped with ICTs such as personal computers, printers, scanners, assistive technologies, local area networks and low-cost laptops (optional) for the students of selected schools in each country. The connected schools will be prepared to serve as community ICT Centres. Model-connected schools shall use suitable technologies according to the geography and local infrastructure for connection in selected communities.

- Training of instructors (training the trainers and maintenance training) provided on the use of ICT equipment in schools.
- An agenda of trainings to be defined with the assistance of the ITU Center of Excellence of the Americas Region (AMS CoE) in two modalities, online and face-to-face, using “train the trainers” methodology to prepare instructors to train children and community members. Community members may have access to other on-line training courses after the successful completion of basic courses.

5. INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure the success of the Project:

- Number of National School Connectivity Plans developed;
- Number of model-connected schools developed and functioning in beneficiary countries;
- Number of children, teachers and community members trained on the use of ICTs;
- Number of on-line and face-to-face courses delivered by the AMS CoE.

6. MAIN ACTIVITIES

6.1 Multi-stakeholder (kick-off) meeting

At the start of the project, a multi-stakeholder (kick-off) meeting would be convened with all project beneficiaries to formally launch the project, recall its objectives and solicit views from relevant stakeholders. This meeting would review and confirm/modify priorities (see Paragraph 2 – Project description) and agree upon an implementation plan, introduce necessary adaptations within the limits set by the financial partners and establish a consultative mechanism for countries to gain public input. It will also be an opportunity to ensure and formalize the full commitment and participation of all beneficiary organizations and countries and to provide them return benefits as relevant (e.g. publicity for donors also in kind).

6.2 Development of National School Connectivity Plans

The first activity will be mainly dedicated to information gathering and assessment of the existing situation in each country with regard to the priorities selected by the beneficiaries at the kick-off meeting (including international best practices).

All information will be analyzed and recommendations and guidelines will be drafted on the selected topics by the Project team through consultation with beneficiary countries. This methodology aims to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the identification process of difficulties and needs and will facilitate the decision making process of national authorities in addressing the most relevant issues to enable a feasible and tailor-made Connectivity Plan to each beneficiary country.

6.3 Implementation of Model-connected Schools

The project team will assist national authorities in the selection of the beneficiary schools, considering the main recommendations contained in the National School Connectivity Plan developed for each beneficiary country.

The equipment used may vary by school and could include personal computers, tablets, mobile phones, e-readers, printers, scanners, a facsimile machine and low-cost laptops for the students. Assistive technologies shall also be considered. National partnerships and agreements should ensure connectivity for a period of at least three years.

Capacity building is critical for the success of the Project. Training courses will be developed to ensure a good management, sustainability and continuity. Besides children and teachers, community members will

be trained and community leaders will also be trained through a “train-the-trainers” methodology as to ensure an evolution and increase in the number of skilled users.

Training sessions may be audio/video recorded for the benefit of other locations.

6.4 Complementary Trainings

With the assistance of the ITU Center of Excellence of the Americas Region (AMS CoE) an agenda of other training courses will be defined in order to improve knowledge and the use of ICTs by community members that have successfully completed the basic courses. These courses may focus specific interests of community members aiming at broadening professional, agriculture and commercial activities to promote social and economic development of beneficiary communities.

7. INPUTS

7.1 International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

ITU will be the implementing agency. ITU will undertake to manage the staff resources that will be funded and hired through this project. Information on the access and use of ICTs related issues, access to ITU existing materials, including training courses and relevant publications will be provided. ITU will exercise all reasonable skill, care and diligence to ensure the success of the project.

ITU will also indicate a Project Manager to manage, monitor and evaluate its implementation jointly with the Project Coordinator recruited for the Project. ITU will identify and recruit the specialists to develop the works and will be responsible for the procurement and delivery of equipment eventually acquired (if not donated), which will be identified in accordance to the selected schools in beneficiary countries.

7.2 Partners

It is necessary to identify partners interested in providing funding support, in cash and also in kind, for the implementation of the Project.

The Project foresees the distribution of low-cost laptops, tablets or e-readers among children and youth of model-connected schools. Low cost laptops and tablets can be provided at an estimated cost of USD 300 (three hundred US dollars) a piece; e-readers are even less costly. Such equipment could be donated or paid for by programs and/or initiatives of the many organizations working for the digital inclusion of marginalized groups. The success of the Project will not be affected if donors for such equipment cannot be identified but their availability would undoubtedly be an enormous contribution and would represent a significant improvement in the life of beneficiary children and youth.

7.3 Beneficiaries

The regional and sub-regional organizations and respective countries will provide qualified and dedicated focal points that will play a key role, both for ownership of the project and for effective transfer of the know-how. These focal points will be participating as far as possible in the consultation process and meetings and adapting the project deliverables to the national context of the concerned countries. Commitment from each beneficiary country as well as from the regional organizations will be an important aspect of the project. The beneficiary countries are also expected to provide information/data necessary to carry out the work, access to all relevant documents, secured premises to host the project team meetings and training activities, logistics arrangements and support and any other assistance to the Project that may be required by the Project staff.

8. RISKS ASSESSMENT

The Project requires close coordination with regional and sub-regional organizations, multiple national government institutions and local partners, including NGOs as appropriate. The primary risk is that in-country activities may suffer delays due to unforeseen local events and/or circumstances. This risk will be minimized through the close involvement of local partners and ITU Regional and Area Offices in Chile and Honduras.

The implementation of the school connectivity component of the Project will require local inputs such as provision of logistics and infrastructure (such as, room (s), availability of Internet access, electricity and back-up power equipment, furniture, etc). In order to mitigate delays all beneficiary countries will ensure timely provision of the inputs and in-kind contributions as agreed in this Project Document. For coordination purposes, each beneficiary country will appoint a National Project Coordinator and a National Project Team to carry out - in collaboration with ITU's Project Manager and the Project Coordinator - all implementation phases.

This project pays particular attention to sustainability, and therefore, to foster community responsibility for long-term sustainability, the beneficiary country shall ensure that, prior to project kick-off, Internet connectivity will be provided for a minimum of 3 years to the school(s) where the community ICT centre(s) will be implemented.

9. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders will be clearly defined in the beginning of the Project. After the identification of the primary funding agency and in order to facilitate the implementation of the project, a Project Team funded by the project, will be recruited by ITU. The Project Team will work in close collaboration with the personnel of the ITU Regional office for the Americas and of the Area Offices of Chile and Honduras as well as of ITU Headquarters and will be assisted by subject experts. The Project Team will work in close relationship with the regional and sub-regional organizations/institutions, and beneficiary countries that will provide, at their own cost, a dedicated National Project Team, for the coordination and implementation of the Project at local level.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The progress of the project will be monitored through periodic reports prepared by the National Project Teams. A compiled and complete version will be prepared by the National Project Coordinator and submitted to the Project Manager. A Final Evaluation Report will be prepared at the end of the Project by the Project Coordinator assessing the achievements of the stated objectives and developmental impact based on expected outcomes and pre-identified key performance indicators to be submitted to Partners. The ITU Project Manager will prepare a Project Closure Report in close collaboration with the National Project Coordinator.

11. SUSTAINABILITY

The project will be conducted so as to ensure that, after its closure, the beneficiary countries and regional organizations have the capacity to sustain the project on their own. Emphasis will be put on beneficiary ownership as it remains a key element to sustainability.

13. ESTIMATED BUDGET¹

Budget estimation considers Project implementation in at least ten (10) Latin American countries.

DESCRIPTION	BUDGET (in USD)
PERSONNEL COSTS	400,000
MISSION EXPENSES	211,000
TRAINING	100,000
PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES	360,000
MISCELLANEOUS	36,000
SUBTOTAL	1,107,000
<i>ITU ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (7,5%)</i>	<i>83,025</i>
TOTAL BUDGET	1,190,025

¹ The cost of the laptops to be distributed among children and youth of model-connected schools is not considered in the estimated budget due to the eventual difficulty in finding a sponsor/donor and to the fact that this is not an issue that will affect the successful implementation of the Project. The total cost of this specific issue also depends on the number of students from selected schools that will benefit from this Project.